

Handbook for assessment in the context of validation of non-formal and informal learning

Training of assessors

in the former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia

November 2017

FINAL VERSION FOR TRANSLATION 22/Nov/2017



CONTENT

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	VNFIL PROCESS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	5
2.1	Preconditions	7
2.2	Co-ordination	9
2.3	Information and guidance	10
2.4	Identification and documentation of competences.....	12
2.5	Assessment and certification	13
2.6	Follow-up	15
2.7	Remarks	15
3	INDIVIDUAL IN THE CENTRE OF THE PROCESS	17
4	COMPETENCE PROFILE AND ROLE OF THE COUNSELLOR	18
4.1	The counsellor in the framework of VNFIL	21
4.2	Competence profile of the counsellor	23
4.3	Personal attributes.....	28
5	COMPETENCE PROFILE AND ROLE OF THE ASSESSOR	29
5.1	Generic competencies	29
5.2	Assessor's competences in portfolio assessment	30
5.2.1	<u>Underpinning knowledge or expertise</u>	31
5.3	Assessor's competences in a practical test situation	32
5.3.1	<u>Underpinning knowledge</u>	33
5.4	Assessors' Competences in the Development of Assessment tools	33
5.5	Remarks on the VNFIL process.....	34
6	ASSESSMENT PROCESS	35
7	LIST OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS.....	40
8	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VNFIL PROCESS.....	43
9	APPENDICES	44
9.1	Case of an Institutional Cleaner	45
9.2	Roadmap for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – <u>tool for benchmarking</u>	51
9.2.1	Quality assurance tool for VNFIL practice – a follow up tool	55
9.3	Literature on VNFIL and related themes	60

1 INTRODUCTION

Experience is a major source of learning. We all build knowledge, skills and attitudes lifelong, at work, in social activities, in varied learning contexts. However most societies have only limited capacities or drive to help citizens make visible their outcomes of learning in non-formal and informal situations. But this can and needs to be changed.

Identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying knowledge, skills and competencies that individuals develop and accumulate throughout life is now a recognized policy area for all EU Member States and for many other countries and regions. Some speak of recognition of prior learning; in the EU we call it “Validation of non-formal and informal learning” (VNFIL).

With help of the European Inventory of VNFIL¹, progress in implementing arrangements for VNFIL has been regularly monitored since the adoption of the new VNFIL Council Recommendation of 2012. And a large body of knowledge has been growing, highlighting achievements, gaps and outstanding issues as regards coherence with national qualifications frameworks, accessibility for vulnerable groups of the population, credibility based on robust quality assurance, and responsiveness to different individual needs.

Countries are not alone in establishing their VNFIL arrangements. Peer learning activities, the European database on VNFIL, thematic and country reports based on the evidence collected by the Inventory, the new Guidelines for VNFIL and a range of new sources and methodology supports are valuable sources of information and inspiration for those institutions that coordinate and lead such developments at national level.

The Centre for Adult Education of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has committed to strengthen the coherence and impact of adult learning policy, and since 2014 has successfully cooperated with ETF in developing a number of key policy papers setting the priorities, concepts and roadmaps for non-formal adult education, and for VNFIL alike. This cooperation has been articulated with the development of the NQF, and coordinated with other relevant projects supported by donors and national partners.

Beyond the outputs of this fruitful cooperation with CAE, ETF has discovered in the relative small team of young professional of CAE an agreeable atmosphere of mutual trust and commitment to objectives, which has positively impacted our joint efforts.

This Handbook to support training of assessors is the final ETF contribution to VNFIL arrangements in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in the work cycle 2014-2017. A small pool of trained assessors will be formed as outcome of the first training programme of the kind, organized in December 2017 in Skopje. Each trained assessor will have an individual development plan and we hope that CAE and its partners will continue supporting these first assessors via other learning opportunities and practical VNFIL processes.

VNFIL is not only assessment. But without quality-assured assessment VNFIL arrangements do not deliver their promise. Citizens, education practitioners, employers, employment

¹ Dedicated Webportal available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>

service and the government expect the best from VNFIL. We hope this Handbook is a helpful and relevant contribution to this ambition.

Anni Karttunen is the main author of this Handbook. The other contributing team members are: Maja Korubin (CAE), Konstantin Hristovski (CAE), Ognen Spasovski (national expert), and Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF).

This Handbook to support training of assessors is structured in eight main chapters, as listed below:

- VNFIL process and quality assurance
- Individual in the centre of the process
- Competence profile and role of the counselor
- Competence profile and role of the assessor
- Assessment process
- List of assessment tools
- Implementation of VNFIL process
- Appendices

The Appendices include practical tools and a rich list of sources and literature. Other separated training support materials complement the Handbook.

This training of assessors is a first step towards action and responds to the vision formulated by the team of CAE: to move from concepts to implementation.

22nd November 2017

2 VNFIL PROCESS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Council Recommendation on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) from 2012² sets the scene for the VNFIL process. The Recommendation defines four different stages that any VNFIL system should include. The stages are as follows:

- "(a) IDENTIFICATION of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;*
- (b) DOCUMENTATION of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;*
- (c) ASSESSMENT of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;*
- (d) CERTIFICATION of the results of the assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the form of a qualification, or credits leading to a qualification, or in another form, as appropriate"*

Furthermore, the Recommendation states that the Member States should:

- "apply, as appropriate, the following principles in arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, whilst taking into consideration national, regional and/or local, as well as sectoral needs and characteristics:*
- (a) the validation arrangements are linked to national qualifications frameworks and are in line with the European Qualifications Framework;*
- (b) information and guidance on the benefits of, and opportunities for validation, as well as on the relevant procedures, are available to individuals and organisations;*
- (c) disadvantaged groups, including individuals who are unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, are particularly likely to benefit from the*

² COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01)

validation arrangements, since validation can increase their participation in lifelong learning and their access to the labour market;

(d) individuals who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment have the opportunity, in accordance with national legislation and specificities, to undergo a 'skills audit' aimed at identifying their knowledge, skills and competences within a reasonable period of time, ideally within six months of an identified need;

(e) the validation of non-formal and informal learning is supported by appropriate guidance and counselling and is readily accessible;

(f) transparent quality assurance measures in line with existing quality assurance frameworks are in place that support reliable, valid and credible assessment methodologies and tools;

(g) provision is made for the development of the professional competences of staff involved in the validation process across all relevant sectors;

(h) qualifications or, where applicable, parts of qualifications obtained by means of the validation of non- formal and informal learning experiences comply with agreed standards that are either the same as, or equivalent to, the standards for qualifications obtained through formal education programmes;

(i) the use of Union transparency tools, such as the Europass framework and Youthpass, is promoted in order to facilitate the documentation of learning outcomes;

(j) synergies exist between validation arrangements and credit systems applicable in the formal education and training system, such as ECTS and ECVET"

The Council Recommendation serves as a basis for the proposed methodology in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the following, more detailed steps of the VNFIL process are described both on meso- and macro-levels.

2.1 Preconditions

Preconditions refer to the **policy and regulatory framework** for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) in each system.

This paradigm is twofold:

- Firstly, there is the question whether the policy and regulatory framework recognizes and supports validation of non-formal and informal learning, which can be seen as the basis to the development and sustainability of a validation system.
- Secondly, there remains the question of interpretation and application of the principles, policies and regulations by the practitioners. This question is also linked to the importance of information: regulations should be complete, clear, unambiguous, presented in user-friendly manner, so that can be effectively disseminated and used by all relevant stakeholders and by the final users as appropriate.

Preconditions not only refer to laws and regulations, but also to **funding mechanisms, co-operation structures between stakeholders as well as descriptions of qualification requirements, assessment criteria and standards (learning outcomes), guidelines (such as handbooks, for the practitioners) as well as attitudes** and the general outlook on VNFIL among the practitioners.

Funding mechanisms promote sustainability of the system and the funding mechanisms of VNFIL procedures should correlate to the existing funding mechanisms for education, i.e. VNFIL should be available for individuals as any form of education (if VNFIL is embedded in the education system).

Tight and open co-operation between stakeholders promotes trust and market value of VNFIL. In systems where the stakeholders, like working life, are involved in the VNFIL development and procedures, the results of VNFIL are more readily accepted and equal the status of the learning outcomes gained in education.

Many education systems where VNFIL has been in place for a longer time, stress the importance of describing the qualification requirements, the standards / assessment criteria in terms of learning outcomes. In case the qualification requirements are only described in terms of time (credits) and subject titles, the interpretation of the level of learning is near impossible and the result of the assessment is hardly valid.

One important, yet slightly neglected prerequisite is the attitude towards VNFIL. In case the attitudes of the practitioners and/or stakeholders are negative, then VNFIL policies and measures are not likely to yield the expected / possible results. This precondition is also linked with information. Laws and regulations alone cannot change the attitudes; instead it is essential to make available relevant and high-quality structured information, as support dialogue between stakeholders, peer learning among practitioners and well-targeted benchmarking activities.

Check box:

- Is the legal framework up-to-date? Is there any need for amendments?
- Are there detailed enough policies and guidelines, that are transparent and provide enough guidance for the VNFIL practitioners and steer the procedures?
- Are all the relevant stakeholders participating the policy-making process?
- Is working life actively involved in the VNFIL procedures and/or policymaking/shaping?
- Do all the stakeholders involved in the VNFIL process understand the VNFIL in a similar manner? Do the stakeholders have a positive attitude towards VNFIL?
- Are the standards and assessment criteria described in terms of learning outcomes?
- Are the standards and assessment criteria formally recognized and widely accepted?
- Does a qualification or a part-qualification gained through VNFIL have a similar status than through a traditional educational route?
- Is an appeals procedure foreseen in the VNFIL process?

The questions proposed in the Checkbox are indicative and need to be adjusted for the country context, notably: the existing policy and legal framework, the landscape

of institutions and organisations likely to be interested / involved in VNFIL and to the stage of development of VNFIL arrangements.

2.2 Co-ordination

Co-ordination is a key element when establishing and developing a VNFIL system. Proper co-ordination is backed up by management and the definition of roles within the VNFIL procedure should be clear. It would be useful to have an VNFIL coordinator in the organizations involved in delivering VNFIL services, whose role is to monitor the procedures, train/help practitioners, guide professionals, co-ordinate the development of procedures, help in forming communities of practice and networks of VNFIL professionals. The coordinator should also assist in developing learning outcome based pedagogical approaches that support the individuals to achieve the learning outcomes.

From the viewpoint of the individual, there should be one entry point for validation processes. Smooth co-ordination makes the VNFIL procedure transparent and customer friendly. Co-ordination ensures that the rights of the individual are respected and that the individuals benefit of equal treatment and gain equal access to reliable information and to all relevant VNFIL services, independently of the diversity of organisations involved in providing them along the four phases of VNFIL.

Check box:

- Are the roles and responsibilities of different VNFIL practitioners clear?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of different VNFIL stakeholders clear?
- Is co-ordination organized on a national level?
- Is co-ordination organized on organizational level?
- Are there Communities of Practice (or other peer learning networks) for VNFIL practitioners (for support and further development)?
- Is continuous training available for the VNFIL practitioners?

