

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME
Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation

Textbook

03: Recognition of non formal and informal learning

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1 ABOUT THIS MODULE

Job matchmaking is essential to promote employability, but in many countries, especially in Southern Europe it is not effectively implemented. At the root of the difficulties there are definitely, on the one hand, the current economic crisis but, on the other, the lack of representation of both job positions available and job seekers' personal and professional characteristics. This criticism is widespread but it is exacerbated in the case of migrants for whom the transparency of qualifications and the ability to understand language and customs is limited.

Job matchmaking would therefore require appropriate tools to the description of jobs and personal characteristics and experienced supporting staff.

This module intends to analyze problems, methods and benefits related to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning whose importance has been recognised for years at European and local level, not only in promoting adult lifelong learning but also in facilitating the access and permanence in the labour market and preventing social exclusion.

The recognition of competences however acquired is essential to the mobility of citizens in educational and occupational contexts; this requires more transparent qualifications and appropriate arrangements such as certification, quality, allocation of credits. Many of these objectives have been achieved thanks to the definition of European frameworks and their implementation in national contexts, even if there is no denying that the recognition of competences however acquired can not rely on a European reference framework but it is largely based on differentiated experiences aimed especially at the access to training rather than at job matchmaking.

Lifelong learning is the determining factor and is essential to the enjoyment of full rights of citizenship in an increasingly inter-cultural and multi-ethnic employability.

This module has been designed to:

- analyse what is non-formal and informal learning
- analyse how and which authorities can validate non-formal and informal learning
- present the benefits for the client resulting from the validation of non formal and informal learning
- provide guidance services in order to support the client in the validation process
- let the participants be familiar with validation procedures implemented in different European countries.

2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module the participant will be able to:

- know the European and national/regional legislation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- know European and national tools available for the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- know the best practices of other European countries
- manage information on the competent authorities responsible for the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- use appropriate tools to survey clients' needs
- know the local network of bodies/agencies in order to cooperate with them and offer a complete and high-quality service
- use appropriate strategies to welcome the client and let him/her be comfortable
- know formal learning opportunities in order to identify and highlight clients' competencies and eventually suggest him/her the most appropriate learning pathway
- support the client in describing non-formal and informal competencies previously acquired
- describe the competencies in terms of learning outcomes and according to a specific template
- apply the official validation procedures (if existing) or in case the available best practices
- share the best practices/procedures with other career guidance counsellors in order to create a tool box.

3 STUDY MATERIALS CONTENT / CHAPTERS

Chapter 1:

Title: Descriptions of procedures implemented in the different European systems to validate non-formal and informal learning

Summary: A set of documents summarizing CEDEFOP country reports - “*Inventory on validation of informal and non formal learning 2010*”. Below the participant can find the information about Italy as an example in a synthetic way. The descriptions of other partner countries (Greece, Cyprus and Czech Republic) are attached as annexes of this textbook.

Text:

ITALY

1. AIM OF THE VALIDATION PROCESS

Several objectives - late adoption of the necessary provisions for the development and institutionalization of a national system.

2. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EXISTING/ DEVELOPING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND INFORMATIONON STANDARDS USED FOR VALIDATION

The lack of a National System of Standards breaks the development of a National Qualifications Framework. The highly fragmented approaches in the field of certification and acknowledgement of acquired skills adopted by the Regions are an obstacle to the creation of a unitary policy, which can meet the European principles of Lifelong Learning

Since 2000, the need to develop and implement a National Qualifications and Certification System has been underlined in many agreements between State-Regions and Social partners. Thanks to the participation and active involvement of all the key actors (Ministries, Regions, Social Partners) and the systematic approach to the integration of the education, training and employment systems, it has been possible to agree on the need to identify and select a national

system for the definition and recognition of qualifications, the certification of competences and training credits, the transparency of competences, and the establishment of training and occupational standards.

As agreed in many important documents since 2006, the NQF implementation process should facilitate the validation of knowledge and competences that were acquired in a non-formal and informal manner.

3. DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL, PROVIDER LEVEL) ACCORDING TO THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF VALIDATION

The national government has a central role in designing a system of validation of non formal and informal learning. The Italian government aims at fixing common national criteria and procedures that will be available to citizens, companies, VET agencies and education providers.

The Regions are in charge of the implementation of the system and seek to make the mechanisms easy to put into practice and not to impact too strongly on their own existing VET and certification system.

The Social Partners are involved in almost all processes of the Italian validation system, in order to ensure it functions well.

4. VALIDATION PRACTITIONERS AND PROVISION OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO THEM

Validation practitioners are often education/training or vocational guidance professionals who are used to managing competence curricula and training programmes and are also skilled in delivering services to individuals.

Both within the Regional experiences and the *Libretto Formativo* testing phase there was training for the validation operators that consisted of 2-5 days intensive classroom training and further e-learning and distance supervision and tutorship.

5. TARGET GROUPS AND BENEFITS

There is no national data on how individuals are engaged in the validation practices. There is no reliable data available to evaluate the benefits or results of the practices mentioned in this report.

6. ASSESSMENT METHODS: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

In spite of the amount of different validation practices, there is a substantial and widespread agreement on the procedures and methodologies to be used in order to validate non formal and informal learning, in Italy. This model comes from the most significant practice of validation envisaged at national, regional and project level. It is planned in three sequential steps: 1) Analysis of the experience and competences of the individual, the collection and organisation of information about the knowledge and skills acquired in a non-formal or informal manner. 2. Evidence collection and assessment. 3) Certification/recognition, this stage awards qualifications where appropriate.

In Italy, self-assessment and evidence collection methods are preferred instead of external testing and assessment methods

7. PROCEDURE AND STEPS

It depends on the type of validation process.

8. COSTS FOR ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

There are no validation programmes in Italy in which a direct cost for the individual (fee charge) is envisaged.

There is no official information about the costs of validation procedures. However some information is available for example in relation to the aforementioned Libretto Formativo.

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

The validation processes available are carried out in different contexts. Thus there is no national quality assurance framework. However the quality principles set out by the Commission through the Common Principles document of 2004 are well known and used. In addition, the approval of the European Recommendation for the introduction of EQARF (European Framework of Reference for Quality Assurance in VET) and the institution (2006), made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies in agreement with the Ministry of Education, University and Research, of a National EQARF Reference Point has already produced positive outcomes on the legislative process in the country

10. NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

National and regional institutions, for example the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, social partners and employers' associations at national level and representatives of the Regions have tried to establish a set of

professional standards of reference for the promotion of initiatives of validation of non formal and informal learning. Until now, the design, formalisation and implementation of institutional systems and devices aimed at validation of non-formal and informal learning has only been fully developed at a regional level. The regions have taken different approaches to the implementation of validation. Furthermore, numerous local “micro-experiences” have been implemented throughout Italy in different Regions and in a variety of sectors

Chapter 2:

Title: European legislation

Summary: Description of main European legislation on the validation of informal and non-formal learning. Further information are available on EUR-Lex and CEDEFOP websites.

