

MATCH

Workpackage 5: Review of processes in the validation of informal and non-formal learning in the partners' countries

Deliverable 22: Accreditation Model and technical specifics

Workpackage 5 Leader:



Partners involved:



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Colophon

Informal and non-formal competences matching devise for migrants' employability and active citizenship

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Table of contents

1. Executive summary	p. 5
2. Comparing systems: a common ground to create a shared model for non-formal and informal learning accreditation methodology and validation in Europe	p. 7
3. Non-formal and informal learning accreditation methodology	p. 9
4. Technical specifications for the web-tool MATCH based on the main results of the survey	p. 18

ANNEXES:

Annex I – Information Request Form
Annex II – Application Form
Annex III – Match Profile
Annex IV – Professional Dossier of Evidence
Annex V – Europass CV
Annex VI – Complementary training agreement
Annex VII – Assessment report
Annex VIII – Full Certification Certificate
Annex IX – Partial Certification Certificate
Annex X – Certificate Supplement
Annex XI – Validation Report

1. Executive Summary

The overall objective of *Workpackage 5: Review of processes in the validation of non-formal and informal learning in the partner countries* is to examine and analyse a wide range of relevant international and national literature about the recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning and to review the partners' national policies and practices. The intention is to generate relevant information and data on the partners' national frameworks, institutional structures and already existing programmes that will feed into the elaboration and implementation of a transferable model for the recognition and validation of learning taking place outside the formal system which could operate across Member States and across sectors and into the definition of the technical specifications for the LO-MATCH web-tool based on the main results of the present survey.

The essential of WP5 is also to provide input for *WP6 – Strategies and tools for semantic description in personnel recruitment and job seeking contexts* and *WP7 – Identification of profiles ad KSC semantic description* respectively aimed at developing a methodology for ontological description of offer and demand in the context of personnel recruitment and job seeking, specifications of a semantic engine for learning outcome based job matchmaking and at identifying occupational profiles in selected sectors.

The present *Deliverable 22 Accreditation Model and technical specifics* constitutes one of the outputs of MATCH Workpackage 5 under the coordination of Fondazione Giacomo Rumor Centro Produttività Veneto (P1). The other partners involved are:

P2 – CREDIJ, FR

P3 – DAFPIC, FR

P6 – USRV, IT

P7 – KCH, NL

P8 – ZDZ, PL

P9 – CPI, SI

P10 – CPU, SI

P11 – CC OVIEDO, ES

The Deliverable 22 comprises a detailed description of a shared methodology for the process of recognising and validating prior learning specifically focused on migrants, to be completed by a certification and the Implementation Plan of the recognition model (standards references, application methodologies and specific tools, etc.) and technical specifications for the web-tool to be tested with the end-users in order to verify its functionality and effectiveness and finally validate it.

The model has been elaborated after a detailed analysis and comparison of the French, Dutch, Polish, Slovenian, Spanish and Italian models or frameworks of reference where a national model had not yet been approved. The proposed model envisages a well-structured process articulated in four different phases (+ 1 optional):

1. Information and initial counselling/guidance
2. Counselling and coaching in writing the candidate's MATCH profile and building the professional dossier with reference to a specific vocational certification, qualification or professional figure
3. Assessment of knowledge, skills and competence by the proper assessment tools
4. Validation and issuing the certificate
5. Job offer matching (optional)

Each phase has been explained in details and a ready-to-use scheme including direct instruction as to procedure, staff, tools and timing completes each step presentation.

The present deliverable is structured in sections:

- in the first section, drawing on the partners' own accreditation policies and schemes, an attempt is made at creating a common ground basing on parallel approaches, common elements supporting a kind of "Pan-European" model for non-formal and informal learning accreditation methodology and validation in Europe
- the second section is devoted to the deployment of the non-formal and informal learning accreditation methodology, supported by schemes, inner references, quotations from the partners' national systems where existing. The leading criteria in working out such a methodology were partly inspired by common features and partly deriving from the feedback collected at national levels by the experimentations. The difficulty in this case what that of conjugating widespread approaches to accreditation of non-formal and informal competences, despite their effectiveness, with the specifics of migrants issues. In this domain of action the lack of documentation providing evidence of competences or the difficulty in speaking the language of the hosting country and/or the accreditation body could really interfere, if not obstacle, the kick off of the accreditation process;
- in the third section basics of the technical specifications characterizing the web-tool MATCH software, elaborated by the Politecnico di Torino, are outlined, as the main focus on this product will be in Workpackages 6 and 7.

