2018

National Plan for Adult Literacy

With a focus on boosting basic literacy levels for the entire adult population, as part of economic growth and social cohesion, in October 2018, the Portuguese Government launched the National Plan for Adult Literacy via the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education. This plan has the backing of the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA). During its first year, the project foresees the following initiatives:

- The creation of a Civil Society Advisory Council for support and guidance at all stages of the project, with regular meetings;
- The drafting of a Technical Research Report and a set of case studies, identifying needs, existing practices at national and European level, collecting and outlining recommendations;
- The organisation of an international workshop to share practices with other European countries, with members of the Advisory Council and organisations involved in national and international literacy projects;
- The organisation and selection of Development Groups involving different actors from civil society in working and discussion meetings on literacy, mediated by local facilitators (to be identified) and based on the joint efforts of those organisations participating in the international workshop and the good practices identified to date by the research team;
- The drafting of Thematic Reports based on the results of the Development Groups, in a joint effort to systematise resources, needs and suggestions (until February 2019).

As these main initiatives are crucial for the design of the National Plan for Adult Literacy, the project team will consult all stakeholders for subsequent phases, which should take place during 2019:

1. an implementation strategy that optimises National Plan guidelines;
2. an official launch event for the National Plan for Adult Literacy; and
3. the development of a dissemination strategy.

Qualifica Programme (Update)

As part of this Program(me), there have been dissemination events to raise awareness among adult population of the importance of improving their qualifications. In March 2017, there was a three-week advertising campaign on radio (national, local and regional coverage), in the press (national, local and regional coverage), on the internet (via Facebook) and at ATMs. As part of this campaign, at the same time, a call centre was set up to provide support concerning the issues that emerged from the campaign. This call centre still operates. In addition to this, the "Qualifica" (RTP1) TV programme was
broadcast. 100 daily episodes of around two minutes each were broadcast (first on 24th July, 2017).

In December 2018, a new Qualifica campaign will be launched in the same format, using the same media as the previous campaign.

The \textit{Qualifica Passport} \cite{2} was created as part of the Qualifica Programme. This is a personal electronic document (non-transferable and optional) that includes an individual record of acquired competences and training attended by adult citizens throughout their lives, which are linked to the National Qualifications Catalogue. This Passport also includes vocational training courses not included in the National Qualifications Catalogue, providing that these were successfully concluded. It allows the holder to identify areas where they can acquire and/or consolidate skills that will improve their qualifications, as well as helping employers match the Passport holder’s competencies to a particular job.

Maximising learning outcomes, the Qualifica Passport identifies various pathways for qualifications and/or for academic and professional development. This tool, which will be very useful for Qualifica Centers and their candidates, not only consolidates lifelong guidance (facilitating access to information on courses already taken and to be taken to achieve a qualification), but also lifelong learning.

In terms of monitoring activity, the Qualifica Centres network has been monitored by regional teams in each NUTS II since 2017. These teams include members of ANQEP (coordinating body), the regional services of the Directorate-General for Schools and of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, who are responsible for monitoring network activities via regular visits and training events, also promoting networking. Regional monitoring aims to create the right conditions for Qualifica Centres teams to achieve the goals established as part of the Qualifica Programme.

To boost the monitoring of Qualifica Centre activity, ANQEP prepares monthly reports, based on data collected from the \textit{SIGO platform} \cite{3} (Centres record information about their activity here). The aim is to verify compliance with the goals established by the Centres regarding the number of adults enrolled, referred to education and training provision and RVCC (academic and professional) and certified via RVCC processes. Following these reports, the Centres receive monthly information regarding their performance and that of the network at NUTS II level. This monitoring report also informs regional team activity, as it identifies deviations from established goals and solutions for identified constraints in relation to the Centres.