Text:

Author	Date and place	Title	Summary
Council	20/12/2012	Council Recommendation on the validation of non formal and informal learning	The Member States should, with a view to offering individuals the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned outside formal education and training — including through mobility experiences — and to make use of that learning for their careers and further learning, and with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity.
Council	20/07/2006	Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage, while taking into account the specific

		<p>the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field (2006/C 168/01)</p>	<p>situation in each Member State, the development of a comparable and transparent youth-specific element within Europass for identifying and recognizing the skills and competences acquired by young people through non-formal and informal learning, that could be attached to or form an integral part of, certificates or other recognition tools in order to make it easier for third persons — particularly in another Member State — to understand what the original</p>
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			<p>certificate means in terms of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by its holder;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enable by this means the identification of those competences acquired and actually used, with a view to their recognition on the labour market;
CEDEFOP	2009	European guidelines for validating non formal and informal learning	<p>This publication presents the conclusions of more than two years of intensive exchange of experiences - involving representatives from more than 20 European countries - in validating non-formal and informal learning. The main objective is to make the outcomes of this common learning process available to a wider audience to support further development of</p>

			<p>validation of non-formal and informal learning at European, national and local levels.</p> <p>These guidelines, while inspired by the common European principles on identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning adopted by the European Council in 2004, are not a policy framework approved by a law-making body: they are a practical tool, providing expert advice to be applied on a purely voluntary basis. Their impact relies exclusively on their relevance and ability to add value at national or local levels.</p>
<p>European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission</p>	<p>7/12/2010</p>	<p>The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020</p>	<p>The European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission declared that participating countries should start to develop, no later than 2015, national procedures for the</p>

			recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, supported, as appropriate, by national qualifications frameworks.
Council	18/05/2004	Draft Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of guidance throughout life in Europe	The Resolution promoted Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Chapter 3:

Title: “The validation of non-formal and informal learning in Italy and other European countries”

Summary: starting from the materials of Chapter 1, the participants will analyze the methods to validate the non formal and informal learning applied in other partner countries (see Annexes) in order to try understanding if the model of another European country can be applied in their own country and professional experience.

The participant can follow the steps described below.

Text:

First part: analysis of one country model

- Model content
- Competent authority and bodies responsible for its management
- Effects (benefits for the user)

- How the model works:
 - request for the validation process
 - identification of the portfolio and tools
- Assessment (description of the tools used and example of assessment documentation)
- Certification

Second part: analysis of your own country model and comparison

Third part: proposal to transfer the analysed model to your own country and analysis of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities

Fourth part: research for a grant to carry out a mobility experience in the country concerned.

Chapter 4:

Title: Standard for the professional profile

Summary: a proposal of methodology developed to validate non formal and informal learning. The methodology lies on a specific criterion, that is the definition of a standard of the professional profile described in terms of activities and competences in order to highlight prior informal and non formal competences.

Text:

The template is based on

- A 'core' section, corresponding to a common professional profile, which contains:
 - o a description of the profile
 - o areas of activity, activities, tasks
 - o key competencies – performances required by the world of work (professional needs) that enable the performance of tasks and activities (grouped into areas)
 - o learning outcomes grouped into units (as certified), meeting the training needs.
- Another part relating to the learning pathway (expressed in cluster of learning units) in order to meet training needs and support the achievement of the learning outcomes

- o it can consist of formal, non-formal and informal activities
- o it can change according to different contexts and can be provided by the training organisation
- o it is customised according to the type of users and available resources (economic, professional, logistical ...)
- o it depends on the choices of the CTS (Technical Scientific Committee)
- o it also includes:
 - access to training courses and possible accreditation procedures
 - organisation standards, also including any criteria for quality control
 - assessment
 - certification in relation to "who" certifies and "the procedures" to certify.

Description of the profile

It should report (in five or maximum ten lines) the processes / areas of activity relating to the profile, the level of autonomy and responsibility, the resources employed to perform the activities, the system of internal – external relations/ the context, the local economic context (type of companies / sectors / sizes and other specific characteristics).

Activity area is the set of specific activities which can be joined in a temporal and logical sequence (same or different process). A profile can have four or five activity areas.

Activities: a segment relating to a process or service which consists of a set of operations that generates an output / outcome which is significant compared to the final output, even if it is intermediate. These activities can be described as a list of tasks or in a written description.

Tasks: elementary operations in an activity which can be carried out independently or according to a predetermined procedure (if required) with a defined purpose (final performance).

Key competencies or performances: by key competencies we mean the performances required by the labour market and necessary to state that a person is able to achieve a specific performance. The key competencies really match the professional requirements. It is therefore necessary to collect the descriptions of tasks and activities, roles, work processes and essential performances from the professionals.

Learning outcomes: as reported in Annex 1 – EQF Recommendation, learning outcomes means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies.

The learning pathway: it consists of learning units and / or formative units making up a training pathway built in clusters and diachronically developed.

The units deal with different learning activities: formal, non-formal and informal.

The training pathway ensues from a well-structured and progressive implementation of the training activities. To summarise, the following steps are suggested:

1. description of the professional profile in terms of activities or macro-activities (4-5 groups) and tasks based on both the national profile and the specific needs of the local labour market;
2. identification of the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to carry out each activity; grouping them into units;
3. synoptic framework between units and formative units;
4. according to the definition of the expected results, it is necessary to highlight those elements that lead to the achievement of the competence and therefore reflect the guidelines relevant to ar-ranging the testing/evaluation according to the certifications and accreditations.

Chapter 5:

Title: "Accreditation model"

*Summary: A shared methodology for the process of recognizing and validating prior learning specifically focused on migrants (European project MATCH - *Informal and non-formal competences matching devise for migrants' employability and active citizenship- 510739-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP22.**

MODEL

Process in steps	Involved actors	Standard reference	of Tools	Documentary outputs
1st – Information and initial counselling/guidance	-candidate - staff of Job Centres, Local Adult Learning Centres/Schools, -Guidance services centre -Education and training centres providing training and certification		-brochure -web site -posters (information material to be made available at different information places: reception centres, town halls, police stations,)	-information request form - application form (to apply for recognition and validation of prior learning)
2nd - Counselling and coaching in writing the candidate's profile and building the professional dossier with reference to a specific vocational certification, qualification or professional figure	-candidate -staff of guidance centre and/or assessment & validation centre (psychologists, experts in Competence Balancing process) -experts in the intended profession or	If existing: -directory of national or regional vocational certifications -standard of regional qualifications -directory of regional or national professional figures	-interview -motivational interview -"competence balancing" in a short form (description of the candidate's non-formal and informal prior learning) - Europass CV	- application form - Professional Dossier including evidences - profile-analysis of experiences - Europass CV - complementary training agreement (if needed)
3rd –assessment of	-candidate	Assessment	-differentiated	-assessment proceedings

knowledge, skills and competence by the proper assessment tools -validation panel procedure (experts in assessment and validation, technical experts in the intended profession, staff of certifying and validating body)

4th - validation and issuing the certificate -candidate Certification procedure - validation panel (staff of certifying and validating body, experts in certification, technical experts in the intended profession)

5th - job offer matching -candidate -staff of Job centres, Certification bodies, Education and Training centres, Industry and Crafts Associations

assessment tools to properly test knowledge, skills or competence (simulations, practical examination in a real or re-enacted professional situation, theory tests, etc.)

- assessment/evaluation grid
-proceedings form

-certificates -certificate of full certification of vocational qualification
-proceedings form
-validation report - certificate of partial certification of vocational qualification + complementary training suggestions
form
-validation proceedings

-interview - list of possible job offers matching the candidate vocational certification
- dating for job interviews

Chapter 6:

Title: The conceptual background and the evolution of the validation of non-formal and informal learning at EU level

Summary: The development and discovering of a common terminology is considered crucial in the process towards transnational cooperation and joint comparative research activity. For this reason, the first step will be to agree on the proposed common language of process, procedures, definitions, and specific terms.

Text:

The validation and promotion of informal and non formal learning refers to many different concepts that need to be recalled.

Learning

A cumulative process whereby individuals gradually assimilate increasingly complex and abstract entities (concepts, categories, and patterns of behaviour or models) and/or acquire skills and competences.

Learning outcome(s) / learning attainments

The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process.

The definitions used by the European Commission are of particular interest as they can be adopted as the guiding operational tools in identifying what type of invisible learning is to be validated and accredited.

The Cedefop glossary defines the core concepts of formal, informal and non-formal education as follows:

CEDEFOP GLOSSARY

Formal learning consists of learning that occurs within an organised and structured context (formal education, in-company training), and that is designed as learning. It may lead to formal recognition (diploma, certificate).

