Session 4

The Portuguese National Qualifications Framework

A pillar of the national qualifications system

Teresa Duarte

REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

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)
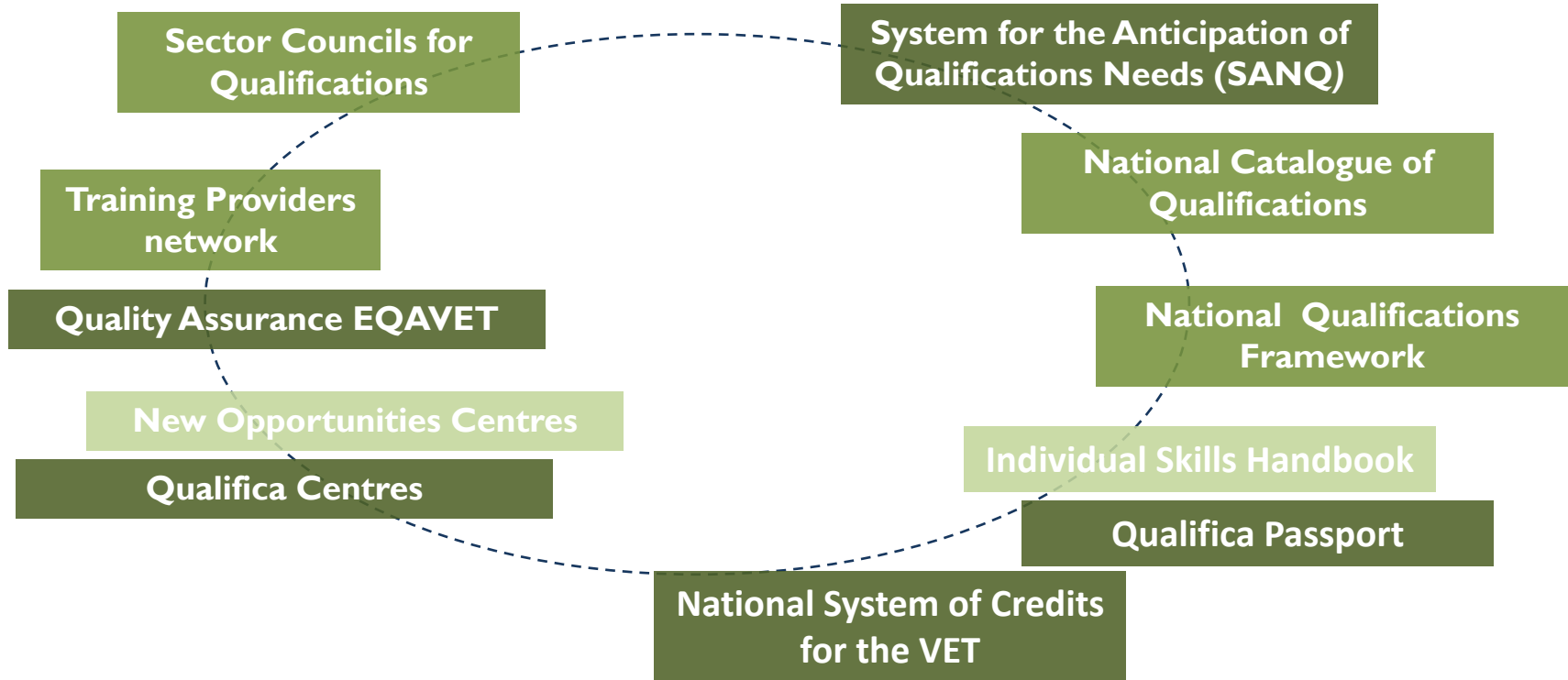
- To strengthen the integration between training within the education system and training within the labour market – reinforce the double certification principle;

- 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)

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/home.html

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

The National Qualifications System (NQS) – 2007 and 2017

STRUCTURES

INSTRUMENTS

Sector Councils for Qualifications

System for the Anticipation of Qualifications Needs (SANQ)

Training Providers network

National Catalogue of Qualifications

Quality Assurance EQAVET

National Qualifications Framework

New Opportunities Centres

Individual Skills Handbook

Qualifica Centres

Qualifica Passport

National System of Credits for the VET

2007	2017	2007 up today

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

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.

