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

Country report Turkey

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1 **Introduction**

In Turkey, making the transition to an information society continues to be a determining political and societal concern. In this regard, continuous improvement of knowledge, skills and competences and being responsive to the needs of the labour market has ever-increasing importance. In recent years, lifelong learning and the validation of prior informal and non-formal learning have received more attention.

A national perspective on validation started to develop rather recently in Turkey and the validation system is in progress. In this progression, the establishment of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) in 2006 has been the most important development, as explained in the 2010 country update. The VQA is the responsible organisation at national level for validation-related activities. In its activities the VQA involves a variety of stakeholders from the public (e.g. the Ministry of National Education, Council of Higher Education and Turkish Employment Agency), private and the third sector. In addition to this, the National Ministry of Education, specifically, the Lifelong Learning Directorate General has carried out projects supporting the development of the validation system in Turkey.

In the last three years, occupational standards, a national qualifications framework and national qualifications for occupational sectors have been prepared at the national level with a view to supporting the development of a validation system. At national level, the VQA defines the testing and certification procedures for vocational qualifications, independent of where the learning took place. Within the last three years, more than 300 vocational qualifications have been defined and/or revised, which included the validation processes for the respective occupations. The qualifications are now defined for a variety of sectors, with no prioritisation for NQF levels 2-6. In addition to this, a number of awareness-raising activities, e.g. presentations in conferences, seminars, workshops, news bulletins and video-clips, have been carried out.

In Turkey, validation continues to be applicable only to the vocational and technical sector and not for the education sector. The certificates received as a result of validation of non-formal and informal learning continue to be treated differently to those gained through formal learning and do not provide access to the formal education system.

While it is possible to conclude that there is an increasing awareness of validation, this aspect can be stated as a primary obstacle to the further development of the system. Whilst national level stakeholders, such as ministries, labour unions, the employment agency, trade unions, chambers of industry and commerce, have knowledge on the issue, ‘on the ground level’ awareness of validation is not very high. In this respect, the completion of the work on the national qualifications framework (NQF), the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF), is vital, and is expected to happen at the end of 2013. Only after this will individuals be able to place their qualifications within this framework and to see the actual/relevant outcomes of the validation process.

2 **National perspective on validation**

2.1 **National legal framework, system or policy on validation**

In Turkey, the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning is a new phenomenon. There are different applications in different sectors for the recognition and certification of prior learning. In the vocational sector, as noted in the European Inventory Report for Turkey (2010), the Basic Education Law on National Education No.17392 arranges non-formal and formal education in a way to complement each other and the Vocational Training Law No. 3308 arranges vocational and technical training. According to

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the Vocational Training Law, within the context of validation in relation to qualifications which have been developed based on occupational standards, the assessment of prior informal and non-formal competences, as well as of competences gained during vocational training, are defined by the relevant rules and regulations. Law No.5544 determines the principles for national qualifications in the technical and vocational fields in regard to auditing, assessment, and evaluation, and certification for formal and non-formal learning. The Laws also sets up the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA). The VQA regulates and coordinates evaluation and certification activities for the validation of formal and non-formal qualifications. The VQA functions at the national level and covers the validation of vocational qualifications in all sectors, except the professions of medical doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, veterinaries, engineers and architects, as well as any other professions requiring education on a graduate level as a minimum, for which conditions for inception of respective professions are regulated by law.

In 2011, the Law No.5544 was amended and new articles were added. It included:

- The creation of the Education Accreditation Institution, which covers institutions and bodies authorised by the VQA to accredit education and training institutions in the field of national vocational qualifications;
- Carrying out activities of accreditation of education and training institutions in the field of national vocational qualifications; assessment, evaluation and certification of individuals and verification of vocational qualification certificates possessed by foreign nationals.

The VQA is planning to operate and manage the framework with other designated bodies such as the MoNE and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Furthermore, the VQA will be responsible for the quality assurance of vocational and technical qualifications included in the framework whereas the MoNE, CoHE and universities are responsible for the development, assessment and certification of qualifications under their scope of work. In addition, Amendments to article 23 were made, here it is stated that works related to the preparation, development and updating of the National Qualifications Framework shall be carried out by the Authority.

