European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014

Country report Czech Republic

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Introduction

The 2010 country report for Czech Republic describes a situation where the legal framework, which had been in existence since 2006, started to be implemented on the ground and the first candidates were certified through validation of non-formal and informal learning for vocational qualifications (VNFIL). Since 2010, the main national approach to VNFIL, which gives access to vocational qualifications, has grown in scale (significantly more persons have been certified) and the main legal act was reviewed to take into account the first years of experience.

As described in the 2010 fiche, the main national framework for VNFIL is set in the 2006 legislation on Recognition of outcomes from further education 179/2006. This approach concerns vocational qualifications that are included in the national qualifications register (Narodni soustava kvalifikaci – NSK). The NSK comprises qualifications that relate to the national occupational standards developed in the National Register of Occupations (Narodni Soustava Povolani - NSP and which can be achieved through either an assessment of competence without any prior training or through non-formal learning. NSP contains occupational standards that describes the tasks and expectations for a given profession/position. People who undergo non-formal learning preparing for these qualifications take the same assessment as people who have their competences recognised without any prior training. The qualifications in the NSK are not part of the formal education system, even though the qualifications of formal initial VET use as a basis the same competence descriptions (as defined in the national occupational standards). Some qualifications in the NSK correspond to parts of formal VET qualifications and can be recognised in view of passing the assessment for the latter. It is relevant to note that a number of qualifications in the NSK can be recognised as part of the conditions regarding ‘professional competence’ when a person requests a trade licence (živnost), creating an incentive for people to use the system for VNFIL.

This is the main national system for VNFIL in the country. In this context VNFIL is based on a competence-based assessment.

A relatively new development is the creation of a more systematic linkage between non-formal training for the unemployed funded through active labour market policies and the competence-based assessment described above. The aim is to ensure that in the future, training funded by PES, when it is in an area where a vocational qualification in the NSK exists, is systematically linked to the assessment and consequently VNFIL.

Beyond this main form of VNFIL, there are other possibilities which fall under the European definition of VNFIL:

- Education and training providers in general education as well as in higher education can decide to shorten a learner’s pathway if deemed appropriate based on their profile. There is no methodological framework for how this should be done. There is also no information on the extent to which this approach is used and for what target audiences. It is likely that the main use of this possibility is for students who transfer from one institution to another within the same or a similar field of study or for very talented students in general education.

- To access higher education, students have to have achieved the upper-secondary leaving certificate (Maturita), however universities can also have other requirements that take the form of entry assessment. If their regulations stipulate so, they can recognise alternative proofs of competence as equivalent to these assessments. Here again there is no national methodology or approach to doing so and no data on scale and focus of this practice.

  The two above practices are not new, have not been reformed since the 2010 update and there is very little data about them. For these reasons, they are not discussed in detail this country report.

- In the youth field, national-level competence profiles for various positions in organisations working with young people and children have been developed. People can provide evidence to show that they meet these requirements through non-formal training
but also through VNFIL. This approach was in the project phase and in development at the time of writing the 2010 country report.

2 National perspective on validation

2.1 National legal framework, system or policy on validation

The legal framework for VNFIL is largely the same as in the 2010 version of the Inventory. VNFIL for vocational qualifications is embedded in specific legislation from 2006. This act defines the system for VNFIL and the responsibilities of different types of organisations.

The act was amended in 2012 and the amendments were based on the experience of the early years of implementation. The main notable amendments are:

- The terminology used for the qualifications concerned was changed: initially these were called partial qualifications, which were seen as having a negative connotation, and the term was replaced by 'vocational qualifications';
- The minimum age limit for taking part in the competence assessment was removed;
- The possibility was introduced to recognise parts of vocational qualifications already obtained when a person passes another competence assessment for another vocational qualification. Provided that they have already certified elements of the knowledge, skills and competence required, they can be exempt from parts of the assessment; and
- The possibility to sanction organisations which undertake assessments and issue certificates, in case of fraud, was strengthened.

The remaining revisions are rather technical, i.e. concerning specific rather detailed legal aspects that do not imply changes to the validation approach as such.

