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Promoting policy recommendations report on the mutual recognition of the AQUAVET curriculum in harmonisation with the European transparency tools

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1. Introduction

This document concerns policy recommendations on the mutual recognition of the AQUAVET curriculum in harmonisation with the European transparency tools (EQF, ECVET). The Aquavet project has developed a validated pedagogical material with regards to new water efficiency technologies, in order to re-skill and up-skill water technicians with open access innovative instructional resources, as well as to contribute to the implementation of EU policies on mobility and transparency in terms of qualifications.

The present deliverable aims to

1. facilitate valorisation of the AQUAVET results
2. delineate the context for the mutual recognition and exploitation of the AQUAVET curriculum (within the partnership countries and the EU)
3. establish a hardstand collaboration on tangible results and practical outcomes between the partnership, VET providers, important representatives from the water technicians sector, and relevant national institutions with regulatory function
4. gather public authorities' support for mutual recognition of learning outcomes, courses and certificates in water efficiency technologies skills among member states.

2. Background

The AQUAVET project formed a “Strategic Partnership” to improve the water efficiency technologies skills of the European water industry workforce, by promoting long term cooperation of relevant organisations from the world of employment and the educational world.

Water technician is an exigent profession far more nowadays than it was in the past. Plumbing work has a direct impact on public health, safety and welfare, which is why it is a regulated profession in some European countries. Due to environmental concerns and energy efficiency

issues, this profession has evolving requirements in terms of skills and knowledge. In addition, it is an activity characterized by growing mobility. New water efficiency technologies present an upcoming trend within an emerging economic growth area supported by European policies focused on the energy performance of buildings and the promotion of "green" practices and environmental friendly approaches in the construction sector. The supply of new skills and training is necessary to enable water companies, construction companies, associations of employers and employees in the water industry to respond to the modern sector environmental and economic challenges.

The installation of water efficient technologies require a level of upgraded and heterogeneous skills portfolios, such as adequate digital competences, electronic literacy on device embedded software and additional technical skills combined with environmental knowledge. They should be also in a position to offer adequate consultation to customers promoting the new water efficient services, products and techniques. To achieve this, they need to acquire the knowledge, qualities and "soft" skills of a consultant specialist combined with the "hard" skills of a sufficiently trained digital technician.

To this end the following were designed in the framework of Aquavet Project:

- a "water efficiency technologies" curriculum for water technicians, based on "hard" and "green" skills, described in terms of learning outcomes and related to Level 3-4 of the European Qualification Framework, (EQF)
- instructional/pedagogical resources and assessment tools for water efficiency technologies curriculum and
- an open educational resource (AQUAVET MOOC) for water efficiency technologies

Five (5) partner organizations from four (4) EU countries collaborated in this project:

- From **Greece**: PROMEA, Hellenic Society for the Promotion of Research and Development Methodologies and

NILHR, National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (NILHR)

- From the **Netherlands** : WWA, Stichting Wateropleidingen
- From **Spain**: CONAIF, Confederacion Nacional de Asociaciones de Instaladores y Fluidos
- From the **United Kingdom** : SWC, South West College (which has replaced SummitSkills)

3. Recognition of the Aquavet outputs within the partnership countries and the EU

What is it about?

According to Cedefop, **Recognition** is “All learning activity undertaken through life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.”¹ The Aquavet project that takes place in the context of the Erasmus+ programme key action of “Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices” and in the field of “Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training” seeks mutual recognition of the curriculum within the partnership countries. This recognition will help water technicians to raise skill levels in water efficiency technology and increase their employability whether within or across borders.² This is also essential so as to give the opportunity to everyone in the water sector to acquire a specialization in the field.

*The way to recognise the full range of an individual’s knowledge, skills and competences, regardless if acquired within or outside the formal education system*³ (as in the case of the Aquavet Project) is the **validation of non-formal and informal learning**. If validated (identified, documented, assessed, and/or certified) these learning experiences can be made more visible

¹ Terminology of European education and training policy, second edition, Cedefop, Publication Office of European Union, Luxembourg, 2014

² European Commission, Recognition of skills and qualifications, https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/skills-qualifications_en

³ Ibid

and usable for further studies or work (Cedefop, 2017).⁴ In the context of the Aquavet Project a validation report has already been produced to enhance the value of the Aquavet curriculum and learning material.⁵

The recognition process is relatively regulated for diplomas and qualifications of formal education and learning. It is not the same for the non formal and informal learning, where there are different systems and approaches of recognition, although the EU has introduced common recognition tools.

What has been done so far at European level?

To date, a variety of initiatives have been launched with a view to simplifying the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications across Europe.

The most important of them are **EQF and ECVET** and they have been developed in order to support European mobility in education-training and employment.

→ **The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**⁶ is a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualification systems in Europe and it allows any qualification acquired through non formal, informal learning to be recognised and related to the EQF levels. It's a voluntary framework, so there are no formal legal obligations on the countries. The aims of the EQF are:

- to help develop a European-wide workforce that is mobile and flexible, and
- to aid lifelong learning

⁴ Member countries are invited to put the necessary arrangements for validation in place by 2018. Guidelines for implementation of these arrangements in the member countries are being developed. A European Inventory is updated on a regular basis to provide an overview over good practices in the area of validation

⁵ See http://www.aquavet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/25-07-2017-REPORT-AQUAVET_05-A1_COMPILING-EVIDENCE.pdf

⁶All information are coming from the site of European Union "Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe Information about courses, work-based learning and qualifications".

https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f%5B0%5D=im_field_entity_type%3A97

EQF is a set of eight (8) common European reference levels described in terms of learning outcomes relevant to qualifications included at that particular level and expressed in the form of: knowledge, skills, and competences

- **Knowledge** means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.
- **Skills** mean the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)
- **Competences** mean the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

EQF is based on **learning outcomes**. **Learning outcomes** are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences that can be achieved in various learning contexts.

→ **The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)** “*is a European instrument designed to support lifelong learning, mobility of learners and flexibility of learning pathways to achieve qualifications*”. ECVET is based also on learning outcomes and Units of learning outcomes that are components of qualifications. Units can be assessed, validated and recognised. In ECVET, learning outcomes are used as a basis for credit transfer and accumulation.