Non-formal learning consists of learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designed as learning, but which contain an important learning element;

Informal learning is defined as learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning, and can to a degree, be understood as accidental learning.

A slightly different perspective of these three concepts is given in the definition by the European Commission within the Communication on Lifelong Learning . The three core concepts in this instance are defined as follows:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION - COMMUNICATION ON LIFELONG LEARNING

Formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective;

Non-formal learning is not provided by educational or training institutions and typically it does not lead to certification. However it is structured, in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view;

Informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time and/or learning support. Typically, it does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases, it is non-intentional.

These two sets of definitions highlight the context within which learning takes place as well as the intentionality of the learner as the main indicators to distinguish between the different forms of learning. The learner is considered at the core of the learning process within the perspective of lifelong learning. The two dimensions identified are used to distinguish between formal, informal and non-formal learning. The different perspective in these three types of learning are summarised in the table which follows.

Nature of Learning: intention and structure			
Structure of the context	Learning is intentional		Learning is not intentional
Planned learning activities	Formal Learning		
Planned activities		Non-formal learning	
No planning			Informal Learning

Questions and tasks

Issues for reflection and review

Chapter 1

1. **(Mandatory task - interactive).** Check if the information available on the national procedures concerning the validation of informal and non formal learning applied in your own country (CEDEFOP Country Reports 2010 - see also Annexes) are up-to-date if compared with those in the Country Reports 2014. Highlight any differences and suggest possible improvements.

Chapter 2

2. Analyse the information on the European legislation available in the chapter and compare the most accurate information with national procedures to see if the legislation is really applied.
3. Suggest possible improvements.

Chapter 3:

4. **(Mandatory task - interactive).** As a practical exercise, follow the 4 steps suggested in the procedure and write a brief essay. Please use the information provided in Chapter 1 concerning your country and other partner countries.

Chapter 4

5. **(Mandatory task - interactive).** Fill in the template presented in the chapter (area of activity, activity, tasks, skills, learning outcomes etc.) with information taken from the standard of the common European professional profile for career guidance counsellor elaborated in the project (see Task 3.2).

Chapter 5:

6. **(Mandatory task - interactive).** Starting from the accreditation model elaborated in MATCH project and reported in the chapter, imagine to relate with a possible client and say if the model is appropriate or you would change or adjust some parts. In case you consider the model not appropriate for your context, please design a new one.

Chapter 6:

7. **(Mandatory task - interactive).** Make a research on European legislation and evolution of the validation of non-formal and informal learning on the specific websites and check if the information reported in the chapter are up-to-date or not. If they are not up-to-date, please describe the most recent information.

4 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Successful completion of the module is conditional upon:

- Attendance at face-to-face sessions.
- Successful completion of 4 out of 5 obligatory tasks No 1, 4, 5, 6, 7. Completion of the tasks will be evaluated by the tutor on scale 1-100. All obligatory tasks as well as other tasks chosen by the trainee will be prepared by the trainee and his/her answers/work will be uploaded to the INNO-CAREER training platform before the final assessment procedure.
- Successful pass of a written test which will evaluate the competences acquired by the trainee. It will include 10 multiple choice questions and 1 open question. For a successful pass, 80% of the questions (9 questions) must be answered correctly. The test will be evaluated by the tutor on scale 1-100. The test will be given to the trainees by the tutor of the module at the final assessment phase of the program. The day of the final assessment will be set by the organizers of the training program.

Final assessment procedure

The final (summative) assessment procedure of the trainee consists of:

- A written essay on a training module chosen by the trainee. If the trainee chooses this module he/she must select one of the following topics:
 - ❖ Analyse *CEDEFOP Country Reports 2014* concerning all partner countries and highlight updates if compared to *CEDEFOP Country Reports 2010*
 - ❖ Analyse and compare the system of adult education of one partner country with your national one; then point out the factors that are transferable and design your own application proposal
 - ❖ Fill in the model described in Chapter 4 with information on your professional profile by highlighting the differences with the common profile of career

guidance counsellor designed in the project and suggesting ways to recognise the non formal and informal competences already acquired

- ❖ Fill in the model described in Chapter 4 with information on your professional profile by highlighting the differences with the common profile of career guidance counsellor designed in the project; then provide your opinion on the suitability of training modules to narrow the gap between acquired competences and those required by the common.

The essay must have a length of 15-20 standard pages minimum including bibliography, tables and contents. One standard page is 1800 characters with spaces. The essay must be uploaded by the trainee to the INNO-CAREER training platform before the final assessment phase.

OR alternatively

- Simulation of a counselling session combining the theory and practice of a module chosen by the trainee. If the trainee chooses this module he must cooperate with another trainee having chosen the same module. At the final assessment phase the two trainees will play the role of counsellor – counselee and vice versa. The simulation will last approximately 1 hour/couple. The goal is to create an environment very similar to the working one in order to better evaluate the participant's skills in practice. (Competency-based training). The simulation will be evaluated by the tutor of the module.

Self- assessment procedure

Filling in an online self-evaluation questionnaire containing multiple choices and open questions aiming to assess the learning outcomes before and after the module training. Before the start of the training at the particular module trainees will complete the questionnaire to make the initial assessment of their competences. After the end of the training and until the final assessment phase they will complete the same questionnaire with the aim to assess changes that happened as a result of the participation at the training program.

The assessment tools described above (tasks, written tests etc) will be designed by the partners responsible for each training module. Each partner may choose to adjust them according to each national context.

5 INDICATIVE READING LIST

- Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (20/12/2012) - 2012/C 398/01 , which calls on Member States to put validation arrangements in place by 2018
- CEDEFOP - European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning (2010)
- CEDEFOP - European guidelines for validating non formal and informal learning (2009)
- CEDEFOP: European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning 2010 Thematic Report: Assessment methods
- CEDEFOP: European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning 2010 Thematic Report: Costs and Benefits of Validation
- CEDEFOP: European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning 2010 Thematic Report – Validation for Specific Target Groups
- CEDEFOP: Promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning - report from the public consultation
- European Commission, “Common European principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning”, p.10. Available at: http://www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory/publications/EC_common_principles_validation_20040303.pdf
- CEDEFOP publication: Use of validation by enterprises for human resource and career development purposes – 2014
- Using ECVET to Support Lifelong Learning ANNOTATED EXAMPLES OF HOW ECVET CAN BE USED TO SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING - Note prepared by the ECVET Users’ Group
- MATCH project - *Informal and non-formal competences matching devise for migrants' employability and active citizenship* - <http://match.cpv.org/>

ANNEXES (CHAPTER 1):

GREECE	
1. Aim of the validation process	
2. Relationship with the existing/developing qualifications framework and information on standards used for validation	<p>The framework for lifelong learning is only now being developed in Greece - a national qualifications' framework (NQF) is under development and the validation of informal and non-formal learning will eventually be linked to this NQF. The recognition of prior learning will be facilitated by the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework which will comprise eight levels and which will allow for the recognition of each level as regards the corresponding levels of skills and competences, thus making possible the recognition of all forms of prior learning including non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>Until now, a unified system for the recognition and certification of qualifications encompassing all forms of education, training and professional experience did not exist in Greece. Recognition of learning outcomes was largely dependent on their attainment in the formal education and training system. The most recent development towards the creation of a NQF in Greece is an open public consultation⁴ on a proposal put forward for a NQF that has been launched by the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (from now on referred to as Ministry of Education). The NQF proposed would follow the eight levels of qualifications of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and would be compatible with the EQF in order to promote comparability of qualifications and mobility. The public consultation was launched on 5 March 2010 and will be open until 5 September 2010. Policy makers, social partners, national experts and VET stakeholders are all participating in this discussion.</p> <p>A National LLL Committee has been created, which is chaired by the Secretary General of Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education. The Committee is made up of representatives, policy makers and experts from all Ministries and organisations that are directly involved in both the strategic planning and the implementation of LLL policies,</p>