\textbf{Vocational education (update)}

To achieve greater recognition of vocational education and qualifications in the labour market, establishing cooperation with social partners and regional business councils to obtain greater recognition of vocational certification, the \textit{Education and Training Provision Portal} \cite{4} was launched in 2018, a national technological platform that facilitates personalised search of educational and training provision in the Portuguese education and training system:

- Bringing together, in a single place, the necessary information for students, families and employers regarding the education and training provision available from the 5th year of schooling onwards, including geographic location;
- Providing ever more and better information for more informed decisions;
- Clarifying myths regarding training provision that are more complex, regarding vocational education, given the vast number of courses, which tends to lead to courses being regarded as less worthwhile.
Another important aspect is the launch of the #escolheoteufuturo (choose your future) National Campaign in June 2018, designed for young people who are completing the 9th year of schooling, with the distribution of an informative leaflet for all enrolled students that is associated with a poster produced by ANQEP, IP, which reached schools at the end of May, 2018. This campaign was coordinated with the Education and Training Provision Portal, as well as with the timely authorisation of network provision for 2018/2019, implemented on 14th May, 2018.

Qualifica programme

In August 2018, changes to time credit allocated to Qualifica Centres were announced, which boosted resources available to achieve the programme’s goals.

In the area of adult education and training, it is worth highlighting certain developments in relation to the Qualifica Programme, i.e. at network level, with the creation of 42 new Qualifica Centres in July 2017, expanding the network to 303 centres, based on existing qualification needs in the different geographical territories and sectors, and increased funding through Community funds for the transmission of the daily television programme, “Qualifica” (RTP1), which is made up of 100 two-minute episodes (first broadcast on 24th July 2017) and the launch of a new campaign to publicise the Qualifica Programme in September 2018 and extra dissemination and support materials at the Qualifica Centres.

Also in 2018, as part of adult education and training, the "Qualifica AP" Programme will be launched, which is geared towards workers in central public administration.

In April 2018, the process of reorganising the Qualifica Centre network began, closing centres with poor performance and subsequent tenders to create new Qualifica Centres, as well as new calls for funding from September 2018 onwards.

Vocational education

In relation to the 2018/2019 academic year, the criteria underlying the VC network planning process was extended to the education and training courses network.

The qualification needs forecasting system (SANQ)

The Basic Analysis Module, which has recently been updated, provides information on economic and job market dynamics that influence the demand for qualifications, from a short and medium-term perspective (intermediate regional level - NUT II). These latest statistics (which can be consulted at ANQEP's website) informed the various indicators that were used in the Planning Module and Regional Development Module.

In relation to SANQ (sistema de antecipação de necessidades de qualificações), the following activities were covered:

- monitoring of the work carried out by the CIM/AM (intermunicipal communities/metropolitan areas) in SANQ's regional development modules;
- monitoring of the process incorporating the Qualification Relevance Framework within the planning and co-ordination criteria of the network of vocationally-oriented provision for young people (SANQ's central role in defining the ETC and VC networks for the 2018/2021 training period).

The principles, criteria and procedures associated with the planning and coordination process of ETC
and VC networks for the 2018-2019 academic year were defined.

A training session was held with intermunicipal communities/metropolitan areas, DGEstE and DGEEC on the criteria and procedures associated with the planning and coordination process of ETC and VC networks for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Alongside the DGEstE, 17 intermunicipal communities/metropolitan areas were involved with the planning and coordination of the network of vocationally-oriented provision for young people (2018/2019 academic year).

Intermunicipal communities continue receiving support for implementing the Regional Development Module, as part of the protocols signed between them and ANQEPI.P.

**Quality assurance systems aligned with the EQAVET framework**

Various training sessions were held for external experts who are involved in the EQAVET compliance verification teams to enable them to develop compliance procedures for quality assurance systems implemented by the education and training providers with the EQAVET Framework.

Following the training sessions, methodological documents are being finalised so they can be disseminated to all those providers who have adhered to the "Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training" model.