EQF and ECVET share the same approach to learning outcomes.

EQF levels also provide a reference for ECVET

ECVET relies on existing templates that may already be in use at national, re-gional or systems level (for example, as part of existing NQFs). This allows any national qualifications systems, national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and qualifications in Europe to relate to the EQF levels. Learners, graduates, providers and employers can use these levels to understand and compare qualifications awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems.

4. The recognition of non formal and informal learning in the training system of partners' countries

This section provides a brief overview of the recognition systems of non-formal and informal learning in the education and training system of project partners. The Information presented below was obtained from Aquavet partners: CONAIF, NILHR, SWC and WWA.

4.1 Validating/ recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the partners' countries

Country	Present situation
Greece⁷	<p>The term 'non-formal education' is a direct translation from the terminology in Greek legislation, and does not have the same meaning as the term 'non-formal learning' as defined in the 2012 Recommendation on the Validation on Non-formal and Informal Learning, as updated in 2015.</p> <p>Non formal education in accordance with Greek legislation (Law 3879/2010, art. 2, paragraph 4 and Law 4386/2016, art. 66, paragraph 2) includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial Vocational Training 2. Continuing Vocational Training 3. General Adult Education 4. The fourth year after graduating from the Vocational Upper Secondary School (EPAL) named

⁷ Information presented in this section come from the report: EOPPEP (2016). Greece EQF Referencing Report, This publication is available on the internet and can be accessed through the Europa server (https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/Greece_EQF_Referencing_Report.pdf). Copyright © National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (E.O.P.P.E.P.), 2016

	<p>Apprenticeship Class is defined in the area of the non-formal education.</p> <p>Regarding the 'Initial Vocational Training National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance' (EOPPEP) is responsible for the certification exam of students having completed training at Initial Vocational Training Institutions (SEK-Level 3 and IEK-Level 5).</p> <p>Regarding the Continuing Vocational Training EOPPEP is responsible for the certification exam of students having completed training at Lifelong Learning Centers (KDBM).</p> <p>Regarding the fourth year (named Apprenticeship Class) after graduating from the three-year vocational education at the Vocational Upper Secondary School (EPAL) EOPPEP is responsible for the certification exam of students who have successfully completed the fourth year named Apprenticeship Class.</p>
<p>Netherlands</p>	<p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the common name given to the process of the recognition of competences that an individual has gained through formal, informal or non-formal learning in various settings</p> <p>Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) refers to the process of accreditation once the gained competences have been recognized. This implies that competences acquired by learning on the job, in society or in voluntary work are in principle comparable to the competences acquired in formal education. RPL are instruments that can highlight the potential of the individual development and improve the human capital management in companies. In the Netherlands, recognition of prior learning is seen in various contexts.</p>
<p>Spain</p>	<p>Recognition, assessment and accreditation of qualifications</p> <p>It is a set of procedures to recognize, assess and accredit the professional competences acquired through work experience or any other type of non-formal learning. This assessment and accreditation of professional competences will be developed following principles that guarantee the assessments reliability, objectiveness and technical rigor.</p> <p>The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications serves as an objective reference in this procedure. When the professional competences of an employee are assessed and they are not sufficient to complete the qualifications included in a diploma of vocational education and training or an Occupational Aptitude Certificate, a partial cumulative accreditation is awarded. Thus, if the employee wishes to do so, he/she will be able to complete the training in order to obtain the relevant diploma or certificate.</p> <p>The Ministry of Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport will develop, with the collaboration of the administrations belonging to the Autonomous</p>

	<p>Community, a Committee for Information and Guidance, which allows for information related to the accreditation and assessment procedure, the official announcements and the training offers. Also included will be the necessary tools to facilitate the self-evaluation and the path training selection.</p> <p>In Spain, over 60% of the working population does not hold a recognized accreditation of their professional qualification. Besides, there is a great amount of non-formal learning whose lack of recognition, especially for population groups like women, immigrants and unemployed, can cause situations of inappropriate mobility in the labour market with the resulting exclusion risk.</p> <p>In Spain the validation system is regulated by Royal Decree 1224/2009, of 17 July, of recognition of professional competences acquired through on-the-job experience, which determines the procedure for the evaluation and accreditation of professional skills acquired through work experience or non-formal training. In the Spanish system the accreditation allows the people who participate in the process to obtain a complete qualification, or a partial qualification, based on validated professional experience and non-formal learning. Participants can accredit units of competence that constitute parts of a vocational training certificate or a certificate of professionalism.</p> <p>The calls for accreditation processes are carried out by the Autonomous Communities - and exceptionally by the General State Administration for certain sectors and groups of a supranational nature - that establish the units of competence and the number of participants for each accreditation process.</p>
<p>UK</p>	<p>It is important to note that in the UK, there is a devolved system of governance for lifelong learning and many aspects of the skills agenda. Each of the devolved administrations has its own strategy for skills and lifelong learning. The details below relate to prior learning in England and Northern Ireland, and not Scotland and Wales as their education system has notable differences.</p> <p>There are a number of routes through which learners can have their non-formal and informal learning recognised and validated in England and Northern Ireland (UK).</p> <p>The system for accrediting non-formal and informal learning – that is, skills that have been gained outside the formal education system - or for individuals who do not have formal certificates, is known in the UK as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL).</p> <p>Credits gained through RPL can count towards any qualification, at any level and in any subject/sector area within the QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework) unless excluded by the requirements for the award of a qualification.</p>

	<p>National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) also represent an opportunity to validate workplace learning. They are aimed mainly at people in work and lead to a nationally-recognised qualification, proving the ability to perform an occupation to a nationally-recognised occupational standard. In England, learners' achievements in non-regulated learning are recorded through the Recognition and Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-Accredited Learning (RARPA), use of which is compulsory for non-regulated learning providers funded through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).</p>
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4.2 The process for validating/ recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the partners' countries

