

QUALIFICATION DATA NEEDS TO SUPPORT RECOGNITION OF NON-EU COUNTRY VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



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Disclaimer

This report was prepared by Karen Adams, Vera Chilari, Peter Debreczeni and Mile Dželalija for ETF.

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PREFACE

This report describes the findings of a short research study conducted by EPRD on behalf of ETF. The study provides a snapshot of recognition practices and data needs across a small selection of non-EU and EU countries along with an examination of some enablers and challenges to recognition. The findings are based on information gathered between August 2024 and January 2025.

The study involved a small sample of research participants along with information gathered when some websites were undergoing (re)development. As a result, the research cannot be viewed as a representative or comprehensive account of systems, practices and data requirements. However, the findings provide clear indications of key issues affecting the recognition within the EU of vocational qualifications from non-EU countries.

The research team thanks the organisations and individuals who contributed their time to the research. All efforts have been taken to ensure that the information included in the report was accurate at the time of data collection and reporting.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. INTRODUCTION	11
1.1. Overview	11
1.2. Glossary	12
2. BACKGROUND	15
2.1. What is recognition of qualifications?	15
2.2. What are vocational qualifications?	16
3. METHODS	21
3.1. Research objectives and scope	21
3.2. Research questions	22
3.3. Research design	23
3.4. Data collection	24
3.5. Data analysis	25
4. FINDINGS	26
4.1. Findings relating to the selected EU countries	26
4.2. Findings relating to Non-EU Countries	41
4.3. Findings relating to the Skills & Talent Mobility Package	48
4.4. Validation of Non-Formal & Informal Learning (VNFIL) – A third route to recognition of vocational qualifications?	50
4.5. Findings relating to ETF Resources	51
5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
5.1. The research aims	53
5.2. Principles and processes	53
5.3. Addressing information needs	55
5.4. VNFIL and the recognition of vocational qualifications	58
5.5. Improving the reach and impact of ETF Resources	59
6. CONCLUSIONS	61
6.1. Limitations of this research	61
6.2. Summary of Recommendations	61
ANNEX 1 – LIST OF TABLES INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT	63
ANNEX 2 – LIST OF ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RESEARCH	64

ANNEX 3 – BIBLIOGRAPHY	65
ANNEX 4 – WEBSITES CONSULTED DURING THE STUDY	69
ANNEX 5 – COUNTRY PROFILES	73
ANNEX 6 – INFORMATION NEEDED FOR RECOGNITION	149
ACRONYMS	151

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognition of skills and qualifications means formal acknowledgement by a relevant authority of the validity of a foreign qualification, and identification of skills, with a view to granting rights. [such as work or academic study].¹

Context

1. Since the late 1990s, the recognition of foreign qualifications by countries within the European Union (EU) has played an important role in supporting skills mobility. The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) (1997) and the Council of Europe's Directive 2005/36/EC provided the basis for recognition, supporting those with Higher Education (HE) and professional qualifications to move country for work or for further study. Several subsequent Council and European Commission Recommendations have extended the scope of recognition to other types of qualifications such as those provided by secondary-level education and training and by microcredentials. However, the LRC and the Directive 2005/36/EC remain the primary instruments underpinning recognition processes.
2. In recent years, the emergence of significant skills gaps in EU labour markets has led to an increasing focus on the links between recognition and skills mobility. In 2023, the European Commission (EC) published the *Recommendation on the recognition of the qualifications of third-country nationals* as part of its *Skills and Talent Mobility Package*² (S&TMP). This Recommendation calls on EU countries to provide easier and faster recognition of the qualifications of appropriately-skilled individuals from non-EU³ countries to enable them to access jobs in key sectors within the EU.
3. The 2023 Recommendation focuses on the importance of data for and about recognition. Among other aspects, it highlights that the competent recognition authorities (CRAs) responsible for recognition in each EU country should have access to reliable data to enable them to make recognition decisions, and that data about those decisions should be shared with other EU countries.
4. The European Training Foundation (ETF) has undertaken a range of initiatives that provide support for the international recognition of vocational qualifications, including the development of national qualifications databases in some of its partner countries. One intended use of these databases is to facilitate international recognition of each country's vocational qualifications by allowing access to the information needed for recognition. However, for this aim to be achieved, it is important to ensure alignment between the information provided by non-EU countries and that required by the CRAs in EU countries. This alignment is made complicated by the fact that, in each EU country, there may be many different bodies responsible for the recognition of vocational qualifications and each may have different information needs.

Aims, scope and structure of the research

5. In July 2024, ETF commissioned the research contained in this report to inform ETF's ongoing work to support the development of vocational qualifications databases. It was also envisaged that the results could contribute to developments designed to meet the aims of the European Commission's *Skills & Talent Mobility Package* (S&TMP). To this end, the research aimed to develop a deeper understanding of:
 - how CRAs in selected EU countries conduct recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications; and

1 Extracted from ETF, 2024: Better Recognition of Qualifications <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/better-recognition-qualifications>

2 European Commission (2023): *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions On Skills And Talent Mobility*.

3 In this report, the term 'EU countries' is used to refer to member states of the European Union. The term 'non-EU countries' refers to countries which are not members of the European Union nor members of the European Economic Area (EEA).

- the extent to which qualifications gained by non-EU nationals while living in the EU can be recognised when they return home.
6. In particular, the research investigated the types of data needed for recognition and if/how processes and data sources aligned between the EU countries and non-EU countries to allow that data to be shared. As the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) of the selected countries highlight, VET qualifications are provided primarily between EQF levels 3-5, with some at Level 5 being provided within the Higher Education (HE) sector. To ensure a clear focus on vocational qualifications, it was decided to limit the scope of investigations to the recognition of vocational qualifications which:
 - sit between EQF Levels 3 and 5
 - sit outside the remit of HE institutions
 - exclude healthcare qualifications (with the exception of qualifications for social care roles⁴).
 7. The research was conducted between August 2024 and January 2025. It focused on recognition practices and requirements in 4 EU countries and on the VET systems and recognition practices in 8 non-EU countries. The mixed-methods approach involved extensive searches of relevant websites in each country, semi-structured individual interviews with representatives from CRAs in the selected EU countries and focus group discussions with senior representatives from key VET-sector organisations in 7 of the 8 selected non-EU countries.

Key findings

8. Key findings from the research can be grouped under the following headings:
 - the recognition landscape in the EU countries
 - the VET landscape in the non-EU countries
 - the impact of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)
 - issues related to the S&TMP and skills mobility.

The recognition landscape in the EU countries

9. The competent recognition authorities (CRAs) in the 4 EU countries included two distinct groups: ENIC-NARIC centres and a wide range of bodies responsible for recognising qualifications allowing individuals access to regulated professions. In some cases, the ENIC-NARIC centres provide support for the other CRAs in their evaluation of the vocational qualification.
10. Both the LRC and/or Directive 2005/36/EC predate the development and implementation of many of the elements which are now common features of VET systems in EU countries and, increasingly, in non-EU countries. These features include:
 - NQFs which categorise qualifications based on the level of the learning outcomes of the qualification
 - the use of NQFs to support lifelong learning, allowing qualifications from different settings, of different durations and undertaken at different stages in life to be included within the national framework
 - the implementation of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) to allow experienced workers to complete vocational qualifications.
11. In all cases examined during the research, recognition processes were based on the LRC and/or Directive 2005/36/E. As a result, only a restricted range of vocational qualifications can be considered for recognition. In particular, a requirement for applicants to have completed a training programme means that qualifications gained through VNFIL processes are not eligible for recognition. In some cases, only qualifications that correspond to levels within the formal education system of the country (i.e. upper-secondary; post-secondary in the case of the study) can be accepted for recognition. Upper-secondary qualifications, in particular, are generally completed before the individual joins the labour market. However, the qualifications

4 The decision to include social care qualifications was based on an acknowledgement that this is a sector with severe shortages in EU countries.

which individuals might complete once they have joined the workforce appear to create greater challenges to recognition processes. The focus on the formal education system means that short qualifications and microcredentials which might be used to upskill already-skilled members of the workforce are unlikely to be recognised.

12. A primary aim of the study was to identify the information that CRAs in EU countries need when making recognition decisions. There was considerable commonality between the information requirements of the different CRAs, both in terms of what is required in an application and the information used to examine the qualification itself. As a result, the study was able to identify 15 categories of information likely to be needed for recognition. Although the information was gathered from a small number of CRAs and therefore cannot be considered as representative, the level of commonality suggests these 15 categories provide a good base for informing the sharing of information between CRAs and non-EU VET systems.
13. Three of the four ENIC-NARIC bodies included in the study provide recognition statements for vocational qualifications from non-EU countries. These statements attest comparability, rather than equivalence, with an aspect of the EU country's education and training system. However, each country uses a different reference point within their country's system to support that comparability. As a result, the potential for sharing outcomes of recognition across EU countries is reduced.
14. 'Professional recognition' involves establishing if the individual's qualification is equivalent to the qualifications or standards required for permission to work in a regulated profession. A key issue guiding recognition is whether or not the individual's intended job is regulated in the EU country. Although the majority of professions are not regulated, a significant number of trades and crafts roles are. In each EU country included in the study, there are a great many CRAs responsible for recognition of qualifications permitting access to regulated roles within a profession. They may comprise national, regional and local bodies and identifying which CRA is responsible for the recognition can be challenging. Some of the factors influencing this identification include:
 - the precise role within the trade or profession that the individual wants to take up
 - where the individual lives (or intends to live) in the EU country
 - how the individual wants to work, (e.g. as an employee or as an independent contractor).

Finding clear information about how to identify the CRA and apply for recognition proved challenging in many cases. However, there were examples of very useful guidance and tools, such as those available via Germany's *Anerkennung in Deutschland* portal.

15. There are two further complicating factors in gaining recognition of professional qualifications from non-EU countries. The first is the time and expense involved. It may take upwards of 4 months to gain recognition, particularly if the applicant receives only partial recognition and is required to complete additional measures to address gaps in their skills or experience. A second factor is that many roles require the individual to provide proof of professional experience. However, Directive 2005/36/EC stipulates that this experience should have been gained in an EU or EEA country. Both profession-specific CRAs included in the study confirmed that they could not accept evidence of experience gained outside the EU/EEA.
16. It is important to note that, for both comparability statements and professional recognition, applications for recognition are processed on a case-by-case basis. At a time when there is increasing demand for recognition, this approach is creating pressure on the capacity of CRAs
17. Notably, the study found that national data on the recognition of vocational qualifications was extremely limited, with only one of the EU countries conducting central monitoring of recognition outcomes. Importantly, at the time of the research, no data was available on if and how employers use outcomes of recognition of vocational qualifications.

The VET landscape in the non-EU countries

18. As mentioned above, the 8 non-EU countries included in the study are undertaking major VET reform projects, many with the support of international agencies. One common feature is the development and implementation of an NQF, often using the EQF as a reference point, and

explicitly designed to promote lifelong learning and the recognition of skills and qualifications both nationally and internationally. In all the non-EU focus group discussions, research participants were keen to take steps to ensure that their qualifications could be recognised in the EU. Among other issues, this was seen as a way of promoting parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning. However, there was a need expressed for clear information about the steps they could take to improve 'recognisability'.

19. Each system is at a different stage in the reform process, but there are commonalities, including a clear structure for the VET system. Importantly, in most cases, the development and quality assurance of all aspects of vocational qualifications, including qualification specification and awarding, curriculum development and the accreditation of training providers, is normally within the remit of an appointed statutory body. As a result, and in contrast to the traditional structure in universities, where the university is both the training provider and competent body, a VET system may have a large number of training providers delivering what the same training programme and assessment process. However, many recognition processes require information about the training programme to be provided by the individual training provider rather than from the central competent body.
20. The majority of the non-EU countries have, or are developing, websites, including national qualifications registers, designed to give public access to much of the information identified as important for recognition. However, when tested by the research team, a range of issues relating to the accessibility, completeness and management of the information on the sites created challenges to accessing the required information.

The impact of VNFIL

21. Although the recognition of vocational qualifications from non-EU countries is offered in the EU countries examined in the study, the research suggested that current approaches to recognition do not fully support the recognition of qualifications and skills gained through VET.
22. One way of addressing this issue has emerged in the form of the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). Many of the countries included in the study have developed VNFIL processes for their own nationals, and there was an indication that this route is also being advised for people from non-EU countries already living in the EU. This approach allows the individual to include their qualification within the evidence required for a VNFIL claim and, in some cases, leads to the award of a further qualification. However, in the cases examined in the research, the value of the original qualification is subsumed into the evidence. As a result, the individual and prospective employers may not recognise the value of the qualification per se. This is an important consideration for countries hoping to promote the value of vocational qualifications to students and employers.

Issues related to the S&TMP and skills mobility

23. The S&TMP has created a clear focus for the recognition of vocational qualifications from non-EU countries. The measures within the package seek to address skills gaps in the EU while providing support for further skills development for appropriately-skilled individuals from non-EU countries. In particular, the potential for *Talent Partnerships* to support the greater recognition of vocational qualifications was noted by non-EU participants. Suggestions included the development of recognition agreements for vocational qualifications in the sectors which are the focus of Partnerships and the use of the non-EU vocational qualifications as a baseline for recruitment into upskilling programmes designed to meet the needs of employers in EU partner countries.
24. Pre-departure services for migrant workers exist in many of the non-EU countries. These services are important for ensuring that skilled workers are prepared to take up work in other countries. Helping individuals prepare for recognition of their qualifications is an important part of those services. They are therefore an important audience for any information, guidance or further development of recognition services.
25. One further area highlighted in the research is that the EU is only one of a number of regions competing to attract workers into roles that may require vocational qualifications. Each recruiting

region or country has its own skills requirements and a number of programmes have been established to ensure that roles are filled by appropriately-skilled workers. It is important to recognise that, in a competitive landscape, complex or onerous recognition processes might create a barrier to recruitment.

Conclusions and recommendations

26. This research was a short study designed primarily to gather information about the data that CRAs need to carry out recognition of vocational qualifications from non-EU countries. However, the use of individual interviews and discussion groups allowed the researchers to gather rich information related to the main topics of the study. They also allowed for more in-depth exploration of challenges and enablers in the recognition of vocational qualifications.
27. It should be stressed that this research study was exploratory. With only a small number of research participants included in the study, the findings cannot be considered in any way to be representative. However, they do provide a clear and valid snapshot of some of issues that affect the recognition practices.
28. The findings reveal interesting and important themes deserving of further study and which can be used to inform future work, including the development of interoperable databases. These themes have been captured in the 8 recommendations made in the final section of this report. The recommendations are designed primarily for ETF, but also assume the involvement of other agencies. They include recommendations for the development of guidance on recognition for different audiences, including how to align the data needed by EU CRAs and that provided by VET bodies in non-EU countries. Other recommendations focus on the need for effective communication and coordination between the different bodies involved in recognition, both in EU and in non-EU countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

1. In recent years, there have been growing concerns about skills gaps in the labour markets of European Union (EU) countries. In 2024, the European Labour Authority (ELA) reported labour shortages across a wide range of sectors, with crafts and trades cited as levels of occupation with the most widespread and severe shortages⁵. Importantly, the skills required for these occupations are most frequently associated with learning developed through vocational education and training (VET) and with vocational qualifications which usually sit below Level 6 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
2. In an effort to address increasing skills shortages, the European Commission (EC) announced a *Skills and Talent Mobility Package*⁶ (S&TMP) in 2023. This package of measures was designed to make the EU more attractive as a work destination for appropriately-skilled individuals from outside the EU and to facilitate skills mobility. The measures include the development of:
 - the *EU Talent Pool*: This platform is intended to facilitate the recruitment of skilled jobseekers from non-EU countries⁷ into EU-wide shortage occupations. The intention is to make recruitment easier and faster and to enable employers to access a wider pool of skills and talent
 - *Talent Partnerships*: Talent Partnerships aim to provide frameworks for cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries to promote talent mobility and skills development. The experience and upskilling afforded via Talent Partnerships are seen as important benefits both to the individuals and to their country of origin when they return home
 - *Measures to make the recognition of qualifications gained in non-EU countries easier and faster*: Recognition can be seen as a translation tool, helping individuals and prospective employers to understand if and how a qualification gained in one country relates to the qualification system of another. This understanding can help both employers and individuals identify if and how the skills represented by a qualification meets the specifications for a job specification.
3. In its announcement, the European Commission called on EU countries to provide simpler and faster routes to recognition and on non-EU countries to provide access to the information needed for that recognition. However, the Commission's announcement also acknowledged that the recognition landscape is complicated and it suggested a number of measures to enhance effective recognition of qualifications. These include finding ways of making information about non-EU qualifications⁸ more easily accessible and encouraging EU countries to develop interoperable databases on the comparability of non-EU qualifications.
4. Over recent years, the European Training Foundation (ETF) has undertaken a range of initiatives that provide support for the international recognition of vocational qualifications. This work has included supporting countries neighbouring the EU to reform and improve their systems for VET and the development in these non-EU countries of national qualifications databases. One intended use of these databases is to facilitate international recognition of each country's vocational qualifications by allowing access to the information needed for recognition.
5. However, if recognition of vocational qualifications is to play the role envisaged for it in the Commission's announcement, it is important to ensure alignment between the information

5 European Labour Authority (2024): Report on labour shortages and surpluses 2023, p.72.

6 European Commission (2023): *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions On Skills And Talent Mobility*.

7 In this report, the term 'EU countries' is used to refer to member states of the European Union. The term 'non-EU countries' refers to countries which are not members of the European Union nor members of the European Economic Area (EEA).

8 In this report, the term 'non-EU qualification' is used to describe qualifications from non-EU countries.

provided by non-EU countries and that required by the bodies responsible for recognition (competent recognition authorities (CRAs)) in EU countries. This alignment is made complicated by the fact that, in each EU country, there may be many different bodies responsible for the recognition of vocational qualifications and each may have different information needs.

6. In July 2024, ETF commissioned EPRD to conduct research into the recognition of vocational qualifications in 4 EU countries and 8 non-EU countries. The overall aim was to support recognition of vocational qualifications between EU and non-EU countries by investigating:
 - how CRAs in the selected EU countries conduct recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications; and
 - the extent to which qualifications gained by non-EU nationals while living in the European Union can be recognised when they return home.

In particular, the research aimed to investigate the types of data needed for recognition and if/how processes and data sources aligned between the EU countries and non-EU countries to allow that data to be shared. This information would inform ETF's ongoing work to support the development of vocational qualifications databases.

7. The research aimed to identify:
 - the bodies responsible for the recognition of vocational qualifications in each country
 - the data required for recognition and how this is gathered
 - how applications for recognition are evaluated and the tools used in the evaluation processes
 - if and how data on the demand for recognition, and on recognition decisions, is gathered and shared
 - any challenges which CRAs face and how ETF might adjust its resources to help address those challenges.
8. This report reflects the research that was conducted between August 2024 and January 2025. It is divided into the following sections:
 - **Background** examines three key elements within the project – recognition, vocational qualifications and the *Skills & Talent Mobility Package* - and identifies how considerations of each informed the research
 - **Methods** defines the research objectives and summarises the methods used to gather and analyse the research data
 - **Findings** summarises the information gathered to address the research questions
 - **Discussion & Recommendations** discusses the themes emerging from the findings and makes recommendations for ETF's work
 - **Conclusion** identifies the value and limitations of this research and identifies potential next steps for ETF.

1.2. Glossary

1. The research was informed, in part, by the findings of two previous studies: *The Mapping of Qualification Recognition Centres*⁹ commissioned by ETF and *Future Possibilities for Recognition of Vocational Qualifications in Europe* produced by the BRAVO Project¹⁰. Both studies investigated the recognition landscape in the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) and in selected non-EU countries.

9 ETF (2023): *Mapping of Qualifications Recognition Centres*. <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/document-attachments/mapping-qualifications-recognition-centres>.

10 The BRAVO Project is a project consortium of three members of the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC): ENIC-NARIC Norway; ENIC-NARIC Lithuania and ENIC-NARIC Sweden. Co-funded by the European Commission, the project is looking at if and how the role of the NARICs (National Academic Recognition and Information Centres) can be supported and enhanced in the field of vocational qualifications. Details of project reports are in the bibliography.

An important finding from the BRAVO project research was that a *lack of a common language among the various stakeholders in the vocational recognition sector creates barriers that complicate the development of best practices*¹¹. In order to support a common understanding of the issues discussed in this report, this glossary defines how the following key terms should be understood within the context of this research.

Key term	Explanation
compensatory measure	Measures such as an adaptation period (a period of supervised and assessed work) or other assessment tasks which an individual must complete in order to receive full recognition of their qualification
competency standard	See 'occupational standard'
competent recognition authority (CRA)	A body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications. <i>Source: Lisbon Recognition Convention</i>
comprehensive National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	NQFs designed to integrate qualifications from different settings and from different types of providers into the same framework, with the same level descriptors applying to all. Comprehensive NQFs are seen as important tools in supporting lifelong learning by promoting permeability and transferability between different types of learning.
continuing vocational education and training (CVET)	Learning carried out after initial education or training – or after entry into working life – which aims to: - improve or update knowledge, know-how and skills (upskilling); - acquire new skills for a career move (retraining / reskilling); - support professional development. <i>Source: CEDEFOP Terminology of European education and training policy: Glossary</i>
credential evaluator	The person responsible for examining qualifications submitted for recognition and identifying if they meet the requirements of the recognising authority.
formal education	Education that is generally state-regulated and comprises general education within the national school system, as well as education within regulated post-secondary and Higher Education. Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education may also be recognized as being part of the formal education system.
formal learning	Acquisition of knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences in an organised and structured environment (e.g. an education or training institution or a company). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view and typically leads to certification. <i>Source: CEDEFOP Terminology of European education and training policy: Glossary</i>
informal sector	Small, often family-owned, enterprises that are not registered under national legislation (e.g. tax regulations; social security obligations) or other regulatory acts. <i>Source: Adapted from UNESCO Glossary definition</i>
initial vocational education and training (IVET)	Learning carried out in the initial VET system – usually before entering working life – to acquire skills and competences leading to a specific occupation or job. <i>Source: CEDEFOP Terminology of European education and training policy: Glossary</i>

11 BRAVO: Skills for the Future Project (2024): Future Possibilities for Recognition of Vocational Qualifications in Europe' p.50

Key term	Explanation
level descriptors	Statements in a National Qualifications Framework that define the characteristics of learning outcomes at each level of the framework.
microcredential	Record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small unit of learning, and that have been assessed against a predefined standard. <i>Source: CEDEFOP Terminology of European education and training policy: Glossary</i>
non-EU countries	In this report, 'non-EU countries' is the term used to refer to countries which are not member states of the European Union (EU) or part of the European Economic Area (EEA)
occupational standard	A document that describes the knowledge, skills and understanding an individual needs to be competent at a job. In some of the countries represented in this study, occupational standards (also known as competency standards) are used as the basis for development of vocational qualifications.
professional body	An organisation with individual members practicing a profession or occupation in which the organisation maintains an oversight of the knowledge, skills, conduct and practice of that profession or occupation. <i>Source: ScienceCouncil.org</i>
professional qualifications	In this report, a professional qualification is a qualification that is required for work in a regulated profession.
recognition	formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities <i>Source: Lisbon Recognition Convention</i>
regulated profession	a professional activity.. access to which.. is subject to the possession of specific professional qualification <i>Source: Condensed from the Council Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC)</i>
validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)	process of confirmation by an authorised body that learning outcomes (knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences) acquired in non-formal or informal settings have been assessed against relevant standards <i>Source: CEDEFOP Terminology of European education and training policy: Glossary</i>
vocational qualification	Formal certification of learning arising from participation in vocational education and/or training and awarded by a recognised competent body. A vocational qualification indicates that the individual has the knowledge and skills required by a specific job.

2. BACKGROUND

1. In 2024, ETF published *Better Recognition of Qualifications*¹², a policy briefing which highlights some of the challenges to the recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications by EU countries. These include the difficulties CRAs in EU countries may face in gathering the data needed for recognition and the difficulties that individuals may face in gaining recognition of their qualifications.
2. In order to address some of these challenges, ETF commissioned this research project to explore recognition requirements, processes and data needs in more detail. The resulting information is intended to inform ETF's work in supporting easier and faster recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications, particularly within the context of the S&TMP.
3. This section examines recognition, vocational qualifications and the S&TMP to identify how each element influenced the research.

2.1. What is recognition of qualifications?

*'Recognition of skills and qualifications' means formal acknowledgement by a relevant authority of the validity of a foreign qualification, and identification of skills, with a view to granting rights to a third-country national, namely access to a regulated profession, a visa or work and residence permit for employment purposes, or access to a learning programme*¹³.

4. In 2023, the European Commission published its *Recommendation on the recognition of the qualifications of third-country nationals*. As the definition above highlights, the process of recognition is designed to determine the validity of a qualification in order to grant the holder access to rights within an EU country. This process involves the evaluation of the qualification to ascertain if and how it meets the requirements of relevant standards within the EU country. Examples of standards often used as reference points to underpin recognition include (but are not confined to) the levels of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), occupational or professional standards, and other recognised qualifications.
5. Since 1997, the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) has underpinned the rights of individuals to have HE qualifications gained in a state that is a signatory to the convention assessed for recognition in another. In 2005, the Council of Europe's Directive 2005/36/EC provided the regulatory basis for individuals who have gained professional qualifications for regulated professions in one EU country to have them recognised in another. This includes automatic mutual recognition of qualifications for a range of medical professions along with a requirement for appropriate systems of recognition for other regulated professions.
6. The move towards automatic recognition of qualifications across the EU found further support in the Council's Recommendation 2018/C 444/01. This Recommendation promotes the automatic recognition of qualifications gained in EU countries both in HE and in upper-secondary education and training, along with recognition of outcomes of periods of learning completed abroad. This wider scope of recognition encompasses many qualifications that sit below tertiary level and outside the list of regulated professions.
7. The 2023 Recommendation builds on this widening of scope of recognition. It encourages EU countries to develop and implement systems that will facilitate recognition of the skills and qualifications, including vocational qualifications, of citizens of non-EU countries seeking to access work or further study in the EU. However, it limits the requirement for recognition to qualifications needed for regulated professions within the EU country where the non-EU national is living or applying for work.

12 ETF, 2024: *Better Recognition of Qualifications* <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/better-recognition-qualifications>

13 Commission Recommendation of 15.11.2023 on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals, European Commission 2023.

8. The recognition of HE qualifications in countries which are signatories to the LRC is carried out by authorised national information centres. Jointly, many of these information centres cooperate within the ENIC and/or NARIC networks. As the scope of recognition has evolved within EU policy, the work of many ENIC-NARIC centres has expanded to incorporate the recognition of qualifications sitting below tertiary level and/or outside the scope of HE. For many, this includes the recognition of vocational qualifications. However, as the BRAVO report highlights, many ENIC-NARIC centres apply the same LRC principles to the recognition of both HE and vocational qualifications¹⁴.
9. Importantly, the LRC defines a qualification as a “*diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education programme...*”¹⁵. The BRAVO report reflects that principles designed to recognise academic learning may not be entirely appropriate to the recognition of the types of learning and skills represented in vocational qualifications. It is important, therefore, to consider what differentiates vocational qualifications from mainstream academic qualifications.

2.2. What are vocational qualifications?

Definition 1: VET

Learning which aims to acquire knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences – either job-specific or transversal – required in specific occupations or more broadly on the labour market.

Comment:

- VET covers initial vocational education and training, continuing vocational education and training at secondary, post-secondary and higher levels.
- it plays an increasing role in retraining and upskilling adults.
- VET can take place in a broad range of – formal and non-formal – settings and –public or private– sectors

Definition 2: Qualification

- **Formal Qualification:** the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. A qualification confers official recognition of the value of learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practise a trade (OECD).

This term has a second dimension:

- **Job requirements:** *knowledge, aptitudes and skills required to perform specific tasks attached to a particular work position (ILO).*

Source: CEDEFOP Glossary of Terminology of European Education & Training Policy

¹⁴ BRAVO Skills for the Future Project (2023): Mapping recognition of foreign vocational qualifications: A presentation of the findings from a survey of recognition of vocational qualifications in the ENIC-NARIC network (p.40)

¹⁵ Council of Europe (1997): Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region; p.3

10. The *CEDEFOP Glossary of Terminology of European Education and Training Policy*¹⁶ does not provide a definition of 'vocational qualification'. However, from the definitions above, we can determine that a vocational qualification is the formal certification of learning arising from participation in VET and awarded by a recognised competent body. It also assumes that the individual has the knowledge and skills required by a specific job. Although this may seem obvious, it is important to establish what a vocational qualification *is* to identify what differentiates it from other general and academic qualifications gained through education in schools and in HE.
11. The key difference between vocational and academic qualifications is that the former provide evidence that the holder has the range of knowledge and skills required to carry out a specific role or range of tasks in the workplace. This focus on meeting the requirements of a job role means that vocational qualifications may differ from academic qualifications in terms of:
 - a) how and when individuals normally complete them
 - b) where they sit in national systems
 - c) who has the right to award them
 - d) what they are used for.

2.2.1. How and when do people complete them?

12. Vocational qualifications are designed for a range of audiences, often within the same occupational or sectoral context.
 - **Initial VET (IVET)** qualifications are most commonly targeted at young people before they enter the workplace and are designed to prepare them for work in a specific sector or role. They may be delivered in secondary schools, where they may be integrated with general academic subjects, in colleges and in the workplace as part of apprenticeships. They are generally integrated into the formal education system at secondary or post-secondary level, with training programmes typically running over a number of years
 - **Continuing VET (CVET)** qualifications are much more varied and are designed to meet a wide range of needs. They are generally aimed at adult learners or those who have left formal education. They are often delivered in training centres, adult education centres or the workplace. CVET qualifications vary enormously in length, with examples including certificated short courses designed to upskill existing workers and longer courses designed for those who are seeking to retrain for a different profession
 - **Validation of non-formal and informal learning:** Validation allows individuals who have a level of work experience which enables them to meet the assessment requirements of the qualification without completing a full training programme. Validation is known by a variety of terms including validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), (the term used in this report); recognition of prior learning (RPL); and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). In France, it is *Validation des Acquis par l'Expérience* (VAE). Examples of countries which permit achievement of national vocational qualifications by a VNFIL process include France, Algeria, Moldova, Pakistan, Türkiye and Ukraine.
13. An important aspect of these different routes to achieving vocational qualifications is when individuals are likely to complete them. IVET is designed primarily to prepare people for entry into the workplace, when they are beginning to develop the skills needed for the job. However, both CVET and VNFIL are generally aimed at those who are already in the workplace and who are therefore likely to already have work-related skills. If recognition processes focus on IVET, therefore, they may exclude people with a greater range or depth of skills.

16 Source: *CEDEFOP Glossary of Terminology of European Education and Training Policy* <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-glossary/glossary?letter=V>

2.2.2. Where do vocational qualifications sit in national systems?

14. There are two predominant models used to describe national education systems: the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) and National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs).
15. ISCED is the UNESCO model devised in the 1970s to categorise levels of education to underpin statistical analysis of education internationally. It comprises 8 levels, with labels that are commonly used to describe different stages of formal education along a traditional route. The definitions of levels 2-5 include vocational qualifications. However, the labels used to describe each level are firmly associated with the formal education settings of school and HE. Importantly, education at each level is categorised not only by its label but also the expected duration of the learning programme.

Table 1: ISCED Levels

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Primary education	Lower Secondary education	Upper Secondary education	Post-Sec-ondary education	Short-cy-cle tertiary education	Bachelor's or equiva-lent	Master's or equiva-lent	Doctorate or equiva-lent

16. Since the beginning of the 2000s, countries have increasingly adopted **NQFs** to describe their national learning landscape. Like ISCED, these Frameworks aim to demonstrate how different qualifications can be categorised and linked to each other. Unlike ISCED, however, the levels of NQFs are based on statements (level descriptors) that describe the levels of the learning outcomes represented by the qualification. Although each NQF has its own number of levels and categories of level descriptors, the descriptors typically describe the features of the knowledge, skills and competences represented in a qualification at each level. CEDEFOP's *Global Inventory of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks 2022*¹⁷ highlights that the majority of NQFs are comprehensive, meaning that the level descriptors are applied across all types of qualifications. For many NQFs, this allows the possibility of including qualifications delivered in a wide range of settings, including CVET. A key aim of including this range of qualifications within the one framework is to allow comparison between them and encourage permeability between different types of learning. As a result, many NQF diagrams include vocational qualifications, HE qualifications and school qualifications in different but parallel categories.
17. In addition to NQFs, a number of regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs) have been developed to facilitate comparison of NQFs between countries. The first and most widely used of these is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to which the majority of NQFs across the EU and EEA are formally referenced, along with those of a number of other countries.
18. One aim of recognition is to identify the level of the qualification being recognised. However, it is important to identify which (type of) Framework is being used as a reference point for level as each provides different information about the qualification.

2.2.3. Who has the right to award vocational qualifications?

19. A key difference between vocational and other qualifications lies in the range of competent bodies who award them. The authority to award qualifications within HE generally sits within the universities themselves whilst school-based qualifications are normally awarded by national agencies such as qualifications authorities or Ministry departments. However, one aim of NQF development in many countries has been to capture and to assure the quality of a more diverse range of vocational qualifications and to open the system to a wider range of providers from both the public and private sectors. This includes many qualifications designed to upskill or retrain

17 CEDEFOP (2023): *Global Inventory of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks 2022, Volume 1: Thematic chapters*.

people who are already in the workplace. These qualifications may be awarded by a wide range of bodies, such as professional bodies or employers.

20. An important consideration for the recognition of a vocational qualification, therefore, is how the recognising body views the competent body responsible for awarding it. This is particularly important in view of the increasing use of CVET qualifications, including microcredentials, as tools for upskilling existing workforces.

2.2.4. What are vocational qualifications used for?

21. **Entry into regulated or non-regulated professions:** An important consideration for the recognition of a vocational qualification is whether or not it is required for entry into a regulated profession. Regulated professions are those which are regulated by law in a country. The regulations stipulate the requirements that an individual needs to meet to practise the profession. These regulations may identify required qualifications and/or types of experience required and/or other standards which the individual must meet.
22. Although the term 'profession' is often associated with HE qualifications, it is important to recognise that many regulated professions require qualifications that are in fact gained through VET. Examples of roles that are regulated in many EU countries include trades such as electrician, carpenter or heavy goods vehicle driver along with services such as beauty therapist or social care assistant. Individuals working in these roles often have responsibilities relating to the health and safety of others and regulation serves to assure that they work safely.
23. Key factors affecting the recognition of qualifications for regulated professions in the EU are that:
 - each EU country regulates professions differently and professions which are regulated in one EU country may not be regulated in another
 - a wide range of regulators may be responsible for the regulated professions. Each may have different processes and data needs relating to the recognition of qualifications
 - in many cases, the regulation of professions requiring a vocational qualification is associated with a professional role rather than a whole professional area. For example, electricians carrying out different types of tasks may have to meet different regulation requirements.

This means that individuals seeking to move from a non-EU country to work in an EU country will need access to clear information about the status of the profession they intend to enter and the associated requirements for recognition.

24. The *Commission Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals* suggests that EU countries should identify regulated professions where there are serious shortages as a priority for recognition. As only a limited number of roles are subject to professional regulation in each EU country, many roles open to skilled workers from non-EU countries may not require a specific vocational qualification as a condition of entry. For individuals seeking to enter non-regulated roles, the EC Recommendation suggests that full recognition may not be necessary. However, the ELA's 2024 report highlights that the main shortage occupations are likely to require occupation-specific qualifications. It also highlights that jobseekers with occupation-specific qualifications are the most difficult to recruit in many of the countries covered by the report¹⁸. This suggests that, even for non-regulated roles, employers may need information about the occupational relevance of non-EU vocational qualifications. Importantly, the Commission Recommendation suggests that EU countries should help individuals *obtain advice or statements (e.g. comparability statements) that will help them to explain their skills and qualification to employers*¹⁹. One aim of the research was to investigate if and how individuals might access this information and advice in their destination EU country and how useful it might be to them and to prospective employers.

¹⁸ European Labour Authority (2024): *Report on labour shortages and surpluses 2023*, p. 72.

¹⁹ Commission Recommendation of 15.11.2023 on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals, Chp.2, para. 27 d.

25. **Vocational qualification or professional qualification?:** One surprising omission from the literature reviewed for this study is clarity on the relationship between vocational qualifications and professional qualifications. The term ‘professional qualification’ is applied in a number of ways by different types of bodies. For example, it may be used to describe qualifications awarded by professional bodies, or higher-level, work-related qualifications awarded by HE institutions or all vocational qualifications that certify skills needed for a specific job.
26. The Council of Europe’s Directive 2005/36/EC defines ‘professional qualifications’ as qualifications attested by evidence of formal qualifications, an attestation of competence referred to in Article 11, point (a) (i) and/or professional experience²⁰ Importantly, both the attestation of competence and recognition of professional experience are dependent on evidence of training and/or work experience within an EU country.
27. It is important to identify how the term ‘professional qualification’ should be interpreted in relation to the recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications. Jobseekers in non-EU countries are unlikely to gain recognition through attestation of competence or professional experience. Therefore, in this report, we define ‘professional qualification’ as a formal qualification which:
 - is judged by the relevant regulator in an EU country to meet the *education requirements* for work in a regulated profession or role
 - may have been achieved as a result of learning gained through VET or validation of workplace experience in the individual’s country of origin.
28. It is also important to recognise that, even if their qualification allows them to enter the regulated profession, individuals may choose to work in non-regulated professions. Understanding how the individual wishes to use their vocational qualification is therefore important in deciding how it is to be recognised.