In addition to the laws, as stated in the 2010 Report for Turkey, the Ninth Development Plan covering the period 2007 – 2013 emphasises the importance of lifelong learning for the improvement of vocational education and qualifications. In this respect, the Plan supports the work of the VQA and can be seen as a framing strategic document.

The Lifelong Learning-DG of the Ministry of National Education also carries out some activities for the organisation and provision of non-formal learning opportunities. In this respect, the DG works on validation of prior learning. For example in 2013, the pilot project on the 'Improvement of Lifelong Learning in Turkey – Recognition of Prior Learning' has been completed. Please see Section 2.6 for further information on this project.

In the vocational sector, out of the four stages of validation, two are addressed: formal assessment and certification. The Regulation on Vocational Qualification, Testing and Certification regulates these stages. Testing and certification operations are carried out by the certification bodies, which are authorised by the VQA, by making use of and a reference to the national qualifications for the respective occupations. The scope and method of testing is defined by the certification schemes with regards to each respective qualification and is described on the VQA website, e.g., written exam composed of multiple-choice questions and practical exam where applicants shall apply their knowledge. Based on the test results and confirmation of the VQA, the certification body issues the certificate for qualifications based on occupational standards within 30 days. Concerning the identification stage, the regulation does not include any information. The certification bodies can have debates, interviews or make use of portfolios, but there is not a standard procedure in this regard.

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4 Internet: www.myk.gov.tr
5 Internet: http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/index.html
7 Internet: http://myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/component/yeterlilik_sor/?view=yeterlilik_sor
Concerning the documentation stage, the provision of certain documents is not necessary. Even though applicants may need to prepare certain documents upon advice of the certification body, in principle, formal assessment is determinant for validation and individuals can apply also with no documents present.

The validation process is described as a whole in the Regulation. The certificates awarded through this process continue to be different from those awarded at the end of formal education. Any individual intending to have their qualifications certified can apply for the test to an authorised certification body, which passes the relevant documents to the VQA and the VQA finally decides their eligibility. Apart from that the law does not specify any eligible group of applicants. Individuals can find relevant information on the certification bodies on the VQA website.

According to the Regulation on Vocational Qualification, Testing and Certification, the certification aims at ensuring the "portability and certification of any individual learning outcomes gained by way of training and experience in a manner independent of the locations of training and jobs of employment". This process is valid for vocational and technical qualifications gained through formal, non-formal and/or informal learning provided by private or public vocational education and training institutions. The process is also used to recognise prior experience.

In the higher education sector, non-formal and informal learning is, by law, not recognised for admission or partial fulfilment of study requirements. Higher education institutions are legally not allowed to validate non-formal and informal learning. As mentioned in the previous report, within the framework of the Bologna Process reforms, national higher education qualifications are defined with reference to the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning based on student workload and learning outcomes, which can be considered as a step towards facilitating probable validation procedures. Still, at the moment, only formal qualifications are recognised in the system.

2.2 Skills audits

Since 2010, a National Career Information System has been available in Turkey. The system is coordinated by the Ministry of National Education, the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), and other relevant stakeholders. The system aims to facilitate the access to vocational guidance programmes at all ages, to promote the dissemination of vocational guidance programmes and to provide guidance for individuals at the age of 13 and above in their lifelong learning processes. Individuals using the system will be supported to identify their skills, interests, competences, and motivations in three respects: education, labour market, and self-auditing.

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

Qualifications and qualifications frameworks

In Turkey, for the higher education sector, work on the NQF started in relation to the Bologna Process reforms. In May 2006, the Commission for the NQF for Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Yeterlikler Komisyonu) was established on the basis of the Dublin Descriptors. The commission prepared a draft for the national qualifications in line with the European Qualifications Framework based on the levels of knowledge and understanding, applied knowledge, and competences that shall be gained by the end of each cycle. In January 2010, the Council of Higher Education updated the NQF by adding the associate level descriptors (the fifth level) and renamed it as the NQF for Higher Education in Turkey (NQF-TR). ‘In January 2011, the implementation of the NQF started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of HEIs, quality assurance agencies and other bodies.’ (Demir 2012, 4). Since 2011, ‘qualifications on fields of education and training according to ISCED

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9 Internet: http://mbs.meb.gov.tr/
97 have been approved’, and the HEIs are asked to define programme qualifications by December 2012. Currently, the Council of Higher Education is preparing a regulation which will define the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders (Demir 2012, 5).