Country	Present situation
Greece	<p>Till now, there isn't any process or policy of validating/recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Greece. In 2017 EOPPEP will undertake the development of a methodology for the classification of qualifications (knowledge, skills and competences) acquired through non-formal education in the EQF.</p> <p>Considering the linkage of the NQF to arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, EOPPEP addresses the instruction in the legislation governing the NQF, which sets out that the national framework should be aimed at recognizing and correlating learning outcomes in all types of formal, non-formal and informal education. This instruction has been carried out in the development of the NQF, which is explicitly designed to accommodate qualifications of all kinds, related to all modes of learning.</p> <p>The NQF development policy has focused initially on analysing and accommodating the full range of qualifications that are awarded within the formal system. Already, a significant number of private educational bodies have engaged with the NQF authorities and expressed interest in the inclusion of their awards in the framework.</p> <p>EOPPEP is the responsible body in Greece for the certification of non-formal and informal learning as well as for the accreditation of other awarding bodies. The certification system of continuing vocational training of graduates of the Centres for Lifelong Learning will be legislated in 2017. After enactment this certification system will apply in 2017 and subsequent years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification of Vocational Training Institute (IEK) Graduates The accreditation of vocational training and the certification of the vocational training institutes (IEK) graduates embeds a national accreditation exam procedure conducted at national and regional level and is based on

	<p>the vocational training exam regulation framework per specialty.</p> <p>EOPPEP organises at national level the certification exams for IEK graduates of all specialties. Upon successful exams results, IEK graduates are awarded the Vocational Training Diploma recognised both in Greece and in EU member states (for lower secondary education graduates) or the Certificate Level I (for upper secondary education graduates).</p> <p>The first step of validation of non-formal and informal learning was taken in 2006 <i>for adult trainers of non-formal learning certifying their teaching competence qualification</i>. The certification system of adult trainers of non-formal learning was designed by EOPPEP and was finalised in 2012 with the contribution of the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning so the goal at the moment is to fully implement it.</p> <p>By Law 4386/2016 “Arrangements for research and other provisions” (Gazette 83/A/11-05-2016) certification procedures are currently open to all interested parties fulfilling prescribed eligibility criteria. The updated system foresees three pathways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) direct certification upon conditions and criteria; b) Participation in an assessment process and then certification. c) enrolment in training programmes and subsequent certification
<p>Netherlands</p>	<p>The four dimensions and possible instruments to validate informal- and non-formal learning can be found in this presentation</p> <p><i>Identification:</i> Reflection and exploring own career goals, career counseling and career training</p> <p><i>Documentation :</i>Resume, e-portfolio, profile of prior learning</p> <p><i>Assessment :</i> Assessment development, RPL procedure, Intake assessment for education</p> <p><i>Certification:</i> RPL formal certificate Exemptions and ECVET</p> <p>In general, a candidate wants to prove that he or she is competent for a certain job. Therefore, an APL-procedure is focused on a sector standard or formal qualification. The acquired competences, gained through informal and non-formal learning, are compared with the learning outcomes of a formal qualification or sector standard.</p> <p>The process starts with informing and advising individuals and organizations on the use and goals of APL. During the interview the candidate decides whether or not to start the APL-procedure. The goals of the APL-procedure are set and arrangements are made.</p> <p>At recognition stage the candidate has to collect the evidence that the acquired competences match the qualification. The candidate is guided by a portfolio counselor and stores his or her evidence of learning and acquired competences in a portfolio. At validation stage the competences are assessed against the learning outcomes of a qualification or standard and</p>

	<p>validated by an assessor. The assessor describes the outcomes in a Certificate of Experience ('Ervaringcertificaat'). This certificate can be used for new job opportunities or accelerate formal learning programmes.</p>
<p>Spain</p>	<p>People who want to participate in the procedure must fulfill the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have the Spanish nationality, to have obtained the registration certificate of the community citizenship or the European Union citizen family card, or to be the holder of a residence authorization, or of residence and work in force in Spain, in the terms established in the immigration law of Spain. 2. To be 18 years old in the moment of the registration, when it is about the competence units corresponding the qualifications of level I, and to be 20 years old for the levels I and III. 3. To have work experience and/or training related to the professional competences that to be accredited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In case of work experience.</i> In order to prove at least 3 years of work experience with a minimum of 2.000 total worked hours, during the last ten years prior to the official announcement. For competence units of level I, a two-year work experience with a minimum of 1.200 total worked hours, is required. <i>In case of training.</i> Justify, at least 300 hours, for the 10 years prior to the official announcement. Competence units of level I, require at least 200 hours. In case of learning modules associated with the unit of competency that is hoped to be accredited consider a minor duration, the established hours in those learning modules should be accredited. 4. In cases referred to in the article 10.0 b), to have a supporting document about the compliance with some of the additional planned requirements. <p>People over 25 years old who satisfy the requirements of work training experience indicated in the text above, and can't justify them through the documents described in the article 12 of this Royal Decree 1224/2009 17th of July, could apply for their provisional registration in the procedure. They will submit the justification through any fact admitted in law, about their work experience or non-formal training learning. To study those cases, the competent administrations will designate the necessary consultants, who will issue a report about the participation of the applicant in the procedure. If the report is positive, a definite registration will follow.</p> <p><i>The procedure proceedings will consist of the following stages:</i></p>

	<p><i>Counseling.</i></p> <p><i>Assessment</i> of the professional competence.</p> <p><i>Accreditation</i> and recording of the professional competence</p>
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>Vocational Education & Training: Process for Validating / Recognition of non-formal and informal learning. There is no single national framework for validation, covering all sectors of learning and all levels. Throughout the UK, implementation of recognition procedures lies very much with individual training institutions, leading to variation in policy and practice. There are however, four clear structures by which individuals can have their prior learning validated, which apply to different types of learning:</p> <p><i>1.2.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</i></p> <p>“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process which makes use of evidence of a learner’s previous non - certificated achievements to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification. Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate’s previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcomes of a unit”</p> <p>Centres wishing to undertake RPL must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is carried out by designated staff with relevant levels of expertise to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy / guidance for the qualification concerned. •The methods of assessment used will be determined by the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed and might, for example, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – examination of documents – expert witness testimony – reflective accounts – Professional discussion. •The RPL assessment should be carried out as an entire process. This means that the assessor should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Plan with the learner – Make a formal assessment decision – Feedback assessment decisions to the learner, confirming decision and giving guidance on the available options (particularly in situations where the decision has been not to award credit.) – Maintain appropriate records – Ensure that learners are aware of their right to access the appeals process

