

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

A pillar of the national qualifications system

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3rd Webinar – “Sharing experience - Governance Models of National Qualifications Frameworks. A contribution to the Moroccan NQF Permanent Commission”

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Some sources of information:

The National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training is the EQF NCP in Portugal: <http://www.anqep.gov.pt/default.aspx>

- National qualifications catalogue: <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Qualificacoes>
- Qualification database for higher education:
https://www.dges.gov.pt/pt/pesquisa_cursos_instituicoes?canal=sou-futuro-estudante
- ANQ (2011). *Report on the referencing of the national qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework*: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/reports-referencing-national-qualifications-frameworks-efq>
- MCTES (2011). *The framework for higher education qualifications in Portugal - Report of the international committee on the verification of compatibility with the qualifications framework of the European higher education area*.
https://wwwcdn.dges.gov.pt/sites/default/files/referencing_report_higher_education_portugal_qf-ehea.pdf

Sources, documentation

- Website Agence: <https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/home.html>
- Documents juridiques, methodologiques: <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Documentacao>
- Décret-Loi de creation de l'ANQEP N° 36/2012: <https://data.dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/543022/details/maximized>
- Cadre National des Certifications (brochure): https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/400/QNQ_Triptico.pdf
- CNC – Guide interprétatif, 2014 (90 pages): https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/312/QNQ_GuiaInterpretativoQNQ_2014.pdf
- Catalogue National des Certifications: brochure et guide de l'utilisateur: <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/boDocumentos/getDocumentos/129>
<http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/boDocumentos/getDocumentos/136>
- VAE - Programme “Qualifica”: <https://www.qualifica.gov.pt/#/>
- VAE – Passeport Qualifica: <https://www.passaportequalifica.gov.pt/cicLogin.xhtml>
- <https://www.passaportequalifica.gov.pt/cicLogin.xhtml> Système de credits de la FP: <https://www.qualifica.gov.pt/#/sistemaCreditos>

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework - process of creation

**Created within the Reform of the Portuguese Education and Training System
– build up the National Qualifications System (2007)**

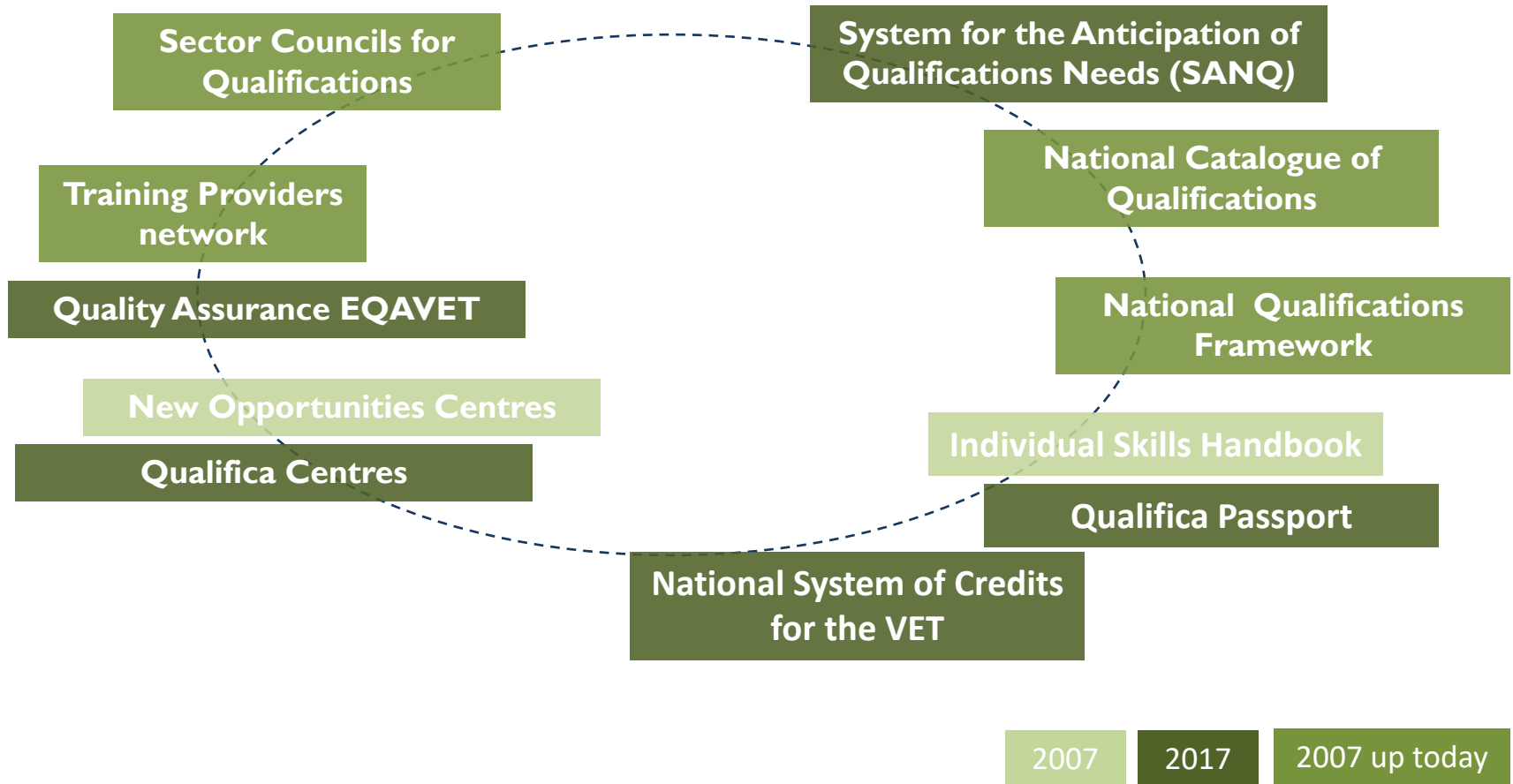
- To strengthen the integration between training within the education system and training within the labour market – reinforce the double certification principle;
- To build certification mechanisms for school and professional competences acquired through informal and non-formal learning;
- To promote VET flexibility - short modular units, that can be certified independently;
- To reinforce the permeability between general education pathways and VET;
- To make training provision relevant for economy and social cohesion (offer in line with needs of labour market);
- Legibility and comparability of national qualifications.