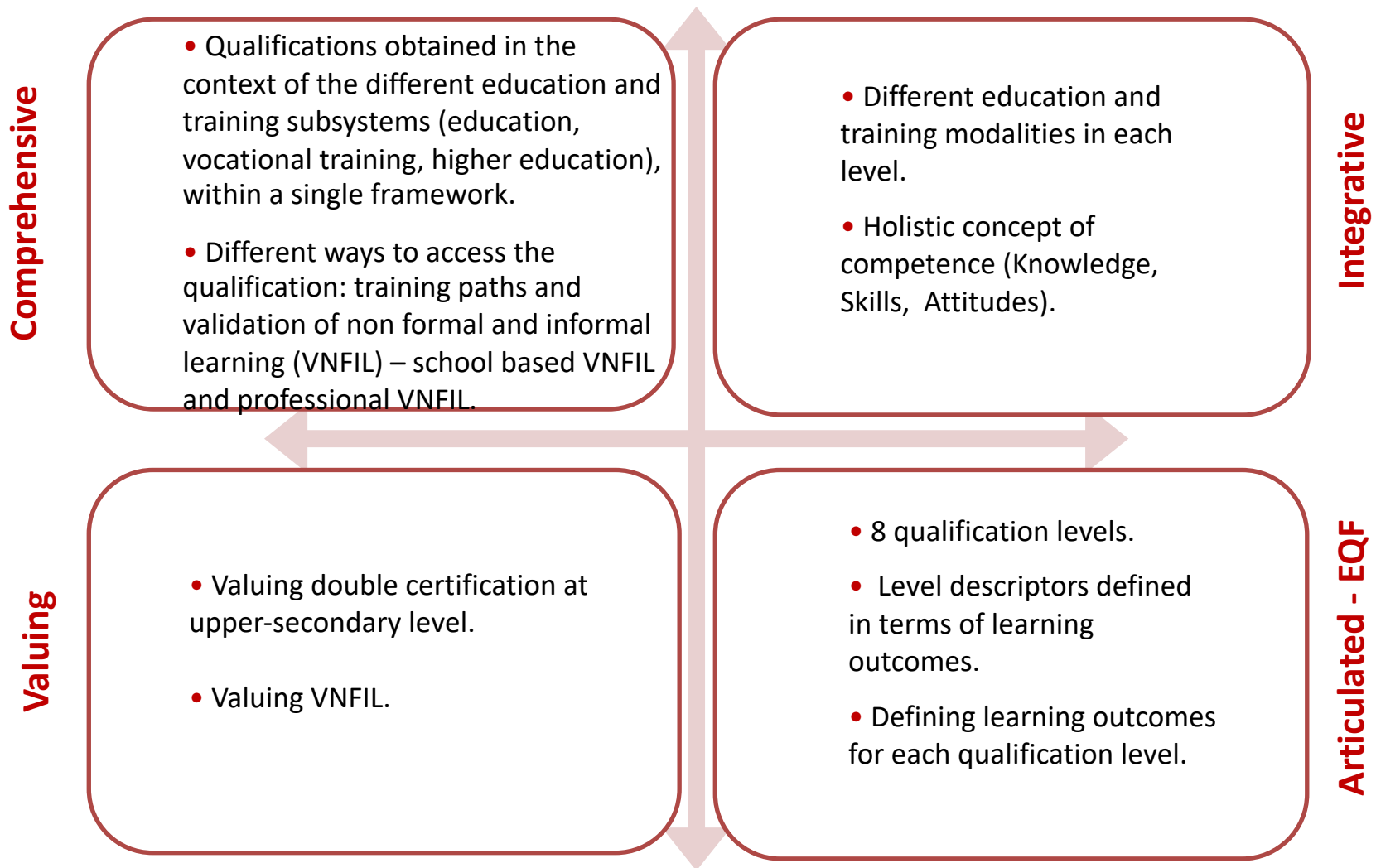- Regulated in July 2009.