The deliverable 22 is completed by a set of annexes to guide the experimentation phase. The philosophy underlying these documents relies on a regional project ARGO (Accrediting non-formal and informal competences to grant for employability) run by the WP5 coordinator, providing a description of learning outcomes at the end of formal training pathways as well as the assessment, recognition, validation and certification of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in informal and non formal learning contexts in the working fields of food processing, wine-growing and producing and entertainment.

Much of the positive attainments gathered through the testing phase of the ARGO project was taken into consideration when planning both the documents lay-out, contents, and items meant to collect information, though respecting the specifics of the MATCH domain of action.

The appendix contains a set of specific tools:

- Annex I – Information Request Form
- Annex II – Application Form
- Annex III – Match Profile
- Annex IV – Professional Dossier of Evidence
- Annex V – Europass CV
- Annex VI – Complementary training agreement
- Annex VII – Assessment report
- Annex VIII – Full Certification Certificate
- Annex IX – Partial Certification Certificate
- Annex X – Certificate Supplement
- Annex XI – Validation Report

2. Comparing systems: a common ground to create a shared model for non-formal and informal learning accreditation methodology and validation in Europe

The elaboration of a proposal for a shared methodology in the process of recognising and validating prior learning has been the result of comparing the different national systems, experimentations and policies in the MATCH partnership countries.

Some steps in the articulation of the method were practically mandatory as they represented a common approach to the process shared by almost all partners, therefore in elaborating the method it was of a primary importance to start from this common ground.

The need for a whole step focused on information was highly emphasized in the contributions by the Dutch, Slovenian and Polish partners. In their respective pilot or systemic experiences the lack of relevant information among the actors of the validation course, locally by the Labour Offices/Employment centres, or widely through information campaigns can really determine a negative start in the process.

As not all of the partner countries still dispose of a National Repertory of Vocational Certifications, that makes it possible as in France a plain use of the VAE process, the model presented in the project took into account as reference points for the choice of the possible job qualification, where existing, the national repertory, where not, the standard regional qualifications or the repertory of professional figures, outlined by wider criteria in knowledge, skills and competence.

The need for an official inventory of national or regional certifications to confront with, a role that in the case of this project is played by the inventory of job offers, job profiles and training offer composing the database of the Politecnico di Torino software, is the direct result of the French best practice of VAE. In France the National Directory of Vocational Certifications is extremely detailed and specific. But this is not the case of most of the partner countries, , in Italy, for example, vocational certifications are sketched at a regional level. As a consequence, as a point of reference is needed, to provide a general point of reference to immediately welcome and classify potential migrants willing to enter a validation process, the software elaborated by the Politecnico di Torino will permit each partner country to set a sort of local inventory including the relevant vocational certifications or job profiles.

What's new in the use of such a software is the flexibility in dealing with ever changing and ever specialising job profiles as the Slovenian partners confirms when they call for a regular updating to the competent authority by the employers on qualification and competence needs and employment trends, a task that can be easily carried out when using such a software.

Another important point of attention in the proposed model is the work on evidence when considering the validation issue. All of the partners agreed on starting from what can be proved, shown, touched, seen, observed, listened. Indeed one of the first problems with migrants, the Slovenian and Italian partners suggested, has to do with language, when they cannot use language at such a degree to be able to fully explain what they can do or understand specific requests. Another problem frequently

faced by migrants is the lack or loss of proofs, evidences, documents. In these cases in particular, but in general terms, varied and diversified assessment and validation tools such as simulations, problem solving in real working like situations, written tests, oral tests, will prove successful to get to finally ascertain the possession of non-formal or informal competence by the candidates.

Another interesting aspect that is implicit in some partners but explicitly referred to by the Dutch partner is the importance of voluntariness in entering a validation process. Voluntarily accessing the process either as a need on the worker's side or as a request on the company's side, shows that accreditation of prior learning is becoming a strategy to improve the workers' competence, the companies' mastery degree and the general level of improvement in the world of job. It's a change in attitude that calls for determination, self-evaluation, self-esteem and need for continual improvement, and better match the job market needs, further confirmed by the Polish experience according to which the competence validation process is designed to support operators and their employees in the context of the constantly changing demand of the market economy.