Raising qualifications levels (young people and adults) and establish upper-secondary level as the minimum level of qualification (compulsory education)

The National Qualifications System (NQS) – 2007 and 2017

STRUCTURES

INSTRUMENTS



The Portuguese Qualifications Framework - process of creation

**Created within the Reform of the Portuguese Education and Training System
– build up the National Qualifications System**

- Proposed by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, and Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.
- Discussed in the National Council for Vocational Training.
- Public consultation (August-September 2007) concerning all the instruments for the VET reform, including NQF.
- Created in December 2007, based in EQF principles.
- Regulated in July 2009.
- In force since the 1st October 2010.

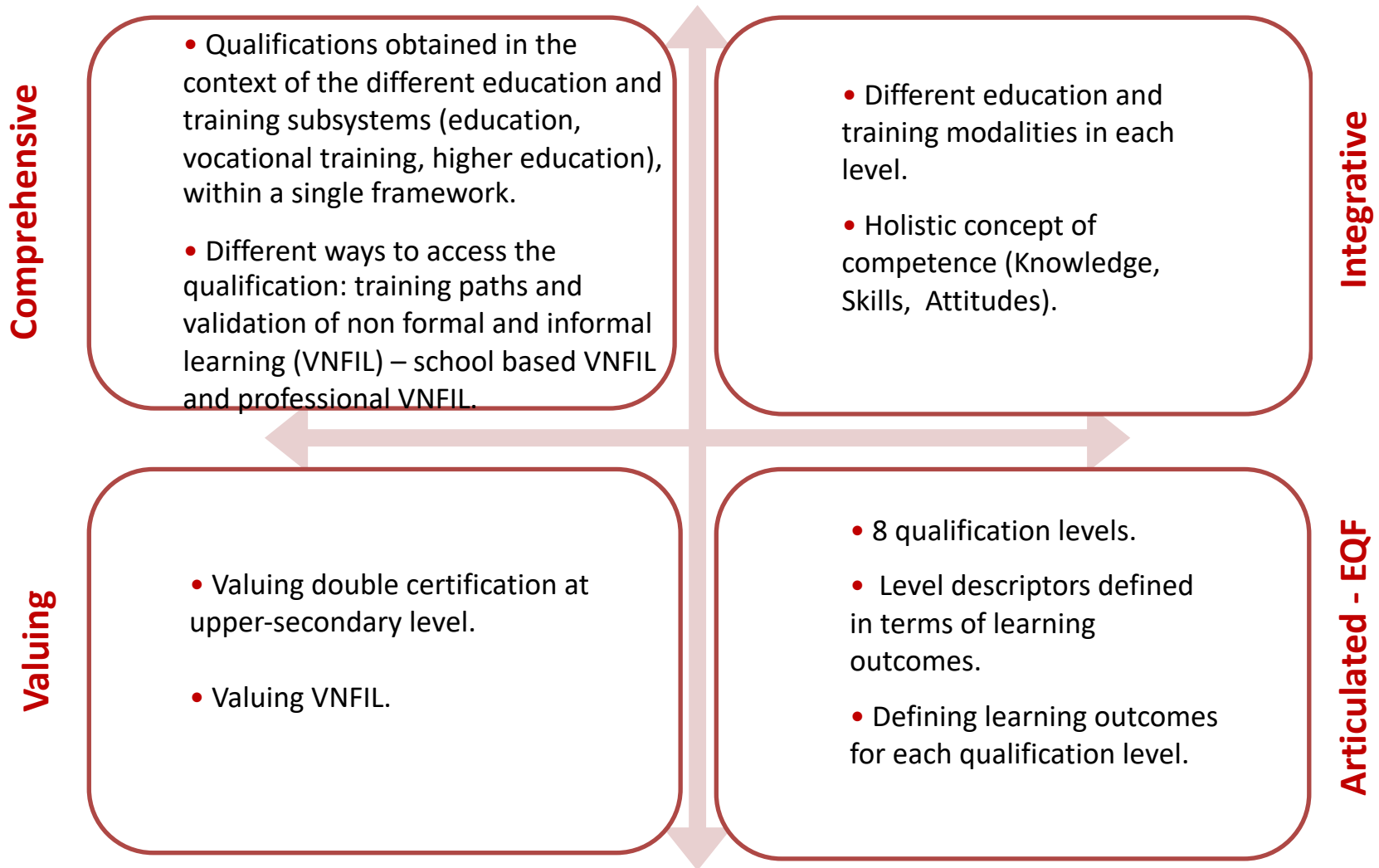
The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

Main objectives ...

- Integrating the qualifications obtained in the context of the different education and training subsystems (education, vocational training, higher education), within a single framework;
- Improving the legibility, transparency and comparability of qualifications;
- Improving the access, progression and quality of national qualifications;
- Defining learning outcomes for each qualification level;
- Ensuring coordination with the EQF, specifically in using the EQF as an instrument of reference for comparing qualification levels from different qualifications systems.

(Art.2º, Ministerial Order nº 782/2009, 23rd July)

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework – Key features



The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

Level	Qualifications
Level 1	2 nd cycle of basic education
Level 2	3 rd cycle of basic education (lower secondary education) obtained in basic education or via double certification paths (VET)
Level 3	Upper-secondary education with a view to pursuing higher level studies (general education)