The development of the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) is ongoing. According to the VQA Law, Article 23/a added in October 2011, ‘works related to the preparation, development and updating of the National Qualifications Framework shall be carried out by the Authority’. The TQF is going to include all quality assured qualifications gained through general and vocational education and training programmes and other means of learning, including elementary, secondary and higher education (CEDEFOP Report, VQA website10). According to interviewees, the TQF will cover qualifications gained through non-formal and informal learning as well. The TQF is planned to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval at the end of 2013. The link between the TQF and validation arrangements will become clear once the TQF is functional.

**Credit systems**

In Turkey, a European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)-compatible system is applicable for higher education and a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)-compatible system is applicable for vocational education. In the higher education sector, a credit system, similar to the North American system, is widely applied. The credits are based on the weekly lecture and half of the weekly laboratory or practicum hours. Legislative changes have been made concerning the use of the ECTS credits. Since 2006, the use of the ECTS is obligatory in all higher education institutions. The ECTS, however, did not replace the existing national credit system and instead is used in parallel with the national credit system, mainly for mobility programmes. At the moment, the national credit system is not fully compatible with ECTS, i.e. credits are not defined based on the student workload and learning outcomes. Since non-formal and informal prior learning is not recognised in the higher education sector, currently the use of ECTS cannot support the validation processes. The credit values for the vocational sector are determined based on the content of qualifications or elements of qualification units defined by knowledge, skills and competences, duration of programmes and ‘work load or notional learning activity volume an individual is assumed having spent at the stage of learning’.

As mentioned before, the link between validation and the NQF is to be clarified. For the time being, certificates obtained outside of formal education are not valid for admission or for partial exemptions in formal education at any level. The Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education define the formal requirements of admission.

Certificates obtained through non-formal learning are however recognised on the labour market. National Occupational Standards are used for the development of National Qualifications for each occupation. As mentioned in the introduction, within the last three years, more than 300 vocational qualifications have been defined and/or revised. So far, the defined qualifications range from Level 2 to 6 on the NQF. There is a unit-based structure based on learning outcomes for qualifications. Individuals have the chance to certify their competences based on single units as well as for full qualification.

**Standards**

The National Occupational Standards are defined as the norms prescribing ‘the possession of necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required for the successful performance of a profession’. The standards are prepared for certain occupations based on the needs of the labour market, educational institutions and sector committees of the VQA. In preparation of the standards, international examples and the European Qualifications Framework and Occupational Standards format constitute guiding examples.

The VQA is the main organisation responsible for coordinating and regulating the preparation of standards. Occupational standards and qualifications are prepared by the institutions and bodies assigned by the VQA or the working groups established by the VQA. Respective levels of the occupational standards and qualifications are prepared in

compliance with the levels in the NQF. The standards and qualifications approved by the Executive Board are enforced as national qualifications. These qualifications are not however recognised in the formal education system and therefore do not provide flexibility to access/progress into higher education.

As of October 2013, 480 occupational standards (408 new standards since 2010), are defined in 25 sectors, e.g. construction, education, electrics and electronics, energy, environment, finance, logistics and communications, mining, textile, tourism and service, health and social services, etc. The National Occupational Standards are defined based on learning outcomes and are compatible with the European Qualifications Framework and the NQF. In this regard, they are supportive for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

As described above, the evaluation and certification of non-formal learning is carried out by the VQA. The working principles and regulations of the VQA, as the only authority dealing with validation, can be considered standards for the validation process. The VQA defines the requirements of assessment and evaluation and certification.

2.4 National institutional framework

The VQA is the responsible organisation for the validation of vocational qualifications (see Section 2.1 above). As stated in the 2010 Report for Turkey, the work on the National Vocational Qualifications System supports the validation processes for the vocational sector and the labour market. The VQA carries out the certification of the national qualifications. As of October 2013, the VQA has approved and published 230 national qualifications (VET) in 13 sectors and the testing and certification work on 68 national qualifications continues. For the higher education sector, such validation processes are not applicable.