2.3 Information and guidance

Information is a key to the development of a validation system or a procedure. The information flow should have many directions and the forms of information should be modified according to the target group. Main target groups are the individuals (i.e. the candidates for validation), the training staff and the stakeholders.

Information should be clear and unambiguous. Information phase should address questions such as why, how, for whom and where and when. All target groups should have equal understanding of the procedure and the standards against which the competences are reflected. Information should also be accessible through various media, like the internet, intranet and brochures. Provision of information should be active and structured. It has become evident that in many organizations lack of information is a major reason for not taking up validation. If the teaching and training professionals do not know, the prospective candidates do not know. If the prospective candidates do not know, they will not seek to get their competences validated. If the stakeholders do not know, there will be lack of co-operation and lack of confidence in the system, which will lead to a lesser market value of the validation system.

The purpose of guidance is to make sure that the glass is always half-full and not half-empty. The role of guidance in VNFIL procedures is paramount for the benefit of the individual. Guidance should be an ongoing process throughout the VNFIL process from the beginning to the end. Guidance should be actively offered to the candidates (yet it is of voluntary nature). There should be a possibility to receive guidance even after the assessment procedures are finalized.

The key task of the guidance procedure is to make the individual's competences visible, so that they can be assessed. Often individuals have a myriad of competences that they do not realize that they possess. It is the job of the guidance counselor to provide the individual with tools to "dig out" their competences and make them visible.

Guidance provides the VNFIL scene for the individual: What are the benefits of VNFIL for the individual? How does the VNFIL work? What are the rights and responsibilities of the individual? What are the assessment criteria like? How does the administrative documentation work? What kind of certification is available? What other possible outcomes there are for the individual? How to use the validation results? What type of further learning paths are available?

The guidance counselors should be trained in VNFIL procedures. They should have a positive attitude towards VNFIL and they should be impartial, good listeners, yet realistic. They should have excellent communication skills and they should have a relatively wide understanding of the existing qualifications and the qualification requirements. In many existing validation systems, the counselor is considered the lifeline of the individual.

Check box:

- What is the main target group or target groups for VNFIL in the country? - Unemployed, people with low or no qualifications, migrants, individuals returning back to Macedonia from abroad...?
- How do we reach the target group? -Public employment services, local newspaper ads, VET colleges' own networks...?
- Is information provided on possible VNFIL fees and other costs?
- Is there information on the benefits of VNFIL?
- Is the VNFIL system transparent?
- Is the goal of the VNFIL process clear?
- Are the VNFIL standards, definitions, concepts and criteria known and legitimate?
- Are the results of VNFIL linked to the Macedonian Qualifications Framework (MQF)?

2.4 Identification and documentation of competences

Proper documentation system of the VNFIL procedures with each individual promotes transparency, supports the individual rights and enhances a systemic approach to VNFIL procedures. The VNFIL provider should see that there is a proper documentation system and procedure in place and that each step of the validation process is duly documented (including guidance discussions, agreements, progress plans and timeframes, not to mention the assessment results and certification). Documentation should be clear and unambiguous and the administrative procedures should be evaluated regularly.

Establishing a systematic compilation of statistics is very useful in terms of following the progress of VNFIL. The number of people going through VNFIL and the number of validated credits are a clear indicator whether the system is working or not.

Identification refers to the process of making the individual's competences visible in a reliable way. At the end, the individual is responsible for the identification process. Only the individual him/herself can be aware of the competence s/he possesses. However, the procedure must be clear as to e.g. what is considered valid evidence and what counts as valid documentation.

A successful and thorough identification and documentation of competences makes it easier to determine what is the most suitable qualification for the candidate, what level and width of competences does the individual have, to plan a development path. In some cases, the individual may have enough competences to cover only a part qualification or some modules, in some cases, the level of competences is not high enough for a certain qualification, but further practice is needed to some extent. In other cases, the individual can take the whole qualification via VNFIL.

There should be different kinds of methods for identifying and documenting the individual's competences. Here it is **not** only referred to formal documentation such as prior certificates or employment references, but also pictures, portfolios or in

some cases even oral descriptions of competences. Furthermore, the identification phase usually requires rigorous guidance and these two steps are tightly interlinked.

Check box:

- Are the administrative procedures transparent?
- Are the administrative procedures monitored and evaluated regularly?
- Is the documentation unambiguous and clear?
- Is the individual responsible for the process of identification?
- Is there full clarity as to what counts as valid evidence?
- Does the provided evidence correspond with the qualification standards?
- Is the documentation and identification phase dialogical?
- Is guidance and support provided to the candidate during the identification and documentation process?

2.5 Assessment and certification

The assessment results in VNFIL should have a legal status (formal certification). Certification should carry the same status as certification gained in school based education in terms of employment or further education and be linked to Macedonian NQF.

The assessment procedure should be reliable, of high-quality and the assessors should be competent in both VNFIL procedures and assessment methodology as well as the field that they are assessing.

To ensure a high-quality assessment procedure, there should be a number of assessment methods available and a combination of methods should be used depending on the needs of the individual and the qualification in question. The assessment criteria should be unambiguous and clear so that the individual can make a connection between real life experience and the assessment criteria. On the other hand, the assessors need to have clear understanding of the interpretation of the assessment criteria.

To guarantee the rights of the individual, it would be beneficial to have more than one assessor and for best result, there should be external assessors, who are independent of the organization or the individual. The assessment criteria and the procedure have to be transparent for all parties involved and the individual has the right for further advice in case there is any confusion. The purpose of the assessment is to measure the individual's existing competences and not if the individual understands obscure and ambiguous language.

In order to maintain a high-quality assessment procedure, the assessors need to have continuous training and the assessment methods and procedures must be evaluated regularly. In addition, the assessors must have a positive attitude towards validation and they should remember that the assessment procedure is also an important learning experience in the spirit of Life Long Learning.

Check box:

- Are multiple assessment methods used to best fit the assessment situation?
- Are the assessment criteria clear and understandable and unambiguous?
- Is the assessment procedure fair and valid in terms of methods and outcomes?
- Is there more than one assessor involved in the process to maintain objectivity and impartiality?
- Are the assessors' competence requirements defined?
- Are the assessors professionals of the occupational field they are assessing?
- Is continuous training available for assessors?
- Is the assessment transparent from the viewpoint of the candidate as well as the assessors?
- Is the assessment fair?
- Are the physical and mental conditions for assessment verified?
- Is the certification process standardized?
- Does the certification gained via VNFIL carry the same status as a certificate gained via school-based or teacher-led learning?

2.6 Follow-up

After the assessment procedure, the individual has a right to have feedback of the assessment results and the possible consequences: Does the result of the assessment possibly shorten the study time? What are the future options in terms of education and work? What if the result of the assessment was negative and the individual does not agree with the result? Is there an appeals procedure in place? Is there guidance available also after the assessment procedure?

Follow-up, from the viewpoint of the validation provider, is crucially important: what are the effects of validation in terms of employment, salary development, possible promotions, horizontal or vertical mobility in the job-market? If there are positive developments, these are the factors that promote the high market value of validation of non-formal and informal learning among all stakeholders and the society as a whole.

Check box:

- Is there an appeals procedure available in the VNFIL procedure?
- Is the appeals procedure known (candidate, assessors, counsellors)?
- Are the candidates provided with career guidance services after validation?
- Is there a follow-up plan? (Are the candidates employed after validation or have they continued their studies etc.)
- Are statistics on VNFIL procedures maintained?

2.7 Remarks

These factors do not aim to be exhaustive and they should not be used as a check list only. Developing high-quality in VNFIL procedures is always related to the national system, to the regional needs and ways of co-operating as well as the education system.

Quality and high market value are a result of networking, dialogue and teamwork.
Trust is the key word. If there is no trust, there is no market value.

3 INDIVIDUAL IN THE CENTRE OF THE PROCESS

In the VNFIL process, the following aspects need to be taken into consideration:

- The VNFIL process should be reliable, i.e. the outcome of the VNFIL process should be the same if repeated with other persons and by other organisations
- The candidate's interest in terms of safety, security and confidentiality should be protected throughout the process and an appeals procedure should be in place
- The standards and assessment criteria should be unambiguous and clear in terms of content and level of learning
- The VNFIL process should be sustainable, yet under constant scrutiny and flexible according to the working life needs
- The VNFIL process should be transparent and well understood by all parties involved
- The VNFIL process should be tailored to fit the purpose, i.e. the VNFIL process should reflect the candidate's circumstances and intentions
- The VNFIL process should be cost-effective in terms of personal and financial benefits.

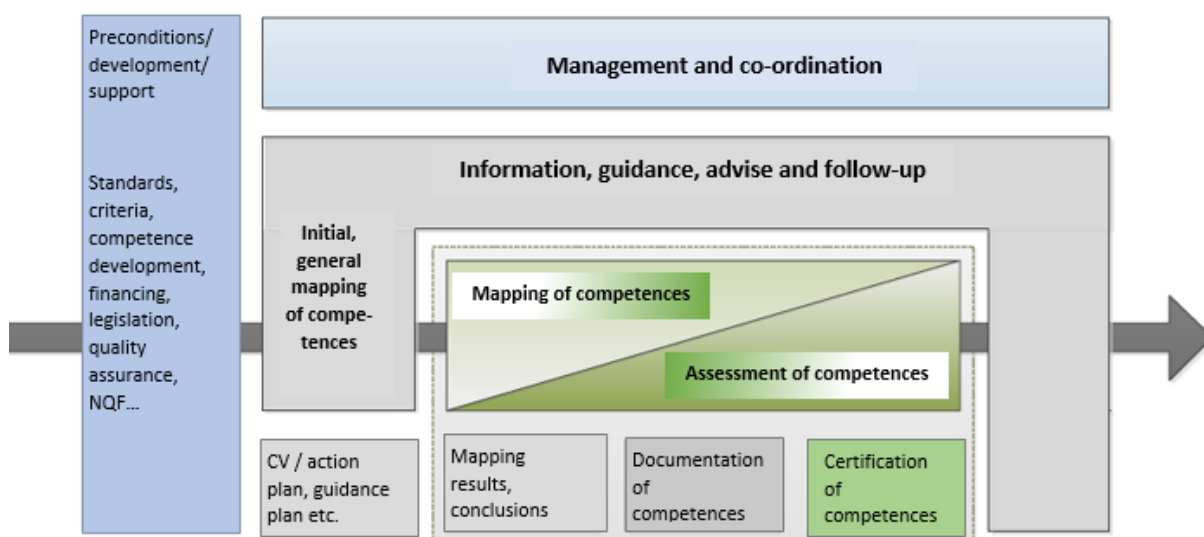


Figure 1. VNFIL as a process within a system³

³Adopted from a Swedish model developed by the Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan www.myh.se

4 COMPETENCE PROFILE AND ROLE OF THE COUNSELLOR

The recent developments in the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning show a wide variety of regulations and practices.

