

Guidelines Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe management: Not Formal Learning (NFL) validation



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- 1) the collection of country-specific information related to Qualification Policies and Models to Recognize and Certify Not Formal Learning according to the National Standards, with attention to OERs and MOOC;
- 2) guidelines about how to apply and certify NFL in cultural routes management.

1. Collection of information on Qualification Policies and Models to validate and certify Not Formal Learning¹

The HECTOR project partners, in consideration of the high interest demonstrated by participants in the formal and informal training activities carried out within the project, of the results of the survey conducted among Cultural Route's Managers and in conformity with the project outputs list, have analysed the National qualification policies in the four Countries represented in the consortium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain.

1.1 Overarching approach to validation per Country: France

In France, the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning builds upon longstanding practices in the field of identification and recognition of prior learning and professional experience. The validation system, which is based on a clear legal framework, has taken shape in the framework of vocational training and labour market policies. Its legal base lies in the 6th part of the Labour code (book IV) dedicated to vocational training; it is evenly addressing initial training (book II) and continuous vocational training (book III).

Its purpose is to give the opportunity to those who have no qualifications in connection with the activities they have undertaken to obtain a level of qualification corresponding to their skills.

A key milestone was the adoption of legislation in 2002, followed by various decrees, which created the current procedure known as Validation of experience (*Validation des acquis de l'expérience* - VAE). VAE can lead to the award of whole or parts of a qualification (*certification*) based on the knowledge and skills acquired through prior experience and learning in a variety of contexts.

VAE is defined as an individual right in France. Employees can use their individual right to training leave to undertake a VAE.

In addition to VAE, other procedures linked to the assessment of informal learning and non-formal learning exist:

- There is a mechanism for the recognition of professional and personal experience to grant access to a programme through exemption of the normal requirements; at higher

¹ The collection of country-specific information is based on the National reports " 2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning" edited by CEDEFOP.

education level, this procedure known as *Validation des acquis professionnels et personnels* (VAPP, initially “VAP 85”) was introduced in 19854 and is still in place as of today;

- The skill audits or *bilan de compétences* aims at the identification of skills and competences acquired by an individual through his/her professional pathway, without targeting a particular certification and without an assessment procedure. It is not in itself a validation procedure, the *Bilan de compétences* can still be the starting point of a validation process.
- Other types of competence portfolios developed outside of validation procedures also exist

VAE can be organised for any vocationally or professionally oriented qualification –including a higher education qualification – officially listed in the national directory of qualifications, the *Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles* (RNCP).

VAE and OER (Open Educational Resources)

No specific information is available on the link between validation (VAE) and OER.

The VAE procedure does not aim to facilitate the validation of learning outcomes from OER.

It is not possible to apply for VAE solely on the basis of learning outcomes from OER. VAE focuses on the validation of learning outcomes from professional experience, including volunteer work; a relevant experience of at least three years is required to apply for validation.

OER such as MOOCs could be taken into account in the validation of higher education studies (*validation des études supérieures - VES*)¹¹ – which is not part of VAE, nor of VAPP – whereby previous studies and obtained diplomas are taken into account in obtaining directly a whole/part of a diploma. There is no data available on VES (source: Ministry of higher education).

Skills audits

Skills audits (*bilans de compétences*) are a well-developed tool in France. This tool is used mostly for workers, but also for jobseekers. Its objective is to allow individuals to identify and analyse their professional and personal competencies, their aptitudes and motivation, with a view to define a professional project or training project. A skills audit is personalised and is not related to a specific qualification or standard.

According to the Labour Code (Article R6322-35 and further revisions):

- A skills audit can be requested by an employee or by his/her employer, but cannot in any case be imposed on any individual. It is assimilated to a training activity and can be requested as part of the individual right to training and training leave.
- The skills audit must be carried out by an external accredited provider and include a preliminary phase, an investigation phase, and a conclusion phase. The procedure must last at least 24 hours in total, including 10 hours of face-to-face interviews taking place over a period of three weeks to three months.
- The skills audit results in a synthesis document drawn up by the professional counsellor. This document is confidential and only provided to the worker who is the object of the skills audit, unless this person agrees to communicate it to another party. This document summarises the competencies and aptitudes which have been identified and how these relate to the objectives of the candidate, and includes one to three proposals for career evolution, as well as an action plan. Advice is given on necessary steps to reach the objectives in question.

In practice, professionals in charge of performing skills audit are often also trained to provide guidance on VAE procedures and support to candidates.

Validation methods

The main approach used as part of VAE in France is the portfolio method completed with interviews and debates with a jury. The methods used may vary depending on the provider and the type of qualification targeted (each awarding authority is in charge of defining the methods used).

Identification/documentation phase

The VAE application follows a two-step procedure for all qualifications.

For the registration of applicants in the VAE process, a common application form for the collection of information has been developed between Ministries, which is known as *Livret 1*.

This is used for a first eligibility check. A decree establishes a standard model for a "Request for VAE," with all ministries awarding qualifications³⁴. This form is registered by the General Directorate of State Modernisation.

It can be downloaded on most websites of VAE official stakeholders.

The second part of the application is the preparation and submission by the candidate of a **portfolio** identifying and documenting the learning outcomes to be validated (called *Livret 2*).

The exact structure and content of this document can vary in content according to the awarding body and the standard requirements of qualifications that are sought; in all cases, it contains a detailed written description of the applicant's knowledge and skills acquired through experience as well as evidence of past professional achievements.

As part of the procedure used at the ministry in charge of employment, the candidate must present a document called *dossier de synthèse de pratiques professionnelles* (DSPP) presenting their professional experience.

