

**NEW OECD ACTIVITY ON
RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

DRAFT COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT

SLOVENIA

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CONTENTS:

Component 1: Contextual factors	3	
1.1 Demographic change		3
1.2 Internationalisation		10
1.3 New ICT		11
1.4 Economic developments and skills shortage/mismatch		14
1.5 Social developments		21
1.6 Others		23
Component 2: Description of institutional arrangements	24	
2.1 Political and legal framework		24
2.2 Governance and the role of government		32
2.3 Resources		36
2.4 Others – appendices		50
2.5. References		
Component 3: Description of technical arrangements	56	
3.1 Qualifications, qualification systems, qualifications framework		56
3.2 Credit accumulation and transfer		64
3.3 Assessment methods and procedures		66
3.4 Others		73
Component 4: Stakeholder behaviour	74	
4.1 Characteristics of stakeholders		74
4.2 Access		82
4.3 Participation		85
4.4 Incentives and disincentives		86
4.5 Others		90
Component 5: Case studies on benefits and barriers	92	
5.1 Economic benefits		95
5.2 Educational benefits		100
5.3 Social benefits		101
5.4 Personal benefits		102
Component 6: Conclusions and challenges	103	
Appendix to Component 1		separately
Annex 1		separately
References	105	

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1.1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

1.1.a) Changes/diversification in profiles of learners (age, ethnicity, sex, socio-economic backgrounds) for overall post-secondary education institutions (higher education, further education, vocational education and training, professional education etc.). Is there any evidence on admission and graduation rates?

The number of adults¹ enrolled into secondary education programmes (three-, four- or five-year upper secondary education programmes) has been slowly increasing (Table 1); i.e. from 11420 in the school year 1999/2000 to 18942 in 2004/05, reaching its peak in 2002/03 with 22928 enrolled participants. The largest single group is concentrated in the 20-29 age group with 50.6% participants in 1999/2000 and 54.2% in the school year 2004/05. The age groups 30-34 and 35-39 also did relatively good. The data show that older generations had been entering secondary education to a greater degree. In the school year 1999/2000, the oldest age group was 40+ and it was not heavily represented (324 students - 2.8%). The next school year saw the introduction of three new age groups: 40 – 44, 45 – 50 and 50+. They did not represent a considerable share within the whole population (between 5 and 7%), but what matters is the fact that adults of this age attended classes and that their participation was also adequately recognised.

What has been said for the whole population could also be said for women. The most heavily represented age group is 20-29. It accounts for more than 50% of all the participating women (51.1% in the 1999/2000 school year and 54.8% in 2004/05). The 30-34 age group also has relatively high proportions and its share amounted to more than 13% in all analysed years. The share of women beyond this age group resembles the situation of the whole secondary school population described above, although the percentages are somewhat higher (between 6 and 7%).

In the student population in higher education (full-time, part time and all post-secondary education), the majority of students fall in the 20-24 age groups which totalled almost 60% (58.1%) in the academic year 1998/99 (Table 2). Their share was slowly decreasing over the years and achieved 53.9% in the academic year 2005/06. The rest of the age groups were gaining participation in education as could be seen from the Table. Maybe the highest increase in the share was recorded by the 40+ group. Their participation in 1998/99 was 3.6%, but it reached 5.3% in 2005/06.

The predominant group of women students was the age bracket 20-24 years. It accounted for 60% of the total women's population in the post-secondary education at the beginning of the analysed period (1998/99 and 1999/2000). Then it gradually diminished to reach 54.8% in the academic year 2005/06. Meanwhile, the participation of other older age groups was increasing and was most pronounced in the group 40+ (from 3% in 1998/99 to 5.3% in 2005/06).

¹ The data for various levels of education and also for different years is presented, however, it is not always organised in a way required for this purpose. The majority of the data discussed in the report is for the period starting with the academic year 1993/94 and finishing with 2004/05. It was compiled by the Statistical Office of Slovenia at special request.

Analysing the enrolment of adults in post-secondary vocational education in relation to participation trends, one can observe that they are similar to those of the whole population. The predominant age groups are 20-24 although their share somewhat varies but stays above one third of the part-time students. In 1998/99, this cohort amounted to 36.7% of adult students, reached 38% in the next academic year and fluctuated between 34% and 36% in the observed years to drop to 22.9% in the academic year 2005/06. It could be said that 25-29 age groups were increasing their participation. At the beginning of the analysed period, they represented 20.7% of adults in post-secondary education, while in 2004/05 their share was 24.6% and diminished by more than one percent point in 2005/06. The share of more mature students (30-34) in this period was more or less stable and totalled around 14% but reached 19.4% in the academic year 2005/06. After the initial and relatively high percentage of participation of the 35-39 age groups in the late 1990ies (19.6% in 1998/99), their share diminished to around 11% in the following years. Since the Statistical Office of Slovenia only started to follow the 40+ group after the year 2000, the previous 35+ group would be among those with the highest rates. Taken together, their share would be 33.6% in the academic year 2005/06.

The situation is similar in case of women as well. The predominant population is the 20-24 age group which represents well over one third of women students at the beginning (1998/99 - 38.9%). Later, the share diminished and accounted for 21.9% in the academic year 2005/06. Generations from 25-29 increased from 18.4% in 1998/99 to 23.4% in 2004/05, but in the following academic year their share dropped (21.8%). By joining together the remaining two age groups (35-39, 40+), it could be said that 35+ is the group which is getting into education very fast. Their participation increased by 26% in the eight-year period.

Post-secondary vocational education is a relatively new field. The Act which rendered it possible was passed in 2004. Before that period, this type of post-secondary education was regulated by the Vocational and Technical Education Act. Traditionally, this kind of study has appealed more to adult student (part-time) population.

Looking at the whole population of students in higher professional education, the share of younger generations (under 20) is diminishing and the same applies to the population from 20-24 years of age although it remained the predominant group in all the years which were analysed (1999/2000 – 2005/06). Their share was 43% in 1999/2000 and reduced to 41% by 2005/06. The 30-34 age cohort increased slowly, while the participation rate of more mature students (age groups 35-39 and 40+) remained more or less stable - between 10–12%.

Women recorded the same trends as the whole population of students in post- secondary vocational education. The share of the up to 20 age group was decreasing, the cohort 20–24 being the predominant one although it is on the decrease as well. Its share was 48.1% in 1999/2000 and came down to 38.9% in 2005/06. The participation of women from 25 - 29 was rising and reached 19.3% which is a 66% increase in relation to the initial year. The same, though not to such a degree, could be said for all other age groups even if the increases vary as is evident from the Table.

Adult students separated from the rest of the post-secondary vocational student body in relation to the shares of various age groups reveal that this kind of study is attractive for adults. The share of students under 20 is almost negligible (under 1%) in all years except in 2004/05. In early 2000, 30+ age group accounted for almost two thirds of the student

population (see Table 2). Later, their share diminished, but they still represent more than 50% of the part-time student population.

Something similar is happening in women's population as well, although their share is somewhat higher with respect to under 20 age groups as in the total population. In 1999/2000, it was 0.4%, recorded one percent in the next academic year, reached 2.1% in 2001/02 and went down to 0.6% in 2005/06. Nevertheless, together with the traditional student age (19–29) they formed less than 50% of the student population (51.5% in 2002/03) in most cases. Non-traditional ones, i.e. age group over 30, were the prevailing ones in almost all years under analysis, except in 2002/03 and 2003/04 when the share of both groups was more or less around 50% (49.7% for 30+ and 50.3% for below 19 to 29 years of age).

In higher professional and university education, the majority of students were represented by the 19-23 age groups (from 1996/97 to 2005/06, Table 3). In the academic year 1996/97, their share was 74%, but it gradually diminished and amounted to 62.5% in 2005/06. In the same period, the share of the generation from 30 and over 40 was increasing. In the 1990ies, it accounted for 9% of the total population and in the academic year of 2005/06 its share was 11.9%.

The participation rate of women in the total student population is slightly higher. Generations from 19 to 23 years of age represented almost 77% of all women participating in higher education at the beginning, but later decreased and amounted to 62.8% by the academic year 2005/06. At the same time, the generation 30+ was increasing. If it represented 8% of the women students' body in the 1990ies, it reached 12% in the academic year 2005/06. This share is similar to the whole population.

Analysing part-time students (adults) does not give one the freedom to say that demographic changes (ageing population) had an impact on larger participation in higher education. In this case we could speak of thirds in adult higher education: over one third (38.2%) is taken up by 19-23 age groups (1996/97), the second third is represented by generations between 24-29 years of age which are slowly gaining in percentages (from 27% in 1996/97 to 32.2% in academic year 2005/06), and the last third consists of by 30+ age groups which are dominant from 2000 onwards.

Women's population within the part-time student body is showing similar traits as the whole part-time student population. Age groups 19-23 are the prevailing ones accounting for 44% at the beginning of the period (1996/97), but diminishing gradually to stop at 28.3% at the end (2005/06). Taking into consideration women only, one would be able to speak of changing patterns in education because of altered demographic conditions. Within women's part-time student body, there is a gradual increase of more mature students. Population 34+ totalled 29.6% of all part-time students at the beginning (1996/97) and gained 40% at the end of the analysed period (2005/06).

The 30-34 age groups are dominant at the level of the whole post-graduate population, including full-time and part-time students, both men and women, seeking the title of specialists or masters in the academic year 1993/94 to 2005/06 as they on average represent more than 17% of the total student population (Table 4). In the academic year 1993/94, these age groups amounted to 19.3% of all post-graduate students, while in 2005/06 they accounted for around 18%.

The second major students' group between 1993/94 to 2003/04 is represented by the 25, 26 and 27 age groups which ranged between 12.4% and 14.4%, but decreased later on. In the last two academic years (2004 to 2006), the 40+ age groups became more heavily represented and accounted for around 13%. It is difficult to find a pattern since some of the age groups are represented relatively evenly. Still, post-graduates aged between 25 and 27 years of age form the most represented groups for together they represent more than one third of all those enrolled into this kind of study (37% on average).

One could suggest that this is the prevailing study pattern in Slovenia at least in the sense used in the mid 1980ies by UNESCO (Wood, 1986). In the circumstances when jobs are scarce and employment made difficult, the youth decides to continue their studies. Besides, those completing their initial education tend to return to schooling to secure their jobs and to improve their competitiveness in the labour market.

Women in post-graduate studies show more or less the same characteristics as the total population. The major share is that of the 30-34 age group accounting for 18.5% in 1993/94 and 17.1% in 2005/06. Though there are fluctuations within various years, the average percentage is around 18.5% which is higher than in the population consisting of both sexes. The second big group are the 25 and 26 age groups. The participation of 25-year olds is relatively stable and amounts to between 11% and 13%. Women aged 26 represented 11.9% in the academic year 1993/94, while they totalled 13.4% twelve years later (2005/06).

Analysing part-time students only, the picture remains more or less unchanged. The 30-34 group was prevailing (30.4% in 1993/94 and 18.4% in 2005/06). Later on, this group is joined by the 40+ one (1997, 1998 and 2000) which at the end of the 1990-ies reached 13 percent participation and exceeded this percentage in 2005 and 2006 (more than 14% on average). Again, as it is the case with the population from 25 to 27 years of age, this group represents one third of all analysed population.

In such circumstances, it would be difficult to expect something drastically different in relation to women in part-time post-graduate studies. Women aged 30-34 years are the prevailing group at 19.4% in the academic year 1993/94 (17.6% in 2005/06). Similarly as in the group of both sexes, groups aged 25, 26 and 27 present the predominant age groups. The 40+ age group was most heavily represented in the academic year 2004/05 (13.5%), while in the academic year 2005/06 it reached the same share as the 26-year olds (12.4%).

From all that has been said so far, one could conclude that post-graduate studies (specialisation, master degree) are above all studies involving generations up to 30 years of age since they accounted for 47.8% of all in 1993/94 and amounted to 60.2% in the academic year 2005/06. A situation like this is understandable when one considers the levels of unemployment of the young population and also the stimulation for post-graduate studies.