2.2.5. What is the EU Skills & Talent Mobility Package (S&TMP)?

29. As discussed in the Introduction, the S&TMP incorporates a number of linked measures, including the *EU Talent Pool*, *Talent Partnerships* and the easier and faster recognition of qualifications. Taken together, these measures have two key aims:
 - to address skills shortages in EU countries by creating supported legal pathways to employment for appropriately-skilled and qualified individuals from non-EU countries
 - to support non-EU countries to benefit from the skills and experience gained by migrant workers when they return to their country of origin.

The overall intention is to support circular migration which benefits the individual, their host country and their home country.

30. Both the *EU Talent Pool* and *Talent Partnerships* are measures aimed at helping organisations from EU and non-EU countries, including employer organisations, NGOs and government agencies, to work together to match skilled workers from non-EU countries with appropriate jobs in the EU. These measures may include providing support to individuals prior to departure to ensure they have the skills needed to integrate successfully into the host country. The measures also focus on realising the benefits of the skills and experience gained while working in the EU for both the individual and their home country. Examples of the types of support for benefits realisation that may be provided are improved careers advice and support for non-EU CRAs in recognising qualifications which individuals may have gained while working in the EU.
31. There is potential for recognition of vocational qualifications to support the aims of the S&TMP in a variety of ways, for example in the recruitment and selection of individuals for roles in the EU countries and in the recognition of skills and qualifications on their return home. An important task for the research, therefore, was to identify the extent to which current recognition practices might be able to provide that support.

20 Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications Article 3 1b.

3. METHODS

3.1. Research objectives and scope

1. The overall aim of the research was to gather information to further ETF's work in supporting easier and faster recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications, particularly within the context of the S&TMP. In order to do this, it was important to understand recognition from the perspective of both EU and non-EU countries.
2. The following countries were identified as the focus of the research:

Table 2: List of countries included in the research

EU countries	Non-EU countries
France	Algeria
Germany	Bangladesh
Italy	Egypt
Sweden	Moldova
	Morocco
	Pakistan
	Tunisia
	Ukraine

- ETF identified four EU countries for the focus of the research. These were selected because it was understood that they represented a variety of approaches to the recognition of vocational qualifications.
 - A wider range of non-EU countries were selected for inclusion in the research. All of the non-EU countries included in the research have significant experience of citizens going to work abroad. Of the 8 countries selected, 6 were existing ETF partners. In addition, Pakistan and Bangladesh were selected as they were understood to be interested in participating in Talent Partnerships.
3. When looking at EU countries, the objectives were to understand how bodies responsible for recognition (competent recognition authorities (CRAs)) in selected EU countries evaluate vocational qualifications. This included identifying:
 - what data they can access on those qualifications and what data they lack but need
 - the sources they draw on to make their evaluations of, and decisions on, recognising non-EU vocational qualifications; and
 - what recognition principles, practices, systems, and tools they apply.
 4. When looking at the selected non-EU countries, there were two main objectives. These were to understand:
 - what data is available to meet the needs identified by the EU CRAs?
 - if bodies responsible for VQs received requests from CRAs in the EU countries for help with recognition. If so, how are those requests dealt with, what data is provided and is data about the requests monitored and reported on?

- if the bodies in the non-EU countries receive requests for recognition of qualifications gained in the EU when people return to their country of origin. If so, who is responsible for responding to those requests and how are they dealt with?
5. As the NQFs of the selected countries highlight, VET qualifications are provided primarily between EQF levels 3-5. Although VET may be provided at higher levels, the majority of learning programmes at EQF Level 6+ sit within the remit of HE. Importantly, the 7 sectoral professions for which there is automatic recognition of qualifications between EU countries ²¹ all sit at EQF Levels 6+. These professions are primarily linked to healthcare. However, at EQF Level 5 there is a clear overlap of vocational qualifications and HE (short-cycle) qualifications, many of which may be vocational in nature.
 6. In order to ensure a clear focus on vocational qualifications, it was decided to limit the scope of investigations to the recognition of vocational qualifications which:
 - sit between EQF Levels 3 and 5
 - sit outside the remit of HE institutions
 - exclude healthcare qualifications (with the exception of qualifications for social care roles²²).

3.2. Research questions

7. The following research questions were developed to address the objectives and to underpin data collection.

Research Questions – EU Countries
CRA and their remits <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Who are the competent bodies responsible for recognition of vocational qualifications (VQs)? b) What types of VQs can be recognised? What is the status of that recognition (e.g. what does it say about the qualification? What can it be used for?)
The recognition process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c) Who can request recognition of a VQ? How do they apply for recognition? d) How are VQs recognised? (i.e. what is the process, who is involved and how are decisions arrived at? What reference points are used in the evaluation process?) e) What data is needed to carry out the recognition process? f) What are the potential outcomes of the recognition process (e.g. full/partial/conditional recognition)? g) What (if any) additional requirements in addition to the VQ are needed for recognition?
Tools and resources <ol style="list-style-type: none"> h) What tools and resources are used to support recognition? Including tools and resources produced by EU, ETF and other external sources.
National data on demand and decisions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) What is the current level of demand for recognition of VQs? Which countries/sectors/ professional areas do most requests come from? Is data on demand and on recognition decisions publicly available?

21 The 7 sectoral professions are nurses, midwives, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, architects and veterinary surgeons (*Source: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/recognition-professional-qualifications-practice/automatic-recognition_en/*)

22 The decision to include social care qualifications was based on an acknowledgement that this is a sector with severe shortages in EU countries.

Research Questions – EU Countries

Challenges and potential solutions

- j) **What (if any) challenges** do competent bodies face when carrying out recognition of VQs from PCs? How could those challenges be overcome?

Research Questions – Non-EU Countries

Understanding the VQ landscape

- d) **Who** are the competent bodies responsible for the development and quality assurance of VQs?
e) **How** is the VQ landscape structured (e.g. at national/regional/sectoral levels)? Where do responsibilities sit for different types of VQs?

Supporting recognition of PC VQs in EU countries (international recognition)

- **If an EU CRA wants to recognise one of your VQs**, where should they go for the information they need?
- f) **Where** do any requests for support for international recognition come from (e.g. individuals / competent bodies in other countries)?
- g) **How** are these requests dealt with (e.g. what is the process, who is involved)?
- h) **What types of data** do the CRAs ask for? Where is that held? How can they access it?
- i) **Do you receive information** about recognition decisions involving your VQs? If so, who receives it? Where is it stored? How is it used?
- j) **What types** of VQs generate most requests for international recognition?
- k) **Is data gathered about** the current level of demand? If so, which countries / sectors/ professional areas do most requests come from?
- l) **What (if any) challenges** do requests for support for international recognition pose for the bodies involved? How could those challenges be overcome?

Recognising qualifications gained in the EU when people return home

- m) *The questions in this section are the same as those for the EU countries.*

3.3. Research design

8. This was a mixed-methods research study. The original approach proposed included:
- **Phase 1: Desk research** to identify information available online to address the questions, including identifying bodies responsible for the development and the recognition of vocational qualifications.
 - **Phase 2: Survey of CRAs in each EU country:** The initial plan included the development of an online survey questionnaire covering all research questions and its distribution to the various CRAs in each of the 4 selected EU countries.
 - **Phase 3: Online workshops in each non-EU country** with senior representatives from the various bodies responsible for vocational qualifications in that country, including those with overall responsibility for VET in their country or region. It was envisaged that different bodies might have different roles to play in recognition and that the recognition might not be familiar to many. Structured workshops, allowing the research participants to discuss the research questions in small groups and report back on them, were seen as the most appropriate format for gathering the required information.
9. As desk research progressed, it became clear that changes were needed at Phase 2. In particular, the different approaches to the organisation of recognition in each country and the number and

types of organisations involved meant that the factors affecting recognition were too diverse for a single survey questionnaire. As a result, it was decided to replace the survey with a phase of individual interviews with a small number of representatives from CRAs and other bodies in the EU countries working in the area of recognition. This change of approach was appropriate because little concrete information about recognition at a national level was found during the desk research. Qualitative interviews and discussions allowed us to explore these research participants' understanding of recognition, their work in relation to it, and the challenges and opportunities they foresee.

3.4. Data collection

10. **Research instruments:** Two different semi-structured discussion guides were developed, one for research participants from the EU countries and one for research participants from non-EU countries. These discussion guides comprised open questions designed to allow individuals to discuss the research questions in depth. A number of closed questions were also included, primarily designed to find out what data is needed for recognition and which types of tools and resources participants use and are familiar with.
11. Prior to the start of this phase, a contact in one of the non-EU countries suggested that the research participants might require support to discuss recognition in depth. We therefore created short practical examples of people seeking recognition of their qualifications to support more focused discussion. These mini case studies were adapted for each non-EU country to reflect the names of the country's qualification as well as common first names for the individuals seeking recognition.
12. Interviews and discussion groups:
 - Zoom was chosen as the preferred platform for the interviews and discussions to allow for recording and sharing of documents on screen. An important aspect of conducting the discussions via Zoom was that each interview/discussion could be recorded and a transcript produced to support more accurate analysis. In addition, each interview and discussion was attended by 2 members of the research team (lead and observer) to ensure that no important information was missed.
 - All research participants received the discussion questions (and practical examples for the non-EU countries) in advance of the online meeting to give them time to think about their responses.
 - Language preferences were discussed in advance of the meetings to ensure that everyone would be able to participate. Discussions were therefore held in English, French and Romanian and led by the research team member with the appropriate language skills.
 - All research participants were asked to complete a consent form prior to the interview/discussion. This included giving consent to recontact them following the interview/discussion for further information.
 - 8 individual interviews with research participants from EU countries and 8 discussion groups with research participants from non-EU countries were held between October 2024 and January 2025. They covered all 4 selected EU countries and 7 of the 8 selected non-EU countries.
 - Research participants from 2 CRAs in EU countries were unable to participate in online interviews but provided written answers to questions.
 - No organisations from Egypt could be included within the timeframe of the research. However, a background research paper highlighting some of the key issues relating to the need for, and barriers to, recognition was shared with the research team²³.

23 'Mapping of Pre-departure and Related Services (January 2022)' was commissioned by the Institute of Migration (IOM) and shared via email. No publication information was available, but the team was informed that the research had informed the development of the Pre-Departure Services Unit within the Egyptian Ministry of Labour.

Table 3: Number of organisations and research participants in discussions and interviews

EU Country	No. of organisations participating	Non-EU Country	No. of organisations participating
France	1 ²⁴ (plus 1 written response)	Bangladesh	4 (5 participants)
Germany	3	Moldova	4 (5 participants)
Italy	2	Morocco	1 (2 participants)
Sweden	1 (plus 1 written response)	Pakistan	4 (4 participants)
		Tunisia	1 (2 participants)
		Ukraine	3 ²⁵ (4 participants)
		Algeria	1 (1 participant)

3.5. Data analysis

13. The 4 members of the research team each reviewed the transcripts and notes from the interviews and discussions in which they were involved to identify the extent to which the research questions were- answered. This information is described in the following section.

24 2 interviews were conducted to allow follow-up questions to be addressed.

25 2 separate discussion groups held to accommodate the different organisations.

4. FINDINGS

This section summarises the information found to address the 5 main groups of research questions along with the additional 2 groups for the non-EU countries. The information was drawn from extensive web searches and the interviews/discussions with the research participants from the different countries.

4.1. Findings relating to the selected EU countries

4.1.1. CRAs and their remits

1. Two different types of CRAs were identified in the EU countries. The first group are national ENIC-NARIC centres. In this research, we looked at how the following ENIC-NARIC centres²⁶ recognise vocational qualifications.
 - France Education International (FEI)
 - Central Office for Foreign Education, Germany (ZAB) ²⁷
 - Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR).
2. The second group encompasses the numerous and diverse bodies whose footprint within particular economic sectors includes the recognition of vocational qualifications for entry into regulated professions (i.e. professional qualifications) and, in some cases, for work in non-regulated professions in the particular sector. The group includes professional bodies, sectoral bodies representing employers (e.g. Chambers) and Ministries or other government bodies. To gain an understanding of how recognition of vocational qualifications functions within each of the 4 EU countries, the research team decided to select one of these CRAs in each country. The key criterion when selecting CRAs was that each should have a significant footprint in sectors or professional areas where skilled workers with vocational qualifications are required. In Germany, we also included a representative from the Federal Institute for Vocational Education & Training (BIBB) which is the body responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of Germany's *Federal Recognition Act*²⁸. It also included a representative from The BQ Portal²⁹, a national service providing information about foreign VET systems and qualifications to companies and CRAs.
3. The final selection of organisations included:
 - France: Chamber of Trades & Crafts (*Chambres des Métiers et Artisanat (CMA)*)
 - Germany: IHK FOSA (*National centre for the Chambers of Industry & Commerce*), Federal Institute for Vocational Education & Training (*BIBB*), The BQ Portal
 - Italy: Ministry of Enterprise & Made In Italy (*Ministero delle Imprese e del Made In Italy MIMIT*) and the Regional Council of Piedmont (*Regione Piemonte*)³⁰
 - Sweden: The National Electrical Safety Board (NESB) (*Elsäkerhetsverket*).

There are important differences between the type of recognition provided by the two groups.

26 At the time of data gathering, information on the Italian ENIC-NARIC centre (CIMEA) website indicated that it does not provide recognition of vocational qualifications for access to work. Recognition of secondary school qualifications is carried out by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers together with the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR). This recognition allows individuals to enter selection processes for work in public administration roles. As a result, CIMEA was not included in the research.

27 To ensure balance of resource across the 4 selected EU countries, the research team did not engage directly with ZAB staff. However, the ZAB website provided a great deal of clear information about its recognition services (<https://zab.kmk.org/en/dab>)

28 Information about BIBB's role in relation to the Federal Recognition Act can be found at <https://www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/pro/about-us.php>

29 For more information see <https://www.bq-portal.de/en>

30 Two bodies were selected in Italy to allow investigation of the relationship between national and regional recognition.

4.1.1.1. ENIC-NARIC centres:

4. The ENIC-NARIC centres included in the study have based their processes for the recognition of vocational qualifications on the principles of the Lisbon Convention.
5. The aims of ENIC-NARIC recognition are to:
 - verify that the individual has achieved a nationally-recognised qualification as a result of participation in an approved training programme with a minimum duration of 200 hours
 - provide information about the comparability of the qualification with aspects of the host country's education system. In France, this means determining how the qualification compares with the levels of the French NQF. In Sweden, it means determining how it compares with a generic vocational qualification at upper-secondary or post-secondary levels in the Swedish education system. In Germany, ZAB issues the *Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (DAB)* which verifies the individual's completion of a nationally-recognised training programme.
6. Importantly, this recognition does not provide a statement of equivalence with a specified qualification in the EU country. In France and in Sweden, this takes the form of official statements of comparability with the NQF level or with a type of qualification. In Germany, the DAB verifies that the qualification is the result of a nationally-recognised vocational training programme of at least 2 years' study in the country of origin.
7. In all 3 countries included in this phase of the research, there are strict limits on how the statement can be used. In each country, they can be used to support access to the labour market and, in some cases, to further study. In Germany, skilled and experienced workers seeking to work in non-regulated professions need to include the *Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification* as part of their visa application. Importantly, however, these statements do not provide the professional recognition required for access to work in regulated professional roles.

4.1.1.2. Other CRAs:

8. Although most work roles are non-regulated, a significant number of roles in trades and crafts across the 4 EU countries are subject to professional recognition. As highlighted in Section 2, the *ELA Report on labour shortages and surpluses* identifies that these are also the professional areas which a) are most likely to require vocational qualifications and b) where the most severe shortages are evident.
9. The aim of recognition of professional qualifications is to provide an assessment of the equivalence of the individual's qualification and experience to the requirements for regulated professional roles. These may require individuals to hold specified qualifications, have documentary evidence of professional experience and/or meet specific professional or occupational standards. If judged equivalent, individuals generally have the legal right to work in the regulated profession. In Germany, this also allows individuals to access other legal rights relating to areas such as salary levels and protected titles. However, when looking at recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications, a number of challenges are apparent.

4.1.2. The complexity of recognition of vocational qualifications for regulated professions

10. In all 4 EU countries included in the study, responsibility for professional recognition lies with a wide range of different bodies. In each country, there is a very diverse range of CRAs, each with their own recognition processes and requirements.
11. Recognition decisions may be made at regional or local, rather than national, level.
 - **In France:** Recognition may depend on where the individual intends to work. One example of this is recognition by CMA in France where decisions are made by each of the 13 regional CMA offices
 - **In Italy:** Roles may be regulated at national or at regional level. As a result, the CRA may be a national Ministry or one of the 20 Regional Councils. The Regional Councils are the bodies

responsible for VET systems and qualifications in their region. However, searches of Regional Council websites provided only very limited reference to recognition of foreign vocational qualifications. As a result, the team engaged the selected Regional Council directly to find out about their involvement in recognition processes

- **In Germany**, there are also two layers of regulation by government authorities.
 - Some professions are regulated under Federal (national) law. In addition, each federal state has regulatory authority over a range of professions
 - There are more than 1500 authorities responsible for professional recognition³¹. These include a wide range of Chambers, federal state offices, and Regional Councils. A large number of Chambers represent different crafts and professions, and each Chamber has regional offices. Examples include the 79 different Chambers of Industry and Commerce representing industrial, trades, catering and service sectors, and 53 Chambers covering other sectors such as craft industries, construction and the food industry³². The Chambers and other authorized bodies can provide recognition of vocational qualifications for regulated roles *and* for non-regulated roles
 - The qualifications within the remit of these bodies are generally recognised at a local or regional level in line with the *Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG)*³³. This means that applicants have to identify both the role and the wish to take up and where they wish to work in order to identify the appropriate CRA
 - IHKFOA is the national recognition centre for 76 of the 79 different Chambers of Industry and Commerce in Germany. It provides a recognition hub for the recognition of qualifications for non-regulated roles in the sectors covered by the Chambers and its partners for industry and commerce. The other Chambers and authorized bodies are responsible for processing recognition requests for the sectors in their respective remits.
 - **In Sweden**, recognition for professional qualifications is undertaken at national level. There are around 60 regulated professions, which is fewer than in the other countries selected for the study, and recognition of qualifications for these professions is provided by 15 different CRAs.
12. In some cases, identifying which CRA is responsible for professional recognition of a given regulated role can be difficult. During the research project, the team made use of multiple sources of information to identify the regulators of different roles. This included the EC's *Regulated Professions Database*. However, the usefulness of this database was limited by a number of factors:
- Although most of the database information about regulated professions in different countries can be displayed in different languages, the titles of the professional roles are only available in the original language
 - In order to identify the type of qualification required for a role, it is necessary to drill into the detail of that role
 - Information in the database is not always updated to align with changes to the regulated professions.
13. Recognition may depend not only on the profession the individual wishes to work in and where they wish to work, but also on *how* they intend to work. For example, in France, FEI provides recognition of qualifications relevant to regulated professions if the person intends to work as an employee of a company. However, qualifications of people wishing to establish their own business are recognised by the regulating CRA. Similarly, in Sweden, electricians can work as an employee of an electrical installation company without the authorisation of NESB, the CRA responsible for professional recognition. However, authorisation is required for those planning to work as electrical contractors as they will also have the role of compliance officer for a company.
14. In many cases, the qualification alone does not provide the evidence needed for recognition of qualifications for regulated professions. Many bodies require evidence of both training and

31 <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/zav/working-living-in-germany/zsba/professional-recognition>

32 <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/business/globalization-world-trade/chambers-and-associations>

33 For more on this, see 'Anerkennung In Deutschland'. <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/professional-state-laws.php>

professional experience. As noted in 2.2.3 (23), the definition of ‘professional qualification’ in Directive 2005/36/EC includes professional experience within its definition of ‘professional qualification’. However, the definition stipulates that this experience must have been gained in the EU or EEA.

15. Not all bodies accept non-EU qualifications and professional experience. In France, CMA recognition is required for anyone who works in the trades and crafts that they represent and who wishes to work as an independent contractor or to set up their own business. The CMA office contacted in the research informed us that all non-EU qualifications must have been recognised in another EU country before being accepted for recognition. Similarly, only evidence of professional experience within the EU/EEA could be accepted. In Sweden, the NESB requires individuals to submit evidence both of their qualifications and of their practical experience as part of the recognition process. Although non-EU qualifications can be accepted, practical experience gained outside the EU/EEA cannot.
16. As this section demonstrates, identifying if and how roles are regulated can be challenging. In order to address this issue, *Anerkennung in Deutschland*, the German Federal Government’s information portal for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, incorporates the *Recognition Finder* described below.

The Recognition in Germany Portal (Anerkennung in Deutschland), incorporating The Recognition Finder

Recognition in Germany is the Federal Government’s main information platform for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. Operated by the *Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)* on behalf of the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)*, this portal provides access to a wide range of information for 3 main audiences:

- Skilled workers
- Employers
- Recognition advisers.

The portal’s main service is The Recognition Finder³⁴.

The Recognition Finder allows individuals to search for information about recognition based on the role they wish to work in and where they intend to live and work. The results of the search:

- indicate if the role is regulated or non-regulated in the town where they wish to work
- provide information about the occupational profile of the role
- provide information about the recognition procedure for the role
- give links to the relevant CRA.

4.1.3. Information needed for recognition

4.1.3.1 Finding out about recognition

17. Clear and accessible information and guidance is essential to help individuals decide if and how they should apply for recognition of their qualifications. However, this study identified that finding this information is not always easy.
18. The features and services that made information easy to find and use included:
 - **Websites (or clearly-labelled parts of websites) that provided information and support for each step in the process.** This included guidance on how and where to submit

34 <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/en/interest/finder/profession>

applications and access to further support and guidance. All of these features were found on the websites of UHR, FEI and ZAB. Importantly, they refer applicants to regulatory bodies if they are seeking professional regulation.

- **Up-to-date links between the websites of different CRAs and clarity about their roles:** For example, UHR provides links to the various different bodies responsible for professional recognition whilst Germany's *Recognition Finder* provides guidance and links for applying for recognition based on role and place of work.
- **Personalised support:** Personalised support to help individuals navigate the path to recognition was provided in a number of ways. UHR, FEI and ZAB provide support via email and phone, whilst in Germany, people are supported in a number of different ways. A key mechanism is access to a counselling service to provide support at each stage of the process. This service is available throughout Germany in person, online and via the phone. It is also available outside Germany through centres established by the *German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK)*³⁵. Among these are centres established in 3 of the non-EU countries included in the study (Algeria, Egypt and Morocco).

19. In other instances, finding the required information was difficult for a number of reasons. In some cases, information about recognition of qualifications could not be found on the CRA's website. This was particularly noticeable on the websites of regional or local bodies. Some members of the research team also contacted a small number of regional/local organisations via email to ask for more information. Only one response was received, outlining the process and information needs. It should be noted that, if recognition is carried out at local or regional level, offices may receive very few requests for recognition with the result that it is not considered as a key business stream.
20. In some cases, the research team found that website information was out of date or that links to resources did not work. This was noticeable in cases across the websites of different government departments and ministries. In one case, a government website which provided advice on the training requirements for different jobs, including requirements for the recognition of foreign qualifications, was taken down without notice and with no indication where visitors to the site should go for information.
21. It should be noted that the timing of the research was only a few months after the publication of the *Recommendation on the recognition of third-country qualifications*. This timing may have affected if and how information is updated, particularly if new guidance and/or policies are in development.

4.1.3.2 What information is needed in the application?

22. The application for recognition provides the information that is evaluated during the recognition process. The majority of CRAs have similar requirements. Those of the ENIC-NARIC centres focus primarily on information about the qualification and, crucially, about the training programme that the individual completed. As noted above, all 3 ENIC-NARIC included in the research require training programmes to be at least 200 hours long.
23. The bodies responsible for professional recognition require a range of additional information, with a focus on verified evidence of professional practice. A range of other information requirements were identified depending on the CRA. These included evidence of language skills (i.e. of the host country language) and evidence of good character (e.g. confirmation that the individual has no convictions, has not filed for bankruptcy in the country of origin).
24. One important consideration for all submissions is the need for authorised translations of documents in addition to copies of the originals. Depending on the country and CRA, originals may be accepted without translation if they are in one of a small number of languages specified by the CRA. These are commonly English, French, German, Spanish and Arabic.

35 The role of AHK is discussed further in the findings relating to non-EU countries.

25. It should also be noted that Italy has one very specific requirement for applications for recognition via government bodies. The *Dichiarazione di valore in loco* (Declaration of value 'in place')³⁶ is a verification process undertaken in the applicant's country of origin at an authorised centre (normally the Italian Embassy or consular office). The applicant is required to submit original copies of a range of documents to the authorised centre and obtain the *Dichiarazione* before proceeding with the application for recognition. The application cannot be accepted in Italy without a *Dichiarazione*.

26. The table below summarises the application requirements identified during the research process.

*Please note: This table should **not** be regarded as a comprehensive list. It is intended to provide an indication of the range of information needed. Empty boxes should not be interpreted as indicating that this information is not needed, rather that reference to it was not found during the research.*

Table 4: Information required in applications

Requirements	FEI (France)	UHR (Sweden)	ZAB (Germany)	CMA (France)	IHKFOSA (Germany)	MIMIT (Italy)	NESB (Sweden) (1)
Applications should include copies or evidence of:							
Official identification document(s)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Residence/work permit or similar		✓				✓	
Qualification cert.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Academic transcript or similar, including details of:</i>							
Training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dates & duration of study programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Position of prog in national system	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Course structure		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Topics covered		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Grades achieved	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CV					✓		
Evidence of professional experience				In EU/EEA	✓	✓	In EU/EEA
Certificates of other training if applicable				✓	✓		
Scope of work in home country (2)				✓	✓	✓	
Proof of language skills				✓	✓		
Other (3)				✓	✓	(4)	✓

Note: (1) NESB authorisation is required for electricians working as contractors or in roles such as compliance officer in a company. Individuals can work as an electrician without an authorisation. The NESB website details the type of work for which authorisation is needed.

(2) *Scope of work in home country* includes information about areas such as the work the individual was qualified to carry out, if the role was regulated and if they were a member of a professional body.

(3) *Other* indicates that additional information might be needed depending on role.

(4) MIMIT requires applicants to submit a *Dichiarazione di valore in loco* (Declaration of value in place).

36 For information about the requirements of the *Dichiarazione di valore in loco*, see <https://www.mimit.gov.it/index.php/it/mercato-e-consumatori/titoli-professionali-esteri/documentazione-per-il-riconoscimento>

4.1.3.3. How is information verified?

27. The recognition process involves evaluators conducting verification processes to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements for recognition and that the certificate is authentic.
28. The recognition process involves those responsible for conducting the process (credential evaluators) investigating a range of factors relating to the qualification. The table below summarises the type of information that different CRAs may need to inform their recognition decisions relating to the qualification.

Please note: This list below relates only to the qualification being recognised. It does not include information that may be needed to verify any of the additional elements that may be required for professional recognition.

Table 5: Information sought for recognition of the qualification

The CRA needs to verify that:	This means looking for the following information about:
a) the qualification:	the VET system at national level, including about:
is nationally recognised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the legal status of the national body responsible for the VET qualification system the legislation underpinning the VET qualification system how qualifications are recognised within that system, including if/how competent bodies and training providers are approved the competent body for the qualification being considered the inclusion of the qualification in a national register or other list of approved qualifications
is at an appropriate level	the position of the qualification in the national system (e.g. its NQF or ISCED level)
is structured appropriately for recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the qualification specification (e.g. title; minimum hours of study required; number of modules to be completed; the learning outcomes represented by the qualification) its relation to the labour market (e.g. is it based on an occupational or professional standard?) assessment that covers both knowledge and practical skills
b) the training programme:	the programme the individual participated in, including:
was delivered by a nationally-approved provider	if the provider is approved to deliver the specified programme
meets duration requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the duration of the programme (i.e. number of months/years; the dates) if the programme was full-time or part-time the number of hours in total
covered the subject areas required for recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the programme was structured (e.g. number and themes of modules) the relationship between the programme and the qualification specification (e.g. if the specification includes optional modules, which options were included?)

The CRA needs to verify that:	This means looking for the following information about:
c) the individual:	if and how the individual completed the programme
completed the training programme	record of attendance/completion for each required module or element
completed the assessment required by the qualification	grades for each module or element final grade(s)
d) the certificate:	the details included on the certificate, including verifying that:
is authentic	the applicant is the person named on the certificate the name of the qualification matches the qualification in the register/national list the awarding body named on the certificate is the competent body for that qualification the certificate is signed/verified by the individuals with authority for the qualification on the date stated on the certificate is not listed in any database of fraudulent qualifications

29. The detail of how much information is needed, how it is verified and where it is found was explored in individual interviews with the CRAs. It is important to note that not all bodies seek all of the information listed. For example, FEI conducts authenticity checks primarily when there is suspicion that the certificate may not be authentic.
30. CRAs responsible for professional recognition in France and Sweden may make use of the country's ENIC-NARIC service for the verification of the information required for recognition. In Germany, this service is provided for the various Chambers by the BQ Portal, an information portal for foreign professional qualifications supported by the *Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action*. Importantly, the ENIC-NARICs (FEI and UHR) and the BQ Portal are *not* responsible for making recognition decisions. In these cases, their role is to provide the information needed by the CRAs to underpin their decisions.
31. The information needed depends on the main reference points being used for recognition:
- All of the CRAs we spoke with require the qualification to be nationally recognised. This means verifying the information in category a i).
 - The level and type of detail required for the requirements in other categories will depend on the requirements of the individual bodies:
 - All bodies need to verify the level of the qualification. For FEI, the points of reference for this are the EQF and France's NQF. For UHR and ZAB, ISCED levels are the main reference points for level
 - All bodies need to verify the title and learning outcomes of the qualification, the duration of the training programme leading to the qualification and its relationship to the labour market. In some cases, evidence is needed that the qualification is underpinned by occupational standards or other relevant standards
 - The level of detail required about the training programme depends on the on the reference points being used.
 - ♦ In cases where comparisons are based on NQF levels, the detailed training programme may be less important than the comparisons that are made between the NQF of the EU country and the non-EU country. If the qualification and the training provider are nationally-recognised and the programme meets the EU country's requirements, this may be enough to allow a comparison to be made

- ♦ Where recognition is made on the basis of comparison with a qualification in the EU country's system, the content of the qualification and the training programme may be subject to more detailed scrutiny. This level of scrutiny is particularly essential if recognition results in a statement of equivalence with the EU country's qualification.
- All of the CRAs we spoke with require confirmation that the applicant completed a training programme of at least 200 hours. This includes evidence of completion of modules as well as confirmation of final grades. Qualifications gained without participation in an approved training programme (e.g. via the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)) are ineligible for recognition³⁷
- All bodies need to be assured that the certificate and training details provided by the applicant are authentic
- It is important to note that individuals may have completed their qualification some years before applying for recognition. Therefore, credential evaluators may need to look for information in historical records as well as in current or recent sources.

4.1.3.4 Finding information for recognition: sources, resources and tools

32. The research participants from the FEI, UHR, IHK FOSA and BQ Portal³⁸ were asked to identify sources they consult frequently to find the information they need to make recognition decisions. This included external sources they consult frequently from a list provided by the research team. The table below summarises the main information they provided.

Table 6: Sources, resources and tools

Sources, resources and tools	FEI	UHR	IHK FOSA	BQ Portal
a) Your country's National Qualification Framework (NQF)	✓		✓	
b) The European Qualification Framework (EQF)	✓	✓	✓	
c) The NQF of the submitting country	✓	✓	✓	✓
d) NQF Inventories (information about NQFs in different countries)			✓	
e) National qualification database/register (your country)			✓	
f) National qualification databases/registers (the country of submission)	✓	✓	✓	✓
g) Competent body websites of the submitting countries	✓		✓	✓
h) Europass Certificate Supplements	✓	✓		
i) ENIC/NARIC website	✓	✓	✓	
j) ETF website			✓	
k) CEDEFOP website		✓		
l) Information from international donors on education and training systems				
m) Other	✓	✓	✓	✓

Please note: This table is intended to provide an indication of the types of resources and tools that individuals typically consult in their roles. Empty boxes should not be interpreted as indicating that this source is never consulted, rather that it did not rank among the primary sources used.

³⁷ The growing relevance of VNFIL to vocational qualifications is explored further in Section 4.4

³⁸ It is important to highlight that the role of the BQ Portal is not to provide recognition of qualifications. It is to find information that will be used by CRAs in their recognition processes.

33. The research participants were also asked about other sources they consult. The following list includes other websites, resources and tools cited as providing useful information and support:
- Legislation governing VET systems in the country of origin
 - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (IMI) website*
 - Websites and databases providing summaries of key features of VET in a variety of countries. These included
 - Alberta International Education Guides*
 - OECD reviews of national policies for education*
 - UNESCO UNEVOC TVET Database*
 - EURYDICE*
 - ♦ The Wayback Machine – internet archive*³⁹
 - ♦ Goethe Institutes
 - ♦ AHK ProRecognition programme.
34. Two further sources of information were identified as essential for the recognition process:
- **The CRA's own database:** The most common data source used by the participants were records within their own organisation's data management system. Each organisation has built up a considerable bank of knowledge drawn from their experience of recognition. It was also highlighted that this knowledge sits not only in databases and records but in the experience of the credential evaluators themselves
 - **Personal contacts in the country of origin:** Some information can be difficult to find. This may be as a result of changes in systems, missing information on websites or information published in formats that cannot be translated easily (e.g. scanned images). In interviews, many of those responsible for gathering information and/or making recognition decisions spoke of establishing contacts with people working in relevant organisations in the country of origin. This point of contact allows the credential evaluators and information gatherers to ask for assistance when information cannot be tracked down in web searches. However, the research participants also highlighted that contacts are often lost due to job changes. As a result, the process of establishing new contacts is ongoing.

4.1.4. Recognition outcomes

4.1.4.1 Potential outcomes of the recognition process

35. The potential outcomes of the recognition processes looked at in the research depend on the type of recognition being sought. Two distinct types of recognition were identified.
36. **Statements of Comparison:** This type of recognition is provided by the 3 ENIC-NARICs included in the research. It is based on comparison with a primary reference point in the EU country's system. The reference points for comparison include:
- Level 3 and above on the NQF (France)
 - a generic qualification in a similar area at upper-secondary or post-secondary level in the formal education system (Sweden)
 - completion of a nationally-recognised training programme of at least 2 years (Germany).
37. In all 3 cases, statements can be provided if the qualification meets eligibility criteria, and a positive comparison can be made between the qualification and the reference point. The statement provides confirmation for the individual and for a prospective employer that they have completed a recognised qualification at the specified level. In Germany, individuals seeking to work in non-regulated roles are required to have a *Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification* to support their visa application.

39 * Links to these websites are included in Annex 4:: List of websites

38. Both UHR in Sweden and ZAB in Germany issue a negative letter or statement if the qualification does not compare positively with the reference point. This details the reasons for the negative decision. In France, FEI can provide *partial recognition* if the qualification does not meet the required criteria. This *certificate of recognition of training* recognises that the individual's qualification was issued by a competent body but no comparison is made with the French NQF. *Recognition of training* can also be provided on the basis of the individual's participation in a training programme but without completion of the qualification. In cases where qualifications and training cannot be recognised, FEI also issues letters explaining the reasons for the refusal of recognition.
39. **Recognition of equivalence:** This type of recognition is provided by the bodies providing professional recognition. These bodies may also be involved in the recognition of qualifications for non-regulated roles in the professional sectors which they represent. The reference points for recognition normally include:
- the specific qualification required by the role
 - the range and level of work experience required by the role
40. In these cases, recognition confirms that the qualification and experience are equivalent to the education and/or experience required by the profession or role. These requirements may be set out in national or regional regulations or in professional or occupational standards.
41. There were 3 potential outcomes of the process identified during the research:
- *full equivalence*, confirming that the individual's qualification (including work experience) is equivalent to the EU country's qualification
 - *partial equivalence*, which identifies that there are gaps in the individual's qualification/ experience in relation to the EU country's qualification. The decision will normally detail the conditions that have to be met in order to meet the requirements for full equivalence. In Italy and Germany, the individual can then use this information to access assessed training or work experience to enable them to bridge the identified gaps. In Italy, these bridging programmes and assessments are offered via the Regional Council in the region where the individual lives
 - *no equivalence*, where the qualification does not meet the minimum requirements for partial equivalence.
42. If the recognition is a requirement for entry into a regulated profession, this entry may be conditional on the individual completing additional measures such as additional tests or a period of monitored work⁴⁰ to address those gaps.
43. The example described below illustrates the features and requirements of recognition of equivalence of roles recognised in Italy by the Ministry of Enterprise and Made in Italy (MIMIT) in conjunction with the Department of Education, Training and Work in the Piedmont Region (Regione Piemonte).

40 Defined respectively as 'aptitude tests' and 'adaptation period' in Directive 2005/36/EU, these additional requirements have a number of titles depending on the CRA (e.g. qualification measures; compensatory measures).

Professional regulation and recognition in Italy – the roles of national and regional authorities

In Italy, there are 2 tiers of regulated professions:

- a) professions regulated at national level
- b) professions regulated at a regional level

The role of the Regional Council varies according to the level of regulation.

a) **Recognition of professional qualifications at national level:**

- **The role of the national CRA:** The CRAs for professions which are regulated at national level are generally Ministries of the Government. In this study, the research team looked at recognition sitting within the remit of the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (MIMIT). MIMIT is the CRB for a range of regulated professional roles which require vocational qualifications. These include a range of trades such as plumbing and auto repair and roles in services such as hairdressing.