Assessment/certification phase

The content and relevance of the portfolio is assessed by the members of an ad-hoc validation jury. The jury meets in the presence of the candidate; this typically includes a presentation by the candidate about his/her experience, an interview with the candidate and debate with jury members. The jury can then decide to award a full or partial validation to the candidate or not to award anything. Other methods can be used as part of the assessment/certification phase (related to the type of learning outcomes to be assessed) such as observation of real or simulated working activities. As part of the procedure used at the ministry in charge of employment, the assessment includes a simulation of the work environment (called *épreuve de synthèse*) in front of a jury, who is also evaluating the dossier submitted by the candidate. The validation can be total or partial (one or several certificates of professional competences can be awarded) (DARES, 2014).

Traditional tests and examinations are not common practice.

1.2 Overarching approach to validation per Country: Italy

In Italy, the national and regional institutions involved in the qualification system (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Regions) have tried on several occasions to establish a legal set of standards to share and harmonise validation practices. There have been important institutional documents and engagements about this aim since 1996 as well as numerous specific initiatives related to certain sectors, Regions or target groups. According to the periodical surveys carried out by Isfol (<http://www.librettocompetenze.it>), the main target groups for validation of non-formal and informal learning within the exploratory phase and regional practices are:

- Unemployed individuals or workers at risk of unemployment,
- Workers in sectors which are poorly regulated and with a need for professional accreditation,
- Immigrant workers without formal qualifications that by now take up a permanent base in whole segments of the labour market (for instance logistics, building, health and social assistance care 'white jobs'),
- Highly qualified young Italians who move abroad for work or study,
- Volunteers, civil service volunteers, interns, apprentices.

The emergence of a national policy on validation in Italy is definitely linked to the Law 92/2012 on the reform of the Labour Market. This Law, introduced on 28 June 2012, establishes a clear path to a systemic top-down approach to this subject by defining a national system of certification of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning. In the chapter related to 'lifelong learning' issues, this law anticipate the following activities:

- Re-launch the policies for lifelong learning through local networks made up of employment services, schools, universities, VET providers, enterprises;
- Specific public services to re-trace and value formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- National rules for the validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competencies;
- The establishment of the National Repertory of Education, Training and Professional Qualifications.

The Law defines the validation of non- formal and informal learning, in the framework of the national system of certification of competences, as one of the key elements to ensure and implement lifelong learning. Perhaps for the first time in Italy, these matters are treated in a comprehensive and systemic manner. The law establishes rules and regulatory requirements (standards) concerning the characteristics and the parties involved, with the aim of ensuring transparency, usability and broad accessibility of validation/certification services.

The implementation of Law 92/2012 led to the adoption of different provisions according to this schedule but most of all after six months as planned, a national decree relevant to a national validation framework was ready.

The Legislative Decree on the "*National competences certification and validation of nonformal and informal learning*" n. 13/2013 (published on January 16, 2013) consists of 11 articles. It contains a section with a glossary of keywords and lays down some essential principles and institutional responsibilities and tasks within the new system.

The glossary defines formal, non-formal and informal learning in a way consistent with the European Commission glossary and other relevant terms such as entitling and entitled bodies within the public system of certification, validation of learning, certification of competences.

The Decree 13/2013 defines some important principles and features for the validation system in its Article 3:

- **Validation as a central point** - In line with EU guidelines, the focus of the identification/validation and certification is on the competences acquired by the individual in **formal, non-formal or informal contexts**.
- A **whole qualification or parts of it can be validated** - The entitled bodies can **identify/validate** and **certify** competences related to the qualifications or to parts of qualifications up to the total number of competences composing an entire qualification.
- **The centrality of the individual** - The **identification/validation** and the **certification** of competences is aimed at valuing the individual's study, work and life experiences. Therefore the centrality of the individual in this process requires a simple, accessible, transparent, objective and confidential service as well as methodological accuracy, completeness, fairness and non-discrimination in the related procedures.
- **Public documents** - The validation documents and certificates issued respectively at the end of the **identification/validation** and **certification** services are public documents.
- **Quality assurance** - The reliability of the national system of competence certification is based on a shared and progressive system of indicators, tools and quality standards applied at national level.

The process standards define a methodological framework consistent with the four stages of validation mentioned in the European Commission Recommendation of 2012:

"With reference to the process of identification, validation and certification process, the public entitling body will ensure the following minimum standards:

the articulation into the following phases:

- 1. Identification:** phase aimed to identify and bring transparency to the individual's competences relating them to one or more qualifications. In the case of non-formal and informal learning this step involves specific support in the analysis and documentation of the experience of learning and in correlating the results to one or more qualifications.
- 2. Assessment:** phase to ascertain the mastery of the competences related to one or more qualifications. In the case of non-formal and informal learning this stage involves the adoption of specific assessment methods and evidences as proof of the competences actually possessed.
- 3. Attestation:** step aimed at issuing validation documents or certificates, standardised in accordance with this decree, documenting the competences identified and validated or certified related to one or more qualifications.

In 2005, an inter-ministerial decree (Decree of 10 October 2005) gave the Libretto official status and established the format it should take. The Libretto is presented as the 'citizen's identity card for countrywide mobility, from the point of view of both their learning experience and work

experience'. In this respect, the Libretto can be compared to the Europass Portfolio and European Skills Passport but it differs from them as it is not self-managed but issued by the institution as the outcome of a service to the individual.