	<p>should they feel the assessment decision was unfair</p> <p>The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that records of assessment are maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.</p> <p><i>1.2.2 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), which recognise workplace learning</i></p> <p>National vocational qualifications (NVQs) are work-related, outcomes-based, competence oriented qualifications which are based on national occupational standards. They are mainly targeted to people who are currently in work and provide evidence of professional competence. They can be taken as a qualification on their own, or as part of an apprenticeship. NVQs are assessed through evidence of performance against certain work related tasks, rather than formal examinations</p> <p><i>1.2.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (formerly referred to as Accreditation of prior Learning, APL/APEL) in relation to Higher Education (HE)</i></p> <p>For HE, the responsibility for RPL lies ultimately with the degree-awarding body or other awarding organisation (as that is where ultimate responsibility for academic standards lies). Although there is no legislation that regulates RPL, there is a long tradition of recognising prior learning and encouraging mature students to participate in higher education¹</p> <p><i>1.2.4 Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-Accredited Learning (RARPA)</i></p> <p>Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-Accredited Learning (RARPA) – applies to England only. RARPA is a process to measure the progress and achievement of learners taking part in non-regulated learning provision, i.e. mainly adult and community learning. It is seen as a method of quality-assuring learning provision and also as a way of supporting learners to make the transition from non-formal to formal learning. It is used as a mechanism to build confidence and support learners who have few or no qualifications, ideally enabling them to progress to further levels of education which may be qualification-based or support them back into work or society (e-mail correspondence with RARPA trainer, 2016).</p> <p>RARPA is a five-stage process, as outlined below, with stages 4-5 relevant to the validation of learning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish aim(s) of the learning programme, appropriate to the learner(s),2. Initial assessment to establish learner’s starting point (this must be recorded),3. Identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives,4. Recognition and recording of progress and achievement during programme,
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	5. End-of-programme learner self-assessment; tutor summative assessment; review of overall progress and achievement (RARPA 5 stages, unpublished).
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4.3 Legal framework

Country	Present situation
Greece	<p>2010-2013, Initial phase of registration of qualifications awarded in formal and non-formal education.</p> <p>By Law 4283/2014, Classification of the following qualifications was legislated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocational Training School (SEK) – Specialty Certificate-Level 3 - General Upper Secondary School Certificate-Level 4 - Vocational Upper Secondary School Certificate- Level 4 - Vocational Upper Secondary School “Degree” (EPAL)- Level 4 - Vocational upper secondary school “degree” and apprenticeship class-Level 5 - Vocational Training Institute (IEK) – Specialty Diploma-Level 5 <p>2015 The National Quality Assurance Framework for VET</p> <p>From December 11 2015 to December 18, 2015, the Framework for Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning (p3) and the application guide were put to public consultation. The above framework will be legislated as a framework for self-assessment of public and private IEK, pursuant to the provisions of Article 5 of no. MD 5954/2014 (Government Gazette 1807/B/2014) «Regulation Operation Training Institutes (IEK) under the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GGDBM)». The proposed framework specifies the definition of quality in Lifelong Learning. It leverages existing and new sets of specific quality principles while providing measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess the application of quality principles by stakeholders.</p> <p>The existing legal framework for validation of non-formal and informal learning has not been implemented but validation is possible for professionals in private security services, in some technical occupations (including plumbers, technical works machinery operators, liquid and gas fuel installation and welding) and for teaching competence of adult trainers in non-formal learning. CEDEFOP 2015</p>
Netherlands	The framework is the same as the framework for vocational training.
Spain	Royal Decree 1224/2009 of 17 July, of Recognition Of The Skills Acquired By Experience, established the procedure and requirements for the assessment and accreditation of the

	<p>professional competencies acquired through work experience and non-formal training.</p> <p>You can find this Royal Decree in English version in this link</p> <p>https://www.global-regulation.com/translation/spain/1442934/royal-decree-1224---2009-of-17-july%252c-of-recognition-of-the-skills-acquired-by-experience.html</p>
United Kingdom	<p>There is no direct legislation in relation to the recognition of informal and non-formal learning in the UK. However, recognition of prior learning (RPL) as it is now commonly termed in the UK is an integral part of the qualifications and credit frameworks that have come to be developed, and which in some cases are still undergoing development.</p>

4.4 Public authorities responsible for the validation/recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Country	Present situation
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity and National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) are responsible for accreditation of “Input” (providers of Initial and Continuing Vocational Training, Occupational profiles, learning programmes for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training) while Certification of “output” (certification of graduates of the Initial Vocational Training and Continuing Vocational Training, certification of qualifications) falls under the responsibility of EOPPEP (Law 4186/2013, art. 17, paragraph 2). ✓ National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) is the body responsible for the design and development of the HQF. It is also the body that represents Greece as the national coordination point for EQF and is responsible for undertaking the referencing of the HQF to the EQF. EOPPEP is also an awarding body in relation to two Qualification Types in the framework. ✓ General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth of Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, has the task of supervising the providers for ‘non-formal education’, both public and private, as well as the authority to define their educational framework
Netherlands	<p>http://www.nationaal-kenniscentrum-eva.nl/werknemers/english and the schools for vocational training and other training institutes.</p>
Spain	<p>The tasks related to the determination of the procedure for the evaluation and accreditation of</p>

professional competences in the field of vocational training depend on :

- ✓ The Ministry of Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, with the participation of the General Council of Vocational Training,
- ✓ The Consultation body with the participation of Administrations, Autonomous Communities and Social Agents, and this, in turn, with the technical support of the
- ✓ The National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL, in Spanish), responsible for defining, preparing and updating references for the evaluation of professional competences, through the National Catalog of Professional Qualifications.