A further element shared by almost all partners' national experiences is the priority to be given to the assessors' preparatory training. The French, Dutch and Polish experiences call for a well defined profile for these professionals. It's their task to carry out the validation process therefore they should master the whole steps of the process, including the use of tools. As a general result it's worthwhile considering the possibility of creating official lists or registers of validation providers and assessors.

What is still missing and hopefully can be the real new outcome of this project is the last step, that is the job offer matching. What's new in this proposal is the possibility of bridging and intertwining through a software device a wide set of stakeholders, namely Labour Offices, Employment centres, validation centres and representatives from the world of crafts, industry and unions and vocational education and training. In this way all of the actors in the process can find a meeting point in a virtual place, where requests, offers, updating, changes and improvements can be easily carried out in order to better satisfy the potential employees' and employers' needs.

3. Non-formal and informal learning accreditation methodology

The Match partnership, inspired by every national validated system of accreditation or pilot experimentations, where a national standard procedure was missing, worked out a proposal for a share methodology for the process of recognising and validating prior learning, to be completed by a certification. The following step will be that of testing the methodology in order to verify its functionality and effectiveness and finally validate it.

As not all of the partner countries dispose of a National Repertory of Vocational Certifications, that makes it possible as in France a plain use of the VAE process, the present model will take into account as reference points for the choice of the possible job qualification, where existing, the national repertory, where not, the standard regional qualifications or the repertory of professional figures, outlined by wider criteria in knowledge, skills and competence.

Furthermore, the relevance of the final certification cannot be considered the same as a certification acquired through formal learning, but it must be acknowledged by the labour market, it has to get the social recognition as certifications should be created and updated to take into account of the labour market needs. Therefore their validity lies in the possibility of accessing the world of job.

The process will be articulated as follows:

- 1st step: Information and initial counselling/guidance**
- 2nd step: Counselling and coaching in writing the candidate's MATCH profile and building the professional dossier with reference to a specific vocational certification, qualification or professional figure**
- 3rd step: Assessment of knowledge, skills and competence by the proper assessment tools**
- 4th step: Validation and issuing the certificate**

Optional

- 5th step: Job offer matching**

1st Step: Information and initial counselling/guidance

Migrants will be informed at first reception places (police stations, town halls, adult learning centres, job centres, company HR department, etc.) about the possibility of having one's non-formal or informal learning evaluated and recognised. This first contact is really important to help migrants finding as soon as possible the right path to integration, that usually starts from the search for a job.

More than one partner underlined the importance of information: the Dutch experience emphasises the relevancy of information to all actors in the process, that are the candidates, the employers, the unions, the associations, whereas in the Polish case inadequacy of advice from the Labour Office together with lack of detailed information about institutions offering training or courses highly contrasted the raising of skills and vocational qualification. The Slovenian results of a round table on the topic

put in evidence that the lack of complete information about society, employment, education, training, culture, and more generally insufficient counselling from the Slovenian Employment service, especially with migrants, determined a gap in providing working opportunities, education and training to these people. There is no formal or informal connection between institutions linked to the migrant issue. Moreover if employers would regularly inform the competent authority about qualification and competence needs and employment trends, staff recruitment and training offer would be more updated and effective.

Moreover the Polish experience in the field suggests that an information campaign should be started to access as many people as possible, through newspapers, Internet, radio, local TV to inform the local community about the opportunity of certifying one's professional competence.

Migrants will be asked to fill in an information request form to get to know more about the accreditation process. It is important in this phase to collect requests for information to keep a mailing list of possible people interested in new activities, courses, etc.

The presence of qualified operators for a first counselling activity will probably determine immediate presentation of an application for the validation process, therefore it will be also necessary to give detailed information about the steps of the whole process and answer any possible request.

Every centre in charge of this phase will receive adequate written information from the partners in this project and will appoint at least one person in charge of this task. Every centre will have a direct contact with the project partner to get further explanation for possible doubts arising.