As noted above, the process for VNFIL in the Czech Republic is mainly based on passing a competence-based assessment. However, the competence required can also be gained through non-formal learning and this can be assessed through the same competence-based assessment. Therefore, similar to the Finnish approach for example, the competence-assessment is used as both: an exit assessment for training programmes for adults and an assessment open to people who did not undergo related training.

Outside the field of further education (CVET), concerning the above-described qualifications and system, there is no national framework for VNFIL in higher education or initial vocational education and training.

In the youth field, there is a policy to support VNFIL for people who are either professionals or volunteers. A national project called ‘Keys for Life’ developed a set of occupational descriptions for a range of positions and developed training as well as assessment which could be accessed without prior training in relation to these positions. A relatively large number of persons in the field and organisations working with young people were reached through this project. The main idea is to support the recognition of competences for individuals holding positions in youth and children organisations, independent of how these were achieved and in which organisation they were active. Following the Keys for Life project, a new project has started in October 2012, called K2 (Quality and Competitiveness in Non-formal Education), which aims at dissemination of the so called Personal Competence Portfolio, a pilot supplement to Europass CV. Also some of the occupational

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1 Zákon 179/2006 Sb., o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání available online: [http://aplikace.msmt.cz/PDF/PKsb061_06.pdf](http://aplikace.msmt.cz/PDF/PKsb061_06.pdf)

Act 179/2006 Coll., on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results and on the Amendment to Some Other Acts (the Act on the Recognition of Further Education Results)

2 For more information see ICF International (2013) *Study on the value of youth work. Keys for Life case study*

3 [http://www.nidm.cz/k2](http://www.nidm.cz/k2)

4 [www.okp.ka2.cz](http://www.okp.ka2.cz)
descriptions were transferred into qualifications, 4 of them were finalised in 2013, 5 more are being developed in 2014.

2.2 Skills audits

Skills audits can be offered by public employment services under the name ‘professional and competence diagnosis’ - also translated using the French terminology of ‘bilan de compétences’ (Profesnī bilanční diagnostika). Certain categories of unemployed persons can get access to ‘enhanced support in finding employment’; this concerns in particular young people (aged below 20) or people who are identified as eligible for such support due to their situation with regard to childcare or their health situation. This enhanced support is also automatically offered to all who are registered as unemployed for longer than five months. All people falling into this situation work with the PES to develop an individual action plan. The above mentioned professional and competence diagnosis can be offered as part of this individual action plan depending on needs of the person.

There is no binding national framework concerning this procedure, either who should have access to it or how the diagnosis should be carried out. Nevertheless, efforts to provide methodological support to practitioners have been developed for more than a decade now. A first methodological guide was published in 2000, largely inspired by the French Bilan de compétences model. In the period 2000-2011 a number of professionals were trained. Though this number was not very large there was a network of counsellors trained to work with this method5. These were psychologists working within PES offices or external providers of advisory services to PES. However in recent years, due to restructuring in local PES offices, this service is increasingly provided by external contractors to PES offices. Due to concerns about the quality of the services offered as a result of the PES restructuring, a project was developed in the period 2012-2013. The project aimed at strengthening the methodological basis for this form of work with unemployed clients, creating a national network of professionals active in this field and enhancing their skills and competence6. The project resulted in the establishment of a National Association for professional diagnosis7 in September 2013. Members of this association commit to following a specific methodology and to abide to the association’s ethical code. In the very early stages of the work of this association, there were 35 persons interested in membership8.

Overall, the situation nowadays (December, 2013) regarding the actual provision of this form of service remains rather unclear. In some regions PES offices do tender out this form of support, whilst in others they don’t. Only limited numbers of staff trained in this method remain employed by PES offices and hence it is unlikely to be provided internally9.

2.3 Relationship with qualifications framework and credit systems, and information on standards used for validation

Qualifications and qualifications frameworks

The Czech National Qualifications Framework is still in the process of development. The main issue currently faced is the integration of different sub-systems into a single overarching framework.