The National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL) was created by Royal Decree 375/1999 of 5 March 1999. It is the technical instrument, endowed with capacity and independence, which supports the Spanish General Council of Vocational Education and Training in order to attain the objectives of the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (known in Spanish as SNCFP). The Organic Act 5/2002 of 19 June 2002 on Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training confers on the INCUAL the responsibility for defining, creating and updating the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications and the corresponding Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training.

The governing body of the INCUAL is the General Council of Vocational Education and Training though the INCUAL is placed under the control of the Secretary General of Education (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport), as laid down in Royal Decree 1553/2004 of 20 June 2004.

Objectives:

- To observe qualifications and their evolution.
- To determine qualifications.
- To accredit qualifications.
- To develop the integration of professional qualifications.
- Follow-up and assessment of the National Program on Vocational Training.

Functions

- To propose the establishment and management of the National System for Professional Qualifications.
- To establish criteria for the requirements and characteristics due to be met by professional qualifications in order to be incorporated into the National System for Professional Qualifications.
- To establish a basic methodology to identify professional competences and to define a model to be adopted by professional qualifications in order to be incorporated into the National

System for Professional Qualifications.

- To propose a system for the professional accreditation and recognition.
- To establish a procedure to involve regional institutions of qualifications as well as other social agents in the definition of the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications and in the update of sectorial demands.
- To establish criteria about basic methods to be observed in the assessment of competences and to establish criteria for the procedure to award accreditations by competent authorities.
- To propose procedures for the establishment of modalities for the accreditation of professional competences from the National System for Professional Qualifications as well as their update.
- To develop, as a basic instrument serving the General Council of Vocational Education and Training, essentially technical activities of vocational education and training both in Spain and the European Community such as studies, reports, comparative analysis, information collection, bibliographies and scientific seminars.
- To facilitate the functional interrelations between training activities of the different subsystems of Vocational Education and Training (and the diplomas and certificates they generate) and professional classifications systems created by collective bargaining.
- To carry out the necessary tasks to establish a reference framework for the general programming of all subsystems and, at the same time, to support the legislative process of Vocational Education and Training.
- To propose the necessary measures to regulate the system for correspondences, validations and equivalences among the three VET subsystems (initial, unemployed and continuing), including work experience.
- To support the implementation and expansion of the new training contract by creating a training development model which reinforces the qualification-oriented role attributed to the contract by law.
- To improve the design and content of the occupational aptitude certificates, thus facilitating standardization and correspondence between certificates and competence units (associated with modules from professional diplomas of Initial Vocational Educational And Training).
- To propose, through the General Council of Vocational Education and Training, the definition of the scope of the modules from Unemployed Vocational Education and Training, so that the worker who takes those modules can capitalize them through the corresponding occupational aptitude certificate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To make proposals about the certification of continuing vocational education and training actions related to the National System for Qualifications through their integration in the System of Professional Certificates, in legal and operative terms.
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Universities / Training Centers: have their own policy for RPL schemes to recognise relevant prior learning for admission and/or credit purposes. ✓ Awarding Bodies: e.g. Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ✓ Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF): The QCF Regulatory Arrangements support the recognition of non-formal certificated learning through the exemption facility which exists within the rules of combination. Individuals with certificated achievements outside the QCF can claim exemption from the requirement to achieve credits for designated units. Exemptions play an important part in supporting learner progression within the QCF. The requirements and expectations for exemption in the QCF are set out in the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual/08/3726). They are based on the following definition of exemption: ‘The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-QCF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value’. ✓ The Open College Networks (OCN): Open College Networks (OCN’s) have existed across England, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1975 to formally recognise the achievements of adult learners and promote and widen access to learning in the UK. They work with a range of organisations (including Adult Education Providers, ✓ Further Education Colleges, Youth Based Providers, Voluntary & Community Providers, Trade Unions, Small & Medium Enterprises, statutory funded Training Providers, Public Sector Bodies including Prisons) to deliver a diverse selection of learning programmes based on OCN units of learning. ✓ Department for the Economy Northern Ireland: regulatory authority responsible for skills training and Higher Education in Northern Ireland. They have an approved process for accrediting students for previous work and/or industrial experience. ✓ The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

4.5 Other Organizations and institutions involved in validation arrangements and its coordination.

Country	Present situation
Greece	<i>There are no other public organizations involved</i>
Netherlands	<i>There are no other organizations involved</i>
Spain	<p>As a consequence of the territorial division of Spain in Autonomous Communities, these also have competences in the field of validation and recognition of professional competences.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>1.-) ANDALUCIA INSTITUTO ANDALUZ DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES PROFESIONALES http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion/webportal/web/iacp</p> <p>2.-) ARAGÓN AGENCIA DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES PROFESIONALES DE ARAGÓN http://servicios.aragon.es/pwac/contenido.visualizar.do?idContenido=2501&javascript=true&sm=201&cpath=S</p> <p>3.-) ASTURIAS DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL, DESARROLLO CURRICULAR E INNOVACIÓN EDUCATIVA</p> <p>4.-) CANARIAS INSTITUTO CANARIO DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES PROFESIONALES http://www3.gobiernodecanarias.org/empleo/portal/web/sce/sce/iccp</p> <p>5.-) CANTABRIA DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL Y EDUCACIÓN PERMANENTE http://www.cantabria.es/web/direccion-general-formacion-profesional-y-educacion-permanente</p> <p>6.-) CASTILLA Y LEÓN. SERVICIO DE CUALIFICACIÓN PROFESIONAL Y APRENDIZAJE PERMANENTE http://www.jcyl.es/web/jcyl/Portada/es/Plantilla100Directorio/1248366924958/0/1142233494630/DirectorioPadre</p> <p>7.-) CATALUÑA INSTITUT CATALÀ DE LES QUALIFICACIONS PROFESSIONALS (ICPQ) http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/inici/</p> <p>8.-) EXTREMADURA INSTITUTO EXTREMEÑO DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES Y ACREDITACIONES http://extremaduratrabaja.gobex.es/ciudadanos/formacion/instituto-extreme%C3%B1o-de-las-</p>

