The Qualifica Programme
Qualifica Centres
RVCC System

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General Context

- Portugal has long faced a **structural problem of low educational attainment** (53% of the people aged 25-64 had not completed upper-secondary education in 2016, against the EU average of 23%). The creation of the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) system has been crucial to effectively recover the qualification levels of the adult population;

- RVCC is **developed by a network of (294) validation centres and is targeted at adults aged 18 or plus** who do not hold either primary or lower-secondary education (4th, 6th, 9th grades), upper-secondary education (12th grade) or a professional certification. Those up to 23 years old must have at least three years of professional certified experience to be eligible;

- The RVCC system has been **co-funded by the ESF and the State Budget**. It is a free of charge process for individuals and is directed at all adults living in Portugal. The standards and the pedagogical materials are available online and offered freely;

- Learning acquired through open educational resources can be matched to the existing standards and be validated through RVCC.

Main Milestones

2000
- Centres for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC Centres)
  - Certification of adults exclusively in the basic level of education

2005
- New Opportunities Initiative
  - Governmental programme to upgrade the qualifications of young people and adults (minimum upper-secondary education)

2007
- Creation of the National Qualifications System
- New Opportunities Centres network
  - Certification of secondary level of education
  - Certification of professional competences (2008)

2013
- Redesign the New Opportunities Centres and resize the national network
  - Creation of the Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education – CQEP
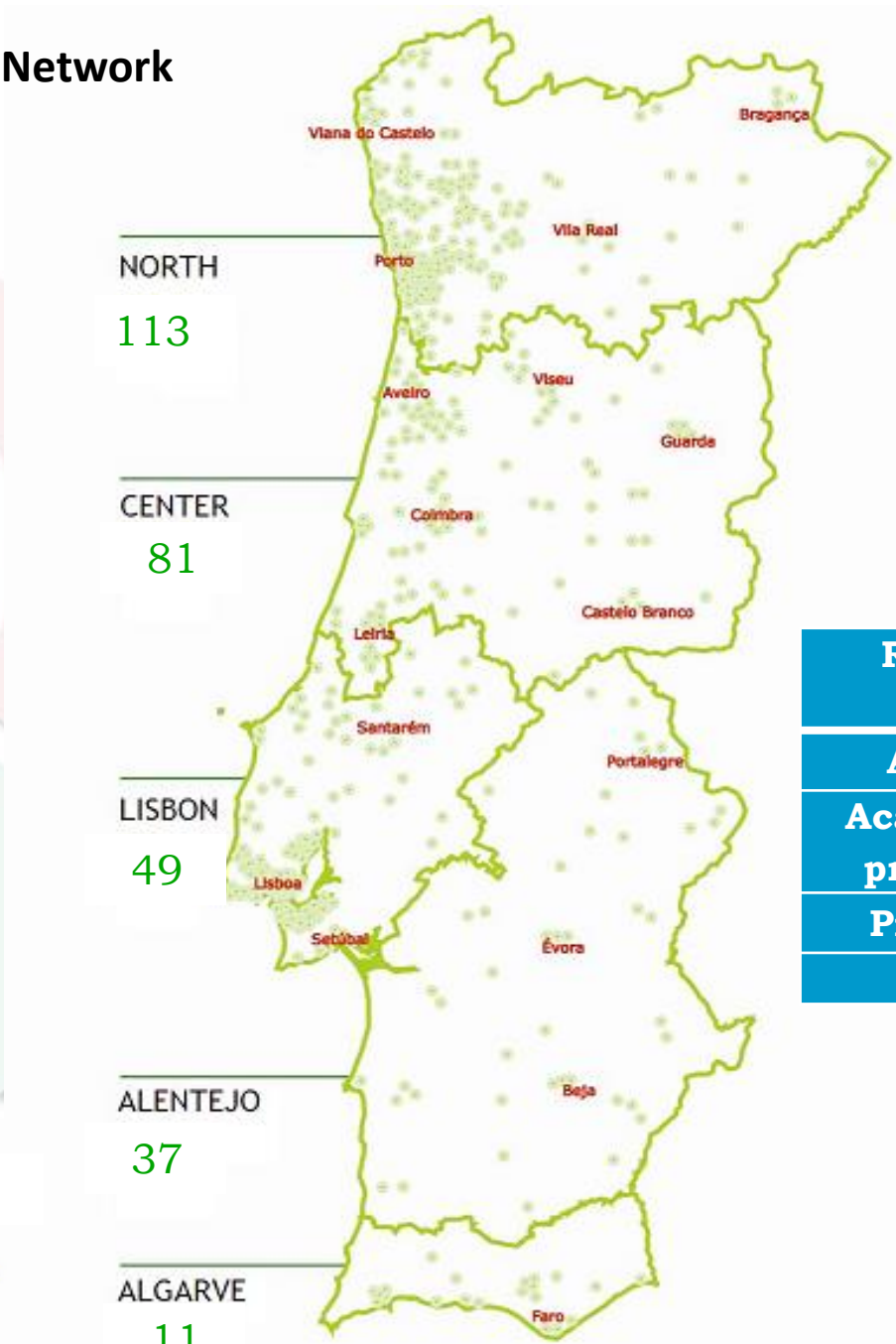
2017
- **Official launch of the *Qualifica* programme**
  - Creation of the *Qualifica* Centres

