36th Meeting
EQF Advisory Group

Brussels
14-16 June 2016
Thematic Reports

prepared within the framework of the 2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
Looking ahead

• **2016** – Light update of the European Inventory

• **2018** – Update of the European Inventory

• **2018** – One-off national reports. Political response to the Council Recommendation

• **2019** - Commission's report to the Council. Reports on the experience gained and implications for the future, including if necessary a possible review of the Recommendation.
By end 2016 light update of European Inventory on validation

- **OUTPUTS**
  - 36 country reports (covering 33 countries) - ongoing
  - 4 Thematic studies (total 8+4) - done
  - A synthesis of main findings
  - An executive summary

1. Validation in the care and youth sectors
2. Monitoring validation
3. Funding validation
4. Validation and OER
Aim

- The thematic reports take a closer look at specific aspects that are particularly relevant for the development of validation arrangements in Europe.

- They contribute to the development of the country report updates.

- They are a source of information to support dialogue between the different stakeholders in developing and implementing validation in Europe.
4 Thematic reports

1. Validation in the care and youth work sectors
2. Monitoring validation
3. Funding validation
4. Validation and open educational resources
1. Validation in the care and youth work sectors

**Youth:** focus on identification and documentation (including self-assessment)

→ visibility of competences to find a job.

**Care:** focus on assessment and certification

→ formalising vocation-specific or work-related competences for supporting employability & mobility
1. Validation in the care and youth work sectors

**Recommendations**

- Increase analysing risks /benefits, monitoring the impact and raising awareness
- Individuals need clarification on validation opportunities and follow-up procedures

**Overall:**
- Collect data on validation opportunities in specific sectors and how they are used
- but use a coordinated approach across sectors
2. Monitoring validation

Figure: % of countries with and without indicators to measure performance of validation system from countries with validation arrangements in place – Analysis across sectors

Source: ICF analysis based on country expert data returns
Key: Y= Yes; N= No; N/R=No Response. Number of countries with validation arrangements in place GE: 16, IVET: 27; CVET: 25, HE: 23, AE: 15, Other validation initiatives: 16
### 2. Monitoring validation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of an institutional structure linked to VNFIL (e.g. lack of legislation in the policy area, or mapping of available validation opportunities; no responsibilities for overall monitoring of validation)</td>
<td>Existence of a clear legal, institutional and policy framework for validation, laying out clear responsibilities for the different stakeholders and clear mandate for the collection and centralisation of data on VNFIL</td>
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<td>Fragmented offer, lack of consistent definition of ‘VNFIL’ (existence of different arrangements) and common databases</td>
<td>Common understanding of VNFIL and consensus on definitions of different forms of VNFIL</td>
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<td>Lack of mandate for educational institutions to collect separate data on take up of VNFIL (as VNFIL is seen as having an equal value to formal education and training)</td>
<td>Nation-wide VNFIL arrangements (as opposed to multiple small-scale arrangements)</td>
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<td>Maturity of the validation system and sufficient scale</td>
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<td>Existence of a specific taskforce, working group, etc. overseeing VNFIL</td>
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Conclusions (1/3)

Still at an early stage across Europe.

Lack of comprehensive monitoring systems at the national (or regional) level. Why?

- not yet a clear priority in the majority of countries
- fragmented offer
- small-scale of VNFIL arrangements
- diversity in data collection systems at the institution level

Statistics are not systematically published, or are not released regularly.
Conclusions (2/3)

Where data is centralised:

- some variation can be observed concerning the type of data compiled
  - overall participation and achievement
  - characteristics of participants
- the type of data collected and centralised does not generally capture the different stages, length or cost of the validation procedures

Evidence in relation to outcomes and impact remains limited.
Conclusions (3/3)

Overall compared to 2014 European Inventory on VNFIL no progress identified.