The data on non-formal education by gender and age is incomplete (Table 5). It represents school years from 2001/02 to 2004/05 only and includes approximately 50% of all participating in this kind of study. The absence of relevant data is not due to the unwillingness of the Statistical Office of Slovenia to collect such data as could be seen from the forms the Office employs to collect the data. It stems from the institutions and individuals who refer to the Personal Data Protection Act and are unwilling to disclose such information.

Age groups in non-formal education are relatively dispersed (see Table). The largest groups are represented by the 25-29 age bracket representing between 15% and 16% of the total population. Age groups from 30–44 years display a relatively even share – around 13% - while the share of 50+ is around 10%.

The situation is not different if a closer look is taken at gender and age. There is a relatively even distribution of different age groups, though it is possible to say that the 25-29 age groups were prevailing (from 15.1% to 16%) from 2001 to 2004, while in 2004/05 the 30-34 age groups were predominant. Nevertheless, all other age groups are to be found between 12% and 14%. It is only for women of 50+ that it is possible to claim that their share in non-formal education rose from 11.8% in 2002 to 14.6% in 2005.

Given the presented data, it could be argued in principle that education in Slovenia is the domain of younger generations, whether it pertains to formal or non-formal education. The demographic situation Slovenia is facing has not yet affected participation rates of mature students in lifelong learning, and there also has not been enough drive for the project from policy-makers or employers.

There was an important change in youth enrolment in upper secondary education concerning fields of study. The numbers and share of youth enrolled into lower and 3-year secondary vocational education and training dropped. On the other hand, the share of youth in technical, vocational – technical and general education increased (see the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development, p. 29).

Admission rates

The share of generations enrolled into education was constantly increasing. In 2004, 77.9% of the 15–19 generation was enrolled into upper secondary education (youth only), while in 1995 their share was 67.3% (source: Operational Programme, p. 29). A similar trend can be observed in higher education where the share, taking into account full-time students only, was 52% (see Table below).

Table: The share of population aged 15-24 at all levels of formal education (upper secondary, higher education) in %

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
The share of population aged 15–24 at all levels of education											
Total	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	53.6	56.3	59.3	62.7	65.2	66.9	n.d.	n.d.
Men	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	49.7	51.8	54.8	58.1	59.9	62.5	n.d.	n.d.
Women	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	57.8	61.1	64.1	67.5	70.7	71.5	n.d.	n.d.
Youth in upper secondary education											
- % of 15-19 generation	67.3	69.2	70.2	70.8	72.2	72.5	74.9	75.4	77.2	77.9	n.d.
Population in undergraduate studies (full-time students only)											
- % of 19–23 generation	24.6	30.8	32.9	35.3	36.5	39.1	41.9	43.2	46.1	49.6	52.1

Source: Operational Programme, Table 10, p. 29.

Note: n.d.- no data

The National Report on the Implementation of the Education and Training 2010 Objectives in Slovenia (p. 10, April 2007) elaborated for the European Commission states that 98% of each generation of children completing primary education enrol into secondary education.

In 2005, 90.5% of population between 20 – 24 years of age completed secondary education at the ISCED level 3 (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey).

Graduation rates

As for the upper secondary education, there is no available data on the graduation or dropout rates since no one has been recording these trends in Slovenia. Until 1999, the Employment Service of Slovenia was monitoring the dropout rate of primary and upper secondary schools, but has stopped since there was no legal basis for it². As for higher education, the data has been collected at the level of individual institutions, however, it lacks reliability of a national one. An estimated average duration of university study programmes in higher education is 7 years (data from 2002).

1.1.b) What are the demographic changes (ageing population and migration) on participation in different sectors of education and training

The data available from the 1991³ census estimated the Slovenian population at 1.9 million. The generations from 0-14 years of age represented 20.8% of the total population, those from 15 to 64 – 68%, while 65+ formed 11.2% of the population. According to this census, the largest national groups, apart from the Slovenians, were: Croats (2.76%), Serbs (2.48%), Muslims (1.39%), nationally indeterminate (1.36%), unknown (2.21%) and two national minorities: Italian (0.15%) and Hungarian (0.42%).

The 2002 census revealed some changes in the age structure of the population with regard to the previous. The total population still stood at 1.9 million, but the share of the generations aged between 0-14 years diminished and accounted for 15.3% of the population, while the other age groups became larger: 15-64 years – 70%, 65+ -14.7%. There were also some changes in the share of national groups residing in Slovenia: Croats (1.81%), Serbs (1.98%), Muslims (1.39%), Bosnians (1.10%), nationally indeterminate (1.13%), unknown (6.43%) and two national minorities: Italian (0.11%) and Hungarian (0.32%).

Looking at the number of pupils and students (initial and adult education in the school system), one notices that the numbers of those in primary education (nine-year compulsory education since 1996 enacted for the whole population in 2001/2002) are gradually decreasing due to diminishing generations. The same trend can be observed in upper secondary education where number of those enrolled, after reaching their highest peak in the school year 1998/99 in youth education and in 2002/03 in adult education, started to decrease (Table 6). At the same time, the number of those enrolled in higher professional education (youth and adults) is increasing. In higher education, the number of young students seems to be growing, while the number of adult students, the so-called part-time students, is on the decrease.

² There are estimates of dropout rates amounting to 8-10% in primary education and accounting for 10-13% in upper secondary.

³ The census was carried out on March 31, 1991. At that time Slovenia was still within Yugoslavia. Independence was declared in June 1991.

1.1.c) Is there any evidence of national policy on migration (e.g. the low-skilled or high skilled) with respect to demographic change?

Slovenia is a migration country. In the past, the majority consisted of economic migrants coming from other parts of Yugoslavia. After the independence and especially during the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia was confronted with the wave of refugees from those countries which prevailed in the total share of all refugees 1.1 (Table 1). In 1995, they accounted for 0.9% of the total population (total: 18870; out of which there were 11327 women). The share had been slowly diminishing and the Statistical Office showed no data on refugees in 2003.⁴

In August 2002, the temporary refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina were granted the right to work and they obtained temporary work permits. They had been able to perform only occasional and temporary work until then (up to 8 hours per week according to the Temporary Asylum Act of 1997). However, they very rarely decided to accept temporary work permits because it was not possible to regain the status once the temporary permit expired. Those who were temporarily employed did not have any problems regarding the recognition of formal education because of the former common state⁵. There were no special instruments in place for those who were unable to produce an adequate certificate attesting to their educational attainment. In this way, they did not have a possibility for either recognition of prior learning or attestation of knowledge and skills gained in non-formal and informal way thus opening the way for education or employment. What remained for them was low skilled work.

When Slovenia was a constituent part of Yugoslavia, the whole Yugoslav territory was considered as a unified human resource area in relation to education and recognition of education attainment. In other words, reports, school-leaving certificates and diplomas from educational institutions in other republics of Yugoslavia were recognised automatically. There was also a legislative provision (the Employment Relationship Act) which introduced the instrument for recognising life and workplace skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, more detailed measures for recognition and accreditation had never been worked out.

1.1.d) Describe any change of higher education institutional admission policies starting to practise recognition of non-formal and informal learning due to the demographic change?

On the whole, it is possible to speak of a relatively well-organised field of recognition of knowledge from the perspective of formal education where matters are regulated by the Assessment and Recognition of Education Act. The Act distinguishes between two functions of recognition of education – 1) continuing education, 2) employment. The recognition is based on written evidence in both cases. For the time being, admission into higher education is conditioned upon adequate upper secondary leaving certificates and no alternative policies have been introduced yet.

⁴ The status of temporary refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina expired in August 2002 when they obtained permanent residence permits. According to the data of the Ministry of Interior, the Sector for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners, there were 40 refugees in 2003 (Sonja Gole Ašanin, personal communication, November 27, 2006).

⁵ After August 2002, there were no obstacles standing in the way to employment, however, ex-temporary refugees experienced high unemployment rates and the situation remained unchanged in 2006. In the late 1990-ies, the NGO Foundation Gea 2000 organized vocational training for temporary refugees. This organisation also made it possible for some temporary refugees – entrepreneurs - to get micro economic credits which enabled them to start their businesses. In 2000, another NGO Slovenian Philanthropy assisted temporary refugees in getting the employment.

1.2. Internationalisation

1.2.a) Describe any national policy or current practices of recognition of non-formal and informal learning as part of integration strategies of migrant population (highly skilled, low skilled and refugees)?

The National Policy on Migrations is determined by the Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 106/2002) which is based on six general principles: i) solidarity and international division of burdens and responsibilities; ii) responsibility towards citizens and country; iii) respect of law and human rights; iiiii) equality; iiiiii) historical responsibility; and iiiiii) "the principle of long-term macro-economic benefits which determines the relative freedom of migration". According to the last principle, it is possible to determine controlled reception of migrants by considering the demand of the Slovenian labour or capital markets, taking into account the accession to the European internal market and at the same preventing illegal immigration and unemployment. (Principles of the Migration Policies of the Republic of Slovenia, Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of Slovenia)⁶.

The Employment and Work of Aliens Act also refers to the above-mentioned Resolution in its Article 5 which foresees quotas annually determined by the Government. The quotas are distributed according to the following purposes: employment of foreigners in the Republic of Slovenia, foreigners posted to the Republic of Slovenia, training and upgrading, seasonal work and individual services of foreigners (Article 5). While issuing work permits, especially new ones, the Act foresees priority treatment of some worker categories, especially those who have an adequate level of professional education in occupations where there is a shortage in Slovenia. Apart from this, legislation provides for additional training to obtain sufficient command of the Slovenian language if such training is necessary. It also renders possible for foreigners to obtain qualifications or receive retraining if it relates to the occupations in shortage.

In the case of refugees, the draft Operational Programme for Human Resources Development for the Period 2007 to 2013 foresees learning Slovenian language if necessary, as well as the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills through education and training or through obtaining NVQs in the certification system.

The regulations adopted by the Minister of Education and Sport (1998) stipulate that the adult education organisation in upper secondary vocational and professional education can recognise prior knowledge of the participants according to publicly valid reports and school-leaving certificates issued by other organisations or the competent assessment centre. Prior knowledge of adults in professional and theoretical subjects can be recognised if the publicly valid document was not issued more than 10 years prior to the assessment. In such a case, the organisation can request direct assessment of knowledge and skills included in the catalogues for the last 5 years.

⁶ Chapter 3. Principles of Migration Policy, Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of Slovenia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 106/2002.

Otherwise, the adult education organisation considers knowledge equivalent to the standards for the subject marked positively on the grounds of the name of the subject and comparison of the catalogues of knowledge and syllabus respectively. The differences in the number of hours should not exceed 30%.

The participant can demand that the adult education organisation conducts an individual subject examination before the start of the learning period if he/she deems it has already acquired the demanded knowledge. The practical part of education can be recognised if the participant can attest by the employer's declaration that the work has been adequately performed and has taken at least twice as long as the duration of practical training which is determined by the educational programme.

The Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act foresees the establishment of a committee composed of at least three lecturers of the higher education institution and headed by the president who is one of the members. The committee deals with questions relating to enrolment, progression, adaptation of study programmes and their updating. Besides these tasks, the committee also adopts measures to assess, accredit and examine knowledge gained at the workplace or through non-formal education to be recognised in fulfilling the study programme requirements.

1.2.b) Describe any national policies or higher education institutional approaches that are currently being taken to promote comparability/compatibility, visibility and portability of learning outcomes through non-formal and informal learning to promote cross-border mobility?

The legislation regulating various levels of education determines enrolment conditions in formal education in the majority of cases. Apart from the evidence demonstrating the fulfilment of formal enrolment conditions (reports, school-leaving certificates, credits), the recognition of knowledge obtained by non-formal education and informal learning (e.g. Higher Education Act, Gimnazije Act) is not envisaged. Two fields could be exempted from this - vocational education and training as well as post-secondary vocational education (Item 1.2.a). It stands to reason to expect that the Bologna process will bring about some changes in this respect.

Component 1.3 New ICT

Since declaring independence in 1991, Slovenia has followed the global development trends in ICT, therefore the spread of ICT is also one of national development goals for the period 2006-2013.⁷ The number of households with personal computers as well as of those which have access to the Internet has been growing every year. For the sake of illustration, in 1995 only 2% of the inhabitants⁸ were using the Internet, however, ten years later in 2005 50% of

⁷ Slovenia's Development Strategy: Development Vision and Priorities (2005), Ljubljana: Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development.