**National skills strategy - action phase**

Following the diagnosis phase in 2014-2015, the current government has implemented the action phase of the National Skills Strategy during 2017 with the support of the European Commission and technical assistance from the OECD. This project involved a national team made up of seven ministries, in addition to workshops and meetings with representatives of a vast range of stakeholders in the field of adult education, including public administration agencies, universities, schools, training centres, companies, unions and local authorities. The main focus was the discussion of the previously-defined diagnosis, monitoring current measures in this field and consolidating policies and practices, in order to construct a skills system in Portugal that is aligned with main goals of economic growth and social cohesion. The results of this second phase will be presented publicly in May 2018.

**2017**

**INCoDe.2030**

The National Digital Competences Initiative e.2030, Portugal INCoDe.2030 [7] is an inter-ministerial initiative which covers the governmental areas of administrative modernisation, science, technology and higher education, education, planning and infrastructures, labour and economy, and that aims to improve the basic ICT skills of the Portuguese population, preparing individuals for emerging digital-based employment opportunities (see additional information in Sub-Section 14.5 [8]).

**Qualifica programme - update**

To meet the objectives of the Qualifica Programme [9] announced by the Government at the end 2016, the following occurred:

- Publication of the Dispatch no. 6261-B/2017, 17th July, which establishes the rules regarding teachers’ weekly timetable credit for Qualifica Centres, for the implementation of their
activities, specifically in relation to information and guidance, referral, training, recognition, validation and certification of competences;
- Creation of five regional monitoring teams for the Qualifica Centres network;
- Implementation of training sessions for the Qualifica Centres teams between 3rd and 20th April;
- Delivery of training sessions for the teams working in the 42 new Qualifica Centres that were set up in 2017, between 19th and 20th and 24th and 25th October;
- Analysis of HCOP funding applications by Qualifica Centres, which were set up in late 2016, in the Norte, Centro and Alentejo regions;
- Analysis of HCOP funding applications by Qualifica Centres, which were set up in 2017, in the Norte, Centro and Alentejo regions;
- Provision of duplicates of certificates and diplomas by Centros Qualifica which were previously New Opportunities Centres.

Three dispatches are currently being prepared as part of Ordinance no. 47/2017 [10], 1st February, regarding:

- the operationalisation and regulation of the Qualifica Passport;
- the allocation and transfer of credit points within the National Credit System of Vocational Education and Training in relation to certified professional training not included in the National Qualifications Catalogue;
- the allocation and transfer of credit points within the National System of Credits of Vocational Education and Training, between courses taught as part of different training provision, as well as the transfer of credits related to the qualification units of the basic component of different forms of dual certification.
- The creation of 42 new Qualifica Centres, concluded in July 2017 via the application procedure foreseen in Notice no. CQ/1/2017, allowed the national network, which is currently made up of 303 Qualifica Centres, to expand.

Learning outcomes-based qualifications - update

In July 2017, there were three training sessions designed for the teachers, trainers and course coordinators involved in vocational courses, whose specific objectives were the following:

- To contextualise the competency/learning outcomes approach within the development of national qualifications systems;
- To situate the different qualification tools within learning outcomes, such as the competency and training framework, as well as the roadmap for its construction and implementation;
- To recognise the strategic and operational implications of adopting this approach in terms of organisation and training;
- To plan courses that are organised according to learning outcomes;
- To describe and apply the main training assessment techniques and tools based on this new approach.

Qualifica programme

As part of the Qualifica Programme [11] announced by the Government at the end of 2016, the following developments occurred:

- the publication of Decree Law no. 14/2017, 26th January [12], which amends Decree Law no. 396/2007, 31st December [13]. The latter Decree regulates the National Qualifications System and the structures that ensure its operation;
- the publication of Order no. 47/2017, 1st February [10], which regulates the National Credit
System for Vocational Education and Training and defines the guidance model and the individual qualifications and skills register;

- launch of Qualifica Portal [11] and Qualifica Passport [2];
- the publication of the dispatch that created 261 Qualifica Centres (Dispatch no. 1971/2017, 8th March [14]);
- application for the creation of 42 Qualifica Centres;
- application to obtain financial support within Human Capital Operational Programme (HCOP), by the Qualifica Centres network of the North, Centre and Alentejo regions;
- updating of SIGO Platform – Qualifica Centres;
- creation of a communication platform between ANQEP and the Qualifica Centres network (Microsoft Office 365);
- upgraded version of the document “Orientação ao Longo da Vida – Guia Metodológico” (Lifelong Guidance – Methodological Guide) made available to the entire network of Qualifica Centres;
- methodological guidelines for the development of RVCC processes in Education and Training made available.