	<p>cualificaciones-y-acreditaciones</p> <p>9.-) GALICIA</p> <p>SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL</p> <p>http://www.edu.xunta.es/fp/acreditacion</p> <p>10.-) ISLAS BALEARES</p> <p>DEPARTAMENTO DE FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL Y CUALIFICACIONES PROFESIONALES</p> <p>http://www.caib.es/govern/sac/organitzacio.do?lang=es&coduo=944322</p> <p>11.-) COMUNIDAD DE MADRID</p> <p>SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE CUALIFICACIÓN Y POLÍTICAS DE EMPLEO</p> <p>http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?cid=1142335670180&language=es&pagename=Empleo%2FPa ge%2FEMPL_pintarContenidoFinal</p> <p>12.-) REGIÓN DE MURCIA</p> <p>INSTITUTO DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES DE LA REGIÓN DE MURCIA</p> <p>http://www.icuam.es/web/guest/presentacion</p> <p>13.-) NAVARRA</p> <p>INSTITUTO NAVARRO DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES</p> <p>http://cualificaciones.educacion.navarra.es/</p> <p>14.-) PAIS VASCO</p> <p>AGENCIA VASCA PARA LA EVALUACIÓN DE LA COMPETENCIA Y LA CALIDAD DE LA FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL</p> <p>https://gida.irekia.euskadi.eus/es/entities/2286-agencia-vasca-para-evaluacion-competencia-calidad-formacion-profesional</p> <p>15.-) LA RIOJA</p> <p>DEPARTAMENTO DE CUALIFICACIONES DE LA RIOJA</p> <p>http://www.larioja.org/es</p> <p>16.-) COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA</p> <p>SERVICIO DE GESTIÓN DE LA FORMACIÓN Y CUALIFICACIÓN PROFESIONAL</p> <p>http://www.ceice.gva.es/web/cualificaciones-profesionales</p>
United Kingdom	See the above table

4.6 The links between validation and the EQF, ECVET,

Country	Present situation
Greece⁸	<p>The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.</p> <p>“However, the learning outcomes approach has not been fully adopted by the education and training system; the process has been gradual, so far. IVET has been mainly input-oriented but analysis of IVET qualifications according to a learning-outcomes approach has been completed. There is no legislation that foresees the development of a credit system in line with ECVET (units of learning outcomes, credit points and partnerships) and compatible with the NQF, creating the necessary legal and regulatory framework”.⁹</p> <p>Greece, in its turn, already has a law that foresees the development of a credit system in line with ECVET and compatible with the NQF; to implement the law, further ministerial decisions are needed but current political challenges put them on hold.¹⁰</p> <p>Law No. 3879/2010 (A 163/21-9-2010) on “Enhancing of Lifelong Learning in Greece” sets out a range of criteria for the design of the HQF and defines the following: Within the context of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework, definitions are as follows:</p> <p>“Descriptors”: the indicators determining the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competence) corresponding to the qualifications of a particular level.</p> <p>“Sectoral descriptors”: specialized sectorial descriptors of the levels of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework, which identify sectorial learning outcomes corresponding to the qualifications per sector of economic activity.</p> <p>“Sectoral qualification”: the qualification awarded as an outcome of an assessment and validation process, upon verification by a competent sectoral body that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to set standards. If the competent sectoral body has international acknowledgment, the qualification is named “international sectoral qualification”.</p> <p>In accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 16 of the Law, the following are determined:</p>

⁸ Page36

⁹ Cedefop (2016). ECVET in Europe: monitoring report 2015. Luxembourg:Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 56.<http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/946187>, page.53

¹⁰ Ibid., page30

	<p>1. Through the Hellenic Qualifications Framework learning outcomes of all forms of formal education, non- formal education and informal learning are recognized and referenced, so that they are certified and classified into levels, in alignment with the levels of the European Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>2. The Hellenic Qualifications Framework can be further specialized in sectoral qualification frameworks.</p> <p>3. The terms of shaping and implementing the Hellenic Qualifications Framework and, in particular, the issues relating to aligning with the European Qualifications Framework and international sectoral qualifications, as well as determining sectoral descriptors, will be determined by Presidential Decrees (PDs), pursuant to the provisions of the same Law. The PDs are issued upon proposal of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, acting in turn upon EOPPEP's recommendation.</p>
Netherlands	<p>An important reason for the development of an EVC system was the need for transparency or comparability of results from formal and informal learning for the connection between education and the labor market. 20 years later, we have multiple tools for validation and transparency of learning outcomes in addition to EVC: the Dutch Qualification Framework NLQF, which is related to the EQF, the European Qualification Framework. This framework offers the possibility of enrolling unrecognized qualifications in a level recognized for the Netherlands and Europe (see also www.ncpnlqf.nl). In addition, there is ECVET, the development of qualifications in units and, if possible, credits.</p>
Spain	<p><i>National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training</i></p> <p>The Spanish National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training, known in Spanish as SNCFP, was established by Spanish Organic Act 5/2002 of 19 June 2002. It consists of instruments and actions which are necessary to promote and develop the integration of Vocational Education and Training, as well as to assess and accredit professional competencies.</p> <p>The SNCFP was created to respond to the demand for qualifications of people and enterprises in a society trying out a continuous process of change and innovation.</p> <p>The SNCFP objectives are to adapt the professional training to the qualification demands of productive organizations, to facilitate the adaptation of supply and demand on the labour market, to extend lifelong learning beyond the traditional educational period, and to promote the freedom of movement for workers. For these reasons, it plays an essential role in the labour and education world.</p> <p>The European Qualifications Framework, or EQF, is one of a series of instruments developed to</p>

support European cooperation in education and training (other instruments include EQAVET , ECTS, NARIC and Europass). It seems clear that the EQF should serve as a reference point for the international integration of sectoral qualifications. Developed and tested over many years, the EQF was officially launched in April 2008 following the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

EQF aims at promoting the mobility of workers and learners, facilitating lifelong learning and qualifications recognition and increasing understanding, and comparison, of the qualifications levels in different European countries through linking national qualifications systems to a Common European reference framework.

The EQF encompasses all levels and all types of learning and centers on eight reference levels, known as EQF levels, which describes what learner knows, understands and is able to do (learning outcomes descriptors). The EQF does not describe specific qualifications, however, relying instead on the leveling of qualifications and awards against existing National Qualifications Systems and Frameworks (NQFs).

