



**Annual National Review (ANaR) on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNF-IFL)**

**on the national context**

**ANaR Report Year 1 – 2008-2010**

**Country: Germany**

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## I. The general situation regarding VNF-IFL

Points to consider	Your text
<p><b>1. National strategy:</b> is there one? <b>What</b> is in place re the VNF-IFL, at <b>which level</b>? If not, are there regional, local or institutional strategies?</p> <p><i>Any reference or URL links to official documents, Websites?</i></p>	<p>There is no general national strategy because the German educational system is regulated by the Länder and not by the federal state.</p> <p>The policy of the government of the Federal Republic is: promotion of LLL is seen as a central response to current education-policy issues. The approaches of non-formal and informal learning are insufficiently well-known and for this reason alone, are relatively little used. The complex education system with many responsibilities and legal regulations contributes to a lack of clarity for individuals. It is required and the central government supports that, to enable a broad culture of recognition in Germany. <b>The KMK, which represents the Länder, is including in their regulations, more and more ways how to accept informal and non formal learning. It is seen as a necessity to find solutions of instruments generally agreed upon. The situation in accepting formal learning outcomes to shorten individual learning time has improved. For example the Project ANKOM, which is a project to recognise professional competence for access to HE has influenced the policy.</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.ankom.his.de">www.ankom.his.de</a></p> <p><b>General information on the German qualification frame <a href="http://www.bmbf.de/de/12189.php">www.bmbf.de/de/12189.php</a></b></p>
<p><b>2. main responsibility for VNF-IFL, regulations, monitoring and evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who</b> has the main responsibility for VNF-IFL? Which ministry (ies), which institution (s), organisation or body (ies)? <b>Who</b> gives the main impetus and direction?</li> <li>• <b>Who</b> regulates, monitors and</li> </ul>	<p>Vocational training is the responsibility of the central government, whereas the responsibilities for schools and higher education are mainly with the Länder. For all questions of Recognition there is the law of the Länder, this might be school or higher education relevant. The Länder try to adjust their laws through the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) in which all ministers of education and higher education are represented as well as the Rectors' conferences of higher education. These institutions try to harmonise laws and regulations concerning for example the frame of the Bologna Process. Study programmes of higher education are looked at by the Akkreditierungsrat, who gives the framework for accreditation.</p> <p>There is no central responsibility for the implementation of VNF-IFL. As far as central law, or the law of the Länder the validation and the accreditation are done by the relevant boards of examination of the educational, vocational institutions and higher education.</p>

<p>assesses practices and pilots new initiatives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Or are they local, regional, sectoral, institutional initiatives?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Sectors: where, which sectors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does VNF-IFL apply to all educational sectors? Or to specific ones (vocational education &amp; training, Further Educ. Colleges, universities, adult education etc....)</li> <li>• Or/ and does it apply to other sectors: 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, private sector</li> </ul> <p><i>Name some examples or references to examples (websites, documents etc....?)</i></p>	<p>- School: alternatives to the traditional final qualification the Abitur which then can be accepted as entrance qualification for higher education:</p> <p>- vocational education: in the system of vocational education as well as possibility to enter higher education</p> <p>- higher education: acceptance of recognition of prior learning (still mainly formal recognition) to shorten duration of study programmes</p> <p>- adult and further education: development of portfolio (Profilpass) especially for low level education to be upgraded. <b>In the last months there have been quite a lot of literature been published about this topic, especially also guidance to multipliers to work for example with the Profilpass.</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.wbv.de/no_cache/publikationenshop/themenbereiche/erwachsenenbildung/shop/detail/8/_/0/1/6001806/1//category/104.html">http://www.wbv.de/no_cache/publikationenshop/themenbereiche/erwachsenenbildung/shop/detail/8/_/0/1/6001806/1//category/104.html</a></p> <p>In all areas, the recognition of formal and informal learning is still under-developed. <b>But, the topic is more and more being debated.</b></p>