Appointed centres will possibly include advice centres connected to schools, information centres linked to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, job centres at local, provincial or regional level, education and training centres providing training and certificates.

If, apart from information, they also provide an initial counselling to direct the applicant's decision of entering a validation process, they should have staff competent in guidance and orientation (i.e. occupational psychologists, industrial and organizational psychologists, experts in Competence Balancing process). In fact they should direct the applicant choosing the proper vocational certification to achieve or redirect him/her to complementary training.

1st STEP	Information and initial counselling/guidance
PROCEDURE:	Information centres receive applicants and provide information. The applicant can either ask for further contact and information or sign an application form to start the whole procedure for recognition and validation of prior learning. The MATCH software can be used as a guideline to orient the candidate's choice.
STAFF:	Staff appointed to provide information, possibly occupational psychologists or competent in orientation and guidance
TOOLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information request form - Application form-analysis of experiences - MATCH software;
TIMING	1 hour or less per candidate

2nd Step: Counselling and coaching in writing the candidate's MATCH profile and building the professional dossier with reference to a specific vocational certification, qualification or professional figure

The choice of this partnership is that any individual having non-formal or informal prior learning can access the validation process, disregarding the number of years of work experience he/she can attest, as the possible result of the process will not uniquely lead to a full certification and consequently to a perfect matching with job offers, but the whole experience will prove fundamental to trigger migrants' employability and active citizenship. In other words the whole process will enact a better self-awareness and self-assessment that can really help migrants fully participate into all aspects of collective life or being redirected to training or other acquisition ways to complete properly their profile in accordance with the KSC composing the chosen vocational certification.

The French choice of admitting to a VAE process individuals proving at least 3 years of salaried, non salaried or voluntary experience, is based on the assumption that the individual has to prove his/her possession of the required skills and theoretical knowledge to obtain the diploma he/she is targeting. But in this project, given the strong need for migrants to get the proper guidance and right connection with institutions, any individual will be admitted to the counselling and coaching phase. It will be the hard job of staff in charge of, to temporarily stop candidates in their process for further training or redirection or to admit them to the validation phase.

Once the candidate has voluntarily decided to enter the process by signing a formal application request, the following step will be finding his/her way among the certification offer (national or regional). The model flexibility allows for different choices of certification complying with each national framework. In France the National Directory of Vocational Certifications is well structured and outlined in details as to each single profession, but in Italy, for example, vocational certification are sketched at a regional level, as this level is in charge of issuing vocational qualifications.

The support of the Match software, in particular its job offer database, could help in the choice of the final certification. The flexibility of the model should permit any worker to access different certifications at any time, according to the flux of job offers. Slovenia suggests that employers should regularly inform competent authority about qualification and competence needs and employment trends to better carry on a proper matching between job requests and job offer and to update the system on a regular basis.

The choice of one's certification can be easy in the case of migrant professionals (electricians, plumbers) or the result of a guided process. In any case, once the certification has been identified, the applicant should write down his Match profile, to be uploaded on the Match software to realize an adequate matching with job or training offers.

Relevant data to fill in one's Match profile are in accordance with EQF a set of knowledge, skills and competence (KSC) possessed by the candidate that should partly or completely match the professional profiles or job descriptions contained in the software. Every partner will contribute the job descriptions/vocational qualifications articulated in KSC to be included in the Match software responding to the job usually done by migrants in their country (in the building sector, or) Describing one's

profile can be a really long activity to be carried out by the individual supported by competence balancing experts, occupational psychologists, but also by experts in the intended profession. In fact, as the Slovenian experience proves, it is very difficult for immigrants themselves to prove their non-formal knowledge, also for linguistic problems.

Further to his/her profile, the candidate should build his professional dossier containing evidences of his/her non-formal and/or informal prior learning. As a matter of fact validation is a work on the evidence in France, Italy and in every partner country.

Evidence as in the French case range from pay slip, or employer's attestation to tax-return or associations attestations in case of voluntary unpaid activities. In the case of migrants the problem of evidences is a big issue. Most of them emigrated under difficult circumstances and either do not possess any evidence, or left it during the journey or left it at their native country. Moreover sometimes they were issued in the local language, therefore they must be translated in the local language or in a "*lingua franca*" accepted by the certification body.