	<p>along with representatives of various stakeholders, trade unions and members from Higher Education Institutions (HE). The aforementioned open consultation may bring about changes in the composition and functions of the Committee. In addition, Lifelong Learning Institutes have been established in HE and in Social Partners Structures.</p> <p>A system for occupational standards is currently being developed in Greece. The process of designing occupational profiles was initiated by EKEPIS in 2007, with close involvement of the social partners. So far, 202 occupational profiles have been designed, covering a multitude of emerging occupations and economic sectors including commerce, tourism, industry and banking. The social partners are actively involved in defining these occupational profiles, the relevant knowledge, skills and competence for each occupation and the learning pathways and training programmes that need to be followed in each case.</p> <p>Each profile can extend to the whole range of knowledge, skills and competence gained through education and training required for the specific job profile and in line with existing labour market needs. Priorities for the development of job profiles are justified by existing (and persisting) fast changing job requirements as proposed by employers and employees, as well as national priorities set by the government.</p> <p>These profiles will subsequently be accredited and training institutions will then be expected to adapt their curricula in accordance with these occupational profiles. Hence, the system of defining occupational standards is one step in the process towards a system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The creation of a system for the accreditation of training programmes based on the occupational profiles, and following that, a system for the accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competences that will be acquired through such programmes has not yet been implemented. This is a challenge for the near future, in the context of a National Qualifications' Framework based on learning outcomes, which will be governed by common processes and in parallel to the accreditation of the stakeholders offering continuing vocational training.</p>
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<p>3. Division of responsibilities (national, regional, local, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation</p>	<p>A validation system has not yet been implemented in Greece. However, from the plans contained in the Law 3879, passed in September 2010, it appears that the responsibility for validation will rest with the national level Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications (EOPP). Regional and local level responsibilities are not yet set out in relation to validation. However, for the provider level, Law 3879, mentions that the EOPP will be responsible for issuing permits and monitoring those bodies that will be offering validation of informal and non-formal learning.</p>
<p>4. Target groups and benefits 4.1 Provision of guidance and support 4.2 Evidence of benefits to individuals</p>	<p>Guidance and support is provided by the OEEK and by the GSLLL, in relation to the initiatives for the validation of ICT and language competences, respectively.</p> <p>In relation to the validation of Greek Language Competence, based on the Certificate of Greek Language Competence, which is awarded by the GSLLL, the main benefit is that foreigners awarded the certification can then obtain a 'long-stay' permit in Greece. This is because the Certificate is a pre-requisite and is submitted together with other required documents to the Ministry of the Interior, which then issues the long-stay permit. Third country nationals seek this certification, in order to be able to obtain the long-stay permit. Conversely, foreigners from EU member states residing in Greece that participate in the Greek language and culture training, find that the Lifelong Learning Certificate which is awarded upon successful completion of the course, is enough for them, without needing to further participate in the exams to obtain the Certification of Greek Language Competence.</p> <p>In the case of private sector initiatives such as the ECDL Certification, possessing a certificate of basic dexterities for the use of PCs constitutes an essential qualification for participating in examinations for employment in the Greek Public Sector. The ECDL Certification meets this requirement and, as mentioned above, is officially recognised by the Greek State, the OEEK and the organisation for the examinations for employment in the public sector (ASEP). This is also one reason explaining the impressive attendance of candidates in the programmes of acquisition of ECDL in Greece. In the provisions for employment in the public sector, it is stated that only ICT competence certificates that are published by institutions certified by the OEEK are accepted and ECDL is such a certificate. This is consistent with</p>

	<p>international practice in the area of certification of ICT knowledge and is harmonised with the international standard ISO/IEC 17024:200313. Aside from being recognised for employment in the public sector, the ECDL certificate is also recognised by private sector employers. According to ECDL Greece, the impressive number of individuals registered in the Programme in Greece, which exceeds 2.5% of the total population of Greece and is almost double the European average, is proof of the recognition of the ECDL Certificates by candidates and by the labour market more generally.</p>
<p>5. Validation practitioners: profile and provision of training and support to them</p>	<p>There is little available information in relation to the profile of validation practitioners in Greece. In the cases of validation initiatives described above, such as ECDL, the practitioners are ICT professionals.</p>
<p>6. Assessment 6.1 Methods used 6.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the methods used</p>	<p>The assessment methods used for validation practices in Greece by both the public sector (for language and ICT certification) and the private sector (e.g. ECDL), are based on examinations. In particular for the ECDL, 99% of the examinations are based on the ‘automated test evaluation system – aTES’.</p> <p>The advantages of using examinations as an assessment method for validating informal and non-formal learning relate to the consistency of the approach, the fact that such examinations are convenient to use and they can be adopted and implemented quickly. On the other hand, the disadvantages of using examinations as an assessment method relate mainly to the fact that examinations measure relatively superficial knowledge or learning.</p>
<p>7. Procedures and steps</p>	
<p>8. Costs to organisations and individuals</p>	<p>There is no information available on the costs of validation initiatives to organizations.</p>
<p>9. Quality assurance</p>	<p>The quality assurance procedures employed in Greece are likely to vary by validating organisation, as little national guidance is provided on this topic. Moreover, there is currently no comparative overview of</p>

	the level and nature of such practices.
<p>10. National legal framework</p>	<p>Prompted to a large extent by the European policy agenda, but also by a need to rationalise the education and training system, the issue of validation of non-formal and informal learning has been in discussion for a number of years in Greece. The discussion is particularly evident in public sector institutions responsible for adult education and VET, but there is increasing involvement from the social partners and key stakeholders in the debate. Overall, continuing vocational training in Greece is moving towards learning outcomes-based approaches.</p> <p>The legal framework for the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning is under development. However, a national system for validation has not yet been implemented.</p> <p>This can be attributed to both the difficulty of evaluating non-formal and informal learning and to the conflicting interests of professional associations who feel that their professional rights might be threatened with the establishment of a validation system.</p> <p>The recent Law 3879/2010, passed in September 2010, aims to address the shortcomings of the Greek education and training system and brings all further training and adult education under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The law discusses all types of education and training, including informal and non-formal learning. The Law introduces a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Lifelong Learning, in the framework of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which is intended to create an integrated system of validation of informal and non-formal learning in Greece.</p> <p>In this context, two institutions are foreseen by the law:</p> <p>a) an institution that will be responsible for certifying the inputs to lifelong learning (the occupational profiles, training centre infrastructures, trainers, training programmes, training materials etc). This role will be performed by the existing EKEPIS institution which is renamed from ‘National Accreditation Centre of Continuing Vocational Training’ into ‘National Accreditation Centre of Lifelong Learning Structures’ maintaining the same acronym, EKEPIS.</p> <p>b) A new institution responsible for certifying the outputs of lifelong learning, i.e. the knowledge, skills and competences that individuals will acquire during learning is set up. The title of the new institution will be the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications (EOPP). This institution will be responsible for: the creation and</p>