⁸ Statistical Yearbook 1998, Ljubljana: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, see: http://www.stat.si/letopis/index_vsebina.asp?poglavje=8&leto=1998&jezik=si (24 October 2006)

the inhabitants⁹ were employing the Internet. While the percentage of households with a personal computer amounted to 47% in 2001, it grew to 61% in 2005.¹⁰ The main purpose of the use of the Internet is self-directed learning (59%), the exchange of files through P2P networks (45%), internet telephone (17%), online lottery (7%) and the use of gaming houses 2%.¹¹ We can say that the development of ICT introduces new possibilities for learning. Despite early attempts of e-learning in Slovenia, we can claim that it is still in an early phase and that it develops slowly. We cannot yet be satisfied with its level of development although during the last years we could monitor the development in the supply of e-learning. Already in the early 1990ies, some forms of distance learning were available in Slovenia, mainly correspondence education (Zagmajster, Bregar 2005). A number of e-learning projects were put in place since the mid 1990ies.

E-learning at universities is also gaining ground slowly, however, there are many universities which still have not introduced it. University web sites very often mainly include the information about study programmes for students, examinations, consultation hours with professors, but not audio recordings of the professors' lectures and study material as it is, for example, frequent in Germany and other European states. The universities which have online study material are very rare. Interactive consultations between professors and students are not developed as well. According to the RIS research (The Use of the Internet in Slovenia), which was performed by the Centre for Informatics and Methodology (Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana) and the Faculty of Management (University of Primorska), the use of ICT at higher education and post-secondary vocational institutions lags behind the EU.¹² Also, the number of computers in primary schools is still not sufficient, however, the situation is better in upper secondary schools.

1.3.a) Provide any evidence of modularisation of learning and the new recording system opened up by new information and communication technologies be fully used to promote credit transfer?

The modularisation system in the study programmes is still in its early phase in Slovenia. Very few universities and faculties have modules, nevertheless their number might increase when more faculties will start the Bologna programmes. The modularisation of programmes for upper secondary vocational schools and lower secondary vocational schools is in the pipeline. The credit system is in its early phase of development in Slovenia, and post-secondary vocational education organisations apply the ECTS.

⁹ Slovenia in Numbers 2006, Ljubljana: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, see: http://www.stat.si/doc/pub/slo_figures_06.pdf (24. 10. 2006).

¹⁰ Slovenia in Numbers 2006, Ljubljana: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, see: http://www.stat.si/doc/pub/slo_figures_06.pdf (24. 10. 2006).

¹¹ Research on the Use of the Internet – RIS 2006, : <http://www.ris.org/index.php?fl=1&nt=9&sid=428> (13. 10. 2006).

¹² The research was carried out in the middle of the school year 2004/2005. 75 out of 88 higher education and post-secondary vocational education institutions participated in the questionnaire. The total number of computers in all the surveyed 75 higher education and post-secondary vocational education institutions stood at 13,000, whereas one third was intended for the students. There were 6 computers per 100 undergraduate students in the school year 2004/2005 in Slovenia. The ratio is even lower if we take into account postgraduate students, namely 3.5 computers per 100 students. Public institutions in the field of technology are better equipped with ICT when compared to humanities and social sciences. One third of all the institutions updated sites of university professors. However, only 13 institutions provided e-learning in the time of the research and only 5 of them offered distance learning in certain study programmes. More data about the questionnaire is available at: www.ris.org (23. 10. 2006)

1.3.b) Provide a list of new qualifications that have been opened up by new information and communication technologies. Provide evidence, if any, that the certificates by the major industries carry more or equivalent currency in the labour market than academic qualifications.

In accordance with the development of ICT, new needs for new qualifications connected with ICT arise. Thus, Slovenia has put in place eight national vocational qualifications (new professions) connected with ICT since 2003. These are the following: web site designer, web site developer, operator of multimedia devices, computer systems and networks assistant, software applications and databases assistant, computer mechanical equipment maintainer, information and communication equipment administrator and software maintainer. Following successful recognition of non-formal and informal learning, applicants obtain a publicly valid certificate which does not grant them formal education, however, it helps them find a job in the labour market.

It has been possible to get ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) certificate in the Slovenian language for five years.¹³ ECDL is a globally recognised certificate which proves IT skills and qualifications of its holders, and consequently gives them a competitive edge. Authorized assessment centres perform the exams leading to the acquisition of ECDL. 1,850 ECDL certificates were awarded in Slovenia in the last five years. The Slovenian Society Informatika is of an opinion that ECDL certificate holders are more successful at their work than those who do not have it.

Nevertheless, the ECDL certificate is not sufficient for getting a job at companies such as Microsoft and Cisco. These companies employ on the basis of formal education and experience. They do not have in-company training certificates. The Microsoft Company only collects the data on employee development programmes on the intranet and their superiors have access to them. The general formal education is considered as the most important in Slovenia, therefore the certificates which some big companies grant are mainly valid in the companies themselves and not in others (e.g. certificates awarded by the Slovenian factory Litostroj and the national carrier Adria Airways), however, the exception to this rule is the second largest Slovenian pharmaceutical company Krka, which grants certificates for some national vocational qualifications valid on the national level. However, formal education is still valued the most. Typically, wage brackets are predominantly based on formal education and they only rarely include non-formal and informal education. The latter is important to gain access to in-company promotion.

1.3.c) Describe current national policies or practices of e-portfolio as a tool to record learning outcomes or 'learning assets'? What have been achieved and what have been challenges?

Despite the fact that portfolio has been used for a number of years in the assessment and recognition of national vocational qualifications in the certification system, the use of e-portfolio is still in its early phase of development. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) participated in the international project entitled Key Pal (2004-2006), the objective of which was to learn about the importance and effects of e-portfolio in the development and

¹³ For more information see: <http://www.ecdl.si/> (11 October 2006)

assessment of basic skills / key competences. The project examined the methods in which e-portfolio can support and enhance self-directed learning and the development of basic skills. Slovenia conducted the pilot research in PUM project (Project Learning for Young Adults). E-portfolios of the mentors and participants in PUM were compiled. Another project developing e-portfolio is "Youth in Action" with the objective to create Youthpass, which is an instrument for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Forms for e-portfolio (in electronic form) are in the pipeline, whereby skills and competences acquired in voluntary work will be incorporated as well. The Europass Language Passport is an electronic format of passport intended for employers and provides information about language skills.¹⁴

Component 1.4. Economic development and skills shortages/mismatch

1.4.a) Describe any legal framework, policy, programmes, research that address the issue of recognition of skills, experience and knowledge within the framework of human capital with respect to the economic developments or labour force issues. Are there any specific policies at the regional level concerning such as 'Regional Development' and 'Learning Regions'?

Economic restructuring and profound labour market changes characterised the first years of transition and triggered high unemployment rates. They represented decisive factors behind the development of procedures for assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal education and learning, and work experience. In addition, the accelerated development of adult education in the beginning of the 1990ies significantly contributed to the introduction of various innovations in this field, with accreditation of prior learning being one of them. Based on experience from English speaking countries, some experiments in relation to APEL were launched by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, however, accession activities were the most important in this respect. In the process of harmonisation of the Slovenian legal order to the *acquis communautaire*, concepts and measures developed by European institutions were adopted in VET and adult education policies. The European dimension of lifelong learning is the main concept, while validation and recognition of all education and learning represent one of its key supporting measures.¹⁵

A research project financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs was initiated in 1994. The project aimed at analysing possibilities for the development and implementation of the certification model of qualifications irrespective of their ways of acquisition. The formal model of assessment and recognition was proposed (Ivančič 1995). All main stakeholders did not readily accept and support the incorporation of qualifications attained outside the formal educational environment. The education system regarded the certification of non-formal learning and work experiences as a parallel way of obtaining qualifications which could undermine formal education and threaten the transparency of qualifications. This hindered any progress towards the experimental implementation of the proposed model. The environment for a step forward was created only at the end of the 1990ies. The Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act of 1998 paved the way for assessment and recognition of qualifications for the unemployed. With the support of the Phare MOCCA programme carried out in 1998-2000, assessment and recognition procedures were developed and put in place.¹⁶ In August 2000, the National Vocational Qualifications

¹⁴ See://www.europass.si/en/europass_documents/europass_language_passport.aspx (11. 12. 2006)

¹⁶ Some background studies in support to the certification of non-formal learning were performed within the Phare Mocca programme (see: Svetlik 2000) and they served as a basis for the development and piloting of assessment and recognition procedures (Ivančič et al. 2000).

Act was passed by the Parliament. The certification procedures were legally introduced in Slovenia by this Act. Thereafter, all national strategic documents addressing human resource development and national strategies coping with unemployment problems and problems of structural disparities in the labour market (e.g. active labour market policy programmes, programmes addressing social cohesion)¹⁷ have been promoting the acquisition of national vocational qualifications based on non-formal education, learning and work experiences as an important measure directed towards the improvement of qualifications and employability of the labour force. Whereas the National Vocational Qualification Act of 2000 limited the assessment and recognition of non-formal education and work experiences to narrow occupation specific skills at the secondary and post-secondary levels, the amended Act approved by the the Parliament in October 2006 extended its scope to include key competences and tertiary level.

1.4.b) Describe overall skills mismatch/shortage situation in your country. Do you have any economic policies that address the issue of skills shortage or skills mismatch? In what sectors/industries has the issue been most conspicuous?

Skills mismatch/shortage in the Slovenian labour market may be discussed in terms of levels of formal education and types of qualifications which are the result of disparities between the labour market demand for qualifications and their supply, and regional disparities stemming from geographical immobility of the labour force/qualifications. Structural disparities in the labour market due to disparities between the needs of the economy for qualifications and outcomes in the educational system are strongly highlighted in all national strategic documents (see UMAR 2005; 2006). Educational fields such as economy, social sciences, business, administration and law are producing large numbers of graduates at all levels, while there is a limited interest for studying in fields such as natural sciences, live sciences, technical field and similar. At the same time – due to the way in which the education system and labour market are organised and interrelated – low substitutional capacity of individual qualifications in the labour market exists (Kramberger 2000). Traditionally, Slovenia has experienced low capacity of the Slovenian labour force in terms of geographical mobility, while at the same time one may observe a strong tendency of young population from less developed regions of Slovenia to migrate to more developed centres.

Policy makers in Slovenia have been dealing with structural disparities and skills shortages in the labour market since the very beginning of transition. The active labour market policy was introduced with the aim to better adjust qualifications and skills of the unemployed to the skills requirements of the economy. The key objectives of the VET reform enacted in 1996 (White Paper on Education and Training in Slovenia; Vocational and Technical Education Act) and higher education reform from 1993 (Higher Education Act of 1993), also included better adjustment of the outcomes of the education system to the needs of the labour market. To this end, social partnership was introduced in VET, and education and training programmes were linked to vocational standards proposed by the employment system. In addition, employers were involved in delivering formal training in the form of apprenticeship. Some important national strategic and policy documents were adopted by the Government since 2000 and these documents also stressed the problem of structural disparities and foresaw certain coping strategies and measures (Strategy of Economic Development of Slovenia from 2001-2006; Labour Market and Development Strategy of Slovenia 2001-2006; National

¹⁷ The Strategy of Economic Development of Slovenia 2001-2006; Labour Market and Development Strategy of Slovenia 2001-2006; Slovenia's Development Strategy).

Development Programme). The same goes for new strategic documents adopted from 2005 onward (Slovenia's Development Strategy (2005); Government Reforms for Attaining the Lisbon Objectives (2005), New Development Perspective to 2013 (2007)). The Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education until 2010 and the Resolution on Master Plan for Higher Education deserve to be mentioned in the field of education and lifelong learning. There is also a specific national strategic document supporting the development of basic and new basic skills of the population which was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Sport in 2003 (Green Paper on the Literacy Development).

No systematic studies of skills disparities in the Slovenian labour market have been carried out, but there is extensive statistical data on qualification structure of jobs and employees, registered unemployment and registered and occupied vacancies which may enable some insight into the current situation.