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5 There was a national register of persons qualified to carry out this service. In 2005, a total of 31 external providers and 34 psychologists working PES offices were registered. By 2009, the number of external providers rose to 54. Maříková (2013) Bilanční diagnostika v České Republice – Vývoj a současnost in NVF (2013) Bilanční diagnostika v České Republice. Mezinárodní spoluprací k inovacím a kvalitě
7 http://www.associace-bilancni-dagnostiky.cz/
8 Idem
The Czech Republic has presented its draft referencing report to the EQF advisory group which expressed concerns about the non-comprehensive character of the NQF initially proposed. Further work on the development of the qualifications framework is ongoing.

Instead of a single qualifications framework, at the moment there are two sectoral frameworks:

- The National Qualifications Register (NSK) for vocational qualifications, which also functions as a National Qualifications Framework for VET;
- The Q-RAM, the qualifications framework for higher education. This has developed detailed descriptors for different domains/fields of study in higher education.

As described above the NSK is closely linked to the procedure for VNFIL as all qualifications in the register have to be achievable through VNFIL.

For the moment there is no clear link between VNFIL and the higher education framework.

General education is not included in the National Qualifications Register. It is not possible to get recognition for one's competences related to general education through validation of non-formal and informal learning.

For the moment the qualifications framework in development does not open up the possibilities to access programmes through different pathways. The Maturita (upper-secondary leaving examination) is the requirement to enter higher education and no exceptions apply. Higher education institutions can also decide to use specific entry examinations. Completion of compulsory education is in general a requirement to enter upper-secondary programmes. The vast majority of the Czech population have achieved this level.

**Credit systems**

There is no credit system as such in vocational education and training. However, there are possibilities to accumulate learning outcomes achieved through VNFIL:

- Persons who achieve vocational qualifications through VNFIL can have these recognised in view of passing an assessment for the related full formal VET qualification. As noted above, the vocational qualifications in the NSK are related to the formal VET qualifications. When a person holds all the related vocational qualifications they are exempt from the formal training and can directly pass the final assessment;
- When a person holds a vocational qualification and wishes to pass an assessment for another, related, one, s/he should be exempt from an assessment for those competences that have already been assessed in the first certification procedure.

At this stage, there is no data available on the actual use of these procedures in practice.

ECTS is the credit system used in higher education. As stated above, there is no clear framework for VNFIL in higher education and there is consequently no clearly defined link with the use of ECTS. Some institutions may have institutional practices linking ECTS with their recognition procedures.

**Standards**

The NSK contains qualification standards used for VNFIL in view of achieving vocational qualifications. Each qualification standard is defined in competences and is accompanied by an assessment standard. The same standards are also used as the basis for defining training programmes for non-formal training programmes.

The NSK qualification standards are based on the national occupational standards. The latter are also the basis for formal initial VET qualifications. In the formal IVET qualifications the occupational standards are translated into national framework curricula.

The above described initiative in the field of youth work, also described standards for persons working with children and young people in non-formal/leisure education in terms of competence standards. The same format was used as for the NSK, even though these competence profiles are currently not integrated in the NSK.
### 2.4 National institutional framework

The institutional framework for VNFIL remains unchanged compared to the 2010 version of the inventory.