The reference points for recognition are the regulation requirements for the individual role and full recognition grants equivalence with those requirements. However, in many cases, equivalence is dependent on the individual being assessed against any areas of gap between the regulations and their evidence.

- **The role of the Regional Council:** The recognition outcome includes details of any compensatory measures that the individual must meet to gain full recognition. This information is sent to the Regional Council in the region where the applicant lives. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete the required training or additional workplace learning in order to meet the requirements of the condition set by the relevant Ministry. The Regional Council is responsible for setting and organising compensatory measures. If the candidates pass the compensatory measure successfully, the Regional Council provides confirmation to the Ministry that they have met the requirements of the condition. The Ministry then decrees that the individual can work in the regulated role.

Information provided by Regione Piemonte shows that cases requiring the management of compensatory measures increased in 2024 to 21 compared with 14 in 2023. The two roles most frequently represented in the caseload were healthcare social worker (regulated by the Ministry of Health) and beautician (regulated by the Ministry of Work and Social Policies).

b) **Recognition of professions regulated at regional level**

In general, Regional Councils should not regulate or introduce new professions. This is a responsibility given to State by the Italian Constitution. Although the State is deemed to have exclusive competence in professions and the Regions have exclusive competences in vocational training, Regional Councils may need to respond to the needs of new professions emerging in their region. This need may lead to a need for regulation at regional level. This may occur if regulation at national level might take too long to achieve, or where there has been an increase in the region in particular sectors. In these cases, the Regional Council is the CRA, responsible for making recognition decisions and for setting and monitoring compensatory measures.

Examples of professions which have recently been regulated by Regione Piemonte include tattoo artist, funeral director and pet therapist.

For more information about the 2 tiers of regulation and the role of the Regional Councils, see Country Profile: Italy in Annex 5.

44. Comparability or equivalence? In Germany, not all roles requiring recognition of equivalence are regulated. There are many non-regulated roles that require specific qualifications resulting from education and training via dual education (i.e. combining study and workplace experience). Individuals who have completed vocational qualifications via an apprenticeship route similar to the German dual system of education may apply for recognition of equivalence, even if they intend to work in non-regulated roles. For the individual, this type of recognition can secure a range of legal rights. For a prospective employer, the type of evidence provided by assessment of equivalence gives confirmation of the specifics of the individual's learning and experience, unlike the more generic *Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification*⁴¹.

4.1.4.2 Results of the recognition process

45. Some information about results of the recognition process for vocational qualifications was found during the research:
- UHR's *Qualifications Assessment Tool*⁴² provides information about foreign qualifications that have received a positive match to the Swedish formal education system. Although it does not provide a statement relating to the individual's own certificate, the tool allows individuals and employers to search for the non-EU qualification to understand where the qualification sits in relation to the levels in the system. Individuals can download a pdf of the information to include with job applications. A search for qualifications from the 10 non-EU Countries included in the research revealed that 25 post-secondary qualifications had been matched.
 - In Italy, public access is available to the outcomes of MIMIT recognition processes via the DATI database which is hosted by the Ministry of Economic Development⁴³. This database gives public access to MIMIT recognition decisions at an individual level. The recognition decision includes the individual's personal identifiable data (name; date and place of birth), details of their qualification and professional experience, and the outcome of the recognition process. In all cases sampled for the research, full recognition of equivalence was conditional on the individual completing compensatory measures (i.e. additional assessments of knowledge and practical skills). These requirements are detailed in the published document.
 - Some information was also found on the success rate of applications for recognition of vocational qualifications. For example, discussions with the research participants in Germany highlighted that the most likely outcome of the initial evaluation of professional recognition is *partial equivalence*, with individuals required to complete compensatory measures (known as qualification measures) in order to achieve full equivalence. As in Italy, these measures may require participation in study programmes or on-the-job training to enable the individual to bridge the identified gaps. Once these measures have been completed, the individual must reapply for recognition of their qualification.

4.1.4.3 The time and cost of recognition

46. Achieving recognition requires an investment of both time and money by the individual. The time and the cost involved for recognition depends on the type of recognition required and the availability of the required information.
47. The research participants identified that timescales to arrive at recognition decisions normally range between 2 and 6 months. Factors that affect the timescale include legislative requirements, the completeness of the application and the complexity of finding information about the qualification. Furthermore, in cases where the individual has been granted partial recognition, the need to complete compensatory measures can add substantially to the time needed for recognition. In Italy, MIMIT has 1 month to acknowledge receipt of a complete application and 4 months to process that application before passing it to the Regional Council if compensatory measures are required. One participant said that decisions for qualifications from countries which submit most frequently can be as little as 2 weeks because of the evaluator's familiarity with the country's systems. However, a number of participants have seen a considerable increase in the time needed for processing due to an increase in the volume of applications.

41 For information about the links between recognition and visa requirements, see *Make It In Germany* (<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types/work-qualified-professionals>)

42 <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/recognition-of-foreign-qualifications/qualifications-assessment-tool/ukraine?eid=2>

43 <https://dati.mise.gov.it/index.php/qualifiche-professionali>

48. Costs to the applicant for recognition also vary considerably.

- **ENIC-NARIC centres:** UHR provides the service free of charge, while FEI's service costs €120 (an initial fee of €20 for an eligibility check plus a further €100 for processing applications which have been deemed eligible for recognition). ZAB charges a flat fee of €150 for all applications
- **Recognition of equivalence:** The cost of this type of recognition is noticeably higher as a result of a variety of factors:
 - In Germany, costs of between €100 and €600 are cited both by IHK FOSA and Annerkenung in Deutschland website, depending on the complexity of the case. In Italy, the direct fee for recognition via MIMIT is €32
 - However, a number of research participants highlighted that a range of indirect costs might be incurred for recognition. These include fees for translation and, in the case of Italy, for the Dichiarazione di valore in loco. The latter may also require the individual to return to their country of origin to complete the process. In cases where individuals need to complete compensatory measures to achieve full recognition, costs may be incurred for training materials and for travel to test centres. In Germany, individuals may apply for financial support for the costs of recognition⁴⁴.

4.1.5. Data on recognition

49. One aim of the research was to identify the volume and categories of data about recognition that is captured at national level in the EU countries. Of the four EU countries included in the research, detailed data on recognition could only be found in Germany. This is the result of requirements relating to the implementation of the *Federal Recognition Act 2012*.

50. As mentioned in 4.1.1 (2), BIBB is the body responsible for the implementation of the *Federal Recognition Act 2012*. The organisation's role includes responsibility for data gathering and analysis relating to the recognition of qualifications. BIBB provided the data and analysis required for the *Report on Recognition Act 2023* produced by the Federal Ministry of Education & Research (BMFB). This report provides comprehensive data on recognition in Germany in 2022, including data on:

- application numbers based on country of origin and on relevant professional area
- comparisons of how numbers of applications are distributed across federal and state level
- the reference professions with the highest number of applications
- comparisons of outcome results and numbers completing compensatory measures to achieve full recognition.

51. The results show that there is increasing use of recognition services. However, the report does not clearly disaggregate the data based on level or type of qualification. As a result, it is difficult to identify the volume of applications from individuals holding vocational qualifications and the roles to which they apply. Only 2 roles among those listed as the top reference professions are easily identifiable as requiring vocational qualifications. These are cook and electric fitter.

52. Unlike Germany, national data on recognition was not found to be publicly available in the other EU countries included in the study. The research team were unable to find data on recognition relating to regulated professions. However, both UHR and FEI supplied some data relating to their recognition of vocational qualifications. This included data on countries of origin, and on the number of applications. This data highlighted that applications for recognition of vocational qualifications make up a very small minority of applications overall. UHR also supplied data on recognition outcomes for qualifications at upper-secondary and post-secondary level. Two interesting points emerging from this data were:

- At upper-secondary level, vocational qualifications allowing access to HE were more likely to receive a positive recognition statement than those which do not lead to HE access (97% as opposed to 89%)

44 For details, see <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/financial-support.php#module1452>

- Post-secondary vocational qualifications were much likely to be rejected than those at upper-secondary level. Only 38% of the 2,228 applications received at this level in 2023 were granted recognition. Key reasons for this were that the file was incomplete, the training programme was too short or that the qualification is not part of the formal education system in the home country.

53. There are three issues that emerge from the data which could be found:

- The research team had hoped to find information that would give a national picture of recognition in each of the 4 EU countries included in the study. However, with the exception of Germany, this was not possible. A key reason is the absence of a mechanism to ensure communication and coordination between the various CRAs within each country. Each may produce data for their own service, but no evidence was found that this evidence is aggregated and used in any way. This was true even between the different regional CRAs sitting under the same national umbrella organisation
- Although some data is available on vocational qualifications, the usefulness of that data for understanding patterns of recognition relating to those qualifications is limited. As a research team, we were seeking to find the following answers:
 - Which non-EU countries produce the most requests for recognition at each level?
 - What professional areas are represented, and at what level, by the qualifications submitted for recognition?
 - What are the recognition outcomes for vocational qualification by professional area and country?
- In order to understand how the recognition of vocational qualifications is progressing, it is important to have access to complete data that can be interrogated across a number of factors
- The *Recognition Act* in Germany has provided a strong impetus for tracking data relating to the recognition of qualifications. In particular, BIBB's role in monitoring the implementation of the Act has enabled the organisation to gather data across the landscape of different bodies and different types of recognition

54. It is important to note that, without reliable data on recognition of vocational qualifications, it is not possible to identify the value of that recognition to individuals and to their (prospective) employers. This issue will be discussed further in Section 5.

Key points in the findings about the EU countries:

- Recognition statements from ENIC-NARIC centres generally provide confirmation of how the individual's vocational qualification compares with a generic reference point within the EU country's education system. However, they do not confirm how the skills represented by the qualification compare with similar, specific vocational qualifications in the EU country
- The recognition landscape for *professional recognition* is complex and crowded. In particular, finding out if a role is regulated and who is responsible for its recognition can be difficult
- CRAs make use of a wide range of resources, depending on the individual case. However, most of the CRAs involved in this study cite their main resource as their own organisation's records. They also depend on personal contacts in the submitting country
- Recognition processes, particularly those for equivalence, can be costly and time consuming for the applicant
- The requirements relating to participation in a nationally-recognised training programme of at least 200 hours means that many qualifications from CVET, post-secondary programmes or national qualifications gained via VNFIL may not meet recognition requirements
- The study confirms findings in the BRAVO report that there is little coordination or communication between the various CRAs, with the result that little national-level data about recognition of vocational qualification could be found.

4.2. Findings relating to Non-EU Countries

4.2.1. The research participants and the research process

55. The research with participants from the various non-EU countries focused on 3 key areas:
- what data is available to meet the needs identified by the EU CRAs
 - where and how the information needed by CRAs in EU countries might be found
 - if the non-EU country has any mechanism for recognising qualifications completed by individuals while working in an EU country when they return to the country ('returners').
56. To gather the information, the team conducted discussions with people in 7 of the 8 countries⁴⁵ selected for the research. In total, 7 discussion groups⁴⁶ were held with between 2 and 5 participants in each group and 1 interview with an individual participant from Algeria.
57. The participants in each country were people working in senior roles in a wide range of organisations with a footprint in VET and in the provision of pre-departure services for skilled migrants. The full range of organisations contributing to the research is included in Annex 2.
58. A number of the participants in the discussions had had experience of seeking recognition of their own qualifications after completing HE qualifications in other countries. These experiences meant they had a clear understanding of the need for recognition, the processes involved, and the challenges individuals can face when presenting unfamiliar qualifications for recognition.

4.2.2. Development of VET systems

59. In recent years, all of the non-EU countries included in the study have undertaken major VET reform programmes. The reform programmes aim to address key economic and social development goals. These include ensuring access to quality education that allows individuals to develop the skills needed to be economically active and to work and thrive in good-quality jobs.
60. The major reform programmes have received significant support from a range of international organisations, including the *International Labour Organisation* (ILO), various agencies of the European Union (including ETF), agencies of EU countries such as the *German International Cooperation Society* (GIZ) and a wide range of non-governmental agencies (NGOs). The resulting reform programmes have evolved to align with many of the developments also seen in Europe and in other areas of the world. These include a focus on vocational qualifications based on learning outcomes, the development of NQFs and the integration of vocational qualifications into those NQFs. They also have a strong focus on addressing the needs of the labour market through engagement with employers and on embedding quality assurance systems to ensure that the outcomes of training and qualifications can be trusted.
61. Each of the non-EU countries in the study is at a different point in the reform journey. For example, some NQFs, including those of Pakistan and Moldova, were launched almost 10 years ago whilst others such as the Bangladesh Framework (BNQF) are much more recent developments. All have appointed bodies via legal acts to oversee the development and implementation of new systems and to assure the quality of training and qualifications. It is important to note, however, that the implementation of reforms requires time as changes to existing systems need to be developed and piloted and capacity needs to be built in the system to maintain the changes.
62. Given that each country is at a different stage in its implementation of reforms, the discussions took account not only of existing systems but also of changes which are being implemented currently and the aims of those changes.

45 No participants from Egypt could be engaged within the research period. However, one contact supplied the team with a background research paper. This will be discussed further under 'pre-departure services'.

46 2 separate discussions were held with Ukraine to accommodate participants from different organisations.

4.2.3. Accessing information to support recognition

63. Participants were asked to talk about their own organisations and how they relate to the overall VET system in the country. They also discussed the list of requirements for recognition that had emerged from our discussions with EU CRAs. The aim of these questions was to identify if and where information to address the requirements might be found in their own system, and if this information is in the public domain.
64. The main information required by the EU CRAs is summarised in the 15 information categories in Table 7 below. It should be noted that, although not all CRAs require all of this information, the list covers most of the information required across CRAs.

Table 7: Information required by EU CRAs for recognition of vocational qualifications

VET and VQ Systems	
1.	The national body responsible for the VET qualification system is defined in legislation
2.	The VET qualification system is defined in legislation or national regulations
3.	VQs are included in an NQF
4.	(If applicable) Regional/provincial authorities responsible for VET/VQs are legally defined ⁴⁷
5.	Quality assurance processes for the different aspects of the VET system are clearly defined
6.	VQs are nationally approved
7.	Competent (awarding) bodies for VQs are nationally-accredited
8.	Training providers are nationally accredited for programmes leading to VQs
Qualifications and training programmes	
9.	Each qualification has specified level, learning outcomes, structure, assessment requirements and duration
10.	Each qualification is underpinned by competency standards/occupational standards or other relevant professional standards
11.	The balance of theory and practice in VQs is clearly defined
12.	There is a curriculum or training plan for each qualification which defines what has to be taught
13.	There is public access to details of each training provider's training programme
14.	The individual's training record can be accessed by recognition bodies
15.	There is a technological solution for checking the authenticity of an individual's certificate (e.g. QR code)

65. When discussing these information requirements, participants in most of the non-EU countries felt that, in principle, many of the points about the VET and VQ systems in their country could be addressed by information available on their organisations' websites. In some countries, access to qualification details is also available. However, there was also a reflection that the information is, in many cases, incomplete or limited by the stage of development of the VET system.
66. One aim of the research project was to identify the challenges that recognition bodies in EU countries might face in gathering the information needed for recognition. It was therefore important to identify what barriers to access might exist. This was done both by asking

⁴⁷ Examples of this type of authority are Pakistan's Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs) which are legally constituted by the governments of the country's individual Provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

participants in the EU countries about any of the challenges they face and by the research team sampling the websites of the national agencies responsible for VET systems in the non-EU countries. A number of barriers and challenges were identified. These related mainly to the stage of implementation of new systems and to issues relating to the web infrastructure. They included:

- **Parallel systems of qualifications:** As mentioned above, considerable time is needed for the implementation of NQFs. During the implementation period, the existing system for VET and vocational qualifications needs to continue to be supported. As a result, parallel systems can emerge, with some qualifications being moved over to the NQF whilst others still sit within the pre-existing format or system. Credential evaluators can face challenges in identifying where the qualification sits currently in the national system and where it sat at the time it was awarded
- **Missing information:** Although websites have been set up to reflect the planned structure and categories of information that (will) exist in the VET system, the team found numerous cases of empty categories and blank webpages. In these cases, there was often no explanation of the type of information that would be made available on those pages
- **Limited explanations:** All of the websites contain a lot of information. However, many of them depend on the reader being familiar with the various elements of the VET system and how they relate to each other. Most of the websites contain drop-down lists of information in different sub-sections on the website. However, in many cases, the type of information did not match what the researchers expected to find. The research team felt that some short introductory explanation about the purpose of each sub-section or webpage would help readers not familiar with the system to identify if the section/page held the information they needed
- **Broken links, out-of-date information and inaccessible websites:** Although many of the websites have a clear structure, access to information was made difficult because of issues relating to website maintenance. The research team found numerous instances of broken links and information that had not been updated. One further challenge was that a number of websites were blocked by browsers in the EU/UK when the research team tried to access them. The blocks were normally the result of security issues being flagged by the researcher's web browser
- **Translation issues:** The credential evaluators we spoke with said that one important feature of many of the websites was the option to choose between versions in the official language of the non-EU country and in English. Some of the research participants from the non-EU countries mentioned that, although official-language versions of the websites are vital for meeting the needs of the home audience, English-language versions are essential for reaching international audiences. However, one challenge for the credential evaluators and for the research team is that not everything on the English-language versions is actually translated into English. This includes formats that need to be machine translated separately (e.g. pdfs), those that cannot be machine translated (e.g. scanned copies or pictures) and sections of the websites in list format⁴⁸
- **Protection of information:** Some research participants highlighted that not all information could be placed in the public domain. For example, an increase in the number of private TVET providers means that there is increased awareness of issues of commercial sensitivity relating to training programmes and materials as providers may need to protect their intellectual property. The issue of data protection was also highlighted by some of the research participants in the EU countries. Some of the CRAs included in the research require individuals to sign consent forms to allow the CRA to contact their training provider. However, none identified that the providers themselves may not be willing to share data. Two research participants suggested that this problem might be addressed by the creation of data-sharing agreements between the EU CRAs and the VET authority in the non-EU country
- **Knowing who to contact:** ETF wanted to know about requests for information that non-EU countries receive from CRAs in EU countries. However, this assumes that there is a way of tracking requests for information. As noted above, individuals working in credential evaluation

48 The issue of non-translation of lists is also a feature of the EU Database of Regulated Professions, where titles of jobs/professions are not translated from the original language.

in the EU countries highlighted that, if they need hard-to-find information, they may depend on their own personal network of contacts for help because there is no central information point. However, one of the challenges of depending on personal contacts is that individuals may move to different roles and this important source of information is then lost. One challenge highlighted was that frequent changes in personnel can make it difficult to find required information.

67. As the list above illustrates, there are a number of challenges for CRAs when trying to access information in the non-EU countries. Although they do not apply to all cases at all times, these challenges have an impact on the time taken to process recognition claims and to provide individuals with results. At a time when requests for recognition are increasing, finding ways to reduce these challenges will be important.

4.2.4. Facilitating recognition of vocational qualifications

68. It is important to note that access to information is not the only issue which may affect the demand for and the provision of recognition services. In discussions with research participants from non-EU countries, the research team was able to identify some factors which could act as enablers of recognition and others which present challenges.

4.2.4.1. Enablers of recognition

69. The following characteristics and developments in non-EU countries were identified as having a possible role in enabling the effective use of recognition to support skilled workers to find appropriate jobs within the EU:
 - **The role of the VET sector:** One important difference identified between the non-EU and the EU countries is the close cooperation between the VET system and the system for recognition. The research team identified that, in the EU countries, some CRAs might be competent bodies for the awarding of vocational qualifications (e.g. CMA France). However, it proved difficult to identify links between the authorities responsible for VET and vocational qualification development and those involved in recognising vocational qualifications. In the non-EU country discussions, however, the research participants we spoke with were very aware of the need for recognition and how that might affect VET developments. In Pakistan, Bangladesh and Algeria, participants spoke of the importance of vocational qualifications in helping support improvements in conditions for the migrant workforce. In particular, they were seen as a mechanism for helping people enter high-quality jobs. Many of the developments being introduced through the VET reform programmes, such as the introduction of NQFs, were viewed as mechanisms that could help improve that recognition. Research participants also recognised that individuals needed to provide different types of evidence to CRAs and spoke about ways in which the information provided in certificates and online could support this. This ranged from including QR codes on certificates that lead to the individual's training record to ensuring that qualification specifications include the appropriate code for classifying the reference occupation⁴⁹ of the qualification. In Moldova, it also includes the support of an agency which provides individuals with packs of the information they need for recognition of their qualification in their chosen country.

49 Two separate classification systems were mentioned, depending on the country: the *International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO)* and *European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)*.

Facilitating Recognition: The role of CTICE in Moldova

The **Centre for Information and Communication Technology in Education** (CTICE) supports digitalization in education in Moldova and facilitates recognition processes for individuals in Moldova and those moving abroad for work. It:

- handles the submission and authentication of documents for recognition purposes,
- supports applicants in the recognition process,
- manages digital infrastructure.

CTICE is responsible for the authentication of study documents before they are submitted for international recognition. People turn to CTICE to authenticate their study documents before they travel abroad for further studies or employment. This helps to expedite the recognition process in their destination country.

CTICE also plays an important role in streamlining and modernising the recognition of qualifications through the use of digital tools and platforms. Its contributions include:

- **Digitising qualification records:** This supports the creation and management of secure digital records for diplomas, certificates, and other qualifications, making them easier to verify and share
- **Supporting credential verification:** CTICE develops and maintains systems that help employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders verify the authenticity of qualifications quickly and efficiently
- **Enhancing transparency:** By integrating ICT solutions, CTICE ensures that qualification recognition processes are transparent, accessible, and user-friendly for individuals, institutions, and employers
- For more information, see <https://ctice.gov.md>

70. **The role of pre-departure services:** Some of the non-EU countries involved in the study have a long history of large-scale migration of skilled workers. Examples include Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan. Each of these countries has a government department responsible for developing a range of services for managing migration, covering areas such as the licensing of recruitment agencies offering overseas work, and services safeguarding the welfare of migrant workers. These departments also arrange access to pre-departure training and support designed to prepare the individual for work abroad. Recognition of skills and qualifications feature in pre-departure services, and pre-departure programmes are offered by a range of providers. In Egypt, Morocco and Algeria, these providers include the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK). One of their services is support for skilled workers to prepare applications for recognition of their qualification in Germany.

Facilitating Recognition: The ProRecognition Project in Germany

The *ProRecognition Project* provides recognition advice abroad. It was launched in 2015 and will be funded through to the end of 2027 by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). It is coordinated by DIHK Service GmbH in close cooperation with the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK). The ProRecognition counselling centres are established at a number of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs).

The project is aimed at:

- Skilled workers with vocational qualifications.
- Professionals with academic qualifications.

ProRecognition provides advice, support and help for foreign skilled workers at a local level in all issues relating to recognition:

- Is recognition possible for me with my qualification?
- What is the appropriate reference occupation?
- How and where do I apply for recognition?
- Which documents are necessary?
- What level of German language skills do I need to have?
- Where can I learn German?
- How do I find a job?

The service helps applicants identify suitable jobs and supports them throughout the entire process. It also provides a range of offers to help prepare for migration including:

- writing CVs
- training in how to apply for jobs and
- training in intercultural skills

ProRecognition is currently represented at the following AHK locations: Algeria*, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt*, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Morocco* and Turkey.

* Countries included in this study.

For more information, see <https://algerien.ahk.de/fr/services/prorecognition>

4.2.4.2. Challenges to recognition

71. The discussions with the research participants in non-EU countries also revealed a number of important challenges to recognition of vocational qualifications from their respective countries.

- **Difficulty navigating recognition systems:** As the findings from the EU countries revealed, identifying the most appropriate CRA and their requirements for recognition can be challenging. The research participants in the non-EU countries were keen to ensure their qualifications could be recognised but want guidance on requirements and processes
- **Lack of coordination between providers of pre-departure services:** A 2022 mapping report of pre-departure services in Egypt commissioned by the *International Organisation for Migration (IOM)*⁵⁰ highlighted the important role that providers of pre-departure services could play in facilitating the recognition of vocational qualifications. The importance of pre-departure support is also highlighted in the *Commission Recommendation on the recognition of third-country nationals*. However, IOM's report noted that, although there are many providers, there is little coordination between them. Greater sharing of information and aims would enable these services to support the development of a more systematic approach to recognition. Suggestions for support mechanisms include a common guide to recognition

50 Mapping of Pre-Departure and Related Services (January 2022). Received via email and no citation details available.

in the destination countries so individuals in all pre-departure programmes could access the same information

- **Addressing the needs of many ‘customers’:** It was highlighted that there are many countries competing to attract workers from many of the non-EU countries into roles that may require vocational qualifications. Participants from different countries spoke of programmes to recruit workers to China, Japan and Korea as well as to the Gulf States, which is the traditional market for workers from many Arabic-speaking countries as well as from Bangladesh and Pakistan. Each country has its own skills requirements and a number of programmes have been established in different countries to ensure that roles are filled by appropriately-skilled workers. The most prominent programme is Saudi Arabia’s *Professional Verification Test*⁵¹. The aim of the test is to ensure that individuals meet the skills level needed for their role and a test certificate is required for a work visa. 3 of the Non-EU Countries (Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh) have been approved to deliver the tests in the workers’ home countries prior to departure. Notably, in Bangladesh and Pakistan, the tests are managed and delivered with the support of the national bodies with overall responsibility for the VET system. The challenge to recognition, however, is that vocational qualifications are not taken into account in this form of skills verification. Recognition, therefore, is not required
- **Mismatch between qualifications being delivered and qualifications being recognised:** As the findings from the EU countries highlight, most CRAs base their recognition of vocational qualifications on the principles of the LRC. The Convention, agreed in 1997, predates the considerable developments that have taken place in NQFs, VET and vocational qualifications. In particular, many of the newer qualifications being developed in non-EU countries focus on short training programmes as a way of reskilling and upskilling people already in the workplace and make use of the country’s comprehensive NQF to list the qualifications in the national register. Importantly, these newer qualifications may be developed by the private sector with competent bodies which sit outside the formal education sector. An example of these types of developments was provided by the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Bangladesh’s principal body responsible for the planning, development and implementation of skills programmes to meet national and international skills needs. As part of this role, NSDA is the competent body for a range of nationally-recognised competence-based qualifications (National Skills Certificates). Many of these qualifications are designed to upskill people who are already in the workplace following short training programmes. However, many of these qualifications may not meet requirements for recognition. For example, with training programmes not exceeding 360 hours, they do not meet the 2-year full-time training requirement for recognition by ZAB in Germany and, as they are not linked to the formal education sector, they do not meet requirements for recognition by UHR in Sweden.

72. Our discussions revealed deep support for the recognition of vocational qualifications by EU countries but some considerable challenges. One suggestion for overcoming challenges repeated in a number of the discussions was the development of recognition agreements allowing qualifications for priority occupations to be automatically recognised in one or more EU country.

4.2.5. Recognising the qualifications of returners

73. In addition to examining how non-EU countries can support the recognition of their nationals’ vocational qualifications by CRAs in the EU, the study also looked at the recognition of qualifications from EU countries when the individual returns home. Recognition of skills and qualifications gained in the EU while the individual is working there is an important component of the *Skills & Talent Mobility Package*. This skills gain is essential in avoiding a ‘brain drain’ in the non-EU country. Recognition is seen as a tool in helping the non-EU country recognise ‘brain gain’ when the individual returns home.
74. There was a view expressed by some participants in the discussion groups that recognition of vocational qualifications from EU countries is not really necessary. It was felt that the fact that they are from the EU means that they can be trusted. However, others spoke of current

51 A useful overview of the test can be found at <https://ksaexpats.com/things-to-know-about-the-professional-verification-program-in-saudi-arabia/>

or emerging systems in their country. Among the non-EU countries in the study, research participants in Tunisia, Ukraine, Moldova and Algeria all discussed the development of recognition processes for returning nationals. The recognition processes mirror many of those found in EU countries. For example, in Ukraine, the aim of the process is to establish equivalence with an existing qualification therefore detailed matching of the content and level of the submitted qualification against the reference qualification is required. Importantly, the EU qualification must be based on an occupational standard. Equivalence against a qualification is also the aim in the Algerian process while, in Tunisia, equivalence is established against the NQF level.

75. One important feature of recognition in all countries is the involvement of agencies with a footprint in VET in the process. For example, in Ukraine, the responsibility lies with the National Qualifications Agency (NQA), the body is responsible for the NQF, while in Tunisia, the responsibility sits within the remit of the Ministry for Vocational Education and Employment. In the latter case, requests for recognition of a foreign vocational qualification are considered by a commission which will generally include a representative from the relevant economic sector.

Key points in the findings about non-EU countries

- A lot of the information required for recognition of vocational qualifications is available or coming onstream on the websites of the VET authorities in the non-EU countries. However, technical issues mean that the information may not be easily accessible
- In all of the non-EU countries included in the study, there is a close relationship between the VET authorities and the bodies responsible for recognition of vocational qualifications. This means that recognition processes are underpinned by an understanding of skills needs
- There is considerable willingness within VET bodies in the non-EU countries to ensure that their qualifications are 'recognisable'. However, they need more information about the recognition requirements
- Many of the new types of qualifications designed to meet the needs of employers do not meet the requirements of recognition based on LRC principles. This is particularly true for qualifications designed primarily for upskilling or reskilling experienced workers and/or qualifications provided by private-sector organisations
- Pre-departure services are important for ensuring that skilled workers are prepared to take up work in other countries. Helping individuals prepare for recognition of their qualifications is an important part of those services.

4.3. Findings relating to the *Skills & Talent Mobility Package*

76. One aim of the research study was to investigate the information needed for the recognition of vocational qualifications in the context of measures in the Skills & Talent Mobility package. A key aim of the S&TMP is to open up vacancies in sectors of severe labour shortage in EU countries to appropriately-skilled individuals from non-EU countries. Assessing who is 'appropriately skilled' involves a process of skills matching, and recognition of vocational qualifications can help with this match. Recognition has the potential to provide a key tool for confirming that the non-EU qualification is comparable or (fully/partially) equivalent to the skills needed by the employer in the EU country.
77. The Talent Partnerships are one of the measures within the S&TMP. At the time of the research, very limited information about the aims and activities of individual Talent Partnerships was available. However, some information was found in a press release⁵² announcing Italy's

52 *Italy's participation in the EU "Talent Partnerships" for the attraction of skilled labour from abroad (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation Feb 2024)* https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2024/02/partecipazione-italiana-ai-partenariati-per-il-talento-della-ue-per-lattrazione-di-manodopera-qualificata-dallestero/

involvement in Talent Partnerships with Egypt (for the tourism sector), Morocco (for the mechatronics sector) and Tunisia (for the construction sector). All 3 Talent Partnerships are planned to involve vocational training for the workers from non-EU countries included in this study.

78. Within the timeline of the study, no information was found on if or how recognition of any existing vocational qualifications might be integrated into the selection or training processes. However, discussions with research participants in the non-EU countries produced some suggestions for integrating some form of recognition of qualifications. These included the following:
- Research participants in both Pakistan and Bangladesh highlighted that the greatest supply of skilled workers lies in the informal sector with individuals who did not develop their skills through formal education and qualifications⁵³. However, having learned their trade or craft in informal apprenticeships, most do not have the level of general education required to meet the requirements of a vocational qualification. In Pakistan, RPL is now being used to integrate skilled workers from the informal sector into Level 1 of the NQF with the aim of increasing their level of general education so that they can achieve a vocational qualification at Level 2. Similar processes are being considered in Bangladesh. It was recognised that a Level 2 vocational qualification is likely to be too low-level to meet employer expectations in EU countries. However, it was suggested that these qualifications might be used as baseline requirements for entry into preparatory vocational programmes planned for Talent Partnerships. It was suggested that this provides a form of recognition for the qualification. As a result, its value is increased for employers by allowing them to access very skilled workers and for individuals by allowing them to access skilled work abroad
 - Another suggestion emerging from discussions was that vocational qualifications for sectors covered by a Talent Partnership might be compared to allow for automatic recognition between the EU and non-EU partners or adjusted to incorporate the needs of the EU employers by the addition of units that reflect EU requirements. In this way, the qualification could eventually replace the need for the additional vocational training currently planned as part of Talent Partnerships. The idea of basing the additional training provided by the EU partner on an alignment with the non-EU country qualification is currently being explored in relation to a potential partnership between Italy and Pakistan. The aims of the project, led by ANOLF Piemonte, are described below.

53 It is estimated that between 80% and 90% of people working in crafts or trades have developed their skills through Ustaad Shagird, a traditional apprenticeship system in which children work from a young age with a master craftsman or tradesman. However, although the system allows the individual to become a skilled worker, it does not provide the formal education that will allow them to access high-quality jobs. The research participants described how RPL is being used to bring these skilled individuals into the formal sector at a low level and to provide access to the learning needed to enable them to achieve a formal craft or trade qualification.

SkillNet: Strengthening Circular Legal and Skilled Migration Through Cooperation Between Italy and Pakistan

This project is designed to support a talent pathway between Italy and Pakistan through recognition of the qualifications and skills of workers in Pakistan. Launched by the *Migration Partnership Facility* (MPF), the project is led by the Piemonte branch of ANOLF (*National Association Beyond Borders*). Working with a range of partners in Italy and in Pakistan, the project aims to:

- identify priority areas of skills needs in the Piemonte region
- map Italian requirements for the skills needed (e.g. in vocational qualifications) against relevant qualifications in Pakistan's VET system
- identify any gaps between the Italian requirements and the Pakistani qualifications
- use the outcomes of mapping to inform the development of bridging programmes in Pakistan

The project aims to build a sustainable pathway for skilled workers from Pakistan into areas of severe skills shortage in Piemonte.

For more information and updates about the SkillNet project, see https://www.anolfpiemonte.it/progetti_anolf/skillnet/?portfolioCats=40

4.4. Validation of Non-Formal & Informal Learning (VNFIL) – A third route to recognition of vocational qualifications?

79. A final theme emerging from the findings was how VNFIL is developing as a third route to recognising skills gained through vocational qualifications.
80. As noted above, the implementation of comprehensive NQFs, designed to integrate all forms of learning, and the development of shorter qualifications to support reskilling and upskilling have led to the development of vocational qualifications that sit outside the framework of requirements applied by most of the CRAs looked at in this study. This is true both in EU countries and in non-EU countries. However, the research team noted that many of the countries included in the research have implemented or are implementing processes for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning that can also incorporate the formal learning represented by their qualification.
81. Within the EU countries included in the study, both Germany and France have implemented VNFIL systems at national level. In France, this process allows individuals to complete vocational qualifications and skills blocks via VAE (*Validation des Acquis par l'Expérience*). If a vocational qualification submitted to FEI for recognition does not meet the eligibility criteria, the individual may be recommended to follow a VAE route. Some Regional Councils in Italy have also begun to introduce VNFIL for residents in their regions.
82. VNFIL allowing completion of national qualifications have also been introduced in non-EU countries. Algeria, like Pakistan, has used VNFIL as a mechanism for integrating skilled workers from the informal sector into formal VET systems.

VNFIL In Ukraine

Despite ongoing hostilities, there has been an increase in the numbers of people returning home to Ukraine. Validation is seen as an important service for enabling the country to benefit from skills and qualifications which people may have gained when they were living abroad as well as for recognising the skills that people who have been displaced by war may have gained.

An individual may gain a Ukrainian national qualification or part qualification through a combination of evaluation of their qualification and experience, and a practical test. The validation service is being rolled out through Qualification Centres accredited and monitored by the National Qualifications Agency.

Many employer organisations have established accredited Qualifications Centres, helping to ensure clear links between the validation process and employment. Since being established in early 2024, the service has awarded more than 3,000 certificates of qualification or part-qualification.

83. However, although VNFIL has emerged as an important route for the recognition of skills, it creates some challenges for the recognition of vocational qualifications.
- VNFIL as a route to completing a vocational qualification in their home country creates a challenge for current recognition requirements in EU countries if an individual migrates for work. The requirement for participation in a training programme means that individuals from non-EU countries with a qualification gained via VNFIL are unlikely to gain formal recognition of that qualification.
 - An important advantage of the French and Ukrainian systems is that they allow for the learning gained from a foreign qualification to be recognised within the route to completion of a home qualification. However, neither system records the qualification as having been recognised. The qualification is simply part of the portfolio of evidence that is measured against the requirements of the national qualification. As a result, no data is available on which qualifications have been accepted as part of a VNFIL claim or the value attributed to them in that evaluation of that claim. The potential impact of this on recognition processes and on the VET system itself is discussed in Section 5.

4.5. Findings relating to ETF Resources

84. As part of the research, ETF had also asked that the research team to explore if and how tools and resources provided by the organisation are used by individuals involved in recognition. All participants were asked to consider the following list of ETF resources and talk about:
- which, if any, they were familiar with
 - which, if any, they used to support their work and how useful they are
 - any ideas on how the resources might be changed or developed to improve their usefulness in recognition.
85. The list of resources included:
- Support for the further development of national qualifications databases, including the existing guidelines and the existing policy briefing on a **Network of national qualifications databases**
 - Regular updates on selected non-EU qualifications systems in **NQF Inventories**
 - Regular updates on validation systems for non-formal and informal learning and skills in selected non-EU countries
 - **The Torino Process** review of VET policies and practices in selected non-EU countries
 - Policy briefings, including ETF's policy Brief on **Better recognition of qualifications**
86. Of the 7 research participants we interviewed from EU countries, 3 had been aware of the work of ETF prior to being invited to participate in the research and 2 had experience of using the

resources. Of the resources, the NQF Inventories were seen as being the most relevant to the work of recognition.