	<p>development of the NQF and its correspondence with the EQF; the correspondence of qualifications gained through non-formal and informal learning with the NQF levels; the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning and the issuing of permits and the monitoring of bodies validating non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>Prior legislation that made up the legislative framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning included:</p> <p>Law 3191/2003 refers to the National System of Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA). The law was passed at the end of 2003 and became activated in 2006. A High Level Committee for ESSEEKA was set up in 2006, aiming to function as the core group that will implement all the other provisions of the Law. This law aimed to link the adult education and VET systems and laid the foundations for a future validation system.</p> <p>Law 3369/2005 on ‘Systematisation of Lifelong Learning’ aims at the systematic promotion of lifelong learning services by all bodies involved. This Law constitutes the first integrated strategy on lifelong learning at national level, in contrast to the frequently fragmented policies of the past. The Law sets out the roles and responsibilities of each type of organisation involved in VET and lifelong learning. It also sets the framework for the establishment and function of the “National Committee for Lifelong Learning”, whose role is intended to be the improved identification of needs in lifelong education and training, the improved cooperation between actors in lifelong education and training and its link with ESSEEKA. The Chairman of the High Level Committee sits in the Lifelong Learning Committee. There is a provision in the Law for training certificates for training programmes lasting 75 hours and lifelong learning certificates of programmes lasting up to 250 hours. The provisions of the aforementioned law complement the provisions of the ESSEEKA Law. Moreover, the procedures of certification for the structures, the trainers, the general framework of the occupational profiles, as well as the procedures of constant control and evaluation of the educational institutions with the assistance of the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) and the National Accreditation Centre of Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) have been designed and have begun to be</p>
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	<p>implemented.</p> <p>6 The development of procedures and tools for certifying knowledge, skills and competences which contribute to the recognition of professional qualifications that are acquired in the framework of lifelong learning have led to the Common Ministerial Decision by the Ministers of Economy and Finance, Employment and Social Protection entitled ‘Certification System of Programmes, Knowledge, Skills and Competences’ (Official Journal issue B’-30-12-2005) which defines the procedures for the certification of knowledge, skills and competences of trainees. However, this common ministerial decision has not been implemented to date. The National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) will be the competent body for the implementation of the above decision.</p> <p>7 A Joint Ministerial Decision on the creation of Occupational [Vocational] Profiles (566/2006) was issued in 2006. Further, the Ministerial Decision No 110998/2006 regarding a common methodology for the creation of job profiles is considered to be a central and innovative development for VET in Greece – more information on job profiles is provided below in this report.</p> <p>8 Law N. 3999/2008 which provides for the creation of the ‘National Committee for Lifelong Learning’, and Law N. 3687/2008 which addresses further issues related to lifelong learning in Greece, also attempted to strengthen lifelong learning in Greece. In Greece, for cultural reasons, formal educational attainment, especially at University level, is held in high esteem. However, there is a lack of a training culture, while non-formal and informal learning are not valued. Moreover, the lack of a system for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning in Greece lowers the motivation of learners to participate in lifelong learning. The National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS), established in 1997, has been making efforts to develop quality assurance systems which were intended to lead to the implementation of a system for the validation of informal and non- formal learning. The steps taken by EKEPIS, in the process of putting in place quality assurance systems for continuing vocational training, included the following:</p> <p>8.1 EKEPIS firstly developed the system for the accreditation of</p>
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	<p>Vocational Training Centres (KEK) and for the Specialised Centres of Social and Labour Integration for disadvantaged groups, i.e. ensuring that the accredited training structures have the appropriate infrastructure.</p> <p>8.2 The second step has been the development of an accreditation system for human resources, such as adult trainers. EKEPIS has compiled a Registry of accredited trainers, who are eligible for employment in EU co-funded programmes offered by those KEKs which have been accredited by EKEPIS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓EKEPIS went on to develop a system for the accreditation of accompanying support services staff, who provide support services tailored to the needs of the social vulnerable groups, and has respectively compiled a Registry of accredited support services professionals, who are eligible for employment in EU co-funded programmes. ✓EKEPIS is also responsible for the accreditation of Occupational Profiles on which continuing vocational training programmes are built. EKEPIS has developed and accredits 202 occupational profiles, on the basis of tripartite agreements (i.e. agreements between the government, employee and employer representatives). ✓There are two remaining steps that are related to the validation of informal and non- formal learning, which have not yet been implemented. These steps will entail a system for the accreditation of Vocational Training Programmes offered by accredited vocational training centres (KEKs). The last step is envisaged to be the accreditation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by learners, who have successfully completed an accredited training programme. This last step, and the validation of non- formal and informal learning, in general, will now be the responsibility of the new institution, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications (EOPP), established by law 3879/2010, in September 2010. <p>Apart from the above system which is under development, the Greek government certifies foreign language learning and knowledge on Informatics and ICTs through two validation initiatives. These are described below, along with other validation initiatives. Validation of Language Competence: in 2003, the Ministry of Education set up a system of summative assessment, based on examinations, to confirm and certify knowledge of modern languages obtained through non-</p>
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	<p>formal learning. The process leads to the award of the 'National Language Certificate' which is not linked to the formal education system. It mainly targets adults and is recognised as a qualification with labour market value. This Certificate has adopted the scale of six levels of language competence proposed by the European Council in the European Language Passport. It can be obtained by Greek native speakers for foreign languages including English, French, German, Italian and Spanish, while foreign nationals can obtain certification for their knowledge of Modern Greek. The Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs is the body responsible for the recognition and accreditation of language proficiency through the State Certificate in Language Proficiency. Hence, the Ministry of education, via the Directorate for Accreditation of Foreign Language Proficiency, certifies the level of foreign language knowledge of the successful participants. A condition for the acquisition of the State Certificate in Language Proficiency is the candidates' success in the written and oral examinations, organised two times per year, on the basis of a common programme framework for all languages, common criteria for papers and instruments of measuring the written and oral speech comprehension skills. One of the most important factors of assessment is transparency, for this reason detailed information on the certification method is widely available on the internet and through communication with the Ministry and its agencies. The details of the structure and content of the certification procedure are available for the benefit of the language learners, language teachers and employers¹. In 2006, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLLL) developed a system which provides for the accreditation and recognition of Greek language competence for immigrants at two levels of competence. A non-formal Greek Language learning programme is offered at beginner level (125 hours of training) and at advanced level (175 hours of training). Upon successful completion of a test, participants are awarded a 'certificate of lifelong learning' in Greek Language Learning. In addition, those who successfully complete the advanced level of the GSLLL's educational programme on Greek language and culture can participate in twice-yearly examinations to obtain a Certificate of Greek Language Competence. The certificate is awarded by the GSLLL, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior. This Certificate is a pre-requisite for obtaining a long-stay permit in Greece and is sought after in particular by third country nationals (from countries outside the EU) who participate in the examinations. Examinations took place</p>
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	<p>in April 2008, March 2009 and July 2010. In terms of participation, 2 380 persons participated in the advanced level Greek language and culture training, a proportion of which sat the July 2010 exams.</p> <p>A recent development of interest in relation to the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning is that the new Law 3879/2010 on Lifelong Learning, passed in September 2010, affords the possibility for immigrants to obtain the Greek Language Competence Certificate without sitting through a GSLLL Greek language training programme beforehand. Thus, knowledge of the Greek language is assessed, irrespective of how it was obtained, whether this was through various training programmes and educational institutions, or through self-learning.</p> <p>Validation of ICT Competence: The Ministerial Decision A/25081/8-12-2005 on the 'Development and Implementation of Accreditation and Regular Control of Bodies that issue Certificates on Informatics and the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)' is another important measure introduced in order to validate ICT competences. This measure is considered to be part of a broader policy trend that aims at improving and developing methods for the accreditation of skills that are acquired through non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>Up to 2010, the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) has been responsible for the implementation of this policy which helps to ensure the quality and validity of the ICT competence certificates issued. The certificates are an essential qualification for employment in the public sector. Acquisition of ICT basic knowledge and skills is recognised by the Supreme Council for Personnel Selection (ASEP) of the Greek State on the condition that the respective certificates (except those acquired through the formal educational system) are awarded by the bodies accredited by OEEK.</p> <p>The learning modules are a) word processing, b) spreadsheets and c) internet services. The certificates awarded are valid for three years from the day of issue³. This means that people have to re-sit the exam every three years.</p> <p>Further initiatives related to validation include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Currently, upon successful completion of a continuing vocational training programme, participants are provided with a certificate of attendance by the accredited Vocational Training Centres (KEK). Such programmes are not integrated in the formal VET system and such certificates do not have official state recognition but have some recognition in the labour market.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Training Departments of various Ministries and major public corporations also plan vocational in-service training programmes for their own staff. These courses lead to certificates which are taken into account for career development within each Ministry or company. ✓ The Second Chance Schools for adults who have not completed compulsory education were introduced by Law in 1997 but started operating in 2000, with great success. These schools offer adults who had not completed compulsory education a second chance to do so. The training is considered to be non-formal learning but graduates of the second chance schools are awarded a Certificate which is equivalent to the lower secondary leaving School Certificate. This Certificate is recognised for employment in the Public Sector and allows holders to proceed to upper secondary general and technical education or to initial or continuing vocational training programmes such as, in IEKs, KEKs, and other structures offering adult learning. ✓ Furthermore, non-formal learning is provided by: the Adult Education Centres (KEE); the Parents' Schools (Scholes Goneon); the Centre for Distance Lifelong Education and Training of Adults (KEEENAP). Lifelong learning programmes lead to the acquisition of either a 'Certificate of Training' (this is awarded for programmes that last for up to 75 hours) or a 'Certificate of Lifelong Learning' (awarded for programmes that last for up to 250 hours).
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CYPRUS	
1. Aim of the validation process	
2. Relationship with the existing/developing	Following discussions amongst government departments in October 2005, Cyprus initiated a debate amongst numerous public and private stakeholders - including the social partners - in the field of lifelong