New developments in the use of tools have emerged. For example, "quick scan", computer- based programs help the candidate in the process of decision making whether it is worthwhile to participate in the VNFIL process or not, and they give the candidate an opportunity to make use of self-assessment.

Existing paper-based portfolios will be more likely to replace e-portfolios in the future altogether. However, sometimes a practical test is preferred to a portfolio, depending on the target groups or the procedures of the specific organisation.

The roles of the counsellor and assessor are in general clearly divided; the work of the counsellor stops when the portfolio is finalised and submitted for assessment.

In the early stages of guidance and advice, the counsellor may propose alternatives to the VNFIL process, if it becomes obvious that the candidate's dossier is weak. In some instances, the counsellor will propose a more comprehensive career guidance path or a specific training plan.

It is clear, that the candidate participates actively in the validation process: s/he reflects upon the work and learning experiences, gathers evidence for the portfolio, takes a decision to enter the validation procedure...

The table below outlines the entire VNFIL- process. The roles of the counsellor are shown in phases 1, 2 and 5.

Standard process flow VNFIL	Activities	Actors
--------------------------------	------------	--------

Phase 1 Identification

1.1.	Information - Briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise individual or group briefing sessions on VNFIL-procedure 	Counsellor
1.2.	Quick scan Self-assessment tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply tools that reflect the evidence to the occupational standard to decide which processes to enter (VNFIL, career guidance) 	Counsellor
1.3.	Intake/orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct individual interview: give support, identify objectives, planning 	Counsellor

Phase 2 Documentation

2.1	Composition of portfolio /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach candidate to complete an inventory of his/her learning and other experiences and translate this into competencies Coach candidate to gather evidence 	Counsellor
2.2	Drafting of portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the portfolio to form a first impression: complete benchmarking with competency (job) profile⁴ 	

Phase 3 Assessment

3.1.	Portfolio assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appraise the portfolio and accompanying evidence Draw up a preliminary report (exemption for training, demand for 	Assessor
------	----------------------	--	----------

⁴ Self-appraisal of portfolio by candidate is sometimes used at the end of phase 2.

		extra proof of practical test, recommendations) • Interview the candidate	
3.2.	Assessment through practical/knowledge test	Assess the skills and knowledge by organising a practical test and interview	Assessor
3.3.	Final report	Draw up a summative report of the assessment	Assessor

Phase 4 Certification			
		Formal validation or certification	Accreditation body/authority

Follow-up			
		Appeals procedure ⁵	Commission of appeal
		Support candidate to draw up personal development plan	Counsellor

⁵ The role of the counsellor in phase 5 may be subject to the national context or legal framework.

4.1 The counsellor in the framework of VNFIL

Presently, we live in a society, where the need for counselling becomes more and more important in the course of one's professional career. Consequently, the profile of mentor/counsellors must diversify and new spheres of activities must be considered.

This appears in the framework of VNFIL. The various intervention levels, as shown in the chart about the role of all contributors in the validation procedure, raise the question of the profile and training of mentor/counsellors.

Does the basic profile of a VNFIL mentor/counsellor differ fundamentally from the profile of a career mentor/counsellor? Is a specific training needed?

Considering that the validation process aims at supporting the individual from the very first phase of informing until the follow up phase, it is obvious that this person must meet multiple and various requirements.

This underlies the following questions:

1. What initial training should a counselor have and what specific training does s/he need?
2. What should his attitude be in order to support people in the framework of VNFIL?

In order to answer these questions, we must consider the tasks of the counsellor. The basic profile and the necessary additional training will be defined through the role that the counsellor has to fulfil. This will be explained in detail further on in the document.

The task of the counsellor consists of three main stages: *information, advising and documentation*.

STAGES:

Information

During the first phase of information, the intervention is of a very general nature. The candidate(s) must be informed about the aim and the procedure of the validation. The counsellor must be aware of the existing procedures and should have a positive attitude towards the principles of VNFIL. Any counseling, guidance or information organization could undertake this phase, individually or with groups, under the condition that they specialize in the field of VNFIL procedures.

Advising /counselling

During this phase, the counsellor must be able to evaluate the experience together with the candidate under the point of view of launching the procedure. S/he must be able to encourage the candidate to describe his experience.

This approach is aiming at giving advice to the candidate in connection with a specific reference (standard), i.e. qualification requirements. This task requires good command of the references (standards) as well as the competences to identify and to combine the elements emerging from the experience of the candidate with the reference (standards) elements. To do so the counsellor must be specialized in the qualifications and the sectorial occupational requirements.

Parallel to an open-minded attitude and to the knowledge of the qualifications, the counsellor should have the same competences as a career counsellor.

On the other hand, it is not necessary to be a specialist in one or another occupation. The risk of partiality would be too great. A professional, whether or not deliberately, is inclined to have unilateral points of view. This could influence his/her interpretation of the experience through his own specialization, even if other opportunities could be considered, or slow down the candidate when the experiences do not fit with his/her idea.

Documentation

After the references (standards) have been defined, the candidate is entering the realization phase of the procedure (*documentation phase*). This could consist of a dossier explaining and describing his/her experiences, or a portfolio only listing all his/her experiences.

No matter what the final purpose is like, the counsellor must have a double competence. On one side s/he must have enough knowledge of the said occupation, while having enough distance to avoid the problems described above. On the other hand, the counsellor must be competent enough to support the candidate during this preparation. This support is aiming at raising the awareness of the candidate.

It is essential to make the candidate conscious of his/her experiences and competences and to enable him/her to make them visible. In this situation, the role of the counsellor is to guide the candidate. The counsellor shall not take the role of the candidate but shall be something like an "interactive mirror".

The assessment phase can only be conclusive when this clarifying process has been convincing. The better the candidate will explain and back up his experiences, the more the assessors will be able to fit them with the references (standards).

In conclusion one can say that the approach is a continuous interaction between the counsellor and the candidate. The interaction is a to and fro between the past and the future, the experiences and their wording. The counsellor facilitates the approach of the candidate, while remaining impartial, but having the necessary competences

to help the candidate to realize his project through the various phases of the validation procedure.

4.2 Competence profile of the counsellor

Preliminary statements

Advising and counselling in VNFIL is seen as part of an existing job; in some cases, employment officers, career counsellors, or experts from sectoral or branch organisations may be "appointed" as counsellor in the same way as members of assessment bodies are appointed on the basis of their merit or expertise. In practice, the entry requirements to become a counsellor vary from country or organisation.

To assure a high level of credibility and impartiality of the recognition and validation procedures, governments or public bodies and the validation providers themselves will no doubt raise the standards and entry requirements.

I. Generic competencies

As mentioned in the previous chapter the counsellor performs different roles at different stages in the VNFIL- process, such as:

- Inform the candidates,
- Assist them to use self- assessment tools,
- Support candidates in their process of gathering evidence,
- Link evidence to occupational standards,
- Draw up a portfolio,
- Assist candidates in the composition of their personal development plan.

II. Communication competencies

The counsellor needs to have:

- Presentation skills: the counsellor is able to present information on the VNFIL- procedure in a systematic and clear way.
- Facilitation skills: the counsellor is able to engage effectively with individuals and groups
- Interviewing skills: the counsellor is able to use adequate interviewing techniques to bring out the formal and informal competencies.

III. Technical competencies

The counsellor is familiar with:

- The standards, job requirements, in the given occupation or sector.
- The developments in the labour market and the changes in the expected qualifications
- The VNFIL aims, procedures and processes
- Training offer or possibilities
- The specificity of adult guidance

IV. Attitudes

- The counsellor has the necessary diversity awareness to establish a positive work climate with the candidate.
- The counsellor is able to maintain an unbiased and neutral⁶ position in the guidance process
- The counsellor is able to stimulate the motivation and the self- confidence of the candidates
- The counsellor is able to empower the candidate and ensures that s/he takes responsibility in his validation process
- The counsellor adheres to his professional ethics as outlined in the code of conduct.

Mentor/counsellor's competencies in brief

The counsellor is able to:

- clarify the boundaries of the VNFIL service

⁶ Neutral position: the counsellor is able to minimise the influence of his own beliefs, professional background or organisation for which (s)he works.

- draw the line between reasonable and unjustified expectations of the candidate,

Underpinning knowledge of:

- VNFIL- framework:
- Concept of VNFIL
- Aims of VNFIL
- Existing occupational standards and instruments
- Awarding bodies
- Procedures, duration and cost of process
- Portfolio tools and methodology
- Legal framework
- Rights and duties of the candidate
- Code of conduct

Counsellor's competencies in the use of quick scan and self-assessment tools:
--

The counsellor is able to:

- Determine whether the demand of the candidate fits into the VNFIL procedure, using the agreed procedures and processes in transparent manner
- Give adequate support to each candidate
- Determine whether the candidate can show enough evidence to go through the VNFIL- process
- Make an overall estimation of the experience of the candidate in relation to the formal qualifications (occupational standards)
- Assist the candidate in preparing relevant aspects of her /his self-assessment, as adequate
- Explore with the candidate his objectives and s/he can evaluate the feasibility in the VNFIL- process
- Assist the candidate to decide whether s/he commences the validation process

Underpinning knowledge of:

- Formal qualifications and occupational standards
- Specific certificates which can be obtained
- The (computer aided) tools which are used for self-assessment and their scope and validity
- Sector-specific labour market information

Counsellor's competencies in orientation and intake

The counsellor is able to:

- Structure the guidance process
- Clarify the experience of the candidate and relate it to learning and working
- Evaluate the experience of the candidate in relation to the relevant formal qualification and/or occupational standards
- Coach the candidate in translating the outcomes of the discussion into a Personal Development Plan

The mentor/counsellor has an underpinning knowledge of:

- The roles of adults in their familial and professional context
- Theories about career planning and decision making in this matter

Counsellor's competencies in the portfolio development

The counsellor is able to:

- Conduct workshops or individual discussions about portfolio development with groups and individuals
- Assist the candidate in formulating and presenting his experiences
- Assist the candidate in identifying suitable evidence
- Make a comparison of the shown evidence to the occupational standards or specific qualifications
- Evaluate if the evidence is sufficient regarding topicality, authenticity, relevance, variation and quality
- Give advice if the evidence is sufficient to pass through the VNFIL- process

The counsellor has an underpinning knowledge of:

- The method used in portfolio composition
- The tools used for portfolio composition
- Occupational standards or specific certificates, which can be obtained.
- Interviewing techniques

Counsellor's competences in the development of the candidate's personal development plan⁷

The counsellor is able to:

- Explain next possible steps to the candidate in relation to the positive or negative results of the assessment
- Support the candidate to draw up a personal development plan

The mentor/counsellor has an underpinning knowledge of:

- Theories about career development
- Training options and access to them
- Services for career guidance and access to them

⁷Different persons can take up this role: in case of employees it can be performed by the hr-services, in case of unemployed by the counsellor or the employment officer.

4.3 Personal attributes

The following attributes are common to all counsellors in the fulfilment of their different roles.