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The Qualifica Programme

- The *Qualifica* programme is an integrated strategy to foster the training and qualification of adults. **It targets less qualified adults, unemployed people and NEET**;

- The *Qualifica* centres (validation centres) are structures that contribute to increase the qualification levels in Portugal through the process of RVCC, combined with training activities. They provide information, guidance and referral of adults (18 or plus) and exceptionally NEET to:
  - RVCC processes (school and/or professional, levels 1 to 4 of the NQF)

    and
  - education and training pathways;

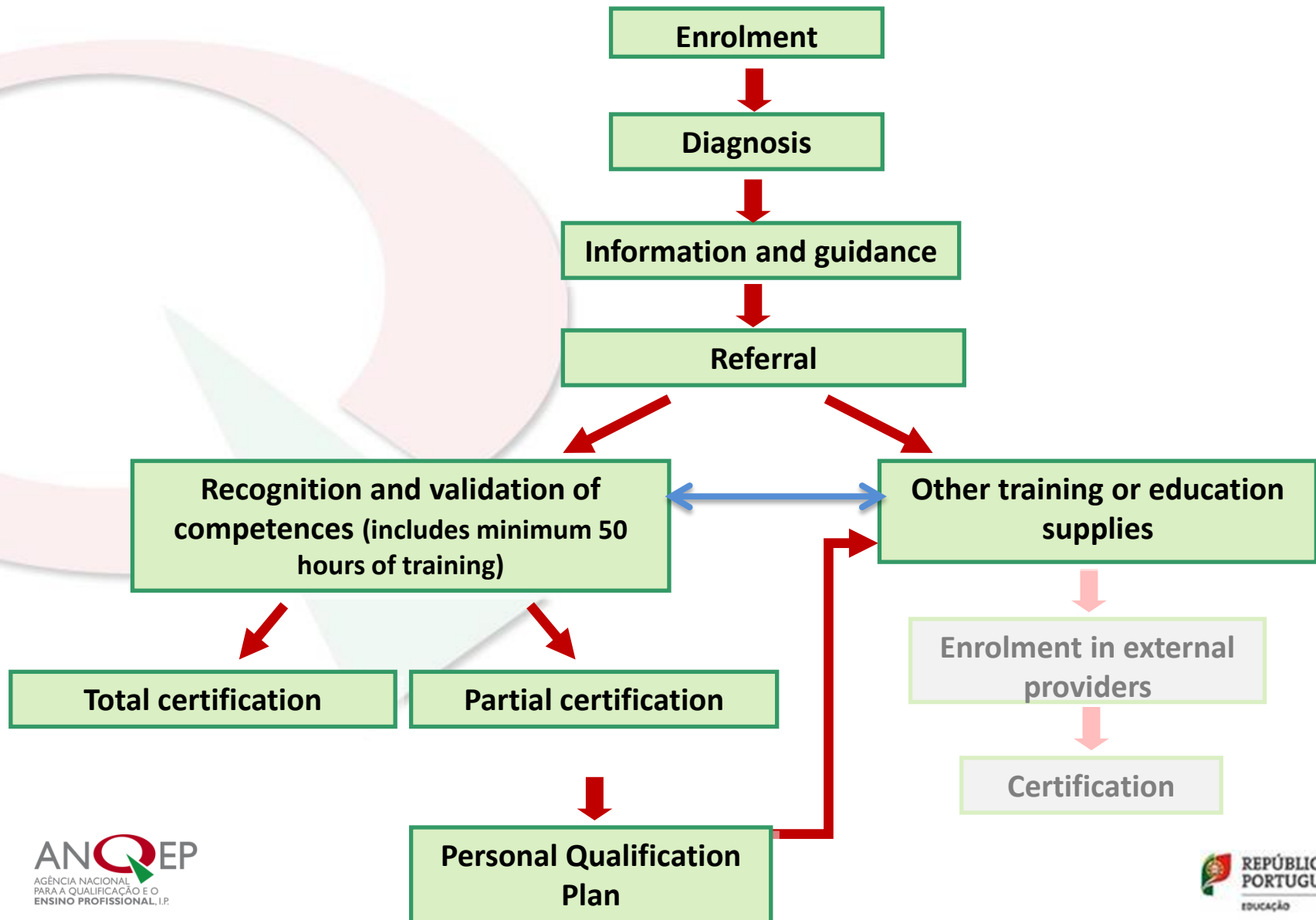- **Budget** allocated to the centres for the period October 2018- December 2020:

Budget allocated			
	Operational Programme for Human Capital (North, Centre and Alentejo)	Regional Operational Programme - Lisbon	Regional Operational Programme - Algarve
Oct. 2018-Dec. 2020	109.250.000€	16.000.000€	8.250.000€

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Qualifica Centres- Network

NORTH
113

CENTER
81

LISBON
49

ALENTEJO
37

ALGARVE
11

MADEIRA
3

RVCC in Qualifica Centres	
Academic	65
Academic and professional	228
Professional	1
TOTAL	**294**

The different stages of intervention and the support to individuals in a Qualifica Centre

Qualifica Centres - Team

For the development of their attributions, the validation centres have **a team** composed of:

- A **coordinator**, responsible for ensuring the regular functioning of the centre (pedagogical, organizational and financial management);
- **Guidance, recognition and validation of competences practitioners**, who carry out the enrolment, diagnosis, information and guidance and referral stages;
- **Trainers and teachers**:
  - Academic RVCC - responsible for identifying the competences held by the candidate, supporting the preparation of the Portfolio, organizing and developing complementary training actions;
  - Professional RVCC – responsible for applying the assessment tools.

The individual is accompanied at all stages of the process.

RVCC - Standards

- RVCC is based on:
  - two key-competences standards for **school RVCC** (basic and upper-secondary education)
  - professional standards for **professional RVCC**

<u>**Basic Level standard:**</u>

- Language and Communication

- Mathematics for Life

- Citizenship and Employability

- Information and Communication Technologies

(ICT)