Mismatch in the required and attained level of education of the employed

Statistical data for the period from 2000 to 2004 suggests that there are noticeable differences among the economic activities as regards this issue. Virtually all of them registered a rather high surplus of highest levels of academic qualifications, i.e. doctoral degrees and master's degrees in the observed years (Tables 1a to 1e in the Appendix). Overemployment is also characteristic for secondary technical and general education. In 2000, it amounted to about 2% and in 2004 it stood at about 3%, while in some activities (i.e. education, mining and quarrying) it reached even about 25% and more. At the same time, the data shows that the Slovenian economy has been overburdened by unskilled labour although the share of surplus of this category decreased from 45% in 2000 to about 34% in 2004. Not just mining and manufacturing industry, but also some services displayed rather high percentages (see Tables 1a to 1e in the Appendix).

Contrary to the post-university level, the data on the required and attained higher and university level confirm certain shortages in all surveyed economic activities. The rate of match in required and attained skills varies from year to year. From 86% in 2000, it dropped to 78% in 2002, and then in 2004 it improved and reached about 87%. As indicated by the data in Tables 1a to 1c in the Appendix, considerable differences exist among different economic activities. The highest shortage was registered in education (about 37% in 2004). Also, 2-year post-secondary vocational qualifications do not display any trend; the percentage was changing from one year to another. Still, for the observed years it holds true that most economic activities registered skills shortages at this level. Education seems to be an exception with an extensive overemployment of these skills from 2002 onward (see Tables 1c to 1e in the Appendix).

On the other hand, the data reveals a rather high rate of match between the requirement for skilled and highly skilled manual and non-manual workers, and the fulfilment of this requirement (over 90%). Noticeable shortages are registered in some manufacturing industries (manufacturing of textile and textile products, manufacturing of leather and leather products). Somewhat larger surplus of these skills is characteristic for service industries (financial intermediation; public administration and defence, and social insurance; education; health and social services).

Large shortages of semi-skilled workers were registered in the observed years. In 2000, the match between the required and attained skills at this skills level reached 60% and in 2004 it dropped to 51%. The largest disparities were displayed by most traditional industry branches but also by some services (hotels and restaurants; other social and personal services).

Registered and occupied vacancies in the period from 2001 to 2005

The data collected by the Employment Service of Slovenia confirms that quite a large share of vacancies registered by employers remains unoccupied each year. In total, 135,869 vacancies were registered in 2001. In 2003 the number stood at 140,326 and in 2005 it was already 198,280. About 30% of all vacancies are represented by the jobs not requiring any formal qualification, from 35% to 36% of jobs require secondary vocational qualifications, from 17% to 18% of jobs need secondary technical education, from 3% to 4% of jobs demand 2-year post-secondary vocational qualifications, and from 11% to 13% of jobs call for higher and university degrees. According to the results in the period from 2001 to 2005, the observed percentages remained rather stable (Table 2 in the Appendix).

The figures for main economic sectors presented in Table 2 in the Appendix suggest that around one half of all annually registered vacancies in primary sector do not require any formal qualifications and about 30% require secondary vocational qualifications. Only the share of vacancies requiring higher education somewhat increased throughout the observed years (from 4% in 2002 to 5.5% in 2005). The secondary sector displayed very similar picture: vacancies without any formal qualifications represent from 43% to 45%, those requiring vocational qualifications around 38% (year 2005) and tertiary education around 5.5%. Secondary technical and general qualifications are not in high demand by the secondary sector – they amount to about 11% of all annually registered vacancies.

From 58% to 60% of all annually registered vacancies come from the service sector. Around 30% of them do not require any formal qualifications. From 35% to 36% require secondary vocational qualifications, and about 22% demand secondary technical education. The percentage of vacancies requiring higher education increased from 16.5% in 2001 to 19% in 2004 and decreased to 18% in 2005. The share of vacancies requiring 2-year post-secondary vocational qualifications dropped from 5% in 2002 and 2003 to 4% in 2004 and 2005.

While there were about 23% of uncovered vacancies in 2001, the situation improved in 2002 and 2003, but then it deteriorated again and in 2005 the share increased to 33%. Data for the years 2001 to 2005 broken down by levels of formal school qualifications and main economic sectors suggests some shortages of workers at all levels. Secondary technical qualifications and general education represent an exception. The number of hired workers from these qualification groups exceeded the number of registered vacancies until 2004, while in 2005 a rough match in numbers was registered (see Table 2 in the Appendix). The largest discrepancy between registered vacancies and hired workers was characteristic of higher education with high shares of uncovered vacancies (Table 2 in the Appendix).

The data for 2005 demonstrates that the coverage rate of registered vacancies does not differ considerably among the main economic sectors; it accounted for 66% in the service sector, stood at 68% in the primary sector and at 69% in the secondary sector. Regarding the primary sector, the lowest coverage rate was calculated for 2-year post-secondary vocational education (46%), whereas the respective percentage for secondary vocational qualifications and for the group without formal qualifications amounted to 62% (Table 2 in the Appendix). The secondary sector managed to cover about 80% of vacancies requiring higher and university levels, about 56% of vacancies for 2-year post-secondary vocational qualifications and 58% of vacancies for secondary vocational qualifications. Also, 33.5% of vacancies demanding no formal qualifications remained unoccupied each observed year.

As for the service sector, the percentage of occupied registered vacancies at individual educational levels amounted from 63% (higher and university level and the category with no

formal qualifications) to 67% (2-year post-secondary vocational qualifications) each year. The lowest coverage was attained for secondary vocational qualifications (52%) and the highest one for secondary technical education (99.5%).

In addition to the vacancies for which fully skilled workers are required, employers also register vacancies for interns¹⁸. In 2001, 7253 vacancies for interns were registered. In 2002 and 2004, the number decreased considerably, while in 2005 a small increase was observed (by about 5%). The largest shares apply to higher and university level (from 37% in 2001 to 57% in 2005) each year, and to secondary technical education (from 31% in 2001 to 28% in 2005). The share of vacancies for interns with secondary vocational qualifications dropped from 26% in 2001 to 11% in 2005.¹⁹ The data presented in Table 3 in the appendix demonstrates that there are visible differences in numbers of vacancies for interns and interns actually hired at individual educational levels and in the main economic sectors.

Registered vacancies and registered unemployment

The available data suggests that the average number of annually registered vacancies far exceeded the number of registered unemployed in the observed years. In 2002, the index amounted to 76.7%, thereafter it decreased and in 2005 dropped to as low as 46.7%. However, there is a difference in regard to individual qualification levels. In 2001 and 2002, the number of registered unemployed with no formal qualifications exceeded the number of registered vacancies requiring no formal qualifications, but from 2003 onwards the data showed a reverse picture. Slightly better situation was characteristic of secondary technical education. The largest difference is registered for higher education with the index reaching about 21%. To put it differently, 4 to 5 vacancies are available to one registered unemployed person with higher education.

Looking at the data for the years 2004 and 2005, the number of registered vacancies was by about two thirds higher than the number of registered unemployed at the same qualification level. Exceptions are the categories without formal qualifications and with secondary technical qualifications where the difference between registered vacancies and registered unemployed persons is much smaller (from 25% to 40%) (Table 4 in the Appendix).

Table 6 in the Appendix presents the list of occupations in main occupational groupings of the National Standard Classification of Occupations with largest numbers of registered vacancies in the years from 2001 to 2005. Simultaneously, the data on registered unemployed by fields of education suggests that although certain occupations are in high demand by employers, one can observe a rather high percent of unemployment in corresponding fields of education. More detailed information on educational fields at individual levels of education in which highest shares of unemployed are registered is available in Tables 5a to 5d in the Appendix.

1.4.c) Provide any evidence of increasing or decreasing economic and social disparities in your country (e.g. poverty rate such as gini co-efficiency) among certain groups (low skilled, immigrants, youth, older workers, etc.). Provide also, if any, relevant documents addressing policies issues (economic, social, labour market, etc.) that account for such trends.

¹⁸ Interns are young people in the transition from school to employment who enter employment for the first time. At the time of internship, they should acquire organisation-specific skills and competences not provided within the school programme. The duration of internship lasts from 6 months to 1 year and depends on the level of educational attainment. Internship enables acquisition of work experience necessary to get a stable job.

¹⁹ Those trained in the dual system do not need to enter their first employment via internship since they are expected to develop organisation-specific skills through the apprenticeship.

Gainful employment in the formal economy represents the most important form enabling economic and social wellbeing of the Slovenian population. The available data for the period from 1999 onwards indicates positive labour market dynamics: the employment rate of the population has been increasing and has come close to 66%, while the unemployment rate had been slowly decreasing until 2005. It accounted for 6.5% at the end of 2005. Young people and poorly educated older population are the groups most exposed to unemployment. Structural unemployment of certain vulnerable groups may be regarded as one of the most difficult problems (UMAR 2006: 39). Structural unemployment is primarily characteristic of older generations especially due to rigidity of the labour market which is much less flexible when it comes to ageing population (Ignjatović 2002). The employment rate among the category 55-64 years of age is among the lowest in the EU. The employment protection index in Slovenia amounted to 2.7 (UMAR 2006:40) in 2003.

Nationally representative data on participation of adults in education and learning indicates large disparities in participation rates with regards to age and education. While almost 70% of those with tertiary education annually participate in at least one education and training event, this holds true for as little as 17% of those with no formal education qualifications (Mohorčič Špolar et al. 2005). As for age, the same study points out that the highest participation rate (from 42% to 47%) is characteristic of the 26-49 age groups. The participation rate of those over 49 years amounts to 21%.

The Human Development Index (HDI) has shown some improvement in the standard of living of the population: it reached 0.904²⁰ in 2003. The poverty risk rate and income disparities are decreasing and are among the lowest in EU-25 (UMAR 2006:39). In 2003, the quintile coefficient totalled 3.1. To put it differently, in 2003 the income of the wealthiest persons was 3.1 times higher than the income of the poorest. The income inequality measured by the Gini-coefficient also decreased in the period 1998-2003; it is the lowest among the EU countries; with about 10% of the population living under the threshold of the poverty risk in 2003. The rate has been decreasing since 1997 and is the lowest among EU-15 and EU-25 (ibid.: 44).

The highest rate of poverty risk is demonstrated by the unemployed; it amounts to 39.2%. The worst-off are the long-term unemployed. 3.1% of all active population was long-term unemployed in 2004 (ibid.: 44). The long-term unemployed mostly come from the ranks of the older population, low educated and disabled.

As for social exclusion indicators, the available data reveals that 6.7% of the Slovenian population lives in households with no gainfully employed person (ibid.: 44).

There are several national policy documents in Slovenia addressing social disparities. The Active Employment Policy Programme and Social Welfare Master Plan can be mentioned among the most important ones. Since participation in lifelong learning is among important activities facilitating inclusion in the labour market and at the same time preventing social exclusion, the Resolution on Master Plan for Adult Education until 2010 should be considered as well.

1.4.d) Provide data, if any, which points to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning as a way of re-distributing human capital and solve the issue of skills mismatch and skills shortage and, therefore, a way to drive economic development.

Not available

²⁰ The average for EU – 15 amounts to 0.907 (UMAR 2005: 42).

1.4.e) Provide data, if any, if there has been any study that points to a certain group that would benefit most from the recognition system for their skills (e.g. retirees, older workers, women, immigrants (highly-skilled or low-skilled), part-time workers, unemployed youth, etc.)?

The driving force for the study on the development of a certification model financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (2004-2005) was the fact that around 45% of the Slovenian labour force did not have any formal certificate attesting to their qualifications (Ivančič 1992). They were mostly represented by those employed in traditional industries with considerable years of service and work experience. Many of them also participated in various non-formal educations and training activities. It was assumed that assessment and recognition of knowledge and skills acquired in these ways would make it possible for them to obtain formal qualifications. Since these categories are most vulnerable in times of economic and labour force restructuring, this project was also seen as a way to improve their economic and social security. These formal certificates could also pave the way back to formal education for low-educated population in future years. The same argument also led to the development of the formal model of procedures for assessment and recognition of qualifications. On the other hand, the educational system regarded the certification system as an opportunity for the drop-outs from formal education to facilitate their return to schooling. Within the Phare MOCCA Programme carried out in the period 1998 – 2000 and supporting the educational reform, special attention was devoted to the exploration of possibilities for practical implementation of the certification of non-formal and informal learning and to its possible links with the education system and occupations in the labour market. To this end, some background studies were conducted. The exploration of possibilities of deprived youth to find an opportunity with the support of the certification system was also the subject of the studies (see Trbanc 2000). The author states that most of young drop-outs from VET leave schooling after the first year, but there are still 30% of dropouts who drop out of the system after 2 years and about 20% after three years. The modular approach to VET coupled with a developed system of certification could make it easier for this category to return to education. In addition, the opportunity to certify what they have learnt at school could enhance their chances in the labour market.