Level 4	Upper-secondary education obtained via double certification paths (VET) Upper-secondary education with a view to pursuing higher level studies plus professional placement - minimum six months
Level 5	Post-secondary non-higher level qualification with credits to pursue higher level studies
Level 6	Bachelor degree
Level 7	Master degree
Level 8	Doctorate degree

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(at the beginning) Some challenges...

- Adjustment of the descriptors used in the implicit qualifications framework and the descriptors used in the national qualifications framework.
- The use of learning outcomes (LO) to define qualification levels - harmonising approaches, concepts and practices.
- The use of “attitude” instead of “competence” as a LO descriptor domain.
- Communication and dissemination of NQF and referencing to EQF to a wide spectrum of stakeholders.
- Differentiation between level 3 and 4 has not fully grasped by some stakeholders.

Some solutions...

- Methodology for designing qualifications based in LO.
- “Understanding the NQF – user’s support guide” (to make the NQF descriptors more explicit and readable, to clarify the criteria used to classify a national qualification at a given level; to make the NQF easier to use for providers in the education and training system).
- Communication and dissemination activities (conferences, workshops, sectorial councils for qualifications, leaflets, ...).

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Nowadays:

- The legal framework is in place
- Qualifications have been assigned to levels
- Quality assurance arrangements have been implemented

<https://europa.eu/europass/en/compare-qualifications>

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In which areas is NQF making more difference/ *Added-value*?

Visibility

- NQF levels are mentioned in all certificates and diplomas (IVET, CVET and VNFIL - non-higher education).
- (some) Certificates and diplomas include the NQF and EQF levels.
- VET database contains NQF and EQF levels (namely, the National Catalogue of Qualifications).
- Access to financial support and to professional internships takes the framework into consideration.

