European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update

COUNTRY REPORT: **TURKEY**

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Acknowledgements

Disclaimer:

1 Introduction

Turkey has made considerable progress in developing its qualifications system, while implementing systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) has been a priority. Since 2006, the country has had a VNFIL system for vocational qualifications. The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), a powerful platform that brings together the state, employees and employers in the country, runs this system. The ultimate aim of the system is to equip the labour force with up to date qualifications and recognize learning in the workplace.

The Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) supports the validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal contexts. The TQF Regulation (2015) refers to the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and includes a specific article, which foresees the preparation of specific principles and procedures for the recognition and quality assurance of prior learning.

Following the adoption of the TQF in 2015, the framework was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-certified to the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education area (QF-EHEA), in 2017. EQF referencing criterion 3 refers specifically to the relation of national qualifications frameworks with arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The infrastructure for validation is in place, and the current agenda is to improve the communication, collaboration and co-ordination of all relevant stakeholders. The assessment and certification as defined in the Council Recommendation on VNFIL in 2012 are in place, on the other hand, the identification and documentation need to progress more with tools and other self-assessment approaches.

VNFIL for newly developed vocational/professional qualifications was initiated by VQA, leading to the establishment of Authorised Certification Bodies (ACBs), 170 in total by August 2018. ACBs carry out assessment, evaluation and certification processes. The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) strongly focuses on validation processes and promotes extensive use of validation. In October 2017, MoNE issued the regulation on VNFIL principles and implementation, regarding accreditation, assessment and evaluation. VNFIL is still in a starting phase in higher education. It was legally introduced to the Turkish higher education system in 2011 by the amendment of Law No 2547 (article 44/b). VNFIL work with migrants and refugees has started and there has been significant progress.

2 National perspective

2.1 Overarching approach to validation

Turkey initiated VNFIL in 2006 with the establishment of VQA, whose remit was to develop new vocational qualifications with labour market partners. Adults with work experience can acquire such qualifications by going through an assessment of their knowledge and skills. The assessment, evaluation and certification of learning outcomes against national vocational qualifications is carried out by authorised certification bodies that are also newly established. These bodies offer no education or training for these qualifications. They operate as validation centres but within Turkey's e specific model .

The validation system in Turkey differs in some respects from the approach described in the 2012 Recommendation. Namely, validation at VQA is based on the

demonstration of learning outcomes rather than on documented evidence. Therefore, the first two stages of the validation model of the 2012 Recommendation, identification and documentation, have not been fully implemented. Every candidate must take the theoretical and practical exams regardless of their previous experience and career. The assessment methods are described in detail in each qualification standard[1]. Developing an NQF that enhances the quality of education and training and strengthens the link between education and employment has been a priority for Turkey. Therefore, the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) is based on learning outcomes. The TQF is expected to meet the education and training needs of all individuals through lifelong learning, support the development of qualifications required by the labour market and facilitate the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Regulation on TQF, approved by a Cabinet Decision, gives the TQF a very strong legal status.

The TQF Regulation includes provisions for recognition of prior learning, stipulating that all qualifications included in the TQF can be attained via RPL/ VNFIL.

Learners will have the following possibilities through the recognition of prior learning:

■ access to programmes;
■ access to exams;
■ exemptions;
■ certification of units;
■ credit accumulation and transfer;
■ recognition of qualifications.

The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document promotes extensive use of VNFIL. The General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DG LLL) of MoNE has conducted two EU IPA Lifelong learning projects with VNFIL components. The LLL2 Project, completed in 2017, lays the foundation for the VNFIL system under MoNE's remit and provides organising principles and mechanisms for the identification, assessment and certification in relation to the qualifications under the authority of MoNE. VNFIL was legally introduced to the Turkish higher education system in 2011 but is still in an early phase.

The TQF Coordination Council, where all relevant partners are represented, will prepare guidelines for principles and procedures on RPL/VNFIL. This will be a general VNFIL framework. The responsible bodies--VQA, MoNE and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) shall be responsible for applying these principles and procedures for the qualifications under their authority. The document is planned to be finalised by 2019.

Since the most extensive arrangements on VNFIL are carried out by VQA at the national level, it is foreseen that the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DG LLL) of MoNE, as the other major authority in this field will work in close cooperation with VQA in terms of transparency and accountability of VNFIL processes. Also, to ensure the development, update and consistency of VNFIL policies at national level, the work of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and CoHE in this field is expected to align with the work in the other two institutions[2].

2.2 Validation in education and training

A national system of validation is in progress and the establishment of the TQF and the aforementioned new regulations support the further development of the system.

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[1] For more information see section 4.

[2] Turkish Qualifications Framework, Turkish Referencing Report. Ankara: December 2016.

The VNFIL legal framework for the qualifications under the authority of MoNE has been updated. Amendments of the VET Law (3308, dated 2 December 2016, and adopted by the Parliament) stipulate that "the vocational qualifications related to prior learning are defined based on the occupational standards and their levels and assessed by testing. In October 2017, MoNE issued the regulation on the principles and implementation of VNFIL, regarding accreditation, assessment and evaluation. In March 2018, the regulation on secondary education was amended to include VNFIL in the system.

A new lifelong learning (LLL) regulation (April 2018, numbered 30388) stipulates that MoNE decides the occupations whose learning outcomes can be validated. Non-formal and informal learning are validated according to the assessment procedures for the standards. There is no separate strategy for validation of learning through open educational resources (OER). The new LLL regulation only mentions that open education schools and distance education facilitate LLL.

All these regulations refer to the four stages of validation as defined by the 2012 Council Recommendation. As the existing validation system established by VQA is geared towards assessment and certification, the first two stages—identification and documentation— require further development.

The VET sector is prioritised since there is a great need for workers to obtain qualifications, which recognize their skills and provide evidence of these. This is also important for employers – to be able to show that they have a qualified workforce.

MoNE has conducted two LLL Projects. Both LLL1 and LLL2 had VNFIL components. In the LLL1 project, a framework and guidelines were designed to develop VNFIL in MoNE. The process was piloted in three occupations. The LLL2 Project implemented and improved on the VNFIL framework developed in the previous project.

Box 2.1   LLL 2 Project in MoNE

The planning document for the LLL2 project set out to implement the MoNE's VNFIL framework within the context of lifelong learning. Drawing on the Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper and relevant international guidelines, it laid the foundation for the VNFIL system under MoNE's remit, and provided organising principles and mechanisms for the identification, documentation, assessment and certification for qualifications under their authority. The framework may be subject to review following the publication of overall principles on VNFIL by the VQA General Assembly. Yet, the framework has been updated to account for changes since the LLL1 project and also because certain things had not happened as planned, e.g. Provincial LLL Coordination Units had not been established. Nevertheless, VNFIL assessment tools (validation sets) in relation to seven (7) occupations were developed. The project translated these validation sets into English so that they could be quality assured. The seven occupations in four fields for which validation sets were developed are in the fields of Automotive, Energy, Construction and Metal. The occupations are automotive electronics, mechanical maintenance, heating and natural gas interior installation staff, biogas systems staff, wooden moulding, ironworker for iron concrete, concrete worker, heat isolationist and metal works serial production bench worker. Unfortunately, within the Project span, there was no opportunity to pilot them. The vocational training centres that the VNFIL would be conducted in have been transferred to the General Directorate for VET (DG VET) in MoNE. This DG has developed assessment criteria for 27 occupational areas and 141 branches based on VQA assessment forms and the ones used in the LLL2 project. The examinations based on the new criteria and format were conducted the first time in February 2018, thus making the results of the LLL 2 Project sustainable. These new developments are based on the changes made in the VET Law numbered 3308, dated 2 December 2016, and adopted by the Parliament, which states that "the vocational qualifications related to prior learning are defined based on the occupational standards and their levels, and assessed by testing."

Moreover, within the Project, LLG professionals' competency developments and training of the professionals within MoNE, have been conducted. Capacity building within the Ministry is in progress.

Assessors in the 27 areas and 141 branches are the teachers were trained by VQA, who are satisfied with this new methodology. In February 2018, there were around 68, 000 applications, and around 35,000 were successful in the exams (51% success rate). Such exams will be conducted twice a year. The exam standards and conditions are aligned with the VQA standards and conditions and this reflects effective communication and coordination among the stakeholders. Moreover, aligning the DG VET regulation with VQA regulation is in progress.

Effective VNFIL requires stakeholder partnerships with broad participation. Non-formal and informal learning do not fit neatly into pre-existing structures. Therefore, VNFIL development needs to draw on organisations such as professional chambers, industry, employers and enterprises, public and private providers of technical and vocational education and training, trade unions, local governments/authorities, municipalities, continuing education and training services, community organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Some universities have initiated arrangements at institutional level, authorised by their respective Senates. The CoHE is authorized in Law No 2547 to issue a directive on validation. In early 2018, CoHE issued an instruction, based on Higher Education Law item 44b, that describes the basic principles of VNFIL and gives the responsibility to define VNFIL basics to the Senates of the universities. Sakarya University and Yıldız Technical University are two HEIs that have established basic VNFIL principles and have validation guidelines in place for both students and administrators. The skills previously acquired could be validated by exemption exams, work experience portfolios or recognising the certificates from other institutions. Other universities have not announced their decisions on this yet.

Box 2.2   The TURQUAS Project

For CoHE, the TURQUAS Project is the first Erasmus+ project, which aims to promote, facilitate and internalise the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms. It was initiated in February 2017. The project "Implementation and Sustainability of EHEA Reforms in Turkish Higher Education System" (TURQUAS), which is perceived as an important motivation tool to fulfil the requirements of the "Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education" and the "Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Regarding the Implementation of the "National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey"", is expected to finish in two years. Raising awareness of quality assurance in Turkish higher education institutions, internalising quality culture and generalising the institutional external evaluation process in higher education institutions are among the goals of the project. Recognition of prior non-formal and in-formal learning is not in place. Despite the progress in Bologna process tools in the country, recognition of prior learning (RPL) is still the weakest part of the Turkish higher education system due to the need for legislative changes. Work Package 3 of the TURQUAS project addresses this, in order to support employability, develop awareness in VNFIL, and to develop infrastructure and a VNFIL manual for higher education. Recognition of higher education diplomas and degrees at associate, bachelor and master levels gained abroad is another subject of the project.

2.3   Validation and the labour market

The system to assess, evaluate and certify skills of adults against national vocational qualifications (qualifications under the authority of VQA) is operational. Assessment, evaluation and certification is administered by Authorised Certification Bodies (also-

called VocTest Centers) that are accredited by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) and authorised by VQA.

