

INVENTORY ON THE VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Country factsheet 2023: Morocco

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Context and stage of development

Since 2008, the term used to designate the main VNFIL approach in Morocco is Validation of occupational experiential learning (*Validation des acquis de l'expérience professionnelle*, VAEP). The Framework Law 51-17 of 2019 provides the following definition: 'the validation of occupational and artisanal learning outcomes is a tool for assessing and recognising learning outcomes acquired through occupational experience and the development of personal competences, in order to allow successful applicants to continue their studies'. Therefore, the main VNFIL system is used in the TVET sector; and the Law 60-17 of 2018 provides that only a limited list of occupations will allow VAEP (the regulatory texts are still to come). This main system has been complemented only recently (since 2020) by an approach proposing VNFIL in the tertiary education system. This has been possible as a result of the Erasmus+ project 'AMEL' – from '*amélioration*' (improvement) in French and 'hope' in Arabic – which involves a large consortium of partners and goes beyond higher education institutions (e.g. the quality assurance agency, ANEAQ, and the main employers' organisation, CGEM).

By 2023, several pilots have been carried out. Since the first VAEP pilots in 2008 in the Building Industry, several other industry sectors have organised pilots: Textile and Clothing, Meat Processing, Hospitality and Tourism, and Crafts. About two thousand applicants have been assessed in the VAEP system, five in the context of AMEL in tertiary education.

At the time of drafting, there is no VNFIL system in Morocco but a set of islands of good practice.

Policy and Regulatory Framework

Due to the absence of application decrees and of regulatory texts following the Law 60-17, it is not possible in Morocco to award qualifications registered in the national catalogue/repertory of qualifications associated to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In practice, none of these two instruments are operational. Therefore, the successful applicants received a Certificate of Labour Market Competences (*'attestation'* in French) and not a qualification registered in the National Catalogue (a.k.a. Repertory) of Qualifications attached to the Moroccan NQF.

The same applies to VNFIL in higher education where successful applicants who passed the assessment only received partial validation from the partner, the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts (CNAM, *Conservatoire national des arts et métiers*, the French higher education institution dedicated to lifelong learning).

The setting in motion of VAEP on a large scale is highly demanded by employers and individuals. The absence of an operational legislative framework is the main barrier.

Institutional setup and collaboration

In the current Moroccan approach, the applicants for VAEP must be presented by their company. Employers and employers' organisations are therefore key stakeholders in the VAEP pilots. The successful applicants receive a Certificate of Labour Market Competences awarded as part of the agreement ('*convention*' in French) signed between the partners of each pilot. In the early days of VAEP (2008-2010), the French National Agency for Adult Vocational Training (*Agence nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes*, AFPA) was involved as a technical and financial partner, and therefore is also a signatory of the Certificate. The third and last signatory was the Department of Vocational Education and Training (*Département de la formation professionnelle*, DFP) that is the public body overseeing VAEP since 2008. The AFPA withdrew from the work in 2010 and all subsequent agreements have been signed by the DFP and the relevant partner, e.g. the Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport and the Social and Solidarity Economy (*Ministère du Tourisme, de l'Artisanat, du Transport aérien, et de l'Économie sociale*) for the current pilots.

The AMEL Project is very recent and only a micro-pilot has started so far. One of the partners of the Erasmus+ Consortium was the CNAM (*Conservatoire national des arts et métiers*, a French higher education institution dedicated to lifelong learning) that provided technical assistance. It has led partial validation by the CNAM.

There is no VNFIL system in Morocco at the moment, also because the VAEP and AMEL approaches are not coordinated.

The presence of highly experienced institutions in both approaches – the AFPA for the VAEP and the CNAM for AMEL – also partly explains the similarity between the Moroccan and French approaches, and between the Moroccan VAEP and the French VAE, which is the name also retained by AMEL.

Beneficiaries and impact

By definition, the main and only target groups of the VAEP approach are employees – in the technical sense, i.e. wage-earners having contracts with a company; even if the Law 60-17 provides for other groups, unemployed people and those outside the labour force are excluded from the pilot phase. In the case of AMEL, the typical target group is composed of high-level autodidacts possessing knowledge that is consistent with a tertiary education qualification (e.g. a Master's degree in the pilot).