The choice of this model is that of collecting evidences supporting the candidate's profile and Europass CV, but "non-proved" knowledge, skills or competence can be assessed directly by the assessment and validation panel through different ways: simulations, problem solving in real working like situations, written tests, oral tests ... depending on what is being assessed. The more complete the dossier and the profile will be the easier will be the panel's decision whether to ask for further assessment or to pass to the validation phase directly. To this aim, possible evidence could be a picture of a set of operations carried out or a concrete piece of work showing the possession of KSC, as for example in the case of mechanical operators.

As probably migrants will have difficulties collecting evidences, a further assessment will be practically always necessary to ascertain the possession of knowledge, skills and competence relating to the chosen vocational certification or professional profile, that is why the partnership decided to rely on two steps, documentary and practical, to carry out the assessment and validation process. Newly arrived immigrants will certainly have more difficulty in providing evidences and describing their competence, on the contrary long stay migrants usually dispose of evidences and can easily describe what they know and what they can do, but most of the time already have a proper job. For the latter anyway the value of the validation process can be a useful tool to plan a career development or to find a new job when crisis is affecting the labour market.

As to the choice of the appropriate certifying body, every information centre will have a register of certification bodies listed according to the vocational certification they issue. Every certification body will have to include among its staff (permanent or contract hire consultants) experts in certification. Experts will have to undergo a special training and pass a final national or regional examination to be appointed as experts.

But during the experimentation phase of the model (WP6) certification bodies will act in a flexible way, temporarily employing as many experts as each selected candidate and his/her chosen certification will require. The same will be done with experts in the intended profession. A list of experts, possibly retired experts from the world of job, with a considerable experience in the vocational field under examination will be at disposal of each certification body. As generally retired skilled professionals do not always have guidance skills, a particular training can be carried on these

specific aspects. As to assessment and validation, they will be possibly supported by assessment tools to make the process as transparent and objective as possible.

All partners methodology or experimentations call for a voluntary request of starting the validation process as it is the right of any individual to have one's prior learning recognised, though sometimes the candidate can be suggested by his/her company to enter the process, but the decision should be freely taken by the employee. What is happening in the Netherlands, that is, the fact that accreditation of prior learning (APL) is earning its place in the area of Human Resources Management, reintegration processes, and labour market process can be of further stimulus in the experimentation of this model. The objective of APL is that of laying a bridge between job holders and job seekers, employers and employees, education and labour market; the same objective as the MATCH project with a particular attention to migrants.

2 nd STEP	Counselling and coaching in writing the candidate's MATCH profile and building the professional dossier with reference to a specific vocational certification, qualification or professional figure
PROCEDURE:	Once the applicant has signed the application form, the advisor will help him/her finding the right certification also by means of the MATCH software, a repertory of professional profiles and jobs. To enter the process the candidate has to prove he/she possesses the competence composing the chosen profession. This is done by filling in the Individual dossier to give evidence and the MATCH profile, also taking advantage of self-evaluation procedures. In the description of Knowledge, Skills and Competence the MATCH software can be also used to provide guidance. If the profile is met, the candidate can access the assessment phase (3 rd step), if he/she is missing some competence, he can be suggested to complete it with further training and try again later. Training offer is also provided by the MATCH software.
STAFF:	Occupational psychologists, experts in competence balancing, possibly experts in the chosen job profile
TOOLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application form - MATCH software - Professional Dossier including evidences - Match profile-analysis of experiences - Europass CV - Complementary training agreement
TIMING	8 hours

3rd Step: Assessment of knowledge, skills and competence by the proper assessment tools

Once the guidance staff declares the candidate admissible to continue the procedure, the assessment phase can start.

As the choice of the a specific vocational qualification or professional profile to call for validation will be both the result of the candidate's aspiration and a matching of the candidate MATCH profile to the job offers in the MATCH database, they will both speak a common language. The partnership, in compliance with the EQF principles, decided that both vocational qualifications, professional profiles, candidate's MATCH profile and job offers in the MATCH database were expressed in knowledge, skills and competence. Moreover in the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of autonomy and responsibility, two indicators that well suit the labour market needs. Though migrants will probably take advantage of the validation process to get basic qualifications, the perspective of career development, the idea of being better evaluated by employers fosters motivation and self-awareness.