2.5 Governance and allocation of responsibilities

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

Turkey traditionally has a centralised administration system. In this respect, the decision-making predominantly takes place at the national level and the respective actors have the main responsibility. The Council of Higher Education is the responsible body for higher education. It regulates, coordinates and supervises all aspects of higher education and provides relevant information and legislation. Based on the current regulations, formal qualifications provide the only way into higher education.

The Ministry of National Education is the highest responsible unit for primary and secondary level education. It also coordinates all the non-formal learning activities within the context of lifelong learning. The Lifelong Learning-DG has carried out various projects in this respect. In addition to this, it provides information and guidance through its website and web portal.

Concerning vocational education and training and labour market qualifications, the VQA is the main responsible organisation at the national level. The VQA brings together a large variety of stakeholders and comprises a General Assembly, an Executive Board and service departments, e.g. Occupational Standards Department, Testing and Certification Department, International Relations and European Union Department, and Legal Consultancy and Administrative and Financial Affairs Department. The General Assembly is the highest decision-making organ of the VQA and is composed of the representatives from the government, education, training, the labour market and the third sector:

- the ministries (i.e. the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry for European Union Affairs, the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Customs and Trade, the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transportation, Maritime and Communication),
faculty members to be identified by the Higher Education Council from the disciplines of labour economics, business administration and vocational education related fields,
- other relevant public offices (i.e. the Turkish Employment Agency, Turkish Standards Institution),
- employers (i.e. the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey, the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen, the Union of Turkish Chambers of Agriculture, the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies, Turkish Assembly of Exporters),
- three labour unions having the highest number of members and the confederation of employers’ unions having the highest number of members.

In a similar way, its Executive Board comprises a total of six primary members and six alternate members, who are elected by the General Assembly from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of National Education, the Higher Education Council, the vocational organisations having a status as a public body, the Confederation of Trade Unions, and the Confederation of Employers’ Unions.

The VQA carries out information, promotion and raising awareness, counselling and guidance activities through its website and upon individual inquiries. The assessment and certification processes are described in Section 2.1. The VQA is also responsible for the quality assurance, evaluation, and review of the authorised bodies.

2.5.2 Explain more specifically the role of different stakeholders

There has not been a substantial change in this field since 2010. Education and training opportunities are provided by a variety of organisations, but only 11 ‘authorised bodies’ are eligible to certificate. Vocational Qualification Certificates are issued to graduates of accredited education and training institutions suitable for the vocational qualifications achieved. Principles and procedures related to the accreditation of education and training institutions and the designation of the education accreditation institutions in the field of national vocational qualifications as well as the issuing of certificates to the graduates of accredited education institutions is governed by a regulation to be issued by the VQA.

All stakeholders mentioned in Section 2.5.1 are actively involved in institutional, financial and technical aspects of validation through their work in relevant sector-committees and working groups. They contribute to the development of sector qualifications, a national qualifications framework, occupational standards and relevant policies.

2.5.3 Coordination between stakeholders

Since the VQA is the only organisation that carries out validation activities, the coordination of the process is rather straightforward. The VQA has an active role in coordination that mostly takes place through working group and sub-committee arrangements and consultation activities. This kind of centralised structure can be very effective in the dissemination of information throughout the system. The case of active involvement and high engagement of all stakeholders can reduce the risks in relation to the internalisation of changes.

2.6 Examples of national regional, local or EU funded initiatives

1. General initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project for Strengthening Vocational Qualifications Authority and National Qualifications System in Turkey (UYEP)</th>
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</table>

UYEP activities were initiated in October 2010 to offer consultancy for project management and policy making concerning the development of the National Qualification Standards (NQS), and supporting VQA in its highly important tasks to ensure that vocational education provided is in line

11 Information provided via interview.
12 Internet: http://www.uyep.net
with the needs of the labour market, to strengthen the link between education and employment, and to facilitate compliance with the European Qualifications Framework. UYEP was funded by the European Union to enhance the knowledge and awareness of the system amongst all stakeholders involved in the NQS (public and private sector representatives, employer and employee organisations, civil society organisations, and education providers) and to help them develop ownership of the system.