<p><b>4. Terminology:</b> Is there a <b>common definition</b> of VNF-IFL, or are there <b>specific terms</b> used by different institutions implementing VNF-IFL? What would be the best way to translate it / them into English?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anrechnung beruflicher Kompetenzen: RPL</li> <li>- berufliche Bildung: vocational training</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. National Qualification Framework:</b> How do VNF-IFL practices or initiatives relate to <b>NQF</b> in place or in construction, if they do? If not, why not? <i>Brief description of the NQF (diagram etc)? Reference to docs or website?</i></p>	<p>There is not yet a national qualification framework. The central government established working groups, which consist of the relevant stakeholders like employers, trade unions, higher education representatives etc. Their task is to prepare a central national qualification framework, which then has to be accepted by the Länder and the federal government.</p> <p>Higher education qualification frame has been established and passed by the KMK in April 2005. Supported by the Rectors Conference and the central ministry for education and research. In this qualification frame, is mentioned that by starting a BA study programme, there <b>are ways of recognition of</b> prior learning for proven areas through exams <b>or procedures of recognition which have to be defined clearly (see ANKOM Project)</b> . This qualification frame refers to the Dublin descriptors i.e. there is an analogy to the European qualification framework.</p> <p><b>The German national qualification framework is still being discussed heavily among the relevant stakeholders. There are still the main problems of accepting professional competences for HE; the ANKOM project showed ways how to handle these difficulties. At the moment, 4 working groups which define qualification in different areas will show their results. The next discussion will be with KMK and HRK how to accept the formal qualifications in connection to the level descriptors. The next step of how to include informal and non formal qualifications is going to be even more complicated.</b></p>

## II. Impact of Validation

<p><b>6. Impact on individuals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact has VNF-IFL had on <b>individuals</b>? <b>On whom</b>, in your opinion, has it had the most impact: Validation candidates/ learners, practitioners, teachers/ academics/ tutors/facilitators in adult education, careers advisers, human resource managers...any more?</li> <li>• <b>In what way</b> has it had an impact:</li> <li>• in the actors/ stakeholders' <b>attitudes, practices</b> and methodologies, <b>interaction</b> with each others, <b>understanding</b> of different types of learning, better understanding of adult learners' needs, assessment practices, etc...?</li> <li>• Do you have evidence whether <b>it is felt</b> as a <b>positive, negative, problematic impact</b>? <i>Some evidence/ reference to examples of this impact?</i></li> </ul>	<p>In future, it will certainly have the highest impact on the individual, who has a chance to get recognised officially whatever and wherever he was taught or learned and has the possibility of shortening the duration of study programmes. It is a big chance to make competences visible.</p> <p>Also the access of non-traditional students to higher education can be improved by different ways of recognition of prior learning. In Lower Saxony's Access law, already today there are ways of recognition e.g. mothers having brought up their children have similar opportunities from those who received vocational training and work experience.</p> <p>It has also an impact on the relationship between higher education and vocational training. Does higher education open its programmes or even develop special programmes for those coming out of vocational training? Or is it going to be as restricted as today?</p> <p>Vocational training is mostly interested in getting more flexibility between the different levels of qualification. Especially low a level qualification has to get opportunities to be upgraded because of the changes in labour market. High level vocational training is seen as equivalent to the BA <b>by employers, employer organisations and chambers</b>. This is highly discussed.</p>
<p><b>7. structural and institutional impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has it had an impact on <b>education and training (or lifelong learning) policies</b>?</li> <li>• <b>On other</b> legislation, official/ governmental organisations, bodies, institutions?</li> <li>• On the negotiations between <b>social partners</b> (who are those anyway in your country?)</li> <li>• On <b>human resource management</b> in the private sector?</li> <li>• On civil society/ NGOs/ adult education sector?</li> </ul> <p>On <b>building bridges</b> (of communication, working partnerships...) between different systems of certification, sectors etc?</p>	<p>Especially the support structure in higher education or other education institutions are an absolute necessity for a sustainable counselling of those who are the future clients. In Germany there is no <b>specific support</b> structure, <b>but more and more it is included by all relevant stakeholders. As we will have a lack of competent employees in future because of our demographic development, there is a growing interest in more mobility between different levels. Also, the social partners include this topic more and more.</b> <b>(“Der Deutsche Qualifikationsrahmen, Positionen, Reflektionen und Optionen“ Gutachen der Max-Träger Stiftung <a href="http://www.gew-shop.de">www.gew-shop.de</a>) The Trade Union GEW assigned this expert report.</b></p> <p><b>Also in the area of human resource policy, there are more and more aspects of recognition included.</b></p>