By August 2018, the country had 170 ACBs and numbers are increasing. ACBs conduct assessment, evaluation and certification of learning outcomes for 258 national vocational qualifications (as of 30 June 2018). Successful candidates receive VQA vocational qualification certificates; by 30 June 2018, 358,679 certificates had been issued in 16 sectors.

VQA certification has become compulsory for 81 hazardous occupations, which puts a strain on the system's capacity. The number of certificates awarded in these 81 occupations is 326,431 as of 30 June 2018.

The identification stage of the validation process is carried out by the ACBs focusing on the eligibility of the candidate to start the procedure. The ACB judges whether the candidate meets the entry requirements that are defined in the qualification standard and informs the candidate about the assessment procedure.

As explained before, VQA's validation system is based on the actual demonstration of the learning outcomes rather than on documented evidence. There is no structured identification stage mapping the skills of the candidate nor a documentation stage gathering evidence. This is the specificity of the Turkish system. Therefore, every candidate should take the theoretical and practical exams as defined in the qualification standard. Several methods are used at the assessment stage such as case studies, interviews, practical demonstrations, simulation, role-plays, and presentations. Various assessment activities are videos recorded and stored accordingly. The certification process is carried out by the VQA. VQA authorises and issues vocational qualification certificates.

ACBs are established and run by the private sector (half of ACBs are private sector companies) and by public and non-governmental bodies such as chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, employer associations and unions for craftsman. They mainly focus on empowering employees in the sector, to improve their qualifications and obtain the VQA certification. Recently, some of them have also initiated validation work with migrants and refugees. An example is provided below:

> **Box 2.3   TOBB MEYBEM, an ACB, supporting the labour market integration of the host community and the migrants**
>
> TOBB MEYBEM, founded by TOBB (the umbrella organisation of the Turkish business community), together with the local and provincial offices of TOBB in 81 provinces, works on VNFIL. This ACB provides validation in the hazardous occupations in cooperation with the local Chambers of Industry and Trade in all provinces. TOBB MEYBEM focuses on 5 main sectors, construction, metal, machinery, automotive and electronics. By the end of March 2018, TOBB MEYBEM has validated more than 30.000 people throughout 81 provinces and 160 districts. Moreover, with its capacity and local network, TOBB MEYBEM also aims at contributing to the revision process of the national occupational standards while taking the sectoral perspective into consideration and expanding its accreditation into more sectors and occupations.
>
> Moreover, the organisation actively validates migrants' non-formal and informal learning as well as develops awareness by providing them with VNFIL information to facilitate their labour market integration. The ACB also seeks to extend these activities to the local communities. In addition, the organisation supported the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) pilot work on migrants in September 2017.

> **Box 2.4   HAK-İŞ MEYEB, an ACB for labour market integration of the host community and migrants**
>
> HAK-İŞ MEYEB is HAK-İŞ's accredited certification body, which carries out VNFIL assessment and certification since 2012. Based on sectoral demands, this ACB administers VNFIL and develops training programmes based on national qualifications and standards as well as establishes training centres. This ACB has also conducted VNFIL with Syrians who are under temporary protection regime in the Hatay province. In October 2017, 33 migrants had assessment and certification in crane operation. These migrants had vocational training prior to the VNFIL process. The documents were translated into Arabic and translators supported the assessment process. This was carried out as part of an ILO project.

2.3.2   Skills audits

There are no well-established processes to support skills audits in Turkey. There are job and employment counselling services in the Turkish Employment Agency İŞKUR, supporting individuals for job/employment counselling and developing career plans. These services are for employed and unemployed individuals. The job and employment counsellors, with the support of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), organise training to support migrants in labour market integration and part of this training is on the validation processes and procedures.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank (WB) are in a joint venture with İŞKUR to develop ICT tools for the assessment and skills profiling of refugees. The EU Skills Profile tool for third country nationals has been introduced, but it has not become part of the system yet.

2.4   Validation and the third sector

Further research is needed to establish if validation is used in the third sector. There could be examples of validation to support youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities offered by third sector organisations.

3   Links to national qualification systems

The qualifications provided through validation are part of the national qualification systems. A full formal qualification may be awarded at the end of a validation procedure. VQA qualifications have a unit-based structure; candidates may acquire the units separately and accumulate them. MoNE awards the same qualifications through education and training and through validation.

The TQF is becoming the central organising tool of the national qualification systems; the validation system is an integral part of the TQF. All qualifications awarded through validation will be included in the TQF. The TQF is fully based on the principles and objectives of learning outcomes. VET programmes need to be aligned with national occupational standards to improve the link between education and employment. All education and training programmes and curricula need to be (re)designed based on learning outcomes, so that they align with national standards and qualifications and are included in the TQF. Formal and non-formal VET programmes are modular. This may lead to partial or unit qualifications in the future.

The TQF structure allows for the inclusion of qualifications that have been achieved through credit accumulation: for example, 'unit' qualifications are included in the range of qualification types. The qualification standards in the TQF include credit value, which will facilitate the development of credit systems by bodies responsible for the

awarding of qualifications. Currently, Turkey only has an operational system for credit accumulation and transfer in higher education, but MoNE is working on capacity building related to ECVET. Moreover, the National Agency for European Affairs arranges events to encourage improved awareness and preparations for a policy paper on ECVET. ECVET supports the validation of learning outcomes of individuals and supports LLL.

4 Standards

The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) is responsible for developing qualifications under the National Vocational Qualifications System. Qualifications under the mandate of VQA are based on national occupational standards and learning outcomes. National occupational standards are technical documents that define the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to practice an occupation successfully. They are defined by VQA based on labour market needs. Occupational standards describe the worker's profile as demanded by the sector and include the learning outcomes that the worker should have. Also present in the standards are:

■ legislation on healthcare, safety and environmental protection in the professional field;
■ work setting and conditions in which the occupation is practiced;
■ tools, materials and equipment used in the practice of the occupation;
■ technical requirements

National vocational qualification standards are based on occupational standards and are the basis for study programmes. The qualification standards include the NQF Level, Credit value and typical duration of the programme, learning outcomes, awarding body, assessment and evaluation methods, and progression paths. VQA uses these qualification standards for validation.

Employer organisations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been active in developing occupational standards (792 occupational standards as of 30 June 2018). Furthermore, 445 national vocational qualification standards have been developed.

The Ministry of National Education uses for validation the same learning outcomes that are defined for the formal education system. The VET programmes and curricula are being revised and redesigned taking into account the occupational standards developed by VQA. 160 occupational standards have corresponding VET curricula (around 25 % of the total number of available occupational standards). Individuals with a qualification based on occupational standards have a better chance at the labour market.

Education and training standards in the non-formal learning programmes run by MoNE are being aligned with the TQF and occupational standards so that the validation system would have the same reference points. At present, curricula have been redesigned for 19 occupations, and 14 more are planned for 2018.

5 Organisations and institutions involved in validation arrangements and its coordination

Stakeholder institutions develop national standards and qualifications as well as administer assessment, evaluation and certification. VQA coordinates labour market validation activities between the Ministries and the stakeholder institutions, employees and employers.

Sustainability of the system is ensured by the existence of 26 sector committees, which evaluate draft occupational standards and draft national vocational qualifications for acceptance by the VQA Executive Board. As per the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles for the Establishment, Duties and Operation of the VQA Sector Committees, the sector committees consist of representatives from MoNE, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, CoHE, other ministries related to the occupation, employer and labour unions and professional organisations and the VQA.

Duties of the VQA Sector Committees are to:

■ Make suggestions on the preparation, updating and improvement of occupational standards and qualifications as well as the timing of updates;
■ Submit opinions on new occupational standards and qualification formats and their updates.
■ Review the draft occupational standards and draft qualifications in terms of format and content, make evaluations and develop opinions to submit to the Executive Board.
■ Refer the deficient draft occupational standards and qualifications to the relevant department to be amended, review the amended drafts once more, make evaluations and develop opinions.
■ If necessary, audit the site where the occupation is practiced to develop an opinion on the draft occupational standard and draft qualification.

The private sector is at the centre of the validation system of VQA. Half of the authorised certification bodies are private sector companies.

The DG VET and, to a limited extent, DG LLL are the main departments in MoNE for the validation arrangements. According to a recent reorganisation at MoNE, Vocational Education Centres that administer validation are being transferred from DG LLL to DG VET. Some universities have started validation arrangements at institutional level, authorised by their respective Senates. As described in section 2.3, Sakarya University and Yıldız Technical University are the two HEIs that have established the basic VNFIL principles and have guidelines in place for both students and administrators.

6   Information, advice and guidance

6.1   Awareness-raising

VQA has held two "Vocational Qualification Conferences" in which three thousand people participated, both stakeholders from the business world and representatives of related public institutions. More than 60 events have been organised in different cities to reach employers and employed people without a formal qualification to introduce the Vocational Qualifications System and explain that people working in hazardous occupations are required by law to have VQA Certificates. Also the VQA system and regulations were promoted to school managements.

VQA has established a helpdesk to inform citizens and provide technical support to ACBs. VQA's services are now also provided through an e-State online tool. A public TV broadcast was aired and VQA management has contributed to several TV programmes to give information about VQA and validation. Seminars for candidate ACBs are held at least once a month. Authorised Certification Bodies have carried out several awareness raising activities to promote the validation system.

In MoNE, no awareness raising materials have been prepared yet and no activities have been conducted. Posters, brochures and pamphlets on VET have been distributed in all provinces.

6.2 Information, advice and guidance

Since the first two stages of the validation process (identification and documentation) have not been fully implemented in Turkey, information, advice and guidance services (IAG) are focussed on the opportunities for validation, the benefits of validation and on the assessment and outcomes of the validation procedures.

IAG is provided free of charge to validation candidates for VQA qualifications through the VQA web portal, an e-State online tool, ALO 170 telephone line, the helpdesk established in VQA and face-to-face briefings by ACBs. IAG is also provided to employers and providers before, during and after validation.

The Turkish employment agency İŞKUR has recruited almost 4,000 Job and Employment counsellors in previous years. These counsellors have received training on validation processes and have been actively involved in IAG activities for job seekers.

In MoNE, a short briefing is provided to the candidate on the validation process when they apply.

7 Validation practitioners

7.1 Profile of validation practitioners

ACBs have recruited professionals who inform and guide the individuals through the validation process for VQA qualifications. These are quality management representatives, assessors/decision makers/internal verifiers and certification managers. There are also several committees for appeals and complaints, objectivity and programmes. VQA monitors the qualifications of all these professionals and VQA experts provide support through face-to-face communication, e-mail and the VQA web portal.