Some new developments:

- improvements in the collection of data at upper secondary level in NO
- centralisation of data on recognition of prior learning in HE in the UK
- adoption of a legal basis in FR to underpin data collection at regional and national levels
- current offer of VNFIL arrangements is being expanded in Malta
- Iceland, Romania and Slovakia are developing databases providing an overview of available validation procedures
2. Monitoring validation

Recommendations (1/3)

Collection of data - Recommendations for providers:

* Develop a database to collect data on different aspects of the take up of VNFIL procedure:
  * Participation at different stages of validation
  * Type of qualification (level, field of study) or outcomes (e.g. certificate)
  * Achievement and success rate
  * Characteristic of users
  * Length of the procedure
  * Cost of the procedure for the institution and for the user (in comparison with the cost of achieving the qualification through a formal learning route)

* Make data available online (annual statistics)

* If possible, gather data on outcomes and impact of VNFIL for users (based on surveys and internal or external evaluations)
Recommendations (2/3)

Monitoring: Recommendations for national-level (or regional-level, where appropriate) stakeholders, ministries and agencies:

*If no centralised databases are already in place:*

- Take stock of existing data collection systems among the main providers of VNFIL;
- Provide guidance to VNFIL providers on how to keep their own registers to monitor their activities and encourage the publication of data;
- Develop common databases in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.
Recommendations (3/3)

Monitoring: Recommendations for national-level (or regional-level, where appropriate) stakeholders, ministries and agencies:

*If some centralised databases are already in place:*

- Encourage stakeholders WGs to improve data compilation
- Complement available evidence on take-up by launching studies to measure the impact of validation on users
- Identify and recognise good practice in collecting data and awareness raising events
- Use data for planning purposes and inform policy developments on VNFIL
Conclusions (1/2)

- **Limited information** (no earmarking funding & no info due to fragmented structures)
- Countries **use various funding sources** related to learning sectors
- In some countries **funding is only provided for certain stages** of the validation process
- In Is & NL **responsibility allocated to providers outside formal education**
  - + accessibility & buy-in
  - - in transfer outcomes to formal education
- **(European) project funding** an important ‘start-up’ source to enable new developments
Conclusions (2/2)

- Funding from providers’ existing budgets ➔
  + VNIL better integrated into formal E&T but
  - shift in attitudes slow

- In some countries perception that validation is an expensive, time-consuming process

- EU funding (ESF) used to support (mainstream) validation initiatives in some countries
  + invest in development policies, practices and tools & increase the user base
  - sustainability of projects

- Individuals cover costs of a validation procedure in many countries
  + sustainable model & driven by demand
  - barriers to access
3. Funding validation

Recommendations (1/2)

*Look into the issue of validation funding in more detail*
  - more precise typology of models and more in-depth discussion of the associated issues.
  - more in-depth case studies, profiling countries’ experiences, and/or more evaluative research into the impact of funding models in place on the buy-in/take-up among providers and learners, as well as the quality of provision

*Need to collect more systematic information about validation funding*
  - more effort by countries to calculate the cost associated with validation practice. However, important that both economic and social benefits are considered.
Recommendations (2/2)

Where funding for validation is allocated proportionally, per learner/qualification/credit, info about funding arrangements is needed so that providers and users understand what they are entitled to.

Explore the link between funding on validation in relation to other active labour market policies, especially its linkage to guidance and PES.

Study how the funding models affect low-qualified and unemployed as a route back to education, as they might be more reluctant on paying fees.
Objectives:

1. explore whether current validation arrangements and procedures are adapted to VNIL through the use of OER

2. present drivers and barriers regarding the validation of learning acquired through the use of OER
Conclusions:

- **Relatively new** phenomenon that has gained in importance recently e.g. in higher education.
- OER **challenge traditional definitions and divisions between formal and non-formal learning**. Even more so in the future, as (formal) education institutions continue to be both providers of OER and to develop the ways in which these experiences are incorporated into regular curricula.
- OER creates flexible learning opportunities and is seen as an **important setting to acquire competences in a non-formal learning environment**.
- However, no comprehensive data available on the number of validation requests that concern learning acquired through the use of OER.
4. Validation and OER

Recommendations

- **Share knowledge and spread good practice** on the validation of OER derived learning across the **formal education** sector
- **Expand the options of what can be validated**, to include full qualifications
- **Further develop and make stakeholders aware of the options for validation** of learning outcomes from participation in OER/MOOCs and its benefits
- **Enhance measures** that can link learning from the use of OER with other generic systems for VNIL
- **Invest in high quality assessment** systems
Comments and questions?