### III. Your analysis of the national situation regarding Validation

<p><b>8. Stakeholders' engagement:</b> how would you rate the <a href="#">stakeholders' level of interest</a> in your country regarding the VNF-IFL?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which stakeholders in particular are very interested?</li> <li>• Which ones are not so/ not at all interested?</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Why</a> is that so? Any particular or obvious reasons? <i>Reference to examples, documents?</i></p>	<p>Industry and trade unions and state agencies concerned with vocational training are mainly interested in recognition of informal learning to support the development in validation of formal learning.</p> <p>Of course, in reality the validation of informal learning takes place in human resource processes without the official recognition dependant on the policy of the company.</p> <p>In the public services, this is more formalised and it is quite difficult to overcome these formalities.</p> <p>Higher education has quite a number of projects on the topic and is experimental and very strongly attached to questions of quality, which mainly means quality of formal training and has a lot of problems with validation of informal learning.</p> <p>The federal state is responsible for vocational training and is very much interested in procedures and accreditation of informal learning to strengthen their positive position to fulfil the European requirement to develop NQF.</p> <p>The Länder are working together with the Rectors Conference and have had two agreements, one in 2002 and one in 2005 including RPL. <b>There has been a new regulation by the KMK starting from 6.03.2009 on Access to HE for those who are professionally / vocationally qualified with a tendency to give more possibilities to these groups. Also, in HE there has been a resolution from the KMK on the 10.12.2009 for the accreditation of BA- and MA programmes to widen opportunities. In general one can say that universities had to change their regulations on access for professionally qualified students and in doing this, they also started regulating recognition aspects. Proven competences have to be accepted whereas before, it only said, that they could be accepted. Starting in the winter semester 2010/11 students who fall under these new regulations, being accepted also without Abitur, but with recognised professional competences, can start studying.</b></p> <p>The adult education institutions developed a profile pass to strengthen validation and recognition of non-formal learning. Out of their daily work, they have a high interest in this topic.</p>
<p><b>9. Debates-discussions:</b> Are there any (few/many) discussions concerning VNF-IFL?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has it stimulated discussion on <a href="#">specific issues</a> (social inclusion, employability, learning society,</li> </ul>	<p>The debated are mostly among experts in different areas. There is a general acknowledgement that we have to develop a NQF. The higher education representatives are mostly worried how their higher education frame is going to be involved in the NQF, how is it going to be harmonised?</p>

<p>accessibility for older learners, women, migrants...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the <b>nature</b> of assessment, knowledge...?</li> <li>• <b>Between which stakeholders</b> mainly/ or <b>within which sector</b> mainly?</li> </ul> <p><i>Any evidence or references to those?</i></p>	<p>The official statement of the government is: to support the process with the final outcome of a NQF. The difficult discussions around that are similar to those of the Bologna process and at the end, it somehow worked. There is a ministry paper within the framework of the OECD activity “recognition of non-formal and informal learning” on the status in Germany.</p>
<p><b>10. Research and VNF-IFL:</b> Does <b>research</b> feed these debates? <i>Are there examples of this? Reference to reports, research findings etc...?</i></p>	<p>There has been specific research on specific topics, including RPL interesting could be the ANKOM report.</p>
<p><b>11. Problems/ difficulties, and resistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any emerging? If so <b>which</b> ones? <b>What</b> type? (strategic, operational, organisational, attitudinal, cultural, financial etc...)</li> </ul> <p>Is there <b>resistance</b> appearing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At which</b> level?</li> <li>• <b>In which</b> sector in particular?</li> <li>• <b>From which</b> category of actors/ stakeholders?</li> </ul> <p><i>Evidence available? Some examples?</i></p>	<p>There are a lot of problems, difficulties and resistance. They are strategic, as well as operational etc. It has a lot to do with our complicated structure between the Länder and the federal government, the excellent system of vocational training e.g. the Lehre, Meister etc. which are interested in keeping their high level of training. And of course higher education, which is already mentioned above.</p>

**Any other comments**

The Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung has given a report within the Framework of the OECD activity on “[Recognition of Formal and Informal Learning](#)” on the topic of “Status of recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning in Germany”. The report has a 143 pages, is in English and you can get it from the Ministry. This is the most extensive report on the topic in English.