#### Table 2.1 Institutional framework for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in CZ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function / Process</th>
<th>(Type of) Institution responsible</th>
</tr>
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| Qualification and assessment standards                  | ■ Approved by the Ministry of Education  
■ Developed by the sectoral councils. Sectoral councils bring together: employers’ and employees’ representatives as well as the National Institute for Education (formerly National Institute for TVET) (NUV), National Council for qualifications, the relevant ministry. The sectoral councils are expected to be proactive in suggesting what new standards are needed and where standards should be updated. |
| Conception of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning process | Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Education. The process and responsibilities of different institutions are defined in the law 179/2006 Coll. |
| (carrying out) Assessment of non-formal and informal learning (based on the standard) – for vocational qualifications | ■ Authorised institutions – these can be schools, private institutions, companies as well as persons (for example a craftsman can become an authorised person)  
■ Some assessment standards require the presence of a jury (two or three people)  
■ In line with the assessment standard and the specified mode of assessment the authorised persons are responsible to choose the most appropriate assessment method, context, tools as well as the exact definition of the assessment (i.e. the formulation of the question or the assignment, etc.) |
| (carrying out) Assessment of non-formal and informal learning (based on the standard) – for complete or comprehensive vocational qualifications | ■ Schools only  
■ In line with the regulation and specifications for the specific complete or comprehensive vocational qualification. Note: final examinations for VET qualifications at upper-secondary level are all defined nationally and the same examination applies to regular students as well as to people who have achieved partial qualifications but have not participated in the full formal programme. |
| Recognition of non-formal and informal learning (i.e. delivery of certificate) – for vocational qualifications | ■ The certificate is delivered by the authorised person or the jury  
■ The law 179/2006 Coll. specifies what information has to appear on the certificate |
| Recognition of non-formal and informal learning (i.e. delivery of certificate) – for complete or comprehensive vocational qualifications | ■ Only schools can award complete or comprehensive vocational qualifications – these are the same certificates as those awarded by schools to people who have achieved the qualification through formal education and training |
| Quality assurance of the process                         | ■ The law 179/2006 Coll. stipulates the requirements regarding documentation and                  |
2.5 Governance and allocation of responsibilities

The governance and allocation of responsibilities remains unchanged compared to the 2010 version of the inventory.

2.5.1 Please describe the allocation of responsibilities (at national, regional, local, social partner, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation

This section presents the governance for VNFIL concerning vocational qualifications in the NSK. As mentioned above, the situation has not changed since 2010.

These aspects are set at national level:

- The overall approach as set in the legislative framework (including division of competences among the different institutions and types of bodies);
- The final decision to create a new qualification. Definition of conditions to achieve a trade licence in a given field, including the possible link to the professional qualification. There are several ministries that govern qualifications. As shown in Figure 2.1 below, in 2013 the ministry that governed the greatest number of qualifications in the NSK was the Ministry of Industry and Trade.
- The qualification and assessment standards including assessment standards;
- The delivery (and removal) of licence to authorising bodies to undertake VNFIL;
- Public employment service policy including the use of recognition of NFIL for requalification (retraining) of unemployed (requalification is the term used for training programmes offered to unemployed people to achieve a new qualification or to update their existing qualifications).
Regional level:
Regional authorities do not have a specifically defined responsibility with regard to recognition of NFIL in the legislation, however they have important competences in the related areas such as:
- Regions are in charge of education and training infrastructure (they decide on the number of schools, the qualifications to be offered etc.). Vocational schools\(^{10}\) are one of the types of organisations that can become authorising bodies for VNFIL. Regions can provide incentives for schools to engage in lifelong learning activities (including recognition).
- Though public employment services (PES) operate at local level (towns), regions have a role in disseminating information among public employment services staff who offer guidance and are expected to orientate people towards recognition of NFIL (mainly when it comes to requalification/retraining measures).

Institutional level (authorising bodies – see below):
- Reception of requests for recognition from the side of learners;
- Setting up the assessment procedure and its design and the actual assessment;
- Decision on recognition;
- Delivery of a certificate.

Public employment service (local offices):
- Funding of VNFIL for the unemployed;
- Use of competence diagnosis (bilan de compétences) for job seekers.

There is for the moment no clearly defined responsibility for orientation and guidance.

2.5.2 Explain more specifically the role of different stakeholders

The NSK approach uses the concept of authorising bodies. These are legal entities that receive the authorisation to undertake assessment in view of the award of professional qualifications. The legal entities can be education and training institutions, private bodies (employers, employment agencies, etc.) or non-profit organisations. They can also be chambers or other organisations that represent employers.

\(^{10}\) The Czech VET systems is largely school-based hence schools are the main type of VET providers targeting young people in the country.
**Education and training providers**

The qualification and assessment standards in the NSK are not only a basis for recognition of NFIL but they are also the basis for the development of further education courses and programmes. Consequently education and training providers combine the recognition of NFIL and training activities.