- In force since the 1st October 2010.

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

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)

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework – Key features

Comprehensive

- Qualifications obtained in the context of the different education and training subsystems (education, vocational training, higher education), within a single framework.

- Different ways to access the qualification: training paths and validation of non formal and informal learning (VNFIL) – school based VNFIL and professional VNFIL.

Integrative

- Different education and training modalities in each level.

- Holistic concept of competence (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes).

Valuing

- Valuing double certification at upper-secondary level.

- Valuing VNFIL.

Articulated - EQF

- 8 qualification levels.

- Level descriptors defined in terms of learning outcomes.

- Defining learning outcomes for each qualification level.

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

Level	Qualifications
Level 1	2nd cycle of basic education
Level 2	3rd 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

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

(at the beginning) Some challenges…

Some solutions…

- 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.

- 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, …).

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

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

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

In which areas is NQF making more difference?

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.

RÉPUBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

In which areas is NQF making more difference?

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.

The National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ)

It's 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.

REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

The National Catalogue of Qualifications

- 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:

388 qualifications … in 47 areas of education and training

http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Qualificacoes

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

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 (social partners, reference companies, education and training providers, experts). 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.

- No qualification is integrated in the NCQ without being submitted to the respective Sector Council for analysis and approval by consensus.
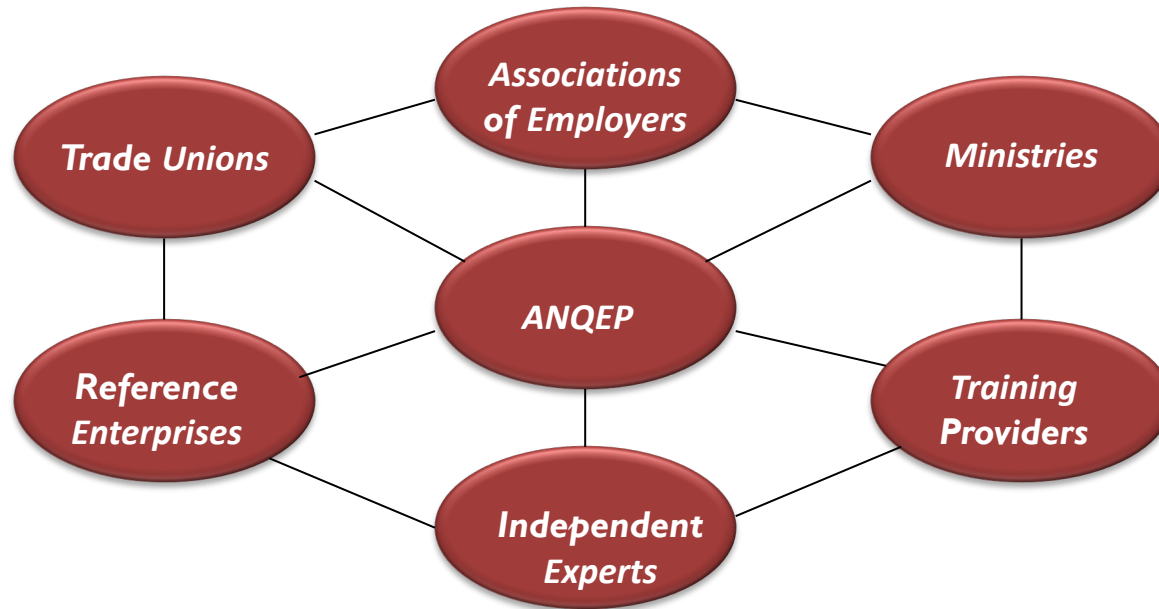
https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/indicadores_n3

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.