Appreciation of whole	A holistic appreciation of the VNFIL process and the placement of the candidate at the centre.
Attention to detail	Highly observing; ability to handle detail
Cultural and linguistic sensitivity	The counsellor shows empathy, and develops a multicultural attitude towards people with a different cultural or linguistic background.
Integrity	High level of honesty and truthfulness Ability to maintain ethical norms in job related activities Respect for the privacy of the candidate
Interpersonal sensitivity	The counsellor is attuned to interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication and is able to put himself in the place of the candidate Respects the feelings of the candidate
Intrapersonal sensitivity	Awareness of the impact of the own behaviour upon other people
Readiness to listen	Asks relevant questions to clarify what is not clear Listens attentively to the candidate
Support	The candidate must feel himself at ease,
Tenacity	Perseverance and ability to stay with a problem
Tolerance	Stability of performance under pressure and/or opposition

5 COMPETENCE PROFILE AND ROLE OF THE ASSESSOR

The assessor performs different roles at different stages in the VNFIL process, such as assigning the portfolio, the practical test, knowledge tests and development of assessment tools. Practice shows, however, that assessors are generally not the developers of the assessment tools. The following sections expand these roles and indicate the competences required of the assessor in order to perform these roles.⁸

5.1 Generic competencies

The assessor possesses the following generic competencies:

- **Observation and assessment skills, being objective:** attempts to assess subjective experiences as objective as possible;
- **Interviewing skills:** the assessor knows how to bring the best out of the candidate, asks a lot of questions, without judging immediately, interviewing candidates to establish authenticity of evidence;
- **Evaluation (assessment) skills:** to give candidates feedback in a constructive and encouraging way, which meets their needs and is appropriate to their level of confidence. To clearly explain the assessment decisions on whether candidates' evidence of competence is good enough. To give candidates advice when they cannot prove their competence, and on how they can develop the necessary skills or provide more evidence. Identify and agree the next steps in the assessment process and how candidates will achieve these;
- **Writing skills:** the assessor knows how to write a clear, detailed and structured report. He must ensure the assessment records are up to date, and can be followed by an audit. The report must be written in terms of competences, not in terms of features of the person. The report can be a combination of ticking pre-described competences and free text;
- **Technical competence:** the assessor must show technical competence: he must have a substantial experience and qualifications in the appropriate discipline

⁸Adopted from "Accreditation of Prior Learning - Reference Guide for APL assessors and assessment process" (EVTA – European Vocational Training Association)

(occupational competence). Furthermore, s/he must prove his willingness to keep abreast of developments in the sector. The technical level of the assessor must at minimum be as high as the level of the candidate. He/she must be, therefore, technically competent.

5.2 Assessor's competences in portfolio assessment

To assess the candidate's portfolio the assessor should:

- Assess the value of the portfolio and proofs of competence on the basis of several criteria: authenticity, topicality, relevance, quantity, variation of the evidence;
- The candidate is asked to provide further information in order that a balanced assessment be made. In advance of the interview, the assessor must have carefully studied the documents which describe the qualification. These documents describe the attained targets as well as the content and level of mastery. In this way, the assessor prepares the interview with the candidate;
- Possible evidence: questioning, prior experience and achievement, formal testing (see further on), projects and assignments, simulations (see further on), candidate and peer reports, evidence from others;
- Ensure that evidence comes from the candidates' own work;
- Connect evidence to expected competences (according to the agreed standards) using tools e.g. matrix;
 - Make a relationship between evidence and underlying competences;
 - Weigh evidence against occupational or training standards. The result of the candidate is compared with a standard which is agreed by a professional organisation, the social partners, the Ministry of Education;
- Make consistent, fair, valid and reliable decisions about the competence of candidates, based only on the agreed standard;
- Base the decision on all the relevant evidence from candidate's performance and knowledge;
- Gather the evidence from as many situations as possible;
- Conduct a criterion based interview;

- Explain and resolve any inconsistencies in the evidence;
- Use other interview techniques based on other theoretical approaches, for example probing interviews to assist people to make their competences more explicit;
- Draw up a report: the results of the portfolio assessment are written down in a standardised way, which enables the accreditation jury or body to make a judgment.

5.2.1 Underpinning knowledge or expertise

The assessor possesses knowledge in the areas below:

- Subject area, job profile (standards) and labour market in relation to the portfolio assessment;

Mostly, the assessors assess within their own discipline. They know the professional practice, so they know what they want to ask, but it is more difficult to determine when proof is “up to scratch”;

- Educational or vocational programmes in the subject matter:
 - Overview of existing programmes;
 - Target groups;
 - Attained level after training;
 - Relevance to the labour market.
- VNFIL-procedures and aims:
 - What is VNFIL?
 - Aims of VNFIL;
 - Target groups.
- Portfolio tool and methodology:
 - Quick scan: is the VNFIL-procedure feasible and appropriate?
 - Written evidence about learning experience and working experience;
 - Other evidence about working experience;
 - Judgment by the assessor about the transferability of the (proven) competences.
- Code of conduct of assessor

In short, the assessor is responsible for:

- The candidate knows the procedure;
- The candidate knows his rights;
- The candidate knows he can lodge an appeal against the decision;
- The candidate gets feedback about the results of the VNFIL;
- Report and results are sworn to secrecy;
- The candidate is the owner of the results and the report;
- The candidate knows which data are registered;
- The candidate has to give his permission if the organisation wants to use the results for other purposes;
- The candidate and the assessor sign the code of conduct.

5.3 Assessor's competences in a practical test situation

- Organise and coordinate the practice (practical) test (infrastructure, tools)
- Observe behaviour and results (products, processes) during assessment:
 - Evaluation of process;
 - evaluation of product;
 - distinguish observation and interpretation (being objective);
- Register and document observations
- Conduct an assessment interview:
 - To probe the candidate's reasoning;
 - to find out the "why" behind the behaviour;
 - to test the underlying knowledge.
- Interpret and evaluate activity related to required competence:
 - Evaluation of activities/ products: what meets the competence (quality).
- Make a relationship between competences and standard:
 - Use a structured assessment grid;
 - decide which criteria are attained and to what standard.
- Confer with other assessor(s):

- Observe independently;
- make a consensus afterwards.
- Draw up final report:
 - Provide clear information to the accreditation jury or body on the outcome of the assessment.
- Provide feedback to candidate or counsellor.

5.3.1 Underpinning knowledge

- Job standards and performance (quality) criteria in given context for the assessor:
 - Which standards are used, what is their origin;
 - who uses these standards;
 - level of the judgement: beginner, experienced, professional...
- Objectives of training programme, assessment procedure and target group:
 - Formative evaluation;
 - complete evaluation;
 - description of target groups and the related objectives of VNFIL.
- Code of conduct for assessors:
 - The assessor doesn't inform anyone about the content of the practical tests;
 - the assessor doesn't communicate the result of an VNFIL test to outsiders;
 - the candidate is the owner of the result;
 - the assessor supports the final decision;
 - the assessor makes the candidate feel at ease during the test.
- Assessment and evaluation concepts:
 - Formative assessment target: exemption from training programme modules;
 - complete assessment target: certification.
- VNFIL-procedures and aims:
 - Aims and target groups of VNFIL in respective organisations.

5.4 Assessors' Competences in the Development of Assessment tools

This section is important as in many cases the assessor is involved in the construction of assessment tools. Therefore, an understanding of the assessment design process is required (validity, reliability).

- To be familiar with:
 - Occupational standards;
 - Occupational profiles;
 - Job descriptions.
- Describe related activities (observable behavior):
 - Translation of chosen competences into concrete and observable activities;
 - Each competency must be observable several times.
- Construct an assessment scale:
 - Determine assessment criteria;
 - Determine observable indicators;
 - Determine success norms;
 - analyze validity and reliability of the assessment tool
- Describe material aspects of the practical test (infrastructure, materials, assignments...):
 - Description of material and infrastructure (in relation to standards);
 - Description of assignment;
 - Description of assessment process;
 - Description of desired report

5.5 Remarks on the VNFIL process

- VNFIL-related counselling and assessment should always be carried out by different persons, to avoid a conflict of interest. The counsellor and the assessor are different persons.
- The assessor should not have any personal interest in the outcome of the VNFIL process (objectivity and impartiality)
- Practical tests situations provide most reliable evidence and can be carried out effectively

6 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Pre-assessment stage

Usually a guidance counsellor oversees this stage.

1. Collecting general information on the candidate through interviews. Where has the candidate worked and what type of work and for how long? What kind of educational background does the candidate have (including non-formal learning and further professional training)? Does the candidate have hobbies that may be relevant in terms of competence development? What are the candidates hopes and expectations etc.? Documentation of the interview should be recorded and signed by the candidate and the counsellor.
2. Guidance on how to compile a portfolio, i.e. what type of documentation, pictures or samples are relevant and a model on how the portfolio should be compiled. The portfolio can be delivered in paper or electronic format (in e-format it is easier to present e.g. video footage or pictures of evidence).
3. Advice on how to connect the qualification requirements and the evidence in the portfolio (relevance of evidence), as well as how to verify the evidence (ownership of the work carried out).
4. General pre-assessment on the suitable qualifications or part qualifications for the candidate
5. Based on the pre-assessment, professionals of that particular occupation or occupations (usually teachers of the trades) should conduct an interview and pre-assess the depth and width of the candidate's competences.
6. It is decided **in co-operation with the candidate**, what qualification / part qualification is most suitable for him/her.

7. The qualification requirements are provided (in writing) to the candidate and explained orally, how they should be interpreted in terms of work tasks (and, if possible) what the NQF-level requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and competences concerning the qualification are.
8. Self-assessment based on the qualification / part qualification requirements, should be carried out and attached to the portfolio.
 - a. The self-assessment can be divided in three or more competence categories:
 - ✓ **"I do not master";**
 - ✓ **"I have some mastery";**
 - ✓ **"I have good mastery"**
9. It is agreed with the candidate, when the portfolio should be handed in for assessment and where to get additional support and advice on compiling the portfolio (Recommendation: if there is a group of candidates applying for validation, it would be a good idea to provide them with a short training, where they can get the support and where they can also support each other and it is economically more viable).

Assessment stage

This phase is usually carried out in co-operation with internal and external assessors – external referring to a work-life assessor working in the field of the occupation in question.

1. Assessing the portfolio

The actual assessment phase starts with the assessment of the portfolio against the qualification requirements. If there is enough solid evidence of knowledge, skills and competences with regards to qualification requirements, recognition may be carried out.

- a. What counts as solid evidence? – E.g. a hairdresser has taken pictures of different phases of his/her work and provided explanations of the choices of techniques, materials used etc. that depict professional conduct. Or certificates of further specialized training courses, that provide enough information of the learning outcomes. Or declarations by the candidate's co-workers or supervisors.
- b. If in doubt of the evidence: ask the candidate to elaborate on the evidence. Ask questions specific to the technique or materials used. Ask the rationale, why the candidate made the particular choice?
- c. If there is no solid evidence in the portfolio, other forms of assessment are carried out.