<p>qualifications framework and information on standards used for validation</p>	<p>learning. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) initiative was presented, analysed and discussed in early January 2006. Stakeholders were then asked to prepare and submit their proposals, on the basis of which Cyprus developed and submitted its position to the EU, thus contributing to the shaping and introduction of the EQF. The European Parliament formally adopted an EQF in February 2008. At the same time, the stakeholders have started discussing and debating the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF).</p> <p>The development of a NQF for promoting the recognition of academic and vocational qualifications that have been acquired in Cyprus is a priority of the government. As a result, the Council of Ministers has set up a high level national committee comprising of the Director Generals of the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) and the Human Resource Development Authority, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD/HRDA), to formulate the general framework and the policies for the design and implementation of a NQF. For that purpose a working committee has been established.</p> <p>Cyprus is also developing a system of occupational standards (defining the main jobs that people do, what they need to do, how they will do it and how well they do it).</p> <p>The System of Vocational Qualifications is based on Standards of Vocational Qualifications, which are developed with the involvement of technical sectoral committees.</p> <p>The System is designed specifically for the assessment and certification of the knowledge, skills and competences of a person to perform competently in a working environment under normal working or simulated conditions at a predetermined level of occupation.</p> <p>The development of a Competence-Based System of Vocational Qualifications, which will constitute an integral part of a future NQF, is a high priority objective for Cyprus. The System is being established and implemented in two phases. During the first phase in the period 2006-2009, five Standards of Vocational Qualifications at level 2 have been developed in the three economic sectors of Hotel and Restaurants, Construction and Retail trade for the occupations of waiter, cook, receptionist, construction mason and sales person. During this first phase, access to opportunities for validation in relation to the standard is provided to employees only.</p>
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	<p>One of the strengths of the System of Vocational Qualifications is the sectoral and occupational coverage of qualifications and the fact that during the second phase of the system, opportunities for access are expected to be provided to everyone including employees, the unemployed, economically inactive persons as well as students, apprentices and trainees participating in initial vocational training programmes. Furthermore, there is limited financial burden on employers and employees participating in the System of Vocational Qualifications.</p> <p>An issue during the first phase of the system has been the limited participation in the System. This is connected with the limited access to the system, which will be overcome during the second phase, where opportunities for access will be provided to employees, unemployed and inactive persons and the standards to be developed will cover a broader range of occupations. Additionally, the fact that the second phase is co-financed by the ESF will increase the human and financial resources available.</p> <p>During the second phase, which covers the period 2007 – 2013, the development of 72 new standards in priority occupations at various levels is envisaged and opportunities for access are expected to be provided to employees, unemployed and economically inactive persons. The standards will cover a broader range of occupations in the sectors of Retail and Wholesale Trade, Repairs of Motor Vehicles, Hotels and Restaurants, Construction, Manufacturing, Systems and Networks of Communication and Computers and Hairdressing as well as the occupation of Trainer of Vocational Training. Furthermore, how the System will incorporate the branches / specialisations of Technical and Vocational Schools and the Apprenticeship System as well as other initial vocational training programmes will be examined. In this way it is expected to bridge the various qualifications acquired via formal, non-formal and informal learning and strengthen the ties between initial and continuing vocational education and training. The second phase of the System of Vocational Qualifications is included in the projects to be co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) during the period 2007-2013.</p> <p>Regarding the regulated professions, Cyprus is at the final stages of fully implementing the New Directive 2005/36/EC into national law by introducing eight different specific laws, one for the General System of recognition of regulated professions and seven others for the seven sectoral Professions (nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and</p>
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	<p>doctor). To the extent that legislation in relation to regulated professions will outline the qualification requirements for each profession covered by the legislation, this will be one stepping stone towards developing validation initiatives in these professions sometime in the future.</p>
<p>3. Division of responsibilities (national, regional, local, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation</p>	<p>The lead on the development of new national validation systems is taken by central government, with inputs from other stakeholders, as described above. Since there is no national validation system in Cyprus, it is not possible to provide detailed information in relation to particular responsibilities at the time of implementation. Thus, for instance, higher education institutions undertake validation on an ad-hoc basis. In current initiatives, providers and the private and voluntary sectors either define and undertake validation procedures, or work within the existing framework related to occupational standards defined at the national level, as described above.</p>
<p>4. Target groups and benefits 4.1 Provision of guidance and support 4.2 Evidence of benefits to individuals</p>	<p>As already mentioned, existing information, advice and guidance networks are not well established. Advice and guidance is either given at the provider level (e.g. individual higher education institutions will inform prospective students about their validation procedures) or at project level.</p> <p>It is expected that validation initiatives help to increase the possibilities of access to higher education, and the reduction of time to achieve a higher education qualification. Within sectors, validation is undertaken to better match individuals with job tasks. However, given the low profile of validation in the country, no studies have systematically evidenced the benefits of validation to individuals.</p>
<p>5. Validation practitioners: profile and provision of training and support to them</p>	<p>The validation practitioners involved in the ICT-related certification are ICT professionals who offer training to candidates and who are subsequently involved in assessing the examination results.</p>
<p>6. Assessment 6.1 Methods used 6.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the methods used</p>	<p>There is no national validation system in Cyprus. However, in relation to private sector initiatives, such as the ECDL general and sectoral certificates, the assessment methods used are based on both general examinations (for the Core ECDL certificates) and locally developed exams (for the ECDL computerised accountancy certificate), which follow participation in a brief training programme.</p>