The overall objective of the project was to ensure the provision of formal and non-formal vocational and technical education and training according to labour market needs, supporting lifelong learning, strengthening the relation between education and employment, and facilitating harmonisation with the European Qualifications Framework.

The specific objective was to support the VQA, occupational standards development, and Vocational Knowledge and Skills Testing and Certification Centres (Awarding Bodies) to establish and initiate an efficient and sustainable national qualifications system based on agreed occupational standards with an appropriate system for assessment, grading, and certification at all levels in line with the European Qualifications Framework.

At the end of the project, the Turkish Qualifications Framework was established. Capacity was built amongst staff at VQA, certification bodies, and relevant stakeholders. Awareness and visibility of the system were raised.

Stakeholders involved: Members of Sector Committees in 16 selected target sectors; service providers that will be engaged to develop occupational standards, OSSBs, and qualifications; qualification developers and bodies to undertake testing and certification (Awarding Bodies); industrial and commercial sector organisations in terms of developing and understanding and acceptance of the NQS; grant beneficiaries; Ministry of National Education; Directorate General of Lifelong Learning; Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education; Directorate General of Innovation and Education Technologies; Directorate General of Special Education and Guidance Services; Ministry of Labour and Social Security; Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) and other labour market institutions; Council of Higher Education and the Universities; Local state institutions, municipalities, governorships; NGOs; social partners; unions; employer organisations; teacher unions; and civil servant confederations.

More information about this project can be obtained from contacts at VQA.

**Project for Promoting Lifelong Learning in Turkey**

The Project for Promoting Lifelong Learning in Turkey (May 2011- September 2013) was carried out by the Lifelong Learning DG of the Ministry of National Education. The project was funded by the European Union and aimed at improving the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal prior learning. Furthermore, the project aimed to establish an institutional framework of lifelong learning in Turkey in line with EU practices, by supporting individuals to receive a qualification certificate for all their types of prior learning, so to facilitate access to the labour market. Its emphasis on the informal prior learning distinguishes this project from others.

At the end of the project, three individuals from three occupational sectors received their certificates. The establishment of regional coordination centres is planned. To this end, currently, information visits to east and southeast Turkey are taking place.

Stakeholders involved: Ministry of National Education; Directorate General of Lifelong Learning; Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education; Directorate General of Innovation and Education Technologies; Directorate General of Special Education and Guidance Services; Guidance and Consultancy Centres; Ministry of Labour and Social Security; Vocational Qualifications Authority; Vocational Standards Development- Testing Centres; Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) and other labour market institutions; Council of Higher Education and the Universities; Formal and Informal Education providers, managers, deputy managers, and teachers; National and local Lifelong Learning Coordination Units; existing and potential students in the education institutions; unemployed, employed, unqualified and qualified adults, illiterates, especially women; local state institutions, municipalities, and governorships; NGOs; social partners; unions; employer organisations; teacher unions; and civil servant confederations.

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13 Internet: www.hayatboyuogrenme.gov.tr
More information about this project can be obtained from contacts at the Lifelong Learning DG of the Ministry of Education\textsuperscript{16}.

**CREAM\textsuperscript{15}**

Creative Blended Mentoring for Cultural Managers (CREAM) is a Leonardo da Vinci project funded by the EU. The project ran from December 2011 until November 2013.

The project ‘aims to develop and test a mentoring kit deployed into learning outcomes to foster creativity and entrepreneurial skills, based on the mapping of competences needed in the cultural sector’. The project is expected to help cultural managers to update their skills and validate their non-formal and informal learning, and enhance their employability. The project targets professionals in the cultural sectors, especially those without stable employment.

From Turkey, Denizli Special Provincial Administration\textsuperscript{16} participates in the project.

More information about this project can be obtained from the Strategy Development Directorate\textsuperscript{17}.

**VITA\textsuperscript{18}**

The ‘Validation of service-oriented learning outcomes with an innovative IT-based assessment and evidencing system’ (VITA) project aims at validation of competences gained in different, more or less informal learning contexts in and around schools, higher education institutes, the workplace, and adult learning contexts. The project is funded by the European Commission within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme and has a duration of two years. The project partners comprise NGOs and higher education institutions. From Turkey, the Middle East Technical University participates in the project.