To assess the candidate's KSC, the validation panel, composed of experts in assessment and validation, technical experts in the intended profession, staff of certifying and validating body, can only consider the candidate's MATCH profile and the professional dossier or ask for further assessment. A mix of methods must be used to suit situations and individuals: interviews, knowledge tests, simulation, problem solving in real working-life situations, whatever can make the experience of migrants visible and qualified.

A considerable attention is of course paid to the choice of assessors; their training and certification is a priority as they are responsible for the validation result, therefore they should be competent, impartial and independent. To grant for that certifying body should be accredited by competent regional or national bodies. The validation process should be carried on by an expert in validation, belonging to a regional/national register of experts (*accredited by Ministry of Education and/or their regional offices, in collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Regional/Local job centres?*) in collaboration with an expert from the intended professions and 2 or more representatives from the world of employers and employees.

The French, Dutch and Polish experiences in validating prior learning devote a strong attention to the assessors' preparatory training during which assessors should be made familiar with the validation process procedure, tools and objectives. Moreover their competence should be documented to grant for the highest quality of professionals. A new figure of Prior Learning Assessor can be outlined and the register of these professionals should be made available to all centre for validation of non-formal and informal prior learning. In the same way a list of validation providers should be made available apart to information centres, as it has already been stated in phase 1 Information and Initial Guidance, also to companies.

The Dutch experience in the field and above all the case studies provided highlight how important awareness of informal level can be and how what they call collective learning can be triggered by informal learning. Recognizing and accrediting the employees' professional competence can really enhance the company's levels in production, career development and the general sense of well-being.

The Polish experience teaches another lesson, that is the competence validation process is designed to support operators and their employees in the context of the constantly changing demand of the market economy.

To summarize, according to the present model the assessment and validation panel is composed of:

- 1 expert accredited in validating prior learning
- 1 member (at least) from the intended profession
- 1 member (at least) from the employers representatives
- 1 member (at least) from the employees representatives

All of whom having a high level of theoretical and practical experience.

The panel will examine the candidate's experience registered in his/her MATCH profile and Professional Dossier. If this does not prove convincing, additional interviews, tests or simulation will be requested by the panel to the candidate.

Such a procedure will require 1-2 days examining documentation and 1-2 days further assessment. As documentation should be written according to the EQF-KSC and additional assessment should be carried on to ascertain EQF-KSC, the whole of the procedure should not take a longer time.

3rd Step:	Assessment of knowledge, skills and competence by the proper assessment tools
PROCEDURE:	A panel of experts is appointed to examine the candidate's MATCH profile, dossier of evidence and Europass CV. If documentation does not prove enough, the panel can ask for further elements to complete the assessment, including examinations in a real professional situation.
STAFF:	Experts in assessment and validation, technical experts in the intended profession, staff of certifying and validating body
TOOLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standardized assessment tools - Assessment grids - Assessment report - Assessment proceedings
TIMING	1-2 days for examining documentation 1-2 days further assessment

4th Step: Validation and issuing the certificate

Once assessment is carried out and validation completed the panel will announce its decision. A candidate can obtain:

- a full validation of the chosen vocational qualification
- a partial validation, when the candidate still needs to acquire specific knowledge, skills or competence. In this case thanks to the MATCH software, the candidate will be offered a suggestion for training to complete his/her profile consistently with the vocational certification or professional profile chosen. Dating for additional validation, after planned training, will be also possible to keep the candidate's motivation high.

A refusal of validation will be practically impossible as too weak candidates would be suggested to follow a different path in the second step (counselling and coaching)

and generally speaking migrants candidates will probably ask for basic vocational certification that they will probably manage to be successful in.

An Italian experience, from Emilia Romagna region, further to that considered in the present project, takes into consideration the possibility of awarding candidates entering the qualification process either a qualification certificate, or a certificate showing competence, or a card recognizing skills and knowledge, according to the different level of mastering degree assessed. The suggestion could be considered interesting though it would determined an increasing level of difficulty for the certificate to be recognised and evaluated by the employers.