Legibility

- NQF level descriptors are more clear and accessible to end-users.
- NQF makes non-formal and informal learning more legible.

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In which areas is NQF making more difference/ *Added-value*?

Transparency

- Use of LO to describe and classify qualification – way of harmonising approaches, concepts and practices, but there are differences across subsystems.
- NQF level descriptors are used to support the review and renewal of qualifications.
- The use of “attitude” as a LO descriptor domain caused a redirection of attention to soft skills.

Involvement

- Stakeholders involvement
 - Referencing process (steering committee and WG: ANQEP + bodies involved in the qualifications regulation and quality assurance in ET).
 - Sectors initiative to design qualifications in terms of LO.
 - The role of SCQ in the design of qualifications.
 - Assessment of learning acquired in non-formal and informal settings.

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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?

Directorate General of Education (DGE)

National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP)

Directorate General for Higher Education (DGES)

Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES)

Level	Qualifications
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Directorate General for Employment and Labour Relations (DGERT)

Inspectorate General of Education and Science (IGEC)

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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?

**Directorate
General of
Education (DGE)**

- To ensure implementation of policies relating to the pedagogical and didactic component of preschool education, basic education and secondary education (school track).
- To develop the curriculum, subject programmes and the guidelines for non-subject curricular areas and propose any changes necessary to bring these into line with the objectives of the educational system.

ANQEP

- Has a central role coordinating the implementation of education and training policies for young people and adults and the system for recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC).
- Is responsible for the inclusion of VET qualifications in the NQF with the support of the Sector Councils for Qualifications.
- Is responsible for promoting, monitoring and supporting the implementation of quality assurance systems of training processes and the results achieved by students in vocational schools, certifying them as EQAVET systems.

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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?

**Directorate General
for Employment and
Labour Relations
(DGERT)**

- To support the design of policies on employment, vocational training, accreditation of training providers, regulation of access to professions and industrial relations and working conditions, including safety and health at work. (to assess the quality and accreditation of training entities).

Namely, definition of criteria, quality assessment and accreditation of training providers, as well as the promotion of their knowledge, to the balanced development of the training sector and the quality of the courses and programmes developed, as well as evaluation of training outputs.

**Inspectorate General
of Education and
Science
(IGEC)**

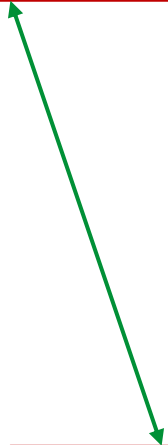
- Checks the legality and conformity of work done by all the governmental bodies, departments and institutions in education and science, technology and higher education.

- Contributes to education system quality (pre-school, basic, upper secondary and higher education).

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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?

**Directorate General
for Higher
Education (DGES)**



A3ES

- To ensure the creation, execution and coordination of policies that, in the scope of higher education, are borne to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

- Public higher education institutions enjoy statutory, pedagogic, scientific, cultural, administrative, financial, patrimonial and disciplinary autonomy. In this sense, they have the power to create, suspend, abolish and change courses or organic units. These actions only take legal effect once registered in DGES.