The process of skill audits defined for Libretto includes **four stages**:

- 1. Reception and guidance.** Before introducing the Libretto in detail, practitioners must inform the beneficiary of its general characteristics and the implications of its use. The individual's motivation and the nature of their personal project should also be specified at this stage.
- 4. Reconstruction of the applicant's experience and competences.** During this stage, the practitioner analyses the individual's education and training history, employment experience and any self-learning they have achieved. The results of this analysis and a summary version of it are recorded under the responsibility of the individual concerned.
- 2. Production of proof or evidence, documents "supporting" the reconstruction of the individual's experience.** The range of possible types of evidence has already been described. However, the guidelines also mention "examples of products accomplished". Practitioners must not merely "demand" evidence: they must also help Libretto users to find and present it.
- 3. Recording of the data and information** to be included in the Libretto, and its compilation. This stage concerns the formalisation of the information collected. As a result, the quality of this process largely determines the quality of the final document.

In the third sector, there is a dynamic sense of innovation and a strong interest in the validation on non-formal and informal learning for the very large amount of workers and volunteers operating in this context in Italy.

At the moment of writing this report for the 2016 update, a structural legislative reform of the entire third sector was underway in the Parliament.

During recent years (2010-2016), there were several interesting experiences and practices carried out within the third sector (some of them were already reported in the 2014 report).

Given that the new national validation framework set up in 2013 provided rules and standards to be met, the exploratory testing phase in the third sector can be considered as completed.

Nevertheless, the first concrete national application of the new rules for specific target groups is just operating in the third sector, at this moment in time.

Standards

The validation and certification system designed by Decree 13/2013 covers all the range of qualifications from education, HE, VET even the ones with legal value. It includes both the professional qualifications and the regulated qualifications.

The Decree 13/2013, establishes the 'National Repertory of education, training and professional qualifications' which is the single framework for the certification of competences.

The Repertory is a comprehensive collection of national, regional and sectoral repertories that already exist, under the responsibility of the competent authorities or "entitling bodies".

The entitling bodies are the following: Ministry of Education and Universities (for school and university qualifications), Regions (for VET qualifications), Ministry of Economic Development - UE Policies Department (for regulated professions), Ministry of Labour (for non-regulated

professions). To be included in the National Repertory the qualification must be referenced to the EQF and over time there will be progressive work on the descriptive standardisation to allow greater permeability between sub-systems and recognition of credits.

Therefore the standards used within the validation system depend on the field of the "entitled body: it is substantially an education standard within school and university; it is occupational (but related to qualification learning outcomes based standard) in the case of VET Regional qualifications; it is purely occupational in the regulated or unregulated professional cases.

1.3 Overarching approach to validation per Country: Luxembourg

The concept of validation of non-formal and informal learning has progressively risen in prominence in Luxembourg during the period 2000-present. Sectoral strategies on validation are now in place in all education sectors – IVET, higher VET and university higher education.

Validation was covered by the White Paper on the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, adopted at the end of 2012 (Government of Luxembourg, 2012). The key elements of this strategy are centred on a learning outcomes approach (rooted in secondary education and VET), recognition and validation of prior learning and the permeability of different education sectors (secondary, vocational and higher education) (Government of Luxembourg, 2014a).

One of the recommendations from the White Paper is to improve the system for the validation of prior learning (VAE) and extend it to all levels of qualifications.

As part of the action plan devised by the Advisory Committee on Lifelong Learning to implement the National Strategy on Lifelong Learning, a working group on the validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning in the different sectors (IVET, higher VET, and university level) was set up in 2014. The working group included representatives from various ministries, professional chambers, the National Institute for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training and the social partners (trade unions and employers' representatives) (Cedefop, 2015b). During 2015, the Working Group met regularly to set their objectives, define expected results and propose a working plan to achieve them.

Skills audits

As until 2014, a bilan de competences (personal skills audit) is provided by the Public Employment Service to jobseekers. However, it is not very largely applied¹⁵. Those jobseekers can use the outcomes of the bilan de competences to apply for VAE.

The bilan de compétences was created in Luxembourg via legislation drawn up in 1998, in link with the introduction of the National Action Plan for Employment. The service is provided by the Public Employment Service (Agence pour le développement de l'emploi - ADEM) and is available for jobseekers. The bilan de compétences is used as a tool to explore the personal and professional skills of the individual concerned and the skills required by the labour market, and is formative in nature. The emphasis is on identifying and documenting the individual's personal and professional skills (e.g. knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills) and elaborating a tailored action plan for job search. Support is also provided for the concrete implementation of the action plan.

A complete skills audit includes the following different stages:

Preparation phase: collective information sessions on the skills audit objectives, assessment of individual needs and selection of appropriate tools.

Investigation phase: analysis of the individual's information and identification of possibilities for career development. This is typically organised in four sessions (of two hours each) with a specialist adviser – these take place every two weeks in order to allow a self-assessment process between sessions.

Conclusion phase: based on the results, factors likely to affect the realisation of a training or professional project are assessed and recommendations and a personal action plan are prepared.

Follow-up: both the beneficiary and the ADEM advisor receive a written synthesis of the skills audit; support is provided for the concrete implementation of the action plan.

Several projects of validation have been carried out in the third sector in Luxembourg in recent years. One example is the certificate of skills acquired through scouting, which is presented in the Box below. The essence is that the outcomes from non-formal and informal learning acquired through activities in the third sector, such as youth work or volunteering, can be used to apply for validation towards formal qualifications.