VITA intends to link formal certification (EUROPASS), including formal and summative validation based on the European Qualification Framework, with evidence of social, personal and organisational competences (SPOC) that are essential in the service sector. For this purpose, VITA will apply the formative Level 5 approach that has been developed in a series of Lifelong Learning projects since 2005 to evidence development of SPOC and connect it with EUROPASS certification.

More information about this project can be obtained from the Middle East Technical University\textsuperscript{19}.

**MAS ECVET\textsuperscript{20}**

Mobility in Automotive Sector through ECVET (MAS ECVET) aims to support the implementation of ECVET in the automotive sector and to promote the transfer of occupational qualifications and

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\textsuperscript{15} Internet: http://www.projectcream.eu/

\textsuperscript{16} Internet: http://www.dioi.gov.tr

\textsuperscript{17} Mrs. Pelin Aslı Özên (pelinasli@gmail.com)

\textsuperscript{18} Internet: http://www.vita-eu.org/

\textsuperscript{19} Prof. Dr. Hanife Akar (hanif@metu.edu.tr) and Prof. Dr. Ali Yıldırım (aliy@metu.edu.tr)

\textsuperscript{20} Internet: http://www.masecvet.eu/
mobility of learners and workers. More specifically, the project aims to promote transparency, transferability, validation, and recognition of credits achieved by individuals in different learning contexts (formal, non-formal, and informal) of different countries. The project started in 2011 and has a duration of two years. The European Commission funds the project. Its target group comprises VET-related policy institutions, educational institutions, students, and employers. From Turkey, MEV-MESS Training Foundation\(^\text{21}\), MESS- Turkish Employers’ Association of Metal Industries\(^\text{22}\), the Turkish Metal Workers’ Union\(^\text{23}\), and Sisli Technical and Industrial Vocational High School\(^\text{24}\) take part in the project.

More information about this project can be obtained from MESS\(^\text{25}\).

2. Target Group Oriented Initiatives

VALUE\(^\text{26}\)

The ‘Validation of immigrants’ vocational skills and competencies in tourism and services as an integration warrant in the EU’ project aims at creating a pilot methodology for recognition and validation of vocational skills gained through work experience and competencies. In this regard, the project aims at transferring functioning models from countries with developed validation systems and continuous vocational training to countries with almost non-existent validation systems (e.g. Turkey). The transfer is expected to promote the flexibility of the education systems and make them more adequate to the demands of the labour market, increase the permeability of the labour market and the mobility of workers.

From Turkey Muğla University and Izmir Economics University participate in the project. The project started on in October 2010 and finished in October 2012. The project is implemented in the framework of the EC Lifelong learning Programme, under the Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation Action.

3. On the European Europass and Youthpass tools

In Turkey, the VQA coordinates the activities related to the documentation of the Europass and the National Agency\(^\text{27}\) (Ulusal Ajans) coordinates the activities related to the documentation of the Youthpass. These tools are functional for the mobility programmes and activities. Based on the information received from the interviewee, the documentation does not constitute an essential stage in validation. While presentation of such documents might be useful, in principle, the formal testing of previous non-formal and informal learning is determinant in certification.

2.7 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

2.7.1 Funding

As stated in the 2010 Report for Turkey, the VQA has financial autonomy. Its revenues comprise:

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\(^{21}\) Internet: http://www.messegitim.com.tr
\(^{22}\) Internet: http://www.mess.org.tr
\(^{23}\) Internet: http://www.turkmetal.org.tr
\(^{24}\) Internet: http://www.sisli.k12.tr
\(^{25}\) Mr. Hakan YILDIRIMOĞLU, Secretary General, or Dr. Aykut ENGİN, Deputy Secretary General (mess@mess.org.tr)
\(^{26}\) Internet: value.org
\(^{27}\) Internet: http://www.ua.gov.tr/programlar/gen%C3%A7lik-program%C4%B1/proje-uygulama-s%C3%BCreci/youthpass
- membership fees of the institutions from the private and the third sector,
- fees collected from applicants for testing and certification works,
- revenues to be earned from national and international service provisions,
- annual dues and charges to be collected from institutions and bodies intending to provide services to the VQA in the fields of testing, assessment, evaluation, certification and accreditation,
- fees to be collected from publications, copyright, brand names and licences,
- revenues generated from the channelling of the revenues,
- other revenues, earnings, and donations.