With respect to severe structural disparities in the labour market pointed out in section 1.4 of this Component, the certification system could also offer a chance to those with qualifications not in demand by the labour market to upgrade or extend their school qualification by acquiring additional skills and competences, making it possible for them to increase their prospects in the labour market. The fact that recognition of non-formal learning and work experience has so far been mostly limited to vocational qualifications at lower skills levels suggests that unskilled and semi-skilled, older workers and long-term unemployed would benefit most from the recognition system. Some groups outside the labour market also merit mentioning, among them those who would like to improve their economic conditions by manufacturing handicraft products or perhaps complementing their current activity with a new one, e.g. farm tourism, making of certain food products for the market etc. Considering rather strict legal regulations of entry into the craft sector, it is virtually impossible to legally start any activity without an adequate formal qualification certificate.

The examples from social and personal services also suggest that women may represent a group benefiting from the recognition system.

1.4.f) Provide data, if any, that discusses some issues linking between the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and the non-formal and informal economies.

Not available.

1.4.g) Please provide a list of occupations to which the recognition of non-formal and informal learning can be counted as a part of entrance (e.g. teachers, engineers, journalists, etc.). Of the list, which occupations are regulated professions, i.e. that require a certain qualification (certificates, licences, etc.)?

See Component 3

Component 1.5 Social developments

1.5.a) What are the newly evolved 'skills and competencies' to live in the knowledge economy, which have been identified to date? Make a list of such skills and competencies.

In order to live successfully in the information society, the population must develop the key competencies which are essential for the efficient integration of individuals into society. The key competencies described by Rychen and Salganik (2003) for the OECD states are, according to the authors, also relevant for the transition societies and therefore also for Slovenia. Beside reading and mathematical literacy as well as writing, they talk about three categories of key competencies: - interaction in socially heterogeneous groups (the ability to relate well to others; to cooperate, to manage and resolve conflicts). These intercultural competencies are especially relevant for multicultural societies and since there are many different cultures in Slovenia they are also relevant for our country. The second category of key competencies is to act autonomously, which includes the ability to act within a big picture of the larger context; to form and conduct life plans and life projects; the ability to defend and assert one's rights, interests, limits and needs. The third category of key competencies includes the interactive use of tools and the ICT literacy respectively. Most of those are also mentioned in the draft version of the Lifelong Learning Strategy in Slovenia. The draft Strategy also emphasizes that it is important to develop such competencies so that we "penetrate into deeper 'layers' concerning personal characteristics such as (authentic) personality, (professional) identity, notions and opinions (e.g. about learning, knowledge), competencies, technical aspects (skills, methods, techniques), all of which are important as well" (p. 8-9). The Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010 emphasizes the need for the following basic skills: literacy in reading and writing in the Slovenian language and numerical literacy in mathematics. Besides the basic skills, the Resolution also mentions the following new key competencies: communication in a foreign language, learning to learn, active citizenship, entrepreneurial skills, the use of ICT, information society skills and social skills.

Ten competencies have been considered as the framework of general education contents in the reform of upper secondary vocational and professional education programmes at the national level. The competencies are included in the programmes in the integrated form that exceeds the programmes elaborated merely by individual subjects. The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia conceived the reference framework of competencies. The reference framework for upper secondary vocational and professional education programmes comprises the following 10 competencies: communication competence (in native and foreign languages), mathematical literacy, learning to learn, intercultural competence, aesthetic competence,

competence in understanding and being critical to natural and societal processes, social competence, competence in managing information, resources, data and materials (capacity for effective search, collection, processing, interpreting, exchange, presentation and validation), competence in health protection, entrepreneurial competence and the competence in building one's professional/educational path.

1.5.b) Provide evidence, if any, that recognition of this type of learning has led to the uptake of further learning or progression in profession?

The applicants who hold national vocational qualifications do not acquire formal education, however, it is easier for them to get involved in the labour market and to improve their social and economic conditions. For example, the national vocational qualifications certificate in relation to farming enables the holder to sell products on the market. Beekeepers can also sell their products abroad. Thus, national vocational qualifications not only provide for easier access to the labour market but also create better work conditions.

Another illustration of a good practice example regarding national vocational qualifications are home care workers. Hrovatič (2006) interviewed 57 holders of the home care workers certificate. She asked them if anything had changed in their lives after they had received a certificate. Nineteen of them replied that things had changed after the certificate, namely that they were promoted at their workplace, they got higher salaries, they became more competent professionally, they gained regular employment, they became more self-confident and improved their communication with the employer. Thirteen certificate holders thought that nothing had changed since they got a certificate. The reason that working conditions have not improved for such a high number of home care workers probably lies in the fact that some employers still consider formal education as more important and recognition of non-formal knowledge and experience is something new to them, and they do not regard it as important as formal education.

Considering the fact that Europe faces the problem of the ageing population, we will need even more home care workers in the future. Therefore, national vocational qualifications bridge an important gap providing for the acquisition of those professions that the society needs urgently.

We are only acquainted with the individual examples of persons who acquired the national vocational qualification certificate and were included in the educational programme (three bricklayers in the Celje School Centre), or the school is systematically making provisions to enable the holders of the national vocational qualification certificates to participate in further education in the adequate training programme (Nova Gorica School Centre). However, the analysis of the certification system (2006/2007) leads us to conclude that the acquisition of national vocational qualification boosts the motivation for further learning / education, improves employability prospects and above all increases the self-confidence and personal growth of the individual.

1.5.c) Provide evidence, if any, of recognition of this type of learning contributes to democracy and citizenship?

If we define citizenship as a process which promotes personal, cultural, social and political development, then we can conclude that active citizenship prevents social exclusion and thus contributes to social cohesion. All recognition procedures of non-formal and informal learning enhance active participation of people in democratic practices, therefore social inclusion is promoted, leading us to believe that it has had a positive impact on active citizenship and democratization processes. The learning about democracy and democratic practices does not stop with formal education, but it lasts the entire life (Medel Anounevo, Mitchell 2003). Therefore, Martin emphasizes the need for the adult education to function as an agent of active citizenship, social inclusion and democratic societies (Keogh 2003). The recognition of non-formal and informal learning has an important place in contemporary democracies because it enhances lifelong learning, which serves as the means for transformation of societies.

Component 1.6. Others.

1.6.a) Provide other contextual factors or trends that you think are influential – directly or non-directly – that drive changes of institutional and technical arrangements and stakeholder behaviour concerning recognition of non-formal and informal learning which have not been addressed in Component 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5.

Included in Components 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5.

1.6.b) Provide historical backgrounds concerning recognition of non-formal and informal learning in your country.

Recognition of non-formal learning and work experience was already used in the Slovenian labour market in the socialist economy. The Labour Code of 1978 (§ 20) enacted the term ‘professional competencies acquired on the job’ (*z delom pridobljene delovne zmožnosti*). The term encompassed “...acquired professional/occupational skills, as well as developed skills, psychological and physical abilities which a worker has obtained or developed primarily through successful performance of work tasks and permanent education and training...” The same law (§ 43) also foresaw that organisational acts defined ways and procedures for assessment and recognition of professional competencies based on work experience and permanent education and training. Recognition was limited to individual work organisation and provided qualifications valid in organisational and internal labour markets. However, no formal assessment procedures existed in day-to-day practice. The years of service and work experience, and not work performance, were treated as individual professional competence in numerous work organisations. Such course of development undermined formal education in the labour market. The consequences were seen in extremely high rates of educational mismatch of the workforce until the beginning of the 1990ies (Ivančič 1999: 107-109). What is more, this evoked in the society and - especially in the education system - a strong mistrust in any type of recognition of non-formal learning and work experience, and became an important obstacle standing in the way of development and promotion of recognition of non-formal learning and experience in the post-transition period.

2.1. Political and legal framework

2.1.a) Describe, if any, clear political will or statement and policy responses in your country on lifelong learning which are explicitly linked to recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The value of non-formally acquired knowledge is increasing in society and it serves as an important supplement to formal education. Unrecognised and unutilised knowledge signifies a great personal and economic loss, therefore we have to enable for tacit knowledge to transform into more visible and socially approved knowledge.

The basic aim of the Government in the field of vocational education and national vocational qualifications is to set up a transparent and coherent national qualifications system. It is necessary to establish a systematic, vertical as well as horizontal link between the VET system, general education system and certification system. Such solutions call for close cooperation between social partners and professional institutions active in education and employment.

The following EU documents serve as the basis for the legislation connected with the System for Validation of Non-Formal Learning.

- In accordance with White Paper on Education and Training (Teaching and Learning... 1995), all EU Member States should invest their efforts in identification of key skills, as well as the best methods for their acquisition, assessment and certification.
- Having adopted the Lisbon Strategy, the EU should become the most competitive and dynamic economic area in the world capable of sustainable economic growth, with new high value added jobs by 2010. These aims require higher skill levels of the employees. The Lisbon Strategy gave rise to a number of operational activities:
 - a. Memorandum on Lifelong Learning
 - b. Common Objectives for Education and Training by 2010
 - c. Copenhagen Declaration
 - d. Maastricht Communiqué.

Slovenia modelled on the guidelines laid down in the above mentioned EU documents while developing strategic documents and legislation.

The beginnings of Slovenian legislation in the area of recognition of non-formal learning can be traced back to the 1990ies. The adoption of the umbrella National Professional Qualifications Act of 2000 was impacted by previously passed acts and directives in the area of education and labour, as well as by numerous debates organised at various levels. A study entitled Qualifications in the Certification System (Ivančič, 1995) was also elaborated. An important incentive for the development of the system was also given in the form of documents and recommendations of the Phare Mocca project (1998-2000).

The expert grounds for the new educational legislation were laid down in the White Paper on Education and Training in the Republic of Slovenia (1995), which provided a basis for the adoption of the umbrella Organisation and Financing of Education Act (OG 23-2/1996) and the Vocational and Technical Education Act (OG 12/1996).

The development of the system for assessment and awarding of national vocational qualifications (certification system) is one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Prior to the adoption of the special Act regulating this field, the system had been developed on the grounds of the Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act (OG 80/1997) which was one of the measures of employment policies. The Rules on the Procedure for Acquisition and Award of National Vocational Qualifications created a possibility for experimental running of the NVQ certification in the framework of the Phare Mocca project in 2000.

The development of the certification system is supported by the National Programme for the Labour Market Development by 2006 (OG 92/2001) with the aim to establish lifelong learning culture and deliver high employment. Among the measures for realising the objectives, the Programme also intends to develop a system of awarding non-formally acquired knowledge, skills and competencies. The National Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia 2007-2013 has also foreseen the following activities in order to raise levels of education or qualification levels of the economically active population:

- increasing accessibility of education at the regional level and at all levels of VET and of NVQs,
- decreasing school failure and dropout rates,
- increasing further improvement and training at work,
- improving participation of elderly people in lifelong learning
- integrating vulnerable groups into education...

The NVQ system has been gaining importance with its integration into the network of national, regional and local policies and partnerships and has thus contributed to the implementation of human resource development policies and promotion of lifelong learning.

2.1. b) Do you have legal regulatory frameworks concerning recognition of non-formal and informal learning? Please state – yes, under development/discussion or no. For those who answered “no” describe possible reasons for the inexistence as well as possible future prospects. For those who answered “yes” or “under development/discussion”, please answer the following questions.

The national legislation has been following European guidelines.

The National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 83/2000, 81/2003, 118/2006) governs procedures, bodies and organisations competent for the adoption of catalogues of professional knowledge and skills standards, as well as conditions and procedures for NVQ assessment and awarding.