Standards

The standards used to support the delivery of validation in Luxembourg are the same as those used in formal education and training (education and training standards based on modular training curricula and/or on competence frameworks). They are used in the same way for assessment. Validation leads to the same qualifications as those awarded through formal education. Diplomas or course units awarded through VAE have the same value as those awarded through formal education and training. The diplomas or units do not mention how they were obtained. Therefore, there is no difference in standards, outcomes or value of the certificates or units obtained through VAE compared to those acquired via formal training.

The main method used in Luxembourg as part of VAE is the **declarative method** i.e. the assessment of the evidence provided by the candidate to support his/her application.

Candidates with a professional experience of at least three years in relation to the qualification they want to acquire need to submit a written application providing evidence (e.g. detailed descriptions) of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired through experience. The content of the portfolio (e.g. competences that need to be presented) depends on the qualification targeted; the University of Luxembourg has autonomy in deciding upon the competences required to access studies, exemptions or part of a qualification³⁰. Once the portfolio is submitted, it is then assessed by a validation

committee. This is generally complemented through interviews with the candidate and/or an assessment in a work context. The standards towards which the evidence is assessed, is the curricular framework (grids) that consists of both the professional profile and the training profile (learning fields, objectives and content) (Consortium of validation of competences, 2014).

Additional details on the different types of methods used are provided below:

At the technical secondary level (VET) qualifications (procedure managed by the Ministry of National Education), VAE follows a four-step process:

First step – **eligibility check:** candidates submit a request for eligibility (*la demande de recevabilité*) in writing to the Ministry of Education, which specifies the qualification/diploma/certificate targeted, and provides a general description of their motivation and objectives, background, specific experience, etc. For the eligibility of the request, the candidates need to provide official documents such as a certificate of affiliation to social security and a copy of the employment contract (or a certificate of employment or payslips) proving periods of learning or certificates issued by the president of the association for the volunteer activities in associations.

Second step: **documentation** – eligible candidates submit a detailed application (demande de validation sur le fond) providing a thorough explanation and detailed description of their aptitudes, skills, knowledge in relation to the targeted qualification, based on concrete examples from their professional and non-work related experience. They receive guidance and support when preparing their application. Applications can be submitted for two deadlines per year corresponding to the two validation sessions taking place annually: deadline of 31 July for session of the autumn session (taking place in October-November) and 28 February for the spring session (validation occurs in May- June). The positive decision on the eligibility of the VAE application remains valid for two validation sessions.

Third step: **assessment** – the experience of the candidate is assessed by a validation commission against the standards of the qualification which is the object of the application. The validation commission consists of six members: two employer organisation representatives, two employee representatives and two representatives from education and training providers. The validation commission can decide to either set up an interview with the candidate or carry out an assessment of the performance of the candidate in a real or simulated professional situation if considered more relevant. It then decides either to award the full qualification or to grant a partial validation to the candidate, who then has three years to acquire the missing skills, training or experience.

Fourth step: **certification** – the qualification is awarded to the successful candidate by the relevant bodies.

1.4 Overarching approach to validation per Country: Spain

The general overview of validation procedures is well known in Spain. With the RD 1631/2006, in the first additional disposition, it was established that the educational administrations have the responsibility to develop procedures for recognition of prior learning acquired through work experience or non-formal education. With time these procedures have been increased and made more precise by other regulations. Nowadays, all levels have to include this process of recognition to access different levels of the education system: secondary, baccalaureate, VET and university education.

There is not a unique system of validation in Spain, but nevertheless there is a large number of procedures of validation with different objectives, effects and addressees. The procedure of assessment and certification of professional skills is only one of them, although it is true that it is more widely known due to the fact that it is a procedure shared between the labour administration and the educational administration. Also, European funds are being allocated to validation.

In Spain, in the education system, there were procedures of validation of learning acquired outside formal routes of education prior to 2012, which have allowed a large number of people to gain admission to the education system without having the requirements, or to obtain a qualification without taking the training or without starting an educational programme from scratch.

The education system provides several procedures of validation of prior learning including tests convened to enable people to obtain the title of Graduate in Secondary Education. The tests will assess the degree of development of skills and competencies equivalent to Secondary Education level. Candidates who pass the test will achieve a Diploma in Compulsory Secondary Education. This qualification allows access to Baccalaureate.

Validation and the labour market

The Law 30/2015, for regulating the Vocational Training System for Employment in the labour field (Ley 30/2015), aims to promote the accreditation processes of professional competencies acquired through non-formal training or work experience, among others. In Article 10 of this law it is stated that the administrators will promote sectoral and transversal courses to let workers complete their competence units in order to obtain both partial and accumulative accreditation. This law is the key to promoting accreditation procedures of work experience, with improvements that favour continuity, flexibility and efficiency to ensure the quality and the opportunities of qualification in equal conditions for all workers (as is published in the third additional provision on boosting key instruments of the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training). This law also regulates the former procedures of training into the training system for employment through the occupational certificates. The recognition of experience is another way of obtaining a certificate if the candidate shows his or her competences were included in the Royal Decree 34/2008 on Certificates of occupational standards and its modification by the Royal Decree 189/2013.

The business associations and chambers of commerce are interested in information and promotion of the validation and certification of professional skills.

Validation and the third sector

There are some initiatives developed by the third sector in the field of validation. The third sector includes youth organisations, business associations and other non-government organisations, and social entities such as trade unions.