Since the validation arrangements of MoNE and VQA are focused on the assessment of learning outcomes, the assessors are very important. Assessors' profiles are defined in the qualification standards. The assessors for the technical fields are mostly teachers at VET schools and engineers. For the other fields, the assessors are experienced professionals, e.g. an experienced hotel manager in the tourism field. There are also guidance practitioners/counsellors working in the education and labour market sectors.

The assessors at the vocational training centres under MoNE's remit are VET teachers, who administer assessment in their own fields and have had no prior training on validation. Lifelong Learning Projects in MoNE LLL1 and LLL2 in 2013-2017 included a focus on the validation process and practitioners' profiles as outputs (see Section 2.2 for more information on LLL1 and LLL2).

7.2 Qualification requirements

Specific requirements exist for all professionals who take part in the validation arrangements for VQA qualifications. Certification managers and quality management representatives of the ACBs should undertake the training provided by VQA focusing

on VQA processes and validation. The assessors/decision makers/internal verifiers should undertake the assessment and evaluation training on competence-based assessment. These training courses are a prerequisite for being employed by ACBs.

ACB programme committee members should meet the mandatory requirements for assessors, as specified in the qualification standards and accessible on VQA's and ACBs webpages. Mandatory requirements for other practitioners are defined in various VQA guidelines.

For VNFIL under MoNE's remit, VET teachers at vocational training centres can administer validation in their field of expertise.

7.2.1 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

VQA has developed a mandatory training programme for assessors; 6697 people have been trained. Of them, 3997 were trained on assessment and certification and 2700 on assessment and evaluation. The participants cannot work as assessors unless they pass the course. ACB managers provide additional 1-2 day courses to assessors about the national qualification system, national standards and qualifications. The assessors are observed and supervised during the assessment.

For VNFIL under MoNE's remit, training on the role of counsellors in the validation process was piloted within the lifelong learning projects (more info in Section 2.2).

8 Quality assurance

Before the TQF, the institutions and organizations were solely responsible for the quality of the qualifications they provided and there was no systematic link between different quality assurance (QA) practices. Neither was there any authority responsible for monitoring and harmonizing the QA systems at national level.

In March 2018 a new regulation was adopted on the QA of the qualifications in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (Regulation 30371, March 25th 2018). The regulation, prepared by the TQF Council, provides for an integrated QA approach for all qualifications of the formal and non-formal education and training sectors and all qualifications awarded through validation. The criteria for assuring the quality will be determined by responsible bodies in coordination with VQA, based on the principles and procedures for QA stipulated by the regulation. The TQF Coordination Council will monitor the continuous improvement of all QA processes. The responsible QA bodies are: MoNE, responsible for education and training qualifications under its remit, CoHE and higher education institutions (HEIs) responsible for higher education qualifications, and VQA responsible for vocational qualifications, as outlined in the VQA Law No. 5544. The quality of other types of qualifications (not under the responsibility of VQA, MoNE or CoHE) will be assured by the responsible bodies specified in the relevant legislation. The responsible bodies are expected to prepare the required documents and guides within a year and in two years' time, the implementation of the QA system will have started at educational institutions and the accredited certification bodies.
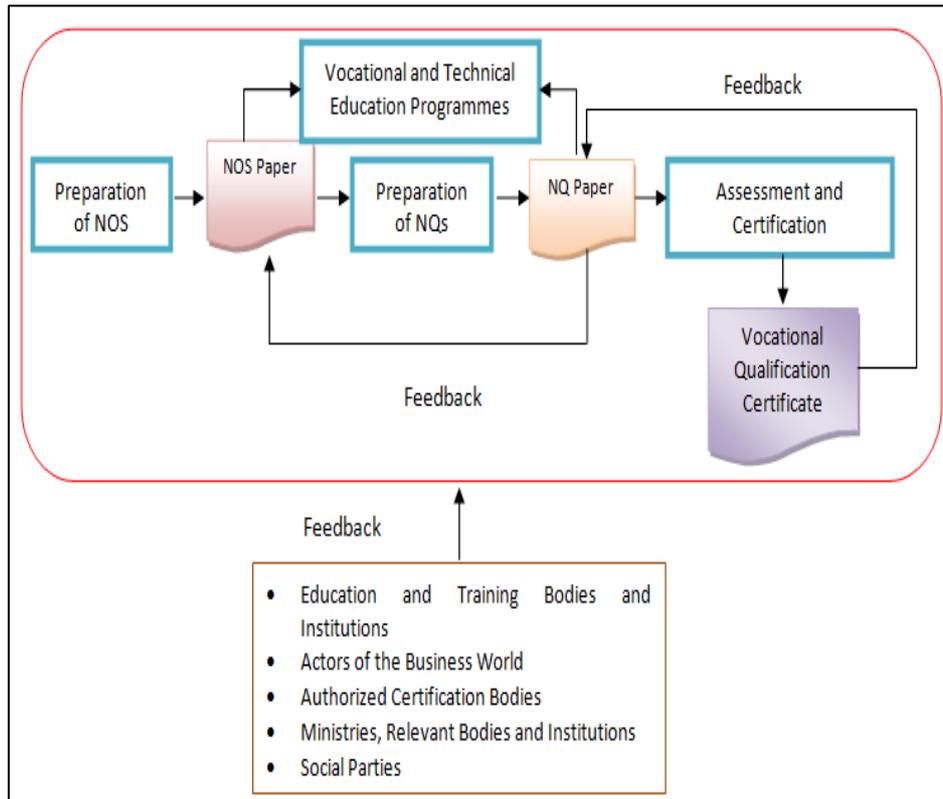
MoNE has established quality assurance committees to proceed with the work on the regulation. The results of the LLL projects (see Section 2.) will be incorporated, among others a checklist on the criteria and indicators on quality management. The process is based on the Lifelong learning regulation and the Quality Assurance of the Qualifications regulation. Quality assurance committees have been established in MoNE and the process to establish the new system has started. The DG VET has developed assessment criteria based on the VQA formats and the ones used in the

LLL2 Project. The exam follows VQA standards and tools (cameras, videotaping and audits). Aligning the DG VET regulation with VQA regulations is in progress.

The National Vocational Qualification System consists of various interacting processes that influence each other's quality. These processes and their interactions are outlined in Figure 8.1.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) provide input for National Qualifications (NQs), which are the basis of assessment and certification activities. Therefore, the quality of NOS influences that of NQs, and similarly, the quality of NQs directly influences that of assessment and certification processes.

Figure 8.1   National vocational qualification system

The VQA has a critical role in the development of quality assurance mechanisms. The action plan to improve the quality mechanisms related to national qualifications has been implemented. The criteria for accreditation and the processes of certification have been updated and are operational. Documentation for internal and external assessment has been prepared and is being used. Priority areas for the coming years are differentiating validation tools, i.e. to include portfolio tools and implement the accreditation of national qualifications and related processes in harmony with ECVET.
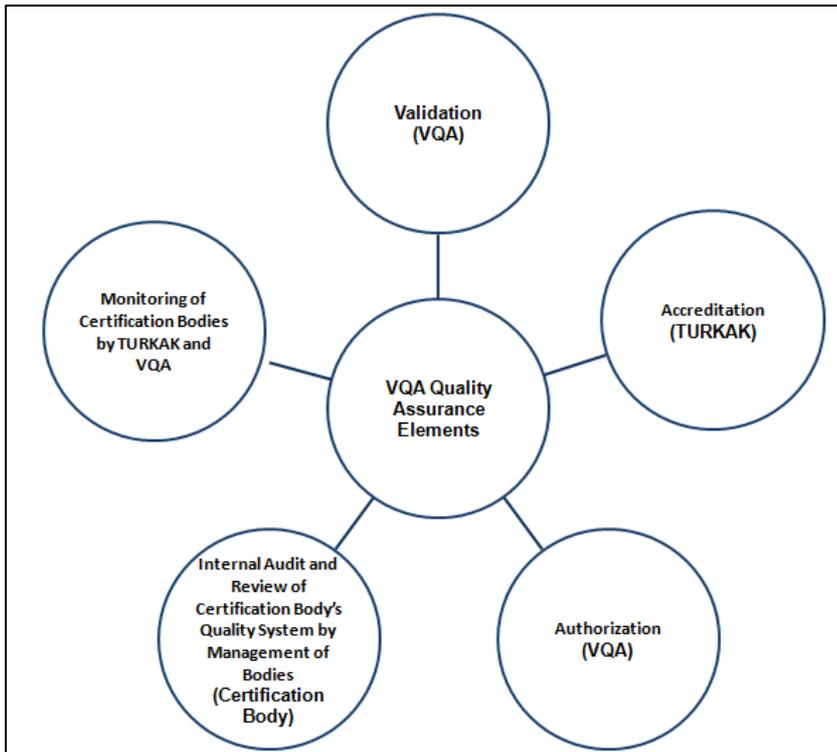
European Union recommendations on quality assurance have been taken into consideration in improving quality assurance principles and criteria. These recommendations include the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF), and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Quality assurance elements implemented in the standards are:

■   validation processes for standards and qualification preparation;

- accreditation and authorisation processes in the external evaluation of institutions to carry out assessment and certification activities on the basis of qualifications; and
- activities for surveillance auditing for monitoring ACBs and for reviewing their internal audits and management reviews.

Figure 8.2 below illustrates the quality assurance elements implemented by the VQA within the national vocational qualifications system.

Figure 8.2   Quality assurance elements

The VQA has a quality assured audit process for the ACBs, the specific quality criteria for authorising assessment and certification bodies are based on ISO EN 17024 Accreditation and the VQA Quality Assurance Criteria and Legislative Regulations. The audits can be scheduled or ad hoc. There were 429 scheduled and 191 ad hoc audits in 2018 as of 30 June 2018.

In case ACBs offer vocational training, they are required to separate training activities from their assessment system. All kind of assessment activities are video recorded and stored. Successful candidates are awarded the formal Vocational Qualification Certificates, which are included in the Turkish Qualifications Framework. VQA has developed draft certification criteria and the process of internal verification has started. A guide for this process was published in August 2018 and is available on the VQA web portal.

