



ACCREDITATION PATHWAY NAVIGATOR / IO6

EUROPEAN BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS REPORT

Erasmus+ **PARTNERSHIP FOR CREATIVE APPRENTICESHIPS (P4CA)**

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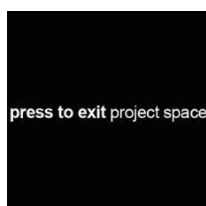
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Acknowledgements and Disclaimer

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Further information about the project and the above partners is available at www.p4ca.eu

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Executive summary



This document provides a summary of apprenticeship accreditation frameworks in six European countries that will be further used as a basis for development of Accreditation Pathway Navigator (IO6).

The Partnership for Creative Apprenticeships (P4CA) consists of six project partners from six European countries: Materahub (Italy), Press to Exit (North Macedonia), Regional Development Agency Senec-Pezinok (Slovakia), Cultural Innovation Competence Centre Association (Hungary), Fundacja ARTeria (Poland) and Rinova Limited (UK) – lead project partner.

Regional Development Agency Senec-Pezinok has developed a template for the partner organizations to map apprenticeship accreditation frameworks in all partner countries. Thus, each partner was asked to produce a national analysis of the current state of development and future possibilities for validation, certification and accreditation systems for Apprenticeship Coaches and In-Company Trainers in the CCIs.

The document reflects four key topics the project partners were asked to cover. More specifically, it gives an overview of the VET context; relation to European systems and frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of accreditation systems in all involved countries.

The main finding of this research is that the validation system for Vocational Education and Training (VET) exists in various forms in all involved countries however there is no clear classification for CCIs at the moment. Therefore, the P4CA partnership recommends the CLOCK framework that could be an option for accrediting informal and non-formal learning as it is a transnational transferable qualification that is already recognized in at least 5 EU member states.

This document was co-designed and co-produced by all partners and synthesised by Regional Development Agency Senec-Pezinok (SK).

1. Brief introduction to the VET context in the involved countries



Based on the research done by the P4CA partners, the involved countries (UK, IT, PL, HU, NMK and SK) all have different approaches to the level of involvement of work-based learning or apprenticeship in the vocational education and training system.

From the comparative point of view, the UK VET system aims to be employer-centred, flexible, market-led and committed to quality, access, inclusion and to support economic development. Although there are different models in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland and different local skills strategies in regions and cities, there is no unified common approach.

On the contrary, in Poland and Slovakia, there are 3 defined forms of a provision of VET, however in different ways. Poland has started development of the Sectoral Qualification Framework (SQF) and Slovakia focuses more on the dual education system that has strong presence in German and Austrian apprenticeship systems.

The Italian VET system represents one of the channels, together with upper secondary schools and apprenticeship. In fact, the three year VET qualification is the first possible outcome (in terms of duration) for an exit from the training system to the world of work in the context of full compliance. There has also been increased interest in dual system methods (study-work alternation). Italy puts an emphasis on bridging the gap between supply and demand for work. More specifically, there is a need for more targeted analysis of entrepreneurial needs; constant updating of repertoires; direction of funding from the regions: investing in figures with the greatest employment prospects; responsiveness of training institutions and strengthening the key competences of future workers.

The Hungarian VET system does not recognize an official role of apprentices and apprenticeship coaches and vocational training is directly coordinated by vocational training centers that were established by the Ministry of Human Resources to organize and directly coordinate state-run vocational training.



North Macedonian vocational training has a long tradition. A formal definition is stated in the NQF, developed in 2011. VET businesses are the most successful entrepreneurship model in the country, catering to industries mainly in the TECH sector.

Generally, after studying all country reports it can be seen that the biggest difference is between the more formal Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, Italian and the more informal UK apprenticeship system. The UK system seems to be more flexible and works better with the aims of the project. However, it is important to note that in practice, the VET systems in the selected countries are fragmented and difficult to navigate.

2. Relation to European systems and frameworks

The national systems of the most involved countries comply with the European Qualification Frameworks and in their legislation, they all pledged to meet EU standards and refer to it.

On the contrary, there is again a specific situation in the UK. Up to now, the Apprenticeship Standards and VET qualification are still mapped against EQF Levels but after 2021 (Brexit), the UK Government decided to withdraw from the Erasmus + program and from ECVET. Nevertheless, it can no longer be guaranteed that development of the UK Apprenticeships Standards will be aligned with the EU Framework of Quality Apprenticeships.

3. Validation of non-formal and informal learning

In Slovakia and Hungary, there is not a fully developed national validation system for non-formal and informal learning yet. However, several methods/elements of validation are embedded in the relevant national legislation.

Recognition of results of further education based on assessment of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through accredited programmes leads to full or partial qualification. However, recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through work experience or practice need to meet practical training requirements in school-based vocational training. Therefore, the individuals without completed education can apply for an



examination in an accredited institution and receive a certificate confirming compliance with the qualification standards.