	<p>The advantages of using examinations as an assessment method for validating informal and non-formal learning relate to the consistency of the approach, the fact that such exams are convenient to use and they can be adopted and implemented quickly. Using locally developed exams has the advantage that the exams can be tailored to match programme and institutional objectives. The disadvantage of using examinations as an assessment method relate mainly to the fact that examinations measure relatively superficial knowledge or learning. Some competences acquired through informal and non-formal learning, may not be picked up and validated through such examinations.</p>
7. Procedures and steps	
8. Costs to organisations and individuals	<p>There is no information available on the costs of validation initiatives to organisations. In some cases, such as the validation practices that take place in higher education institutions, costs refer largely to staff time to undertake validation. The time spent is not considered to be high, as procedures can be rather informal.</p>
9. Quality assurance	<p>The quality assurance procedures employed in Cyprus are likely to vary by validating organisation, as little national guidance is provided on this topic and the extent to which European tools have been adopted by organisations is unknown. Moreover, there is currently no comparative overview of the level and nature of such practices.</p>
10. National legal framework	<p>In Cyprus frameworks and bodies for validating non-formal and informal learning have not yet been established and there are no procedures or national guidelines for the recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning. However, various efforts are being made in that broad direction, namely towards the development of a National Qualifications Framework. The main initiatives towards the broad direction of accumulating, accrediting and validating non-formal and informal learning include the following: The Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA), a dedicated centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) was set as the National Europass Center (NEC) in 2005. The HRDA has responsibility for the establishment and operation of a System of Vocational</p>

	<p>Qualifications. Cyprus supported the initiative for establishing a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and a national committee has been set up for the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In addition, some steps towards the validation of informal and non-formal learning have been taken on the initiative of higher education institutions (see further below for details), while a recent modification of the Law of the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS) allows the Council to recognise, at its discretion, transfer credits based on previous work experience as part of a formal degree title. The general issue of recognising prior learning arose in the context of the discussions amongst numerous public and private stakeholders about the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and a proposal for a political decision on the NQF has been prepared. Developments regarding the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning will influence legislation in Cyprus, relating to the recruitment, employment and promotion of staff, especially in the public sector. Change of legislation will require in-depth dialogue and consent by all stakeholders involved, a process that will be time-consuming. There are no definite plans for introducing a national system of validation, but this may well follow the Education Reform which is currently taking place and which is the government's main priority in the field of Education and Training. The non-formal learning sector in Cyprus is growing rapidly, mainly due to the activities of the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), the organisation responsible for vocational training. Furthermore, adult non-formal education is offered by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. Private sector initiatives have also started to be implemented both at the level of the social partners and of individual companies, mainly in the areas of IT, banking and accounting/auditing. In conclusion, even though there is not yet a national system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Cyprus, there are developments taking place in that direction.</p>
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CZECH REPUBLIC	
1. Aim of the validation process	<p>As an introduction and to understand the focus of validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the Czech Republic it is important to highlight that the overall qualification attainment of the population is relatively high:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The number of early school leavers are among the lowest in the EU (in 2008 only 5.6% of young people – 18-24 – who were not in education had only a lower secondary level education attainment¹); – Over 90% of the economically active adult population (aged 25-64) have achieved at least upper-secondary qualifications (that give access to higher education). <p>Consequently, the main emphasis on validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the Czech Republic is not so much on upgrading one’s qualifications (one level up) or on getting access to higher education, but more on requalification and gaining additional qualifications (mainly vocationally oriented ones). This is the area where most developments are taking place and where the political emphasis is given. Having said this, the system of recognition of non-formal and informal learning that is currently being implemented does give those people who have no or only very low qualifications the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications (second chance). Recognition and permeability are among the seven strategic goals of the Czech Lifelong Learning Strategy, together with equal access, functional literacy, social partnership, stimulation of demand, quality and counselling. When it comes to formal (i.e. certified) recognition of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal settings this is mainly motivated by the political will to support employability. However, attention is also being paid to the contribution non-formal learning activities are having on the development of key competences and personal and social development of individuals – with specific emphasis on non-formal learning of children and young people as well as volunteers and people working in NGOs that organise non-formal learning. Validation of non-formal and informal learning for the purposes of shortening one’s studies (without being linked to achievement of a partial qualification) is not the main focus of ongoing developments. As noted below higher education institutions cannot use this option for purposes of shortening studies leading to Bachelor or Master's qualification. For the moment, publicly funded providers of adult</p>

	<p>learning offering requalification courses can use this procedure for shortening studies in only in a limited manner (see below). The rules for accreditation of providers of publicly funded further learning (mainly leading to requalification) specify that to be able to participate in the final assessment for the given certificate the candidate has to have participated in at least 80% of the programme activities.</p>
<p>2. Relationship with the existing/developing qualifications framework and information on standards used for validation</p>	<p>The procedure for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the Czech Republic is tightly related to the development of the qualifications framework. The law 179/2006 Coll. which defines the procedure for recognition of NFIL also defines the qualifications register which is the basis of the national qualifications framework. Recognition procedure can only be carried out if the qualifications and assessment standard are defined in the qualifications register. Qualifications in the register are developed through a defined process by sectoral councils and they are described in a specific format. The use of competences to define these qualifications (as opposed to the use of teaching inputs that are used to define curricula) enables the recognition of learning that has been achieved outside the formal learning context.</p> <p>The development of the qualifications register is linked to the reform of all vocational qualifications in view of improving the relationship between qualifications and the labour market needs. It takes place simultaneously to the development of a new register of occupations. The qualifications register contains full and partial qualifications. Partial qualifications can be related to a full qualification (i.e. the full qualification is composed of partial qualifications) but they can also be independent “additional” qualifications. For full qualifications, sectoral councils define the standards of all vocationally oriented qualifications that are not awarded by higher education institutions (meaning qualifications other than the Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees). In practice this means that they define all standards of full qualifications up to what would correspond to the level five of the EQF (with the exception of general education qualifications). Sectoral councils can also define partial qualifications that are at higher levels (for example levels that would correspond to the level 6 or 7 of the EQF) but these would be partial qualifications – in practice they are specialised additional qualifications.</p> <p>Full qualifications (other than higher education degrees) can be</p>