As a result of the change made in 2011 concerning the allocation of the revenues, most of the revenues come from the state budget, which increased the sustainability of the institute’s funding. Authorised certification bodies’ funding is mainly provided by service users.

There is overall funding provided to the institutions carrying out validation activities, in addition to their other activities. In other words, the funding is not specifically allocated for validation. Therefore, it is not possible to state an overall government budget specifically for validation. The following figures show the overall budget of the VQA, part of which is spent for validation.

**Table 2.1 Overall Budget of VQA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget in TRL (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6 883 000 (EUR 2 482 829)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7 865 000 (EUR 2 838 023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8 216 000 (EUR 2 964 678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9 129 000 (EUR 3 294 120)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VQA (2013)

### 2.7.2 Distribution of costs

The VQA, alongside its other costs (e.g. staff etc.), pays fees to authorised organisations for occupational standards, testing and certification services. Please see Annex 1 for the table of fees paid to the VQA by the authorised bodies.

Individuals pay fees to the authorised bodies for testing and certification. Currently, there are 12 authorised bodies and each charge different fees. The links to the fees can be found at internet: (http://www.myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/yetkilendirilmi-belgelendirme-kurular).

### 2.7.3 Data on flows of beneficiaries

As shown in the following table, the number of people who certified their previous vocational qualifications has increased substantially since 2010.

**Table 2.2 Number of people receiving certification for previous vocational qualifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4 626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7 115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VQA data

According to the VQA data, more than 50 % of those people with certificates are in the age cohort of 25-29 and the majority of them are men. Yet, it shall be noted that currently the...
occupational sectors in which previous qualifications can be validated are mostly male-dominated sectors, e.g. construction.

2.7.4 Evidence of benefits to individuals

The validation processes started rather recently in Turkey; therefore, it is rather early to assess the outcomes. The first certificates were distributed in 2010. According to the results of the research projects carried out in the VQA, individuals with such certificates are preferred more by employers, tend to have higher status in the workplace, and have increased self-esteem. In addition to this, individuals are supported and encouraged to take further training courses to be able to apply for validation, which contributes to their capacity building.

3 Information, advice and guidance

3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

Individuals can receive information from the VQA website and the authorised certification bodies and apply to take the test and receive a certificate. Services are provided for the general public without a focus on specific target groups.

In addition to this, the VQA provides information and raises awareness through presentations in relevant conferences, workshops, and seminars organised by stakeholders, and through a news bulletin. Considering that the validation of prior non-formal and informal learning is a new phenomenon in Turkey, most of the information is oriented towards explaining the basic features and benefits of the system. Furthermore, the VQA carried out a project entitled ‘Strengthening Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) and National Qualifications System (NQS) in Turkey’ (UYEP - Türkiye’de Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumunun ve Ulusal Yeterlilik Sisteminin Güçlendirilmesi Projesi in 2010-2013). One of the goals of the project was raising awareness of the validation processes. The specific objective is supporting the establishment of ‘an efficient and sustainable National Qualifications System based on agreed occupational standards with an appropriate system for assessment, grading, and certification at all levels in line with European Qualifications Framework’ (UYEP website).

3.2 Role of information, advice and guidance networks/institutions

The VQA is the central body delivering information, guidance and advice at all stages of validation. The main source is the VQA’s website. Individuals can receive information on the documentation they need to submit to start a validation procedure, on the authorised bodies to apply to for certification and taking the test, and on the results of certification. They can also submit individual enquiries to receive further information. In addition to this, the certification bodies are essential in the provision of information and raising awareness on the validation processes.

The Lifelong Learning DG of the Ministry of National Education provides information via its project website on lifelong learning possibilities and the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning.

Individuals can also receive e-guidance from the National Careers Information System.

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29 Information gathered via interview
31 Internet: http://hayatboyu.meb.gov.tr/
32 Internet: http://mbs.meb.gov.tr/
3.3 Measures to enhance the awareness of validation initiatives and practices amongst guidance practitioners
In all the above-mentioned activities, guidance practitioners are involved.