2. Assessment in an authentic environment through observation

- a. In case the candidate is in employment of the occupational area of the qualification / validation area in question, and if the employer organisation provides a suitable environment in terms of the qualification requirements, it is recommended that the assessment is carried out in the authentic working environment. It is familiar to the candidate, i.e. it is a normal working environment, with which the candidate is familiar with (e.g. where the tools are, how the equipment operates, co-workers etc.). In an authentic environment, it is also possible to assess the candidate's conduct, team-working skills, possible customer service skills, self-management skills, key competences etc. The competence test should be planned in co-operation with the candidate, the assessor(s) and the work-life representative (with regards to the schedule and the competences being demonstrated in terms of the qualification requirements).

b. In case the candidate is not in employment, and it is feasible to arrange an on-the-job learning placement for the candidate and carry out the assessment in a semi-familiar environment (given that the candidate has had sufficient time to familiarize him/herself with the working environment) and the working environment offers sufficient variety of tasks for the candidate to demonstrate his/her knowledge, skills and competences, this can be accounted for an authentic working environment. The competence tests should be planned in co-operation with the candidate, the assessor(s) and the work-life representative (with regards to the schedule and the competences being demonstrated in terms of the qualification requirements).

- i. The assessor(s) observing the competence demonstration(s) should be encouraged to ask the candidate questions with regard to his/her choices and the rationale behind the choices. Interaction between the candidate and the assessor may also provide valuable evidence for the assessors.
- ii. The assessor(s) should have an assessment sheet compiled according to the qualification requirements, to write down any remarks of the candidate's performance on each requirement of the qualification.
- iii. The assessment procedures may require very different time-spans depending on the occupation and the provided evidence in question. Therefore, the assessment plans must be compiled and agreed in co-operation with the candidate, work-life representative(s) and the assessor(s).
- iv. The maximum duration of the assessment procedure in an authentic environment should be decided by the team of occupational specialists, module by module. The personal situation of the candidate and his/her needs should also be

taken into consideration. There should not be any unnecessary delays, but the plan for demonstrating one's competences should reflect the real working life cycles.

3. Assessment in a non-authentic environment through simulations

In case there is no possibility to carry out skills demonstrations in an authentic working environment, the VNFIL providers must arrange simulation tests in workshops that are reminiscent to real life situations. In the non-authentic assessment situations, it is difficult to assess the soft competences that are related to normal working life, such as interaction with other employees or customers. These type of soft skills, however, are quite important in terms of a successful work performance and also highly appreciated among employers. Therefore, it is recommended that interviews or other type of verbal assessments will be carried out to be able to assess the soft working life skills and competences.

7 LIST OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

This list⁹ describes and summarises some common tools used in the VNFIL assessment process.

Instrument	Description
Self-assessment	<p>A questionnaire meant to assist the candidate answer to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I know</i> - <i>I am able to do/to perform</i> - <i>I can provide evidence of work results I produced in the past</i> <p>All these questions are related to the main aspects and features of the occupation as are described in the occupational profile</p> <p>When devise the assessment instruments the developers decide the level of detail they require the candidate to approach.</p>
Assignment	<p>An assignment is a problem-solving task with clear guidelines, structure and length. An assignment is more structured and less open-ended than a project. Candidates are given little choice of methodology or content.</p>
Completion questions	<p>Candidates are required to supply the correct missing word(s) to complete a given statement.</p>
Comprehension	<p>This is a set of questions based on a passage of text. The questions assess understanding of the meanings of words, phrases, technical terminology and of the passage overall.</p>
Design activity	<p>Candidates are required to work from a design brief, research and investigate a design problem, and develop and evaluate a final solution.</p>

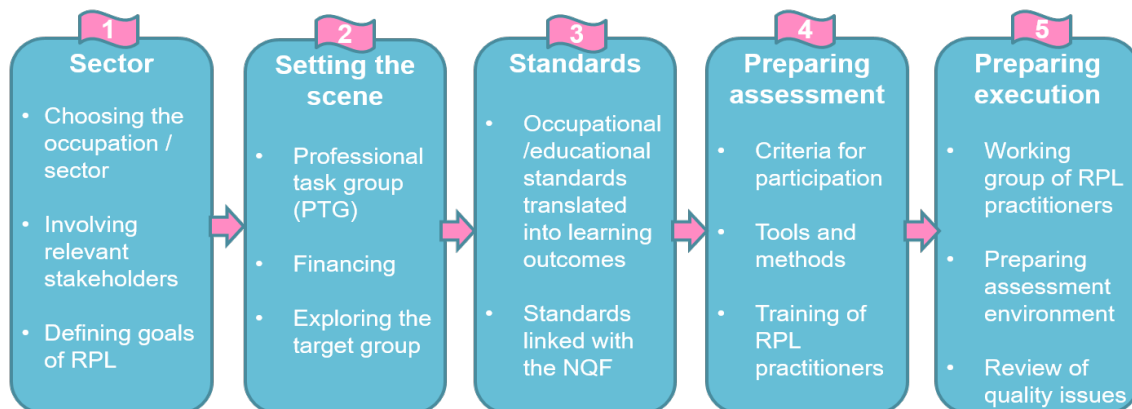
⁹Adopted from "Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning Assessment Guideline" (2013, E. Mitroi)

Grid questions	<p>In grid questions candidates are given a series of related questions, with a series of possible responses presented in an accompanying grid. They are required to select the correct response for each question. Two different questions may have the same answer. Some responses will be plausible but incorrect.</p> <p>Grid questions provide an alternative to matching questions (see below).</p>
Matching questions	<p>Matching questions are a variant of multiple-choice (see over), in which candidates are given two lists to match up: a set of words or statements and a set of responses.</p>
Multiple choice questions	<p>Candidates are presented with questions or incomplete statements, followed by four or five plausible answers, from which they have to select the correct one.</p>
Oral (or personal) interview	<p>This is a structured conversation, generally on a one-to-one basis, eliciting information directly from candidate. It is of particular use when evidence is required of process skills or experiential learning, and results may be recorded in questionnaire format.</p>
Oral presentation	<p>Candidates are required to deliver a prepared talk, in the form of an address, a report or considered opinion. An oral presentation may be offered as an alternative to a written response of equivalent scope or may be used as an instrument of assessment in its own right.</p>
Performance	<p>Candidates are required to demonstrate ability to perform work task in a particular context, encapsulating the skills, techniques, knowledge and understanding of the specialism.</p>
Practical exercise	<p>A practical exercise requires candidates to display a range of practical skills. The assessment may be based on the end result of the activity (the product) or the carrying-out of the activity (the process) or a combination of both.</p>

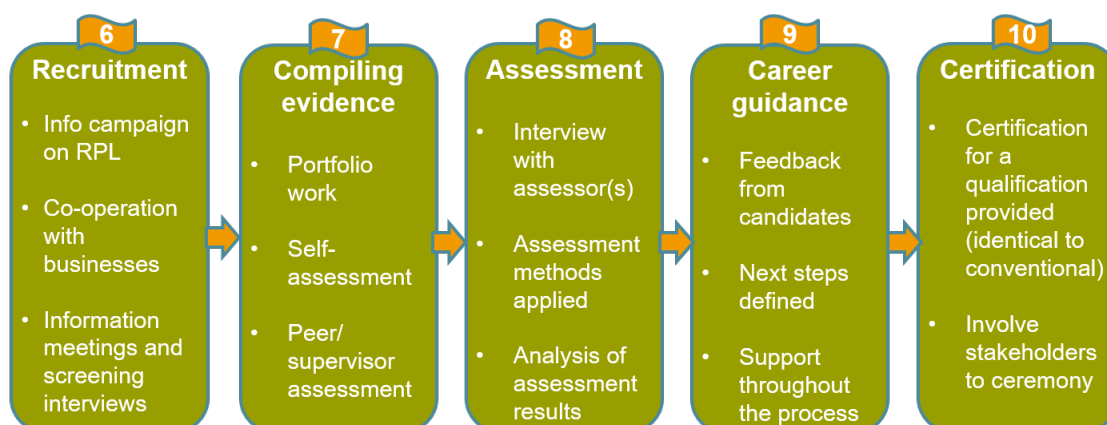
Project	A project is a substantial piece of work in which candidates are required to carry out research, planning, problem solving and evaluating over an extended period of time. Some projects include a practical component. Projects are more comprehensive and open-ended than assignments and may be tackled individually or by a group of candidate. Many projects will involve candidates working without close supervision, but in the interests of authenticity, the levels of supervision required should be stated. A project generally culminates in a report, a work product or a combination of these.
Questionnaire	A questionnaire is a structured written interview consisting of a set of questions relating to a particular area of performance. Unlike a personal interview, it is administered and judged under standard conditions.
Question paper	This consists of a range of assessment items, which together assess a task or an outcome. Generally a question paper is used to assess a combination of knowledge, understanding and skills.
Short answer questions	This type of question requires candidates to provide a predetermined answer consisting of a few words. Such questions may also involve the use of numbers, diagrams and graphs as well as text. Although generally used to assess the recall of factual information, short answer questions can also be constructed to assess understanding and application of knowledge, for example numerical and mathematical concepts.
Structured questions	Structured questions consist of a stem, which describes a situation, followed by a series of related questions. The stem may be text, a diagram, a picture, a video and so on.
True-false questions (alternative response)	In this type of question candidates are required to state whether a particular statement is true or false. They are generally used to assess the recall of information or the ability to discriminate.

8 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VNFIL PROCESS

PREPARATION FOR RPL



EXECUTION OF RPL



CONCLUSION OF RPL PROCESS



Figure 2. Practical phases and steps for VNFIL process ("RPL" used as synonym of "VNFIL")

9 APPENDICES

9.1 Case of an Institutional Cleaner

Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning (see profile and composition of the qualification further on)

Ms Linda had work experience from the cleaning sector for over 10 years from various employers. All her contracts had been temporary. Her aim was to carry out the Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning. Together with a vocational teacher and a guidance counselor the recognition of non-formal and informal learning process started.

First Ms Linda was given the task to orientate herself to the requirements of the Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning (documents are available in the Internet in Finnish and in Swedish). The guidance and counseling needs were canvassed in one-to-one discussions, in learning ability tests and self-assessments. In the beginning of the process all the necessary documentation (work certificates, school certificates etc.) was collected and Ms Linda started to compile her competence portfolio. Ms Linda familiarized herself closely with the qualification requirements and carried out a self-assessment regarding the qualification related competences in the Internet (www.osaan.fi) and enclosed the self-assessment in her portfolio. At this point Ms Linda estimated that her competences were sufficient to take the competence tests directly without any further training.

At the next stage Ms Linda had a meeting with a VET teacher of cleaning services and they examined the qualification requirements together in more detail and compared her self-assessment and prior learning with the requirements. In addition to this discussion Ms Linda spent three days carrying out the tasks of an Institutional Cleaner in an authentic working environment. The authentic working environment is essential so that the candidate can demonstrate her skills according to the qualification criteria and that there would be a qualified assessor available (i.e. a person who already has the qualification and is working as a professional). At this point it became clear that her professional competences were not quite sufficient from all perspectives to take the competence tests directly, but some further learning had to take place.