       * There is a standard adapted to people

       with disabilities

<u>**Secondary Level standard:**</u>

- Culture, Language and Communication

- Society, Technology and Science

- Citizenship and Professionality

<u>**Professional standards:**</u>

- 156 standards for professional RVCC

www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt

RVCC process – Recognition and Validation of Competences

**RECOGNITION
and
Validation**

Recognition of Competences

- Analysis of RVCC standards for the qualification to be obtained
- Systematization of personal /professional experience
- Portfolio elaboration
- Competences balance (Analysis and assessment of the adult's interests and competences, aiming at linking them to the competences presented in the standard)
- Application of assessment tools (professional RVCC)

Team members involved: guidance, recognition and validation of competences practitioner + teachers/trainers

Type of sessions: group or individual

Validation of Competences

- 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 competence standards
- Identification of competences that the candidate actually holds and those that can be certified

Team members involved: guidance, recognition and validation of competences practitioner + teachers/trainers

Type of sessions: group or individual

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RVCC process - Certification

Certification

School certification:

Who:
- A trainer or teacher from each of the key-competences areas and the guidance, recognition and validation of competences practitioner who accompanied the candidate's process.
- Trainers or teachers involved in his/her RVCC process are excluded from the jury.

How:
- Certification examination consists in an oral presentation of a work on a theme that demonstrates knowledge and competences on the key-competences areas of the respective standard.

Professional certification:

Who:
- Two trainers with adequate technical qualification in the education and training area of the standard under assessment (with at least five years of work experience); the trainer who accompanied the candidate's process; a representative of the business associations or employers; and a representative of trade union associations in the activity sector.

How:
- Certification examination is a practical demonstration of the competences held within the professional competences standard.

Results and coherence of validation arrangements

- The NQF, in force since 2010 and referenced to the EQF, is a unique reference tool to classify all qualifications produced in the national education and training system, regardless of the access pathways (general education, VET, RVCC, higher education). Regarding RVCC, **NQF levels 1 to 4** are only granted in the case of a full certification.

NQF Level	Qualifications	EQF Level
Level 1	2nd cycle of basic education obtained via general education, VET pathways or RVCC	Level 1
Level 2	3rd cycle of basic education (lower–secondary education) obtained via general education, VET pathways or RVCC	Level 2
Level 3	Upper–secondary education obtained via general education, VET pathways or RVCC	Level 3
Level 4	Upper–secondary education obtained via general education, VET pathways or RVCC	Level 4
Level 5	Post-secondary non-higher education qualification with credits to pursue higher education studies	Level 5
Level 6	Bachelor degree	Level 6
Level 7	Master degree	Level 7
Level 8	Doctorate degree	Level 8

Evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance

Quality assurance:

- Existence of national standards for RVCC;

- Existence of guidelines for RVCC;

- Accuracy and reliability of the data provided by SIGO;

- Key performance indicators established in the quality chart for the validation centres;

- and the training provided to the staff of the validation centres.

Conclusions and challenges

- A well-developed and flexible RVCC system helps overcoming the challenges faced by low-educated adults (e.g. the barriers to accessing the formal education system). **RVCC is a vital mechanism to promote the return of adults to the education and training system**, insofar as it values the competences acquired throughout life in non-formal, informal and formal contexts and contributes to making lifelong learning a reality;

- A **comprehensive network** of validation centres has contributed both to **giving RVCC relevance** in acquiring a non-higher qualification and to **providing lifelong guidance**;

- The **flexibility of the RVCC system contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency in obtaining a qualification**, enabling the certification in less time and with lower costs than in formal education;

- The outcomes of this system have been determined by political cycles and their respective interest and investment in adult education;

Conclusions and challenges

- Yet, **challenges remain**, including:

    - **reducing the reliance on EU funds** to support the RVCC system, which can be a challenge for the long-term sustainability of the system;

    - **achieving wide consensus regarding policy priorities** for adult education;

    - improving the **social value/recognition of diplomas** obtained via RVCC;

    - increasing the **engagement of stakeholders**, especially employers, in order to mobilize low-skilled employees and facilitate their access to RVCC;

    - **raising the awareness of the benefits of learning** so as to go beyond motivational barriers.

Thank you