Dealing respectively with employees and individuals aiming for a tertiary education qualification, the VAEP and AMEL approaches do not explicitly target disadvantaged groups. Nevertheless, in some sectors, the VAEP approach may deal with individuals with a low level of literacy and therefore address issues (e.g. low wages) relevant to disadvantaged groups. This was the case in particular in the Building Industry where the VAEP approach is useful for the successful applicant to aim for a decent job. The pilots showed that this was less of an issue in the Tourism Industry for example. AMEL did not come across such issues.

Statistics were collected for the pilots, and are shown in Tables 1-3.

Table 1. VAEP in Morocco. Number of participants in the pilots from 2008 to 2022

Economic sector	Number of applicants	Number of applicants awarded with a certificate
Building and public works	445	222
Textiles and clothing	60	19
Meat processing industry	343	226
Hospitality and Tourism		200
Crafts (1 st pilot)	984	711
Total	1 842	1 378
Crafts (2 nd pilot, still ongoing)	657	Not available yet

Source: DFP of Morocco (amended from <https://www.dfp.gov.ma/vaep.html>)

Table 2. Number of successful VAEP applicants between 2019 and 2022 per year and by occupation/trade, in the crafts sector

Year	2019	2020	2022	Total
Trades				
Traditional sewing		98	262	360
Ironwork			56	56
Tapestry				0
Auto electricity				0
Carpet weaving			26	26
Aluminium joinery	34			34
Art carpentry		87		87
Embroidery	26			26
Installation of gas water heaters		22	50	72
Tannery	50			50
TOTAL	110	207	394	711

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport and the Social and Solidarity Economy

Table 3. Number of successful VAEP applicants in 2023 by occupation and by Consular Chamber, in the crafts sector

Trades	Chamber Rabat, Salé and Kenitra	Chamber Draa Tfilalet	Total
Traditional sewing	156		156
Ironwork		95	95
Tapestry	98		98
Auto electricity	46		46
Carpet weaving	6	56	62
Art carpentry	121		121
Embroidery	34		34
Total	461	151	612

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport and the Social and Solidarity Economy

Challenges and opportunities

In 2023, five years after the adoption of the Law 60-17, and fifteen years after the first VAEP pilot, the lack of a fully-fledged legislative framework is the main hindrance for those who wish to have the opportunity to have their non-formal and informal learning outcomes assessed, validated, and recognised in Morocco. Put simply, it is not yet possible for Moroccan citizens to be awarded qualifications registered in the National Catalogue / repertory of Qualifications attached to the NQF that still has to become operational.

Nevertheless, it is clear that VNFIL is made for Morocco and Morocco is made for VNFIL because there are many competences that are not recognised, and therefore are not visible; and because the demand by employers for an operational VNFIL system is high, and constantly repeated. The VAEP large scale multisectoral pilot and the AMEL micro-pilot have shown the relevance of VNFIL for Morocco.

Despite the relative success of the pilots and the convincing approaches that have been used in both VAEP and AMEL, there is room for improvement:

- Morocco would benefit from a collective discussion about the role and shape that it would want to give to its VNFIL system when VAEP and AMEL are scaled up.
- This national debate could provide also an opportunity to address some inconsistencies of the terms used in French, and to decide on standard definitions.
- The national debate would also provide an opportunity to discuss what adaptations are necessary to make a system being largely imported from another country suitable to the local context.
- Several technical issues would need to be reviewed.

As in many other countries, the pilots have relied heavily on the willingness of the VNFIL champions to promote the system and give some of their time, oftentimes for free. This is not sustainable by definition. Beyond the issues of costs and financing that will necessarily arise when / if the VNFIL is scaled up in Morocco, there is the issue of available human resources – typically of administrators, guidance officers, and assessors – and the size of the potentially interested group of the population is huge in Morocco, where the competences are many and the documents to validate them are very scarce.

The question of involving the private sector to inform, guide and also probably assess, and award qualifications on behalf of the ministries will necessarily arise. It is relatively easy to make a business case for VNFIL service providers, but the country is not ready as quality assurance guidelines have not been drawn up and therefore cannot be enforced.