**Private sector actors**

Companies are expected to use the NSK as a basis for further education and training of their staff as well as for recognition of NFIL. In September 2013 a prize was awarded to companies that innovate in the field of HR using the NSK. Experiences of some HR managers can be found on the NSK website\(^\text{11}\). The examples cited include:

- A company in the energy sector uses the NSK standards description to recruit staff or during their induction period;
- An employer in the chemical sector states that the fact that a person whom they are recruiting holds a qualification from the NSK is for them a sign that the person is willing to learn and at the same time they have transparent information about the breadth and scope of their competences;
- An early childcare centre uses the related qualifications in the NSK to enable their employees to enhance their skills and also to show their commitment to the quality of services to parents;

**Social partners**

Social partners are members of sectoral councils that develop qualifications standards for the NSK. Several social partners, in particular the Chamber of Industry and Trade and the Union of Industry and Transport, are key partners in the development of the NSK.

**Third sector organisations**

Third sector organisations can use the professional qualifications in the NSK. For example there are several qualifications related to project management or project administration that can be of relevance to these organisations.

As noted above, the project ‘Keys for Life’ developed qualification standards for professions that correspond to the work of organisations in the sector of youth and children. The project also developed procedures through which these skills and competences can be identified and documented. The idea was that these qualifications, or at least some of them, would be integrated in the NSK in 2014.

2.5.3 **Coordination between stakeholders**

At national level there is a coordinated approach that involves different ministries as well as social partners. The Ministry of education, youth and sport is in charge of this coordination. For example changes to the legal basis are initiated from this Ministry.

Two examples of the results of this coordination are:

- The NSK mechanism for validation and recognition of NFIL is linked to the process for achievement of trade licences (governed by the ministry of industry and trade). When a trade licence requires a person to hold a specific qualification from initial formal education, the qualifications from the NSK (if existent in the given professional area) are also taken into account;
- There is also a link with the training for the unemployed and re-qualifications as governed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. When public employment services fund training for jobseekers this should focus on qualifications in the NSK (unless there is no suitable offer for the given candidate).

Another coordination mechanism is the technical assistance project\textsuperscript{12}, co-financed from the European Social Fund, which ensures the communication, web-platform and management of the NSK. The sectoral councils are also provided with a technical assistance project\textsuperscript{13} that ensures communication, a web-platform and the methodological support.

### 2.6 Examples of national regional, local or EU funded initiatives

#### 2.6.1 Examples of initiatives considered to be good practice/innovative

The national project **UNIV 3**\textsuperscript{14} (launched in 2012 and expected to end in summer 2014) supports the quality assurance of the recognition process. It prepares the specifications for assessment tasks to be used as part of the examinations. These specifications will serve as an example for authorising bodies. Part of the project is also the preparation of assessors and advisors. The project is led by the National Institute for Education. It builds on an earlier project (UNIV 2) that worked together with education and training providers (mostly VET schools) to develop modular re-qualification courses for jobseekers on the basis of the NSK standards. These courses result in the achievement of the professional qualification, combining a process of non-formal learning (the re-qualification training programmes, though developed by VET schools, are considered non-formal learning) and recognition via the assessment. Over 190 schools took part in the project.

The project also undertakes communication activities about the possibilities for recognition of NFIL. A series of communication videos were produced which illustrate the principles as well as the process of assessment in different professional areas\textsuperscript{15}.

The aforementioned **Keys for Life**\textsuperscript{16} (Klíče pro život) project aimed to improve the quality of leisure education and non-formal learning opportunities for children and young people in the Czech Republic by strengthening the continuous training of persons working with children and young people. The project had several strands of activities, one of which was the recognition of non-formal learning of youth workers. In order to improve the visibility and recognition of competences of the target group, the project set out to develop common competence standards as well as procedures for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The underpinning idea was that people would be trained or recognised against the same general standard which would improve their mobility within the sector but also beyond, for example in the private sector. Outputs developed as a result of the project include:

- 24 professional profiles in different areas such as management of organisations and administration, pedagogics and psychology, environmental education, health protection;
- A set of minimum competence standards for each of these professional profiles, which describe: the typical working tasks, professional skills, professional knowledge. The standards were designed taking into account the national vocational qualifications framework requirements for qualification definition and description;
- Examples of training programmes for each of the professional profiles.