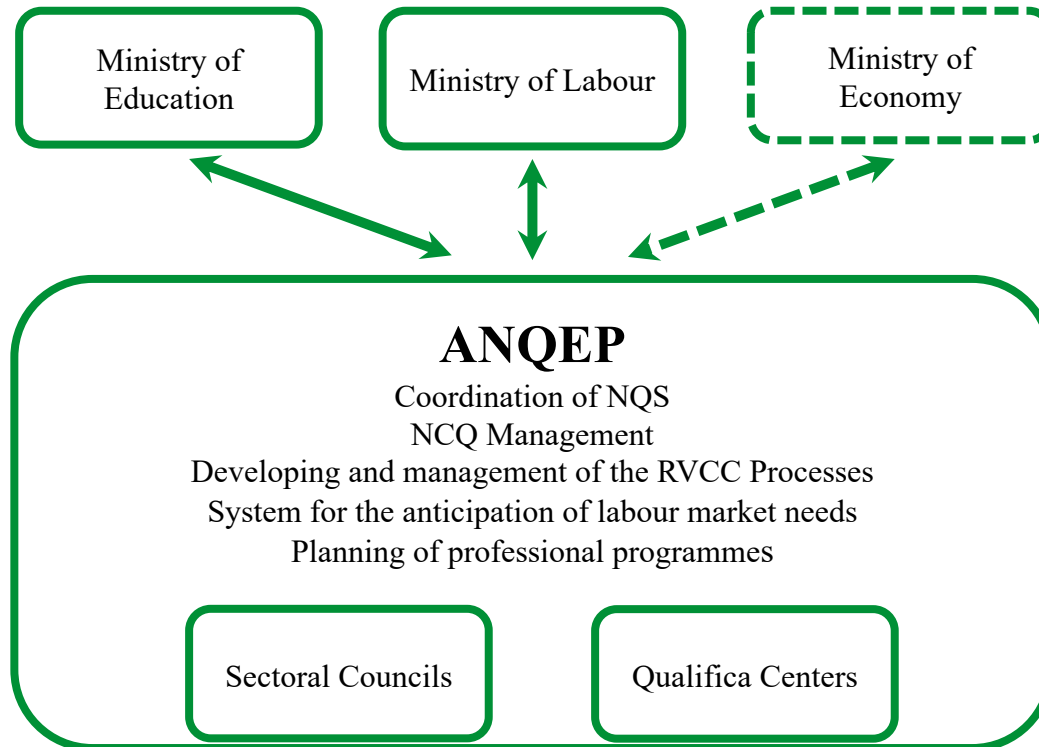
- HE institutions submit their application for initial accreditation to the Agency for the Accreditation and Assessment of Higher Education (A3ES).

- To develop the quality assessment of the performance of higher education institutions and their study programmes.

- To promote the accreditation of study programmes and institutions, for the purpose of ensuring the fulfilment of the legal requirements for their recognition.

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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?



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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?

ANQEP – main attributions

- To promote the design and continual updating of the National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ);
- To develop and manage the RVCC system – academic and/or professional (VNFIL) and to coordinate the network of Qualifica Centers;
- To guarantee the monitoring, assessment and regulation of the VET supply for young people and adults;
- To coordinate and promote the design of pathways, curricula development and specific methodologies and materials for VET (both for young people and adults);
- To cooperate with other public or private, national or international stakeholders, in order to foster the development of quality lifelong learning;
- To participate in the development of initial and continuous Training Standards for teachers, trainers and other professionals working in VET, as well as in the RVCC System, in full cooperation with namely higher education institution.

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NQF implementation: Who does what (main institutions)?

NQF coordination

- Shared between ANQEP and the General Directorate for Higher Education (involved in qualifications at levels 5 to 8).
- ANQEP has been nominated as national coordination point for the EQF (EQF NCP), the leading structure for NQF implementation.



- Its responsibilities include:
 - referencing the national qualification levels to the EQF;
 - providing access to information and guidance on how national qualifications are referenced to the EQF;
 - encouraging participation of all relevant parties (higher education and VET, social partners, sectors and experts).

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NQF and the National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ)

NCQ is a dynamic tool for...

the strategic management of national double certification qualifications (non-higher education) which promotes the effective link between the competences necessary to the social and economic development of the country and the qualifications developed within the NQS. It facilitates the access to qualification, by promoting the flexibility in attaining qualifications.

The NCQ progressively integrates qualifications based on LO, identifying for each qualification a competence standard and a training standard in its technological component.

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NQF and the National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ)

- Catalogue standards are used in IVET, CVET and RVCC (VNFIL). The standards used in RVCC are equivalent to the training standards used in formal education.
- The Catalogue integrates short duration training modules (25h/50H) that can be assessed, certified and capitalised autonomously and that can be transferable between qualifications paths (common modules).
- The Catalogue ensures the connection to the EQF and each qualification is referenced to the National Qualifications Framework.
- Currently, it includes:

**391 qualifications ... in 47 areas of
education and training**

<http://www.catalogo.angep.gov.pt/Qualificacoes>

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NQF and the Higher Education Database

- Contain information about the institution, type of education, area and course of study.
- A comprehensive database including all qualifications within the NQF has yet not been set up.

