

## VNFIL COUNTRY FICHE: PORTUGAL

## General description of the system

National terminology: “RVC” - *Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências*

A formal VNFIL system exists in Portugal since the beginning of 2000. Initially these activities were developed by the RVCC (Centers for Recognition, Validation and Certification), later by the CNO (New Opportunities Centres) and since 2013 by CQEP (Centre for Qualification and Vocational Education). CQEP are structures of the National Qualifications System that play a key role in building bridges between the worlds of education, training and employment, in a perspective of learning throughout life. The CQEP are accompanied by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP), which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of education and training policies for young people and adults and ensure the development and management of the system of recognition, validation and certification of skills.

The CQEP aims to provide young people and adults an information service, guidance and referral in order to obtain an academic and/or vocational qualifications. The Centre also develops recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) acquired by adults throughout life by formal, informal and non-formal means, in their school or professional dimension.

The CQEP can be created in public schools of primary and secondary level; vocational training centres or local authorities or private training providers

The result of the RVCC process is issuing a Qualification Certificate and / or Diploma corresponding to a total or partial certification.

## Process and vocabulary

Identification (*Reception*)

Candidate registration and clarification, considering the mission and the scope of intervention of CQEP;

## Documentation

*Diagnosis:* Candidate profile analysis in order to identify education and / or training responses adjusted to their situation (motivations, needs and expectations). A comprehensive profile is elaborated during at least two sessions. The time for the referral to other appropriate services doesn't exceed 1 month.

*Information and Guidance:* Identification of individual projects of education and professional training, and present realistic options for further studies and / or integration in the labor market;

*Referral:* Refer the candidate to an offer of education and / or vocational training or for recognition, validation and certification of competences - RVCC (only possible for adult applicants, if they are between 18 and 23 years inclusive, that have at least three years duly proven professional experience),

## Assessment

Recognition and Validation of Competences - Identification and validation of competences acquired by adult through formal, non-formal and informal learning. The candidate is oriented by a team of professionals and elaborates a Portfolio. A Bilan de compétences methodology is used, with a clear information about the process at the beginning.

## Certification

Demonstration of adults' competences, before a jury, by conducting an exam. The jury has time for preparatory work (analysis of the portfolio with the RVC counsellor). The CQEP gives the candidate a clear project and action plan for the

continuation of his/her professional development pathway.

### Usage of VNFIL

The target groups of these centers are young people aged 15 years or, regardless of age, attending the last grade of primary education or adults with needs of developing and enhancing knowledge and skills. The main focus of the VNFIL system is on the low-skilled citizens. The services provided in CQEP have no cost.

The conclusion of the RVCC process in a CQEP allows to obtain a certification:

- Academic: Basic level (6th or 9th grade) or secondary
- Professional: Level 2 or 4 (NQF), referring to the professions in the National Catalogue for Qualifications

### Quality assurance

There is a central QA/QD system for VNFIL in Portugal defined in the document - Reference Guide for Quality Assurance in CQEPs. (see attachment

This document defines a set of indicators and benchmarks that allow:

- To guide the activity of CQEP, ensuring the quality of its intervention
- Promote harmonization of procedures, so that the network CQEP act in a coherent and coordinated manner
- Monitor the activity of CQEP based on common indicators

The analysis and evaluation of the indicators is the responsibility of each CQEP. The ANQEP accompanies and monitors the activity of CQEP by consulting the SIGO data and with meetings and follow-up visits (comprising not only the consultation of the various stakeholders as the technical-pedagogical file consulting). Managers and staff of the CQEPs are trained for the self-assessment and the results are collected and analysed in a centralized database. Self-assessment approach is thus used as a self-regulation instrument. Based on this framework, an annual report including a development plan is drawn up by every centre. This report is the condition for continuous public financing of the centre.

**Role of Peer review:** The peer review methodology will strengthen the link between CQEPs. In a context of financial constraints, it allows each CQEP with a low investment to have expert feedback on the quality of their interventions. Peer Review potential is related to the fact that this approach results from a set of existing good practices (cooperation between CQEP).

### Status of implementation of the CEDEFOP guidelines on VNFIL (2015)

#### 1. Availability of information, guidance and counselling:

A comprehensive service is provided by publicly financed centres, which assures the visibility and transparency of the whole process from the beneficiaries' point of view. The centres have also the mission of giving information on career development and referring beneficiaries to other types of services and/or trainings.

#### 2. Stakeholders coordination:

The national legislation defines the policies, regulates the procedures and evaluates the activities of CQEPs. The responsible public entity is ANQEP. National and local stakeholders don't seem to be directly involved in the provision or policy-making.

#### 3. Links to national qualification framework

Clear links exist between targeted qualifications and NQF. Qualifications on EQF level 2 to 3 are targeted via VNFIL. The outcomes of VNFIL are equivalent to the diplomas gained through formal learning.

#### 4. Standards and learning outcomes

National qualification standards exist both for the general/academic and professional qualifications (EQF level 3 and lower).

#### 5. Quality assurance

Quality assurance is done on national level through legislation, that defines the basic rules of the VNFIL system. Very

good central system based on EFQM standards exists (Common Assessment Framework - CAF). The system provides and IT backend for the management of beneficiaries and provides clear criteria for the self-assessment of the CQEP centres.

6. Professional competences of practitioners:

Counsellors have diverse backgrounds – there is no specific RVCC qualification, but professionals must have a degree in an area of social sciences. Continuous development is assured through monthly meetings. No formal requirements for members of Juries, but they must be a locally relevant stakeholder/teacher accredited by the CQEP.