The project has been evaluated and the conclusions of the evaluation are that through its competence descriptions, the project contributed to the harmonisation of terminology in organisations working with children and young people; the project was of particular benefit to small organisations, which did not have clearly defined professional positions prior to the project; the project also enabled participating organisations to become aware of the contribution of non-formal education to the development of more ‘soft’ competences. In particular the organisations learnt how to work with these competences and how to systematically work with people to develop them.

\textsuperscript{12} [http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/](http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/)

\textsuperscript{13} [http://www.sektoroverady.cz/](http://www.sektoroverady.cz/)

\textsuperscript{14} More information can be found at the following link: [http://www.nuv.cz/univ3/univ3-o-projektu](http://www.nuv.cz/univ3/univ3-o-projektu)


2.6.2 Use of Europass / Youthpass to document non-formal and informal learning

The number of visits to the Europass website from the Czech Republic has more than doubled, from 94,659 in 2010 to 224,124 in 2013. The number of Europass CVs and Language Passports has also increased significantly over the same period – from 21,013 to 86,392. The same goes for the number of CVs completed online by citizens residing in the Czech Republic – this figure more than tripled from 2010 (when the number was 32,571) to 115,429 in 2013. The figures for documents downloaded in Czech also increased – although not at such a significant rate, from 59,333 in 2010 to 77,160 in 2013.

With regard to Youthpass, no notable increase in the number of organisations issuing Youthpass certificates could be observed during the period 2010 – 2013, with the number of organisations remaining around 80 during this time. There was however an increase in the number of projects that Youthpass certificates have been issued for, from 97 in 2010 to 120 in 2013 and a notable increase in the number of certificates issued (from 998 in 2010 to 1419 in 2013).

2.7 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

2.7.1 Funding

The funding for VNFIL has two main strands:

- The fees for the assessment and certification raised by the authorising bodies; and
- National level funding for the technical assistance project for NSK.

Public funding is only used for:

- VNFIL of persons who are unemployed; and
- The coordination and technical assistance.

The procedure is designed so that the direct costs of the recognition procedure (assessment and assessors) will be covered by individuals. Individuals can seek co-funding from employers but this is not regulated. The current experience shows that employers are willing to cover the costs of the procedure if the qualification is related to a regulated profession or a licence to practice.

The use of private funding should ensure that the system is demand driven. Given that in just four years of existence there were 87,000 assessments (see below) carried out indicating that the fees are not a major obstacle for the development of the system.

The technical assistance project is largely (85%) ESF funded. It was launched in 2009 (there was a predecessor project) for the duration of six years. The total funding is 651 million CZK (approx. 26 million EUR). This funding includes the development of qualifications and assessment standards by sectoral councils. However, at this stage it is not yet clear how the continuous updating of these standards will be funded in the future.

2.7.2 Distribution of costs

It is for the authorised persons/ bodies to set the fee and in practice this varies depending on the qualification and the material needed for the assessment (it can go up to several hundreds of euro). Initially there was a nationally defined price range set at national level. This was meant to ensure that there are no unreasonable differences in fees charged. However it proved to be difficult to be set in practice and many standards have a price range from zero to several thousand CZK (Czech crowns). Consequently the 2011 review of the legislation abandoned the use of such scales.

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17 http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/Statistics/2._Activity_since_launch_by_country_and_language/Europass_Statistic_Reports_SinceLaunch_Locale_cs_CZ.PDF
18 Data supplied by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, extracted 10 September 2013
When it comes to the equipment needed, the authorised person has to be able to provide the technical and material conditions necessary for carrying out the assessment. This condition can be satisfied by both education and training institutions which have the necessary equipment for teaching but also enterprises which have the equipment for purposes of service/product delivery.