87. Participants from non-EU countries which are established partners of ETF were much more likely to have referred to the resources, in part to keep abreast of developments in other countries and to see how their own country features. There was enthusiasm for the support provided by ETF. Reference to ETF resources was also found in some of the research consulted during the project. For example, the IOM report on the Mapping of Pre-departure and Related Services cites the ETF study on Skills Matching for Legal Migration as a source.
88. After being invited to participate in the research, almost all of the research participants had looked at the ETF website. Participants working in more strategic roles felt the ETF resources might be useful for them, whilst those working directly on credential evaluation felt that other resources were more appropriate for their work.
89. The research participants had been led directly to the website and its resources, and most had reacted very positively to what they found. Those who had browsed said they felt the range of information was interesting and might be useful. However, those who were looking for specific support or information in a hurry felt that it was difficult to identify useful information. With this in mind, the research team also looked at the ETF website with the following questions
 - what types of resources are available?
 - who are the resources for and how do these people find them?
 - what drives people to the website?
 - what differentiates the organisation and its resources from those of similar organisations working within the footprint?
90. In some places, the potential relevance of information was clear, such as in the listing of information about the countries where ETF is active. This allowed the team to identify clearly what they wanted to know. However, in other places, it was felt that the web layout did not make it easy to find information. Some of the labels meant it was difficult to understand immediately what might be contained in different sections and some way of filtering resources might help people to find immediately what was relevant to them. Web searches using the search term 'ETF' did not lead directly to the website and it took some time to find the website. Finally, the home page as it appeared on laptop screens did not immediately tell the reader who the organisation is and why it might be useful to them. It was felt that clearer messaging on the home page might encourage people to stay and explore the resources.

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. The research aims

1. This research study was designed to provide ETF with information and recommendations to inform their work supporting the recognition of vocational qualifications with a particular focus on the S&TMP. The research aimed to develop an understanding of:
 - how CRAs in the selected EU countries evaluate vocational qualifications from non-EU countries in the context of the S&TMP. This included identifying:
 - the information the CRAs have on the qualifications and any gaps that exist
 - the sources the CRAs draw on to underpin their recognition decisions
 - the principles, practices systems and tools that the CRAs apply in making their recognition decisions.
 - if and how authorities in selected non-EU countries:
 - respond to requests from EU country CRAs for data to underpin recognition decisions, and how that data is collected
 - evaluate the qualifications that returning citizens may have completed while working in an EU country, including the processes they use and the data they collect.
 - if and how resources provided by ETF are used in the recognition processes, and to suggest how these resources might be optimised and/or augmented to improve their usefulness.

This section examines the extent to which the findings address those aims and makes recommendations based on those findings.

5.2. Principles and processes

5.2.1. Key considerations

2. The information needed for recognition reflects the principles which underpin recognition decisions. In the case of the ENIC-NARIC bodies included in the study, these principles are derived from the LRC. Importantly, the LRC also informs the recognition decisions of many of the other CRAs responsible for professional recognition as they may draw on the expertise of their ENIC-NARIC to support their recognition process.
3. The BRAVO report, resulting from research conducted by a consortium of the ENIC-NARIC bodies of Norway, Sweden and Lithuania, identified that the use of LRC principles may not be entirely appropriate for the recognition of vocational qualifications. This research study was able to explore this area in some detail to identify some of the reasons why there may be some tension between the LRC principles and vocational qualifications:
 - The LRC was designed as a tool for the recognition of HE qualifications. Crucially, it defines a qualification as *an award made on the successful completion of an education programme*⁵⁴. An important factor in HE qualifications is that a university, working within a national framework, is normally responsible for all aspects of the qualification: approval and awarding; and programme design and delivery. As a result, information about the individual's completion of the programme can be found in a single institution. However, in VET systems, approval and awarding normally sit with a central body such as a Ministry or other competent body. The delivery of training programmes, however, is normally the responsibility of a network of

54 *EAR Manual, 2023: Section 2.1*

different approved training providers working within the framework of a shared curriculum or syllabus. This difference is crucial. If the system of recognition depends on gathering information about the individual's completion of a programme of study (as opposed to the award of the qualification), recognition of VET qualifications depends on gathering information from the competent body *and* from the training provider. Discussions with credential evaluators revealed that it is the latter where information is most difficult to access.

- The requirement for completion of a study programme of at least 200 hours excludes from recognition many of the qualifications and modes of attainment which have developed in recent years. This includes vocational qualifications achieved through VNFIL processes and shorter qualifications or micro-credential⁵⁵s designed to meet employer needs. Importantly, these qualifications and modes of attainment are often most relevant to skilled and experienced workers. However, although many of these qualifications may be listed in NQFs, they may be ineligible for recognition.
4. The findings in this study reflect that there is tension between the principles used in the recognition of HE qualifications and the structures and practices that underpin vocational qualifications. This tension is also highlighted in initial findings of a current CEDEFOP study⁵⁶ into recognition.
 5. Tension also exists between the structures and practices of vocational qualifications and Directive 2005/36/EC, the legal act which underpins recognition of professional qualifications. Importantly, this Directive, like the LRC, predates the widespread development of NQFs and associated tools supporting the quality assurance, transparency and comparability of qualifications. Many of these tools underpin the major VET reform programmes in the non-EU countries included in the research, with many of the NQFs using the EQF as a reference point. However, although the scope of the Directive has been extended by subsequent amendments and Recommendations (legal acts), the general system of recognition in the Directive remains based on the length of the training programme and its relationship to the formal education system or on proof of professional experience gained in an EU country. Noticeably, there is limited reference to the EQF, despite it being recognised within the 2013 amendment to the 2005 Directive as a *tool designed to promote the transparency and comparability of professional qualifications and can be a useful additional source of information for the competent authorities*⁵⁷. As a result, new types of qualifications, including microcredentials, being developed for the market and listed on NQFs may not be acceptable for professional recognition. Furthermore, the requirement for professional experience to be gained in an EU country means that the experience of those applying from outside the EU is unlikely to be taken into account.
 6. Other issues highlighted in the CEDEFOP research which find echoes in our research relate to the processes used in the different EU countries to recognise vocational qualifications. These different processes create some challenges. Examples include:
 - the different reference points used in the evaluation process (e.g. the EU country's NQF; the EU country's formal education system). These differences may limit the potential for sharing recognition decisions across the EU
 - the different levels of trust in non-EU qualifications systems reflected in the evaluation processes. A lack of trust means that the CRA is likely to require a higher level of detail in the information gathered from the non-EU country. This, in turn, can greatly extend the amount of time needed to process applications for recognition
 - the processing of applications on a case-by-case basis and absence of agreements on automatic recognition of qualifications. At a time when requests for recognition are increasing, case-by-case processing puts a severe strain on the capacity of the CRAs to deal with them. The suggestions from some non-EU participants for agreements on automatic recognition of

55 Although guidance for the recognition of micro-credentials is included in the *EAR Manual*, no examples of this type of recognition were found during this research study.

56 V. Symeonidis & C. Blomqvist: *Supporting the comparison and recognition of qualifications*; Presentation to the BRAVO Conference (15 November 2024).

57 *Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System ('the IMI Regulation');* para 11.

selected qualifications could help to relieve that strain by reducing the need for case-by-case recognition of the qualifications.

7. As part of the S&TMP, Talent Partnerships provide a potential mechanism to support the development of automatic recognition agreements between the respective EU and non-EU countries in the Partnership. These agreements could ensure that the non-EU country's vocational qualifications are integrated into the Partnerships for specified uses. Examples of integration might include using the qualifications as a baseline for skills-matching processes or for recruitment into additional training needed to ensure individuals can adapt their skills to the specific needs of employers in EU countries.
8. One suggestion emerging from the CEDEFOP research study is the potential for developing of European guidelines to support improvement in processes for the recognition of vocational qualifications by EU countries. Given ETF's footprint in the area of recognition for non-EU qualifications, it will be important to consider how any work undertaken in this area by the two organisations aligns and is discussed and coordinated.

5.2.2. Recommendations

9. The following recommendations are made based on the findings in section 5.2:

- **Recommendation 1:** Consideration could be given to the development of automatic recognition agreements for vocational qualifications linked to specific occupations or roles within the framework of a Talent Partnership.

5.3. Addressing information needs

5.3.1. Information in the application

10. It is important to recognise that the individual's application contains the information which determines whether or not the qualification can be considered for recognition. The findings highlighted that:

- the qualifications may not meet eligibility criteria for recognition
- applicants may have submitted incomplete or inappropriate documents.

The CRAs highlighted that supporting the individual through these initial stages can be time consuming.

11. Analysis of the information required in applications by different CRAs identified some core categories of information that applied to all, with additional categories depending on the CRA, the purpose of the recognition and the type of recognition provided.
12. However, the research highlighted some of the factors that can complicate making an application for recognition. These include difficulties relating to:
 - Identifying the appropriate CRA to recognise the qualification
 - finding out about the eligibility requirements for recognition – what can and can't be recognised by this CRA
 - finding out about the process of recognition
 - identifying, gathering and submitting the information needed by the CRA
13. In some cases, clear advice and guidance is available for individuals along with support for the process of completing the application. However, in many cases, the research team had difficulty

in identifying who to contact and the precise information that was needed. One area that ETF could consider is the development of guidance for potential applicants in non-EU countries and those who support them (e.g. in Pre-Departure Services). This could draw on information and country profiles included in this report.

5.3.2. Finding information needed for decision-making

14. A principle aim for this research study was to find information to inform ETF's work to develop databases which have the potential to be interoperable. This requires the identification of the information needs of CRAs so that databases can include the appropriate data categories.
15. The findings highlighted two different groups of data categories:
 - The first group are core categories of data required by most CRAs for the recognition of vocational qualifications. These relate primarily to features of education and quality assurance of learning (e.g. level of qualification; duration of programme; legal status of the body responsible for the qualification; details of the curriculum and training programme)
 - Features in the second category relate to the relationship between the qualification and the vocational or professional area (e.g. occupational standards or profiles; the balance of theory and practice represented in the qualification; work experience). These categories are generally used by CRAs responsible for recognition of qualifications for regulated professions or roles
 - In addition to these two groups, an 'Other' category was created to capture any anomalies or specific information not covered by the 'Education' or 'Work' categories.
16. Table 7 in Section 4.2.3 lists 15 information categories that CRAs in the study identified were important for recognition. Although these responses came from a small number of CRAs, there is a high level of commonality in requirements across the CRAs from the EU countries. The categories cover most elements found within a quality-assured vocational qualification. It is important to recognise that some CRAs in some EU countries not included in the study may require additional information. However, we suggest that this 15-point list forms a core set of categories to underpin database development. The database design should also allow for additional categories to be included at a later date if the need arises.
17. The research participants in the non-EU countries were very aware of the importance of recognition and very keen to plug gaps in information if these could be identified. For them, the obstacle to this lay in a lack of information about CRA requirements. One potential use of the findings of this research could be to provide guidance to the VET organisations about how to make their qualifications 'recognisable'.
18. The findings from the CRAs in EU countries acknowledged that a large amount is available online via the non-EU country websites. The obstacles for the CRAs often lay in technical aspects of the websites and in the lack of context provided for some of the information. Noticeably, many of the research participants in non-EU countries were not fully aware of the challenges to accessing the information. Once again, the research findings could inform how websites are developed and maintained to make sure the required information is fully accessible.
19. The findings highlighted that credential evaluators often have to seek out historical data as the individual may present qualifications that were awarded some years ago. Although some of this information may be available on websites, credential evaluators also spoke of having to find people who could supply the information. The terms of reference for the research had assumed that a central resource might be available in the various non-EU countries to monitor requests for information from CRAs. However, although credential evaluators spoke of contacting people within the non-EU organisations, these contacts were generally made on a person-to-person basis and the research team could not identify single points of contact for information within the different non-EU countries. However, if these single points of contact were established within the competent body for VET, they could monitor the extent to which different qualifications are being submitted for recognition.

5.3.3. Sharing information about recognition decisions

20. There are several reasons why systems for sharing information about recognition decisions could support CRAs and VET bodies in their work. Some of these include:
- reducing the time and resource requirements for recognition if one CRA can accept – at least in part - the decision of another
 - identifying which qualifications are in demand in different countries by tracking recognition data
 - understanding key reasons for refusal of recognition and how these might be addressed.
21. The research identified a number of obstacles to information sharing.
- Recognition decisions are usually recorded on CRAs' own internal databases of recognition decisions and there is limited coordination between CRAs so that these decisions are not shared
 - There are large numbers of CRAs operating at regional or local level, meaning that many may not process many requests for recognition and may not be aware of how recognition processes might be developed
 - Among the EU countries included in this study, only Germany has a national approach to monitoring and reporting on how recognition is being used.
22. If recognition of vocational qualifications is to play the role envisaged by the *Skills & Talent Mobility Package*, it will be important to consider how processes might be optimised. One aim of the BRAVO project was to investigate the need for a network of ENIC-NARIC centres to encourage information sharing. This proposal was accepted at the BRAVO Conference in November 2024. However, it is important to recognise that the ENIC-NARIC centres account for a small number of the CRAs involved in recognising vocational qualifications for work. It will be important to consider how other CRAs might be brought into a wider network to encourage further sharing. Areas where ETF might provide important information for networks include helping them to understand developments in VET systems in non-EU countries and how to use the evolving databases.

5.3.4. Recommendations

23. The following recommendations are made based on the findings in Section 5.3:

- **Recommendation 2:** Consideration could be given to the development of a *Guide to the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications in the EU* for potential applicants and those who support them (e.g. in Pre-Departure Services). This could draw on information included in this report. It could include essential information needed for applications, guides to recognition processes in different EU countries and web links to CRAs and sources of support in each country.
- **Recommendation 3:** ETF could use the 15 information categories included in Table 7 in Section 4.2.3 as a core list of data categories to inform database development. The potential to include additional categories should also be integrated into the database design.
- **Recommendation 4:** Consideration could be given to the development of guidance for non-EU country VET bodies and for Pre-Departure Services on '*Making our VET Qualifications Recognisable*'. This guidance could cover areas such as:
 - guidance on information requirements and processes for recognition in different EU countries
 - guidance on the aspects of information and website management that maximise their usefulness and accessibility for EU country CRAs
 - the potential role of pre-departure services in supporting the recognition of qualifications
 - establishing a central point of contact for CRAs and monitoring its use.
- **Recommendation 5:** ETF could consider how it might support CRA networks, for example through updates on VET developments in non-EU countries, including in the area of vocational qualification databases and how to use them.

5.4. VNFIL and the recognition of vocational qualifications

5.4.1. The benefits and challenges of VNFIL

24. One important finding from this study is the extent to which VNFIL processes are being used to recognise skills. Many of the countries included in the study offer a form of VNFIL, and in several countries the results of VNFIL can be used towards completion of a national qualification. However, the focus of recognition processes on the completion of a study programme means that a qualification completed in a non-EU country via a VNFIL route might not meet existing requirements for recognition within an EU country.
25. It is also important to note that, in many cases, people who have completed vocational qualifications have the option of using a VNFIL route to provide evidence of their skills. This type of route was found both in EU and in non-EU countries. VNFIL has several advantages for holders or vocational qualifications:
 - It can help individuals whose qualifications are ineligible for recognition to provide official confirmation of their knowledge and skills
 - It can be cheaper and quicker. The service may be free for residents and the examples of VNFIL timescales which we found typically indicate around 4-6 months for completion
 - It can allow for the skills of returners and others to be recognised and applied quickly in the labour market. For example, the VNFIL system in Ukraine engages employers in assessment, thereby ensuring a link between the skills of the individual and the needs of the job market.
26. Crucially, however, the research found no evidence that a vocational qualification included in a VNFIL claim is recorded or recognised in any way. The information is integrated into the evidence provided for the VNFIL claim.
27. It is important to consider the potential implications of integration of vocational qualifications into evidence for VNFIL. By not being recorded, it is impossible to gauge the value of the qualification towards the VNFIL outcome. Without this measurement, a number of issues may arise:
 - The individual has no mechanism for recognising the value of the qualification to the employer. This may affect their confidence in the qualification itself

- Similarly, the employer has no mechanism for recognising the value of the qualification to the organisation. For example, a particular role may have a qualification requirement but, without formal recognition, the employer may not be able to identify if the individual matches the role profile
 - It is not possible to track if and how non-EU qualifications are being used in EU countries (and vice versa for returners)
 - In many non-EU countries, recognition of the vocational qualification is important for promoting confidence in the VET system and for integrating people from the informal sector into formal education, training and employment. As a result, if VNFIL processes are used instead of recognition of vocational qualifications, recognising the value of the qualification itself becomes difficult and this may shake confidence in the formal VET system.
28. One potential mechanism for mitigating some of the risks identified is for the VNFIL certifying bodies to record any qualifications (including foreign qualifications) included in VNFIL claims. One potential role for Talent Partnerships could be to ensure that EU partners record individuals' vocational qualifications in any skills assessments or skills matching activities.
29. The issue of the overlap between VNFIL and recognition of vocational qualifications was also mentioned in the presentation by CEDEFOP to the BRAVO Conference and signalled that it is an area which needs to be addressed. To ensure that work undertaken by ETF and by CEDEFOP in this area is mutually supportive, it will be important for the organisations to discuss and coordinate any plans they have for developments.

5.4.2. Recommendations

30. The following recommendation is made based on the findings in this section.

- **Recommendation 6:** ETF could consider encouraging the non-EU countries in which it works to develop a system for recording vocational qualifications which are accepted as part of a VNFIL claim or process. This could include details of the qualification, including title, competent body and country of origin.
- **Recommendation 7:** Consideration should be given to how best to ensure appropriate alignment between developments in VNFIL and in the recognition of vocational qualifications.

5.5. Improving the reach and impact of ETF Resources

5.5.1. Key considerations

31. One of the aims of this research study was to identify if and how ETF Resources are used by those involved in recognition of vocational qualifications and to identify ways in which the use of resources might be optimised.
32. As the findings in Section 4.5 highlight, research participants in non-EU countries which have an established partnership with ETF were the most familiar with the support and resources provided by the organisation. This is in line with ETF's mandate to provide support for VET development in countries neighbouring the EU.
33. It is important to note that ETF's increased focus on recognition and engagement with EU CRAs is a relatively recent development, a consequence of the growing levels of demand for recognition. It is therefore not surprising that awareness and use of the resources identified by

ETF as relevant to recognition was limited among the research participants from EU countries included in the study. However, the feedback from the research participants led the research team to ask why people whose work could benefit from ETF's information and resources had only limited awareness of what was available.

34. A review of some aspects of the website identified some issues that might not encourage new visitors to land on the ETF site, to explore and to stay there. It was felt that, given the range of information and resources available, the organisation might benefit from a more targeted communications plan for those resources and information. This plan could cover areas such as:
- identifying key audiences for different resources based on the work people do and how they might use the resources.
 - developing communication strategies relevant to the different audiences.
 - ensuring search engine optimisation, particularly with Google and Bing.

5.5.2. Recommendations

35. The following recommendation is made based on the findings in this section.

- **Recommendation 8:** ETF could consider strengthening their communications strategy for ETF resources to ensure that they reach and are used by a wider audience in order to optimise their usefulness.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Limitations of this research

36. This research was a short study designed primarily to gather information about the data that CRAs need to carry out recognition of vocational qualifications from non-EU countries. In the initial research plan, the research team intended to gather information about data needs and recognition practices in EU CRAs using a structured survey questionnaire. However, desk research revealed that recognition in EU countries is much more complicated than had been anticipated. In particular, the researchers identified too many factors affecting recognition data needs to make the survey approach meaningful. As a result, it was decided to gather information through semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in recognition activities in the 4 selected EU countries and discussion groups with informed research participants from the VET sectors in 7 of the 8 non-EU countries.
37. The use of individual interviews and discussion groups allowed the researchers to gather rich information related to the main topics of the study. They also allowed for more in-depth exploration of challenges and enablers in the recognition of vocational qualifications. It must be stressed that this research study was exploratory. With only a small number of research participants included in the study, the findings cannot be considered in any way to be representative. However, they do provide a clear and valid snapshot of some of issues that affect the recognition practices. The findings reveal interesting and important themes deserving of further study and which can be used to inform future work, including the development of interoperable databases.

6.2. Summary of Recommendations

38. The following 8 recommendations suggest potential next steps based on the findings of the research.

- **Recommendation 1:** Consideration could be given to the development of automatic recognition agreements for vocational qualifications linked to specific occupations or roles within the framework of a Talent Partnership.
- **Recommendation 2:** Consideration could be given to the development of a Guide to the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications in the EU for potential applicants and those who support them (e.g. in Pre-Departure Services). This could draw on information included in this report. It could include essential information needed for applications, guides to recognition processes in different EU countries and web links to CRAs and sources of support in each country.
- **Recommendation 3:** ETF could use the 15 information categories included in Table 7 in Section 4.2.3 as a core list of data categories to inform database development. The potential to include additional categories should also be integrated into the database design.

- **Recommendation 4:** Consideration could be given to the development of guidance for VET bodies and for Pre-Departure Services on 'Making VET Qualifications Recognisable'. This guidance could cover areas such as:
 - guidance on information requirements and processes for recognition in different EU countries
 - guidance on the aspects of information and website management that maximise their usefulness and accessibility for CRAs
 - the potential role of pre-departure services in supporting the recognition of qualifications
 - establishing a central point of contact for CRAs and monitoring its use.
- **Recommendation 5:** ETF could consider how it might support CRA networks, for example through updates on VET developments in non-EU countries, including in the area of vocational qualification databases and how to use them.
- **Recommendation 6:** ETF could consider encouraging the non-EU countries in which it works to develop a system for recording vocational qualifications which are accepted as part of a VNFIL claim or process. This could include details of the qualification, including title, competent body and country of origin.
- **Recommendation 7:** Consideration should be given to how best to ensure appropriate alignment between developments in VNFIL and in the recognition of vocational qualifications.
- **Recommendation 8:** ETF could consider strengthening their communications strategy for ETF resources to ensure that they reach and are used by a wider audience in order to optimise their usefulness.

ANNEX 1 – List of tables included in this report

Table 1	ISCED Levels
Table 2	List of countries included in the research
Table 3	Number of organisations and research participants in discussions and interviews
Table 4	Information required in applications.
Table 5	Information sought for recognition of the qualification
Table 6	Sources, resources and tools
Table 7	Information required by EU CRAs for recognition of vocational qualifications

ANNEX 2 – List of organisations contributing to the research

ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
Chambre d'Industrie et de Commerce Algéro-Allemande (AHK Algérie)	Algeria
Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)	Bangladesh
Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET)	Bangladesh
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	Bangladesh
National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)	Bangladesh
France Education International (FEI)	France
Chamber of Trades & Crafts (CMA)	France
BQ-Portal, IW Köln	Germany
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)	Germany
IHK FOSA	Germany
ANOLF Piemonte	Italy
Regione Piemonte	Italy
Center of Excellence in Food Processing and Services, Bălți	Moldova
Centre for Information and Communication Technology in Education (CTICE)	Moldova
NQF Dept, Ministry of Education & Certification	Moldova
The Public Association Education for Development (AED)	Moldova
Département de la Formation Professionnelle (DFP)	Morocco
Board of Technical and Commerce Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)	Pakistan
Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC)	Pakistan
Sindh Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (STEVTA)	Pakistan
Technical Training Centre, Quetta, Balochistan	Pakistan
The Swedish Council for Higher Education	Sweden
The National Electrical Safety Board (NESB)	Sweden
Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi	Tunisia
ENIC Ukraine (State-Owned Company 'Information and Image Centre')	Ukraine
Ministry of Education & Science of Ukraine	Ukraine
National Qualifications Agency (NQA)	Ukraine

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ANNEX 4 – Websites consulted during the study

The research team conducted extensive searches of websites of the individual countries selected for the study. The following websites provided valuable information about issues related to VET and/or recognition.

Country	Organisation	Website
Algeria	Institut National de Formation et d'Enseignement Professionnels (INFEP)	http://www.infp.edu.dz/
Algeria	Ministry of Vocational Education and Training (MFEP)	https://mfp.gov.dz/
Algeria	The National Distance Learning Center for Vocational Education and Training CN-FEPD)	https://elearningdz.cnepd.edu.dz/
Algeria	The National Office for the Development and Promotion of Continuing Education (ONDPFC)	https://ondefoc.dz/en/
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)	https://bteb.gov.bd/
Bangladesh	BTEB Competency-Based Training (CBT) Portal	http://btebcbt.gov.bd/login/auth
Bangladesh	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training	https://bmet.gov.bd
Bangladesh	ILO Bangladesh	https://www.ilo.org/regions-and-countries/asia-and-pacific/bangladesh
Bangladesh	National Skills Development Agency	https://nsda.gov.bd
Bangladesh	National Skills Portal	https://www.skillsportal.gov.bd/#/
Egypt	Productivity and Vocational Training Department (PVTd)	http://pvtd.gov.eg
Egypt	TVET Egypt	https://tvetegypt.org
France	Chambres de Métiers e de l'Artisanat (CMA)	https://www.artisanat.fr
France	DARES	https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr
France	France Competences	https://www.francecompetences.fr
France	France Education International	https://www.france-education-international.fr
France	France VAE	https://vae.gouv.fr
France	Guichet-qualifications.fr	https://www.guichet-qualifications.fr/en/index.html (Site removed Oct 2024)
France	Je Change de Metier	https://www.je-change-de-metier.com
France	Ministère du travail, de la santé e des solidarités	https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/
France	Ministère du Travail, de la Santé et des Solidarités	https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr
Germany	Anerkennung in Deutschland” – “Recognition in Germany”	https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/index.php
Germany	AusbildungPlus	http://www.ausbildungplus.de/webapp/suche?typ=zq&neuesuche=true

Country	Organisation	Website
Germany	BQ Portal	https://www.bq-portal.de/en
Germany	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)	https://www.giz.de/en/world-wide/142874.html
Germany	Federal Employment Agency	https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/
Germany	Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)	https://www.bibb.de/en/index.php
Germany	Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Actions (BMWK)	https://www.bmwk.de/Navigation/EN/Home/home.html
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education & Research (BMBF)	https://www.dqr.de/dqr/de/der-dqr/was-ist-ein-qualifikationsrahmen/was-ist-ein-qualifikationsrahmen_node.html
Germany	Federal Statistical Office	https://www.destatis.de/DE/The-men/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Berufliche-Bildung/_inhalt.html#_751pg8if8
Germany	Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI)	https://www.gtai.de/en/invest/hot-topics/skilled-workforce-germany-got-talents
Germany	Goethe Institute	https://www.goethe.de/ins/de/en/fku/zuw.html
Germany	Handwerks Kammer Freiburg (Freiburg Chamber of Crafts)	https://www.hwk-freiburg.de/de/service-center/anererkennung-auslaendischer-berufsabschluesse
Germany	IHK-FOSA	https://www.ihk-fosa.de/fuer-antragstellende/qualifikationsanalyse/
Germany	Kooperation International	https://www.kooperation-international.de/en/news/detail/info/recognition-of-foreign-professional-qualifications-in-germany
Germany	Make It In Germany	https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/working-in-germany/professions-in-demand/other-professions-in-demand
Germany	The BQ Portal, part of Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft (IW)	https://www.iwkoeln.de/en/institute/projects/bq-portal.html
Germany/ Algeria	AHK Algérie	https://algerien.ahk.de/de/dienstleistungen/prorecognition
Germany/ Egypt	AHK Egypt	https://aegypten.ahk.de/en/services/recognition-of-qualifications
Germany/ Morocco	AHK Marokko	https://marokko.ahk.de/de/prorecognition
Italy	Impresa In Un Giorno	https://www.impresainungiorno.gov.it/
IIEP UNESCO (Dakar)	IIEP UNESCO / PEFOP	https://pefop.iiep.unesco.org/en/actors
Italy	ANOLF Piemonte	https://www.anolfpiemonte.it/progetti_anolf/skillnet/?portfolioCats=40
Italy	CIMEA	https://www.cimea.it

Country	Organisation	Website
Italy	DATI: Ministry of Economic Development	https://dati.mise.gov.it/index.php/qualifiche-professionali?resetfilters=0&clearordering=0&clearfilters=0
Italy	Ministero delle Imprese e Made in Italy (MIMIT)	https://www.mimit.gov.it/
Italy	Ministry of Education & Merit (MIM)	https://miur.gov.it/web/guest/how-to-have-a-professional-qualification-recognised-in-italy
Italy	Regione Piemonte	https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/
Moldova	Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Education of the Ministry of Education and Research (CTICE)	https://ctice.md/verif/
Moldova	Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER)	https://mec.gov.md/ro
Moldova	National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC)	https://anacec.md/en
Morocco	Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (CGEM)	https://cgem.ma/
Morocco	Department of Vocational Training (DFP)	https://www.dfp.gov.ma/
Morocco	Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research (CSEFRS)	https://www.csefrs.ma/?lang=fr
Morocco	Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MIE-PEEC)	https://miepeec.gov.ma/
Morocco	Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MEN)	https://www.men.gov.ma/
Morocco	Office for Vocational Training and Job Promotion (OFPPT)	https://www.ofppt.ma/
Pakistan	Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment Government of Pakistan	https://beoe.gov.pk/foreign-jobs?job_title=&permission_no=&licence_num=&licence_title=&country_name=Slovenia&min_salary=&max_salary=&currency=
Pakistan	Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP)	https://efp.org.pk
Pakistan	Inter Boards Coordination Commission	https://ibcc.edu.pk/faqs/
Pakistan	National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC)	https://www.navttc.org/lander
Pakistan	National Vocational Qualification Registry System	https://www.nvqf.pk/view_qualifications.php
Pakistan	Pakistan Technical & Vocational Education Reform	https://tvetreform.org.pk/governance/
Pakistan	Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC)	https://www.pvtc.gop.pk/
Sweden	Byggbranschens Yrkesnämnd (The Construction Industry's Professional Board)	https://www.byggbranschensyrkesnamnd.se/yrkesarbetare/utlandsk-utbildning/vad-innebar-ett-erkannandeintyg/
Sweden	Elbranschens centrala yrkesnämnd (The electrical industry's central professional board)	https://ecy.com/bli-elektriker/validering/elteknisk-validering/

Country	Organisation	Website
Sweden	InfoNorden - site for the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers	https://www.norden.org/en/search?query=recognition+of+qualifications
Sweden	Swedish Council for Higher Education	https://www.uhr.se/en/start/recognition-of-foreign-qualifications/before-you-apply/
Sweden	Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH)	https://www.myh.se/in-english
Sweden	Verksamt.se	https://verksamt.se/en/industry/find-permits/regulated-professions/construction-and-installation
Tunisia	Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MFPE)	http://www.emploi.gov.tn/fr/
Tunisia	National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI)	https://www.emploi.nat.tn/fo/en/global.php
Tunisia	National Centre for Continuing Training and Career Development (CNFCPP)	https://www.cnfcpp.tn/
Tunisia	National Centre for Training of Trainers and Training Course Design (CENAFFIF)	http://cenaffif.nat.tn/
Tunisia	Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP)	http://www.atfp.tn/
Ukraine	ENIC Ukraine	https://enic.in.ua/index.php/en/
Ukraine	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	https://mon.gov.ua/
Ukraine	National Qualifications Agency	https://nqa.gov.ua
Alberta Institute Education Guides	Profiles of education systems in countries with high level of immigration into Alberta	https://www.alberta.ca/iqas-education-guides
ENIC-NARIC	Website of the ENIC-NARIC Networks	https://www.enic-naric.net/page-home-page
EURYDICE	Descriptions of national education systems in 40 countries	https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems
OECD	Reviews of national education policies	https://www.oecd.org/en.html
Internal Market Information System (IMI)	EU portal with reports on regulated professions and the recognition of professional qualifications	https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/index_en.htm
UNESCO UN-EVOC (Bonn)	UNESCO	https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Country+Profiles

ANNEX 5 – Country profiles

INTRODUCTION	74
The context for the Country Profiles	74
The purpose and content of the Country Profiles	74
The limitations of the Country Profiles	75
COUNTRY PROFILES: EU COUNTRIES	76
Country Profile: France	76
Country Profile: Germany	84
Country Profile: Italy	97
Country Profile: Sweden	104
COUNTRY PROFILES: NON-EU COUNTRIES	109
Country Profile: Algeria	109
Country Profile: Bangladesh	114
Country Profile: Moldova	121
Country Profile: Morocco	126
Country Profile: Pakistan	133
Country Profile: Tunisia	138
Country Profile: Ukraine	143

Introduction

The context for the Country Profiles

In July 2024, the European Training Foundation (ETF) commissioned research to inform the organisation's ongoing work to support the development of vocational qualifications databases. In particular, ETF wished to understand in greater depth the processes involved in the recognition of foreign vocational qualifications and the data needed for those processes. To this end, the research aimed to develop a deeper understanding of:

- how competent recognition authorities (CRAs) in selected countries in the European Union (EU) conduct recognition of non-EU vocational qualifications; and
- the extent to which qualifications gained by non-EU nationals while living in the EU can be recognised when they return home.

This document contains a series of Country Profiles published as an annex to the research project report. It should therefore be read in conjunction with the report.

The purpose and content of the Country Profiles

The research study involved gathering information about the vocational qualifications landscape and the recognition of vocational qualifications in selected EU countries and non-EU countries. The countries selected for the study are listed in the table below.

EU countries	Non-EU countries
France	Algeria
Germany	Bangladesh
Italy	Moldova
Sweden	Morocco
	Pakistan
	Tunisia
	Ukraine

The research involved extensive desk research supported by interviews and focus group discussions with representatives of bodies involved in vocational qualifications. These included recognition bodies and bodies responsible for aspects of vocational education and training (VET) in their respective country.

The Country Profiles contained in this annex summarise some of the key information gathered during the research process about each country selected for the study.

Each profile provides an **introductory overview** of:

- the key features of the VET system and vocational qualifications in the respective country
- if and how recognition of vocational qualifications is offered, along with links to relevant agencies.

The limitations of the Country Profiles

It should be noted that the Country Profiles are *not* definitive or comprehensive descriptions of systems in each country. They are designed to provide an introduction to those systems based on the information gathered during the research process and to signpost readers to key organisations and websites.

The profiles reflect information that was gathered during the research timeframe (Aug - Dec 2024) and every effort has been made to ensure that the information and weblinks contained in each report are accurate at the time of publication. However, it should be remembered that VET systems continue to develop and that some of the information may change over time. Readers are advised to follow the links provided to gain access to current information.

COUNTRY PROFILES: EU COUNTRIES

Country Profile: France

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape	
Levels of vocational qualifications	<p>In 2019, the 5-level framework introduced in 1969 was replaced with a revised 8-level framework. This National Professional Qualifications Framework (NPQF), defined in <i>Articles D. 6113-18 to D. 6113-20 of France's Labour Code</i>, is referenced to the EQF. It includes all nationally-recognised vocational and professional qualifications. These may be gained in a variety of settings, including in Higher Education. The new framework does not include general school qualifications. A table showing the range and levels of qualifications included in the NPQF is included at the end of this profile.</p>
Body/bodies and their remit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • France Competence is the body responsible for overseeing the implementation and use of the NPQF. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ overall responsibility for the quality of VET qualifications. It works with approved Certifying Bodies in the development of qualifications. France Competence may request the bodies to develop qualifications (e.g. for new or priority occupational areas) or accept submissions generated by the Certification bodies themselves. ♦ overall responsibility for the maintenance of two national directories of vocational qualifications: the RNCP (Directory of National Professional Certificates) contains the professional/vocational qualifications listed in the NPQF. Qualifications in the RS (Specific Directory) certify skills designed to <i>complement</i> the individual's professional skills (e.g. transversal skills; specialist skills). • Certifying Bodies (CBs) were legally defined in the 2018 Law which established the NPQF. They include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ministries, which have a confirmed right to develop qualifications ('de droit'). b. national joint employment commissions of professional branches c. organizations and authorities responsible for the registration of one or more professional certifications registered in the national register of professional certifications. These include <i>Chambres des Metiers et Artisanat (CMA)</i> (see below). d. organizations and authorities responsible for the registration of one or more certifications or authorizations recorded in the specific register <p>Additional organisations may apply to be Certifying Bodies if they meet detailed legal requirements.</p>
Notable features of VQs.	<p>Vocational qualifications feature from NPQF Level 3 upwards. The content of the qualification is defined in <i>Skills Blocks</i>. These blocks define the skills required for certification and how they should be assessed.</p> <p>All skills blocks must be capable of assessment as part of training and as part of a Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (<i>Validation des Acquis par l'Expérience</i>) (VNFIL / VAE) process. Claims for VAE are supported and processed via a dedicated public service (France VAE). At the time of writing, a list of 24 RNCP qualifications in the health and care sector can be awarded solely on the basis of VAE. In 2025, it is planned to operationalise this system more fully across different economic sectors.</p>

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Relevant websites	France Competence: https://www.francecompetences.fr CMA: https://www.artisanat.fr Access to RNCP and RS databases: https://www.francecompetences.fr/recherche-resultats/?types=certification&search=&pageType=certification&active= France VAE: https://vae.gouv.fr
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2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview	<p>Third-country vocational qualifications can receive an official recognition statement in France.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• France Education International (FEI) is the main national Competent Recognition Authority (CRA). Its Diploma Recognition Department is France's ENIC-NARIC centre. FEI ENIC-NARIC processes requests for recognition from individuals both from EU/EEA countries and third countries. This includes vocational/professional qualifications.• The Regulated Professions database identifies 257 regulated professional roles in France. FEI ENIC-NARIC may issue recognition statements for qualifications that relate either to regulated or to non-regulated professions. However, there are limits on the scope of the recognition of qualifications related to regulated professions (see below).• In order to practise in a regulated role, the individual's qualification must be recognised by the relevant regulatory body. These bodies include the Chambres des Metiers e d'Artisanat (CMA: Chamber of Trades & Crafts) responsible for recognition of qualifications for a wide range of roles in the key industries of food, construction, manufacturing and services. While FEI ENIC-NARIC recognizes qualifications for individuals intending to work as employees in a regulated crafts profession, CMA recognizes qualifications when individuals wish to set up their own business in a crafts profession. <i>Given the range of professional areas it covers, CMA was selected by the project as an exemplar professional body with processes relating to the recognition of vocational qualifications for access to a regulated profession.</i>
Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FEI ENIC-NARIC's recognition processes were designed to comply with the requirements of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications. As a result, the Lisbon principles are applied to vocational qualifications as well as those of higher education.• CMA is a state public institution working under the supervision of the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty. It operates as a national network of regional and local Chambers coordinated by CMA France and working in partnership with professional bodies representing the individual professional areas encompassed by CMA. CMA France provides a conduit between government and the regional/local representatives of the trades and crafts industries it represents. Importantly, CMA also provides professional training and is a registered Competent Body for awarding national qualifications for the trades and crafts it represents.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Scope

Recognition by FEI ENIC-NARIC

FEI ENIC-NARIC processes requests for recognition for vocational/professional and higher education qualifications from NPQF/EQF Level 3 upwards.