	<p>achieved following the successful passing of a final examination. The examination is open to people who have either successfully completed the related formal education and training programme or those who have:</p> <p>acquired partial qualifications confirming all professional qualifications laid down in the National Qualification System for Due Performance of all Working Activities Carried Out within a Certain Profession.</p> <p>Consequently the introduction of the qualifications register, which is the basis of the national qualifications framework, articulates the competence requirements to achieve a qualification and this enables a procedure for recognition of non-formal and informal learning. In the past, qualifications were based on education standards (curricula) which were formulated in terms of taught inputs making it impossible to match one's competences achieved outside the formal system with the requirements.</p> <p>When it comes to the issue of standards used, the qualifications in the register are described through two sets of standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Qualifications standard (or certification standard) – which contains the list of professional competences; – Assessment standard which contains, for each professional competence, the assessment criteria and the assessment modes (e.g. oral explanation, practical demonstration, etc.). <p>These standards are used for recognition of non-formal and informal learning as well as for the certification process which follows the formal education and training programme (i.e. final examination).</p>
<p>3. Division of responsibilities (national, regional, local, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation</p>	<p>These aspects are set at national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The overall approach as set in the legislative framework (including division of competences among the different institutions and types of bodies); – For both full and partial qualifications: the qualification and assessment standards including assessment criteria and assessment mode (e.g. oral presentation, practical demonstration, etc.); – For certain full qualifications (qualifications at the level 3 of the NQF) the assessment is fully defined at national level; – The delivery (and removal) of licence to authorised persons/bodies;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public employment service policy including the use of recognition of NFIL for requalification of unemployed. <p>Regional level:</p> <p>Regional authorities do not have a specifically defined responsibility with regard to recognition of NFIL in the legislation, however they have important competences in the related areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regions are in charge of education and training infrastructure (they decide on the number of schools, the qualifications to be offered etc.). As outlined above and discussed in more detail below, schools are expected to be key actors (though not the only one) in the recognition of NFIL. Regions can provide incentives for schools to engage in lifelong learning activities (including recognition). Currently, there is a nation-wide project (UNIV) which develops regional networks of VET schools in view of enhancing their capacity to provide further education, guidance and recognition of NFIL for adults. Among other things, the project provides training to schools staff on how to use the qualifications and assessment standards for recognition of NFIL (as well as for development of adult learning programmes). Regions decide which VET schools participate in the project based on demographic forecasts and skills needs in the area. – Though public employment services (PES) operate at local level (towns) regions have a role in disseminating information among public employment services staff who offer guidance and are expected to orientate people towards recognition of NFIL (mainly when it comes to requalification measures). <p>Institutional level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reception of requests for recognition from the side of learners; – Setting up the assessment procedure and its design and the actual assessment; – Decision on recognition; – Delivery of a certificate. There is for the moment no clearly defined responsibility for orientation and guidance. Promotion and awareness raising about the possibilities of recognition will be made at national level. The information system of the NQF which contains information about qualifications available through this procedure and about the requirements and assessment will be managed at national level (the current system is oriented at an expert audience and will be further developed). PES staff, schools as well as employers and their representatives (e.g. chambers) will
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	<p>have a guidance and orientation role in guiding people towards these possibilities.</p>
<p>4. Target groups and benefits</p> <p>4.1 Provision of guidance and support</p> <p>4.2 Evidence of benefits to individuals</p>	<p>At this stage, no specific support is foreseen at national level to support individuals in preparing for the assessment of NFIL or in completing their application form. However, as part of the project UNIV 2 VET schools are developing their capacity to provide career and education and training guidance to adults – including in order to orientate them towards recognition of NFIL. Furthermore, PES services are also expected to play a role in this process.</p> <p>The implementation of the recognition procedure is still in relatively early stages and no systematic evaluation or monitoring of benefits has been carried out. Some case study evidence is available from the assessments carried out as part of the NUOV project. This rather small scale case study evidence shows benefits such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased confidence; – Enhanced motivation to learn further; – Access to a qualified position in the labour market.
<p>5. Validation practitioners: profile and provision of training and support to them</p>	<p>In most cases practitioners in charge of assessment are teachers and trainers. However, it can be any person who complies with the qualification requirements defined in the assessment standard (see below). If the person does not have the appropriate pedagogical qualifications they have to pass a preparatory course that is specific for the practice of recognition of non-formal and informal learning.</p>
<p>6. Assessment</p> <p>6.1 Methods used</p> <p>6.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the methods used</p>	<p>The assessment always takes the form of a complex examination in front of the authorised person or commission. Portfolia are not used. The person carries out the practical, written and/or oral parts of the assessment in front of the assessors.</p> <p>These three main assessment modes are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Practical demonstration – Oral assessment – Written assessment <p>For each assessment criterion the mode is defined in the assessment standard. However, these modes can cover several methods. Practical demonstrations cover situations where the person directly carries out the tasks or when s/he presents a finalised product. It also covers</p>

	<p>simulations. Practical assessments are the core method to be used as often as possible and suitable. The written assessment covers both complex written assignments as well as tests. However, the use of tests is limited – it cannot be the only assessment method used. Furthermore it is recommended that tests are only used in these cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For partial qualifications which require a very large spectrum of knowledge and where it is unrealistic to expect the assessment of this knowledge through other means; – When this is based on a legal norm; – When tests are an established method in a particular field and have proved effective. <p>When tests are used questions should be generated from a large pool of questions and for each assessment criterion at least one question should occur in the specific test for each individual. The oral assessment is recommended as a complementary method to practical assessment. If practical assessment is not possible or it is not appropriate, written assessment is preferred to oral assessment.</p> <p>Given the fact that so far mainly qualifications at the NQF level 3 (which should correspond to EQF level 3 in the future) are being used as basis of recognition practical demonstrations are the privileged method used. This assessment method is particularly suitable because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it is competence-oriented (it enables candidates to show how they combine knowledge and skills to carry out expected tasks); – it is particularly adapted for people who have acquired the expected knowledge, skills and competence on the workplace. However, it is expected that for qualifications at higher levels a broader range of assessment methods will be used (possibly combining several modes). Their advantages and disadvantages still remain to be demonstrated.
<p>7. Procedures and steps</p>	
<p>8. Costs to organisations and individuals</p>	<p>As noted in the section on funding framework, the costs for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in view of partial qualifications are borne partly by the individual and partly by the organisations – when it comes to equipment. Normally the price of the procedure is set so as to cover the human resources and material</p>

	<p>required.</p> <p>The accreditation fee for an organisation is 1500CKK (approx. EUR 60) for each authorisation¹⁹ with a maximum fee of 10,000CKK (approx EUR 410) when the organisation requests seven or more authorisations. This fee covers the authorisation process.</p> <p>A survey of assessors carried out as part of the UNIV project showed that most assessors considered that the costs for the assessment process were appropriate considering both the costs to the individual (direct and indirect) when compared to the costs of training as well as the costs for the assessment process itself.</p> <p><u>Example: UNIV Projects</u></p> <p>UNIV is a name for a series of projects funded through the ESF Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness 2007-2013 (and the Operational Programme Development of Human Resources 2004-2006). These are capacity building projects that aim at enhancing the capacity of VET schools and providers to deliver lifelong learning including recognition of NFIL.</p> <p>In the first project UNIV 1, the feasibility of the recognition procedure discussed in this national report was tested. Schools were involved in developing modularised VET programmes for adult learning and, in testing the possibilities of using assessment standards defined by sectoral councils for recognition of NFIL.</p> <p>The initial findings of the project UNIV 1 are further developed under the UNIV 2 project which creates regional networks of VET schools and trains teaching staff in order to enable schools to better meet the needs of adult learners. As part of this project pedagogical staff learn how to identify the needs for adult learning provision in their area/region, how to reach adult learners and what information to give them (information – including marketing -and guidance) but they are also trained in using the qualifications register as a basis for both definition of learning programmes as well as assessment and recognition of NFIL.</p> <p>Basic data: 325 VET schools participate in the project (spread across the whole territory of the Czech Republic); in 2010, 61 of these schools were authorised to provide for recognition of NFIL for at least one partial qualification.</p> <p>It is expected that a new project – UNIV 3 – will be launched in 2011 with specific focus on recognition of NFIL.</p>
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9. Quality assurance	
10. National legal framework	<p>The legislative framework for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the Czech Republic is set in the law 179/2006 Coll. on Recognition of Further education results valid as from 1 September 2007. This law defines the conditions and the process for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in view of achieving full and partial qualifications. The law also defines the term qualification (full or partial) as well as the national qualifications register (see also below point 1.2). According to this law any person who is older than 18 and has achieved a minimum basic education can request the assessment of his/her learning outcomes in view of achieving a partial qualification (see also below). In other words there is no minimum requirement in terms of practice in a given professional area or other prior learning. The process is based on an assessment by an authorised person (regulated by the same law) in line with the assessment standard for a given qualification (defined in the national qualifications register). The process will cover all full and partial qualifications in the qualifications register and these can be at all levels of the national qualifications framework except higher education degrees: i.e. Bachelor, Master and PhD. These degrees can currently (in 2010) only be achieved through completion of a regular formal programme of education and training or after a recognition procedure when it comes to qualifications achieved abroad. The formal study programme can be shortened following the recognition of credit from another higher education institution but not following the recognition of non-formal or informal learning. The minimum requirement for access to tertiary education is the upper-secondary leaving certificate (Maturita) and non-formal and informal learning cannot be recognised in order to grant access, if the applicant does not hold the “Maturita” qualification. As will be discussed below, the recognition process is conditioned by the existence of the qualification standard in the national qualifications register. When the legislation entered into force, in 2007, the number of qualifications standards available was limited. The qualifications standards in the qualifications system are being progressively completed and approved thus enhancing the possibilities for recognition of non-formal and informal learning. In May 2010 there were 200 partial qualifications available but it is planned that there would be around 1200-1500 partial qualifications. Most of the full and partial qualifications currently defined in the qualifications register are at the level that will</p>

	correspond to the level 3 of the EQF. Qualifications at higher levels are progressively being developed.
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