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Work package 8

Assessment, recognition and certification of acquired competences

R8.5 - Recommendations for national recognition

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Introduction

The PSA project consortium recognizes the importance of sector-oriented vocational education and training that meets the needs of the industry. To achieve this goal, the project consortium is implementing activities that align with existing European tools and recommendations, including EQF, Europass, ECVET, and EQAVET. However, there are challenges in ensuring national recognition and validation, as not all relevant qualifications are mapped against National Qualification Frameworks in all countries. In this context, the following recommendations are presented to influence national authorities to recognize and validate developed qualifications.

1. Description

The project is sector oriented and responding to sector defined needs. The project consortium is aware of the existing European tools and recommendations formulated by the European Commission, including EQF, Validation of non-formal and informal learning (recommendation and European guidelines). Europass, ECVET credit transfer system for vocational training and EQAVET.

The consortium implements the project activities in line with most of the tools – first and foremost with regard to the designing of qualifications. Regarding recognition and validation we face the situation that neither all relevant qualifications are mapped against National Qualification Frameworks – nor do they exist in all countries. E.g. the Master of Skilled Crafts certification that does not exist in Belgium or Slovakia, whereas in Austria, Germany, Iceland, Norway and Slovenia they are legally regulated. The master qualification is supervised by the sector itself – through Chambers or chamber-like organisations. They are the awarding bodies, responsible for the recognition of the qualification.

Due to the fact that in most countries vocational education and training is based on a tri-partite cooperation between social partners and national (or local) authorities, qualifications are based on a legal framework with (clearly) defined qualification requirements. In this case the developed transnationally oriented qualification matrixes will be presented to the tri-partite commissions as input to revisions of national frameworks. Sectoral bodies responsible for certification at certain levels or for specific occupations are asked for accrediting the new qualification and therefore to recognise them officially.

2. Risks from partners

Critical activity	Risk	Potential impact on the project development	Observations
Recommendations for national recognition.	Difficulties in deriving national recommendations from the developed PSA products (disagreements or lack of understanding prevents “translation” into national contexts).	No direct risk for other WPs, but reduced broad impact and sustainability of the project (also with regard to the presentation in the final report).	Ensuring that the partners (especially P13-P17 as responsible authorities) are involved and that they understand and approve all PSA results. Clear formulation of expectations.

3. Recommendations for influencing national authorities for national recognition and validation

- 1) Consider introducing the Master of Skilled Crafts certification and establishing a legal framework for its recognition.
- 2) Review and align the National Qualification Framework with the European Qualifications Framework to enable the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the sector.
- 3) Work with sectoral bodies responsible for certification to accredit a new qualification and recognize it officially.
- 4) Engage with relevant stakeholders: It is important to engage with all relevant stakeholders, including vocational education and training providers, employers, trade unions, and professional associations. These stakeholders can provide valuable input and insights into the development of the qualification and can help to promote its recognition and validation at the national level.
- 5) Communicate the benefits: It is important to communicate the benefits of new qualifications to national authorities, employers, and other stakeholders. This includes highlighting how the qualifications align with existing frameworks and how it addresses skills gaps in the sector. Additionally, emphasizing the benefits of mobility and recognition of skills across borders can be a powerful argument.
- 6) Advocate for recognition: The consortium should advocate for a new qualification to be recognized by relevant national authorities. This can include meetings with policymakers and regulators, as well as providing information about the qualification and its development process. This advocacy can be bolstered by highlighting the support of relevant stakeholders and the sector as a whole.
- 7) Promote validation: The consortium should also promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning for the sector. This includes engaging with relevant national bodies to ensure that the validation process is recognized and understood. Additionally, highlighting the benefits of validation for individuals and employers can be a powerful argument.
- 8) Collaborate with other initiatives: It may be useful to collaborate with other initiatives in the sector to promote the recognition and validation of a new qualification. This can include working with national and regional industry associations, as well as other European projects in the sector. Collaborating with other initiatives can help to amplify the message and increase the visibility of the new qualification.
- 9) Develop strong relationships with key stakeholders: It is important to build relationships with key stakeholders in the sector, including employers, trade unions, and vocational education and training providers. By collaborating closely with these stakeholders, the PSA project can help to build support for the new qualification and demonstrate its value to the sector.
- 10) Make the case for the qualification: In order to persuade national authorities to recognize and validate the new qualification, it is important to make a strong case for its value and relevance to the sector. This can be done by providing evidence of the skills and knowledge required for the job, and demonstrating how the new qualification addresses existing gaps or challenges in the sector.
- 11) Communicate effectively: Effective communication is key to building support for a new qualification among national authorities. This includes providing clear and concise information about the qualification, as well as engaging in open and transparent dialogue with stakeholders and decision-makers.
- 12) Align with existing frameworks: The PSA project should ensure that a new qualification aligns with existing frameworks and standards in each country. This will make it easier for national authorities to recognize and validate the qualification, and help to build trust and confidence in its value and relevance.
- 13) Be patient and persistent: Achieving national recognition and validation for a new qualification can be a lengthy and complex process. It is important to be patient and persistent, and to continue to make the case for the qualification over time. By staying committed to the process and engaging in ongoing dialogue with



stakeholders, the PSA project can help to build support for new qualifications and increase its chances of success.

- 14) **Build strong relationships with key stakeholders:** Building strong relationships with key stakeholders, such as national authorities, industry associations, and certification bodies, is essential for promoting the recognition and validation of new qualifications. By working closely with these stakeholders and providing them with regular updates on the project's progress, the consortium can help to build support for the new qualifications and increase the likelihood of their recognition.
- 15) **Promote the benefits of new qualifications:** In order to gain the support of national authorities and other stakeholders, it is important to demonstrate the benefits of the new qualifications. This might include highlighting the skills and competencies that they will help learners to develop, as well as the potential career opportunities that will be available to those who hold the qualifications.
- 16) **Share best practices:** The consortium can also help to promote national recognition and validation by sharing best practices and success stories from other countries. This might involve showcasing examples of how the new qualifications have been successfully integrated into national frameworks in other countries, or highlighting the positive outcomes that have been achieved as a result of recognizing and validating non-formal and informal learning.
- 17) **Engage in policy dialogue:** The consortium can also engage in policy dialogue with national authorities and other stakeholders in order to promote the recognition and validation of new qualifications. This might involve participating in national and international policy forums, providing feedback on policy proposals, and advocating for the adoption of policies that support the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- 18) **Foster cooperation between national authorities:** Finally, the consortium can help to promote national recognition and validation by fostering cooperation between national authorities. By encouraging national authorities to work together and share best practices, the consortium can help to ensure that the new qualifications are recognized and valued across borders, making it easier for learners to pursue career opportunities in other countries.

Overall, building strong relationships with stakeholders, communicating the benefits of the qualification, advocating for recognition, promoting validation, and collaborating with other initiatives can all help to influence national authorities for national recognition and validation.

Conclusion

It is important to recognize the varying legal frameworks and qualification requirements in different countries, as well as the role of social partners and sectoral bodies in vocational education and training. By engaging with national authorities, social partners, and sectoral bodies, the project consortium can ensure that the developed qualifications are accredited and recognized, ultimately contributing to the improvement of vocational education and training in the painting industry.