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

Validation of non formal and informal learning

- Portugal has long faced a structural problem of low educational attainment (53% of the people aged 25-64 had not completed upper-secondary education in 2016, against the EU average of 23%).

     The creation of the RVCC system has been crucial to effectively recover the qualification levels of the adult population;

- RVCC is developed by a network of validation centres and is targeted at adults aged 18 or plus who do not hold either primary or lower-secondary education (4th, 6th, 9th grades), upper-secondary education (12th grade) or a professional certification. Those up to 23 years old must have at least three years of professional certified experience to be eligible;

- The RVCC system has been co-funded by the ESF and the State Budget. It is a free of charge process for individuals and is directed at all adults living in Portugal.
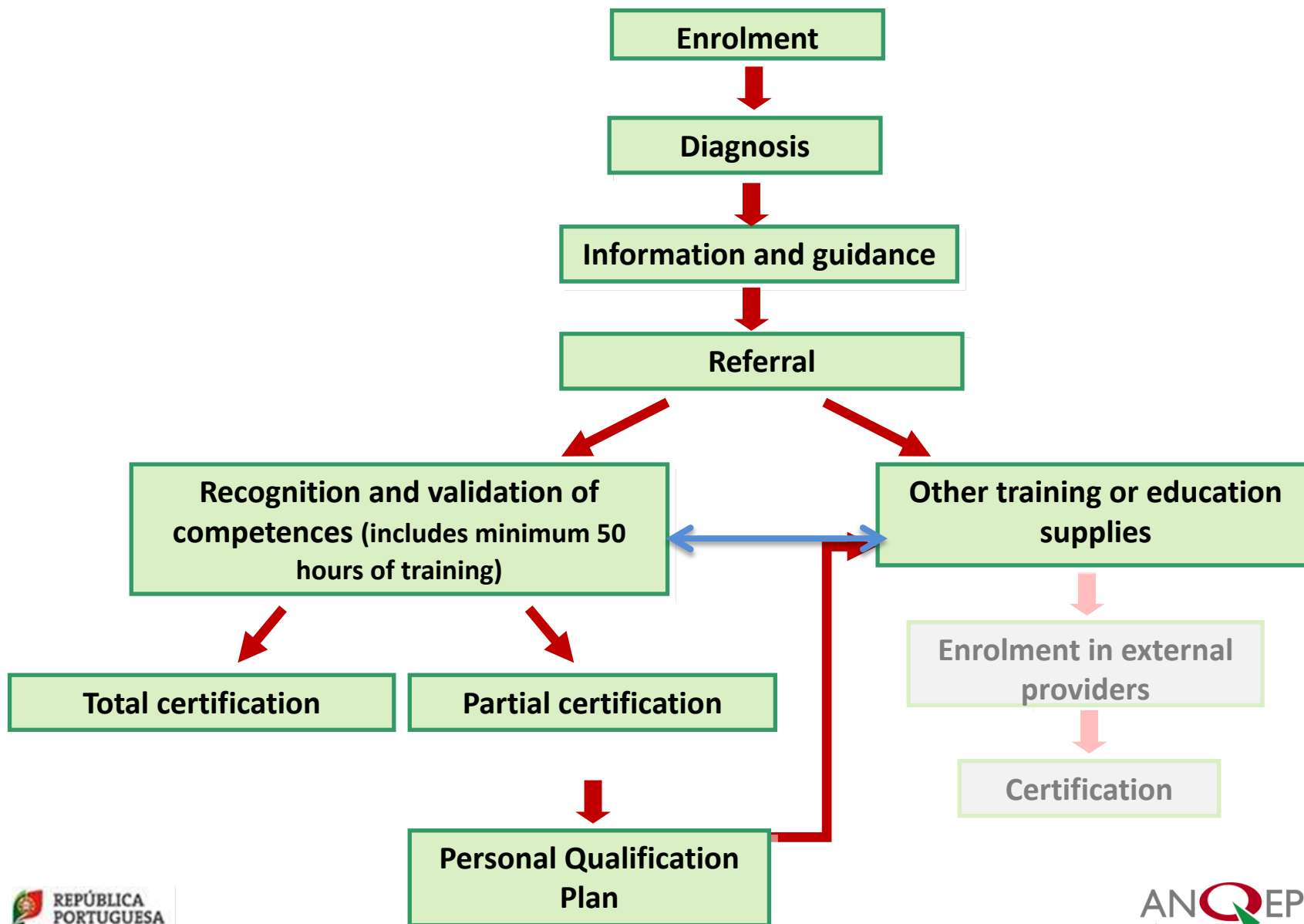
REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