At the third stage Ms Linda carried out a two-week competence canvassing period in an authentic working environment (where the qualification criteria and requirements could be met) and where a qualified workplace assessor was also available during the two weeks. The aim of this two-week period was to recognize the competences and the possible competence gaps. In the process, it became evident that there were some

competence gaps that needed to be worked with before taking the actual competence tests. The strengths and developmental needs were compiled and an individual plan was drafted in order to gain the missing competences required in the qualification criteria.

All of the missing competences were of such nature that it was decided that Ms Linda would best learn and gain the competences by on-the-job-learning. She was allocated an on-the-job-learning position in a company for 2 months, where she was assigned a tutor, who made sure that she had the opportunity to learn and gain the missing competences. Actual schooling was not needed in this case at all. During this period, she took the competence tests according to the individualized plan and according to her own development. After the on-the-job-learning period in the company was over, she had taken all the required parts of the qualification in competence test and was a proud owner of a diploma for Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning.

The VET school only provided for the counseling and the assessment of the competences and acted as a mediator between Ms Linda and the company, where she was able to have her competences assessed and gain the missing competences!

The key of the recognition and validation process is to develop existing competences. The process was very motivating from the viewpoint of the student. It made the student very committed to the learning process and it strengthened her own understanding of the requirements of the profession. The student also found it very rewarding to be able to talk about her skills and competences, make them visible and, also, to really observe her own learning process that occurred while working!

Ms Linda did not possess any prior qualifications hence her employment contracts were always temporary. Now, with learning by doing she gained a Further Qualification only in 3 months, whereas normally in the traditional school based vocational qualification would take three years of school studies! This can be considered a major advantage from the viewpoint of the candidate, but also of the society and in economic terms as well.

See the general qualification requirements and the assessment scores of Ms Linda in the following pages.

Further Qualification of Institutional Cleaning

A. Diamond assessment model example

Module 1: Provision of cleaning services

Grading:

1. Cannot
2. Can to some extent
3. Can very well / ready to take competence test

Learner / candidate: Ms Linda

	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Part 6
Teacher's assessment	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,5	2,5	2,0
Self-assessment	2,8	3,0	2,7	3,0	2,8	2,7

Part 1 = Customer oriented cleaning services

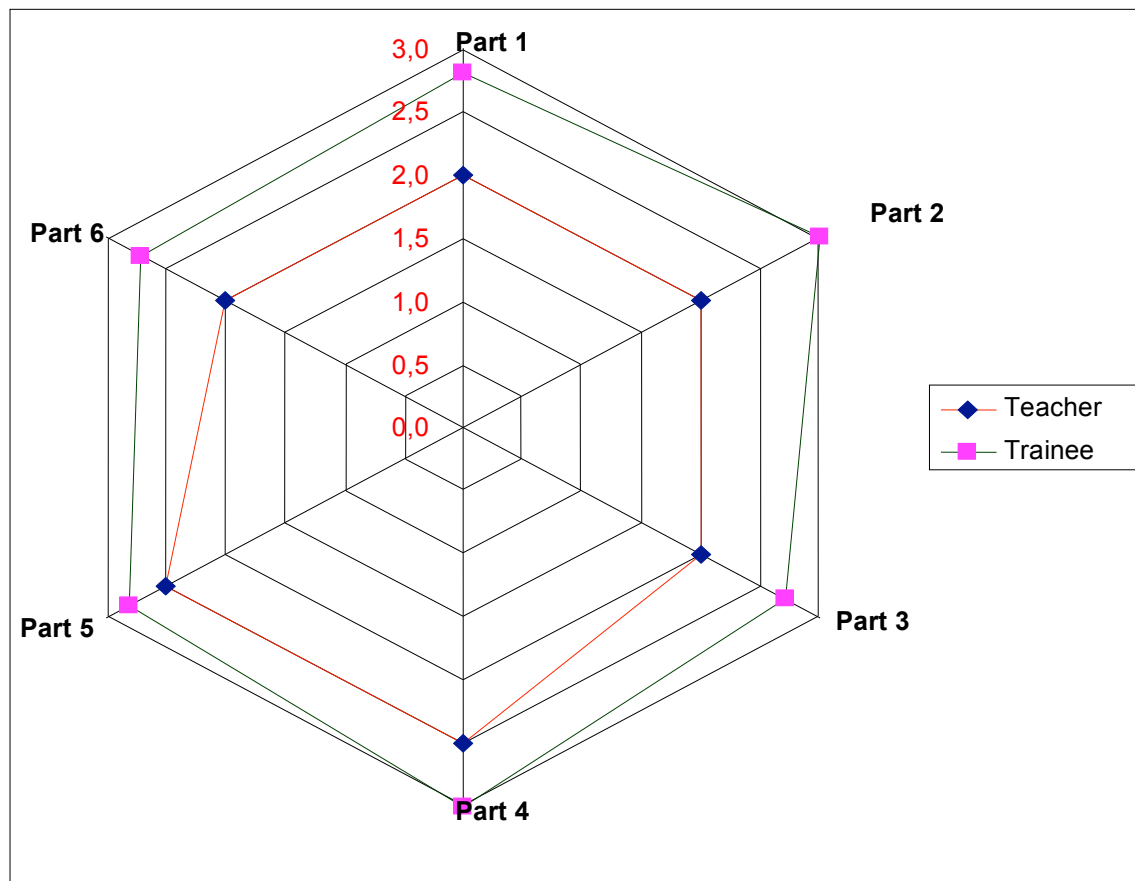
Part 2 = Maintenance cleaning

Part 3 = Ergonomic working habits

Part 4 = Safety at work

Part 5 = Sustainable development in cleaning profession

Part 6 = Self-assessment of own work



B. Certificate Supplement of the Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning

Composition of the qualification

The common modules of the qualification are: **provision of cleaning services** and **intensive cleaning services**.

In addition, **three** of the following **modules must also be chosen: catering services, reception and conference services, cleaning services for special sites, care services, language skills in service situations, property maintenance services, textiles care services, pest control services, indoor plant care and attendance to the pleasantness of customer facilities, equipment maintenance services, environmental maintenance services, entrepreneurship in cleaning services.**

One of the optional modules may be a module of some other further qualification that is closely related to work assignments.

Vocational skills and competences required for completion of the qualification

Those who have completed the qualification shall:

- be able to carry out their work in a competent, customer-focused, confidential, responsible and cost-effective manner and in co-operation;
- deal equally with different people and be capable of independent and empathetic interaction with customers;
- know how to plan and perform routine and intensive cleaning tasks in accordance with work instructions or the service description, customer needs and the functions of the site;
- command cleaning methods and cleaning agents, equipment and machinery used in such methods;
- know how to carry out cleaning services at special sites as required by customers;
- know how to plan and carry out cleaning work at their chosen special site in accordance with work orders, customer needs and the functions of the facilities;
- command the cleaning methods, agents, equipment and machinery used to clean special sites;
- be familiar with the significance of nutrition to human well-being and take customers' different diets and cultural differences into account;

- know how to perform various catering services at customer sites and portion and serve dishes and participate in dish care;
- be aware of the significance of hygiene and self-monitoring in catering services;
- know how to provide reception and conference services as required at the customer site and arrange catering for meetings;
- know how to assist customers in daily activities, such as personal hygiene, eating, moving about and recreational activities;
- be capable of working in co-operation with nursing staff or independently as required;
- also be able to manage customer service in a language other than their own mother tongue and know how to guide customers within the service chain;
- be capable of providing property maintenance and textiles care services needed at the customer site;
- be familiar with the different areas of property maintenance at the customer site and know how to monitor the condition of facilities and the property and report any possible repair issues as agreed;
- be able to identify pests and know how to control them from the first observation to drawing up a follow-up inspection report;
- know how to maintain green and silk plants and carry out other tasks relating to the pleasantness of customer facilities; - be aware of the significance of equipment maintenance as part of customer safety and attend to transportation, preservation and storage of equipment;
- know how to pretreat, clean and disinfect the most common diagnostic and medical equipment used at a customer site;
- be aware of the classification of cleanliness required of the equipment and its maintenance cycle at the customer site;
- be aware of the basic concepts of business activities and different forms of enterprise and be able to assess their own potential and resources to function as entrepreneurs;
- apply ergonomic working methods, comply with occupational safety instructions and be aware of the environmental effects of their work;

- be aware of waste management guidelines and methods at individual customer sites as well as with relevant acts, other statutes and instructions.

C. Range of occupations accessible to the holder of the certificate

Those who have completed the qualification may work as skilled workers in the cleaning services sector with occupational titles such as cleaner, facilities or industrial cleaner, service supervisor, hotel housekeeper, school maintenance operative, institutional maintenance operative, hospital maintenance operative, institutional auxiliary, ward domestic, nursing auxiliary, day-care centre assistant, etc. They may also function as entrepreneurs or independent self-employed people.

(The Finnish National Agency for Education)

9.2 Roadmap for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – tool for benchmarking

Overall goals:

1. Validation of non-formal and informal learning is an inbuilt system within VET and working life in the country
2. Validation of non-formal and informal learning is considered as an integral part of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance
3. Results of validation of non-formal and informal learning equal the status of a qualification gained in formal education
4. The individual is always at the center of the validation process
5. There is a structured plan for continuous development of the validation system
6. There are (regional) CoPs (Communities of Practice) that are goal-oriented and provide support for the VNFIL providers
7. Quality assurance mechanisms are in place
8. There is a monitoring system (statistics, feed-back, reviews) in place
9. There is systematic training of VNFIL providers and practitioners
10. Validation of non-formal and informal learning becomes gradually available in other sectors of education and the labor market

National level		
Task:	How? When?	Who is responsible?
1. Professionalization of VNFIL practitioners Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training for teachers and guidance counsellors is regulated nationally and includes obligatory modules regarding VNFIL• There are regulated competence requirements for VNFIL practitioners		
2. Establishing a network of VNFIL providers		

<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are national criteria and guidelines that the VNFIL providers must follow • There must exist a nationally recognized accreditation system and a register of VNFIL providers • Accreditation is linked to the quality assurance mechanisms and external audits / evaluations 		
<p>3. Policy development</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one national VNFIL policy and guideline, which includes Life Long Guidance along with the VNFIL process • The policy addresses relevant fields of policies, such as formal and non-formal education, labor market, financing, social affairs etc.) • The policy outlines clear roles and responsibilities for different authorities and their co-operation in the sphere of VNFIL • There is a set of nationally agreed occupational standards that form the basis for the creation / development of learning outcomes 		
<p>4. Regulatory framework</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulatory framework covers VNFIL procedures • Laws and regulations are reviewed on a regular basis and amended according to the needs according to the feedback from the VNFIL providers and the analysis according to the statistics and the follow-up procedures • The regulatory framework ensures that it is the right of the individual to participate the VNFIL process • The regulatory framework ensures there is an appeal process available for the individuals 		