4 Quality assurance and evaluation

4.1 Quality Assurance Framework
The development of the quality assurance system is rather recent in Turkey. First steps are taken in the formal education and training sector. In higher education, there has been a functional quality assurance framework since 2005. The Commission of Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions (YÖDEK33) was established in 2005 to carry out and coordinate quality assurance activities at the national level. YÖDEK members comprise academic staff from universities and a representative from the National Student Council. YÖDEK carries out its activities within the framework of the strategies and aims defined by the Council of Higher Education. Quality assurance in higher education is regulated by the by-law on Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions, which sets the principles of evaluation and improvement of quality in teaching and research activities and administrative services, of student involvement, and of external assessment. The by-law is constituted in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

Concerning the vocational education sector, there is not a functioning quality assurance mechanism. The Ministry of National Education is carrying out a project called 'Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Turkey'34. The project is funded by the European Commission and runs from May 2012 until May 2014. The project aims at the establishment of a quality assurance framework for the vocational sector. The project covers selected schools in 21 provinces ( Ağrı, Bingöl, Bİttîs, Çorum, Diyarbakır, Erzincan, Gaziantep, Hakkâri, Iğdır, Kahramanmaraş, Kastamonu, Kilis, Mardin, Muş, Ordu, Rize, Sivas, Siir, Trabzon, Van, and Yozgat).

4.2 Quality assurance systems/procedures
According to the changes made in 2011 to the VQA law, Article 23/A, the VQA ensures the quality assurance of the vocational and technical qualifications which are included in the NQF. Principles and procedures related to the quality assurance criteria of the qualifications to be included in the national qualifications framework are governed by a regulation to be enforced upon decree. The work in this respect is ongoing.

4.3 Evaluation framework
The evaluation framework has not changed since 2010. The responsibility for internal evaluation of the authorised certification bodies lies with these institutions and the responsibility for external evaluation lies with the VQA.

5 Validation methods

5.1 Methods used and the validation process

<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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 Internet: http://www.yodek.org.tr/
6 Validation practitioners

6.1 Profile of validation practitioners

Most of the practitioners are teachers. Yet, it shall be noted that the occupational background of the practitioners depends on the respective sector for validation. For example, if it is on interpretation, then interpreters tend to be the practitioners.

6.2 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

The staff training comprises orientation courses and in-job one-to-one consulting and guidance. In addition to this, within the framework of UYEP (see Section 3.1.) capacity building trainings is provided.

6.3 Qualifications requirements

The mandatory qualification requirements are defined in the Staff Regulation35 of the VQA in relation to academic qualifications (university degree), language requirements, and work experience.

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References


Validation of immigrants’ vocational skills and competences in tourism and services as an integration warrant in the EU. www.value.org [accessed 1.10.2013].


http://www.ua.gov.tr/programlar/gen%C3%A7lik-program%C4%B1/proje-uygulama-s%C3%BCreci/youthpass [accessed 1.10.2013].

*Staff regulation of the VQA.*

### 7.1 Organisations consulted

Vocational Qualifications Authority
### Annex 1

Vocational Qualifications Authority – Certification Fees and Charges in 2013

**A) Documentation fees:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation fee (All levels)</th>
<th>40 TRL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**B) Application Fees for Authorisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application fee</th>
<th>500 TRL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**C) Annual Fee:**

For the authorised certification bodies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The number of qualification certificates</th>
<th>Annual Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-500</td>
<td>5 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-750</td>
<td>6 250 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751-1200</td>
<td>7 800 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1201-1800</td>
<td>9 750 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-2700</td>
<td>12 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2701-4000</td>
<td>15 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001-6000</td>
<td>19 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6001-9000</td>
<td>23 250 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9001-18000</td>
<td>28 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18001 ve üzeri</td>
<td>33 500 TRL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Education Accreditation Institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Number of Accredited Institutions</th>
<th>Annual Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>5 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>6 250 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>7 800 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-36</td>
<td>9 750 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-54</td>
<td>12 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-80</td>
<td>15 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-120</td>
<td>19 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121-180</td>
<td>23 250 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-360</td>
<td>28 000 TRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>361 ve üzeri</td>
<td>33 500 TRL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C) Audit Fee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audit Fee (Per person/Day)</th>
<th>1 100 TRL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>