The organisations asking to become authorising bodies have to pay a fee covering the authorisation process. The fee is 1500 CZK (approx. 60 EUR) for each authorisation.

2.7.3 Data on flows of beneficiaries

As of December 2013, there were in total 87,503 assessments for VNFIL carried out in the period 2010-2013. This covers assessments carried out with no prior training as well as those where people first underwent non-formal training.

Figure 2.2 shows the break-down of this number per ministry that governs the given qualification. It shows that there are important differences in terms of demand for qualifications per ministry. The figure indicates that most assessments concern qualifications under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. This is linked to the introduction of the requirement for any security guards to hold a professional qualification. Introduction of this requirement by the Ministry of Interior created significant demand for certification.

On average there were 1,822 assessments carried out per month in the period 2010-2013. Figure 2.3 shows the oscillations in monthly demand for VNFIL.

In December 2013, there were 769 authorised persons for the assessment and award of certificates under NSK. There were 8,052 assessors.

Figure 2.2 Number of assessments for VNFIL carried out in the period 2010-2013, per ministry in charge of the qualification

Source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, data on NSK
2.7.4 Evidence of benefits to individuals

Excluding the data on the demand for assessments, there is no further evidence on the process of VNFIL in the Czech Republic.

The above numbers show the number of assessments carried out but they do not indicate the proportion that led to the award of the certificate (successful candidates). There is no tracking of beneficiaries to identify whether and how the certificate contributed to their development.

3 Information, advice and guidance

3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

The technical assistance project for the NSK has a component on information and dissemination.

One aspect of these activities is the maintenance, population and further development of the NSK portal which contains information on:

- Existing qualifications,
- The detailed qualifications and assessment standards;
- The authorised organisations for a given qualification.

The portal is linked to another portal that people can search to identify either a course or an assessment in an area they are interested in.

As part of its PR activities the project also communicates about NSK and the possibilities to get recognition for skills and competences in national and local media. Furthermore, NSK is being presented at professional fairs\(^\text{20}\) aimed at both students and professionals. It is also presented through lectures to students in fields related to human resources\(^\text{21}\).

The project UNIV 3 (described above) aims to inform individuals, in particular job seekers who could benefit from recognition via NSK. The project also pilots a process of evaluation of candidates’ competences when entering a training programme (in particular for requalification courses) leading to an NSK qualification. This evaluation takes the form of self-assessment, interview or practical assignment. It is part of the training programme. Depending on the results the duration of the training programme can be shortened.

\(^{20}\) [Link](http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/Clanky/sektorove-rady-pomahaji-zviditelnit-narodni-soustavu-kvalifikaci)

\(^{21}\) [Link](http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/Clanky/prezentace-nsk-na-vysokych-skolach)
The employers’ representatives engaged in the sectoral councils also inform their member organisations about the possibilities offered by NSK.

3.2 Role of information, advice and guidance networks / institutions

In addition to the above described information system, the Public Employment Services and their counsellors are supposed to guide people towards the NSK and the possibilities it offers.

The above described project UNIV3 is currently working on preparing advisors who will accompany candidates for recognition.

3.3 Measures to enhance the awareness of validation initiatives and practices amongst guidance practitioners

The technical assistance office carries out presentations and lectures aimed at various audiences including people in human resources as well as guidance counsellors in public employment services.

4 Quality assurance and evaluation

4.1 Quality Assurance Framework

The quality assurance framework for recognition of non-formal and informal learning has not changed since 2010. The framework is set out in the legislation 179/2006 Sb which sets up this approach and related laws. It relies on these pillars:

- **The quality of the qualifications and assessment standards.** These are formulated by bodies that contain a mixture of stakeholders from the labour market as well as from the education and training area (sector skill councils). There is also national level guidance available concerning the process through which these should be designed and how they should be formulated and presented. Furthermore there is an approval process for the standards by the relevant ministry.