The certificate issued contains the result of validation and a sort of Certificate Supplement detailing the assessed KSC undersigned by the Validation Panel and consistently with the vocational qualification outlined in the MATCH software. The territorial validity of the certificate can be also specified if clear at each partner-nation level.

As to the value of this certificate, seen from a formal point of view it is not the diploma issued by the Ministry of Education, but it has the same formal value, especially for the labour market, as the presence of the employers representatives in the validation panel confirms.

In the Polish partner experimental project a further verification by an external unit is carried out as an additional confirmation. Such a step has not been foreseen in this project for migrants' employability and active citizenship as the main focus in on employability and the presence of a panel where all parties linked with the world of employment are represented, grants for an absolute and objective value of the issued validation certificate.

4rd Step:	Validation and issuing the certificate
PROCEDURE:	Once the MATCH profile and the evidences have been assessed or even practical examination has been required, the assessment and validation panel can make the final decision and issue the certificate
STAFF:	Experts in assessment and validation, technical experts in the intended profession, staff of certifying and validating body
TOOLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full validation certificate - Partial validation certificate + training suggestions - Certificate Supplement - Validation proceedings
TIMING	As required

Optional: Job offer matching

Thanks to the job-offers database provided by the MATCH software, job centres, trades associations, schools and job advising centres can elaborate a set of possible jobs available to the candidate whose non-formal and informal competence have been recognised and awarded a certificate to match formal requirements for that specific job.

MATCH MODEL

Process in steps	Involved actors	Standard of reference	Tools	Documentary outputs
1st – Information and initial counselling/guidance	-candidate - staff of Job Centres, Local Adult Learning Centres/Schools, -Guidance services centre -Education and training centres providing training and certification		-brochure -web site -posters (information material to be made available at different information places: reception centres, town halls, police stations, ...)	-information request form - application form (to apply for recognition and validation of prior learning)
2nd - Counselling and coaching in writing the candidate's MATCH profile and building the professional dossier with reference to a specific vocational certification, qualification or professional figure	-candidate -staff of guidance centre and/or assessment & validation centre (psychologists, experts in Competence Balancing process) -experts in the intended profession	If existing: -directory of national or regional vocational certifications -standard of regional qualifications -directory of regional or national professional figures	-interview -motivational interview -“competence balancing” in a short form (description of the candidate's non-formal and informal prior learning) -Europass CV -software MATCH (for the matching with training offer if needed)	- application form - Professional Dossier including evidences - MATCH profile-analysis of experiences - Europass CV - complementary training agreement (if needed)
3rd –assessment of knowledge, skills and competence by the proper assessment tools	-candidate -validation panel (experts in assessment and validation, technical experts in the intended profession, staff of certifying and validating body)	MATCH Assessment procedure	-differentiated assessment tools to properly test knowledge, skills or competence (simulations, practical examination in a real or re-enacted professional situation, theory tests, etc.) -assessment/evaluation grid -proceedings form	-assessment proceedings -assessment report
4th - validation and issuing the certificate	-candidate - validation panel (staff of certifying and validating body, experts in certification, technical experts in the intended profession)	MATCH Certification procedure	-certificates -proceedings form -validation report form	-certificate of full certification of vocational qualification - certificate of partial certification of vocational qualification + complementary training suggestions -validation proceedings
5th - job offer matching	-candidate -staff of Job centres, Certification bodies, Education and Training centres, Industry and Crafts Associations		-interview -software MATCH	- list of possible job offers matching the candidate vocational certification - dating for job interviews

4. Technical specification for the MATCH web-tool based on the survey's main results

Following the definition of a Regional Directory of vocational qualifications worked out by Emilia Romagna region in Italy, vocational qualifications have been distinguished according to the level of specialization: from the professional basics to the highest level of specialization.

As we can see for example in the case of the mechanical sector:

<p>Basics qualifications to access the professional area</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Machine operator</i></p>	<p>Middle level of technical specialization Qualifications to access the specialization area</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Made to measure medical devices operator</i></p>	<p>Higher level of specialization Highly specialized qualifications</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Stagehand</i></p>
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A well defined set of tasks and activities distinguishes one level of specialization from another. Yet on the territory there are possible employees with different levels of competence and ability with reference to a specific job profile.