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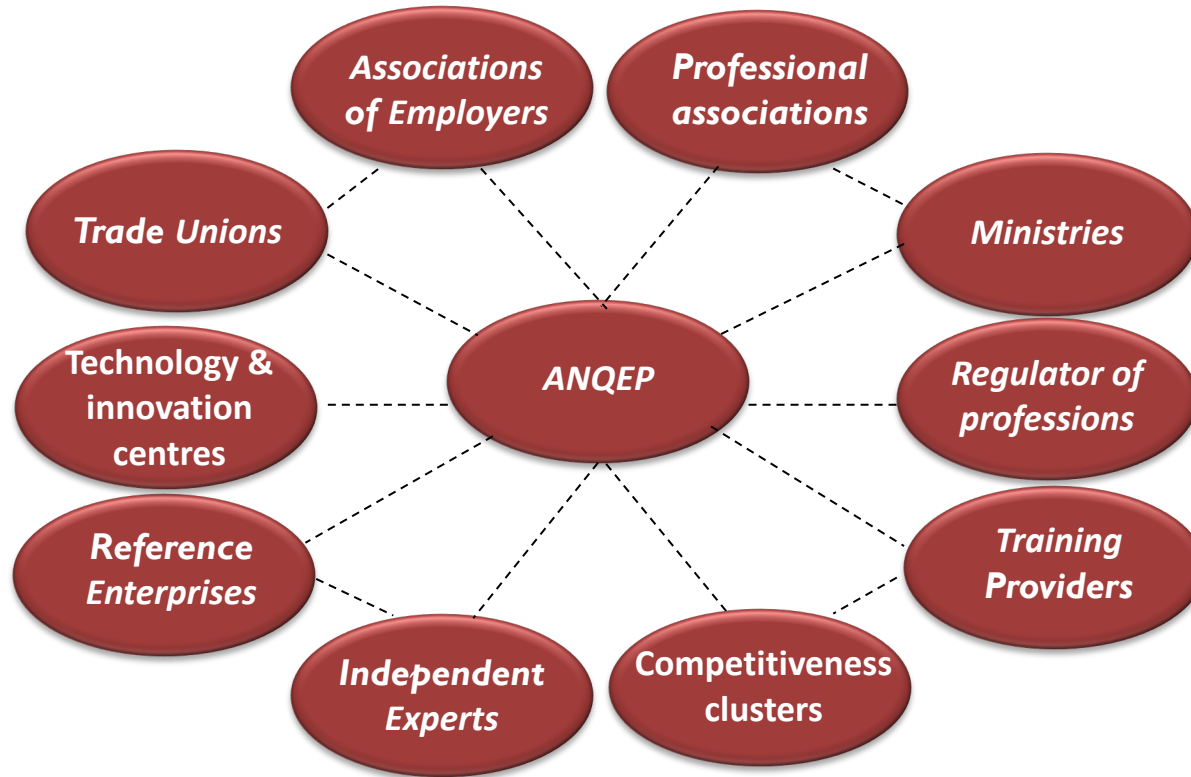
Who are the main partners and stakeholders involved?

The Sector Councils for Qualification (SCQ)

- The SCQ work as a platform for updating/revising the NCQ and bring together the worlds of ET and of work by joining stakeholders from both worlds. They seek to ensure a sectoral representation of the national economic activity and they are an example of a bottom-up approach in the design of qualifications.
- The SCQ are involved in defining qualifications and competences, including new qualifications in the NQC and updating existing ones.
- No qualification is integrated in the NCQ without being submitted to the respective Sector Council for analysis and approval by consensus.

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Who are the main partners and stakeholders involved?



18 sector councils for qualifications

https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/indicadores_n3

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- The importance of VNFIL -

Validation of non formal and informal learning (VNFIL)

- Created in 2000, the VNFIL system is called National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC). It has represented an important part of the measures in place to tackle the critical deficit of qualifications of the Portuguese adult population;
- VNFIL is also possible in HE and it leads to credit awarding. Portuguese legislation enables the access of adults aged 23 or over who do not hold an upper-secondary diploma (standard admission requirement) to HE through the assessment of prior learning. HEI have autonomy to develop their own procedures to validate VNFIL (called accreditation process); validation cannot allow to obtain more than 1/3 of the total n. of ECTS of a degree;
- The national system for RVCC is in line with the Council Recommendation on VNFIL.

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Qualifica Centers (2017)

- The Qualifica programme is an integrated strategy to foster the training and qualification of adults. It targets less qualified adults, unemployed people and NEET.
- The Qualifica centres (Validation centres) are structures that contribute to increase the qualification levels in Portugal through the process of RVCC, combined with training activities. They provide information, guidance and referral of adults (18 or plus) and exceptionally NEET to:
 - RVCC processes (school and/or professional, levels 1 to 4 of the NQF)
 - and
 - education and training pathways.

Muito obrigada!

Merci beaucoup!

Thank you for your attention!

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