The Qualifica Portal aims to make obtaining information easier, allowing users to consult programme-related services and tools. The portal is designed for trainees, employers and agents involved in adult education and training, allowing them to search for current provision by area, collect information on the National Credit System and obtain or update the Qualifica Passport, where training is recorded.

The Qualifica Passport is a (digital) guidance tool and registration of individual qualifications and skills that not only registers qualifications acquired by adults throughout their lives but also a simulation of possible qualification routes and organize what qualification pathways already taken or to be taken, according to the qualifications a person may acquire and the further education and training paths possible for this person. It identifies the skills lacking, in order to create training pathways that are more suited to each person’s needs, among the different available paths.

The Credit System allocates credit points to qualifications that are included in the National Qualifications Catalogue and other certified training courses, provided they are registered in the Information and Management System of the Education and Training Provision (SIGO) and fulfil the quality assurance criteria.

This system incorporates the principles of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), promoting mobility within Europe.

The application process for the creation of 42 Qualifica Centres, which is currently underway, will see the creation of 300 Qualifica Centres in the mainland during the first half of 2017, as established in the Qualifica Programme.

In addition to the application to create Qualifica Centres, the application for POCH funding for the Qualifica Centers located in the North, Centre and Alentejo regions is also underway.

The stabilising and funding of the Qualifica Centres network are key aspects of the Qualifica Programme, taking into account their importance for adults qualification, in terms of guiding them towards different types of qualification and RVCC processes.

Following the publication of Ordinance no. 232/2016, 29th August, the Microsoft Office 365 Platforms - Qualifica Centres and SIGO - Qualifica Centres Platforms were made available. In addition, support documentation was drawn up/updated and made available, including the Methodological Guidelines on the development of school and training RVCC processes and the Lifelong Guidance - Methodological Guide, which incorporate changes made to the Centres activities under the Qualifica
Within this context, the Qualifica Centres can fully develop, contributing to the adult qualification goals established in the Qualifica Programme.

Currently, the training for the Centre teams is being prepared and will take place between 3rd and 20th April.

This training is designed for the Qualifica Centres teams (Guidance, Recognition and Validation and Skills technical staff and trainers) and covers the following areas:

- Lifelong guidance
- Academic RVCC: methodology and tools
- Academic RVCC: skills validation and certification (complementary training; validation and certification conditions; testing)
- Vocational RVCC: methodologies and tools
- Vocational RVCC: skills validation and certification (complementary training; validation and certification conditions; testing).

**Vocational education**

With the publication of *Decree-Law no. 14/2017, 26th January,*[15] which amends Decree-Law no. 396/2007, 31st December, and which regulates the National Qualifications System and support structures, the specialised artistic courses geared to both work and further study became part of the training courses of the said System.

In 2017, as part of its responsibility to regulate educational provision and vocational training, the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education continues the referencing process for Vocational Courses for the CNQ. This process has been extended to the Education and Training Courses (CEF), which, since the academic year 2013/2014, have been referenced to the CNQ.

In order to encourage increasing appreciation of vocational education provision; to match qualifications to the needs of the economy and the job market; to promote educational success and vocational qualifications; to encourage young people to sign up for this training provision, ANQEP I.P. increased vocational courses by 25%, involved psychology and guidance services (SPO) and created a set of criteria for the organisation of vocational courses.