<p>5. Financing</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conditions for financing the VNFIL procedures from the viewpoint of the provider and the individual (candidate) are detailed • Financial support should be available for individuals participating the VNFIL process • Special support should be available for individuals in socially challenging situations (the unemployed, immigrants, prisoners etc.) 		
<p>6. Statistics and follow-up</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant actors are obliged to provide nationally agreed statistics concerning VNFIL • There is a systematic, regular follow-up procedure on the basis of the statistics • Due measures are taken systematically 		

Provider level		
Task:	How? When?	Who is responsible?
<p>1. Networks / Communities of Practice</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are VNFIL Communities of Practice for different purposes (provider level, practitioner level) • The actors in CoPs are relevant for VNFIL • Work of the Communities of Practice is goal-oriented and supports the national guidelines on a regional level 		
<p>2. Creating / revising standards and learning outcomes</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant working life partners, specialists of 		

<p>the field from colleges, relevant NGO representatives participate the development of learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and learning outcomes are revised regularly and specific attention is paid to working life needs on a regional level • An established communications channel is formed to enable the working life to communicate their needs in an accurate and timely manner 		
<p>3. Follow-up and statistics</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VNFIL providers have a sufficient documentation system concerning VNFIL procedures and they are able to provide quantitative and qualitative information as agreed nationally • VNFIL providers adhere to the nationally agreed follow-up procedure • VNFIL providers have a follow-up procedure, which monitors the outcomes of the candidates after the validation process (further training, employment, other) 		
<p>4. Quality assurance in VNFIL</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VNFIL providers see themselves as the gate keepers of quality assurance • VNFIL providers adhere to the nationally agreed QA procedures and actively develop QA in their respective organizations • VNFIL providers make sure that all VNFIL staff is properly trained and informed about the QA procedures and are committed to follow them and improve them continuously • VNFIL providers have a Quality Management System, which proposes a set of actions in 		

case there are discrepancies concerning QA procedures		
---	--	--

9.2.1 Quality assurance tool for VNFIL practice – a follow up tool

DOCUMENTATION OF QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VALIDATION

The aim of this tool is to provide an overview of how quality work in validation is carried out in a country or branch or system. The study is based on a dynamic understanding of quality, which means, for example, that quality measures and indicators have not been defined beforehand. The following grid for documenting quality work in validation in the Nordic countries has been developed in a workshop with country representatives from all the included countries. Inspiration for the approach to the study has been e.g. Joy van Kleefs 'quality mechanisms', the Swedish guidelines for quality work in validation 'Guidelines and quality criteria' and the European guidelines for validation of non-formal learning.

The following areas should be the focus on the study:

1. Laws and regulations
2. Policies (including financing and national standards)
3. Structure of the system
4. Stakeholders
5. Competences of validation professionals
6. Methodologies

In the documentation grid below the overall areas of documentation are in the first column. In the second column the criteria of quality is described. The quality indicators, which are supposed to be used as a checklist in the documentation process, are in the third column. In the fourth column, documentation for quality is suggested, and examples of documentation are provided. The task for the representatives will be to respond to the quality indicators (are there for example national laws) and provide documentation (short description, references to and examples of law texts) within the different areas.

NOTE: FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE! BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES! CRITICAL POINTS!

Areas of documentation	Criteria of quality	Indicators (checklist)	Suggested type of documentation
------------------------	---------------------	------------------------	---------------------------------

1. Law and regulations	There are laws supporting and regulating validation	Are there national laws, regarding quality?	Law texts
	The laws are giving the individual right to be validated	Is it explicit in the law that the individual is given the right of validation? Are there restrictions and/or special conditions?	References to and underpinning of relevant passages

	The law is detailed	Are the law and regulations dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financing - appeal systems - follow-up systems - documentation/certificate - competences of validation professionals 	References to and underpinning of relevant passages
	The laws are implemented	To which degree is the law implemented e.g. are there structural obstructions?	Follow-ups, reports, perspective of representatives (personal views of experts working with document)

2. Policies	There are policies regarding validation	Are there policies in an overall level?	Policy documents
		Are there policies related to subsystems? (different levels and subgroups)	Policy documents related to subsystems
	The policies are followed up	Are there national/local statistics on validation?	References to and examples of statistics
		Are the policies reviewed	Policy reviews
		Are the policies revised	
	There are nationally accepted standards		Policy documents
	There are policies regarding financing		Policy documents

3. Structure of the system	The system is well known and there is information readily available	Is the validation system known <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to stakeholders? - to individuals / candidates? - to the general public? How are individuals and stakeholders informed about the validation	Description
-----------------------------------	---	--	-------------

		<p>system?</p> <p>Where does one find information about the validation system?</p>	
	The system is impartial	<p>Is the system impartial to stakeholders?</p> <p>Who is responsible for validation?</p> <p>How are the 'validation organizations' related to the educational system and the labor market?</p>	<p>Policy documents</p> <p>Laws</p> <p>Description</p>
	The system is transparent	<p>Is the system transparent?</p> <p>Is the process transparent?</p> <p>Is the goal of the validation process clear?</p> <p>Is it transparent who are involved with the process?</p> <p>Are standards known and legitimate?</p>	<p>Policy documents</p> <p>Laws</p> <p>Description</p>
	The system is accessible	<p>Is the system accessible regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financing - geography - for different target groups - age - ethnicity (language) - individual barriers 	
	Information is available		Information material about the validation system
	The system is sustainable	<p>Is the system project-based?</p> <p>Is the system embedded in the qualification system?</p> <p>Is the system embedded in other, e.g. labor market,</p>	

		systems? How is it financed? What is the estimated cost-benefit ratio?	
	Guidance is embedded in the system	Is guidance an integral part of the validation system?	Descriptions of the role of and access to guidance in law texts, policy documents, institutional documents etc.
	Overviewing is part of the system	Is there a competent body overseeing validation? Are there quality indicators or quality assurance mechanisms in place?	

4. Stakeholders	Different stakeholders are 'invited' / involved	Which stakeholders are involved in discussions, development and operation of the validation system?	Policy documents Laws Description
	The stakeholders collaborate (education, authorities, social partners, labour market)	How do stakeholders collaborate? Are stakeholders involved in developing standards?	Description of structures supporting the collaboration of stakeholders
	The stakeholders have influence on law or/and policy-making	How are stakeholders involved in the development of policies and legislation in the area of validation?	Policy documents Laws Description

5. Competences of validation professionals	There is a standardized certification system for validation professionals	Is there a standardized certification system for validation professionals? Is it required that validation professionals are trained or certified?	Description Description of certification system
	The validation professionals have access to support networks	Do the professionals have access to support networks? How are support networks	Description Public documents Reports

		organized?	
	Validation professionals are surveyed	Are validation professionals surveyed? How are they surveyed?	Description Public documents Reports

6. Methodologies			
	Methodologies are developed for purpose and are tested	Who are responsible for the development of relevant methodologies for validation? Are the methods reliable and valid? (e.g. co-assessors) Are they fit for purpose? Are they fit for the individual? Are they fit for the branch?	Description Public documents Reports
	A combination of methods is used	Do validation professionals apply a combination of methods in the process of validation?	

9.3 Literature on VNFIL and related themes

This list contains various sources related to VNFIL, like policy documents, strategic documents, documents on criteria or procedures for VNFIL, sources for information on VNFIL, and sources of data coming from research or best practices of application.

A) EU VNFIL sources

EU STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, GUIDELINES, INFORMATION SOURCES ON VNFIL - policy documents, strategic documents, guidelines and documents on criteria or procedures for VNFIL, sources for information on VNFIL, where VNFIL is recommended and foreseen as integral part of the education system and processes:

- The Council of the European Union, Resolution of the Council on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field, *Official journal of the European Union*, 2006.
Available at: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668227/c_16820060720en00010003.pdf/55bc3955-9e5f-41c5-ab4c-51be2ed18dc9
- The Council of the European Union, Council Recommendation on VNFIL, *Official journal of the European Union*, 2012.
Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF>
- Cedefop, European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, *Publications Office of the European Union*, Luxembourg, 2015.
Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073>
- European Commission, *Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, Brussels, 2010.
Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>
- European Commission, *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: European Reference Framework*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007
Available at: <http://www.alfa-trall.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/EU2007-keyCompetencesL3-brochure.pdf>
- European Commission and Council of Europe, *Pathways Towards Validation and Recognition of Education, Training & Learning in the Youth Field*, Strasbourg and Brussels, 2004.
Available at: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668227/Pathways_towards_validation.pdf/caf83fd5-b4db-4b56-a1ab-3b1178e182db
- European Commission and Council of Europe, *Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe*, 2011.
Available at: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/3084932/Pathways_II_towards_recognition_of_non-formal_learning_Jan_2011.pdf/6af26afb-daff-4543-9253-da26460f8908
- Cedefop, *Identification and Validation of Prior and NonFormal Learning*, 1997.

Available at: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668227/Identification_and_validation_of_prior_and_Non-formal_learning.pdf/18922fec-44db-4d81-8f37-1da4c57d772e

- Bologna Process, *The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals*. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 2005.
Available at: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/Bergen_Communique1.pdf
- Bologna Process. *Dublin Descriptors*.
Available at: http://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-development/assets/pdf/dublin_descriptors.pdf
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, *The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015.
Available at http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/2015%20Implementation%20report_20.05.2015.pdf
- EHEA Ministerial Conference, *Yerevan Communiqué*, 2015.
Available at: http://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/70/7/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf
- EHEA Ministerial Conference, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) - Revised ESG approved by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, on 14-15 May 2015: Approved by the Ministerial Conference in May 2015, by European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education European Students' Union European University Association European Association of Institutions in Higher Education Education International BUSINESS EUROPE European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education*, 2015.
Available at: https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/revised_esg_2015_adopted.pdf
- Ministers of vocational education and training, *Riga Conclusions on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges Communiqué*, 2015.
Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions_en.pdf

EUROPEAN DATABASES AND INFORMATIVE PLATFORMS:

- Cedefop, Upcoming events and project,
Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects>
- Cedefop, *Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning: Compendium of projects*,
Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/compendium-of-projects>
- Cedefop, *European Database on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning*
Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/european-database-on-validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

(Database links the [European guidelines for validation of non-formal and informal learning](#) (2nd ed, 2015) with the [European inventory on validation](#) (update 2014)).
European Commission, *Electronic Platform for Adult Learning*,

Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/home-page>

- European Commission, *Open Education Europa: The gateway to European innovative learning*,
Available at: [Handbook for VNFIL assessment Macedonia all comm_16Nov2017.docx](http://www.openeducationeuropa.eu/Handbook_for_VNFIL_assessment_Macedonia_all_comm_16Nov2017.docx)<http://www.openeducationeuropa.eu/>
- European Commission, *EU policy in the field of adult learning: What it is, priority areas and next steps*,
Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/index_en.htm
- European Commission, *Lifelong Learning Programme*,
Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme_en
- European Commission, *Learning Opportunities and Qualifications: Information about courses, work-based learning and qualifications*,
Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/terms_en.htm
- Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes - A European handbook (2017, Cedefop)
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4156>
This Cedefop handbook is addressed to individuals and institutions actively involved in defining and writing learning outcomes in education and training. Its ambition is to act as a reference point for cooperation in this area.
- Application of learning outcomes approaches across Europe (2016, Cedefop)
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3074>
This Cedefop reference publication maps and analyses the shift to learning outcomes in education and training policies and practices across Europe.