- FEI ENIC-NARIC recognition is based on an evaluation of the level of the submitted qualification against the NPQF level of a comparable French qualification (i.e. a qualification in the same sector or related to a similar role). The process seeks to establish if there is comparability between the submitted qualification and the NPQF level, rather than comparability with or equivalence to the content of the French qualification.
- FEI ENIC-NARIC provides this service for qualifications that are relevant to non-regulated and to regulated professions. However, there are restrictions on how the comparability statement can be used in relation to regulated professions.

FEI ENIC-NARIC's statement provides assurance of recognition and accreditation of the qualification in the country of origin and comparability of level with the French NQF. Authenticity checks are only conducted in cases of suspicion or unclear situations.

The statement of comparability does not provide confirmation that the qualification meets the requirements of a regulated role. This requires separate scrutiny by the body responsible for maintaining the register of regulated professionals.

Recognition by CMA:

- All individuals seeking to work in the professional roles represented by the CMA must hold a recognised and relevant professional qualification. In particular, a recognised qualification is essential for anyone seeking to establish their own business in any of the professional areas represented by CMA.
- CMA France established a common approach to recognition of vocational qualifications. However, it is the responsibility of the individual Chambers to conduct recognition processes. Applicants for recognition must apply to their regional CMA office. The regional CMA's decision is accepted nationally.
- CMA recognition requires applicants to provide proof of their qualification and of a minimum of 3 years' relevant work experience.
- Importantly, CMA does not process requests for recognition of third-country qualifications directly.
 - ♦ Third-country qualifications can only be considered if they have already been recognised in an EU Member State (outside France).
 - ♦ Work experience in a third country cannot be accepted for recognition purposes. To qualify for recognition, work experience must have been gained in an EU Member State.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Applying for recognition of a qualification

Recognition by FEI ENIC-NARIC:

- Applicants submit their application for recognition on a dedicated platform via the FEI website.
- Applications must include copies of the following documents:
 - ♦ a valid identity document
 - ♦ qualification certificate or official statement of achievement in the original language
 - ♦ official evidence of the duration of the period of study (e.g. in grade transcripts or Diploma/Certificate supplement) in the original language
 - ♦ translations into French of the qualification document and evidence of duration. Translations must be carried out in the applicant's country of origin by an official authority or an authorised translator. *Translations are not required for documents in Arabic, English, German, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish.*
- Costs: The total cost (2025) is €120. This includes an initial payment of €20 on submission and a further €100 if the file of documents is deemed admissible for recognition.

Processing applications

FEI ENIC-NARIC processes: The recognition process is conducted by trained and experienced credential evaluators. The following checks and evaluation criteria are applied in the process.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for recognition, qualifications must:

- be awarded by a recognised competent body in the country of origin
- be nationally recognised in the country of origin (e.g. included in an NQF; listed in a national register)
- represent at least 200 hours of study.

Evaluation criteria:

These criteria include ascertaining:

- if the qualification is the subject of multilateral/bilateral recognition agreements
- the position of the qualification in the national framework in the country of origin and/or in regional frameworks
- the entry requirements for the qualification and the length of study
- the elements covered in the qualification (e.g. module titles)
- the quality assurance requirements applied to the qualification and/or awarding body
- the professional opportunities which the qualification gives access to in the country of origin (e.g. does it allow access to a regulated role?)

The FEI website cites the average time taken to process an application as **4 months**. However, more complex cases may take **6 months**.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

CMA processes: The 2009 decree establishing the remit of FEI included an agreement for the processing of applications for recognition from CMA. This does not include third-country qualifications but may give indirect recognition via existing recognition statements gained in other EU Member States.

In addition to the process described above, checks are also made on:

- the qualification in relation to Directive 2005/36/EC
- the status of the profession in the country of origin (is it regulated?)

Since the implementation of this process, CMA has also developed its own database of recognition decisions. This allows CMA centres to check if the qualification has already been recognised.

Outcomes

FEI ENIC-NARIC

Qualifications may or may not receive official recognition at the end of the process. A number of reasons are given for a refusal to recognise the applicant's qualification. These relate primarily to the quality of the submission or the lack of link to national systems in the country of origin (e.g. information missing; authenticity cannot be verified; not recognised in the country of origin).

Successful applicants for recognition receive a *certificate of comparability* stating:

- the details of the applicant's qualification (e.g. date and country of award; title; awarding body; length of study; relevance to professional area in country of origin)
- how the level of the submitted qualification compares with the NPQF level of comparator French qualification
- that the holder may use the statement to apply for access to further learning or to employment (as an employee)
- that the statement does *not* give approval to the holder to:
 - ♦ access a regulated professional role
 - ♦ work as a self-employed person
 - ♦ establish their own business.

No information could be accessed on the content of statements/certificates of recognition issued by CMA within the timeframe of the study. As a result, the study could not determine if the third-country qualification is mentioned in the recognition.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Important web-sites

FEI ENIC-NARIC: <https://www.france-education-international.fr/hub/reconnaissance-de-diplomes?langue=fr>

***CMA France:** <https://www.artisanat.fr>

****EU Regulated Professions Database:** <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/professions/bycountry>

*No information about the recognition of qualifications could be found on the CMA France website or on those of the selected regional CMAs (accessible via CMA France). Information about the CMA/FEI working agreement was extracted from the FEI website. We are grateful to the individual CMA office which provided us with written information about their processes.

**The Regulated Professions Database lists professional roles regulated in different Member States. However, its usefulness was limited in respect of this study for the following reasons:

- Although most of the information on the website is available in English, professional titles are available only in the language of the country of origin.
- The qualification level listed with each entry cites the length rather than type of qualification.

As a result, it is difficult to isolate roles requiring vocational professional qualifications from those requiring Higher Education qualifications.

National professional qualifications framework (NPQR)

NQF level	Qualification type	EQF level
8	Doctoral degrees (<i>Doctorat</i>)	8
	Professional certificates/titles (<i>Titres professionnels</i>) – level 8 (*)	
	Professional qualification certificates (<i>Certificat de qualifications professionnelles – CQP</i>) – level 8 (**)	
	Professional qualifications on demand – level 8 (***)	
7	Master's degrees (<i>Grade de Master</i>)	7
	Professional diploma in engineering with master's degree (<i>diplôme /titre d'ingénieur</i>)	
	National diplomas at level 7 (****)	
	Professional certificates/titles (<i>Titres professionnels</i>) – level 7	
	Professional qualification certificates (<i>CQP</i>) – level 7 (**)	
6	Professional qualifications on demand – level 7	6
	Bachelor's degrees (<i>Grade Licence</i>) Bachelor's (<i>Licence</i>)	
	University bachelor's in technology (<i>Bachelor universitaire de technologie – BUT</i>)	
	National diploma in arts (<i>Diplôme National d'Art – DNA</i>)	
	National diplomas at level 6 (****)	
	Professional certificates/titles (<i>Titres professionnels</i>) – level 6	
	Professional qualification certificates (<i>CQP</i>) – level 6 (**)	
	Professional qualifications on demand – level 6 (***)	

NQF level	Qualification type	EQF level
5	Undergraduate technician certificates <i>Brevet de technicien supérieur – BTS</i>	5
	Undergraduate technician certificates in agriculture <i>Brevet de technicien supérieur Agricole – BTSA</i>	
	Undergraduate diploma in technology <i>Diplôme universitaire de technologie – DUT</i>	
	National diploma 'One of the best workers in France' <i>Diplôme d'Etat 'Un des meilleurs ouvriers de France'</i>	
	National diplomas at level 5 (****)	
	Professional certificates/titles (<i>Titres professionnels</i>) – level 5	
	Professional qualification certificates (<i>CQP</i>) – level 5 (**)	
	Master craftsman qualifications issued by the Chambers of Trades <i>Brevets de maîtrise – Chambre des métiers</i>	
	Professional qualifications on demand – level 5 (***)	
4	National baccalaureate diploma – general, technological or vocational education (<i>Diplôme national du baccalauréat général, technologique ou professionnel</i>)	4
	Applied arts certificates (<i>Brevet des métiers d'art – BMA</i>)	
	Professional certificate for youth, adult education and sports (<i>Brevet professionnel de la jeunesse, de l'éducation nationale et du sport – BPJEPS</i>)	
	Higher technical diploma in craftsmanship (<i>Brevet technique des métiers</i>) Secondary vocational certificates at level 4 (****)	
	Professional certificates/titles (<i>Titres professionnels</i>) – level 4	
	Professional qualification certificates (<i>CQP</i>) – level 4 (**)	
3	Professional qualifications on demand – level 4 (***)	3
	Secondary vocational certificates <i>Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle – CAP;</i> <i>Brevet d'études professionnelles – BEP (*****)</i>	
	Secondary vocational certificates in agriculture <i>Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle agricole – CAPA;</i> <i>Brevet d'études professionnelles agricoles – BEPA (*****)</i>	
	Secondary vocational certificate for youth, adult education and sports <i>Certificat professionnel de la jeunesse, de l'éducation nationale et du sport – CPJEPS</i>	
	Certificate issued by the Chambers of Trades and Crafts <i>Certificat technique des métiers – CTM</i>	
	Professional certificates/titles (<i>Titres professionnels</i>) – level 3	
	Professional qualification certificates (<i>CQP</i>) – level 3 (**)	
	Professional qualifications on demand – level 3 (***)	

NQF level	Qualification type	EQF level
2	Currently no qualifications	2
1		1

(*) Professional certificates/titles are awarded by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Integration; they are registered by law and may be classified at any level.

(**) CQPs are under the responsibility of social partners; they are registered on demand.

(***) Qualifications registered on demand are awarded by public or private bodies.

(****) An overview of national diplomas and vocational certificates registered by law is available in France *Compétences (2021)*, Annex 9.

(*****) BEP and BEPA are intermediary qualifications granted to young people who have passed the BEP exam and are preparing for the vocational baccalaureate.

Source: European Commission and Cedefop (2022); France Compétences (2021), pp. 7 and 102–103.

Table extracted from Cedefop (2023). European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022 – France.

Country Profile: Germany

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

The 8-level *Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für lebenslanges Lernen* (DQR) is Germany's NQF. This comprehensive framework was adopted in 2011 with the aim of making the similarities and differences between qualifications more visible and of supporting lifelong learning. It was referenced to the EQF in 2012. Importantly, the DQR has no regulatory function. Rather, it is an orientation mechanism, providing structured information about the qualifications system and showing how different types of qualifications relate to each other in terms of level.

The *Vocational Education and Training Systems chart* illustrates how vocational qualifications are integrated into the education system. Vocational qualifications feature in Levels 1-7 of the DQR.

Access to VET and vocational qualifications begins at Upper Secondary level (ISCED Level 3) in the formal education system. From this point, learners have access to a wide range of VET programmes offering different routes to the development of vocational skills and completion of vocational qualifications.

Upper-secondary level: VET programmes leading to qualifications are offered in a range of educational settings and for a range of purposes:

- **Dual VET (apprenticeship).** Apprenticeship programmes (EQF level 3-4) of two to three and a half years are the main pillar of the German VET system. They take place in at least two learning venues: companies and vocational schools.
- **School-based VET programmes** (EQF level 4) of one to three years are offered at full-time at vocational schools (*Berufsfachschule*). These prepare learners to work in many occupations.
- **General education programmes with vocational orientation** (EQF level 4) of two to three years are offered at full-time vocational schools (*berufliches Gymnasium*). These qualifications prepare learners for work and can permit access to higher education.
- **Transition programmes** (EQF levels 1-2) are programmes of between 6 and 12 months. They are designed for learners who face difficulties accessing VET programmes qualifying them for the labour market.

The system is highly permeable and numerous routes enable learners to progress from upper secondary VET to post-secondary or tertiary VET.

Post-secondary level: A range of **Specialised programmes** are available at post-secondary level (EQF level 4-5,) These programmes, lasting one to three years, enable learners to develop skills required for work in a wide range of sectors including agronomy, business, social services and healthcare. Many of the programmes lead to qualifications that certificate both vocational and academic skills, thereby granting access to higher education.

Tertiary level: VET and vocational qualifications sitting at tertiary are available in different settings and for different sectors:

- **Advanced vocational programmes** (EQF level 6), of 18 months to four years are offered in trade and technical schools (*Fachschulen*), which are regulated according to Federal State law.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- **Advanced vocational qualifications** (EQF levels 5 to 7) are nationally recognised vocational qualifications. They lead to the titles of:
 - ♦ professional specialist (*Geprüfte Berufsspezialist*) (EQF Level 5);
 - ♦ (b) bachelor professional: master craftsperson, specialist (EQF level 6); (c) master professional (management and expert) (EQF level 7)
- **Dual study programmes** leading to bachelor and master qualifications (EQF level 6 and EQF level 7 respectively). They are available for a range of sectors. Each combines academic study and work-based training.

Non-formal education: Continuing training and adult education

Non-formal continuing training is designed, organised and offered by different training providers for a range of different audience and purposes. These include:

- Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) for people in employment
- Education for unemployed people and vulnerable groups

Other private training courses for adults.

Body/bodies and their remits

In Germany, responsibility for the education system is shared between the German Federation and the Federal States (*Länder*). As a result, there are many different bodies involved in the design and delivery of vocational qualifications.

- **The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)** is responsible for VET-related issues at national level, while the Federal States are in charge of general education in schools.
- **The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)**, under the supervision of BMBF, is the federal government institution for policy, research and practice in VET. One of BIBB's key roles is the support it provides for the development of training regulations. Training regulations, defined in **the Vocational Training Act 2005 (BBiG)**⁵⁸, are the essential foundation for training in recognised training occupations within the dual system. Developed in partnership with representative bodies of employers, trades unions and education bodies at Federal State level (see below), training regulations define the skills, knowledge and competences required by an occupation and the minimum standards for company-based training for that occupation.
- Germany comprises 16 Federal States, each with its own ministry responsible for vocational schools. The **Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)** nominates experts from the Federal States to develop skeleton curricula which harmonise with the regulation and which underpin the vocational school programmes linked to the profession.
- Owing to the distribution of responsibilities between the *Länder* and the federal government in matters of qualifications, there is no single body for the overall coordination and oversight of the DQR. The main institutions providing oversight are the BMBF and the KMK. The coordination point for the DQR is the **Bund-Länder Koordinierungsstelle (B-LKS)**, established by a joint initiative of the federal government and the *Länder*. The B-LKS is also the national coordination point for the EQF.

⁵⁸ Among other issues, the BBiG also identifies the competent bodies responsible for vocational qualifications in each vocational sector covered by the Act.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Key features of VQs

Work-based learning (WBL) is a traditional component of the German education system and plays a major role in most VET programmes at secondary and tertiary levels. As described above, the dual system of education requires the involvement of employers. BIBB works with its partners to identify occupations that may be changing or emerging so that training regulations consistently meet the needs of the labour market.

An innovation in 2005 was the introduction of **Additional qualifications** designed primarily for trainees participating in an apprenticeship for a recognised training profession. These qualifications focus on skills which are additional or complementary to the training regulation and allow trainees to develop emerging or supplementary skills. The qualification programmes, which must be of a minimum duration of 40 hours, are open to trainees during their vocational training or within 6 months of completing. Additional qualifications are listed in the **AusbildungsPlus database**.

Relevant websites

BMBF: https://www.bmbf.de/DE/Home/home_node.html

BIBB: <https://www.bibb.de/en/198718.php>

The BIBB website includes links to:

- **The Vocational Training Act 2005 (BBiG):** https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/bmbf_The_new_Vocational_Training_Act.pdf
- **Training regulations and how they come about:** <https://www.bibb.de/dienst/publikationen/en/8277>
- **AusbildungsPlus database:** <https://www.bibb.de/ausbildungplus/de/34710.php>

DQR: https://www.dqr.de/dqr/de/home/home_node.html

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview

The recognition of foreign qualifications in Germany is highly regulated and structured, involving many different bodies. Since 2012, there has been a legal right to have foreign professional qualifications examined, regardless of nationality and the origin of the qualifications. This legal right is enshrined in the Federal Recognition Act and the Recognition Acts of each of the 16 Federal States (Länder).

The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) is Germany's ENIC-NARIC centre. ZAB's recognition of non-EU qualifications includes the provision of:

- **Statements of Comparability** showing how non-EU university degrees compare with the German education system.
- **Statements on a Foreign Vocational Qualification** which verify that an individual has completed a vocational training programme equivalent to at least 2 years' full-time training and that it is recognised in the country of origin.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Competent Recognition Authorities (CRAs) for specific Professions: A wide range of CRAs are involved in the recognition of qualifications for professions across Germany. These encompass different types of bodies such as Chambers, Federal State offices and Regional Councils. The identification of the CRA responsible for recognition of an individual's qualification depends on the profession the individual intends to work in and the "place of work principle". Importantly, some professions are regulated at Federal level and some are governed at the level of the individual Federal State. This means that, for many professions, the question of which CRA is responsible depends on the place where the individual intends to work. As a result, there are approximately 500 CRAs responsible for recognition in Germany and another 600 bodies that are responsible for permit procedures concerning specific regulated activities.

The complexity of the recognition landscape has led to the development of websites providing a wide range of information, resources and support for individuals seeking recognition of their qualifications. This includes **Anerkennung in Deutschland (Recognition in Germany)** operated by BIBB.

Anerkennung in Deutschland provides access to a wide range of information and support services for individuals, employers and advisors in recognition. Importantly, the site includes the **Recognition Finder**, a tool that allows individuals to find the competent body responsible for recognition of their qualification. It also provides access to the **Profi-Filter**. Like the Recognition Finder, this is a search tool which identifies the CRA for an identified profession in an identified place. The Profi-Filter is designed primarily for use by advisers supporting individuals who are seeking recognition of their qualifications.

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status

Recognition in Germany is supported by a range of specific legislation.

- **The Recognition Act 2012:** Recognition of foreign qualifications is legislated for in the **Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act** (2012) (the 'Recognition Act'). This Act created a legal right to the assessment of foreign professional and vocational qualifications regardless of nationality and qualification origin. The Recognition Act of the Federal Government applies to professions and occupations under federal jurisdiction. Each of the 16 Federal States (Länder) have their own Recognition Act which reflects the Federal Recognition Act. Each Federal State Recognition Act applies to the professions and occupations governed at the level of the federal state.
- **The Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG)** is an important component of the Recognition Acts. The BQFG defines the criteria and procedure for the recognition of qualifications for non-regulated training occupations.
- The **Skilled Immigration Act (2020) (FEG)** was designed to make it easier for skilled workers from non-EU countries to work in Germany if they have completed a qualification which is equivalent/recognised in regard to a German profession. This includes appropriate vocational qualifications.
- The Skilled Immigration Act was further developed in 2024 in order to broaden the options for immigration into the German labour market. The main new feature opens up labour market access in non-regulated professions to people whose qualification is not legally equivalent to a German profession. Proof of a formal, state-recognized qualification from the country of training is still usually a must – to be proven e. g. through a Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (DAB) by ZAB.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Scope

When discussing vocational qualifications, there are two basic types of recognition procedure in Germany which have to be clearly distinguished from each other:

1. **Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (Digitale Auskunft zur Berufsqualifikation, (DAB)):** This statement is intended for people who have completed a non-academic vocational training programme outside of Germany. It certifies that the training was completed, that it is recognised in the country of training and that it was a full-time training program of at least two years. It proves that the requirements for the granting of a residence permit under the Residence Act are met. Due to the exclusive reference to the Residence Act, it can be used at immigration authorities and visa offices to apply for a visa or residence title such as
 - a. opportunity card,
 - b. a recognition partnership
 - c. employment in selected professions with extensive practical work experience

The statement is not to be confused with a professional recognition, as the statement only yields specific legal consequences for a specific labour market access.

2. **Professional recognition via an equivalence assessment procedure:** Individual CRAs are responsible for the recognition of qualifications required for work in a specific professions. This type of recognition requires the CRA to compare the contents of the foreign professional or vocational qualification with a German professional or vocational qualification, referred to as the reference occupation and to assess the extent of equivalence. Professional experience or other evidence of competency, such as continuing training, may be taken into account in this process. The CRA issues an **assessment notice**. This sets out the outcome of this comparison process (see below).

Importantly, the CRAs for different sectors may also provide this more detailed recognition for vocational qualifications related to non-regulated professions in their sector. For example, this is the case for the **Chambers of Skilled Crafts (Handwerkskammern)** and the **Chambers of Industry and Commerce (Industrie- und Handelskammern, IHKs)**. The latter founded **IHK Foreign Skills Approval (IHK FOSA)**. IHK FOSA conducts the recognition of vocational qualifications for non-regulated professions for 76 of the 79 Chambers in the sector. Although not essential for the professional for entry into non-regulated roles, this type of recognition can help individuals and employers understand how the qualification relates to the reference occupation.

Applying for recognition of a qualification

Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (DAB)

Applicants for a DAB are required to set up an account with ZAB using their BundID. The BundID, provided by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI), allows individuals to prove their identity online to German public authorities.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Once they have created their ZAB account, applicants can submit their application. They are required to scan and submit the originals of their:

- certificate of completion of the vocational qualification (for example: diploma, secondary school graduation certificate stating the profession, trade license etc.)
- transcript of records for the entire vocational training programme
- identity document (passport or identity card)

Depending on the original language of the documents, the applicant may also need to submit copies translated into German by an authorised or approved translator.

Time: Applications for a DAB take 2 months to process.

Cost: There is a standard fee of € 150 for all applications, regardless of the outcome of the process. The individual may also incur costs if documents need to be translated into German.

Professional recognition: Application requirements depend mainly on the specific requirements defined in the relevant legal basis but also, to some extent, on the CRA and the professional recognition being sought. There are some standard requirements of all applications.

Applicants are generally required to submit:

- an application form in German
- the individual's proof of identity
- evidence of their professional qualification (e.g. certificate or diploma document)
- evidence of the content and duration of their training programme (e.g. transcripts of their programme; official study records)

Many CRAs may also ask applicants to submit some or all of the following documents:

- a short curriculum vitae
- evidence of professional experience (e.g. employer references; log books)
- any other certificates (e.g. achieved via continuing training)
- evidence of their intention to work in Germany (e.g. contact made with employers; application for work visa)
- a statement about any other applications they may have made for recognition of their qualification

Depending on the profession, some CRAs may also ask for other evidence, such evidence of their being able to work in the regulated profession in their country of origin, or evidence of their fitness.

Submitting the application: Applications are made directly to the relevant CRA. In many cases, these are made online or via email, although some CRAs may require applicants to submit original documents in their original format.

Time: The time required to complete the initial assessment of equivalence is legally defined to take a maximum of up to 4 months. In some limited circumstances, this period may be extended or shortened (e.g. in the case of a recognition procedure within the Fast-track procedure for skilled workers in skilled immigration).

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Costs: The costs of professional recognition may vary considerably depending on the complexity of the case. Costs for the process may range from one hundred to several hundred euros. In addition, there are often costs for translations, certifications, expert opinions, compensatory measures and refresher training. (See below).

Support for applicants:

It is recognised that this recognition landscape may be challenging for individuals to navigate and complete. As a result, a wide range of support has been put in place to support people through the recognition process.

- **Counselling services:** A wide range of counselling services are available. These include online, telephone and in-person support provided by a number of different agencies.
- **Funding support:** Applicants living in Germany and on limited income may qualify for financial support with the costs associated with recognition.
- **Guidance outside Germany**
 - **Pro-Recognition:** Pro-Recognition services are counselling and support services for recognition available in 9 different countries, including Algeria, Morocco and Egypt. These services are supported by the **German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK)** and **German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK)** and provided in-country by AHK centres.
 - **Service Center for Professional Recognition (ZSBA):** The ZSBA was established with the Skilled Immigration Act. It supplements the existing counselling offer and is aimed at Skilled workers who are living abroad and applying for recognition from there. The role of the ZSBA primarily fulfils three functions:
 - It serves as a central point of contact for applicants throughout the entire Recognition procedure.
 - It reduces pressure on the competent authorities in terms of counselling before and during the recognition procedure.
 - It makes the recognition procedure more transparent and efficient for applicants

More detailed information about the range of support available for applicants seeking recognition and for the advisors who support them is available via **Anerkennung in Deutschland**.

Processing applications

Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (DAB)

In order to issue a DAB statement, ZAB must check the information supplied in the application to ensure that the applicant has completed a training programme that:

- is recognised in the country of origin
- comprised at least 2 years' full-time training.

Prior to applying for the DAB, individuals are encouraged to check with their training institution that their programme meets these requirements.

Once the check is complete, ZAB issues a statement that confirms if the applicant has completed a training programme that meets the requirements. (See more in 'Outcomes' below).

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Professional recognition: Notification of equivalence

Applications submitted to other CRAs for recognition for either regulated or non-regulated professions go through an *equivalency assessment*, which is a standardised process defined in the BQFG. The aim of the process is to determine the extent to which the applicant's qualification is equivalent to a corresponding German qualification/training.

The process involves the examination of the applicant's qualification against the German qualification to determine if there is equivalence in terms of a set of fixed criteria, including the scope, content and setting of training. During this process, the CRA is seeking to determine if there are any significant differences between the applicant's qualification and the German reference qualification.

- If there is not enough evidence in the applicant's qualification to decide equivalence, other factors may be considered, including professional experience and additional qualifications.
- If the documents provided by the applicant do not provide enough information to make a decision, a *qualification analysis* may be conducted. This involves using different methods, such as specialised professional discussion or examination of work samples, to determine if the applicant meets the requirements for equivalency.

All qualifications submitted for recognition must be state-recognised in their country of origin. As a result, it is important for those involved in the recognition process to have access to information about the qualifications systems of the different countries represented in the cases they are considering. Two important resources that support CRAs in this work are:

- **BQ-Portal:** The BQ-Portal is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and operated by the by **Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft (German Economic Institute - IW)**. It has been designed as a comprehensive knowledge management system for decision-making practice by Chambers which are CRAs. It also assists employers with the assessment and evaluation of foreign VET systems and professional and vocational qualifications by providing relevant information. As part of the information resource, the BQ Portal publishes country profiles. At the moment it provides access to 107 published country profiles which describe the qualifications systems of individual countries. It also provides access to more than 6,000 professional profiles, which detail the education and training requirements for named professions.
- **anabin information portal:** Established in 2000, anabin is an information portal of **The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)**. It primarily provides information about foreign higher education. This includes information about the results of Statements of Comparability for several thousand individual degree programmes from around the world. It also provides information about the status of educational institutions and about the bodies responsible for different aspects of professional education within a selected country.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Outcomes of the recognition process

Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (DAB)

There are two potential outcomes for an application submitted for a DAB:

- a **positive statement** is issued when the applicant's qualification meet the three essential criteria. The statement confirms that the individual has:
 1. completed a training programme of
 2. at least 2 years full-time study and that
 3. the programme is state-recognised in country where it took place.
- a **negative statement** is issued if the qualification fails to meet any of these criteria.

Only positive statements can be used to support applications for residence titles. They can also be used to support job applications. However, the DAB does not give the right to the individual to work in a profession that is regulated. Professional recognition is needed for this.

Importantly, individuals who have completed more than one eligible training programmes may apply for a DAB for each programme they have completed.

Professional recognition: The outcomes of equivalence assessment

There are three possible outcomes of the process of equivalence assessment.

- **Full equivalence:** If no significant differences have been found between the applicant's qualification and the German qualification, a notice of full equivalence is issued. Full equivalence extends legal rights to the holder, such as the right to the same treatment and eligibility to the same work positions as skilled workers who have completed the equivalent German qualification.
- **Partial equivalence:** A decision of partial equivalence means that significant differences have been found between the applicant's qualification and the German qualification. Notices for partial recognition list the areas in which the qualification is seen as equivalent to the German qualification and identify where any differences or gaps exist. The next steps for the individual will depend on the status of the German qualification:
 - ♦ **If the German qualification gives access to a regulated profession,** the recognition notice will highlight any compensatory measures the individual needs to complete successfully before being able to work in the regulated profession. These measures may take the form of a period of work experience or additional training ('adaptation measures') or completion of a knowledge or aptitude test.
 - ♦ **If the German qualification is relevant to a non-regulated role,** the individual can apply directly to the labour market if they already hold a relevant residence/work permit for Germany. It is then the responsibility of the employer to decide of the range of skills represented by their qualification is appropriate to the role they are recruiting for.
- **No equivalence:** Recognition notices of no equivalence are issued in cases where no comparability can be found between the two qualifications. The notice highlights the key differences between the two qualifications and explains why no equivalence is found.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Monitoring of recognition

BIBB Recognition Monitoring

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) carries out recognition monitoring on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). This involves monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the recognition laws, of the supporting processes and of general policy conditions.

The monitoring focuses on all stages of the recognition process. This includes looking at the work of CRAs, including the information and guidance they provide, the training measures they implement and the usability of the recognition notice in the labour market.

BIBB Recognition Monitoring also evaluates federal statistics on recognition procedures on an ongoing basis, identifying action areas and producing reports on these.

Since 2015, BIBB Recognition Monitoring has also been coordinating networking formats with CRAs of the federal states. The results of the BIBB Recognition Monitoring appear in the Reports on the Recognition Act and other publications, all available via the BIBB website.

Important web-sites

CRAs

The following CRAs were looked at in the context of this study:

- **The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB):** <https://zab.kmk.org/index.php/en>
- **IHK Foreign Skills Approval (IHK FOSA):** <https://www.ihk-fosa.de>

For access to information and contact details for other CRAs, see:

- **The Recognition Finder:** <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/en/interest/finder/profession>
- **Profi-Filter:** <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/en/pro/profi-filter>

Key information sources and resources

anabin: <https://anabin.kmk.org/db/zustaendigestellen>

Anerkennung in Deutschland: <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php>

BIBB Recognition Monitoring: <https://www.bibb.de/en/1350.php>

BQ Portal: <https://www.bq-portal.de/en>

German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) (for information about Pro-Recognition and contact with AHK Centres): <https://www.dihk-service-gmbh.de/de/unsere-projekte/prorecognition->

German qualifications framework for lifelong learning (DQR für lebenslanges Lernen)

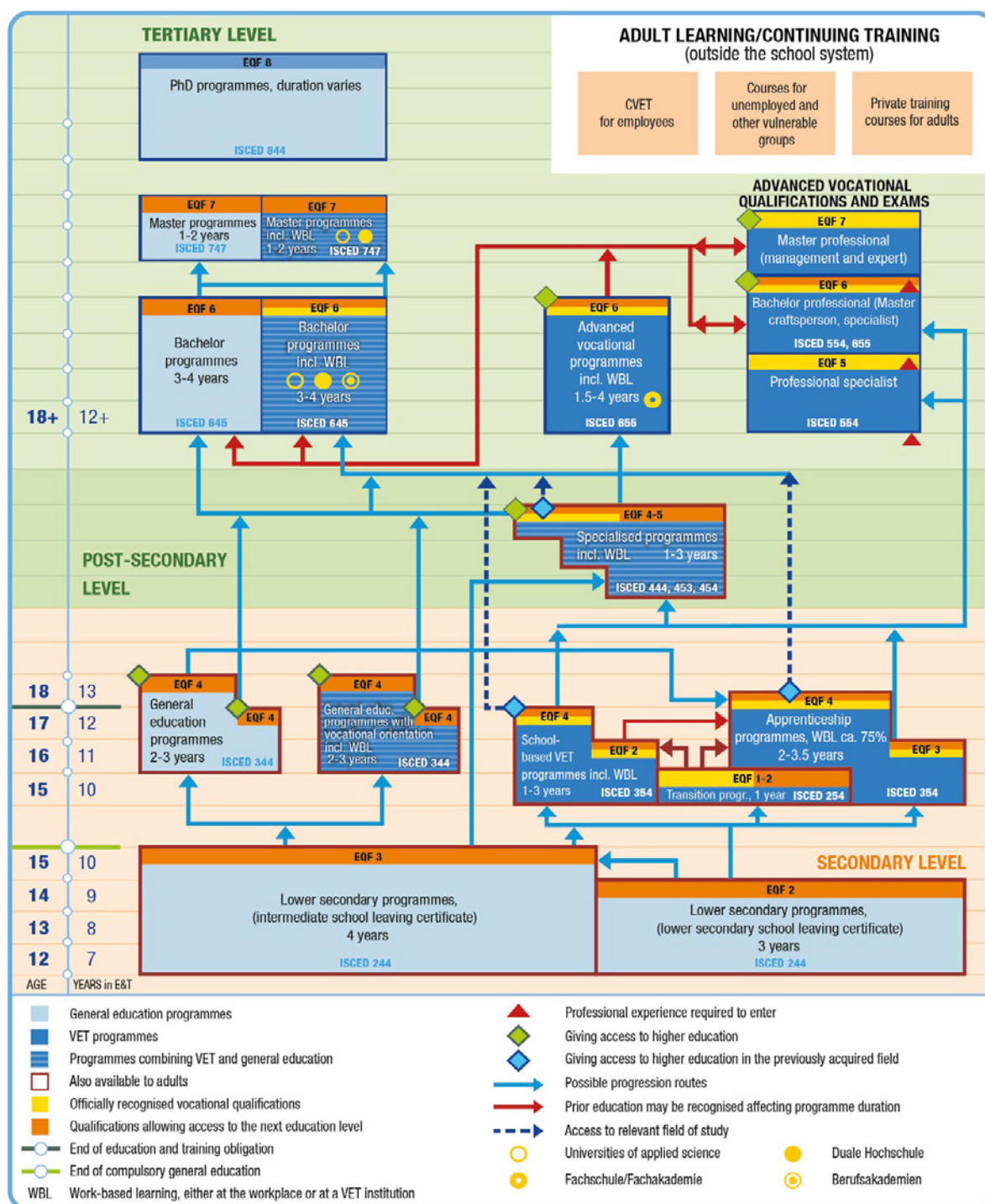
DQR level	Qualification types	EQF level
8	Doctorate and equivalent arts degrees (<i>Doktorat und äquivalente künstlerische Abschlüsse</i>)	8
7	Master's degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (traditional German courses of higher education study such as the first degrees of <i>Diplom</i> or <i>Magister</i> , state examinations) (<i>Master und gleichgestellte Abschlüsse (Diplom, Magister, Staatsexamen)</i>) Strategic professional (IT) (certified) (<i>Strategische/r IT Professional (Geprüfte/r)</i>) Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 7) (<i>Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 7)</i>)	7
6	Bachelor's degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (<i>Bachelor und gleichgestellte Hochschulabschlüsse</i>) Specialist commercial clerk (certified) (<i>Fachkaufmann/-frau (Geprüfte/r)</i>) Business management specialist (certified) (<i>Fachwirt (Geprüfter)</i>) Master craftsman (<i>Meister</i>) Operative professional (IT) (certified) (<i>Operative/r Professional (IT) (Geprüfte/r)</i>) Trade and technical school (advanced vocational training governed by federal state law) (<i>Fachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte berufliche Weiterbildungen)</i>) Advanced vocational training pursuant to Article 54 of the Vocational Training Act (level 6) (<i>Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach § 54 BBiG (Niveau 6)</i>) Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 6) (<i>Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 6)</i>)	6
5	IT specialist (<i>IT-Spezialist/in (Zertifizierte/r)</i>) Service technician (certified) (<i>Servicetechniker/in (Geprüfte/r)</i>) Advanced vocational training pursuant to Article 54 of the Vocational Training Act (<i>Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach § 54 BBiG (Niveau 5)</i>) Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 5) (<i>Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 5)</i>)	5

DQR level	Qualification types	EQF level
4	Upper secondary general education school leaving certificate – General higher education entrance qualification (<i>Allgemeine Hochschulreife (AHR)</i>)	4
	Subject-linked higher education entrance qualification (<i>Fachgebundene Hochschulreife (FgbHR)</i>)	
	Higher education entrance qualification for university of applied sciences (<i>Fachhochschulreife (FHR)</i>)	
	Dual VET (3-year and 3.5-year training courses) (<i>Duale Berufsausbildung (3 und 3 ½-jährige Ausbildungen)</i>)	
	Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal state law) (<i>Berufsfachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte Berufsausbildungen)</i>)	
	Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal law in healthcare and elderly care) (<i>Berufsfachschule (Bundesrechtliche Ausbildungsregelungen für Berufe im Gesundheitswesen und in der Altenpflege)</i>)	
3	Full-time vocational school (fully qualifying VET pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code) (<i>Berufsfachschule (vollqualifizierende Berufsausbildung nach BBiG/HwO)</i>)	3
	Retraining qualification pursuant to the Vocational Training Act (level 4) (<i>Berufliche Umschulung nach BBiG (Niveau 4)</i>)	
	Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate – General education, 10 years (<i>Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA)</i>)	
2	Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate – Full-time vocational school (<i>Berufsfachschule (Mittlerer Schulabschluss)</i>)	2
	Dual VET (2-year training courses) (<i>Duale Berufsausbildung (2-jährige Ausbildung)</i>)	
	Lower secondary school leaving certificate – General education, 9 years (<i>Erster Schulabschluss (ESA)</i>)	
1	Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year, introductory training) (<i>Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 2; BvB, BvB-Reha, BVJ, EQ)</i>)	1
	Basic vocational training – Full-time vocational school (<i>Berufsfachschule (Berufliche Grundbildung)</i>)	
1	Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year) (<i>Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 1; BvB, BvB-Reha, BVJ)</i>)	1

Source: Cedefop (2023). *European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022 – Germany*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/germany-european-inventory-nqfs-2022>

Vocational education and training system chart

This figure shows more clearly how the VET education fits into the education system showing the path between the different types and levels and marking the EQF and ISCED levels of the qualifications



Source: Cedefop, & Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Germany: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database].<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/germany-u3>

Country Profile: Italy

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of vocational qualifications

The Italian NQF, referenced to the EQF, is the national mechanism aimed at promoting transparency, usability and portability of qualifications and competences within the National System for Certification of Competences (NSCC). The NQF has 8 levels, which are defined by complexity of learning outcomes within three main domains: knowledge, skills, and responsibility/autonomy.