- **The quality of authorising bodies when it comes to their expertise as well as material equipment.** The overall criteria through which a person or an organisation can become authorised are defined at national level and each qualification standard specifies the particular qualifications and equipment the authorising bodies have to demonstrate. These are authorised by the relevant ministry. The authorisation is limited in time (five years).

- **Definition of the assessment mode and material equipment at national level.** For each competence defined in the qualifications standard, several assessment criteria are defined. For each criterion the mode of assessment is defined as part of the assessment standard and is hence homogeneous across the country. The material needed for assessment is also defined at national level (at a general level).

- **The requirement to document the execution of the assessment.** It is required that the authorised persons keep documentation about the procedure. It is also required that the assessment process is open to the public.

- **The possibility for individuals to appeal.** Individuals can request a review of the process and the competent ministry has to give an opinion on their request.

4.2 Quality assurance systems / procedures

See above.

The only thing that changed compared to 2010 is that in 2011 the review of the legislation introduced the possibility of legal and financial sanctions for authorising bodies in case of irregularities. The organisations can be charged up to 20,000 CZK (approx. 800 EUR). This revision was introduced due to the fact that some organisations were found to be basically ‘selling’ the certificate to applicants with no proper assesment.
4.3 Evaluation framework

There is no explicit evaluation framework. Only the monitoring data presented in section 2.7 is being collected.

5 Validation methods

5.1 Methods used and the validation process

There has been no change in the methods used for the validation process since 2010. The assessment always takes the form of a complex examination in front of the authorised person or commission. Portfolia are not used. The person carries out the practical, written and/or oral parts of the assessment in front of the assessors.

These three main assessment modes are used:

- Practical demonstration, where the person directly carries out the tasks or when s/he presents a finalised product, including simulations. This is the main method to be used as often as is possible and suitable.
- Written assessment, which covers both complex written assignments as well as tests. (However, the use of tests is limited and recommended in certain circumstances only.) If practical assessment is not possible or it is not appropriate, written assessment is preferred to oral assessment.
- Oral assessment, which is recommended as a complementary method to practical assessment).

For each assessment criterion the mode is defined in the assessment standard. However, these modes can cover several methods.

The most commonly used methods at the different stages of the validation process are indicated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declarative methods</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio method</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation and evidence</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>extracted from work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests and examinations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g. e-learning methods) – please specify</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written assessments and oral assessments</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The use of interviews and declarative methods is being piloted in the UNIV3 project. These methods are being piloted as a means to identify competences that a person already possesses in view of shortening a training programme leading to an NSK qualification. However, these competences are still assessed during the final examination.
6 Validation practitioners

6.1 Profile of validation practitioners

There has been no change in the profile of validation practitioners since 2010. In most cases practitioners in charge of assessment are teachers and trainers. However, it can be any person who complies with the qualification requirements defined in the assessment standard (see below). If the person does not have the appropriate pedagogical qualifications they have to pass a preparatory course that is specific for the practice of recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

6.2 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

The UNIV2 project trained VET schools, in particular VET teachers, on how to use the NSK qualifications and assessment standards for recognition of NFIL.

The UNIV3 project is currently training authoring bodies and advisors on use of assessment standards, development of assessment tasks and examination specifications but also on how to guide candidates through the process.

The participation in both projects is voluntary.

6.3 Qualifications requirements

There has been no change in the qualification requirements for validation practitioners since 2010. For each partial qualification the ‘technical’ qualification requirements for the authorised person are specified (e.g. qualification in the occupational field and/or years of practice of an occupation). As a general rule, assessors themselves have to be qualified in the given area.

In addition, general rules are valid for all partial qualifications and these are:

- The person has to be either a qualified education professional, or experienced adult educator or have passed a specific preparation course for recognition of non-formal and informal learning and work with adults (12 hours of courses).
- The person has to have basic competences in working with computers and the internet.
7 References

Data on NSK provided by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

Data on Youthpass supplied by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, extracted 10 September 2013.


http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/Statistics/2._Activity_since_launch_by_country_and_language/Europass_Statistic_Reports_SinceLaunch_Locale_cs_CZ.PDF.