The reference of different national qualifications systems and frameworks to the EQF is ongoing, with some countries having completed this activity and other countries continuing to work on development and referencing actions. Where referencing has been completed, results have been uploaded to the EQF Portal (a part of the European Commission's Ploteus platform) to allow the comparison of different NQFs, to the EQF, and to each other.

The EQF shares common transparency goals with ECVET, with each of these instruments making use of learning outcomes (see section on Learning Outcomes). In ECVET, learning outcomes are used as a basis for credit transfer and accumulation. ECVET does not, however, provide a template or taxonomy for the development of learning outcomes descriptions, relying instead on existing models already in use at national, regional or systems level (for example, as part of existing NQFs).

What is essential for ECVET is that learning outcomes are clearly identified and described to enable the mutual understanding of qualifications and judgments on:

- Whether the qualifications covered in the framework of a partnership for geographical mobility lead to the same or similar occupation.
- Whether they are described in one setting or context and whether they are comparable with those that can be achieved in another setting or context.

An EQF must be of direct relevance to individual citizens and must help them pursue lifelong learning. This could be done, in part, through the introduction of common reference points, which

	<p>will make it easier for students and workers to plan their careers throughout life. In addition, strong links must be established between the EQF, the credit transfer and accumulation system.</p> <p>The priority given to lifelong learning and the need to encourage the transfer of qualifications across institutional, inter-system and inter-national borders emphasize the need for an integrated transfer and accumulation system for European credit Training throughout life.</p> <p>The introduction of the 8 levels of an EQF should facilitate the development and implementation of this system. Building on the experiences of higher education (ECTS) and education and vocational training (ECVET), an integrated system for the transfer and accumulation of European credits for lifelong learning could be based on the following main principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be implemented on a voluntary basis. • It must be sufficiently simple and functional to be of practical relevance to individuals, to education and training providers, to competent authorities in qualification and to other relevant bodies. • It should be built on a set of transparent and agreed principles, conventions and procedures that promote mutual trust between the groups of partners involved. • It should be built on learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning procedures. • It must be flexible enough to encompass the diversity of learning in lifelong learning (initial and continuing education and training in formal systems as well as learning acquired in non-formal and informal settings). <p>More information in this link: http://www.euvetsupport.eu/index.php?id=208&L=0</p>
United Kingdom	See table 1

4.7 Recognition procedure of Open Educational Resources (MOOC)

Country	Present situation
Greece	There is no recognition procedure.
Netherlands	There is no recognition procedure.
Spain	In Spain, there is the Order ESS/1897/2013 of 10 October, which has developed from the Royal Decree 34/2008, of 18 January, by which professional certificates are regulated and royal decrees

	<p>of certificates of professionalism dictated in its application.</p> <p>This Order, which establishes that 310 certificates of professionalism can be taught in the form of e-learning (on line), basically develops the conditions of delivery in this modality of certificates of professionalism, as well as certain aspects of the other modalities of delivery (face-to-face). In this way, the offer of training of certificates of professionalism can be imparted, in whole or in part, in person or via e-learning and even be part of a company through dual vocational training.</p> <p>Modality of e-learning entails the accomplishment of formative actions through the information and communication technologies, thus enabling the interactivity of students, tutors-trainers and resources located in different places, although it can be combined with face-to-face training.</p> <p>The e-learning training will have the same validity and effects as the face-to-face modality training regarding the obtaining of the certificate of professionalism and of the accumulable partial accreditation.</p>
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few Moocs lead to any sort of officially recognised qualification • There is no systematic MOOC accrediting in the UK by any University • A British report entitled “The Maturing of MOOCs” clearly states that the increasing formal recognition of MOOCs constitutes a priority for policy-makers and institutions. The accreditation methods said to include badges and adoption of validation techniques (e.g., keyboard tracking, honour codes). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there is a lack of any systematic solution for policy on credit recognition of MOOCs • UK universities and other awarding organisations are responsible for the quality of all the courses they offer. Since MOOCs are typically non-credit bearing and have no particular entry requirements, they are not formally scrutinised during quality assurance review. • The majority of MOOCs are offering digital badges for completion of either the entire course, of each unit or of a week of work • Assessment and credentialisation are central to the future of MOOCs and, more broadly, of open learning.

4.8 The value of the certification of non-formal and informal learning and through MOOC, in the labour market

Country	Present situation
Greece	Usually, this kind of certification is not recognized by the labour market. However, the reputation of the issuing authority may add a value to the certification. This means a higher paying job and/or

	more professional opportunities.
Netherlands	The value of a certification (EVC) is the same as a common diploma.
Spain	<p>These certificates accredit the set of professional competences that enable the development of an identifiable work activity in the production system without this constituting regulation of the professional practice.</p> <p>They are official in nature and valid throughout Spanish territory, they are issued by the competent Administrations and they shall have the effects that are due in accordance with rules on recognition of qualifications in the European Union and valid throughout the national territory.</p> <p>They are an excellent accreditation tool for the insertion in the labor market of young people without experience and also for those workers with experience but without accredited training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a more economical training than the postgraduate courses, for example, and yet they all have an important practical component through the module of internships in companies. • In several sectors they are an instrument of regulation of the professional activity, given that it is necessary to be in possession of the corresponding certificate to exercise this profession. • Its training is modular cumulative, which allows the student to progressively overcome the different modules that make up the training itinerary obtaining partial accreditation. • It is a versatile training that can be carried out through the face-to-face or distance-learning modalities, depending on the students' personal needs and circumstances.
United Kingdom	MOOCs are an important part of non-formal learning for individuals with higher education experience, particularly those who are either unemployed or low earners. However, MOOC certificates currently have low value in the labour market and in formal education largely because there is no formal system of accreditation, so drop-out rates have been high. Most Higher Education Institutions do not have recognition mechanisms for MOOC-based learning indicating there are currently few opportunities for bridging MOOC-based learning and formal education.