The planning criteria for the professional courses network focussed on the planning and coordinating of training provision in a way that is consistent with existing capacity and training needs, seeking to avoid redundant provision from the various operators.

**Learning outcomes-based qualifications**

The provision network for the 2017/2018 academic year has been extended regarding vocational courses based on learning outcomes-based qualifications frameworks. There were three training sessions in July 2017 for the teachers, trainers and course coordinators who will implement these qualifications for the first time.

These sessions aim to develop skills as part of the operationalisation of training organised according to this new methodological approach.
Qualification needs forecasting system (SANQ)

As part of the Qualification Needs Forecasting System – SANQ, ANQEP I.P. has updated the model comparing level 2, 4 and 5 qualifications of the National Qualifications Catalogue – CNQ and the Portuguese Professions Classification.

The Basic Analysis Module is being updated with more recent statistical data that inform the different indicators used in the Planning Module and Regional Development Module.

Intermunicipal Communities – CIM continue receiving support for implementing the Regional Development Module, as part of the protocols signed between ANQEP I.P and the CIM.

Quality assurance systems in line with the EQAVET framework

Due to the experimental monitoring model aligned with the EQAVET framework having been applied to eight operators at the end of 2016, ANQEP I.P. is finalising the Guide to the process of verifying compliance of quality assurance systems used by education and training operators with EQAVET (Guia para o processo de verificação de conformidade dos sistemas de qualidade implementados pelos operadores de educação e formação com o EQAVET). It has been necessary to complete and adjust document templates, as well as produce models regarding the Pronouncement on the preliminary EQAE verification report and the Annual Progress Report (Pronúncia sobre o relatório preliminar de verificação EQAVE e ao Relatório de Progresso Anual).

Final tests and adjustments are underway regarding the platform that supports the implementation and verification of the quality assurance systems implemented by education and training operators with EQAVET, which will be made available to all operators.

EQAVET compliance verification teams were set up by higher education experts, following protocols between ANQEP I.P. and polytechnic and higher education institutions. Training is being prepared for the experts who make up the EQAVET compliance teams.

2016

Vocational education

Between 2002 and 2015, the number of early school leavers fell from 45% to 13.7%, which is not unrelated to investment in vocational education in upper-secondary education (levels of attendance have quadrupled and currently account for nearly 50% of total students), and the adoption of 12 years of schooling (compulsory as of 2010).

That said, overall, not only does the Portuguese population lack qualifications (55% of adults between 25-64 did not complete upper-secondary education and around 45% of the workforce has few or no digital skills), but previous investment in adult qualification was abandoned in 2012, with significant reductions in both education-training qualifications for adults and the recognition, validation and certification of competences, thus impeding the growing convergence with European averages that had occurred since 2007.

Among its priorities, the 21st Constitutional Government’s programme has established:

- extending the range of courses and qualifications in vocational education;
- consolidating pedagogical diversification strategies within vocational education and the promotion of stronger bonds between school, community and the family;
improving the status of vocational trainers through ongoing training programmes in pedagogy, didactics and technical skills, as well as a review of the organization of the initial training provided to them;

greater recognition of vocational education and qualifications in the labour market, establishing greater cooperation with the social partners and businesses.

To meet the objectives set out, The National Credit System, which is based on the ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training) model, is in the final stage of completion and will improve mobility mechanisms between courses, redirecting students to other forms of training and facilitating the completion of interrupted courses.

The Passaporte Qualifica is currently being prepared, in parallel with the creation of the National Credit System. This is a digital tool that functions as a platform to record all training individuals have undertaken.

The implementation of a quality assurance system for vocational education is based on the EQAVET (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) model, which aims to consolidate and certify the quality of vocational schools.

The Rede Qualifica is currently at the preparation phase. This network will play an important part in helping young people find qualifications that match their situation, ambitions and characteristics.

The Portuguese A programme has become modular, so it can be used on vocational courses, ensuring that these training courses replicate science-humanities courses. Until now, students on vocational courses studied the Portuguese B syllabus and then, in order to enter higher education, they had to take the Portuguese A exam. This improves the equity and permeability of different courses of study.