Volunteering is a major topic of interest for validation. In 2015, a study of validation of competences acquired through volunteering was published, entitled Reconoce18. The Confederación de Centros Juveniles Don Bosco [Federation of Youth Centres Don Bosco] (2015) has led a network of organisations to promote the recognition of competences acquired through volunteering for improving the employability of young people. Throughout this project, the network has organised an online system for accreditation of volunteering, starting with more than 1,000 youth volunteers. In the webpage of this project, they are adding members interested in validating the competences they acquired in their leisure time and youth activities. The project designed a model of validation using Scrum19 as a technique for identification of competencies and their recognition. In 2016, they agreed to promote this system in cooperation with the Spanish Youth Institute (Instituto de la Juventud de España, INJUVE)20, within the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

1.6 Importance of OERs and MOOCs in the Recognition and Validation Policies

OER has gained importance in the EU policy agenda, in particular with the 2013 communication on opening up education, which states that validation should address the challenges linked to the emergence of OER, to reflect better the learning landscape: 'validation and recognition instruments used in formal education must adapt to the emergence of a much more diversified educational offer, including new education providers and the new forms of learning made possible by technology. In parallel, new tools may need to be created both to ensure that technology-supported learning taking place outside formal education is validated and to encourage learners to become more engaged in open practices. These new tools should respect the principles set out in the ... in synergy with established validation and recognition tools and contribute to the creation of a European Area for Skills and Qualifications, the latter aiming to address the diversity of practices across Member States and promote an effective recognition across borders' (European Commission, 2013b, p. 7).

OER also featured in validation of non-formal and informal learning.

OER are mentioned as one example of non-formal learning. OER are defined in the recommendation as 'digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and selflearners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research; it includes learning content, software tools to develop, use and distribute content, and implementation resources such as open licences; OER also refers to accumulated digital assets that can be adjusted and which provide benefits without restricting the possibilities for others to enjoy them' (Council of the EU, 2012, p. 5). This is in line with the Unesco definition. The 2012 recommendation also states that validation arrangements in Member States should cover, where applicable, knowledge, skills and competences acquired through OER.

OER and its manifestations, such as MOOCs, bring challenges for validation, the first of which is its status as non-formal education. The 2012 Council recommendation on validation provides definitions: '(a) formal learning [as] learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma; it includes systems of general education, initial vocational training and higher education'; '(b) non-formal learning [as] learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships); it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers; very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT skills, structured online learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target group or the general public' (Council of EU, 2012, p. 5). While

MOOCs are commonly defined as non-formal education, they are organised by educational institutions specifically dedicated to learning and can lead to the award of certifications. Although they rarely lead to full academic or vocational training qualifications, some providers – such as OER – aim to reach that stage in the near future (Souto-Otero et al., 2015). This raises questions as to what ‘qualification’, ‘organised and structured environment’ mean as distinctive elements of formal education. However, MOOCs may or may not impart work skills, and rarely provide adult literacy or education for early school leavers. It could be argued that the definition challenges raised reinforce the point of validation: rather than the establishment of stronger barriers between different types of learning, we see increasing difficulty in having clear boundaries. A further question is how OER may be associated with validation. The table below outlines ways in which validation can be linked to OER.

2. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe management: training and skills

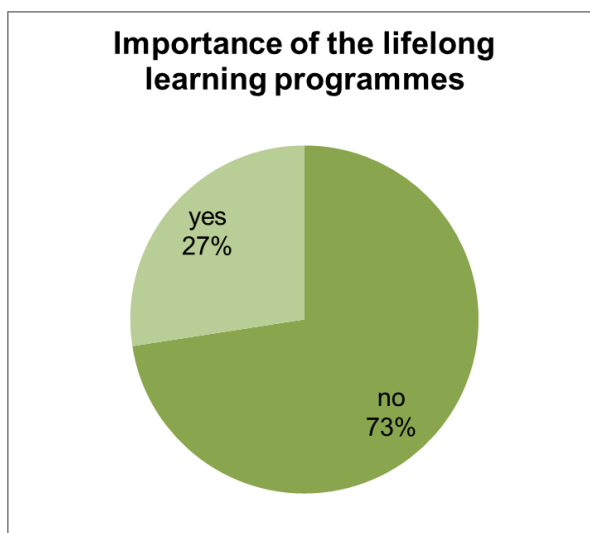
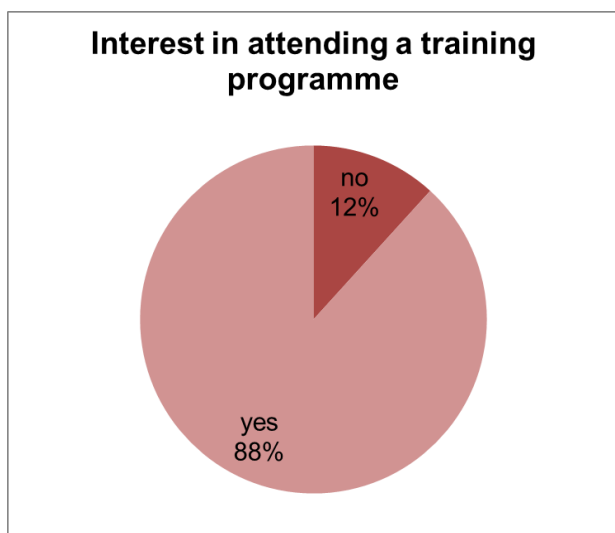
Cultural routes of the Council of Europe management is not subject of curricula and no specific diploma exists to train future managers of Cultural Routes.

Among the Cultural routes managers and practitioners there is an overwhelming consensus on the importance of making visible the knowledge, skills and competences gained through life and work experience and on the importance of training and lifelong learning.