The National Professional Qualifications Act emphasizes learning outcomes and not the methods of acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies. NVQ assessment and recognition (certification) is designed for adults only and consists of either direct demonstration of knowledge, skills and competencies, or of documents and other proof collected in the applicant's portfolio.

Appendix 1: legal basis for the functioning of the certification system.

2.1.c) Describe the aim(s) and principles stated in framework?

The basic aims formulated during the preparatory phase of the National Professional Qualifications Act are also stated in the explanation to the Act Amending the National Professional Qualifications Act (ZNPk 2006 – 2611-0003). They are as follows:

- creating a possibility for swifter adjustment to the labour market needs in accordance with common European guidelines;
- providing reliability and quality of knowledge assessment and accreditation;
- providing evaluation (assessment) and recognition of competencies supported by tools assuring the quality of assessment in educational institutions - credits;
- providing external assessment and accreditation;
- unified procedures of NVQ assessment and awarding at national level;

- equal access to assessment and accreditation of qualifications as defined in the vocational standard and catalogues of knowledge, skills and competences standards;
- transparency and simplicity of documents, as well as simplicity, transparency and promptness of the procedure's documents.

The proposed amendments to the Act are based on the National Professional Qualifications Act 2006 – 2611-0003:

- principle of connection between formal and non-formal education and work experience. In other words, catalogues of professional knowledge and skills standards will be subjected to credit evaluation in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and their recognition in the education system (modules and recognition of non-formal and informal knowledge);
- partnership and cooperation principle applies to the NVQ development and its promotion, thereby providing for flexible labour market and creation of new qualifications. What is more, an additional support to technological development in the labour structure is hereby assured;
- principle of transferability between various fields and levels of education and training enabling individuals to obtain different qualifications in different vocational fields and at different complexity levels within the qualification system or framework; with this Act qualifications are extending to all professional fields;
- principle of ensuring transparency in certification procedures to provide for the unification of assessment and accreditation procedures at national level. Commissions for NVQ assessment and accreditation are appointed by the minister following the publication of a public tender, while the register of recognition providers for NVQ identification and accreditation is being transferred to the National Examinations Centre.

2.1.d) Describe the historical background that this issue has been taken up. What are the most important drivers of legislation? If there has been already reform of the legislation, describe the change and pressure which made the change.

In the 1990ies, proposals for the development of a system which would enable the NVQ acquisition beyond the formal education system were formulated in Slovenia. These proposals were put forward due to the following reasons:

- a large part of unemployed and almost a half of all employment seekers were lacking education, i.e. consequently they lacked formally recognised qualifications;
- there was a need for integration of vocational education of young people and adults into a single system of lifelong learning;
- a need to enhance transparency and comparability of vocational qualifications and documents, both in Slovenia and Europe emerged;
- there was a need to reduce education related costs and to assess uncompleted education.

The foundations of NVQs were laid in parallel with the 1996 reform of the education system as the new legislation was adopted. The main reasons for changes introduced in vocational adult education are described in the White Paper. The concept of vocational education and training (VET) has been designed as an essential and integral part of lifelong learning, whereby a link between formal and non-formal education had to be defined.

The most important aim of the Vocational and Technical Education Act is to “transfer knowledge, skills and aptitudes essential to perform one’s professions to an internationally comparable level” (Article 2).

In the context of the recognition of non-formal learning, the Adult Education Act (OG 12/1996, 110/2006) lays down the following principles:

- lifelong learning;

- freedom and autonomy to choose learning pathways, contents, forms, means and methods of adult education
- acquisition of publicly recognised education in relation to the same standards as applying to education of young students.

The certification system is being developed as a relatively autonomous system within the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and is upgrading the traditional education system. At a systemic level, an important decision has been made to establish a single integrated system of NVQs which is based on the assumption that the national vocational standard is the basis for both educational programmes and NVQs.

The beginnings of the establishment of the NVQ acquisition system go back to 1999 when no independent Act regulating this area existed. The first steps were therefore based on the Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act (OG 80/1997) and the Rules on the Procedure for Acquiring Professional Qualifications through which the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs wanted to give the unemployed a chance to certify their non-formally obtained knowledge and skills as well as the knowledge acquired through training for the labour market.

The Rules on the Procedure for Acquiring Professional Qualifications established the procedure for acquiring vocational qualifications until the adoption of the National Professional Qualifications Act. The Rules made a clear distinction between qualifications acquired on a school basis and qualifications acquired through certification (Svetlik, in Phare Mocca 2000).

The participation in the Phare Mocca programme also provided important professional support to the devisers of systemic solutions in their efforts to set up the certification system for vocational qualifications. In the course of this programme, extensive and detailed studies on theoretical background together with international comparisons were conducted, and the results of these studies led to the adoption of the Act (Phare Mocca, 2000).

NVQ assessment and recognition was formally introduced in Slovenia through the National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 81/2000, 83/2003). The Act put in place the procedure for the preparation of the standards of vocational knowledge and skills as well as their assessment and accreditation. The Act was amended in the years 2003 and 2006.

In November 2006, the Act Amending the National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 118/2006) was passed. With all its amendments, the new Act has established the legal framework for fulfilling European guidelines; but mostly it called for further development of the system on the basis of the Slovenian experiences.

The Act Amending the National Professional Qualifications Act brings about a number of positive effects, which are expected to reflect in multiple fields.

- improving qualification structures,
- reducing structural imbalances,
- transparency of vocational qualifications,
- promotion of social partnerships and reduction of social exclusion.

Specific improvements of the system are as follows:

- extension of social partnership: apart from chambers and ministries, the Act also includes employers associations, vocational associations and non-government organisations as the representatives of employers;
- NVQ acquisition at a higher level (level 7) where formal education programmes exist,
- lists of assessors for each NVQ are formulated on the basis of a public tender issued by the National Examinations Centre.

2.1.e) What areas of competences do government have or intent to have? Are there any specific areas that are/to be regulated by law or by social partners for professional recognition?

In accordance with the Act Amending the National Professional Qualifications Act (118/2006), the Minister responsible for labour is responsible for:

- determining the format and contents of public documents which are issued in accordance with this Act (Article 5);
- determining the entry procedure into the register as well as keeping the recognition providers register for those responsible for NVQ assessment and recognition (Article 10);
- adopting certification catalogues proposed by the competent expert council (Article 12) ;
- appointing sectoral committees for vocational standards whose responsibility is to harmonise their partners' proposals (Article 14);
- determining a list of committee members for each catalogue on the basis of the public tender issued by the National Examinations Centre (as far as military professions are concerned, this proceeds on the proposal of the Minister responsible for defence). The members are appointed for 4 years (Article 19);
- determining the method and procedure of regular professional training of committee members (Article 19);
- the Minister determines the structure of the committees, the method and procedure for acquiring and losing the license, as well as the assessment and recognition procedure (Article 22);
- defining, in cooperation with partners, the methodology for setting the price for acquisition of the certificate (Article 34);
- adopting rules stipulated by this Act (Article 36).

The Ministry responsible for labour is in charge of the professional policy for regulated professions while taking into consideration appropriate European directives.

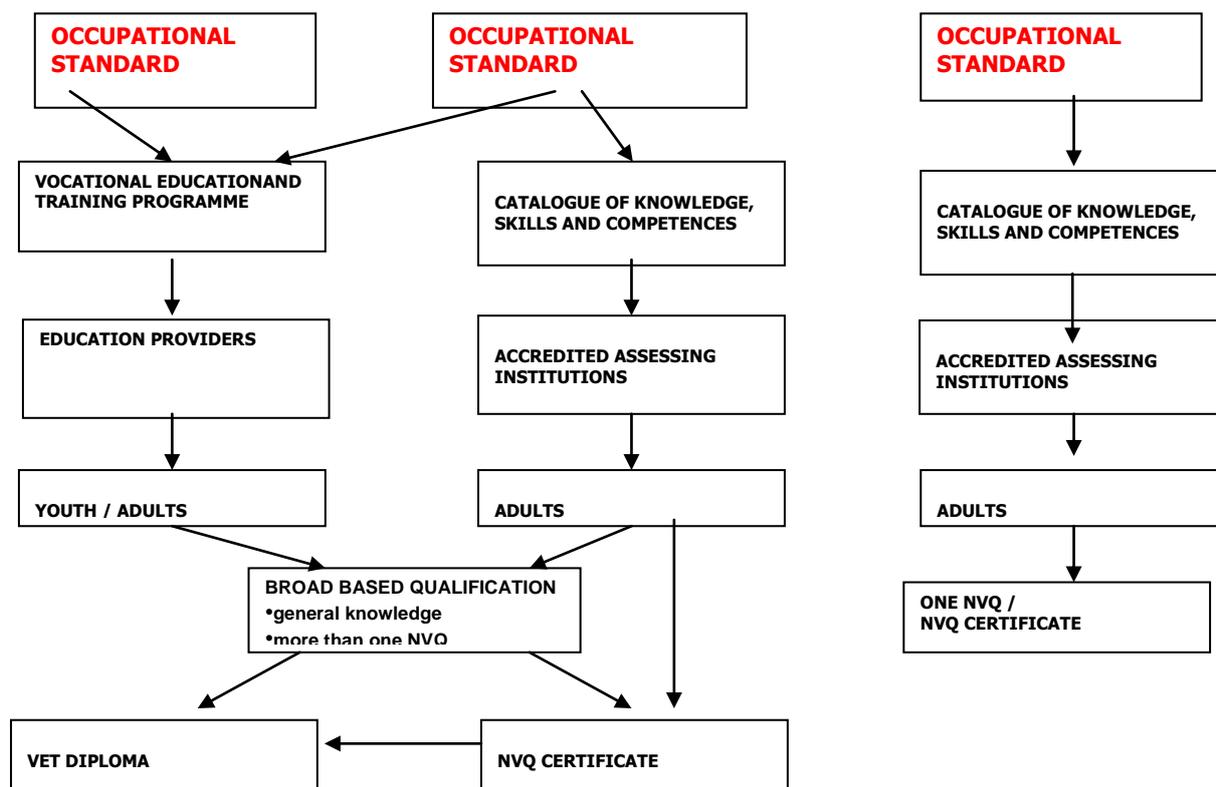
Appropriate laws accurately define the regulation of individual professions and follow the deregulation trend in accordance with EU directives.

Appendix 2: legal basis for regulated professions.

2.1.f) Describe, if any, operational system to put the legal framework into practice. Who set up the system(s)?

Scheme 1 is an attempt to illustrate the current situation of NVQ acquisition as well as links among them. The vocational standard is the fundamental link between both systems. The vocational standard is the same when qualifications could be acquired in both ways.

Scheme 1: Ways of NVQ acquisition in Slovenia



The left column illustrates the acquisition of education in formal programmes. The central column shows NVQs which could be obtained in 2 ways, while the right column displays those NVQs that as a rule build on education that has been already attained and could be acquired only through the NVQ certification. The latter could be categorised into further or continuous education which is being developed in response to market requirements, but, above all, in response to lifelong requirements and interests of individuals (Šlander 2005).

The National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 83/2000, 81/2003, 118/2006) distributes responsibilities and basic duties of expert bodies, public institutions and other organisations responsible for putting the system into practice:

- *Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training* is in charge of:
 - proposing vocational standards and certification catalogues;
 - adopting methodology for the design of vocational standards and catalogues;
 - passing priorities for elaborating vocational standards and catalogues within a specified time period and on the basis of long-term requirements of the labour market;
 - proposing training programmes for committee members aiming towards obtaining a license.

The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training performs all expert, technical and other activities related to vocational standards on behalf of the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training.

- *Partners*

When it comes to the acquisition of vocational qualifications, chambers, employer associations, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and responsible ministries as partners foremost perform the following tasks:

- launching initiatives for new vocational standards and catalogues at all complexity levels,
- proposing the members of sectoral committees for vocational standards,
- carrying out other tasks as determined by the law and other rules.

According to the National Professional Qualifications Act, the chambers or responsible ministries (for the fields where the chambers are not organized) are exclusively responsible for proposing vocational standards. However, with the introduction of the Act Amending National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 118/2006), partnerships have been extended to include employers. At the same time, the obligatory membership of employers in various chambers is being abolished

- *National Institute for Vocational Education and Training*

Its tasks are mainly developmental and it also acts as a consultant as well developer of vocational standards in vocational qualifications and catalogues. In pursuing these aims, the Institute works closely together with other professional institutions in education, both national and foreign.