DOCUMENTS RELATED WITH THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK:

- New Skills Agenda for Europe - webportal
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>
- Learning opportunities and Qualifications in Europe – webportal including all documents on the EQF
<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en?cookie=no>
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03)
<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-efq/files/en.pdf>
- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016/C 484/01)
[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224(01)&from=EN)
- European Commission, European Qualifications Framework Series

- EQF Note 1 Explaining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (brochure) – (2010)
- EQF Note 2 Added value of National Qualifications Frameworks in implementing the EQF (2010)
- EQF Note 3 Referencing National Qualifications Levels to the EQF (2011)
- EQF Note 4 Using Learning Outcomes (2011)
- EQF Note 5 Referencing National Qualifications Levels to the EQF - Update 2013 (2013)

Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/documentation#documentation_76

- EQF Referencing Reports *The official versions of the national referencing reports of the countries following their adoption by the EQF AG*

Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/documentation#documentation_76

- ICF GHK, *Evaluation of the Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation-Final report*, 2013.

Available at: <http://www.nki-latvija.lv/content/files/DG%20EAC%20-%20Evaluation%20EQF%20-%20Final%20Report%20-%20Final%20Version.pdf>

- European Training Foundation, *Inventory and Analysis of Existing Qualifications, Study Supporting the EQF Referencing Process in the Republic of Macedonia*, 2014.

http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Inventory_Analysis_NQF_Eng.-1.pdf
http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Inventory_Analysis_NQF_MKD.pdf

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO EUROPEAN INVENTORY ON VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

European inventory on validation updates in 2016:

- General portal with all reports, policy documents related with VNFIL in the EU:
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>
- Synthesis report – European Inventory on VNFIL – 2016 update
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>
- Funding validation: A thematic report for the 2016 update of the European inventory on validation
 Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4146>
- Validation in the care and youth work sectors: Thematic report for the 2016 update of the European inventory on validation
 Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4147>
- Monitoring the use of validation of non-formal and informal learning: Thematic report for the 2016 update of the European inventory on validation
 Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4148>
- Validation and open educational resources (OER): Thematic report for the 2016 update of the European inventory on validation
 Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4149>

European inventory on validation updates in 2014:

- European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International, *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014 (Links to Full synthesis report, Country reports, Thematic reports and Case studies)*.
 - 36 country reports (33 countries)
 - Synthesis report
 - 8 Thematic reports (see below) and 2 case studies

[Executive summary](#)

[Final Synthesis report](#)

[Awareness rising: thematic report](#)

[Competence assessment in the private sector: thematic report](#)

[Current approaches to skills audits in the public sector: thematic report](#)

[Thematic report: multi-level governance](#)

[Guidance and counseling: thematic report](#)

[Research themes on validation: thematic report](#)

[Validation and early school leavers: thematic report](#)

[Validation methods: thematic report](#)

Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/de/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>

B) DOCUMENTS FROM THE RELEVANT WIDER INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Council of Europe

- Council of Europe, *Council resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)*,
Available at: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/3084919/doc1648_en.pdf/92968c65-3ffe-4085-ba6b-ddd51e220e09
- Council of Europe, *Non-formal learning / education*,
Available at: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/non-formal-learning>
- Council of Europe, *The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio*,
Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/resources/portfolio/portfolio_EN.asp
- Council of Europe and UNESCO (2013). *Subsidiary Text to the Convention: "Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications"*. Available at:
http://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/128_323d3fabbbf54af185073abb20f68457.pdf

UNESCO documents:

- <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/de/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory> UNESCO, *Recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning in UNESCO member states*, 2015.
Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002326/232656e.pdf>
- UNESCO, *UNESCO Guidelines on RVA*, 2012.
Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216360e.pdf>

- UNESCO, *UNESCO Global RVA Observatory*,
Available at: <http://www.uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/uil-launches-global-rva-observatory>

OECD Documents:

- OECD, *Recognising Non-Formal and Informal Learning: Outcomes, Policies and Practices*, 2010.
Available at: http://www.eucen.eu/sites/default/files/OECD_RNFIFL2010_Werquin.pdf
- OECD, *Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning: Country Practices*, 2010.
Available at: <http://www.connect.tsoft.hu/digitalcity/servlet/PublishedFileServlet/AAABEWBX/OECD-Report.pdf>
- OECD, Development Centre Studies, *Is Informal Normal?: Towards More and Better Jobs in Developing Countries*, 2009.
Available at: <http://www.materialien.org/planet/oecdinformellersektor.pdf>

Other research documents on VNFIL from international publications:

- Madhu Singh, *Global perspectives on recognising NLIFL, Why recognition matters*, 2015.
Available at: <http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319152776>
- Fejes, A., *Validation of non-formal and informal learning Statements and Comments*, 2007.
Available at: http://pdf.mutual-learning-employment.net/pdf/FR07/Sweden_FR07.pdf
- Colardyn, D., Bjornavold, J., *Validation of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning: policy and practices in EU Member States*, European Journal of Education, 2004.
Available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0141-8211.2004.00167.x/full>

C) VNFIL TOOLS AND CASES

- *When competences become occupational opportunities* (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)
<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/when-competences-become-occupational-opportunities/>

The study analyzes the validation systems from seven good practice countries based on five core elements and provides recommendations for transferring individual core elements from one country to another. The five core elements are: Law, procedures and instruments, financing, institutional structures and support. Important principles of a successful validation system for non-formally and informally acquired competences include easy access for all target groups, homogeneity or at least equivalence of educational degrees and certificates, acceptance by companies and target groups' and companies' awareness of the procedures and certificates.

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: Denmark* (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe-1/>

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: Finland (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)*

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe/>

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: France (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)*

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe-5/>

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: Netherlands (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)*

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe-3/>

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: Norway (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)*

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe-2/>

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: Austria (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)*

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe-4/>

- *How informal and non-formal learning is recognised in Europe? Country report: UK (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)*

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/uk-country-report-how-informal-and-non-formal-learning-is-recognised-in-europe/>

- *The validation of learning outcomes in Poland – new opportunities for attaining qualifications*

http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/publikacje/Walidacja_EN_Internet5_FIN.pdf

- *Validation and the value of competences – Roadmap 2018 (2015, NVL)*

<http://nvl.org/Content/Validation-and-the-value-of-competences-Road-Map-2018>

- *Guidance in validation within the Nordic region (2015, NVL)*

<http://nvl.org/Content/Guidance-in-validation-within-the-Nordic-region>

- *Nordic Competence Profiles of Validation Practitioners and Competence Development (2014, NVL)*

<http://nvl.org/Content/Nordic-competence-profiles-for-validation-staff>

- *Quality Model for Validation in the Nordic Countries (2013, NVL)*
<http://nvl.org/Content/Quality-Model-for-Validation-in-the-Nordic-Countries>

NATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Build up Skills Macedonia – Project on building skills in energy sector,
Available at: <http://www.buildupskills.mk/index.php>
- Bureau for Development of Education, *Assessment Standards*.
Available at: <http://bro.gov.mk/?q=osnovno-obrazovanie-standardi>
- Bureau for Development of Education, *Criteria for Assessment of Student Achievements*.
Available at: http://bro.gov.mk/docs/kriteriumi/Kriteriumi_za_ocenuvanje.pdf
- Centre for Adult Education, *Concept for Primary Education for Adults in the Republic of Macedonia*, 2015.
- Council for Adult Education, *Strategy on Adult Education 2010-2015, with Action plan*, 2010.
- Macedonian Framework for Qualifications, Macedonian Qualification Framework –
Baselines
Available at: http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Dokument_Makedonska_ramka_za_kvalifikacii_-_pojnovni_osnovi.pdf
- Macedonian Framework for Qualifications, Procedures for development of qualifications
<http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Procedura-za-razvivanje-na-kvalifikacii.pdf>
- Ministry of Education and Science, *Concept for graduation and final exam in secondary education lasting four years in the Republic of Macedonia*, 2015.
Available at:
http://www.matura.gov.mk/data_files/state_graduate/mk/2035_%D0%9A%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%A6%D0%95%D0%9F%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%88%D0%90.pdf
- Ministry of Education and Science, *Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in the Context of Lifelong Learning 2013-2020, With Action Plan: Better Skills for a Better Tomorrow*, 2013.
Available at: http://www.csoo.edu.mk/images/vet%20strategy_mac%20-%20final.pdf
- Ministry of Education and Science, *National Qualifications Framework –Baselines*, 2013.
Available at:
http://mon.gov.mk/images/documents/nacionalna_ramka/Dokument_Makedonska_ramka_za_kvalifikacii_-_pojnovni_osnovi-eng.pdf
- Ministry of Education and Science, *Concept Document for Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Macedonia*, 2010.
- Ministry of Education and Science, *Documentation produced in the framework of the EU funded project “Technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science on Life Long Learning”*, 2009. (Contract number 06MAC01/11/102, CARDS) Period of implementation 2007-2009.
- Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, *Law on National Qualification Framework*, 2014
Available at: http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Zakon_za_nacionalna_ramka_2014.pdf
- State Statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia, *The System of Education in the Republic of Macedonia in Relation to the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, 2014.

- Available at: <http://www.stat.gov.mk/KlasifikaciiNomenklaturi/2.8.14.01.pdf>
- State Statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia, *National Classification of Occupations*, 2011.
Available at:
<http://www.stat.gov.mk/KlasifikaciiNomenklaturi/NacionalnaKlasifikacijaNaZanimanjata.pdf>
 - Vocational Education and Training Centre, *Concept for Vocational Education for Occupations*, 2010. Available at:
<http://www.csoo.edu.mk/images/stories/koncepcija%20na%20strucno%20obrazovanie%20na%20zanimanja.pdf>
 - Vocational Education and Training Centre, *Concept for Post-Secondary Education*, 2010. Available at:
<http://www.csoo.edu.mk/images/stories/koncepcija%20za%20postsredno%20obrazovanie.pdf>
 - Vocational Education and Training Centre, *Standards for Delivery of Practical Training of Student at Employers*.
Available at:
http://www.csoo.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=37&Itemid=138
 - Vocational Education and Training Centre, *Standards of Occupations*,
Available at:
http://www.csoo.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=65&Itemid=190
 - Vocational Education and Training Centre, *Methodology for Preparation of Standards for Occupations*, 2009.
Available at:
<http://www.csoo.edu.mk/images/stories/metodologija%20za%20izrabotka%20na%20standardi%20na%20zanimanja.pdf>
 - **Documents on Macedonian Qualifications Framework**
Web portal: <http://mrk.mk/?lang=mk>
 - MoES (2016) *EQF Referencing Report of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework and Self-Certification to the QF-EHEA*
http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/MQF_Referencing_Report_Final.pdf
 - *Roadmap for further development and implementation of the MQF*
http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/MQF_Roadmap.pdf