Validation of non formal and informal learning

2017 – Creation of *Qualifica* Centers

- 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.

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

VNFIL - Intervention stages in a *Qualifica* Centre

Enrolment

↓

Diagnosis

↓

Information and guidance

↓

Referral

↙ ↘

Recognition and validation of competences (includes minimum 50 hours of training) ⟷ **Other training or education supplies**

↓ ↓

Total certification   **Partial certification**   **Enrolment in external providers**

↓ ↓

Personal Qualification Plan   **Certification**

VNFIL – RVCC Process

Based on competences standards, available in the National Catalogue of Qualifications

- RVCC is based on:
  - **School RVCC** - two key-competences standards (basic and upper-secondary education)
  - **Professional RVCC** standards

Basic Level standard:

- Language and Communication

- Mathematics for Life

- Citizenship and Employability

- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

* There is a standard adapted to people with disabilities

Secondary Level standard:

- Culture, Language and Communication

- Society, Technology and Science

- Citizenship and Professionality

Professional standards:

- 161 professional qualifications standards

VNFIL - Results and coherence of validation arrangements

- Candidates who obtain a partial certification in RVCC may complete the qualification through training.

- Certificates and diplomas obtained through RVCC have the same legal value as any other way of obtaining a qualification.

- Diplomas obtained through RVCC or through training are the same.

- There is no limitation of the duration of validity of a qualification obtained through RVCC.

REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

Portuguese Qualifications Framework and COVID 19

Impact on the education and training system and for NQF

- As a result of the Council of Ministers on 12 March 2020, extraordinary measures were taken to respond to the epidemic of the new coronavirus. One of these measures was the closure of all schools, starting on March 16.

- However, to ensure continuity of the learning and the teaching through this period, teachers and students were encouraged to take advantage of the traditional resources used such as manuals (physical and virtual), email, Moodle platform or others with identical functionalities, as well as the tools and instruments available online that can provide additional resources for working with distance students.

- Several practices were in place for VET programmes: the education ministry issued guidelines for professional schools on the development and functioning, including attendance, training plans, assessment, final exams and WBL.

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

Portuguese Qualifications Framework and COVID 19

Impact on the education and training system and for NQF

- Qualifica centres, supervised by ANQEP, had specific guidelines for distance learning. Digital technologies also ensured the continuation of RVCC process. In this way, the continuity of registrations, lifelong guidance or RVCC processes was possible.

- Qualifica Centres maintain their activity at a distance:

  - trainers are in a position to monitor the development of adults' portfolios in school RVCC processes, including complementary training. In addition to email, the use of online resources that allow audio and/or video contacts are privileged. The jury sessions can be held by videoconference, as long as there are technical conditions for the purpose;

  - in professional RVCC processes, consideration is given to the possibility of applying distance assessment instruments, by the team and, in particular, by trainers, taking into account the specific nature of the qualification. The jury sessions can be held by videoconference, as long as there are technical conditions for the purpose.

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

ANQEP
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O
ENSINO PROFISSIONAL, I.P.

Muito obrigada!

Merci beaucoup!

Thank you for your attention!