4.9 The cost for the validation process

Country	Present situation
Greece	<p>For the validation process (only for the IEK) from the public authorities there's a relatively small amount.</p> <p>Certification fees per participant are: fifty euros (€50.00) for the Theoretical Part) and fifty euros (€ 50.00) for the Practical Part.</p>
Netherland	<i>Yes, there is</i>
Spain	In Spain, the Certificates of Professionalism will be issued to those who have requested it and

	<p>demonstrate that they have passed the modules corresponding to that certificate or have obtained the recognition and accreditation of all the units of competence that compose it through the evaluation procedure and Accreditation of the professional competences acquired by the work experience or by non-formal forms of training, after payment of the appropriate fee.</p> <p>The amount of this tax depends on the Autonomous Community, for example in the case of Madrid the amount is 46,82 €, while in Aragon, for example, 32 €.</p>
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>The cost of RPL has long been identified as an issue. For example, the need to make RPL services affordable and manageable for learners and learning providers has been identified as an important barrier.</p> <p>In England, despite the allowances for RPL within the main vocational training funding mechanism, it has been reported that the costs of the RPL process still present a significant barrier to making an RPL offer to large numbers of learners. This is due to the individualised nature of recognition processes and the fact that providers need groups of learners working through the same units to make provision viable (although groups do not necessarily have to be large). In addition, staff in training institutions needs training in recognition processes and this involves a cost which has to be covered by the training institution. To offset these costs, providers may charge a fee for recognition services to learners. Evidently, this is likely to impact on the learners with low levels of formal qualification and low wages proportionately more than on those with higher levels and higher incomes. No funding is available to learners to cover such costs</p>

5. Policy Recommendations

Considering the above as well as the fact that recognition is a complex issue, we propose the following key policy recommendations to help realize the outlined vision of the mutual recognition of the Aquavet curriculum, in harmonization with the European tools.

- 1. Aquavet partners should continue their efforts to ensure a close cooperation with national institutions and authorities responsible for the EQF, ECVET, and informal and non-formal learning, as well as with the social partners, in order to promote the implementation of the AQUAVET pedagogical resources**

Aquavet partners with the support of experts on the field and with the use of evidence compiled from the implementation of the project, should:

- promote the added value and importance of Aquavet curriculum and MOOC in different educational and learning environments, eg. in vocational schools, training centers, in job training, in technical training seminars,
- promote the significance of Aquavet recognition and certification for the different professionals groups, from plumbers and builders to engineers
- highlight how the creation of a Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), could provide a cost effective outreach programme

- 2. Use the European credit system (ECVET) for the recognition, transfer and accumulation of credits for the Aquavet curriculum between project partners**

A dialogue should be encouraged between policy makers at national and European levels, VET providers and trainers for the water and construction industry, plumbers' associations, water building installation companies - building services engineering, water efficiency technologies companies and manufacturers - water efficiency research institutes and

academic institutions - environmental and water efficiency agencies, regarding the estimated time for the student to engage in each learning outcome for “hard” and “soft” skills, both for the training program and for the MOOC. Each learning outcome has to be attributed to ECVET credits (*the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload*¹¹)

3. Reinforce transparency in procedures on recognition of non- formal and informal learning

Aquavet partners in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders should work towards building up greater transparency and information on recognition procedures of non- formal learning. Despite the growing acknowledgment of the recognition and validation of professional skills, it is desirable to involve more people who do not have official accreditation of their competencies in these procedures. The challenge is to achieve greater citizen motivation, accessibility and trust in the process as well as to improve the flexibility of procedures and to optimize resources

4. Aquavet partners should cooperate with the competent authorities, within the framework of their national education and training systems and in the context for the European cooperation in education and training, in order to incorporate Aquavet's curriculum and learning material, and especially the MOOC, into plumbing apprenticeship programs in vocational schools and/or vocational training seminars.

¹¹ An estimation of the time learners typically need to complete all learning activities such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, work placements, individual study required to achieve the defined learning outcomes in formal learning environments. The correspondence of the full-time workload of an academic year to 60 credits is often formalised by national legal provisions. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, which means that one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. It should be recognised that this represents the normal workload and that for individual learners the actual time to achieve the learning outcomes will vary.

Trainers, trained through ‘Train the Trainer’ Seminar and ‘Pilot training’ of Aquavet programme could act as an antenna for dissemination and recognition of the Aquavet curriculum in their own classroom. MOOC could also be a support material for vocational education and training for water technicians which could even be enriched at regular intervals with the contribution of teachers, trainers, students and trainees.

- 5. Professional associations and bodies of water technicians in each partner country should work together in order to implement the Aquavet’s learning material and MOOC in the training courses and information provided to their members for the purpose of promoting sustainable water use.**

Plumbing associations and organizations in partner countries offer to their members various professional courses and seminars to develop and upgrade their skills and qualifications. The water efficient technologies as presented through Aquavet's training material is a major specialization for professional plumbers wishing to provide new services to their customers and at the same time to promote Sustainable Water Resources Management at macro as well as micro levels.

- 6. Furthermore, competent authorities, bodies, institutions NGOs should be encouraged to use Aquavet’s learning material, resources and MOOC to raise awareness and/or influence people about sustainable water use, mainly in areas where water is scarce, such as in Southern Europe**

Aquavet project shows us that there is a need for the reinforcement of concrete information and knowledge exchange between different national and European agencies for water recycling. Aquavet curriculum, learning material and MOOC offer a rich and a “renewable re- source” of technical issues, about the reuse of wastewater produced at household level.

So, Aquavet outputs could serve as a teaching material as well as an awareness-raising material by relevant stakeholders and environmental organizations. *However*, it is important that all competent authorities and organizations at all levels work together to update and enrich the content of the learning material and MOOC. For example it is necessary to include subjects such as cost estimation about the execution of this kind of installations, water reuse in collective buildings, and differences between geographic areas, e.g. North and South Europe.

7. Continue the dialogue between different stakeholders with regard to the recognition of the skills, knowledge and attitudes of young plumbers and water technicians gained through informal and non-formal training.

The Aquavet 'Memorandum of understanding' between different parties in the field could be a chance to make recognition of non-formal learning more widespread and could contribute to further development of recognition policies for the water technicians that are interested to up skill their qualifications and work in another EU country.