Vocational qualifications feature at Levels 3-7 on the NQF. Importantly, there are two parallel systems working in alignment to offer access to vocational qualifications:

- qualifications which combine academic and vocational study at upper-secondary level are the responsibility of the national education system.
- qualifications offering vocational education and training from EQF Level 2 to EQF Level 7 are the responsibility of the regional governments of Italy's 20 Regions and Autonomous Regions.

The alignment between the qualifications in these systems is supported by the **Atlas of Work and Qualifications**. Qualifications developed at the level of the Region or Autonomous Region must be entered into the Atlas and must align with national requirements.

The NQF diagram included in this profile illustrates the division between national and regional provision of qualifications.

Body/bodies and their remit

The bodies responsible for vocational qualifications include national and regional government departments:

- **Education and training system:** Responsibility for combined academic and vocational education is shared between the Ministry of Education and Merit, the Ministry of University and Research and the governments of the Regions and Autonomous Regions.
- **Vocational training system.** Responsibility for vocational education and training sits with the regional governments. Importantly, qualifications offered by the Regions and Autonomous Regions centre on a professionalising the offer addressed to young people and adults.
- **Adult education system.** Responsibility for adult education sits with the Ministry of Education and Merit in conjunction with the Regions and Autonomous Regions. Adult education is provided by Provincial Centres for Adult Education and focuses on general, vocational and language learning.

Depending on types of qualifications and sectors, VET qualifications can be developed by various authorised bodies. Examples include:

- Accredited training institutions, under the authority of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces;
- State institutions and independent educational institutions, under the authority of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces;
- Public Entitled Bodies under the specified Competent Authority for individual regulated professions;
- State institutions and independent educational institutions, under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Merit;
- Provincial centres for adult education, under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Merit;

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Key features of VQs.

The division of responsibilities for VET and vocational qualifications between national and regional bodies means that there are parallel pathways to completing vocational qualifications.

At EQF Levels 3&4 / Upper secondary:

- **Upper Secondary Diploma (Technical and Vocational)** qualifications are delivered in technical schools as part of national mainstream education. These 5-year programmes combine general and vocational education and completion of the diploma allows access to higher education.
- **leFP Certificate (L3) and Diploma (L4):** These qualifications are *Initial Education and Vocational Training* qualifications offered by the regional authorities. Designed for students leaving middle school and for young adults, these qualifications provide work placements and are delivered in a range of different training institutions.

Post-secondary VET and vocational qualifications

These qualifications sit within the remit and address the needs of the individual regions but align with national requirements.

- **Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTTS):** IFTS programmes are designed by regional authorities and are delivered by a wide range of approved providers. The programmes reflect nationally-recognised skills profiles in a number of key sectors. Importantly, all programmes involve significant in-work learning and lead to a Higher Specialisation Certificate at EQF L4. level.
- **Higher Technological Institute (ITS):** These institutes provide 2-year and 3-year programmes leading to Higher Level Technical Diplomas at EQF L5. Like IFTS, the programmes require collaboration between training providers and employers and involve considerable in-work learning.

Importantly, IFTS and ITS are nationally-recognised qualifications.

Relevant websites

- **Ministry of Education and Merit (MIM):** <https://www.mim.gov.it/web/guest/sistema-educativo-di-istruzione-e-formazione>
- **Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR):** <https://www.mur.gov.it/it>
- **Atlas of Work & Qualifications :** https://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/atlan-te_lavoro_dettagli.php
- **The websites of the individual Regional Councils** can be accessed via [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_council_\(Italy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_council_(Italy))

Information sources used in this overview:

- **EQF Referencing Report - Italy, 2022,** <https://europass.europa.eu/en/document-library/eqf-referencing-report-italy>
- **Angotti, R.; (2019). Vocational education and training in Europe: Italy.** Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018. https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2019/Vocational_Education_Training_Europe_Italy_2018_Cedefop_ReferNet.pdf
- **National Qualifications Online Tool – Italy 2020** <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/nqfs-online-tool/countries/italy-2020>

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview

CIMEA is Italy's ENIC-NARIC centre. Its website provides access to two mechanisms for recognising upper-secondary and higher education qualifications. These include:

- ARDI (Automatic Recognition Database Italia) which describes the main qualifications of the countries signatory to the Lisbon Convention and suggests a level correspondence with Italian qualifications.
- CIMEA-Diplome which covers upper-secondary and higher education qualifications from a range of non-EU countries. The new Diplome website, launched in 2025, enables individuals to access statements that verifies their qualification and provides a comparison with qualifications in the Italian formal education sector.

However, unlike the other ENIC-NARIC centres included in this study, CIMEA does not provide comparability statements for non-EU vocational qualifications. No agency was found during the study to provide a national statement of comparability of vocational qualifications.

Recognition processes for vocational qualifications focus instead on assessing the equivalence of the qualification with an identified Italian qualification. Recognition can be provided for the following reasons:

- for access to academic programmes.
- for access to open competitions for civil servant roles in public sector institutions.
- for access to regulated professions.

Refugees holding qualifications may also have their qualifications recognised.

The competent recognition authority (CRA) will depend on the reason that recognition is being sought and where the individual lives or intends to work in Italy.

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status

Recognition of non-HE qualifications for access to academic programmes or to competitions for public-sector roles is conducted by the Department of Public Service, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MIM). Access to this process for non-EU nationals is restricted under *Article 38 of Legislative Decree 165* to those who are:

- holders of an EU residence permit for long-term residents; *or*
- refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection; *or*
- non-EU family members of European Union citizens, those holding a right of residence or right of permanent residence.

Recognition of professional qualifications:

There are 2 tiers of regulated professions in Italy:

- a) professions regulated at national level
- b) professions regulated at regional level

a) Professions regulated at national level:

The majority of regulated professions are regulated at national level. The CRAs for nationally-regulated professions are generally Ministries of the Government or authorised professional bodies. Information about the CRAs responsible for different professional sectors can be found on the CIMEA website and on the Regulated Professions Database.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

b) Recognition of professions regulated at regional level

Regional Councils should not normally introduce or regulate new professions. However, at times, Regional Councils may need to respond to emerging needs within the region. This includes recognising that regional demand for the new profession is growing and that regulation at national level might take too long to. In such cases, the Regional Council is the CRA, responsible for making recognition decisions and for setting and monitoring compensatory measures.

In this study, the research team looked at recognition sitting within the remit of the *Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy* (MIMIT). MIMIT is the CRA for a range of regulated professional roles which require vocational qualifications. These include a range of trades such as plumbing and auto repair and roles in services such as hairdressing.

Scope	<p><i>The focus in this study was on the recognition of vocational qualifications for entry into a regulated profession.</i></p> <p>The reference points for recognition are the regulation requirements for the individual role and full recognition grants equivalence with those requirements. Depending on the professional role for which recognition is sought, individual applicants may have to provide evidence both of vocational qualifications and of professional work experience.</p>
Applying for recognition of a qualification	<p><i>In this study, the research team looked at the process for submitting applications for recognition via MIMIT.</i></p> <p>Applications must be submitted electronically and include scanned copies of original documents. These documents include training programme transcripts and certificates along with attested evidence of professional experience. All documents must be provided in the original language and, if that language is not Italian, in an authorised translation.</p> <p>There are two additional important features of the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the applicant's evidence of their qualification must be supported by a <i>Dichiarazione di valore in loco</i> (Declaration of value in place). This declaration is provided by the Italian consul or other authorised Italian institution in the country of origin of the qualification. The Declaration confirms that the qualification evidence is accurate and that the qualification itself is nationally recognised in the country of origin.• the applicant must also state town and province where they intend to work. This is because the recognition process is likely to involve the Regional Council.
Processing applications	<p>The Ministry has up to 4 weeks to acknowledge applications although the processing of the application may take longer.</p> <p>The process involves reviewing all of the submitted evidence to identify if there are significant differences between the evidence and the requirements of the profession.</p>

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

At the end of this process, a statement is provided to identify the extent to which the applicant meets the requirements of regulation. The result might be:

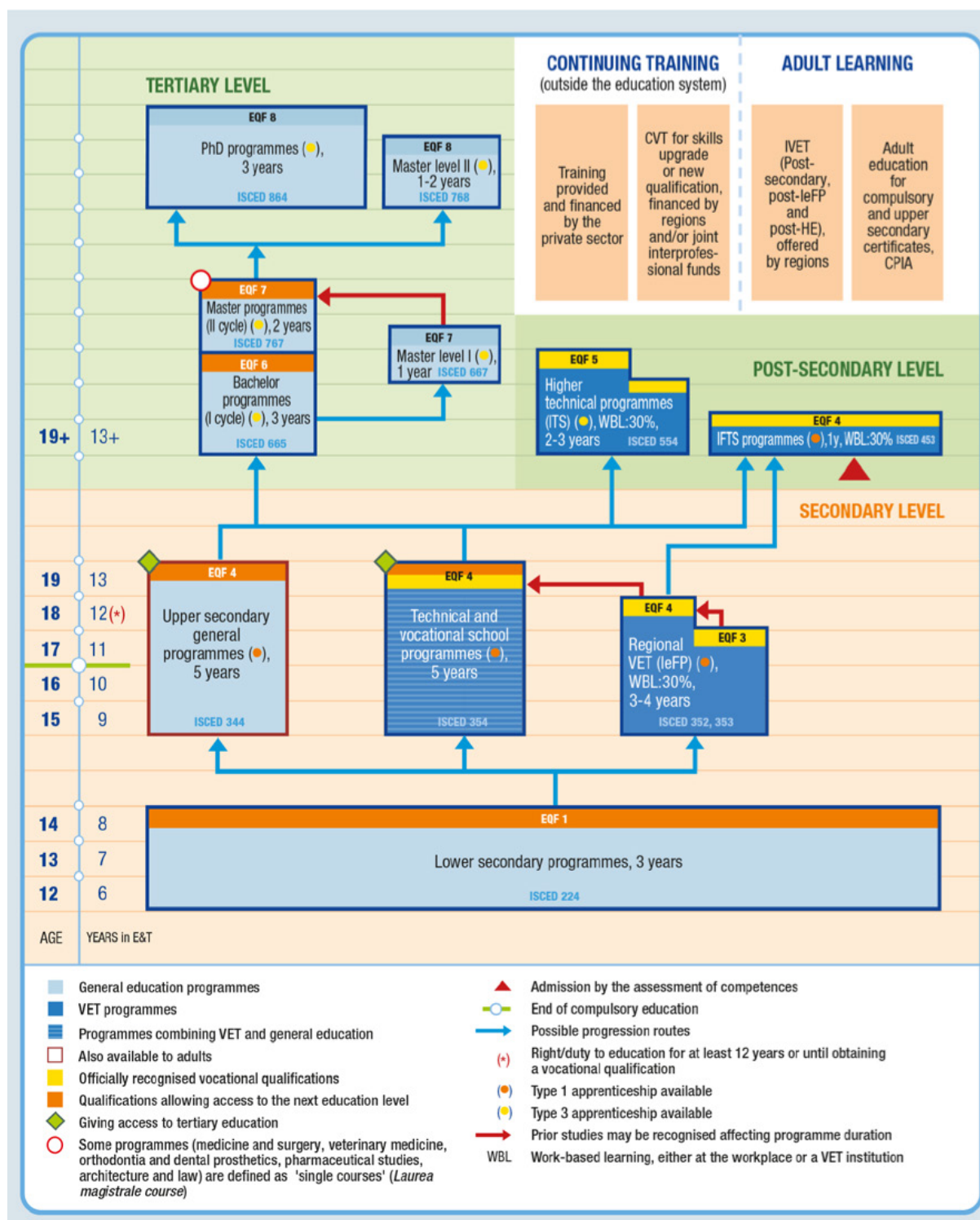
- full approval (there are no significant gaps)
- partial approval (there are gaps which can be addressed by compensatory measures)
- no approval (there are significant gaps between the evidence and the requirements which cannot be addressed by compensatory measures).

The statement details requirements for compensatory measures.

The role of the Regional Council: Information about the outcome of the process and compensatory measures is sent to the Regional Council in the region where the applicant lives. It is the responsibility of the individual to complete training or additional workplace learning in order to meet the requirements of the condition set by the relevant Ministry. Regional Council responsibility is to set and organise access to the compensatory measure. If the individual completes this compensatory measure successfully, the Regional Council confirms to the Ministry that they have met the requirements of the condition. The Ministry then establishes with a decree that individual can then work in the regulated role.

Outcomes	Recognition statements for individual applicants for professional recognition can be accessed on the DATI database managed by the Ministry of Economic Development.
Important web-sites	<p>Ministry of Education and Merit (MIM) recognition guidance: https://mim.gov.it/how-to-have-a-professional-qualification-recognised-in-italy</p> <p>Ministry of Enterprise and Made in Italy: https://www.mimit.gov.it/it/per-il-cittadino/titoli-e-professioni</p> <p>CIMEA-Diplome: https://cimea-diplome.it/page-homepage</p> <p>ARDI: https://ardi.cimea.it/en</p> <p>DATI: https://dati.mise.gov.it/index.php/qualifiche-professionali</p> <p>The websites of the individual Regional Councils can be accessed via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_council_(Italy)</p>

Structure of the Italian Education System



Source: Angotti, R.; (2019). Vocational education and training in Europe: Italy. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.

Qualification titles in the Italian NQF

EQF LEVEL	Titolo/Qualificazione
1	Final diploma of the first cycle of education
2	Compulsory education certificate
3	Initial education and vocational certificate (IeFP) (Professional operator)
4	Upper secondary education diploma (Lycée, Technical, Vocational) Initial education and vocational diploma (IeFP) (Professional technician) Higher technical specialisation certificate (IFTS)
5	Higher technical education diploma ⁷²
6	Bachelor degree First-level academic diploma
7	Master degree Second-level academic diploma (AFAM) First-level university post degree First level Academic specialization diploma Higher specialization diploma or first level post degree
8	Research doctorate (PhD) Research training academic Diploma (AFAM) Specialization diploma Second-level university post degree Second level Academic specialization diploma (AFAM) Higher specialization diploma or second level post degree (AFAM)

Source:

Italian Referencing Report Of The Qualifications To The European Qualifications Framework (2022)

https://www.anpal.gov.it/documents/552016/586510/RAPPORTO+REFERENZIAZIONE+_APRILE+2023_ENG_V5.pdf/df219955-99bd-0004-8818-fc08436fedd9?t=1697008505873

Country Profile: Sweden

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

The Swedish National Qualifications Framework (SeQF), aligns with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), ensuring transparency and comparability of Swedish qualifications across Europe and facilitating mobility for learners and workers.

It encompasses qualifications from **Level 1** (basic education) to **Level 8** (doctoral education), integrating general, vocational, and higher education qualifications. The SeQF is a comprehensive NQF, which was referenced to the EQF in 2016. It is structured in eight levels, including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training, as well as qualifications awarded outside the formal education and training system. The system is designed to promote lifelong learning, flexibility, and alignment with labour market demand.

The diagram on page 6 illustrates how vocational qualifications are integrated into the formal education system from upper-secondary level (SeQF/EQF Level 4) and upwards. In addition, a range of vocational qualifications are offered within the non-formal education sector. These include qualifications within adult learning and within continuing training settings. These qualifications are offered by organisations sitting outside the formal education system. Organisations providing non-formal qualifications may apply to have their qualifications levelled within the SeQF.

The system also allows for **Validation of Prior Learning (VPL)** to recognize skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. This is designed to ensure greater accessibility to qualifications and support career progression.

Body/bodies and their remit

Sweden's qualification system is centrally governed but implemented through decentralized mechanisms. This is designed to ensure flexibility and regional adaptation.

The principal bodies include:

- **Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket):** Oversees curricula, quality assurance, and vocational programmes in upper secondary and adult education.
- **Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolans - MYH):** Responsible for approving and funding higher vocational education programs and working in collaboration with employers to meet labour market needs. MYH also acts as the Swedish National Coordination Point for the EQF and is as such responsible for the SeQF.

Skolverket, the Ministry of Education and Research and MYH are responsible for the educational content of vocational qualifications. This work includes collaborating with industry representatives. However, the industries do not regulate any educational content

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Position of VQs in national system

Vocational qualifications are integrated into Sweden's educational framework. IVET (vocational upper-secondary) programmes combine school-based and workplace-based learning, while HVE programmes emphasize workplace training and collaboration with industries to meet workforce demands. Flexible adult education pathways further enhance access to vocational training.

Main Pathways include:

- **Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and Adult Education:**

- ♦ Delivered at upper secondary schools across 12 vocational programs.
- ♦ Combines school-based learning with significant work-based learning components.
- ♦ Includes apprenticeship models available within or outside the public system.
- ♦ Adult education is managed through municipal adult education (Komvux) and HVE programs administered by the **Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH)**.

- **Continuing Training and Adult Education** includes:

- ♦ Skills training for those in employment
- ♦ Apprenticeship or work introduction placements following IVET
- ♦ Training programmes powered by folk high schools and private training providers
- ♦ ALMP (mainly for the unemployed).

Relevant websites and links

- Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket): <https://www.skolverket.se>
- Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan - MYH): <https://www.myh.se>

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview

Vocational qualifications from other countries, including third-country qualifications, can be officially recognized in Sweden through two main routes.

- **Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR):** UHR is the main body for recognizing foreign qualifications, including vocational qualifications. UHR provides a recognition statement for vocational qualifications from outside Sweden.
- **Competent Recognition Authorities (CRAs) for Regulated Professions:** Sweden has a list of regulated professions, each with specific qualification requirements. Examples of the professions regulated in Sweden that may require vocational qualifications include a range of roles in construction, transport and agriculture. If the individual wishes to work in a regulated profession, they must apply for recognition to the relevant competent recognition authority (CRA) for that profession. A list of the CRAs for Regulated Professions is included on the UHR website.

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status

UHR applies the principles of the **Lisbon Recognition Convention** to its recognition of vocational qualifications. This means that recognition is granted unless substantial differences can be demonstrated between the foreign qualification and a comparable Swedish qualification. It is important to note that, in this process, foreign vocational education is compared with Swedish education as defined by Swedish laws and regulations.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Scope

Recognition by UHR: UHR evaluates vocational qualifications that are part of the formal education systems from EU/EEA and from third countries. The assessment determines the comparability of the foreign qualification with a generic vocational qualification in the Swedish formal education system, at upper-secondary and post-secondary levels.

- Individuals whose qualification is judged to be comparable to an upper-secondary or post-secondary vocational qualification can use their recognition statement to support applications for work.
- Individuals whose qualification is judged to be comparable to an upper-secondary vocational qualification with dual purpose can also use their recognition statement to support applications for further study.

It is important to note that UHR provides this service for qualifications that are relevant to non-regulated and to regulated professions. However, the recognition of a qualification relevant to a regulated profession does not confirm the right of the individual to work in that profession.

Recognition for Regulated Professions: For professions that are regulated, recognition is handled by relevant sector-specific CRAs. These CRAs evaluate the qualifications and issue licenses to practise where appropriate. For example:

- Healthcare: Licenses are issued by the National Board of Health and Welfare.
- Electrical Work: Certifications are managed by the National Electrical Safety Board.

Each CRA ensures that the foreign qualification meets required Swedish standards and may require the individual to complete compensatory measures (e.g. additional training, or assessments) before issuing authorization to practice. The CRAs process applications for professional recognition according to the rules in *Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications*. For applications regarding third country qualifications, national rules apply and may include tests and additional training.

Applying for recognition of a qualification

To apply for recognition by UHR, individuals from third countries must have applied for a work and residence permit in Sweden. Applications are normally submitted online via the UHR website. The application should include the proof of the applicant's identity, the original diploma or certificate and academic transcripts. Documents issued in English, French, German, Spanish or in one of the Nordic languages can be submitted without translation. However, documents issued in any other language must be accompanied by an official translation into one of the accepted languages.

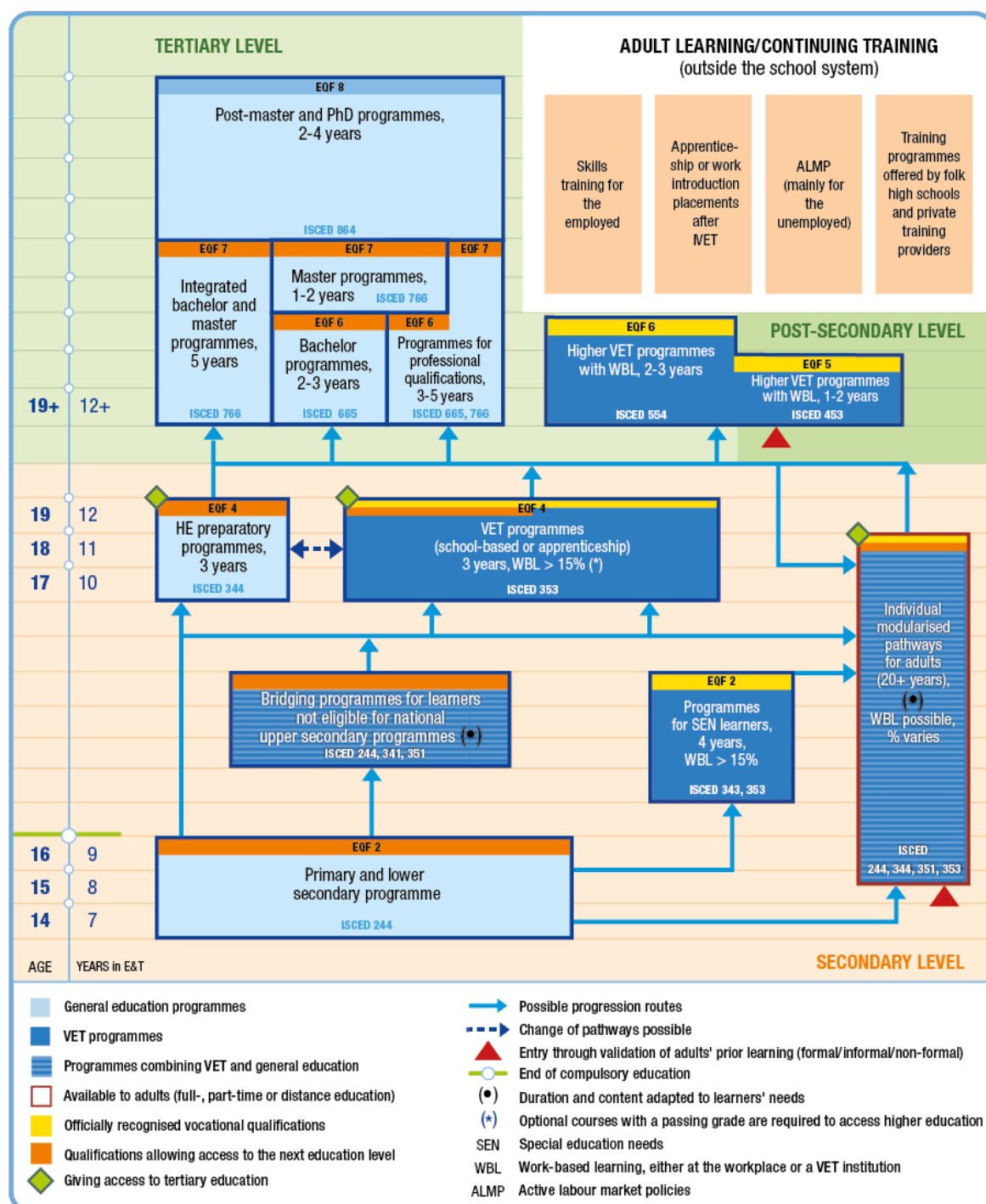
For regulated professions: Each CRA has its own application requirements and processes. Individuals should check with the CRA before beginning an application.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Processing applications	<p>UHR evaluates the vocational qualification based on its comparability with a similar qualification at upper-secondary or post-secondary level within the Swedish formal education system.. The recognition process focuses on the five elements of a qualification as defined in the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual⁵⁹. This includes comparisons between the submitted qualification and the generic Swedish qualification in terms of the quality of the qualification, the educational level/EQF-level, the workload and scope of the training programme, the learning outcomes and the profile (i.e. purpose or content) of the programme.</p> <p>Duration: Processing time is typically 2 to 4 months.</p> <p>Cost: The recognition of qualifications provided by UHR is free of charge. However, individuals may incur costs for translations of documents.</p> <p>For regulated professions: The Fees Ordinance (Avgiftsförordningen) regulates the right of CRAs to charge fees for goods and services they provide. The fees may range from 0 sek to several thousand sek.</p> <p>Applicants may also incur additional costs for document translation or meeting supplementary requirements.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Recognition by UHR: There are two possible outcomes of the recognition process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals whose qualification is found to have sufficient similarities in terms of educational level/EQF-level, training programme scope, quality, learning outcomes and profile of the submitted qualifications receive a recognition statement reflecting its comparability with the identified Swedish qualification. • In cases where there is substantial difference, individuals receive a negative statement which outlines the reasons why the qualification cannot be recognised. <p>The recognition statement is an electronic document supplied via digital certification.</p>
Important web-sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR): https://www.uhr.se • Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket): https://www.skolverket.se • National Board of Health and Welfare: https://www.socialstyrelsen.se • Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan): https://www.myh.se

59 European Area of Recognition – EAR Manual (2nd edition, 2023) pp.19-23 <https://www.enic-naric.net/documents/page-EAR-manual>

Structure of the Swedish Education System⁶⁰



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Sweden, 2022.

COUNTRY PROFILES: NON-EU COUNTRIES

Country Profile: Algeria

2. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

Algeria is in the process of developing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), although it has not yet been fully established. The development of the NQF is seen as a critical step towards aligning Algeria's educational qualifications with international standards, particularly those of the European Higher Education Area.

The education system is divided into five qualification levels. The systems chart illustrates how vocational qualifications are integrated into the education system.

After completing compulsory schooling, students may express preferences regarding the choice of further educational institutions, but ultimately the results of the final examination "Brevet d'enseignement moyen – BEM شهادة اتمام مرحلة التعليم الاساسي" are decisive for their further educational career.

After successful completion of compulsory schooling, there are two possibilities:

- attending a three-year general secondary school (الثانوية العامة) and then obtaining the general higher education entrance qualification (Baccalauréat de l'enseignement secondaire) (بكالوريا) under the authority of the Ministry of Education, or
- pursuing a professional path of vocational education, (التعليم المهني) comprising two cycles of three and two years of study attested by the diploma BEP and BEPS (level 4 and 5). This educational provision, placed under the authority of the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education (MFEP)

Initial vocational training (التكوين المهني الاول) comprises five levels and attested by diplomas of: Specialised Vocational Training Certificate (CFPS) (level 1), Certificate of Professional Competence (CAP) (level 2), Certificate of Professional Mastery (CMP) (level 3), Technician's Certificate (BT) (level 4) and Higher Technician's Certificate (BTS) (level 5).

(Body/bodies and their remit)

- **Ministry of Vocational Education and Training (Ministère de la formation et de l'enseignement professionnels - MFEP):** This governmental body is central to the formulation and regulation of VET qualifications. It coordinates various initiatives aimed at improving the quality and relevance of vocational training in Algeria.

The MFEP is based on a set of national and regional support institutions:

National level:

- **National Institute of Vocational Training and Education (Institut National de Formation et d'Enseignement Professionnels - INFEP):** This is a public administrative establishment responsible for pedagogical expertise and the training of supervisory staff and specialised trainers of vocational training institutions, and for carrying out studies and research covering all training methods and the development of learning programmes.

2. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- **National Institution for Technical and Pedagogical Equipment for Vocational Training and Education (Etablissement nationale d'équipements techniques et pédagogiques pour la formation et l'enseignement professionnels – ENEFEP)** : This is a public administrative establishment that plans and schedules the acquisition, delivery and installation of technical educational equipment in VET establishments.
- **The National Distance Learning Centre for Vocational Education and Training (Centre National de la Formation et l'Enseignement Professionnel à Distance - CNFEPD)**: CNFEPD supports vocational training through:
 - ♦ Developing programs, content, and tools
 - ♦ Preparing trainees for exams
 - ♦ Organizing meetings and internships
 - ♦ Assisting in training, development, and retraining activities
 - ♦ Publishing and marketing educational materials
- **The National Office for the Development and Promotion of Continuing Education (L'Office national de développement et de promotion de la formation continue: ONDEFOC)**: Its missions include assisting and advising businesses and carrying out and / or developing retraining and improvement actions at the request of individuals and workers in public and private institutions and organizations.
- **Centre for Studies and Research on Occupations and Qualifications (Centre d'étude et de recherche sur les professions et les qualifications: CERPEQ)**, This is an industrial and commercial public undertaking whose mission is to carry out studies and research in relation to qualifications.
- **National Development Fund for Apprenticeships and Continuing Vocational Training (Fonds National de Développement de l'Apprentissage et de la Formation Continue - FNAC)**, This is a special public establishment which promotes and develops continuing work-based training and apprenticeships, in connection with the business sector.

Regional level:

- **DFEPs** are directorates for vocational education and training of the wilaya, which are the decentralised services of the MFEP for the 48 wilayas.
- **IFPs** are the vocational training institutes, which ensure the development and adaptation of training and apprenticeship programmes.
- **INSFPs** are the specialised national vocational training institutes involved in training at levels 4 and 5 (BT and BTS).

Key features of VQs

VQs are structured according to job role descriptions:

Level 1 qualification: skilled worker qualification which corresponds to jobs requiring practical skills enabling them to carry out, under the permanent supervision of a direct manager, tasks linked to the exercise of the profession

Level 2 qualification: qualification of worker and skilled agent which corresponds to jobs requiring theoretical knowledge and practical skills enabling the execution of tasks and works linked to the exercise of the profession and to be able to interpret the directives necessary for the organization of his own work according to the means at his disposal.

2. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Level 3 qualification: qualification of highly qualified worker and agent which corresponds to jobs requiring theoretical knowledge and practical skills enabling mastery of the techniques necessary for carrying out tasks related to the exercise of the profession and the organization of qualified work in the profession in question.

Level 4 qualification: technician qualification which corresponds to jobs requiring theoretical knowledge and practical skills enabling the mastery of the techniques necessary for the accomplishment of tasks, production, maintenance, upkeep, evaluation and control and to assist a senior manager in design work and to ensure the coordination of the work of a team of workers.

Level 5 qualification: higher technician qualification which corresponds to jobs requiring theoretical knowledge, practical skills and abilities enabling them to exercise functions of responsibility and management of works, ensuring the organization, coordination and control of the activities of one or more groups of workers.

Validation of experience gained through experience (VNFIL or VAE)

(المصادقة على الخبرات المكتسبة عن طريق الخبرة):

MFEP established a system for accrediting skills acquired through experience. This system aims to recognize individuals' skills for professional certification. It also aims to improve their professional status through the implementation of their professional or training projects. This system also targets long-term unemployed individuals and job seekers.

Training Platform ("Takween"):

The platform is one of the digital services provided by the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education with the aim of facilitating the registration process for training applicants. The platform allows the trainee to create a personal account that enables him to follow his professional path continuously until he obtains the final certificate.

- Direct registration without the need to go to the institution.
- An account that enables you to follow your professional path until graduation.
- A space dedicated to trainers and users.

Relevant websites *Websites for all relevant bodies mentioned in the text (including links to register(s)/database(s))*

MFEP: <https://mfep.gov.dz/>

INFEP: <http://www.infp.edu.dz/index.html>

ENEFEP: https://mfep.gov.dz/?page_id=41151

CNFEPD: <https://www.cnepd.edu.dz>

ONDEFOC: <https://.ondefoc.dz>

FNAC: <http://www.fnac-mfep.dz/>

CERPEQ: No website found

Link to registers and databases and guidelines: https://mfep.gov.dz/?page_id=1319

Training platform: <https://www.takwin.dz/>

3. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview	<p>The Ministry of Vocational Education and Training (MFEP) is tasked with overseeing the recognition processes for VET qualifications especially its <i>Direction of orientation, examinations and recognition</i> (Direction de l'orientation, des examens et des homologations).</p> <p>Institut National de Formation et d'Enseignement Professionnels (INFEP): This institute plays a significant role in implementing policies related to VET qualification recognition. INFEP is involved in developing frameworks that support the validation and recognition of both formal and informal learning outcomes.</p> <p>Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL or VAE in Algeria (المصادقة على الكفاءات المكتسبة عن طريق الخبرة): Algeria has been piloting VNFIL since 2004, which allows for the recognition of skills acquired outside formal education settings. This initiative aims to improve the recognition process for individuals seeking to validate their competencies in both national and international contexts.</p>
Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status	For information about the documents necessary for recognition see MFEP website.
Scope	Foreign qualifications, particularly vocational certificates and diplomas from EU member states, are seldom recognized based on interviews. The only exceptions are regulated professions in Algeria, primarily involving higher education diplomas.
Applying for recognition of a qualification	<p>File requesting equivalence of a certificate issued by an authority outside the country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written request stating the justifications for obtaining the equivalence • Two copies of the foreign certificate or professional qualification certified by the official supervisory bodies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country supervising the training) • Two copies of the training program translated into Arabic or French • Two copies of the transcript + hourly volume • Certificate of proof of level for entry into vocational training • Birth certificate • Any document proving the duration of residence in the foreign country during the training period
Processing applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must travel to the headquarters of the MFEP for authentication of their diploma, and educational documents. • Following receipt of the application, the MFEP sends a form for diploma authentication to the establishment which issued the diploma. • The diploma can only be authenticated once the completed form is received. • Applicants must attend the MFEP in person to collect their completed authentication and their original documents. • If recognition is required urgently, MFEP can activate an online recognition process.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful applicants are awarded the national qualification against which they have been assessed. • VNFIL: The acquired competencies are certified by a professional qualification certificate issued by the director of the institution where the examination is held.

3. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Important web-sites

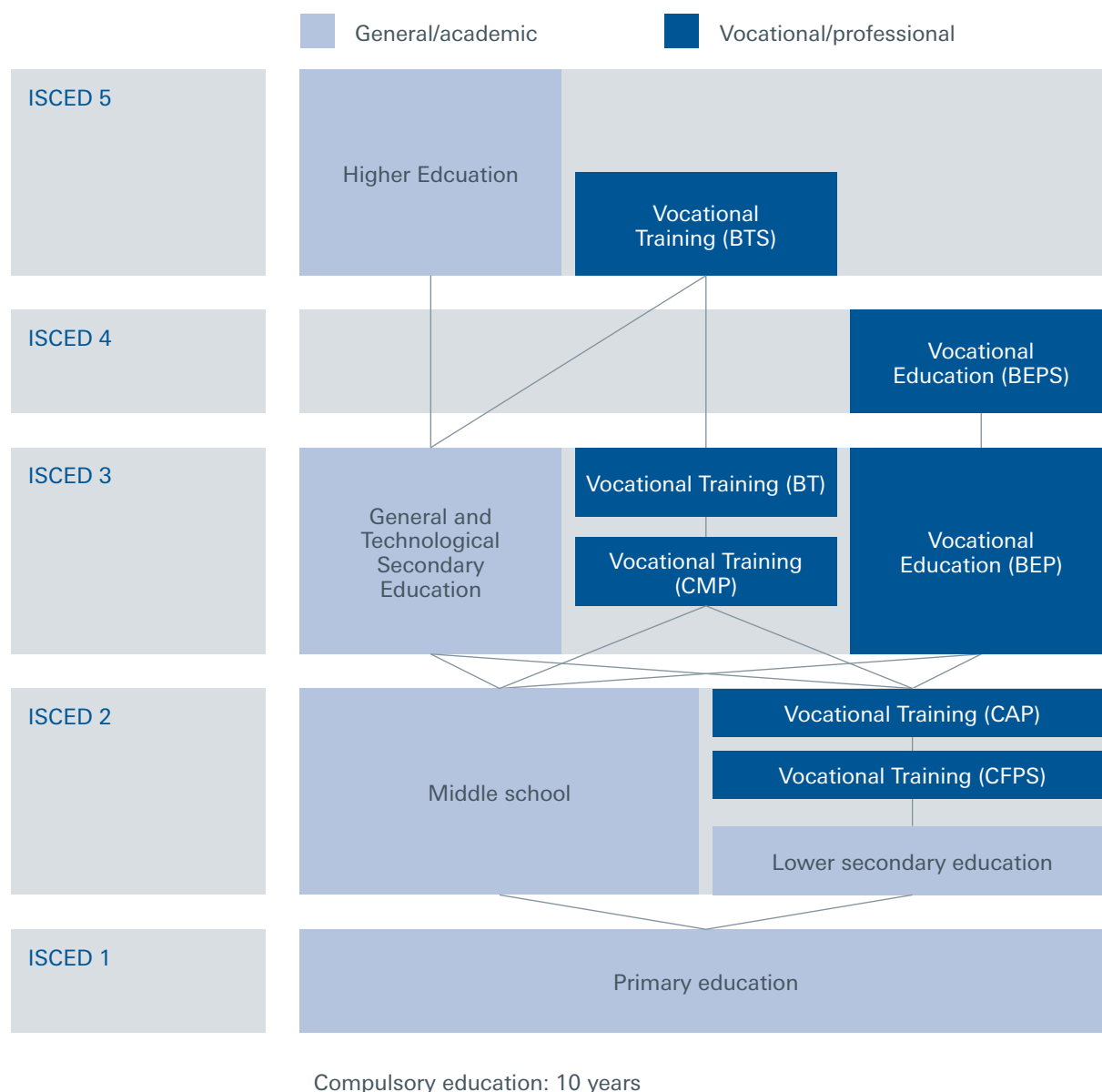
Recognition:

https://mfp.gov.dz/?page_id=44059 contains list of documents for requesting equivalency of a certificate issued by an authority outside the country

VNFIL:

https://mfp.gov.dz/?page_id=41239

Formal Education System - Algeria



UNESCO-UNEVOC: Education system diagramme – <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Country+Profiles>

Country Profile: Bangladesh

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

The Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF) was finalized in 2023, with key implementation documents, such as the BNQF NQAS manuals and Implementation Manual, completed in 2024. It is designed as a comprehensive framework, building on developments of 3 pre-existing NQFs:

- the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), approved in 2012 and encompassing qualifications from the secondary school and madrasah (religious schools) sectors;
- the National Qualifications Framework of Bangladesh for Higher Education (NQFBHE), developed in 2018 and encompassing qualifications in the university sector; and
- the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), designed to encompass a range of technical and vocational qualifications for learners of all ages.

The BNQF is a 10-level, comprehensive framework, with vocational qualifications sitting at 1-6.

The Level Descriptors for Levels 1-6 encompass 3 domains: knowledge, skills and responsibilities. The latter domain allows the framework to identify the type of role the holder of the qualification might take up in the workplace. The descriptors for these levels, along with the type of role suggested, are included in the final page of this profile.

Body/bodies and their remits

- **Ministry of Education (MoE):** The MoE is the Ministry mandated to implement national education policies as well as the SDG 4 (quality education) goals and targets. As such the Ministry is pioneering policy planning and development for secondary and post-secondary education under respectively the Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), and the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) for Madrasah and technical and vocational education systems.
- The **Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED):** The TMED carries out its regulatory mandates for TVET and Religious Education (Madrasah) through the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board (BMEB), and Directorate of Madrasah Education (DME). TMED is entrusted with several key responsibilities for the TVET sector, including the development of a sectoral plan, policy and reform initiatives, curriculum development, textbook production and distribution, managing equivalency and credit transfer with foreign institutions, overseeing the implementation of the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP), reviewing and formulating legislation pertaining to TVET, coordinating inter-ministerial and inter-divisional matters, and addressing matters related to Education Commission recommendations in the context of TVET.
- The **Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)** was established in 1969. Under the BTEB Act of 2018 and the NSDP 2011, the BTEB's key mandate is the implementation of the NTVQF. The BTEB under the purview of the MoE's TMED regulates TVET qualifications such as Secondary School Certificate (SSC)-Voc, Dakhil- (Voc), High School Certificate (HSC)-Voc, HSC(BMT) and 4-year diploma programs delivered in Polytechnics. Additionally, the BTEB is responsible for dual certification, ensuring that the curriculum content allow learners to receive recognition for both academic and vocational achievements.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- The **National Skills Development Agency (NSDA)** established by the NSDA Act 2018 as the principal body responsible for the planning, development and implementation of skills programmes to meet national and international skills needs. As part of this role, NSDA is the competent body for competence-based qualifications leading to National Skills Certificates (NSCs) at Levels 1- 6 in the BNQF.
- The **Bureau of Manpower, Employment & Training (BMET)** is a department of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE). Although not directly involved in the development and oversight of the TVET sector as a whole, BMET provides services for people preparing to migrate for work. This includes providing short training courses, including language and VET courses, as part of pre-departure preparation. BMET works in partnership with NSDA and BTEB for the assessment and certification of these short courses.

Key features of VQs

- All NSCs, SSC vocational course (SSC-VoC), Dakhil-vocational offered by Madrasahs, higher secondary level such as HSC-VoC course, Diploma courses share some key features. Each qualification:
 - ♦ is underpinned by a *competency standard* that defines the work-related competencies that the student must demonstrate in order to achieve the qualification.
 - ♦ has a stated balance between theory and practice. In all cases, the balance is towards practice, underpinned by theory.
 - ♦ is supported by a *curriculum* and *teaching materials* to support uniformity in the delivery of training programmes.
 - ♦ is assessed using competence-based assessment.
- **Diplomas, HSCs-VoC and SSCs-VoC:** These qualifications are delivered within the formal education system in technical schools, colleges and polytechnics in the government and private sectors.
- **Key features of these qualifications:**
 - ♦ **Diploma:** BNQF Level 6; post-secondary qualifications completed via a 4-year training programme.
 - ♦ **HSCs-VoC:** BNQF Level 5; upper-secondary qualification completed after 12 years of formal education. All vocational HSCs include 12 weeks of work-based training.
 - ♦ **SSCs-VoC:** BNQF Level 3; secondary school qualification completed after 10 years of formal education.
- BTEB is responsible for the design, development and overall quality assurance of all aspects of the qualifications, This includes:
 - ♦ development of the competency standards, curricula, training materials and assessment requirements.
 - ♦ accreditation of training providers
 - ♦ certification.
- BTEB also offers short course qualifications (360 hours) in a number of trade areas.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- **NSCs:** These qualifications are designed as short programmes (maximum 360 hours) and are delivered by a wide range of training providers in the public and private sectors. Key features of NSCs:
 - ♦ They are open to a wide range of people, from already-skilled workers to those planning to reskill or to join the workforce.
 - ♦ Normal minimum entry requirement for NSC Level 1 is completion of 8 years of formal education.
 - ♦ NSDA is responsible for the design and development and overall quality assurance of all aspects of the qualifications. This includes:
 - development of the competency standards, curricula and training materials and assessment requirements.
 - accreditation of training providers
 - accreditation of assessment bodies
 - certification.

Relevant websites

BTEB: <https://bteb.gov.bd>

NSDA: <https://nsda.gov.bd>

BMET: <http://bmet.portal.gov.bd>

National Skills Portal: <https://www.skillsportal.gov.bd/#/>

This portal provides access to a wide range of information about qualifications, including lists of accredited training providers, competency standards, and policies & guidelines.

BTEB Competency-Based Training (CBT) Portal: <http://btebcbt.gov.bd/login/auth> provides access to a range of documents supporting BTEB processes, including assessment processes, for RPL and short courses.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview

There are two mechanisms which provide for some recognition of vocational qualifications gained in other countries:

- **BTEB** has a mechanism for providing recognition of some foreign vocational qualifications through comparison with BTEB qualifications. The process aims to identify if the qualification submitted by the individual is *equivalent* to the BTEB qualification.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** There is a well-established RPL process operated via both BTEB and NSDC. This process allows individuals to complete a qualification via an RPL (VNFIL) process. As part of this process, individuals may include qualifications gained abroad as part of their evidence for RPL.

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status

- The BTEB Act 2018 includes RPL as one of the areas of responsibility for BTEB.
- Following on from the NSDA Act 2018 and NSDA Rules 2020, the NSDA Policy 2020 identifies RPL as one key area of activity. It also identifies the pursuance of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with foreign countries to assure recognition of Bangladesh skills-based qualifications in other countries.

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although BTEB has a mechanism for recognition of foreign qualifications, there is a suggestion that this is rarely used. RPL is growing in use. It supports both the integration of workers from the informal sector into the formal sector and a form of recognition for qualifications gained by those returning to Bangladesh from work abroad.
Gaining recognition of a qualification via RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BTEB's RPL Guideline provides details on the application procedure for RPL. Individuals returning to Bangladesh following a period outside of the country must provide evidence of at least one year's work experience. This may also include evidence of training and/or qualifications gained whilst living and working abroad. RPL is provided by BTEB-accredited centres. Individuals must apply to their local centre for RPL. Individuals must submit a portfolio of evidence, including any certificates gained while working abroad, as part of their application for RPL. All RPL claims are evaluated against the competency standard for the most appropriate national qualification. Applicants participate in a 2-3 day orientation course to ensure they understand the requirements of the RPL process. Applicants whose evidence meets the requirements of the identified qualification must then complete a practical assessment. This assessment is the same as that taken by others completing the qualification by a standard study route.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful applicants are awarded the national qualification against which they have been assessed. Applicants who are unsuccessful at the first attempt may resubmit for assessment at a later date. They are subject to the same rules as applicants completing the qualification by a standard study route.
Important web-sites	BTEB RPL Guideline: http://btebcbt.gov.bd/Utility/rpl_guide_line

Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework

BNQF Level	Higher Education Sector	TVET and Skills Sector	School and Madrasah Education Sector
10	Doctoral by research Doctoral by mixed mode		
9	Masters' by research Master's by mixed mode Master's by coursework		Kamil
8	Post Graduate Diploma/ Post Graduate Certificate		
7	Bachelor's 5 years Bachelor's with honours/ 4 years Bachelor's 3 years		Fazil
6	Diploma/National Skills Certificate NSC 6		
5		National Skills Certificate NSC 5	HSC/HSC (Voc)/Alim
4		National Skills Certificate NSC 4	
3		National Skills Certificate NSC 3	SSC/SSC(Voc)/Dakhil
2		National Skills Certificate NSC 2	
1		National Skills Certificate NSC 1	

LIFELONG LEARNING

Source:
Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF)
Report published by Ministry of Education, Bangladesh

BNQF Level Descriptors – Levels 1-6

Level and Job Class	Domains	Descriptors
BNQF Level 1 Basic Skilled Worker	Knowledge	Elementary understanding of ability to interpret the underpinning knowledge in a specific study area, able to interpret common occupational terms and instructions
	Skills	Specific Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks. Interpret occupational terms and present the results of own work within guided work environment/ under supervision.
	Responsibilities	Work under direct supervision in a structured context with limited range of responsibilities

Level and Job Class	Domains	Descriptors
BNQF Level 2 Semi Skilled Worker	Knowledge	Basic understanding of underpinning knowledge in a specific study area, able to interpret and apply common occupational terms and instructions.
	Skills	Skills required to carry out simple tasks, communicate with his team in the workplace presenting and discussing results of his work with required clarity.
	Responsibilities	Work or study under supervision in a structured context with limited scope of manipulation
BNQF Level 3 Skilled Worker	Knowledge	Moderately broad knowledge in a specific work or study area, able to perceive ideas and abstract from drawing and design according to workplace requirements.
	Skills	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools. Communicate with his team and limited external partners upholding the values, nature and culture of the workplace.
	Responsibilities	Work or study under supervision with considerable autonomy. Participate in teams and responsible for group coordination.
BNQF Level 4 Highly Skilled Worker	Knowledge	Broader knowledge of the underlying, concepts, principles, and processes in a specific work or study area, able to solve problems to new situations by comparing and applying acquired knowledge.
	Skills	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying the full range of methods, tools, materials and information. Communicate using technical terminology and IT technology with partners and users as per workplace requirements.
	Responsibilities	Work under minimal supervision in specific contexts in response to workplace requirements. Resolve technical issues in response to workplace requirements and lead/guide a team/ group.
BNQF Level 5 Supervisor	Knowledge	Broad knowledge of the underlying, concepts, principles, and processes in a specific work or study area, able to scrutinise and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes.
	Skills	Broad range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in one or more work or study areas. Communicate practice-related problems and possible solutions to external partners.
	Responsibilities	Work under guidance of management and self-direction to resolve specific issues. Lead and take responsibility for the work and actions of group/team members. Bridge between management.

Level and Job Class	Domains	Descriptors
BNQF Level 6 Mid-Level Manager/ Sub Assistant Engineer	Knowledge	Comprehensive actual and theoretical knowledge within a specific work or study area with an awareness of the validity and limits of that knowledge, able to analyze, compare, relate and evaluate.
	Skills	Specialised and wider range of cognitive and practical skills required to provide leadership in the development of creative solutions to defined problems. Communicate professional issues and solutions to the team and to external partners/users.
	Responsibilities	Work under broad guidance and self-motivation to execute strategic and operational plan/s. Lead lower-level management. Diagnose and resolve problems within and among work groups.

Source:
Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF) Report Published by Ministry of Education.

Country Profile: Moldova

•The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

The **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** of Moldova is structured across **8 levels**, aligned with the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). This structure ensures compatibility with European standards, facilitating qualification recognition and mobility for learners and workers.

Levels and Scope: The NQF covers qualifications from basic education to doctoral studies, structured as follows:

- **Level 1:** Primary education (grade 1-4).
- **Level 2:** Lower secondary general education - Gymnasium education (grade 5-9).
- **Level 3:** General secondary education and secondary vocational education.
- **Level 4:** Post-secondary VET
- **Level 5:** Post-secondary - non-tertiary vocational qualifications
- **Level 6:** Bachelor's degree or equivalent.
- **Level 7:** Master's degree or equivalent.
- **Level 8:** Doctoral studies and equivalent advanced qualifications.

Vocational qualifications are primarily awarded at **Levels 3 to 5**, reflecting increasing complexity in skills and competencies.

Key Features

1. **Descriptors:** The NQF includes descriptors for each level, detailing the scope of knowledge, cognitive and practical skills, and the degree of autonomy and responsibility expected.
2. **Integration with the EQF and QF-EHEA** ensures comparability of Moldovan qualifications within Europe, enhancing international mobility and recognition.
3. **Fields of Study:** Qualifications are categorised into fields of study and training specialisations, regulated by the **Nomenclature of Training Fields** and the **Classifier of Occupations in Moldova**.
4. **Qualification Standards** outline the learning outcomes, competencies, and assessment criteria required for each qualification, ensuring relevance to labour market needs.

• The Vocational Qualifications Landscape	
Body/bodies and their remit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) develops policies, oversees qualifications, and ensures alignment with the European Qualifications Framework. • National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (AN-ACEC) evaluates and accredits educational programs, ensuring compliance with quality standards. • National Employment Agency (ANOFM) conducts workforce surveys and provides VET-related services. • Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Education of the Ministry of Education and Research (CTICE) manages the electronic recognition system and document authentication processes, supports digitalisation and credential verification, and streamline recognition processes. • Sectoral Committees develop occupational profiles, Occupational standards based on labour market needs, contributing to labour market alignment.
Position of VQs in national system	<p>Level 3: Qualification certificates (e.g., trade certifications).</p> <p>Levels 4 and 5: Qualification diplomas, in the Europass format, including supplements.</p>
Relevant websites	<p>Ministry of Education and Research (MER): https://mecc.gov.md</p> <p>ANACEC: https://anacec.md</p> <p>ANOFM: https://anofm.md</p> <p>CTICE: https://ctice.md</p>

• Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications	
Overview	<p>Responsibilities related to the recognition⁶¹ and equivalence of diplomas and qualifications are managed by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), specifically through its subdivisions, such as the National Qualifications Framework Directorate and the Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Education of the Ministry of Education and Research (CTICE).</p> <p>Key Institutions involved in recognition in Moldova:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ overseeing the recognition of foreign qualifications. ♦ developing and enforcing the legal and policy frameworks for recognition. • The National Qualifications Framework Directorate is a structural subdivision of MER. It is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ establishing and systematically updating, in accordance with national and international requirements, the normative framework on the process of authentication, equivalence and recognition of educational documents and qualifications and monitoring its implementation.

⁶¹ Recognition is the formal process through which the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), via CTICE and other competent bodies, determines the authenticity and equivalence of a qualification issued abroad, ensuring its alignment with Moldova's National Qualifications Framework.

• Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

- **CTICE** is also a subdivision of MER. It is responsible for:
 - ♦ handling the submission and authentication of documents for recognition purposes.
 - ♦ managing digital infrastructure and supporting applicants in the recognition process.
 - ♦ authenticating study documents before apostille and international recognition.
- **ANACEC** plays a role in ensuring the quality of education and qualifications within Moldova.
- **Educational institutions** designated as **Recognition Centres** under Regulation 1702/2019 have the responsibility to recognise educational qualifications for further studies or for professional purposes, in particular those qualifications obtained in the Transnistrian region.

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status

The recognition of foreign qualifications in Moldova is governed by national laws and regulations, ensuring compliance with international standards and facilitating fair recognition of qualifications for education and employment purposes.

Key Legislative and policy frameworks

1. **Code of Education (2014):**
 - Articles **66** and **97** establish the foundation for recognising qualifications, aligning them with NQF and international frameworks.
 - Specifies the requirements for recognition, equivalence, and validation of foreign qualifications.
2. **Framework Regulation on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (2019):**
 - Regulates the validation process for skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal or informal means, supporting the integration of foreign qualifications into the Moldovan system.
3. **NQF Legal Framework:**
 - Government decisions, including Government Decision No. 330/2023, and the National Register of Qualifications (2018) and related methodologies, ensure alignment of qualifications with the NQF and European standards and
 - Describes qualification levels, occupational standards, and quality assurance mechanisms.
4. **Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements:**
 - Moldova adheres to the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1999) and has recently joined the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (UNESCO, 2023), reinforcing its commitment to international academic mobility.
 - Participates in the **ENIC-NARIC Network**, which facilitates international recognition of educational qualifications.

• Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Scope

Recognition refers to the acceptance by the national competent authority (MER) of a study document (issued by an accredited educational institution in the country of origin) as authentic, as well as the acknowledgment of its value and content. This process facilitates access to higher levels of study (academic recognition) and/or employment (professional recognition).

The recognition and equivalence of a study document are based on several factors: the type of study or vocational training programme, the number of transferable credits, the content of the programme, and the professional qualification (Diploma Supplement / Certificate of Qualification). These factors are compared with the national education system to determine the level of the qualification within the national framework.

Equivalence involves evaluating the curriculum followed by the holder of the study document, assessing its compatibility with the national education system in terms of learning outcomes, goals, and the competencies acquired.

Once the recognition and equivalence are determined, MER issues a Certificate of Recognition and Equivalence. This certificate formalises the decision and grants the holder the same rights as those who completed studies at the respective level in the national education system.

Applying for recognition of a qualification

For recognition of foreign qualifications, individuals must follow the procedures outlined by the **MER** and submit their documents through the **CTICE** platform.

Application dossier for recognition and equivalence

The application dossier for recognition and equivalence of a diploma must include the following documents:

- **Application:** A standard form addressed to MEC, including the country of study, the applicant's postal address, phone number, and email address. The application form can be downloaded online.
- **Study document:** A photocopy of the original study document, legalized if in Romanian, or a legalized translation into the original language (except for documents in English).
- **Diploma supplement/matricula/** academic transcripts and/or additional documents: A legalized photocopy of relevant documents.
- **Hague apostille or authentication:** For countries part of the Hague Apostille Convention, the educational documents must be endorsed with an Apostille. For non-signatory countries, the documents must be authenticated.
- **Study document for continued studies abroad:** A photocopy of the original, legalized if applicable.
- **Notarized power of attorney:** If applicable.
- **Identity proof:** A photocopy of the identity card or passport, including identification data.

Other relevant documents may be requested as necessary. The completed dossier should be submitted to CTICE. (<http://ctice.md:8095/autenticare/>)

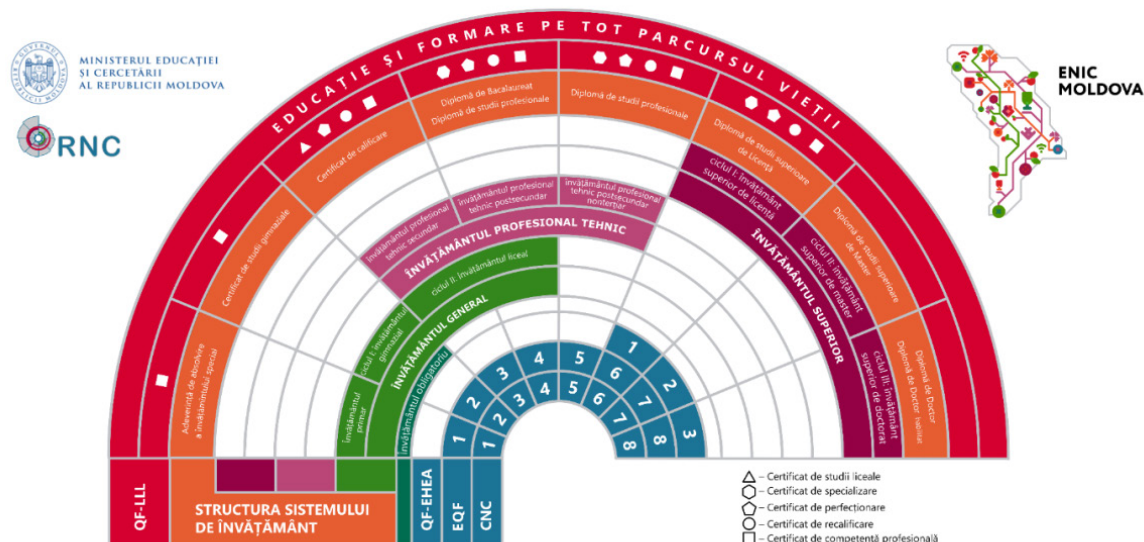
• Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Processing applications	<p>Recognition procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications from other countries: The evaluation focuses on the level and content of the study programme, without requiring full equivalence between foreign and national programmes. Academic differences of up to 30% are acceptable. • Qualifications obtained on the Left side of the Dniester/Transnistrian region: The recognition process is more intricate, requiring validation of credentials, completion of any academic differences, and the issuance of a nationally equivalent qualification certificate. • Duration: The official processing time is 30 working days, though it may be extended in more complex cases⁶². • Cost: The recognition process is free of charge. <p>The recognition process is also possible through the process of Validation of Prior Learning, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's skills and knowledge.</p>
Outcomes	<p>At the end of the recognition process, qualifications may either be fully recognized, partially recognized, or not recognized at all.</p> <p>Successful applicants are issued a certificate of comparability, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the applicant's qualification (e.g., award date and country, title, awarding institution, duration of study, and its relevance to the professional field in the country of origin). • a comparison of the qualification's level with NQF level. • a statement that the holder can use the certificate to apply for further education or employment (as an employee). <p>For qualifications obtained on the left side of the Dniester/Transnistrian region, once recognized, a nationally equivalent qualification certificate or diploma is issued.</p>
Important web-sites	<p>Ministerul Educației și Cercetării Guvernul Republicii Moldova</p> <p>Verificarea Actelor de studii</p> <p>http://ctice.md:8095/autenticare/</p>

⁶² Recognition sometimes exceeds 30 days, especially for documents requiring international verification.

National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Moldova

CADRUL NAȚIONAL AL CALIFICĂRILOR DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA



Source: <https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/1w.png>

Country Profile: Morocco

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

The Moroccan National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is structured in eight levels (1 to 8), each defined by 6 domains of level descriptors:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Complexity
- Autonomy/responsibility
- Adaptability
- Communication

The level descriptors in the Moroccan NQF are formulated with a degree of detail and can serve as a reference for stakeholders and practitioners involved in designing competence standards, learning programmes and assessment standards. By opting for the indicated domains, the involved stakeholders took account of key strategic areas for the future of education and training such as communication skills, as well as adaptability.

The “Reference Document of the Moroccan NQF” defines the detailed conceptual-technical design of the NQF, and is politically validated, but not yet sanctioned by a legal act. An important step was taken with the creation of the NQF Permanent Commission in July 2019. Concrete political orientations to start operationalisation are expected in 2020, notably: agreement on the roadmap for action, and establishment of an operational setting (unit) re-sourced and mandated to run the activities. Steps to conceive and launch the NQF Repertoire (**Qualifications register**) have been initiated and is an ongoing process.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Body/bodies and their remits

The main responsibility for TVET is with the **Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (Ministre de l'Inclusion économique, de la Petite entreprise, de l'Emploi et des Compétences- MIEPEC)** and its **Department of Vocational Training**.

Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MEN): This ministry is the primary authority responsible for formulating VET policies and ensuring their implementation. It oversees the strategic direction of vocational training and coordinates efforts across various sectors.

Department of Vocational Training (DFP): Operating under the ministry, the DFP develops specific vocational training policies, manages accreditation for private training institutions, and ensures compliance with quality standards. It plays a pivotal role in coordinating the overall VET system.

Office for Vocational Training and Job Promotion (OFPPT): As the main provider of public vocational training, OFPPT is responsible for delivering a significant portion of VET programs in Morocco. It works closely with other stakeholders to align training with market demands.

National Sectoral Commissions: These commissions involve industry professionals who help define occupational standards and qualifications. They ensure that training programs are relevant to current labour market needs by validating curricula based on sector-specific requirements.

Economic and Social Partners: Trade unions and employer organizations are actively involved in the governance of the VET system. They contribute to defining strategies, assessing learning outcomes, and developing training programs that reflect industry needs.

Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research (CSEFRS): This council provides strategic oversight for educational reforms, including those related to vocational training. It facilitates collaboration between various stakeholders to enhance the quality and relevance of VET qualifications.

Private Training Institutions: These institutions offer alternative pathways for vocational training. They must adhere to accreditation processes established by the DFP to ensure that their programs meet national standards.

CNAM Maroc: Dedicated to continuing education, it offers face-to-face or distance learning in 1,500 sectors and 350 professions. Cnam Maroc is also responsible for promoting the transfer of engineering and skills to the relevant authorities, particularly in terms of the national framework for certification and validation of acquired skills (VAE, VES, VAPP).

Key features of VQs

The Moroccan VET system emphasizes a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders to ensure that qualifications are aligned with labour market demands. This includes regular consultations with industry representatives to identify skills gaps and develop relevant training programs.

Sectoral Training Programmes: Each sectoral program is guided by **occupational standards** that define the skills required for specific jobs, along with **qualification standards** that outline the educational requirements needed to achieve those skills. These standards are validated by professionals from the relevant sectors.

There are three primary **methods for delivering initial vocational training**:

- **Residential Training:** Conducted mainly in training institutes with internships in businesses for practical experience.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- **Work-Based Learning:** Aims to increase the number of trainees involved in workplace settings, targeting a significant portion of training to occur in actual job environments.
- **Apprenticeship Programs:** These combine theoretical learning with hands-on experience in a professional setting

VAEP: The Validation of Acquired Professional Experience (VAEP) aims to recognize professional skills acquired within companies. It provides a new pathway to a diploma or certificate, outside of the initial training system. This approach allows:

For companies:

- To facilitate inter- and intra-company mobility
- To provide HR management and development tools

For employees:

- To facilitate access to or return to the job market
- To facilitate training, development, retraining, and mobility, and promotes their professional advancement, thereby improving the competitiveness of companies.

Relevant websites	MIEPEC: https://miepeec.gov.ma MEN : https://www.men.gov.ma/ DFP: https://www.dfp.gov.ma/ OFPPT: https://www.ofppt.ma/ CSEFRS: https://www.csefrs.ma/?lang=fr VAE, VES, VAPP: https://cnam.ma/formation-cnam-maroc/valider-ses-acquis-professionnels/ VAEP: https://dfp.gov.ma/vaep.html
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2. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status	<p>The legal policy framework for the recognition of foreign vocational education and training (VET) qualifications in Morocco is primarily governed by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and several related laws.</p> <p>Law 01.00 on higher education</p> <p>Law 12.00 on apprenticeship</p> <p>Law 13.00 on the statute of private professional training</p> <p>Law 60-17 on the organization of continuing training for private sector employees</p>
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2. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Scope

Based on the different documents consulted, the recognition of foreign vocational education and training (VET) qualifications in Morocco serves several purposes expressed in general terms, like for example, enhancing the country's educational framework and labour market alignment. Some more specific purposes that can be mentioned:

Facilitating International Mobility (mentioned mainly for higher education degrees)

- Enhancing Employability
- Supporting Lifelong Learning
- Aligning with International Standards
- Promoting Economic Development
- Strengthening Partnerships

Applying for recognition of a qualification

Required Documents:

- **Application Form:** A completed application form specifying the request for recognition of the foreign VET qualification.
- **Proof of Identity:** A valid identity document, such as a passport or national ID card.
- **Diploma or Certificate:** An official copy of the foreign diploma or certificate that confirms the completion of vocational training.
- **Transcripts or Academic Records:** Detailed transcripts or records that outline the subjects studied and grades achieved during the vocational training.
- **Curriculum Overview:** A tabulated overview of the content and duration of the vocational training program, which helps assess its equivalency to Moroccan standards.
- **Evidence of Professional Experience (if applicable):** Certificates or letters from employers that validate relevant work experience related to the qualification.
- **Certificate of Good Conduct:** A document proving that there are no legal impediments to practicing in the profession, often required for regulated professions.
- **Translation of Documents:** If documents are not in Arabic or French, certified translations may be required.
- **Additional Supporting Documents (if applicable):** Any other documents that may support the application, such as evidence of intention to work in Morocco.

Processing applications

Submission of Documentation:

Individuals or institutions seeking recognition must submit official documentation of the foreign qualifications. This typically includes diplomas, transcripts, and any relevant certificates that detail the training received.

Evaluation by the Department of Vocational Training (DFP):

The DFP, under the Ministry of National Education, assesses the submitted qualifications against Moroccan standards. This evaluation checks for equivalency in terms of content, duration, and learning outcomes.

Comparison with National Qualifications Framework (NQF):

The foreign qualifications are compared to the Moroccan National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to determine their equivalency. The NQF provides a structured approach for classifying and recognizing qualifications based on defined learning outcomes.

2. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Consultation with Sectoral Skills Councils:

If necessary, the DFP may consult with relevant Sectoral Skills Councils to gather insights on industry-specific requirements and ensure that the foreign qualifications align with current labor market needs.

Issuance of Equivalency Certificate:

If the foreign qualifications meet the necessary criteria, an equivalency certificate is issued. This certificate allows individuals to pursue employment or further education in Morocco based on their recognized qualifications.

Compliance with Regulatory Requirements:

The recognized qualifications must comply with any additional regulatory requirements set by Moroccan authorities, including adherence to quality assurance standards established for vocational training.

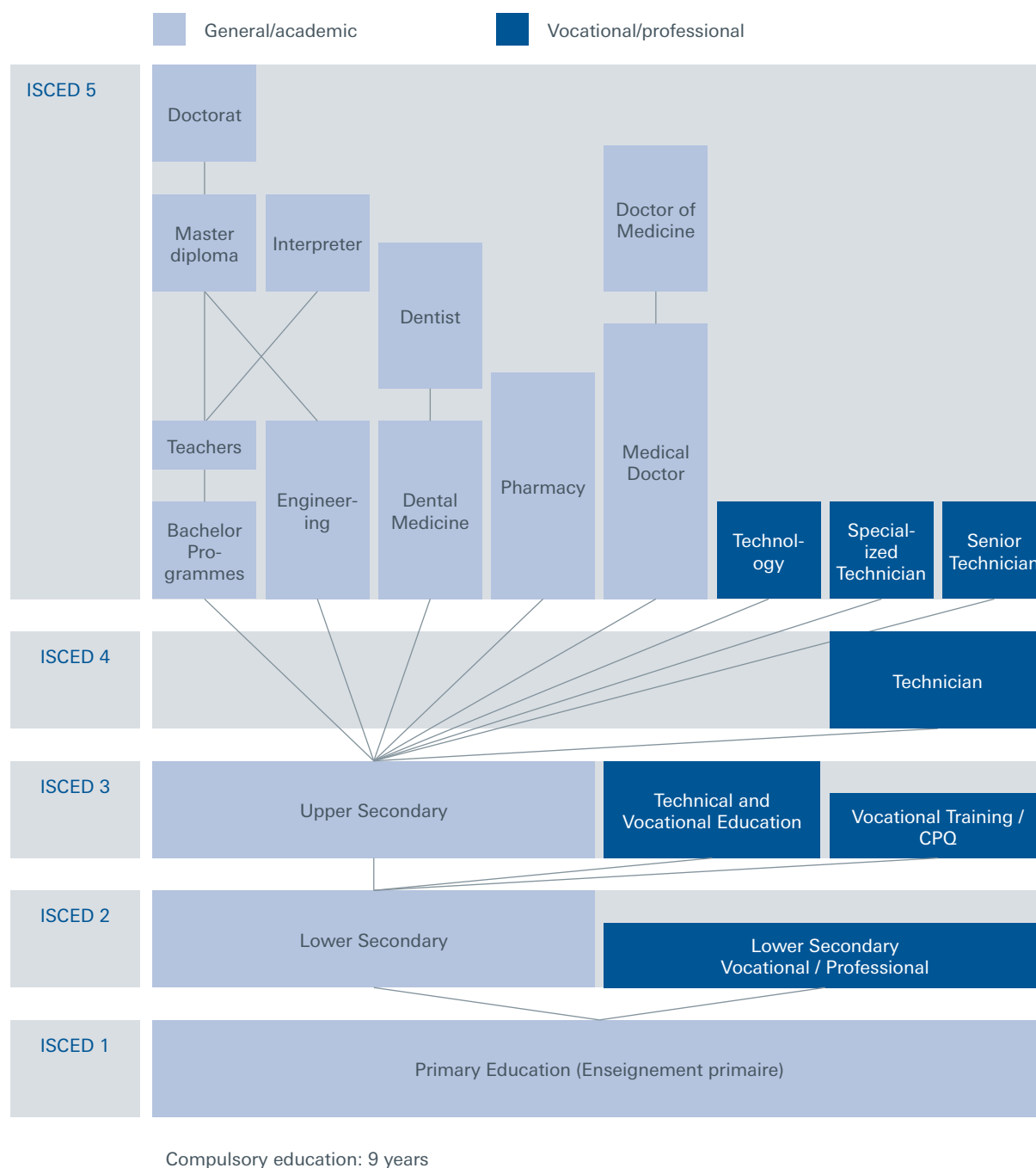
Continuous Monitoring:

The recognition process is subject to ongoing evaluation and monitoring to adapt to changes in both domestic and international educational standards

N.B.: The recognition decisions expressed in Dahirs (Decrees) in Arabic, refers to a “Higher Committee for the Equivalency of Vocational Training Diplomas or Certificates” (اللجنة العليا لمعادلة دبلومات او شهادات التكوين المهني) as the body who took the decision, however, searching on the net for this body nothing comes out except its different decisions. Or similar bodies in Tunisia, Saud-Arabia, etc.!

Outcomes	Equivalent level on Moroccan NQF.
Important web-sites	DFP: https://www.dfp.gov.ma/ MEN: https://www.men.gov.ma/

Formal Education System – Morocco



UNESCO-UNEVOC: Education system diagramme – <https://evoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Country+Profiles>

NQF Level	National education	Professional training	Higher education
1	Mid-primary Certificat de Formation Professionnelle (CFP)		
2	Primary	Spécialisation	
3	CE9	Qualification	
4	Baccalauréat (Bac), Bac Professionnel (Bac Pro)	Technicien	
5 (Bac+2)	Brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS)	Technicien spécialisé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplôme Études Universitaires Générales (DEUG) • Diplôme des Études Universitaires Professionnelles (DEUP) • Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie (DUT)
6 (Bac+3)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence Études Fondamentales (LF) • Licence Professionnelle
7 (Bac+5)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master (M) • Master spécialisé (MS) • Master Sciences et Techniques (MST) • Diplôme d'ingénieur (DI) • Diplôme de l'ENCG et diplôme de traduction
8 (Bac+8)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorat (D)

*Note: "Bac" stands for Baccalauréat (diploma of conclusion of secondary education)
NQF level and correspondence with levels and diplomas of the subsectors of education and training
(Source: African Continental Qualifications Framework, Country Report Morocco , p. 20/21)*

Country Profile: Pakistan

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

In common with a number of other countries included in this study, Pakistan is in the process of implementing a major programme of TVET reform. A key platform underpinning this reform is the continuing implementation of the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF). The NVQF was established in 2013 and its implementation has progressed in stages.

The NVQF is an 8-level, framework. It draws together learning for work which is delivered in a wide range of institutional settings. This includes schools, training institutes and higher education institutes. It also has the capacity to include other types of providers. Its aim is to ensure transparency, uniformity and consistency at a national level in the qualifications awarded as a result of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Importantly, given that, at a national level, more than 70% of training for work takes place outside the formal education sector⁶³, the NVQF also embeds Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a key aim in its application.

The NVQF Level Descriptors encompass 3 domains: knowledge & understanding, skills, and responsibilities. Each level is associated with a qualification type. NVQF levels are also associated with the level of work role that a qualification holder might perform in the workplace. The structure of the NVQF and the level descriptors are included at the end of this profile.