9 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

9.1 Funding

Funding arrangements involve the state, individuals and the organisation/institution. In some cases it is the employers and in others, the candidates who cover the expenses for validation. Support from state funds and EU funds is available. The

unemployment insurance fund is available for people who work in one of the 81 hazardous occupations and need a formal vocational qualification to practice. As of 30 June 2018, 259.121 people had made use of the unemployment fund for a total amount of almost 190 million TL[3]. A direct grant for validation, supported by EU funds is available for the assessment and certification of all qualifications provided by VQA, 32.040 people made use of this fund as of 30 June, 2018 for a total amount of 18 million TL. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization provides some financial support for employees of small and medium enterprises up to 30.000 TL per company. For validation under MoNE's remit, the individual only pays for the materials used. The other expenses are funded from the general budget.

9.2   Distribution of costs

9.2.1   Costs for ACBs

ACBs have several costs such as establishment of the centre, accreditation fee to TURKAK, authorization fee to VQA, audit fee to both TURKAK and VQA, staff costs, facility costs etc. The application fee for authorisation ranges from TL 2.250 to 3.500 and the audit fee (Per person/Day) is TL 1 500.

Table 9.1 shows the fees that ACBs pay to VQA depending on the number of certificates awarded

Table 9.1   Annual fee paid by the authorised certification bodies to VQA depending on the number of certificates issued

Number of qualification certificates	Annual fee (tl)
0-500	6.800
501-750	9.000
751-1200	11.200
1201-1800	15.725
1801-2700	19.400
2701-4000	22.200
4001-6000	30.000
6001-9000	37.000
9001-18000	44.000
18001+	48.750

Source: VQA (2018)

9.2.2   Costs for individuals

Assessment fees for vocational qualification certificates range from 750 to 1500TL; the average is around 1000 TL. The fees are determined by the ACBs depending on the complexity of the qualification and assessment cost. The fees are monitored by VQA. Assessment fees can be increased twice a year at inflation rate.

The documentation fee for all levels is TL 150.

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[3] €35.416.000. The rate for 1 Turkish Lira (TL) against the EUR was 0,18643 on June 30th, 2018.

For the non-nationals who want to get their vocational qualification certificates recognised/validated, if they apply from Turkey, the fee is TL 550, and if they apply from abroad, it is EUR 120 or $150.

As described in section 9.1, financial support is available from the unemployment fund and EU grant programmes. Moreover, if a candidate for validation is successful in the assessment, an amount of EUR 300 is paid back to the individual from the unemployment fund.

9.3 Evidence of benefits to individuals

There are several articles published in the magazines of occupational bodies, employer associations and social stakeholders about the benefits of validation to individuals, employers and the economy broadly. These articles indicate that the most important validation benefit is improving the employers' trust in the VQA awards. Since stakeholders such as employer associations are involved in the VQA validation processes, they trust the quality of these qualifications more than others. The individuals who have worked without a formal qualification for years reach the opportunity to receive a formal qualification to certify the learning outcomes they already have without further training. VQA awards are getting well-known in the sectors of economy and are preferred by individuals and employers.

9.4 Beneficiaries and users of validation processes

9.4.1 Validation trends

There is an increasing demand for validation for the 81 qualifications required to work in dangerous and hazardous occupations. In 2017, 168,260 people were awarded such qualifications through VNFIL and in the first six months of 2018 the number is 89,275. On average, 15,000 people per month are awarded these qualifications through validation.

The construction sector as one of the pioneer sectors of economy has the greatest demand for validation, since many employees in this sector lack formal qualifications and occupations in this sector are considered hazardous. Most validation cases in the past two years were in steel welder occupation with almost 50,000 awards. The second is "wooden moulder" with 35,000 awards. "Bar bender" qualification follows with around 28,000 awards. "Machine maintainer" is the fourth popular qualification with almost 26,000 awards while the "house painter" is the fifth with around 12,000 awards. The most popular qualification outside the 81 hazardous occupations is a "job and occupational consultant" with almost 5,000 awards. This qualification is also a mandatory prerequisite for employment at the Turkish Employment Agency.

9.4.2 Validation users

Among the 347,714 individuals who got VQA certificates through validation since 2015 as of May 2018:

- 97.5% are male;

- 3.4% are between 15 and 20 years of age; 68.4% are between 21 and 40 years of age; 28.2% are over 40 years old;

- 95% were already employed when they applied to validation;

- 74% of certificates are for qualifications at TQF level 3; 17% of certificates are for qualifications at TQF level 4;

- 300 people were foreigners.

The educational status of the validation users is provided in Table 9.2

Table 9.2 Education level of validation users

Level of education	Number of individuals	Share of total
literate	12229	3.5%
illiterate	18092	5.2%
graduates of junior high school	142159	40.8%
graduates of secondary school	63058	18.1%
graduates of VET high school	32604	9.3%
graduates of high school	55986	16.1%
graduates of vocational high school	13868	4.0%
graduates of university	10390	3.0%
master degree	314	0.1%
doctoral degree	11	0.003%

9.4.3 Validation and disadvantaged groups

ACBs provide opportunities for low-skilled individuals to validate their skills and upgrade their competences. The ACBs also provide information about training to support their skills development so that they would have better success rate in the process of assessment.

Specific support is available for people who are illiterate or visually impaired. These people are tested individually and the questions are read for them. For people with hearing impairment, certified translators with sign language skills are used. For candidates who do not understand Turkish, all materials are translated by a certified translator.

VQA has developed a guide on theoretical and performance-based assessment that specifies the validation process for disadvantaged groups. Women are a specific disadvantaged group. Female participation in validation is only 2%. This can be explained by the fact that most validation candidates are workers in hazardous occupations, where a VQA qualification is required by law. Women are underrepresented in these occupations.

Since 2016, considerable progress has been made on validation for migrants and refugees, specifically, with the contribution of international donors. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and ETF have supported the development of a framework for VNFIL for migrants[4]. The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) has developed a training programme on for the job and employment counsellors of Turkish Employment Organisation (İŞKUR) to empower them in working with migrants. The

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[4] Akkök, F (2017) A model for the validation of non-formal and informal learning for the Syrians under temporary protection regime. Ankara: ILO paper

ETF (2017 Recognition and validation of qualifications and skills for refugees: Selected practices from Europe; ETF report.

United Nations Development Programme and World Bank are developing tools for the assessment of skills and skills profiling.

Several ACBs already conduct assessment and certification of migrants (see section 2.3). Around 300 refugees have gone through validation. The number is low compared to the number of 350,000 Turkish citizens who have successfully completed the process. Yet, even the small number shows that this work is possible[5]. VQA has plans and allocated resources for further capacity building of the ACBs, specifically related to migrants' assessment and certification process. In cooperation with national and international organisations VQA is translating validation documents and item banks into Arabic to serve the target group.

Two ACBs (INTES and MEYBEM) have conducted assessment and certification for Chinese workers seeking employment in Turkey. Those who needed training before assessment, were referred by INTES to related training institutions. Both ACBs stressed the higher validation cost as additional funds are needed for interpreting as well as translating foreign language original documents. Both strongly emphasised that sustainable financial resources are required to maintain validation activities for this target group.

Box 9.1   ILO pilot work on VNFIL with the Syrians under temporary protection regime

In September 2017 ILO piloted validation for the Syrians who were under temporary protection regime. The piloted occupation was "steel welding" for 8 candidates who had been in training at the Vocational Education Centre in Gaziantep, whereas 40 candidates had had the training in that centre. The pilot was implemented together with the Gaziantep Commerce Chamber and a motivated and interested ACB. The documents were translated into Arabic language. Among the 8 candidates who volunteered for the VNFIL process, 4 were validated. Also, as part of this pilot, validation process on crane operating was conducted in Hatay and 9 out of 33 Syrians who had had the training in the centre were validated. ILO plans to extend the work on VNFIL for the migrants.

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10   Validation methods

Since the VQA validation system is based on the actual demonstration of the learning outcomes rather than documented evidence, the first two stages – identification and documentation, have been implemented poorly. Every candidate should take the theoretical (multiple choice, structured oral interviews, open-ended questions) and practical exams regardless of their previous experience and career. So, several methods are used at the assessment stage such as case studies, structured interviews, practical demonstrations, simulations, role-plays and presentations. The assessment methods are determined in detail in each qualification standard.

In MoNE, based on the assessment criteria prepared for each occupation, the individuals are assessed by observation techniques.

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[5] Presentation made by Akbiyik, O.S on the Validation week. Brussels: June 2018.

11 The position of validation in society; visibility and trust

The Regulation that made VQA qualifications mandatory for (currently) 81 occupations has given a boost to validation in Turkey. Some 350,000 people have validated their knowledge and skills through validation and most of these were workers in hazardous occupations without formal qualifications.

The involvement of stakeholders such as employer organisations in validation through the ACBs creates visibility and trust in the VQA qualifications and the validation process. The individuals who have worked without a formal qualification for years get the opportunity to receive a formal qualification and certify the learning outcomes they already have without further training. VQA awards are getting well-known in the sectors of economy and are preferred by individuals and employers.

A challenge for the coming years will be to make validation also accessible to other group such as women, migrants, unemployed people. Steps in this direction are being taken, both by VQA and the ACBs and through new validation arrangements under MoNE.

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Interviews were conducted with the following stakeholders: Mustafa Çolakoğlu, consultant to the Minister,MoNE and Özlem Kalkan, the expert, MoNE, Osman Seçkin Akbıyık, the head of the department of TQF, VQA, Buşra Dikici, the assistant expert, the department of TQF, VQA,Dr. Serap Karabacak, the expert, DG LLL, MoNE, Hasan

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13   List of Abbreviations

ACBs- Authorised Certification Bodies

CoHE- Council of Higher Education

DG-Directorate General

EQF- European Qualifications Framework

HAK-İŞ- Labour Union

HEI-Higher Education Institute

ICT- Information Communication Technologies

ILO- International Labour Organisation

IOM-International Organisation of Migration

IAG-Information, Advice and Guidance

İŞKUR- Turkish Employment Agency

LLL-Lifelong Learning

MEYBEM-An Authorised Certification Centre

MoNE -Ministry of National Education

MoLSS- Ministry of Labour and Social Security

NGO-Non-Governmental Organisation

NOS – National occupational standards

NQs –National qualifications

OER-Open Education Resources

QF-EHEA- Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

RPL-Recognition of Prior Learning

TİSK-Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations

TQF-Turkish Qualifications Framework

TOBB-Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges

TURQUAS- The Implementation and Sustainability of EHEA Reforms in Turkish Higher Education System Project

TÜRKAK-Turkish Accreditation Organisation

VQA- Vocational Qualifications Authority

VET- Vocational Education and Training

VNFIL-Validation of non-formal and informal learning

UNDP-   United Nations Development Programme

WB- World Bank Group

Acknowledgements

Disclaimer:

1   Introduction

Turkey has made considerable progress in developing its qualifications system, while implementing systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) has been a priority. Since 2006, the country has had a VNFIL system for vocational qualifications. The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), a powerful platform that brings together the state, employees and employers in the country, runs this system. The ultimate aim of the system is to equip the labour force with up to date qualifications and recognize learning in the workplace.

The Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) supports the validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal contexts. The TQF Regulation (2015) refers to the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and includes a specific article, which foresees the preparation of specific principles and procedures for the recognition and quality assurance of prior learning.

Following the adoption of the TQF in 2015, the framework was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-certified to the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education area (QF-EHEA), in 2017. EQF referencing criterion 3 refers specifically to the relation of national qualifications frameworks with arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The infrastructure for validation is in place, and the current agenda is to improve the communication, collaboration and co-ordination of all relevant stakeholders. The assessment and certification as defined in the Council Recommendation on VNFIL in 2012 are in place, on the other hand, the identification and documentation need to progress more with tools and other self-assessment approaches.

VNFIL for newly developed vocational/professional qualifications was initiated by VQA, leading to the establishment of Authorised Certification Bodies (ACBs), 170 in total by August 2018. ACBs carry out assessment, evaluation and certification processes. The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) strongly focuses on validation processes and promotes extensive use of validation. In October 2017, MoNE issued the regulation on VNFIL principles and implementation, regarding accreditation, assessment and evaluation. VNFIL is still in a starting phase in higher education. It was legally introduced to the Turkish higher education system in 2011 by the amendment of Law No 2547 (article 44/b). VNFIL work with migrants and refugees has started and there has been significant progress.

2   National perspective

2.1   Overarching approach to validation

Turkey initiated VNFIL in 2006 with the establishment of VQA, whose remit was to develop new vocational qualifications with labour market partners. Adults with work experience can acquire such qualifications by going through an assessment of their knowledge and skills. The assessment, evaluation and certification of learning outcomes against national vocational qualifications is carried out by authorised certification bodies that are also newly established. These bodies offer no education or training for these qualifications. They operate as validation centres but within Turkey's e specific model .

The validation system in Turkey differs in some respects from the approach described in the 2012 Recommendation. Namely, validation at VQA is based on the

demonstration of learning outcomes rather than on documented evidence. Therefore, the first two stages of the validation model of the 2012 Recommendation, identification and documentation, have not been fully implemented. Every candidate must take the theoretical and practical exams regardless of their previous experience and career. The assessment methods are described in detail in each qualification standard[1]. Developing an NQF that enhances the quality of education and training and strengthens the link between education and employment has been a priority for Turkey. Therefore, the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) is based on learning outcomes. The TQF is expected to meet the education and training needs of all individuals through lifelong learning, support the development of qualifications required by the labour market and facilitate the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Regulation on TQF, approved by a Cabinet Decision, gives the TQF a very strong legal status.

The TQF Regulation includes provisions for recognition of prior learning, stipulating that all qualifications included in the TQF can be attained via RPL/ VNFIL.

Learners will have the following possibilities through the recognition of prior learning:

■ access to programmes;
■ access to exams;
■ exemptions;
■ certification of units;
■ credit accumulation and transfer;
■ recognition of qualifications.

The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document promotes extensive use of VNFIL. The General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DG LLL) of MoNE has conducted two EU IPA Lifelong learning projects with VNFIL components. The LLL2 Project, completed in 2017, lays the foundation for the VNFIL system under MoNE's remit and provides organising principles and mechanisms for the identification, assessment and certification in relation to the qualifications under the authority of MoNE. VNFIL was legally introduced to the Turkish higher education system in 2011 but is still in an early phase.

The TQF Coordination Council, where all relevant partners are represented, will prepare guidelines for principles and procedures on RPL/VNFIL. This will be a general VNFIL framework. The responsible bodies--VQA, MoNE and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) shall be responsible for applying these principles and procedures for the qualifications under their authority. The document is planned to be finalised by 2019.

Since the most extensive arrangements on VNFIL are carried out by VQA at the national level, it is foreseen that the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DG LLL) of MoNE, as the other major authority in this field will work in close cooperation with VQA in terms of transparency and accountability of VNFIL processes. Also, to ensure the development, update and consistency of VNFIL policies at national level, the work of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and CoHE in this field is expected to align with the work in the other two institutions[2].

2.2 Validation in education and training

A national system of validation is in progress and the establishment of the TQF and the aforementioned new regulations support the further development of the system.

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[1] For more information see section 4.

[2] Turkish Qualifications Framework, Turkish Referencing Report. Ankara: December 2016.

The VNFIL legal framework for the qualifications under the authority of MoNE has been updated. Amendments of the VET Law (3308, dated 2 December 2016, and adopted by the Parliament) stipulate that "the vocational qualifications related to prior learning are defined based on the occupational standards and their levels and assessed by testing. In October 2017, MoNE issued the regulation on the principles and implementation of VNFIL, regarding accreditation, assessment and evaluation. In March 2018, the regulation on secondary education was amended to include VNFIL in the system.

A new lifelong learning (LLL) regulation (April 2018, numbered 30388) stipulates that MoNE decides the occupations whose learning outcomes can be validated. Non-formal and informal learning are validated according to the assessment procedures for the standards. There is no separate strategy for validation of learning through open educational resources (OER). The new LLL regulation only mentions that open education schools and distance education facilitate LLL.

All these regulations refer to the four stages of validation as defined by the 2012 Council Recommendation. As the existing validation system established by VQA is geared towards assessment and certification, the first two stages—identification and documentation— require further development.

The VET sector is prioritised since there is a great need for workers to obtain qualifications, which recognize their skills and provide evidence of these. This is also important for employers – to be able to show that they have a qualified workforce.

MoNE has conducted two LLL Projects. Both LLL1 and LLL2 had VNFIL components. In the LLL1 project, a framework and guidelines were designed to develop VNFIL in MoNE. The process was piloted in three occupations. The LLL2 Project implemented and improved on the VNFIL framework developed in the previous project.

Box 2.1   LLL 2 Project in MoNE

The planning document for the LLL2 project set out to implement the MoNE's VNFIL framework within the context of lifelong learning. Drawing on the Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper and relevant international guidelines, it laid the foundation for the VNFIL system under MoNE's remit, and provided organising principles and mechanisms for the identification, documentation, assessment and certification for qualifications under their authority. The framework may be subject to review following the publication of overall principles on VNFIL by the VQA General Assembly. Yet, the framework has been updated to account for changes since the LLL1 project and also because certain things had not happened as planned, e.g. Provincial LLL Coordination Units had not been established. Nevertheless, VNFIL assessment tools (validation sets) in relation to seven (7) occupations were developed. The project translated these validation sets into English so that they could be quality assured. The seven occupations in four fields for which validation sets were developed are in the fields of Automotive, Energy, Construction and Metal. The occupations are automotive electronics, mechanical maintenance, heating and natural gas interior installation staff, biogas systems staff, wooden moulding, ironworker for iron concrete, concrete worker, heat isolationist and metal works serial production bench worker. Unfortunately, within the Project span, there was no opportunity to pilot them. The vocational training centres that the VNFIL would be conducted in have been transferred to the General Directorate for VET (DG VET) in MoNE. This DG has developed assessment criteria for 27 occupational areas and 141 branches based on VQA assessment forms and the ones used in the LLL2 project. The examinations based on the new criteria and format were conducted the first time in February 2018, thus making the results of the LLL 2 Project sustainable. These new developments are based on the changes made in the VET Law numbered 3308, dated 2 December 2016, and adopted by the Parliament, which states that "the vocational qualifications related to prior learning are defined based on the occupational standards and their levels, and assessed by testing."

Moreover, within the Project, LLG professionals' competency developments and training of the professionals within MoNE, have been conducted. Capacity building within the Ministry is in progress.

Assessors in the 27 areas and 141 branches are the teachers were trained by VQA, who are satisfied with this new methodology. In February 2018, there were around 68, 000 applications, and around 35,000 were successful in the exams (51% success rate). Such exams will be conducted twice a year. The exam standards and conditions are aligned with the VQA standards and conditions and this reflects effective communication and coordination among the stakeholders. Moreover, aligning the DG VET regulation with VQA regulation is in progress.

Effective VNFIL requires stakeholder partnerships with broad participation. Non-formal and informal learning do not fit neatly into pre-existing structures. Therefore, VNFIL development needs to draw on organisations such as professional chambers, industry, employers and enterprises, public and private providers of technical and vocational education and training, trade unions, local governments/authorities, municipalities, continuing education and training services, community organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Some universities have initiated arrangements at institutional level, authorised by their respective Senates. The CoHE is authorized in Law No 2547 to issue a directive on validation. In early 2018, CoHE issued an instruction, based on Higher Education Law item 44b, that describes the basic principles of VNFIL and gives the responsibility to define VNFIL basics to the Senates of the universities. Sakarya University and Yıldız Technical University are two HEIs that have established basic VNFIL principles and have validation guidelines in place for both students and administrators. The skills previously acquired could be validated by exemption exams, work experience portfolios or recognising the certificates from other institutions. Other universities have not announced their decisions on this yet.

Box 2.2   The TURQUAS Project

For CoHE, the TURQUAS Project is the first Erasmus+ project, which aims to promote, facilitate and internalise the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms. It was initiated in February 2017. The project "Implementation and Sustainability of EHEA Reforms in Turkish Higher Education System" (TURQUAS), which is perceived as an important motivation tool to fulfil the requirements of the "Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education" and the "Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Regarding the Implementation of the "National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey"", is expected to finish in two years. Raising awareness of quality assurance in Turkish higher education institutions, internalising quality culture and generalising the institutional external evaluation process in higher education institutions are among the goals of the project. Recognition of prior non-formal and in-formal learning is not in place. Despite the progress in Bologna process tools in the country, recognition of prior learning (RPL) is still the weakest part of the Turkish higher education system due to the need for legislative changes. Work Package 3 of the TURQUAS project addresses this, in order to support employability, develop awareness in VNFIL, and to develop infrastructure and a VNFIL manual for higher education. Recognition of higher education diplomas and degrees at associate, bachelor and master levels gained abroad is another subject of the project.

2.3   Validation and the labour market

The system to assess, evaluate and certify skills of adults against national vocational qualifications (qualifications under the authority of VQA) is operational. Assessment, evaluation and certification is administered by Authorised Certification Bodies (also-

called VocTest Centers) that are accredited by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) and authorised by VQA.