To value what they have learned, people should be able to demonstrate what they have learned in all settings in life and to use this in their career and for further education and training. This is why, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy, validation of non-formal and informal learning can make an essential contribution to the ambition of achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth also in the field of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

Its impact can be significant in better matching of skills and labour demand promoting transferability of skills between sectors and supporting mobility across the European labour market along the Cultural Routes network.

The survey conducted among the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe managers (see annex 1) underlines the interest of managers and members of the networks in attending training programmes, and at the same time the low importance given to lifelong learning programmes (see below).



Concerning the skills perceived as essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers, network management and leadership is the most important one.



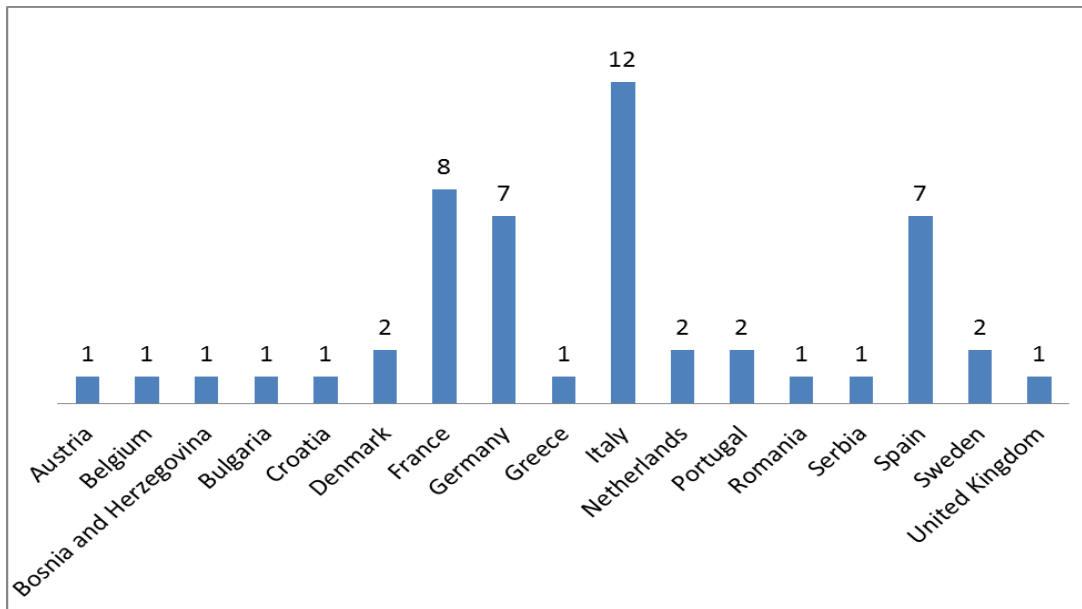
Please indicate two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers

There is a coherence between skills perceived as important and topics indicted as priorities for training programmes:



Topics for training programmes

In the analysis of the results and in the elaboration of common guidelines for NFL for Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe management, it is important to consider that managers and members of these transnational networks come different by definition from different countries and different backgrounds.



Answers by country



Moreover they have in general different status: they can be civil servants, employed by public authorities part of the cultural route networks; employed directly by the cultural route networks.

Members of Cultural Routes are in general employed by the public authorities or private bodies member of the cultural route networks.

An informal structured interview on the interest of having a validation of the training activities was conducted among a pool of managers during the Hector Training Academy 2016.

60% of interviewed managers do not find useful to have a validation of the training provided, also if they are interested to participate.

Managers who are employed by public authorities are interested in the recognition and validation of training in which they take part.

Not Formal Learning (NFL) validation: elements to be taken into consideration

Four main elements have to be taken into consideration thinking about a set of criteria for recognition and validation of not formal and informal learning:

- Managers of certified Cultural routes of the Council of Europe **have different educational backgrounds**, (see IO 1 – Resource and Capacity Map);
- The **range of age** among the cultural routes managers is very different;
- The managers have **different nationalities** and each Country has **different rules** for recognition and validation;
- **OERs and MOOCs have a great potential to overcome these differences**, but at the moment an homogeneous system for recognition and validation of these training resources does not exist.

Informal and not formal training are the most used within the cultural routes programme, to assess skills and abilities relevant to working in the sector.

Training academies and workshops focusing on specific topics addressed to Certified Cultural routes managers and practitioners are regularly organised by the European institute of Cultural Routes: these sessions give the opportunity to provide managers with shared knowledge, to test new methods and innovative learning approaches, to reinforce peer to peer exchanges among the certified routes and the mentoring between certified and candidates.

At the moment, these informal learning activities are not recognised and no validation system is in place.

In the case of Cultural Routes management related professions, HECTOR partners suggest that, in coherence with the procedures established by some countries, if an individual has acquired prior learning or work experience through formal, non-formal or informal learning activities over an established period (i.e. of at least three years - min. 5 000 hours) is entitled to apply for validation towards the relevant formal qualification.

According to their National law, some Countries allow individuals to benefit of a system of educational leave. At the same time, they could add these training to their education skills to upgrade their work position.

Nevertheless, the main difficulty is to find common rules for validation going beyond national differences and specific features.

In line with the consideration of 2012 recommendation, in the specific case of training on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe management, arrangements in Member States should cover, where applicable, knowledge, skills and competences acquired through OER and MOOCs.

OERs developed during the HECTOR project, as well as the HECTOR MOOC, were designed, produced and validated internally by the project partners in accordance with the training needs expressed by the Cultural Routes managers. Then, OERs were used and tested during the HECTOR training activities.