Non-HE vocational qualifications are offered at NVQF Levels 2 to 5. At Level 2, in particular, serves as a starting point for RPL to recognise the skills of individuals who have learned their skills in the informal sector and to support their integration into formal learning and qualifications.

Body/bodies and their remit

- The **National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC)** is Pakistan's national body responsible for regulating, coordination and standards setting for Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) in Pakistan. Its role and remit are set out in the NAVTTTC Act 2011. NAVTTTC's key functions include:
 - ♦ developing policy and strategy for the TVET sector
 - ♦ ensuring links between industry and the TVET sector to inform qualification development
 - ♦ overseeing the development and approval of TVET qualifications and associated curricula
 - ♦ overseeing the accreditation of TVET institutions and awarding bodies and quality assuring certification processes
 - ♦ building the capacity of the different actors in the TVET sector to deliver effective vocational education.
- **Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs)** have responsibility for VET within the individual provinces of Pakistan. TEVTA are legally constituted by the Governments of the country's individual Provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The largest of these is TEVTA Punjab. The TEVTAs work in support of the national directions set by NAVTTTC. Their responsibilities cover all aspects of TVET at the level of the province, including the accreditation of training providers and quality assurance of programmes and provision.

63 Source: NAVTTTC 2024: *National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) Regulations, 2024*, https://navttc.gov.pk/ActsAndRegulations/NVQFManuals/NVQF_Version%20III%20V.3_Revised.pdf

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- **Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs)** are responsible for the assessment of learning in line with the assessment requirements for individual qualifications and for the awarding of vocational qualification certificates and diplomas. At the time of writing, there are 13 accredited QABs responsible for the awarding of TVET qualifications.
- **Assessment centres:** QABs are responsible for accrediting:
 - ♦ assessors to undertake assessment of candidates
 - ♦ assessment centres where the assessment of candidates take place.

Assessment centres may be within accredited training provider premises. However, it is important to note that, since Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a major feature of Pakistan's route through vocational qualifications (see below), other types of assessment centres may also be accredited.

- **Training Providers** are accredited by TEVTAs to deliver NVQF qualification programmes. They include schools, colleges and training institutes in the public sector as well as private sector institutes. Some institutes have been established as public-private partnerships. An example of the latter is the Punjab Vocational Training. In order to enter their candidates for assessment, training providers must register with an appropriate and accredited QAB.

Key features of VQs

The introduction of the NVQF has been a platform for the gradual (re)development of qualifications based on competency-based training and assessment (CBT&A). This means that qualifications:

- are developed on the basis of competency standards devised by Qualification Development Committees (QDC) to meet the needs of industry. Each QDC must include representatives from the occupational sectors or industries where the qualification might be used. The standards are benchmarks that define performance requirements and underpin the development of curricula, training programmes and assessment tools.
- have requirements for the balance of theory, practice and on-the-job training embedded into the qualification specification.
- are supported by centrally-devised and accredited curricula and assessment packages to ensure that training and assessment focuses on the assessment of competency.

Each qualification contains a number of competency standards. These standards may be delivered together as a major qualification or as individual units (short courses). Individuals may 'package' their short courses to complete a major qualification.

- **Qualifications at NVQF Levels 2, 3 and 4:** Training programmes leading to these qualifications may be delivered in vocational or technical schools and in other types of training institutes.
- **Qualifications at NVQF Level 5:** Training programmes are delivered in TVET institutes and colleges. They lead to awards of Higher Technical Diploma or Diploma of Associate Engineer.

Importantly, RPL processes allow direct entry to these qualifications for appropriately-skilled individuals. In order to achieve the qualification, an individual entering via an RPL route must complete the assessment for the qualification.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Access to information about vocational qualifications

- Each qualification listed on the NVQF is included in the **National Qualification Register**. The Register permits access to the qualification summary, individual competency standards and lists of training providers accredited for each qualification.
- Details about approved Short Courses and other training courses are listed on NAVTTC's website.

Relevant websites	<p>National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) : https://navttc.gov.pk</p> <p>Pakistan National Vocational Qualification Registry System: https://nvqf.pk</p> <p>Pakistan TVET Reform: https://tvetreform.org.pk</p> <p>TEVTA Punjab: https://tevta.gop.pk</p> <p>TEVTA Balochistan (B-TEVTA): https://btevta.gob.pk</p> <p>TEVTA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: https://kptevta.gov.pk</p> <p>TEVTA Sindh (STEVTA): https://stevta.gos.pk</p> <p>TEVTA Azad Jamma & Kashmir: https://tevta.gok.pk/index.html</p> <p>QAB: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Technical Education (KP-BPE) https://kpbte.edu.pk/Default.aspx</p> <p>QAB and Training Provider: Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) https://www.pvtc.gop.pk/</p> <p>National Skills Information System (NSIS): https://dev.skillingpakistan.gov.pk</p>
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2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview	<p>Pakistan has two bodies responsible for recognising qualifications from other countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inter-Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) is responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications in general education at secondary and upper-secondary levels. This is done by assessing the equivalence between the submitted foreign qualification and the identified Pakistan qualification. • the Higher Education Council (HEC) is responsible for the recognition of university degree qualifications. <p>Until recently, no body routinely undertook the recognition of vocational qualifications from other countries. However, NAVTTC's <i>National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) Regulations, 2024</i> has set out a framework for the recognition of vocational qualifications gained outside Pakistan.</p>
Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status	<p>That NAVTTC Act 2011 gave NAVTTC the authority to <i>manage and determine equivalences and recognition of diplomas, and certificates awarded by the institutions within the country and abroad</i>, The 2024 Regulations specify how recognition processes will be managed.</p>

2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

	The 2024 Regulations give responsibility for the development and management of the recognition process to a strengthened Committee of Chairmen and Directors of Technical Education (CCDTE). Support will be sought from IBCC and HEC for the formulation of the rules and requirements of the process.
Scope	The Regulations lay out a draft procedure for the recognition process. In this procedure, NAVTTC will be responsible for receiving applications for recognition and for initial scrutiny of the application. The application is then passed to CCDTE for consideration and, once decided, NAVTTC will inform the applicant of the decision.
Outcomes	No further details were found within the timescales of the research study.
Important web-sites	<p>NAVTTC National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) Regulations, 2024: https://navttc.gov.pk/ActsAndRegulations/NVQFManuals/NVQF_Version%20_III%20V.3_Revised.pdf</p> <p>IBCC: https://ibcc.edu.pk/equivalence/rules-for-equivalence/</p> <p>HEC: https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/DES/Pages/Procedure/Procedure-foreign.aspx</p>

Pakistan's National Vocational Qualifications Framework

Figure 1: The National Vocational Qualification Structure

Level	Award	Entry	Minimum Credits	Credit Accumulation	Institute	Awarding Bodies	Occupation Levels
Foundation	Certificate / Class-VI	Grade 5	10	10	School / Institute	School / Institute	Orientation
Level 1	Certificate Class-VII	Grade 6	10	20	School / Institute	School / Institute	Orientation
Level 2	Certificate / Middle-Tech	Grade 7	20	40	School / Institute	Accredited QAB	Worker
Level 3	Certificate / Matric-Tech Part-1	As per NOSS	20	60	School / Institute	Accredited QAB	Skilled
Level 4	Diploma / Matric-Tech Part-2	As per NOSS	30	90	School / Institute	Accredited QAB	Highly-Skilled
Level 5	Higher Diploma / DAE	As per NOSS	80	100	TVET Institute / College	Accredited QAB	Supervisor / Manager
Level 6	BS ET / PGD ET	L-5	As prescribed by HEC + NAVTTC	As prescribed by HEC + NAVTTC	Affiliated Institute or College / DAI or University	DAI / University	Manager / Teacher / Technologist
Level 7	MS ET	L-6					Manager / Technologist / Scientist / Researcher
Level 8	PhD ET	L-7					

Illustrative Credit Hours Distribution: Theory 20% + Practical 65% + OJT 15% = 100%. This distribution may vary for different qualifications / levels based on actual load / nature of competency standards

Equivalence in General Education and award of Middle-Tech, Matric-Tech and Inter-Tech shall be subject to NVQF Credit of each level + General Education Subjects as prescribed by NCC

Source: NAVTTC 2024: National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) Regulations, 2024, https://navttc.gov.pk/ActsAndRegulations/NVQFManuals/NVQF_Version%20_III%20V.3_Revised.pdf

NVQF Level Descriptors

Level	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Responsibility	Qualification type
1	Basic knowledge of an area of work or study	Limited practical skills required to carry out single-process tasks and solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under direct supervision with limited autonomy	Certificate
2	Basic knowledge of readily available facts, processes and general theory of an area of work or study	Basic practical skills required to complete tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	Take responsibility for prioritizing and completing tasks in work or study under indirect supervision with some autonomy and adapt own abilities when solving problems	Certificate
3	Broad theoretical knowledge and interpretation of available information in relevant contexts within an area of work or study	Broad range of well-developed cognitive and psychomotor skills required to plan and complete multi-stage tasks and generate optimum solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Plan and manage own work and/or supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	Certificate
4	Comprehensive theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study	Comprehensive range of cognitive, technical and psychomotor skills required to complete complex tasks and develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise full responsibility for management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities within well-defined boundaries and where there is unpredictable change. Provide inputs to review and develop performance of self and others	Diploma
5	Advanced theoretical knowledge with analytical interpretation of an area of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	Specialist level of cognitive, technical and psychomotor skills required to complete variable complex tasks and develop innovative solutions to abstract and complex problems in an advanced field of work or study	Carry out planning and development of courses of action with complete accountability. Exercise management and supervision in work or study activities where there is unpredictable change. Review and develop performance of self and others	Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) or Higher Diploma
6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups	Bachelor or post graduate diploma
7	Highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams	Master

Level	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Responsibility	Qualification type
8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research	Ph.D

Source: NAVTTC 2024: National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) Regulations, 2024, https://navttc.gov.pk/ActsAndRegulations/NVQFManuals/NVQF_Version%20III%20V.3_Revised.pdf

Country Profile: Tunisia

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

The National Qualifications Framework was established by Presidential Decree n° 2009-2139 dated 8 July 2009, which put into force the “National Classification of Qualifications”.

The framework was jointly developed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Vocational Training and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research after consulting with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Employment and the Administrative Court.

The Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Education share responsibility in their respective sub-sectors.

The Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment has been active in dialogue and cooperation with international partners to advance the agenda of the **CNQ** (NQF) and develop further its instruments.

The CNQ is structured in 7 levels. Each level is defined by six categories of level descriptors: complexity, autonomy, responsibility, adaptability, knowledge, skills and behaviour.

The descriptors for these levels, along with the type of role suggested, are included in the final page of this profile.

Body/bodies and their remits

The **Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi - MFPE)** oversees various aspects of vocational training, including policy formulation, monitoring, evaluation and developing VQs.

Several key institutions support the MFPE in the development and implementation of VET qualifications:

- **Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle - ATFP)** This agency is the main provider of vocational training in Tunisia, operating numerous training centres across the country that offer a wide range of programmes.
- **National Centre for Training of Trainers and Training Course Design (CE-NAFFIF):** This center focuses on developing training programs and ensuring that trainers are adequately prepared to deliver quality education.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

- **National Centre for Continuing Training and Career Development (CNFCPP):** This institution provides continuing education opportunities and supports career development initiatives.
- **National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI):** This agency plays a role in integrating vocational training with employment services, helping to align training outcomes with labor market needs.

Key features of VQs

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a crucial component of Tunisia's education system, designed to equip individuals with the skills needed for the labor market. The structure of VET qualifications is integrated into a broader educational framework that includes general education and higher education.

1. **General Education:** This includes primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education.
2. **Vocational Education and Training (VET):** This encompasses both initial training for youth and continuing education for adults. It ranges from the **Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP)** to the **Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)**.
3. **Higher Education:** This includes qualifications such as the Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and Doctorate, following the Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system adopted in 2008.

VET qualifications in Tunisia are categorized into several levels:

- Competency Certificates (CC)
- Professional Aptitude Certificates (CAP)
- Professional Technicians' Certificates (BTP)
- Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)

These qualifications are issued by various ministries, including the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, and are aligned with the National Qualifications Framework (CNQ), which aims to standardize qualifications across different sectors

Pathways and Progression

The VET system allows students to pursue vocational training after completing lower secondary education. They can choose a two-year vocational program leading to a CAP. Successful candidates may further their studies to obtain a BTP, and subsequently a BTS, which provides advanced technical skills

Currently, there is limited transition from VET to higher education; however, reforms are underway to facilitate this pathway and improve access to quality vocational training

Non-formal TVET

Lifelong learning and **continuous vocational training (CVET)** is provided through the National Centre for Lifelong Learning and Professional Development (**CNFCPP**), and mostly takes the form of non-formal learning. CNFCPP centers provide individual degree courses through seven Institutes of Higher Labour Promotion.

VAE (VNFIL): This service allows people who do not hold a study or training diploma and who have professional experience of at least three years in a craft trade to obtain a certificate of validation of acquired experience after passing the examination organized for this purpose.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Relevant websites	MFPE: http://www.emploi.gov.tn/fr/ ATFP: http://www.atfp.tn/ CENAFFIF: http://cenaffif.nat.tn/ CNFCPP: https://www.cnfcpp.tn/ ANETI: https://www.emploi.nat.tn/fo/en/global.php CNQ: https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/78125/TUN-78125.pdf (law on VET) https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/81846/TUN-81846.pdf (CNQ Decree) VAE (VNFI): https://www.emploi.gov.tn/fr/124/validation-des-acquis-de-lexperience
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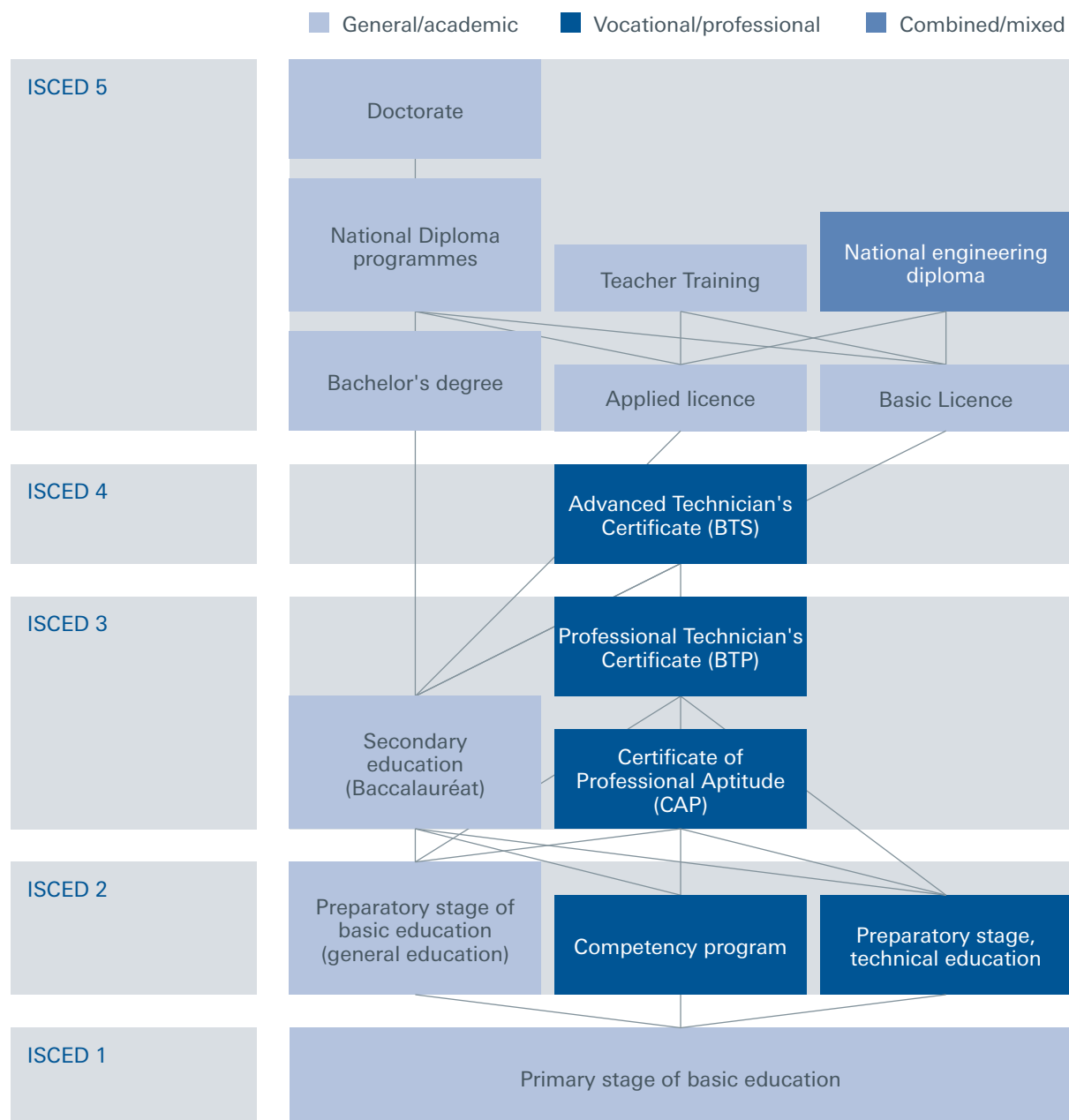
2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview	<p>In Tunisia, the recognition of external Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications is primarily managed by the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MFPE). This ministry oversees the overall framework for vocational training, including the recognition of qualifications obtained outside the country.</p> <p>Key Institutions Involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MFPE) is responsible for establishing policies related to vocational training, including the recognition of both domestic and external qualifications. It ensures that these qualifications align with national standards and labour market needs.• Advisory Commission for the equivalence of foreign professional training diplomas is responsible for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ examining requests submitted to the MFPE, and proposing appropriate equivalences,♦ examining requests for review of equivalence decisions. <p>The members of the Advisory Commission include representatives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MFPE• the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research• the Ministry of Education,• the ministry overseeing the relevant training sector• the National Centre for Trainer Training and Training Engineering,• the Tunisian General Labor Union,• the Tunisian Union of Industry, Commerce and Crafts• the Tunisian Union of Agriculture and Fisheries.
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2. An Overview of the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status	<p>A number of orders and decrees underpin the recognition of foreign qualifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national classification of jobs and the conditions for the approval of initial and continuing vocational training certificates and diplomas were established in <i>Decree No. 94-1397 of June 20, 1994</i>. • The national classification of qualifications was established in <i>Decree No. 2009-2139 of July 8, 2009</i>. • The general framework of reference for vocational training diplomas was established by the <i>Order of the Minister of Vocational Training and Employment of August 2, 2010</i> • The conditions for the equivalence of foreign vocational training diplomas are set out in the <i>Order of the Minister of Vocational Training and Employment of September 27, 2010</i>.
Scope	<p>Equivalence of foreign professional training diplomas</p> <p>The purpose of equivalence is to establish the correspondence between foreign vocational training diplomas and the following certificates and diplomas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the certificate of competence, • the certificate of professional aptitude, • the professional technician certificate, • the higher technician certificate. <p>The equivalence consists of referring the skills acquired in relation to the levels indicated in the national employment scale in accordance with the decrees and orders listed above.</p>
Applying for recognition of a qualification	<p>Requests for equivalence of foreign vocational training diplomas must be submitted by their holders to MFEP. The submission must be supported by a file of evidence completed in accordance with a template available from the Ministry. The file should contain evidence relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the registration requirements for the qualification • the training program, indicating its theoretical and practical components and including the training schedule showing the time devoted to each component • the methods of assessment and certification of the training, • transcripts showing completion of the various components of training • proof of recognition of the diploma in the country concerned.
Outcomes	<p>Decisions on the equivalence of foreign vocational training diplomas are made by MFEP following consultation with the Advisory Committee.</p> <p>The applicant is notified of the equivalence decision by MFEP within a maximum of one week from the date of signature on the decision of the Advisory Committee. The decision not to grant equivalence must be justified.</p>
Important web-sites	<p>Recognition: https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/85089/TUN-85089.pdf</p> <p>Procedure and application form:</p> <p>https://www.emploi.gov.tn/index.php/fr/42/equivalence-des-diplomes-etrangeers-de-la-formation-professionnelle</p>

Formal Education System – Tunisia



UNESCO-UNEVOC: Education system diagramme <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Country+Profiles>

Country Profile: Ukraine

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Levels of qualifications

Ukraine's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was initially introduced in 2011 as a ten-level system. The 2017 Law on Education reinforced a competency-based approach to education and lifelong learning, linking existing qualifications to 11 NQF levels and distinguishing between educational and professional qualifications, the latter being tailored to labour market needs.

For the implementation of paragraph 2 of Article 6 of Chapter XI of this law also was established National Qualifications Agency as a collegial body responsible for overseeing qualifications policy.

In 2020, the NQF was revised to an eight-level structure to align with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), enhancing the comparability and recognition of Ukrainian qualifications across Europe.

Vocational education and training qualifications in Ukraine fall within levels 2 to 5 of the NQF. The revised NQF Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers (25 June 2020) specifies that level 5 includes vocational, professional pre-higher education and higher education qualifications. Higher education qualifications span levels 5 to 8, while professional qualifications can exist across all levels.

This alignment supports mobility, lifelong learning, and employability, enhancing the recognition of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications across Europe.

Body/bodies and their remit

The governance and development of VET qualifications in Ukraine involve multiple institutions, each playing a distinct role in shaping policies, ensuring quality, and overseeing recognition processes.

Development of VET Qualifications

1. **Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine** – as the primary regulatory authority, the Ministry sets the framework for VET, establishes policies, and ensures alignment with national and international standards.
2. **Institute of Vocational Education and Training** – conducts research, develops curricula, and provides recommendations for improving VET programmes.
3. **Sectoral Councils for professional qualifications** – comprising representatives from various industries, these councils identify sector-specific competency requirements and contribute to qualification development.
4. **Educational Institutions and Training Providers** – VET schools, colleges, and training centres implement and refine VET programmes based on national standards and industry needs.

These entities collaborate to ensure that VET qualifications are relevant, up-to-date, and aligned with labour market demands.

Recognition and Quality Assurance of VET Qualifications

1. **Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine** – oversees the recognition and regulation of qualifications in coordination with other ministries, ensuring compliance with educational standards.
2. **State Service for Quality of Education of Ukraine** – ensures the quality of educational institutions and VET programmes, verifying adherence to established criteria.
3. **National Qualifications Agency** – plays a key role in the development and implementation of the NQF, supporting the recognition and validation of VET qualifications.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Previously, the Ministry of Social Policy managed non-formal and informal learning validation, occupational standards, and the National Classifier of Occupations. However, many of these responsibilities have transitioned to the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine and National Qualifications Agency.

By working together, these organisations uphold the integrity of Ukraine's qualifications system, ensuring transparency, quality, and alignment with international best practices.

Position of VQs in national system

VET qualifications in Ukraine are integrated into the NQF and span levels 2 to 5.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1341 as of 23.11.2011 "On Approval of the National Framework of Qualifications" specifies that VET qualifications are confined to these levels, with level 5 qualifications bridging VET, professional pre-higher education and higher education. Meanwhile, higher education qualifications extend from levels 5 to 8. Professional qualifications, as outlined in the National Classifier of Occupations, can cover the full NQF spectrum.

The Ukrainian NQF aligns with the EQF, facilitating the recognition and comparability of VET qualifications across Europe.

Levels of VET in Ukraine

Three-year field-specific secondary education is integrated into full general secondary education. Field-specific secondary education has two directions: academic and VET, that is labour market-oriented, based on a combination of the content of education defined by the field-specific secondary educational standard and a professional-oriented approach to learning, taking into account the abilities and needs of students. Field-specific secondary education under twelve-year complete general secondary education programmes begins on 1 September 2027.

Programmes emphasise career guidance, extracurricular vocational training, and social support for disadvantaged students.

Second (basic) VET level (Post-secondary VET) is available to students completing grades 9 or 11. Programmes last between 1-4 years, integrating general education with vocational training. Students entering after grade 9 undergo a 3–4-year programme that includes multiple vocational specialisations, whereas those entering after grade 11 follow a 1–2-year vocational programme.

Third (upper) VET level (Tertiary VET) is designed for adults seeking professional qualifications or reskilling. Training is provided by VET schools, enterprise training centres, and private institutions, with flexible formats including part-time, dual, and modular learning options. Duration varies from 3 months to 3 years.

VET qualifications in Ukraine are competency-based, emphasizing modular learning, recognition of prior experience, and validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). Certification pathways include:

- Skilled worker certificate or diploma.
- Professional junior bachelor's degree (фаховий молодший бакалавр).
- Qualifications facilitating direct entry into the labour market or progression to higher education.

1. The Vocational Qualifications Landscape

Relevant websites	National Qualifications Agency: https://nqa.gov.ua Ministry of Education and Science: https://mon.gov.ua State Employment Service: https://www.dcz.gov.ua
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2. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

Overview	The recognition of foreign VET qualifications in Ukraine is governed by the National Qualifications Agency (NQA) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MESU). Ukraine follows the Lisbon Recognition Convention principles, ensuring fair assessment of qualifications obtained abroad. Recognition applies to both regulated and non-regulated professions.
Legislative or Regulatory Frameworks or Status	The legal framework is provided in <i>The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 576 of June 02, 2021, "On Approval of the Procedure for Recognition in Ukraine of Professional Qualifications Obtained in Other Countries"</i> It includes the recognition procedure for refugees and individuals with incomplete documentation. Source: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/576-2021-%D0%BF#Text
Scope	<p>The recognition of VET qualifications serves multiple purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and career progression, ensuring that individuals with foreign qualifications can integrate into the workforce and access professional opportunities. • Access to further education, allowing individuals with recognised qualifications to pursue additional studies in Ukrainian educational institutions. • Integration of returning Ukrainian citizens, facilitating the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad for those returning to Ukraine. • Professional Mobility supporting workforce movement within the Ukrainian labour market. <p>Role of key institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Qualifications Agency (NQA) is responsible for the development of criteria and procedures for the recognition of professional and partial professional qualifications obtained in other countries. It provides support for the National Qualifications Framework, including its harmonisation with similar international documents such as the EQF. Its responsibility also includes the development of a draft procedure for awarding/validating professional and partial professional qualifications, recognition of learning outcomes (including those obtained through non-formal or informal education) by qualification centres and submission for approval to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. • Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MESU) oversees policies ensuring compliance with European standards and organises the development and approval of education standards • Qualification centers are competent recognition authorities for the recognition in Ukraine of professional qualifications obtained in other countries • Sectoral Professional Bodies handle recognition for regulated professions, ensuring that foreign qualifications meet the standards required for practice within specific industries. <p>For regulated professions, additional scrutiny is conducted by professional bodies, which may impose further requirements such as licensing exams or supplementary training.</p>

2. An Overview of Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

This structured approach ensures that both professional and academic qualifications in Ukraine align with national and international standards, fostering labour market integration and lifelong learning.

<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/576-2021-%D0%BF#Text>

<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/956-2021-%25D0%25BF%23Text#Text>

<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/986-2021-%25D0%25BF%23Text#Text>

Applying for recognition of a qualification

Recognition by NQA

The NQA accredits the Qualification Centres that evaluate professional qualifications based on their level, content, and relevance to the Ukrainian NQF. Key factors in recognition include:

- Comparison with equivalent Ukrainian qualifications.
- Accreditation status of the foreign awarding institution.
- Learning outcomes and professional competencies achieved.
- Compliance with national quality assurance standards.

For regulated professions, additional recognition is required from the relevant professional bodies or sectoral councils.

Applicants must submit their request through the MESU online portal or designated regional centres. Required documents include:

- Proof of identity (passport or ID card).
- Original qualification certificate and transcripts.
- Official translations of documents into Ukrainian.
- Proof of accreditation of the issuing institution.

Processing applications

Processing applications

The recognition process follows these steps:

1. **Preliminary assessment:** verification of document authenticity and accreditation of the awarding institution.
2. **Comparability evaluation:** determination of the qualification level against the Ukrainian NQF.
3. **Decision and certification:** issuance of a recognition statement or requirement for additional assessment/examinations.

The process takes approximately 3-6 months, depending on the complexity of the application.

Outcomes

Outcomes

Successful applicants receive a recognition certificate stating:

- Qualification details (title, institution, date of award).
- Equivalent professional qualification of Ukraine, as defined by the occupational standard (qualification characteristic) of Ukraine

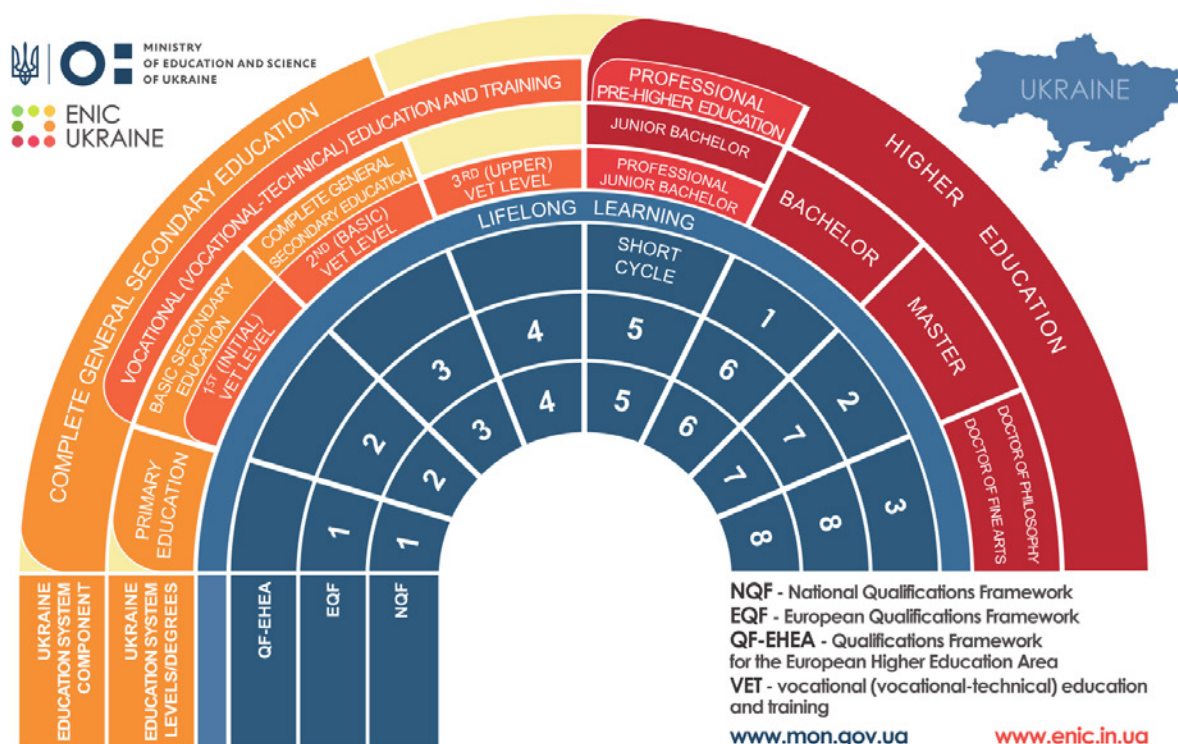
If a qualification is not recognized, applicants may appeal the decision or undergo additional training.

Important web-sites

- NQA: <https://nqa.gov.ua>
- MESU Recognition Portal: <https://naric.mon.gov.ua>
- State Employment Service: <https://www.dcz.gov.ua>

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OF UKRAINE

Approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 1341, dated November 23, 2011, as amended by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 519, dated June 25, 2020



(source: <https://enic.in.ua/index.php/en/educationl-system>)

Structure of the Formal Education System of Ukraine

Component	Level	Degree, qualification or education level	Scope of the program (ECTS1credits), period of study	National Qualification Framework
Pre-school education				
Complete general secondary education	Primary education	-	4 years	1 level
	Basic secondary education	-	5 years	2 level
	Profile (field-specific) secondary education	-	3 years ²	3 level
Out-of-school education		-	-	1-3 level
Specialized education				
Vocational (Vocational-Technical) Education and Training ³	1st (initial) VET level	Working qualification;	Regulated by standards of professional (vocational) education	2 level
	2nd (initial) VET level	Qualified worker;		3 level
	3rd (upper) VET level	Junior Specialist		4-5 level

Component	Level	Degree, qualification or education level	Scope of the program (ECTS1credits), period of study	National Qualification Framework
Professional prehigher education3	Professional prehigher education	Professional Junior Bachelor	Educational-professional program: 240 credits based on basic secondary education; 120-180 credits based on complete general secondary education (field-specific secondary education)	5 level
Higher education	Initial level (short cycle) of higher education	Junior Bachelor4	Educational and professional program – 120 credits	5 level
	The first (Bachelor) level of higher education	Bachelor	Educational and professional program – 180-240 credits	6 level
	The second (Master) level of higher education	Master	Educational and professional program – 90-120 credits	7 level
			Educational and scientific program – 120 credits (scientific component - not less than 30%)	
		Master of Medical, Pharmaceutical or Veterinary field5	Educational program – 300-360 credits	
	The third (educational and research /educational and creative) level of higher education6	Doctor of Philosophy	Preparation in aspirantura (adjuncture) – 4 years, educational component of the educational and scientific program – 30-60 credits	8 level
		Doctor of Fine Arts	Preparation in creative aspirantura – 3 years, educational component of the educational and creative program – 30-60 credits	
Adult education, including postgraduate education		Partial qualifications	-	

Source: <https://enic.in.ua/index.php/en/educationl-system>

ANNEX 6 – Information needed for recognition

The research question contained in Section 3.2 covered a range of areas relating to:

- the remit and recognition processes of the EU CRAs,
- the data required for recognition and if/where this exists in the VET systems of the non-EU countries

For each EU CRA included in the study, the research team looked at:

- the type and scope of recognition it provides
- application processes and information requirements
- information used to inform recognition decisions
- the outcomes of recognition

For each non-EU country, the research team looked at:

- which pieces of information used to inform decision-making are publicly available and how they are accessed.

This information has been made available in the form of two spreadsheets. It is anticipated that these spreadsheets may provide a useful resource to inform the development of guidance on recognition for applicants, VET organisations and CRAs.

The table overleaf lists the categories of information contained in the spreadsheet for the EU country CRAs.

Information needed for recognition	
Information about the CRA	What type of organisation is this CRA?
	Can the CRA recognise non-EU country vocational quals?
	Can the CRA recognise qualifications for regulated professions?
	Which levels of qualifications can they recognise? Is this an NQF level or an ISCED level?
	Is this recognition accepted nationally or is it restricted to a region/locality?
	Is recognition based on level or a specific qualification? Are qualifications recognised as comparable or equivalent?
	What can the individual do with this recognition? Are there any restrictions?
Application requirements	How does the individual submit their documents (e.g. hard copy? online?)
	Does the individual apply to a national centre or to a regional/local centre?
	Is proof of identity required? If yes, are there specific requirements?
	Does the individual have to be resident in the country to make the application?
	Is the original diploma/certificate needed?
	Is detailed official information from issuing authority about the dates/study content/results needed?
	Official translations include those issued by the country's embassy in the individual's country of origin or from translators approved by the recognising country
	Any additional requirements not captured
	Total cost to the applicant

Information needed for recognition	
Information for decision making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Status of regulatory or statutory body 2. Status of awarding/competent body 3. Status of training provider 4. Qualification title 5. Entry requirements 6. Qualification NQF level 7. Position of qualification in national education system 8. Qualification learning outcomes 9. Occupational standard/profile or competency standard 10. Detailed curriculum or training programme 11. Duration of training programme 12. Balance of theory and practice 13. Assessment criteria 14. Occupation or job role on completion 15. Evidence of work experience
<p><i>N.B. These are the 15 categories of data we found that EU country CRAs use to inform their decision.</i></p> <p><i>Each CRA may require only some of this information.</i></p>	
The outcomes of the recognition process	<p>How long should an applicant expect the recognition process to take?</p> <p>What are the potential decisions that the recognition body can take? This may include full/partial/conditional or no recognition. For conditional recognition, information about possible conditions is included where known.</p> <p>What is the name of the recognition document? What information does it contain?</p>
Anything else?	Are there any other requirements not listed above?

ACRONYMS

The following abbreviations are used in the body of this report. The names and abbreviations of non-EU VET organisations contributing to the research are contained in the list of participating organisations.

AHK	German Chambers of Commerce Abroad
ANOLF	National Association Beyond Borders (Italy)
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning. See also RPL; VAE; VNFIL
BIBB	Federal Institute for Vocational Education & Training (Germany)
BMBF	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany)
CMA	Chambers of Trades & Crafts (France)
CRA	Competent Recognition Authority
CTICE	Centre for Information and Communication Technology in Education (Moldova)
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
DAB	Statement on a Foreign Vocational Qualification (Germany)
DIHK	German Chamber of Industry and Commerce
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres in the European Region
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FEI	France Education International
GIZ	German International Cooperation Society
HE	Higher Education
IHK FOSA	National Centre for the Chambers of Industry & Commerce (Germany)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
LRC	Lisbon Recognition Convention
MIMIT	Ministry of Enterprise & Made In Italy (Italy)
MPF	Migration Partnership Facility
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union
NESB	The National Electrical Safety Board (Sweden)
NGO	Non-Governmental Agency
NQA	National Qualifications Agency (Ukraine)

NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning. See also APEL; VAE; VNFIL
S&TMP	Skills & Talent Mobility Package
UHR	Swedish Council for Higher Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VAE	Validation des Acquis par l'Expérience. See also APEL; RPL; VNFIL
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VNFIL	Validation of Non-Formal & Informal Learning. See also APEL; RPL;VAE
ZAB	Central Office for Foreign Education (Germany)