By August 2018, the country had 170 ACBs and numbers are increasing. ACBs conduct assessment, evaluation and certification of learning outcomes for 258 national vocational qualifications (as of 30 June 2018). Successful candidates receive VQA vocational qualification certificates; by 30 June 2018, 358,679 certificates had been issued in 16 sectors.

VQA certification has become compulsory for 81 hazardous occupations, which puts a strain on the system's capacity. The number of certificates awarded in these 81 occupations is 326,431 as of 30 June 2018.

The identification stage of the validation process is carried out by the ACBs focusing on the eligibility of the candidate to start the procedure. The ACB judges whether the candidate meets the entry requirements that are defined in the qualification standard and informs the candidate about the assessment procedure.

As explained before, VQA's validation system is based on the actual demonstration of the learning outcomes rather than on documented evidence. There is no structured identification stage mapping the skills of the candidate nor a documentation stage gathering evidence. This is the specificity of the Turkish system. Therefore, every candidate should take the theoretical and practical exams as defined in the qualification standard. Several methods are used at the assessment stage such as case studies, interviews, practical demonstrations, simulation, role-plays, and presentations. Various assessment activities are videos recorded and stored accordingly. The certification process is carried out by the VQA. VQA authorises and issues vocational qualification certificates.

ACBs are established and run by the private sector (half of ACBs are private sector companies) and by public and non-governmental bodies such as chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, employer associations and unions for craftsman. They mainly focus on empowering employees in the sector, to improve their qualifications and obtain the VQA certification. Recently, some of them have also initiated validation work with migrants and refugees. An example is provided below:

Box 2.3   TOBB MEYBEM, an ACB, supporting the labour market integration of the host community and the migrants

TOBB MEYBEM, founded by TOBB (the umbrella organisation of the Turkish business community), together with the local and provincial offices of TOBB in 81 provinces, works on VNFIL. This ACB provides validation in the hazardous occupations in cooperation with the local Chambers of Industry and Trade in all provinces. TOBB MEYBEM focuses on 5 main sectors, construction, metal, machinery, automotive and electronics. By the end of March 2018, TOBB MEYBEM has validated more than 30.000 people throughout 81 provinces and 160 districts. Moreover, with its capacity and local network, TOBB MEYBEM also aims at contributing to the revision process of the national occupational standards while taking the sectoral perspective into consideration and expanding its accreditation into more sectors and occupations.

Moreover, the organisation actively validates migrants' non-formal and informal learning as well as develops awareness by providing them with VNFIL information to facilitate their labour market integration. The ACB also seeks to extend these activities to the local communities. In addition, the organisation supported the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) pilot work on migrants in September 2017.

> **Box 2.4   HAK-İŞ MEYEB, an ACB for labour market integration of the host community and migrants**
>
> HAK-İŞ MEYEB is HAK-İŞ's accredited certification body, which carries out VNFIL assessment and certification since 2012. Based on sectoral demands, this ACB administers VNFIL and develops training programmes based on national qualifications and standards as well as establishes training centres. This ACB has also conducted VNFIL with Syrians who are under temporary protection regime in the Hatay province. In October 2017, 33 migrants had assessment and certification in crane operation. These migrants had vocational training prior to the VNFIL process. The documents were translated into Arabic and translators supported the assessment process. This was carried out as part of an ILO project.

2.3.2   Skills audits

There are no well-established processes to support skills audits in Turkey. There are job and employment counselling services in the Turkish Employment Agency İŞKUR, supporting individuals for job/employment counselling and developing career plans. These services are for employed and unemployed individuals. The job and employment counsellors, with the support of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), organise training to support migrants in labour market integration and part of this training is on the validation processes and procedures.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank (WB) are in a joint venture with İŞKUR to develop ICT tools for the assessment and skills profiling of refugees. The EU Skills Profile tool for third country nationals has been introduced, but it has not become part of the system yet.

2.4   Validation and the third sector

Further research is needed to establish if validation is used in the third sector. There could be examples of validation to support youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities offered by third sector organisations.

3   Links to national qualification systems

The qualifications provided through validation are part of the national qualification systems. A full formal qualification may be awarded at the end of a validation procedure. VQA qualifications have a unit-based structure; candidates may acquire the units separately and accumulate them. MoNE awards the same qualifications through education and training and through validation.

The TQF is becoming the central organising tool of the national qualification systems; the validation system is an integral part of the TQF. All qualifications awarded through validation will be included in the TQF. The TQF is fully based on the principles and objectives of learning outcomes. VET programmes need to be aligned with national occupational standards to improve the link between education and employment. All education and training programmes and curricula need to be (re)designed based on learning outcomes, so that they align with national standards and qualifications and are included in the TQF. Formal and non-formal VET programmes are modular. This may lead to partial or unit qualifications in the future.

The TQF structure allows for the inclusion of qualifications that have been achieved through credit accumulation: for example, 'unit' qualifications are included in the range of qualification types. The qualification standards in the TQF include credit value, which will facilitate the development of credit systems by bodies responsible for the

awarding of qualifications. Currently, Turkey only has an operational system for credit accumulation and transfer in higher education, but MoNE is working on capacity building related to ECVET. Moreover, the National Agency for European Affairs arranges events to encourage improved awareness and preparations for a policy paper on ECVET. ECVET supports the validation of learning outcomes of individuals and supports LLL.

4 Standards

The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) is responsible for developing qualifications under the National Vocational Qualifications System. Qualifications under the mandate of VQA are based on national occupational standards and learning outcomes. National occupational standards are technical documents that define the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to practice an occupation successfully. They are defined by VQA based on labour market needs.Occupational standards describe the worker's profile as demanded by the sector and include the learning outcomes that the worker should have. Also present in the standards are:

■ legislation on healthcare, safety and environmental protection in the professional field;
■ work setting and conditions in which the occupation is practiced;
■ tools, materials and equipment used in the practice of the occupation;
■ technical requirements

National vocational qualification standards are based on occupational standards and are the basis for study programmes. The qualification standards include the NQF Level, Credit value and typical duration of the programme, learning outcomes, awarding body, assessment and evaluation methods, and progression paths. VQA uses these qualification standards for validation.

Employer organisations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been active in developing occupational standards (792 occupational standards as of 30 June 2018). Furthermore, 445 national vocational qualification standards have been developed.

The Ministry of National Education uses for validation the same learning outcomes that are defined for the formal education system. The VET programmes and curricula are being revised and redesigned taking into account the occupational standards developed by VQA. 160 occupational standards have corresponding VET curricula (around 25 % of the total number of available occupational standards). Individuals with a qualification based on occupational standards have a better chance at the labour market.

Education and training standards in the non-formal learning programmes run by MoNE are being aligned with the TQF and occupational standards so that the validation system would have the same reference points. At present, curricula have been redesigned for 19 occupations, and 14 more are planned for 2018.

5 Organisations and institutions involved in validation arrangements and its coordination

Stakeholder institutions develop national standards and qualifications as well as administer assessment, evaluation and certification. VQA coordinates labour market validation activities between the Ministries and the stakeholder institutions, employees and employers.

Sustainability of the system is ensured by the existence of 26 sector committees, which evaluate draft occupational standards and draft national vocational qualifications for acceptance by the VQA Executive Board. As per the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles for the Establishment, Duties and Operation of the VQA Sector Committees, the sector committees consist of representatives from MoNE, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, CoHE, other ministries related to the occupation, employer and labour unions and professional organisations and the VQA.

Duties of the VQA Sector Committees are to:

■ Make suggestions on the preparation, updating and improvement of occupational standards and qualifications as well as the timing of updates;
■ Submit opinions on new occupational standards and qualification formats and their updates.
■ Review the draft occupational standards and draft qualifications in terms of format and content, make evaluations and develop opinions to submit to the Executive Board.
■ Refer the deficient draft occupational standards and qualifications to the relevant department to be amended, review the amended drafts once more, make evaluations and develop opinions.
■ If necessary, audit the site where the occupation is practiced to develop an opinion on the draft occupational standard and draft qualification.

The private sector is at the centre of the validation system of VQA. Half of the authorised certification bodies are private sector companies.

The DG VET and, to a limited extent, DG LLL are the main departments in MoNE for the validation arrangements. According to a recent reorganisation at MoNE, Vocational Education Centres that administer validation are being transferred from DG LLL to DG VET. Some universities have started validation arrangements at institutional level, authorised by their respective Senates. As described in section 2.3, Sakarya University and Yıldız Technical University are the two HEIs that have established the basic VNFIL principles and have guidelines in place for both students and administrators.

6 Information, advice and guidance

6.1 Awareness-raising

VQA has held two "Vocational Qualification Conferences" in which three thousand people participated, both stakeholders from the business world and representatives of related public institutions. More than 60 events have been organised in different cities to reach employers and employed people without a formal qualification to introduce the Vocational Qualifications System and explain that people working in hazardous occupations are required by law to have VQA Certificates. Also the VQA system and regulations were promoted to school managements.

VQA has established a helpdesk to inform citizens and provide technical support to ACBs. VQA's services are now also provided through an e-State online tool. A public TV broadcast was aired and VQA management has contributed to several TV programmes to give information about VQA and validation. Seminars for candidate ACBs are held at least once a month. Authorised Certification Bodies have carried out several awareness raising activities to promote the validation system.

In MoNE, no awareness raising materials have been prepared yet and no activities have been conducted. Posters, brochures and pamphlets on VET have been distributed in all provinces.

6.2 Information, advice and guidance

Since the first two stages of the validation process (identification and documentation) have not been fully implemented in Turkey, information, advice and guidance services (IAG) are focussed on the opportunities for validation, the benefits of validation and on the assessment and outcomes of the validation procedures.

IAG is provided free of charge to validation candidates for VQA qualifications through the VQA web portal, an e-State online tool, ALO 170 telephone line, the helpdesk established in VQA and face-to-face briefings by ACBs. IAG is also provided to employers and providers before, during and after validation.

The Turkish employment agency İŞKUR has recruited almost 4,000 Job and Employment counsellors in previous years. These counsellors have received training on validation processes and have been actively involved in IAG activities for job seekers.

In MoNE, a short briefing is provided to the candidate on the validation process when they apply.

7 Validation practitioners

7.1 Profile of validation practitioners

ACBs have recruited professionals who inform and guide the individuals through the validation process for VQA qualifications. These are quality management representatives, assessors/decision makers/internal verifiers and certification managers. There are also several committees for appeals and complaints, objectivity and programmes. VQA monitors the qualifications of all these professionals and VQA experts provide support through face-to-face communication, e-mail and the VQA web portal.

