



# ***The National Qualifications System***

## ***Instruments to support Qualification and Lifelong Learning***

Maria João Alves  
Head of Unit - Nacional Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP)  
November 2018, Lisbon, Portugal

## The National Qualifications System

→ In Portugal the VET system is centrally governed by the ministries responsible for Education and Labour. The National Qualifications System (NQS) was created in 2007 to reform VET within the education system and within the labour market by creating common objectives, tools and structures. It was updated in 2017.

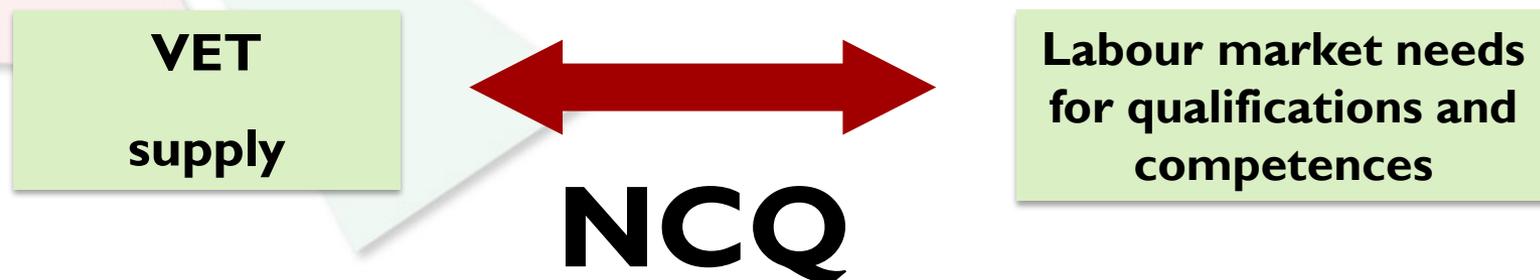
### Objectives of the NQS:

- To make upper-secondary education the reference objective for the qualification of young people and adults;
- To strengthen the integration between general education and professional training in all VET pathways ensuring for all of them the principle of double certification (a school and a professional certification);
- To create mechanisms for the certification of academic and professional competences via recognition of prior learning;
- To ensure that VET qualifications better match labour market needs.

# National Catalogue of Qualifications

**It is a dynamic tool for...**

- ... the strategic management of national non-higher qualifications
- ... the regulation of VET (double certification pathways)
- ... the promotion of the effectiveness of public funding



# National Catalogue of Qualifications

For each qualification it defines...

**Professional profile**

- Mission
- Activities
- Competences
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Attitudes

**Training standard of double certification**

- Organization of the standard:
- School standard (school certification)
  - Technological training standard (professional certification)

**RVCC standard**

**Basic  
(school  
certification)**

**Technological  
(professional  
certification)**

- Units of competence
- Criteria of evidence

Nowadays it integrates...

**308 qualifications ...in 40 areas of education and training**

# The diagnosis in Portugal

- In Portugal there are still
  - 895.140 adults (in a total of about 10 million inhabitants) with no education level and almost 500.000 people are illiterate (2011 Census);
  - only 33% of Portuguese aged 25-34 have completed secondary education (OECD 2016);
  - 55% of the people aged 25 to 64 have not completed upper-secondary education (2015 Eurostat);
- These adults have significant problems in basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) and face obstacles to get in the labour market and to achieve full social integration (in today's society of information and knowledge);
- According to several studies, the less qualified tend not to participate in LLL activities (the qualifications trap);
- Targeting adult education and LLL towards the low skilled was identified as one of the challenges for Portugal (Diagnostic Report - 2015, OECD Skills Strategy).

# The *Qualifica* programme (a political priority of the Government)

In order to tackle the deficit of qualifications, in March 2016 the Government launched the *Qualifica* programme (an integrated strategy to foster the training and qualification of adults).

## Main objectives

- Raise the qualification level of adults and their employability;
- Increase digital and functional literacy;
- Better align the training provision with labour market needs;
- Facilitate tailored training pathways that lead to raising the qualification level of adults (better combining RVCC with adult education and training).