After the end of the HECTOR project, partners envisage to use the most appropriate Creative Commons licences to better share, disseminate and use the OERs and MOOCs contents created within the project to give more visibility to the contents and outputs of the project.

Skills audits

The procedures for the validation of not formal learning have to follow the guidelines elaborated by the EU on this matter.

The *bilan de compétences* is a complex guidance methodology designed for all types of beneficiaries and is a good tool for the 'skills audit', defined as "*analysis of knowledge, skills and competences of an individual, including their aptitudes and motivations to define a career project and/or plan professional reorientation or training project*" (CEDEFOP, 2011).

It allows the identification and assessment of:

- personal and professional skills and competences,
- aptitudes and potential,
- interests and motivations.

Its objective is to:

- define a strategy of individual professional development
- develop new skills in a specific job
- construct an individual training pathway

- prepare an Accreditation/Recognition of Experiential Learning
- support and accompany external or internal job mobility
- describe and present one's skills and competences.

Validation methods

In the case of the recognition of acquired competencies, the most common methods for documentation, assessment and certification that are usually used in Spain include the portfolio method, interview, tests and examination.

The portfolio method is the procedure mostly used by applicants to provide evidence of their work experience and formal or non-formal training. It consists of a set of documents with the following data:

- 1 Personal profile ;
- 2 Professional-Job Experience profile ;
- 3 Training profile: academic titles and/or certificates ;
- 4 Other relevant information ;
- 5 Applicant declaration.

The Joint Master Proposal constitutes a possibility to create synergies among Universities and Countries on the theme of Cultural Routes management.

The curriculum of the JM proposal already contains the recognition of informal learning (the internship at the European Institute of Cultural routes and along the Cultural Routes).

HECTOR partners cannot influence the decisions of the Countries, nevertheless they encourage decision makers to consider the opportunity of using Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe to test and create criteria and procedures for validation and recognition of training.

This will allow to test the coherence of NFL validation practices across the national borders and also in non-EU countries.

Annex I - Survey among Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Managers: Resource and capacity map

ATRIUM

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Technical Assistant	Coordination with Cultural Routes' stakeholders Promotion of the Cultural routes: Modern Tools	yes	Management in Cultural tourism, Promotion of the Cultural Route
Bulgaria	coordinator	Strategic planning Cultural awareness	yes	Cultural tourism management
Italy	President	Project application, design, management and accounting. Applied research (both desk and field)	yes	Cultural tourism
Italy	Director	Interpretation of heritage, fundraising, communication, consent and involvement of citizens	yes	Interpretation of heritage, communication,
Italy	Secretary	Being capable of developing public relations Having a global and fairly deep view of the themes connected to the Route (Being aware of the 5 criteria established by the Council of Europe is given for granted)	yes	fund raising

European Route of Cistercian Abbeys

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Spain	agent in Spain	Communicate skills in order to coordinate properly different agents in different countries. Coordination skills at different levels	Yes	

Iter Vitis

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Italy	Project Manager	Ability to redact a business plan Ability to develop lobby activities	yes	Found raising for cultural project
Spain	Project Manager	Social Media to spread European Culture to youngers Internet tools CRM tools Collaborative tools	yes	

Réseau Art Nouveau Network

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Belgium	Secretary	No specific new skill to add	yes	Communication, new technologies
Serbia	Manager	Cooperation, mutual understanding and support	yes	
Spain	Director	Knowledge of new communication and commercial strategies using new technologies Capacity to create collaboration networks with low-key, low-cost structures	yes	Sustainable tourism; communication and marketing

Saint Martin of Tours Route

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
France	Director	être polyvalent et disponible	no	
France	President	cultural networking, creativity	yes	cultural heritage, cultural tourism

Saint Olav Ways

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Danmark	Director, Project Manager, Volunteer Chairman of Viborg Pilgrimscentre	I consider it essential for managers to be able to create hospitality and the feeling of being welcome in a centre, on a walk and at a cultural arrangement. Also, the deep experience of being a pilgrim, having walked at least for one month without stopping, and having interests in history, culture, nature, humans. Very many pilgrims are people having worked with other people, like nurses, pædagogs m.m. It is also important to be curious to the world and having trust in it.	Yes	How to get money to survive as a volunteer organisation.
SWEDEN	President	The mutual involvement of culture and religion	no	

Santiago de Compostela

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
France	Director, Project Manager	<p>Université d'été - axer sur l'échange de bonnes pratiques - Atelier thématique / Présentations de réalisation d' ICE certifiés (site web, charte graphique, jeunesse, art contemporain, package touristique, candidature programme de financement, partenariat public/privé - communication - Fonctionnement du réseau : statuts, réunion, etc.</p> <p>- Visites thématiques de terrain : signalisation, aménagement, dév durable, interprétation/médiation</p> <p>- Aide au montage de projets communs entre 2 ou 3 ICE</p>	yes	<p>Echanges d'expériences et de bonnes pratiques- apprendre l'anglais couramment - Gestion et animation du réseau - Coopération entre ICE -</p>
Italy	Member	Deep knowledge of the Cultural Route theme, Cultural tourism management	yes	Tourism, Culture
Portugal	Project Manager	Administration Group spirit	yes	Cultural tourism

The Cluniac Sites in Europe

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
France	Director	Connaissance de l'histoire du programme des itinéraires culturels ; Connaissance des autres itinéraires culturels ; Compétence en matière de gestion d'un réseau ; Parfaite maîtrise de la thématique de l'itinéraire qu'il dirige.	yes	Recherche et médiation touristique / Citoyenneté européenne et patrimoine