The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training is responsible for:

- providing professional assistance to working groups developing vocational capabilities, qualifications, vocational standards and catalogues;
- developing methodology for recognising qualifications acquired within the work system;
- monitoring the certification system;
- monitoring international comparability of vocational qualifications;
- performing professional tasks and complementing methodological foundations of the certification system, credit system and qualifications framework;
- promoting the acquisition of vocational qualifications for new vocational and professional areas at all complexity levels;
- promoting the certification system in cooperation with partners;
- cooperating with other partner institutions in the EU;
- developing and complementing methodologies in direct and indirect assessment;
- preparing materials and performing other tasks as determined by law and other rules and other general acts as well as being in line with the ministry's requirements.

- *The National Examinations Centre:*

- is in charge of developing methodologies and NVQ assessment and awarding procedures;
- organising training of applicants to join assessment and awarding assessors;
- looking into a number of questions and tasks related to NVQ assessment and awarding procedures;
- is responsible for developing a NVQ assessment and awarding network;
- managing a register of all responsible for carrying out NVQ assessment and awarding procedures;
- granting licences to examination and awarding assessors members;
- keeping records that is authorised to manage by law;
- monitoring the work of assessment and awarding assessors;
- reporting to the minister at least once a year;
- carrying out other tasks as laid down by laws and other rules and general acts.

The Act also determines the implementation of NVQ assessment and recognition procedures in practice. It also defines the power of recognition providers. These procedures can be carried out by VET training centres, schools, adult education organisations and chambers carrying out publicly recognised educational programmes. Catalogue of knowledge, skills and competences also prescribes material requirements which have to be fulfilled by the recognition providers and staffing requirements for NVQs assessors. Lastly, the National Examinations Centre chooses the recognition providers for some sectors on the basis of a public tender.

According to the National Professional Qualifications Act, it was exclusively chambers' or responsible ministries' task to propose vocational standards. With the introduction of the new National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 1/2007), however, formal proposals on vocational standards come from sectoral committees for vocational standards. Partnerships have been extended by including other professional associations since obligatory membership of employers in the chambers has turned into optional membership.

2.1.g) Provide information, if exist, any evaluation of how they work or how they have not worked.

The certification system is a fairly new approach to NVQ acquisition for adults. It was established in 2000. Table 1 illustrates the number of certificates granted for individual sectoral committee until 2005.

Table 1: The number of awarded certificates by sectors 2001 – 06

Sector	Number of awarded certificates
Art, culture	76
Computer science	30
Technics	458
Production (manufacturing) technology	328
Architecture, construction	306
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	1020
Health care	312
Social work	344
Personal services	1871
Transport services	7823
Security	2561
Environmental care	0
Veterinary science	0
Education	0
Journalism and correspondence	0
Total	15259

Source: The data was calculated on the basis of the Report on the Results of the Performance of Professional Tasks in the Year of 2006, National Examinations Centre.

The National Examinations Centre conducts regular monitoring of assessment and recognition procedures in accordance with the Act. In addition, the National Examinations Centre also elaborates annual reports (based on the reports formulated by assessment and recognition providers) for the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

The National Examinations Centre monitors:

- training of applicants for assessors as well as licenses issued to them;
- keeping of the records of license holders for the committee members;
- the work of assessment and recognition committee (terms of assessment, committee members monitoring assessment and awarding procedures, considering objections to the work of the assessors and of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, number of certificates and

assessments, proposals made by the committee members to improve catalogues of professional knowledge and skills, other opinions and proposals).

In 2006, the project entitled “Monitoring of Certification System” was launched nationally. The project is scheduled to finish in 2007, and one of the outcomes of the project is going to be the development of the model for systematic monitoring of the NVQ system.

In 2004, a report on implementation of the National Professional Qualifications Act was compiled by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the National Examinations Centre.

2.1.h) Describe outreach activities or awareness-raising activities of the framework or the operational system. How are the objectives of outreach/awareness-raising activities articulated? Which audience(s) do the activities main target?

The promotion of the NVQ system has not yet been systematically organised. The NVQ promotion is partly incorporated into promotional activities organised by individual partners. Chambers and trade unions should be in charge of NVQ promotion, but in reality a bigger share of promotion efforts have been undertaken by recognition providers.

The Employment Service of Slovenia promotes the involvement of unemployed into the NVQ acquisition system because it offers a faster way of obtaining qualifications and is adjusted to individual needs

Regional development agencies are responsible for the development and promotion of the NVQ system at the regional level.

The promotion at the national level is carried out by institutions responsible for the development and implementation of the NVQ system as a part of their regular activities. The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the National Examinations Centre promote the system by organising various conferences, workshops, meetings in accordance with the objectives of individual organisations responsible for various target groups. For example:

- presentations at annual conferences of the Association of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education which are intended for prominent experts in adult education at people’s universities, VET schools and private institutions;
- activities organized during annual Lifelong Learning Week;
- National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications provides user-friendly information and occasional demonstration of activities.

We have come to the conclusion that promotion is a weak point of the system. Therefore, we should elaborate an inter-institutional plan for the implementation of recognition and validation of non-formal and informal knowledge, skills and competencies at national, regional and local levels.

2.2. Governance and the role of government

2.2.a) List all actors in governance and create a matrix of who (e.g. government, quasi-government, assessment centres, public educational institutions, private for-profit educational providers, professional bodies, etc.) does what (provides academic/professional recognition, overseas assessment, etc.) for non-formal and informal learning. If there are more than one body who are responsible for an action (e.g. recognition), list all actors involved and describe how is the coordination managed? If there are more than one ministry of a government are involved, specify which ministries have competencies for what. How clear are different roles by different actors communicate among themselves as well as to users?

The term “validation” is increasingly popular in the EU to describe the recognition of knowledge and experience acquired in the working environment (APEL - accreditation of prior experiential learning is used instead of APL which refers only to prior learning in a formal education process leading to the certificate).

The term “procedure of NVQ assessment and recognition” was introduced in Slovenia with the amended National Professional Qualifications Act in 2000. The Act enables for the people with work experience, but without publicly recognised certificates to undertake assessment and recognition procedures, thus acquiring a publicly valid document that testifies to their ability to practice an occupation. The assessment procedure focuses on the knowledge and skills directly pertaining to the occupation or vocational qualification defined by the national standard.

Table 2 describes partners and their role in the procedure.

Table 2: List of partners and their role in elaboration of documents and in assessment procedures

Social partner	Role and tasks (what?)
1. Chambers, employer representatives, competent ministries, trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launching initiatives for the development of new vocational qualifications; - Cooperating in expert groups for development of occupational profile, vocational standard, catalogues of professional knowledge and skills standards;
2. Trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominating members of external committees responsible for assessment and awarding of knowledge, skills and competencies; - Cooperation in national commissions and committee for vocational education and training;
3. National Institute for Vocational Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of methodologies; - Methodological management of expert groups for development of occupational profile, vocational standards, catalogues of professional knowledge and skills standards;
4. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopting and publishing the vocational standard; - Adopting and publishing the catalogue; - Appointing members of the assessment and awarding commissions; - Keeping the register of providers;
5. Educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperating in drafting of professional documents serving as the basis for procedures of NVQ assessment and awarding (occupational profile, vocational standard, catalogues of professional knowledge and skills standards); - Training applicants for obtaining the NVQ; - When incorporating applicants in vocational education or training programmes, institutions perform corresponding evaluation of prior knowledge and skills, or of an already acquired NVQ by following the procedure for assessment and awarding of knowledge and skills.
6. Providers – institutions performing procedures for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counselling for applicants; - Organising assessment and recognition; functioning

assessment and recognition of knowledge and skills of applicants	<p>of the 3-member assessment committee which verifies NVQ on the basis of portfolio and direct demonstration of knowledge, skills and competencies of the NVQ applicants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informing applicants about the results; - Issuing certificates; - Submitting results to the National Examinations Centre.
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Appendix 3: graphical presentation of institutions involved in the procedure of NVQ assessment and recognition

Table 3: The distribution of roles and tasks of the partners in the procedure of assessment and recognition of non-formal knowledge.

Who?	What?
1. Whichever legal person	Elaboration of an incentive for the vocational standard
2 Chambers, ministries, National Institute for Vocational Education and Training	Development of the occupational profile
3. Sectoral committee for vocational standards	A suggestion for the vocational standard
4. Expert committee for vocational education and training	Confirmation of the occupational profile
5. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs	Adoption and notification of the vocational standard
6. Sectoral committee for vocational standards	Proposing the catalogue
7. Expert committee for vocational education and training	Proceeds with the work and passes the catalogue
8. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs	Adoption and publication of the catalogue
9. Recognition providers	Execution of assessment and recognition procedures

2.2.b) Create the above same matrix for recognition of formal learning for comparative purposes.

Table 4: Responsible partners in formal VET system

Who?	What?
1. Whichever legal person	Elaboration of an incentive for the vocational standard
2 Chambers, ministries, National Institute for Vocational Education and Training	Development of the occupational profile
3. Sectoral committee for vocational standards	A suggestion for the vocational standard
4. Expert committee for vocational education and training	Confirmation of the occupational profile
5. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs	Adoption and notification of the vocational standard
6. Expert group for the elaboration of an educational programme	Programme planning: analysis of the vocational standard, formulation of modules

7. Expert group for the elaboration of an educational programme	The suggested educational programme accompanied by the certificate supplement
8. Expert committee for vocational education and training	Confirmation of the programme
9. Ministry of Education and Sport	Its acceptance and publication
10. VET schools	Implementation of VET programmes

The fundamental difference between both systems lies in the responsible ministry and in the providing institution. Partners and tasks from number 1 to number 5 in the Table are identical for both systems.

Recognition of non-formal learning in the school system is made possible by the Vocational and Technical Education Act (2006), while more detailed instructions on recognition are being prepared within the Rules on Accreditation in VET.

2.2.c) Describe the competencies (direct and indirect role) of government in the practice? Which of the following three models would your country be classified with respect to governance: 1) a 'predominance-of-industry' model; 2) a 'predominance-of-public authorities' model; and 3) a 'shared responsibility' model. Explain why that model fits into your country context. If there is a trend to shift to another model, describe driving forces for such change. Describe the details. If none of which is suitable to your country, describe your own country model.

It has been estimated that there is a prevailing "centralized model" of the NVQ system (assessment and recognition of NVQ) in place in Slovenia. Legislation adopted by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs determines responsibilities and competences of individual partners in the implementation of the system. Social partners perform systemic tasks within their sphere of responsibility. Item 2.1.e describes competences of the Ministry according to the National Professional Qualifications Act, which defines the Ministry as a decisive actor in the development of the certification system.

2.2.d) Describe, if any, inter-ministerial approaches to the issue? Describe also the policy objectives behind such approaches as well as positive results and challenges to date.

The system of assessment and recognition of non-formal learning is being set up under the delegated powers of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, whereas the system of formal (vocational and professional) education falls within the scope of the Ministry of Education and Sport. The concept of the certification system is seen as an addition and upgrading of VET. Secondary education is witnessing the establishment of a uniform system of VET based on a unified vocational standard, which enables both young and adults to acquire vocational education. Adults are also in the position to obtain a NVQ by way of assessment and recognition – certification of knowledge, skills and competencies (see also Scheme 1).

The Act Amending the National Professional Qualifications Act (118/2006) broadens the scope of assessment and recognition of non-formal learning to post-secondary vocational and higher education. According to the umbrella National Professional Qualifications Act, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology will have to harmonise legislation in this field.

Qualifications are also regulated by certain sectoral acts. Let us mention just some of the relevant areas: health care, special needs, private security, agriculture and forestry, electroenergetics...

The introduction of the national system for obtaining qualifications gave rise to the abandonment of some sectoral training systems (sectoral acts). Some areas, however, remain governed by qualifications in sectoral acts. The Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policies is responsible for human resource development in regions and local communities.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia have been also setting up their own qualifications systems in the past few years, although the National Professional Qualifications Act conferred responsibilities upon them as the most important social partners in the national system of NVQ. The Act amending the National Professional Qualifications Act changed the role of the above mentioned Chambers.