## Target groups

- Less qualified adults;
- Unemployed people;
- NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).



# The *Qualifica* programme

## Goals until 2020

- 300 *Qualifica* Centres in 2017;
- 50% of the active population with upper secondary education;
- 15% of adults in LLL activities;
- Contribute to 40% of 30-34 year-olds with higher education.

## Key Tools

- *Qualifica* Centres and ET providers;
- *Qualifica* Passport;
- National Credit System for VET.

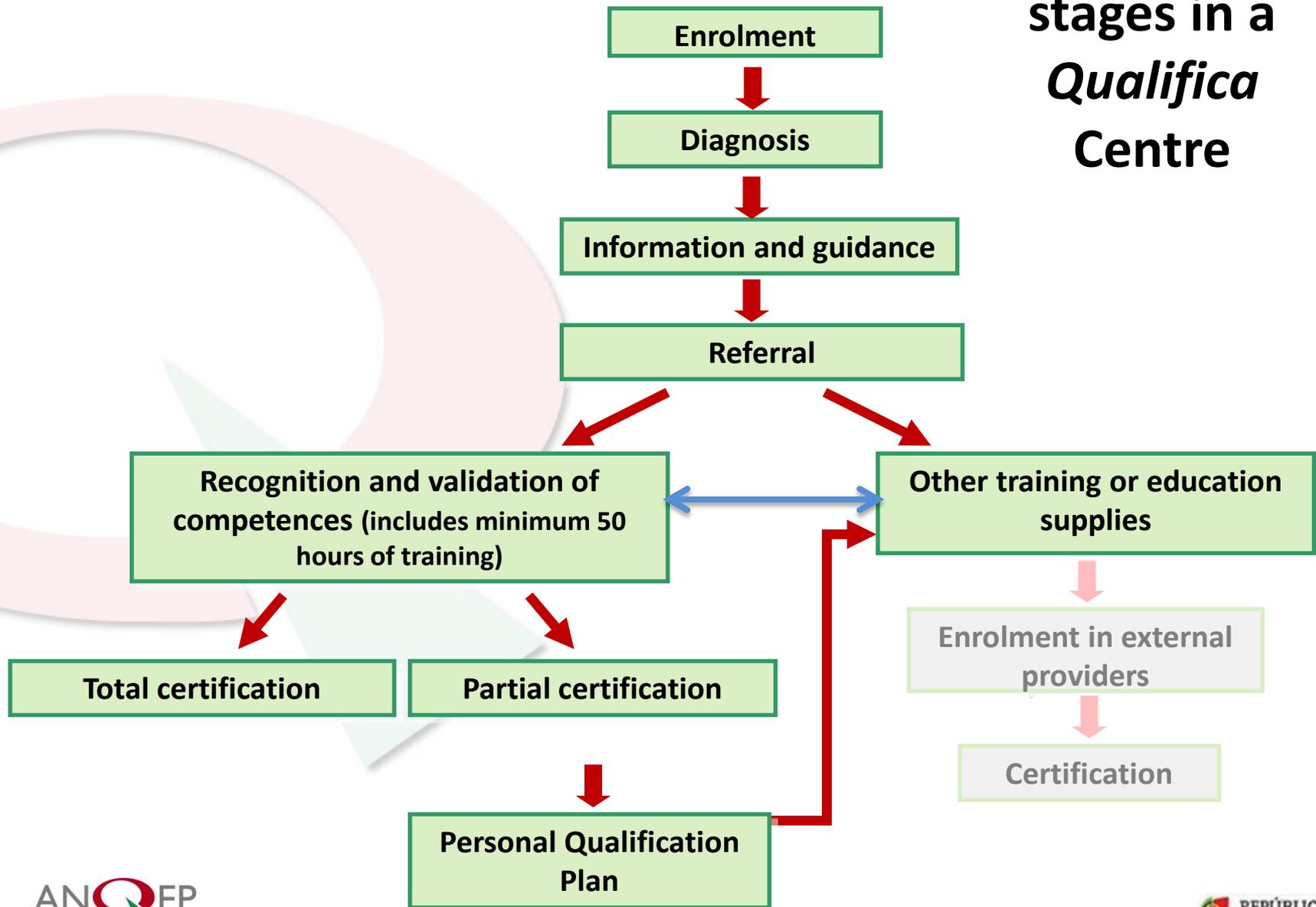


# The *Qualifica* programme

## *Qualifica* Centres

- Are structures that contribute to increase the qualification levels in Portugal through the process of RVCC, combined with training activities;
- Provide information, guidance and referral of adults (18 or over) and NEET to:
  - RVCC processes (academic and/or professional, levels 1 to 4 of the NQF)  
and
  - education and training pathways
- These centres allow adults to certify prior learning that was acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts (Portugal has a VNFIL system since 2000);
- Play a key role in motivating adults for LLL and in the local networks for qualification (employers, ET providers, municipalities).

# Intervention stages in a *Qualifica* Centre



## RVCC Process

- Based on key competences standards, available in the National Catalogue of Qualifications

### Basic Level standard:

- Language and Communication
- Mathematics for Life
- Citizenship and Employability
- Information and Communication Technologies

(ICT)

**\* There is a standard adapted to people with disabilities**

### Secondary Level standard:

- Culture, Language and Communication
- Society, Technology and Science
- Citizenship and Professionalism

### Professional standards:

- 154 professional qualifications standards

RECOGNITION  
and  
VALIDATION

### Competences Recognition

- Analysis of the RVCC standards (academic and/or professional)
- Systematization of professional experience
- Portfolio elaboration
- Competences balance
- Application of assessment tools (Professional RVCC)

### Competences Validation

- Presentation of self evaluation and evaluation by the team of the Portfolio, with a view to assessing the competences acquired and their correspondence to the RCC.
- Identification of skills that the candidate actually holds and those that may be acquired through training.

CERTIFICATION

### Competences Certification

- The adult is presented to a jury and is evaluated by a practical or oral exam, demonstrating competences related to the Competences previously validated
- After the exam, the adult gets a certificate of the attained full or partial certification

## *RVCC Process*

### **Specialized Team:**

- Technicians for guidance, recognition and validation of competences
- Teachers/trainers from specific professional areas