In North Macedonia, the validation of non-formal and informal learning is introduced and developed in line with the NQF. When individuals wish to validate a certificate they have obtained through a process of non-formal or informal learning, there are 4 stage to go throughs:

1. Identifying competencies of an individual (i.e., the results of learning) acquired through both non-formal and informal education;
2. Documenting the results of the non-formal and informal learning completed by an individual through accompanying proof;
3. Assessing the results of the learning done by an individual through examination of the provided proof;
4. Certification of the individual's achievements based on the results of their learning.

This process can be done by institutions that can apply to be verified for either all four or only the initial stages of validation. Any legal entity can apply to be an accredited provider of VNFIL, a process managed through the Ministry of Education and Science.

In Poland, non-formal and informal education is not well developed and therefore validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal education is related to mechanisms applied in formal education. Extramural exams are one of the methods of validating learning outcomes achieved outside formal education. The bodies responsible for organization and publication of the results related to these exams are the Central Examination Board and Regional Examination Boards.

In Italy, there is a possibility to validate and certify non-formal and informal learning within the National Skills Certification System (SNCC) which is regulated by national and regional regulations defining the minimum service standards.



In the UK, there is no universal approach to validate or recognize non-formal and informal learning and there is no data to show the extent to which it takes place. The most commonly used term for validation of non-formal and informal learning is the 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL), which is usually used in relation to formal qualifications.

To recognize and accredit learning retrospectively, the P4CA offers a new innovative methodology known as the Collective Open Learning Curriculum (CLOCK), which is particularly designed and fitted to the context of the CCIs. It is based around four skill sets which have been identified by creative professionals in the UK and across Europe as essential skills for professionals delivering creative work: Creative Practice, Creative Entrepreneurship, Sharing Knowledge and Skills and Developing social potential.

4. Certification and Accreditation Systems

In Italy, there is a procedure for identification and validation of skills, knowledge and competences based on 5 concrete steps: 1. publication; 2. voluntary request; 3. identification&validation process; 4. certification process; 5. training course.

In Slovakia, there is the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements responsible for monitoring and quality assurance of education.

Certification in Slovakia is based on examination of accredited programmes graduates and is performed by an authorised institution that is, at the same time, in charge of exam organization. Nevertheless, applying for this type of an exam without prior completion of the accredited programme is possible for individuals who have at least five years of professional experience. They receive a certificate confirming compliance with the related qualification standards. However, certificates verifying professional competence are not equivalent to those acquired in formal education.

Accreditation of an educational program is a state verification of the ability of an educational institution to carry out an accredited educational program on the basis of meeting the conditions laid down in the Lifelong Learning Act (No.568/2009). The decision on

accreditation is made by the Ministry, which, based on the recommendation of the Accreditation Commission, issues a certificate of accreditation of the educational program to the educational institution. The accreditation commission, comprising personalities from academic and non-academic areas, is an advisory body to the government, independent from the Ministry of Education.

In Hungary, the whole system has been placed in the hands of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and training is accredited by the National Accreditation Authority. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry conducts the professional side and the other part is managed by the Educational Authority.

In Poland, accreditation covers a specific type of a continuing education/training program or course. Evaluation is conducted by an accreditation panel appointed by the Head of the Regional Education Authorities (REA). However, there is no certification in the sector of CCIs, there is basically no place where an Apprenticeship Coach would acquire a certificate.

In the UK, there is a number of different awarding organizations that offer accreditation for qualification. These organizations can be registered charities, chartered institutes, commercial businesses, employers who have established their own awarding body, small sector specific bodies or large cross-sectoral bodies. Although, it is important to note that some specific sub-sectors of the CCIs have very clear accreditation systems.

Conclusion

In this document, we have presented a summary of the VET system and its relation to European systems and frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification and accreditation systems in six European countries.

Based on the findings, in all involved countries there is a validation system for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in various forms but there is no clear classification for CCIs at the moment. All involved countries lack a coherent system for validation of learning outcomes gained from non-formal and informal learning. Some of the countries do not even



have the development of CCI in their plans. On the contrary, the summary also highlights that some specific sub-sectors of the CCIs have very clear accreditation systems, primarily in the UK.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the biggest contrast we have found is the difference between the more formal dual system (that is applied in the majority of involved countries) and the more informal UK apprenticeship system. The UK system seems to be more flexible, less formal and generally works better with the aims of the project. However, due to Brexit, the UK based qualifications are no longer likely to meet the aims of P4CA in promoting common EU frameworks and transferability.

None of the selected countries claim to have a place where an Apprenticeship Coach would be able to get certification. Nevertheless, the P4CA project partnership believes that the CLOCK framework described in section 3 can offer a new and innovative model of informal and non-formal learning accreditation.