Since the validation arrangements of MoNE and VQA are focused on the assessment of learning outcomes, the assessors are very important. Assessors' profiles are defined in the qualification standards. The assessors for the technical fields are mostly teachers at VET schools and engineers. For the other fields, the assessors are experienced professionals, e.g. an experienced hotel manager in the tourism field. There are also guidance practitioners/counsellors working in the education and labour market sectors.

The assessors at the vocational training centres under MoNE's remit are VET teachers, who administer assessment in their own fields and have had no prior training on validation. Lifelong Learning Projects in MoNE LLL1 and LLL2 in 2013-2017 included a focus on the validation process and practitioners' profiles as outputs (see Section 2.2 for more information on LLL1 and LLL2).

7.2 Qualification requirements

Specific requirements exist for all professionals who take part in the validation arrangements for VQA qualifications. Certification managers and quality management representatives of the ACBs should undertake the training provided by VQA focusing

on VQA processes and validation. The assessors/decision makers/internal verifiers should undertake the assessment and evaluation training on competence-based assessment. These training courses are a prerequisite for being employed by ACBs.

ACB programme committee members should meet the mandatory requirements for assessors, as specified in the qualification standards and accessible on VQA's and ACBs webpages. Mandatory requirements for other practitioners are defined in various VQA guidelines.

For VNFIL under MoNE's remit, VET teachers at vocational training centres can administer validation in their field of expertise.

7.2.1 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

VQA has developed a mandatory training programme for assessors; 6697 people have been trained. Of them, 3997 were trained on assessment and certification and 2700 on assessment and evaluation. The participants cannot work as assessors unless they pass the course. ACB managers provide additional 1-2 day courses to assessors about the national qualification system, national standards and qualifications. The assessors are observed and supervised during the assessment.

For VNFIL under MoNE's remit, training on the role of counsellors in the validation process was piloted within the lifelong learning projects (more info in Section 2.2).

8 Quality assurance

Before the TQF, the institutions and organizations were solely responsible for the quality of the qualifications they provided and there was no systematic link between different quality assurance (QA) practices. Neither was there any authority responsible for monitoring and harmonizing the QA systems at national level.

In March 2018 a new regulation was adopted on the QA of the qualifications in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (Regulation 30371, March 25th 2018). The regulation, prepared by the TQF Council, provides for an integrated QA approach for all qualifications of the formal and non-formal education and training sectors and all qualifications awarded through validation. The criteria for assuring the quality will be determined by responsible bodies in coordination with VQA, based on the principles and procedures for QA stipulated by the regulation. The TQF Coordination Council will monitor the continuous improvement of all QA processes. The responsible QA bodies are: MoNE, responsible for education and training qualifications under its remit, CoHE and higher education institutions (HEIs) responsible for higher education qualifications, and VQA responsible for vocational qualifications, as outlined in the VQA Law No. 5544. The quality of other types of qualifications (not under the responsibility of VQA, MoNE or CoHE) will be assured by the responsible bodies specified in the relevant legislation. The responsible bodies are expected to prepare the required documents and guides within a year and in two years' time, the implementation of the QA system will have started at educational institutions and the accredited certification bodies.
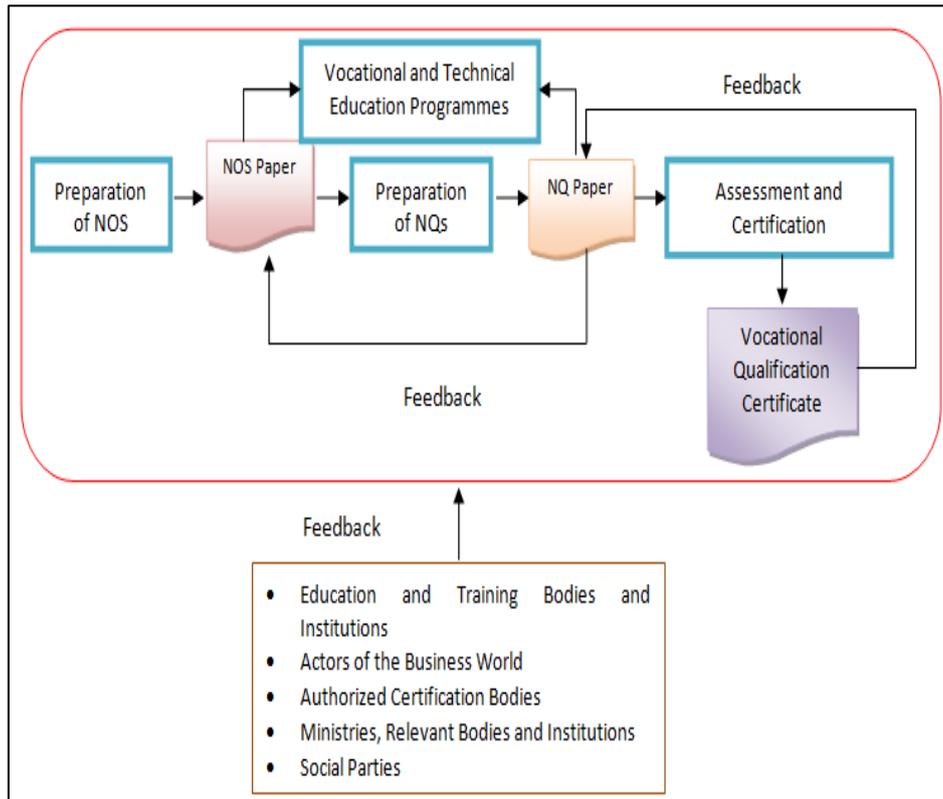
MoNE has established quality assurance committees to proceed with the work on the regulation. The results of the LLL projects (see Section 2.) will be incorporated, among others a checklist on the criteria and indicators on quality management. The process is based on the Lifelong learning regulation and the Quality Assurance of the Qualifications regulation. Quality assurance committees have been established in MoNE and the process to establish the new system has started. The DG VET has developed assessment criteria based on the VQA formats and the ones used in the

LLL2 Project. The exam follows VQA standards and tools (cameras, videotaping and audits). Aligning the DG VET regulation with VQA regulations is in progress.

The National Vocational Qualification System consists of various interacting processes that influence each other's quality. These processes and their interactions are outlined in Figure 8.1.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) provide input for National Qualifications (NQs), which are the basis of assessment and certification activities. Therefore, the quality of NOS influences that of NQs, and similarly, the quality of NQs directly influences that of assessment and certification processes.

Figure 8.1   National vocational qualification system

The VQA has a critical role in the development of quality assurance mechanisms. The action plan to improve the quality mechanisms related to national qualifications has been implemented. The criteria for accreditation and the processes of certification have been updated and are operational. Documentation for internal and external assessment has been prepared and is being used. Priority areas for the coming years are differentiating validation tools, i.e. to include portfolio tools and implement the accreditation of national qualifications and related processes in harmony with ECVET.
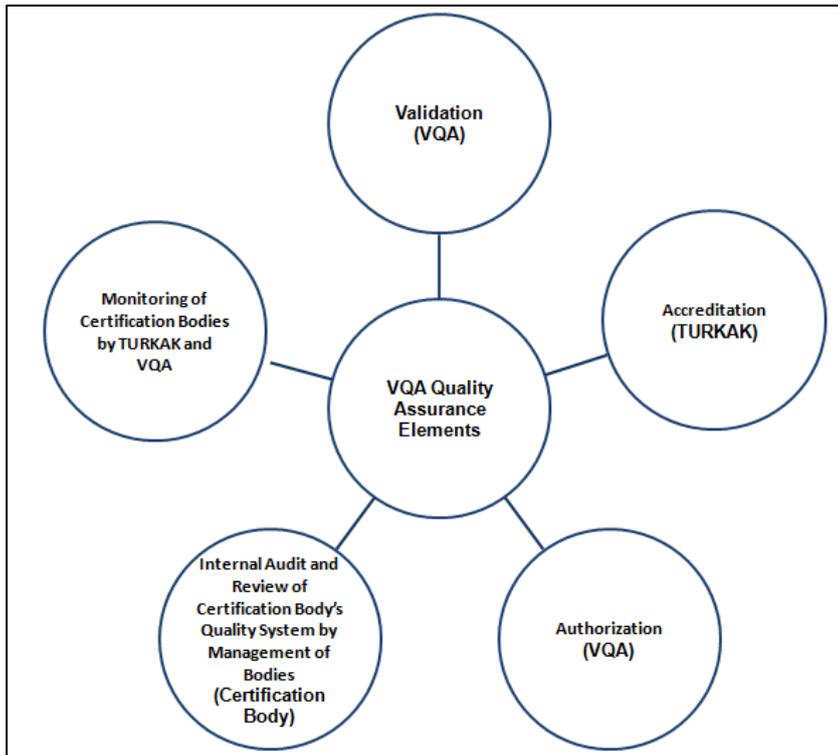
European Union recommendations on quality assurance have been taken into consideration in improving quality assurance principles and criteria. These recommendations include the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF), and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Quality assurance elements implemented in the standards are:

■   validation processes for standards and qualification preparation;

- accreditation and authorisation processes in the external evaluation of institutions to carry out assessment and certification activities on the basis of qualifications; and
- activities for surveillance auditing for monitoring ACBs and for reviewing their internal audits and management reviews.

Figure 8.2 below illustrates the quality assurance elements implemented by the VQA within the national vocational qualifications system.

Figure 8.2   Quality assurance elements

The VQA has a quality assured audit process for the ACBs, the specific quality criteria for authorising assessment and certification bodies are based on ISO EN 17024 Accreditation and the VQA Quality Assurance Criteria and Legislative Regulations. The audits can be scheduled or ad hoc. There were 429 scheduled and 191 ad hoc audits in 2018 as of 30 June 2018.

In case ACBs offer vocational training, they are required to separate training activities from their assessment system. All kind of assessment activities are video recorded and stored. Successful candidates are awarded the formal Vocational Qualification Certificates, which are included in the Turkish Qualifications Framework. VQA has developed draft certification criteria and the process of internal verification has started. A guide for this process was published in August 2018 and is available on the VQA web portal.