Qualifica programme

Considering the structural deficit of the Portuguese population qualifications (55% of adults of the 25-64 age group did not complete secondary education), it is necessary to develop an adult education and training program that provides this national priority.

This program will be based on a triple integration:

- integration of the means and institutional actors, with a strong coordination and cooperation between the areas of Education, Labour, Solidarity and Social Security and Higher Education, both in the formulation of the instruments used for the task and in its operationalisation on the field;
- integration and mobilisation of different kinds of answers and instruments, combining adult education and qualifying professional training with recognition, validation and certification of competences and;
- integration of the answers in the perspective of who searches the system, making the network and the training paths portfolio coherent in the perspective of the student, being that these should be possible to customize to fit an individual path.

To this end the Qualifica Network was created, allowing the effective development of the recognition, validation and certification of competences processes, the access to information and guidance about education and training offers, combining physical spaces with online assets.

This measure is being implemented through the activation of the former Qualification and Professional Education Centres (Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional – CQEP), endowing them with qualified technicians for vocational guidance and hours credit, and the conditions for a decentralized
Starting with the current 238 centres, this network will have a total of 270 centres in 2016 and 300 in 2017. The expansion of the network will take place in the municipalities in which it is necessary to ensure an answer to the qualification needs, simultaneously giving priority to territories in which the number of active adults who didn’t complete secondary education is bigger, but also assuring territorial cohesion, considering the specific and contingent dynamics of the low density territories.

The creation of the Qualifica Centres was legally established through the Ordinance no. 232/2016, 29th August [16].

The creation of a national credit system, aligned with the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), that allows and favours mobility processes for students and trainees, introducing a greater flexibility in the training paths, allowing people to resume interrupted paths, streamlining the attendance of longer duration offers and prioritizing already existing short term modular training that contribute to the educational and professional qualification, preserving the value of those paths.

The decree-law that creates this national credit system is being created and is expected to be published in December 2016.

The creation of the Qualifica Passport, an instrument that will aggregate the training attended by the person, allow to consolidate the individual training paths, and develop flexible processes of referral for further training paths.

**Learning outcomes-based qualifications**

In terms of the design of learning outcomes-based qualifications, ANQEP, IP, used a new methodology to a range of qualifications, which were made available in the National Qualifications Catalogue (Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações CNQ). These outcomes-based qualifications were organised into skills and training frameworks for the following education and training areas: Hotels and Restaurants, Tourism and Leisure, Commerce, Management and Administration and Secretarial and Administrative Work.

For the 2016/2017 academic year, schools have the option to develop learning outcomes-based qualifications in the form of vocational courses, using the frameworks associated with this methodology.

With the purpose of developing skills according to this new approach, ANQEP, IP, has held a number of training sessions for teachers, trainers and coordinators of vocational courses that will implement frameworks of learning outcomes-based qualifications.

**National reforms program**

The Government presented the National Reforms Program [17] stabilising the following objectives:

- Promote training and labour activation policies for young people who are not studying, being trained or working;
- Launch an integrated program for adult training and education;
- Ensure the possibility of a second opportunity for qualification;
- Leverage lifelong learning strategies;
- Adult education and training program based on a triple integration: (1) assets made available
by different stakeholders; (2) different types of instruments and responses; and (3) different portfolios of educational pathways;

- Qualify Passport (Passaporte Qualifica) to consolidate the individual qualification itinerary.

**Vocational education development**

The development of Vocational Education in Portugal is one of the Government’s objective, pursuing:

- achieving the target of 50% of upper-secondary school students in dual certification career paths by 2020;
- increased attractiveness of vocational education, improved operational conditions, quality and relevance of training provision that contribute to the gradual improvement of the social perception of this type of training.

Parallel with and complementary to this, a programme of information session should be created for the dissemination and promotion of vocational education.