The European Mozart Ways

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Austria	Project Manager	Crowd funding, e- tourism	yes	tourism, music mediation
Germany	Rechnungsprüferin/ Mitglied AK Tourismus- Marketing	creative persons to develop concept of cooperation networker	yes	Intention and deep Knowledge of Cultural Routes, cooperation for members of one of the cultural routes

The European Route of Ceramics

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
France	Project Manager	Tourism development / Tourism products	no	Depends on the time needed
Germany	Project Manager	intercultural competence, the ability to bundle skills and knowledge of all parnters to achieve the best possible results	yes	inclusion/copyright law
Italy	member	Networking and strategic planning	yes	cooperation between network and fundraising

European route of historic thermal towns

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Croatia	Member	General knowledge and knowledge of historical facts	yes	Preventive health programmes
Italy	Member of Executive Council	European project management financial management	yes	Hotel and tourism training
Italy	Secretary, referent for the city of Acqui Terme	predisposition to: networking (flexibility in working) having a european cultural background and awareness	yes	marketing and tourism

The European Route of Jewish Heritage

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
France	Présidente d'Honneur	culture- education	no	
Italy	Secretary		yes	
Italy	member	languages and strategic planning in culture	yes	
Spain	Director	International cooperation and coaching and leadership skills	yes	European Cooperation
UK	Project Manager	organisational/management skills inter-cultural programming	yes	routes strategy, running cultural tourism

The European Route of Megalithic culture

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Denmark	Member	cooperation across borders on long-distance, management and fundraising to improve the cultural route	no	
Germany	Project Manager	project financing, know about the research and what is going on in Europe in the field of your route.	yes	financing and management of a cultural route
Netherlands	advisory board	Cultural awareness Good knowledge of the subject (the archeology of megalithic cultures)	no	

The Hansa

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Germany	Project Manager	Knowledge of new forms of marketing (social media, viral marketing)	yes	HR
Germany	Member of Steering group Hanse	Still, the cultural routes are mostly not organized on an economical basis, more on a political one. It is necessary, to create concrete products for such routes, which are so good, that large tour operators are able to sell them. Therefore it is necessary to train 'tourism managers' of cities, regions and countries.	no	
SWEDEN	Director	E-Commerce, production and sales of transnational packages	yes	E-commerce,
The Netherlands	member of steeringgroup hansa tourism	for our route it is very important to communicate more with all the partners. It takes a lot of time to get every city involved into the cultural routes. But the problem is that there is almost no money to get someone to do this job promotion/marketing of all the cultural routes in Europe; In the Netherlands almost no tourist knows about cultural routes. I think we can win a lot if we all together can promote the cultural routes more!	yes	I don't really know the programme, but could be interested

The Huguenot and Waldensian trail

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
France	Project Manager	human resources management creativity	yes	Marketing - product innovation
Germany	Project Manager	knowledge of fundraising possibilities, cooperation and networking skills	yes	thematic cultural mediator

The Phoenicians' Route

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Italy	Director	Local development and territorial marketing Cultural and tourism management strategies	yes	Cultural management, ICT

The Prehistoric rock art trail

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Spain	Manager of one of the sites of the route	Grant and sponsorship management Leadership	yes	
Spain	Technical coordinator	To know the subject of his/her Cultural Routes and the Program of CRs To know the Tourism market	yes	Attention to the public / Tourism and tourists

The Routes of El Legado Andalusi

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Spain	Project Manager	- Languages. -Cultural Management Learning.	yes	Tourism Management / Cultural diplomacy
Spain	Director	Knowledge of funding search and european funding search. Skills in innovative tools for dissemination in the field of tourism	yes	Heritage, crafts

The Routes of the olive tree

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
France	scientific member	capacity to find funds to develop cultural routes	yes	cultural and touristic aspects
Greece	Project Manager	Volonte reelle pour bien connaitre les itineraires et leur objectif, essayer de comprendre et de respecter leurs particularites Etre proche aux equipes qui animent les itineraires, comprendre les difficultes, etre presents	yes	Bonnes pratiques pour la valorisation du patrimoine culturel / lobbying
Greece	President	Constant update on tendencies about cultural tourism & cultural routes Constant update on tendencies about tourism and financement resources	yes	Marketing, Cultural Tourism, Innovation
Morocco	Morocco delegate	Esprit ouvert sur la méditerranéen pour certains itinéraires culturels. Maîtriser les principales langues européennes.	yes	Dégustation, environnement, stratégie de marketing et promotion

TRANSROMANICA

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/ topics?
Germany	Director	- very strong communication skills - organizational / management skills (structured working, keeping an overview, ...)	yes	product development and marketing aspects for cultural routes
Portugal	Director	Strategic Planning in Cultural Network management	yes	Cultural, tourism
Romania	Representative of a destination	public communication marketing strategist	yes	Public communication on all the possible communication channels, destination marketing

Via Francigena

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
France	Project Manager	Foreign languages skills Network/communication	no	
Italy	Project Coordinator	Expertise in: governance project management European Funds and Fundraising Communication and social media	yes	
UK	local authority visitor management role	Communication and commercial skills	no	

Via Habsburg

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
Germany	Secretary, Project Manager	The ability to set up networks and the language skills are key factors.	yes	Computing, marketing, business english

Viking Cultural Route

Country	Role in the Cultural Route	Two skills you consider essential for Council of Europe Cultural Routes' managers	Would you be interested in attending a training programme?	If yes, on which topic/topics?
UK	CHAIRMAN	Strategic Planning Effective Communication	no	