9   Inputs, outputs and outcomes

9.1   Funding

Funding arrangements involve the state, individuals and the organisation/institution. In some cases it is the employers and in others, the candidates who cover the expenses for validation. Support from state funds and EU funds is available. The

unemployment insurance fund is available for people who work in one of the 81 hazardous occupations and need a formal vocational qualification to practice. As of 30 June 2018, 259.121 people had made use of the unemployment fund for a total amount of almost 190 million TL[3]. A direct grant for validation, supported by EU funds is available for the assessment and certification of all qualifications provided by VQA, 32.040 people made use of this fund as of 30 June, 2018 for a total amount of 18 million TL. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization provides some financial support for employees of small and medium enterprises up to 30.000 TL per company. For validation under MoNE's remit, the individual only pays for the materials used. The other expenses are funded from the general budget.

9.2 Distribution of costs

9.2.1 Costs for ACBs

ACBs have several costs such as establishment of the centre, accreditation fee to TURKAK, authorization fee to VQA, audit fee to both TURKAK and VQA, staff costs, facility costs etc. The application fee for authorisation ranges from TL 2.250 to 3.500 and the audit fee (Per person/Day) is TL 1 500.

Table 9.1 shows the fees that ACBs pay to VQA depending on the number of certificates awarded

Table 9.1   Annual fee paid by the authorised certification bodies to VQA depending on the number of certificates issued

Number of qualification certificates	Annual fee (tl)
0-500	6.800
501-750	9.000
751-1200	11.200
1201-1800	15.725
1801-2700	19.400
2701-4000	22.200
4001-6000	30.000
6001-9000	37.000
9001-18000	44.000
18001+	48.750

Source: VQA (2018)

9.2.2 Costs for individuals

Assessment fees for vocational qualification certificates range from 750 to 1500TL; the average is around 1000 TL. The fees are determined by the ACBs depending on the complexity of the qualification and assessment cost. The fees are monitored by VQA. Assessment fees can be increased twice a year at inflation rate.

The documentation fee for all levels is TL 150.

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[3] €35.416.000. The rate for 1 Turkish Lira (TL) against the EUR was 0,18643 on June 30th, 2018.

For the non-nationals who want to get their vocational qualification certificates recognised/validated, if they apply from Turkey, the fee is TL 550, and if they apply from abroad, it is EUR 120 or $150.

As described in section 9.1, financial support is available from the unemployment fund and EU grant programmes. Moreover, if a candidate for validation is successful in the assessment, an amount of EUR 300 is paid back to the individual from the unemployment fund.

9.3　Evidence of benefits to individuals

There are several articles published in the magazines of occupational bodies, employer associations and social stakeholders about the benefits of validation to individuals, employers and the economy broadly. These articles indicate that the most important validation benefit is improving the employers' trust in the VQA awards. Since stakeholders such as employer associations are involved in the VQA validation processes, they trust the quality of these qualifications more than others. The individuals who have worked without a formal qualification for years reach the opportunity to receive a formal qualification to certify the learning outcomes they already have without further training. VQA awards are getting well-known in the sectors of economy and are preferred by individuals and employers.

9.4　Beneficiaries and users of validation processes

9.4.1　Validation trends

There is an increasing demand for validation for the 81 qualifications required to work in dangerous and hazardous occupations. In 2017, 168,260 people were awarded such qualifications through VNFIL and in the first six months of 2018 the number is 89,275. On average, 15,000 people per month are awarded these qualifications through validation.

The construction sector as one of the pioneer sectors of economy has the greatest demand for validation, since many employees in this sector lack formal qualifications and occupations in this sector are considered hazardous. Most validation cases in the past two years were in steel welder occupation with almost 50,000 awards. The second is "wooden moulder" with 35,000 awards. "Bar bender" qualification follows with around 28,000 awards. "Machine maintainer" is the fourth popular qualification with almost 26,000 awards while the "house painter" is the fifth with around 12,000 awards. The most popular qualification outside the 81 hazardous occupations is a "job and occupational consultant" with almost 5,000 awards. This qualification is also a mandatory prerequisite for employment at the Turkish Employment Agency.

9.4.2　Validation users

Among the 347,714 individuals who got VQA certificates through validation since 2015 as of May 2018:

■ 97.5% are male;

■ 3.4% are between 15 and 20 years of age; 68.4% are between 21 and 40 years of age; 28.2% are over 40 years old;

■ 95% were already employed when they applied to validation;

- 74% of certificates are for qualifications at TQF level 3; 17% of certificates are for qualifications at TQF level 4;
- 300 people were foreigners.

The educational status of the validation users is provided in Table 9.2

Table 9.2 Education level of validation users

Level of education	Number of individuals	Share of total
literate	12229	3.5%
illiterate	18092	5.2%
graduates of junior high school	142159	40.8%
graduates of secondary school	63058	18.1%
graduates of VET high school	32604	9.3%
graduates of high school	55986	16.1%
graduates of vocational high school	13868	4.0%
graduates of university	10390	3.0%
master degree	314	0.1%
doctoral degree	11	0.003%

9.4.3 Validation and disadvantaged groups

ACBs provide opportunities for low-skilled individuals to validate their skills and upgrade their competences. The ACBs also provide information about training to support their skills development so that they would have better success rate in the process of assessment.

Specific support is available for people who are illiterate or visually impaired. These people are tested individually and the questions are read for them. For people with hearing impairment, certified translators with sign language skills are used. For candidates who do not understand Turkish, all materials are translated by a certified translator.

VQA has developed a guide on theoretical and performance-based assessment that specifies the validation process for disadvantaged groups. Women are a specific disadvantaged group. Female participation in validation is only 2%. This can be explained by the fact that most validation candidates are workers in hazardous occupations, where a VQA qualification is required by law. Women are underrepresented in these occupations.

Since 2016, considerable progress has been made on validation for migrants and refugees, specifically, with the contribution of international donors. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and ETF have supported the development of a framework for VNFIL for migrants[4]. The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) has developed a training programme on for the job and employment counsellors of Turkish Employment Organisation (İŞKUR) to empower them in working with migrants. The

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[4] Akkök, F (2017) A model for the validation of non-formal and informal learning for the Syrians under temporary protection regime. Ankara: ILO paper

ETF (2017 Recognition and validation of qualifications and skills for refugees: Selected practices from Europe; ETF report.

United Nations Development Programme and World Bank are developing tools for the assessment of skills and skills profiling.

Several ACBs already conduct assessment and certification of migrants (see section 2.3). Around 300 refugees have gone through validation. The number is low compared to the number of 350,000 Turkish citizens who have successfully completed the process. Yet, even the small number shows that this work is possible[5]. VQA has plans and allocated resources for further capacity building of the ACBs, specifically related to migrants' assessment and certification process. In cooperation with national and international organisations VQA is translating validation documents and item banks into Arabic to serve the target group.

Two ACBs (INTES and MEYBEM) have conducted assessment and certification for Chinese workers seeking employment in Turkey. Those who needed training before assessment, were referred by INTES to related training institutions. Both ACBs stressed the higher validation cost as additional funds are needed for interpreting as well as translating foreign language original documents. Both strongly emphasised that sustainable financial resources are required to maintain validation activities for this target group.

Box 9.1   ILO pilot work on VNFIL with the Syrians under temporary protection regime

In September 2017 ILO piloted validation for the Syrians who were under temporary protection regime. The piloted occupation was "steel welding" for 8 candidates who had been in training at the Vocational Education Centre in Gaziantep, whereas 40 candidates had had the training in that centre. The pilot was implemented together with the Gaziantep Commerce Chamber and a motivated and interested ACB. The documents were translated into Arabic language. Among the 8 candidates who volunteered for the VNFIL process, 4 were validated. Also, as part of this pilot, validation process on crane operating was conducted in Hatay and 9 out of 33 Syrians who had had the training in the centre were validated. ILO plans to extend the work on VNFIL for the migrants.

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10   Validation methods

Since the VQA validation system is based on the actual demonstration of the learning outcomes rather than documented evidence, the first two stages – identification and documentation, have been implemented poorly. Every candidate should take the theoretical (multiple choice, structured oral interviews, open-ended questions) and practical exams regardless of their previous experience and career. So, several methods are used at the assessment stage such as case studies, structured interviews, practical demonstrations, simulations, role-plays and presentations. The assessment methods are determined in detail in each qualification standard.

In MoNE, based on the assessment criteria prepared for each occupation, the individuals are assessed by observation techniques.

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[5] Presentation made by Akbiyik, O.S on the Validation week. Brussels: June 2018.

11 The position of validation in society; visibility and trust

The Regulation that made VQA qualifications mandatory for (currently) 81 occupations has given a boost to validation in Turkey. Some 350,000 people have validated their knowledge and skills through validation and most of these were workers in hazardous occupations without formal qualifications.

The involvement of stakeholders such as employer organisations in validation through the ACBs creates visibility and trust in the VQA qualifications and the validation process. The individuals who have worked without a formal qualification for years get the opportunity to receive a formal qualification and certify the learning outcomes they already have without further training. VQA awards are getting well-known in the sectors of economy and are preferred by individuals and employers.

A challenge for the coming years will be to make validation also accessible to other group such as women, migrants, unemployed people. Steps in this direction are being taken, both by VQA and the ACBs and through new validation arrangements under MoNE.

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DG LLL, MoNE

Department of educational policies and programmes, LLL, MoNE,

Department of work-based learning, DG VET, MoNE,

•Department of recognition and Equivalence Services in Higher Education Council/
ENIC/NARIC Turkey,
Higher Education Council,
International University of Sarajevo
TOBB MEYBEM, ACB,
Sports Industry Association, Turkey
National Project Coordinator, ILO

13   List of Abbreviations

ACBs- Authorised Certification Bodies

CoHE- Council of Higher Education

DG-Directorate General

EQF- European Qualifications Framework

HAK-İŞ- Labour Union

HEI-Higher Education Institute

ICT- Information Communication Technologies

ILO- International Labour Organisation

IOM-International Organisation of Migration

IAG-Information, Advice and Guidance

İŞKUR- Turkish Employment Agency

LLL-Lifelong Learning

MEYBEM-An Authorised Certification Centre

MoNE -Ministry of National Education

MoLSS- Ministry of Labour and Social Security

NGO-Non-Governmental Organisation

NOS – National occupational standards

NQs –National qualifications

OER-Open Education Resources

QF-EHEA- Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

RPL-Recognition of Prior Learning

TİSK-Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations

TQF-Turkish Qualifications Framework

TOBB-Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges

TURQUAS- The Implementation and Sustainability of EHEA Reforms in Turkish Higher Education System Project

TÜRKAK-Turkish Accreditation Organisation

VQA- Vocational Qualifications Authority

VET- Vocational Education and Training

VNFIL-Validation of non-formal and informal learning

UNDP-   United Nations Development Programme

WB- World Bank Group