Furthermore the existence of regional bodies, in Italy and elsewhere in the partner countries, such as Veneto Lavoro and its function Borsa Lavoro where job holders and job seekers can meet, demonstrate that there is a strong need for effective matchmaking devices to help in the delicate task of meeting offer and request.

Websites and softwares can be instruments to bridge and connect the world of employers and employees, though a more capillary updating of job offers and requests can be carried out more effectively by local partners highly connected to the employers representatives, as Trades and Crafts Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc.

The aim of the MATCH project is the development of a web-based functional tool connecting the migrants' competences acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts to occupational profiles and to companies' labour demand. The devised platform, the LO-MATCH platform, will possibly support training organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Job Offices and Centres in effectively linking employers' needs and job seekers characteristics in order to find the best, or at least good, solutions for the involved parties (thus, by solving a matchmaking problem).

In this matchmaking process a relevant obstacle is represented by the national and the job marked differences in describing job profiles, on one side, and curricula, on the other side. Nonetheless, the issue of heterogeneity is currently being addressed under multiple points of views in both the national and trans-national domains (e.g. the creation of national as well as international professional and educational standards, the definition of a European framework supporting the comparability of qualifications, the creation of a system for credits transfer, the development of specific tools in the context of the Europass portfolio supporting the readability and capitalization of learning achievements and working experience). However, despite this harmonization process still going on differences existing among different countries and cultures, economic sectors, formal education frameworks, interpretation of the learning outcome concept, as well as strategies for the validation of informal and non-formal learning make it still difficult a proper matchmaking.

A unique representation of information on job offers and curricula components is needed to overcome the heterogeneity .

The idea at the base of this project and other European projects such as H.E.I.E.N. and the TIPTOE where the WP5 coordinator has been involved is that by exploiting a semantic approach relying on a formalization of core elements, it will be possible to create a platform that will collect the information deriving from different sources (existing working profiles, migrant's curricula, job needs, etc.) with the aim of reducing the distance between the world of work and the migrants. Indeed by using Semantic Web instruments like ontologies (explicit specifications of a conceptualization) or taxonomies (hierarchical representation of terms) for describing job offers and curricula components, the overall result of bridging different cultures, economic sectors, formal education frameworks etc... can be somehow attained to pave the way for the consequent attempt at effectively matchmaking job profiles and curricula.

Deliverables 24 and 25 outcomes of WP6 will present in details the methodological approach for the ontological description of job profiles and curricula. Specifically they will analyse the reasons behind the use of Semantic Web instruments then, they will explain the three-steps methodology for the ontological description of job profiles and curricula and provide practical examples on semantic annotation. Finally they will also explain how the annotated profiles will be used by the LO-MATCH platform.

The working dimension of different countries and sectors will be analyzed through desk researches, interviews with relevant stakeholders, etc. and suitable profiles, either occupational, educational or both, will be inserted in the LO-MATCH platform.

Relying on the EQF specifications, each job profile will be structured in tasks, eventually containing one or more subtasks. Tasks (and subtasks, where present) will be expressed in terms of knowledge (the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study), skills (the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems) and competence (the demonstrated ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development in order to achieve objective results according to a specific level of autonomy and context complexity) required in order to accomplish them.

The most delicate phase in WP6 and WP7 will be that of correctly and accurately defining a job profile in terms of activities and tasks. This comprehensive set of activities, and knowledge, skills and competence elements associated, will try and describe as exactly as possible what a professional should be able to do. In fact, each time a job applicant or an employer inserts his characteristics or needs (preferably defined according to the EQF guidelines, hence in terms of KSC), expressed by a sentence, the LO-MATCH platform will perform a search in the set of annotated KSC, in order to find if the set of concepts composing the sentence has already been used for the description of a KSC: if it is so, the sentence specified by the end-user could be automatically annotated by exploiting already defined semantic relations.

The final objective of the whole project is indeed that end-users (Chambers of Commerce supporting migrants in the insertion of their curriculum vitae, human resources offices looking for new professionals to hire, etc.) could rely on such an instrument for describing training and working profiles and based on information possibly derived from real cases, for quickly and efficiently specifying working attitudes or needs. Therefore an "incomplete" working/training profile, focused only on a portion of working activities characterizing a professional, in fact, could negatively influence the success of the LO-MATCH platform.