### **Methodologies:**

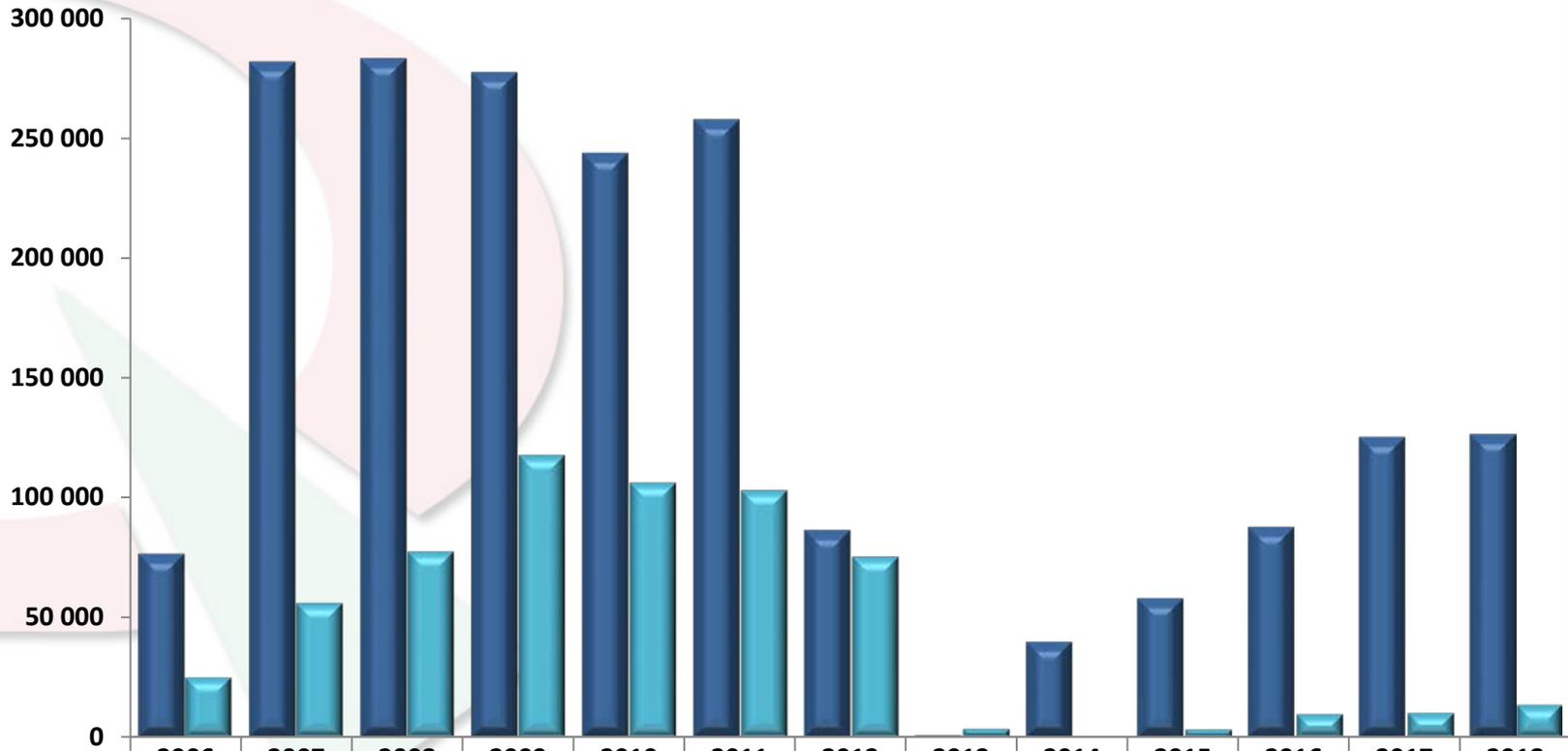
- Competences balance
- Portfolio analysis
- Technical Interview
- Practical exercises and observation at the workplace

## Funding

- POCH Funding for Qualifica Centres located in the regions North Centre and Alentejo
- In Lisbon and Algarve, Qualifica Centres are funded by Regional Operational programmes (POR Lisboa and POR Algarve)
- There are no financial costs for individuals

# Results

## Enrolment in Centres and Certification in RVCC



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
■ Enrolment in Centres	77 246	281 981	283 399	277 619	243 971	257 951	87 147	776	40 492	58 742	88 366	125 893	127 041
■ Certification in RVCC	25 079	56 025	77 483	117 528	106 053	102 932	75 250	3 400	38	3 162	9 570	10 157	13 437

New Opportunities Centres

Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education

Qualifica Centres

# The *Qualifica* programme



## *Qualifica* Passport (2017)

- It is an online tool where qualifications and skills acquired are recorded;
- It provides guidance to pathways that lead to complete or to obtain a new qualification, taking into account the training already attained and the skills acquired;
- It is an important lifelong guidance tool;
- The Passport can be modified, updated and printed at any time, thus being a tool that accompanies the adult throughout his active life.



# The *Qualifica* programme

## The National Credit System for VET

- It fosters permeability among VET pathways and also with higher education;
- It enables the allocation of credit points to:
  - level 2, 4 and 5 qualifications of the NQF included in the NCQ;
  - certified training recorded in the online information system for the management of training provision (SIGO) complying with quality assurance criteria in place.

## Final note:



- The *Qualifica* webportal ([www.qualifica.gov.pt](http://www.qualifica.gov.pt)) aims at easing access to information, services and tools included in the Programme;
- A media campaign is ongoing to raise awareness to the benefits of LLL;
- Funding: ESF and state budget;
- The *Qualifica* programme is in line with the Recommendation Upskilling Pathways:

“Whether in employment, unemployed or economically inactive, the new “Upskilling Pathways” initiative will provide a fresh start to people in need of basic skills development by mapping and recognizing the knowledge and skills they already possess; enabling further education and training and ultimately lead to a new qualification.”
- In Portugal, the adult learning system is the focus of the Action Phase of the OECD Skills Strategy.