2.3. Resources

2.3.a) Who is/are the financing body(ies) for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning? What is the policy thinking behind such financing? What is annual budget 2004/2005? (Please convert in Euro). Provide data, if possible, on the breakdown of the budget has been spent.

In 2004, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010. According to the above mentioned Resolution, budget resources should gradually increase, i.e. from 8 billion in 2004 up to 13 billion in 2010.

Appendix 4: Public resources allocated for adult education from 2004 to 2010.

The most important fund provider for the NVQ assessment and recognition is the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

The Ministry of Education and Sport is also involved in the funding of non-formal learning.

The Ministry primarily funds the tasks carried out by public institutes with the view to develop new qualifications and modernise the existing ones, monitor certification procedures and establish databases to provide for fulfilment of the tasks laid down in the National Professional Qualifications Act (81/2000, 83/2006, 118/2006).

2.3.1. Survey of budget for the Active Employment Policy (AEP), as well as for education and training

(Source: Gazette of the National Assembly...)

Table 5: Budget of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and funds allocated to the Active Employment Policy

	2001	2002	2003		2004	2005	2006
1003 AEP	SIT 15655402 € 65328,83	SIT 16351757 € 68234,67	SIT 17810355 € 74321,29	1003 AEP	SIT 21437156 € 89455,67	SIT 22807262 €95173,04	SIT 20586923 €85907,71
10032601 Education and training of the unemployed	SIT 2.494.000 € 10407,28	SIT 2.397.073 € 10002,81	SIT 2.978.158 € 12427,63	10032605 Increase in employability	SIT 11512871 € 48042,36	SIT 12077808 € 50399,80	SIT 11219922 € 46819,90
5512 Network of vocational information centres	SIT 24.000 € 100,15	SIT 25.196 € 105,14	SIT 26.484 € 110,52	7023 Preparation of the unemployed for employment	SIT 520.900 € 2173,68	SIT 532.534 € 2222,23	SIT 1.020.000 € 4256,38
7023 Preparation of the unemployed for employment	SIT 2.470.000 € 10307,13	SIT 2.276.139 € 9498,16	SIT 2.422.055 € 10190,51	3551 Incentives for employment of the unemployed	SIT 6.518.500 € 27201,22	SIT 5.872.079 € 24503,75	SIT 5.700.000 € 23785,68
8219 PHARE Celje region			SIT 97.450 € 406,65	4282 Education and training for employment	SIT 1.504.235 € 6277,06	SIT 1.528.516 € 6378,38	SIT 1.355.677 € 5657,14
				3559 ESS - EU funds for the measure 2.1	SIT 1.189.904 € 4965,38	SIT 1.810.409 € 7554,70	SIT 1.701.502 € 7100,24
				3558 Individual participation Measure 2.1. ESS	SIT 396.635 € 1655,13	SIT 603.470 € 2518,24	SIT 567.167 € 2366,75

Table 6: Budget of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and funds allocated to education

	2002	2003		2004	2005	2006
19 Education	SIT 20737280 € 86536,67	SIT 22479030 € 93804,99	19 Education	SIT 24462310 € 102081,22	SIT 24640789 € 102826,02	SIT 26462686 € 110428,79
1905 Other educational programmes	SIT 163.216 € 681,10	SIT 176.043 € 734,63	1905 Other educational programmes	SIT 212.204 € 885,53	SIT 216.157 € 902,02	SIT 249.753 € 1042,22
19052601 Adult education	SIT 163.216 € 681,10	SIT 176.043 € 734,63	19052601 Adult education	SIT 212.204 € 885,53	SIT 216.157 € 902,02	SIT 249.753 € 1042,22
5511 Development of new occupations and vocational qualifications	SIT 22.932 € 95,70	SIT 94.620 € 394,85	3243 Funds for implemenetation of ZSPJZ * – Insitutions for vocational education and adult education	SIT 784 € 3,27	SIT 1.568 € 6,54	SIT 1.142 € 4,77
8663 Development of adult education and training	SIT 140.285 € 585,41	SIT 81.423 € 339,78	3244 KDPZ ** premiums- Insitutions for vocational education and adult education	SIT 1.895 € 7,91	SIT 1.920 € 8,01	SIT 1.958 € 8,17
			8663 Development of adult education and training - lifelong learning (2006)	SIT 104.411 € 435,71	SIT 106.532 € 444,56	SIT 79.367 € 331,20
			5511 Development of new occupations and vocational qualifications – Development of national qualifications structure (2006)	SIT 105.115 € 438,64	SIT 106.137 € 442,91	SIT 167.286 € 698,08

*Salary System in the Public Sector Act

**Collective additional pension insurance

Table 7 : Budget of the Ministry of Education and Sport and funds allocated to the Active employment policy

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1003 Active employment policy	SIT 374.809 € 1564,05	SIT 501.175 € 2091,40	SIT 387.166 € 1615,64	SIT 381.118 € 1590,41	SIT 630.750 € 2632,12	SIT 602.629 € 2514,77
10033301 Education and training of the unemployed	SIT 374.809 € 1564,05	SIT 501.175 € 2091,40	SIT 387.166 € 1615,64	SIT 381.118 € 1590,41	SIT 630.750 € 2632,12	SIT 602.629 € 2514,77
5780 Education of the unemployed	SIT 301.064 € 1256,32	SIT 357.826 € 1493,21	SIT 236.261 € 985,92	SIT 223.908 € 934,37	SIT 249.465 € 1041,02	SIT 218.213 € 910,60
6247 Centres for young adults - project learning for young adults (2004)	SIT 73.745 € 307,73	SIT 143.349 € 598,20	SIT 150.905 € 629,73	SIT 157.210 € 656,04	SIT 161.286 € 673,05	SIT 164.416 € 686,11

Table 8: Budget of the Ministry of Education and Sport and funds allocated to education

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
19 Education	SIT 198876123 € 829910,06	SIT 224399904 € 936420,80	SIT 241512566 € 1007831,94	SIT 266729495 € 1113062,18	SIT 275915220 € 1151394,21	SIT 259250746 € 1081853,36
1905 Other educational programmes	SIT 894086 € 3731,02	SIT 1196953 € 4994,88	SIT 930006 € 3880,92	SIT 1735461 € 7242,08	SIT 1959059 € 8175,15	SIT 2031657 € 8478,10
19053301 Adult education	SIT 796821 € 3325,13	SIT 791432 € 3302,65	SIT 822824 € 3433,64	SIT 1036747 € 4326,35	SIT 1131656 € 4722,40	SIT 1020481 € 4258,47
4831 Foreign languages	SIT 105649 € 440,87	SIT 101563 € 423,82	SIT 101854 € 425,04	SIT 105505 € 440,27	SIT 110201 € 459,87	SIT 59427 € 247,99
7229 Activities for adult education	SIT 415997 € 1735,96	SIT 384686 SIT € 1605,29	SIT 402173 SIT € 1678,27	SIT 555617 SIT € 2318,59	SIT 560239 SIT € 2337,88	SIT 356123 SIT € 1486,10
9140 Network of public institutes for adult education	SIT 102954 € 429,63	SIT 156446 € 652,85	SIT 164623 € 686,97	SIT 175208 € 731,14	SIT 179816 € 750,37	SIT 178099 € 743,21
7914 Education of young adults for profession	SIT 170014 € 709,47	SIT 146344 € 610,69	SIT 151567 € 632,49			

4482 Adult education – computer literacy and information science 6095 Slovenian Institute for Adult Education				SIT 40000 € 166,92	SIT 49400 € 206,15	SIT 26390 € 110,13 SIT 168442 € 702,91
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The Table does not cover resources earmarked by the Employment Service of Slovenia for unemployed to obtain NVQs as it was not possible to get hold of disaggregated data. In addition to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, some non-formal learning projects were also financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport.

2.3.2. Funds allocated to the public institutions by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

2.3.b) If the system has existed for some years, please provide the budget data since it existed. Has there been any increase/decrease of budget for recognition of non-formal and informal learning since a framework/system has been taken up? If so, describe any elements that have driven such change.

Professional institutions allocated certain funds for fulfilment of tasks entrusted by the National Professional Qualifications Act. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs finances experts and material costs for the development of new qualifications, elaboration of new vocational standards and vocational catalogues, as well as fees for professional groups.

Table 9 presents approximate budget costs from 2000 until 2005.

Table 9: Budget for the assessment and recognition of NVQ system and funds allocated to the professional institutions

Year / Source	National Institute for Vocational Education and Training	National Examinations Centre	Slovenian Institute for Adult Education	Total
2000	SIT 14.052.700 EUR 58.640,88	-	-	SIT 14.052.700 EUR 58.640,88
2001	SIT 27.549.500 EUR 114.962,03	SIT 13.750.000 EUR 57.377,73	-	SIT 41.299.500 EUR 172.339,76
2002	SIT 23.842.771 EUR 99.494,12	SIT 14.221.000 EUR 59.343,18	SIT 2.100.000 EUR 8.763,14	SIT 40.163.771 EUR 167.600,45
2003	SIT 33.830.529 EUR 141.172,30	SIT 14.270.000 EUR 59.547,65	-	SIT 48.100.529 EUR 200.719,95
2004	SIT 36.941.528 EUR 154.154,26	SIT 15.164.000 EUR 63.278,25	-	SIT 52.105.528 EUR 217.432,51
2005	SIT 58.373.340 EUR 243.587,63	SIT 15.759.000 EUR 65.969,49	-	SIT 74.132.340 EUR 309.348,77

TOTAL	SIT 194.590.368 EUR 812.011,21	SIT 73.164.000 EUR 305.307,96	SIT 2.100.000 T EUR 8.763,14	SIT 269.854.368 EUR 1.126.082,32
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Source: Data was provided by the public institutions.

The funds allocated to the Employment Service of Slovenia for operating and material costs by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Sport were not included in the Table.

Table 10 shows the expenditure of individual public institutions in 2005. The data was submitted by the National Examinations Centre and National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, while no data was forwarded by the Employment Service of Slovenia.

Table 10 also presents the distribution of funds among the professional institutions for the payment of expert workers and material costs as well as for the development of qualifications (elaboration of vocational standards and catalogues). The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs provided the funds for individual years.

Table 10 shows the use of funds allocated to each of the public institution in 2005. The data was provided by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, National Examinations Centre, while the data from the Employment Service of Slovenia was not available.

Table 10 shows the distribution of funds between the institutions allocated for salaries and overheads for elaboration of vocational standards and catalogues of knowledge, skills and competences (development of qualifications) financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

Table 10: Budget funds allocated to the institutions according to spending in 2005

Budget item	National Institute for Vocational Education and Training	National Examinations Centre	Slovenian Institute for Adult Education	Employment Service of Slovenia	TOTAL
OVERHEADS	SIT 7.953.186 EUR 33.188,06	SIT 2.895.000 EUR 2.080,62	-	No data	SIT 10.848.186 EUR 45.268,68
Salaries - development of qualifications - NRP	SIT 31.819.743 EUR 132.781,43 SIT 18.600.412 EUR 77.618,14	SIT 12.650.000 EUR 52.787,62	-	No data	SIT 63.070.155 EUR 263.187,09
Other	-	SIT 214.000 EUR 893,01 EUR	-	No data	SIT 214.000 EUR 893,01
Total	SIT 58.373.340 EUR 243.587,63	SIT 15.759.000 EUR 65.969,49	-	No data	SIT 74.132.340 EUR 309.348,77

Source: Financial sector of each public institution.

2.3.3. Funds allocated to the participants

The Employment Service of Slovenia has been conducting Programme 1000+ as a part of active employment policy with the view to finance the NVQ acquisition for the unemployed.

The Employment Service of Slovenia finances programmes for obtaining NVQs in the following cases:

- costs for training of the unemployed are fully borne from public resources;
- costs of the employed whose job is under threat due to their low level of vocational education are usually partly covered from public resources.

The funds allocated to the educational programme for the unemployed – Programme 1000+ are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Funds allocated to the Programme 1000+ for each individual school year

School year	Year	Budget item	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs	Budget item	ESS EQUAL EU budget	Budget item	ESS EQUAL Individual participation	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs total	Budget item	Ministry of Education and Sport	Total
2004/05	2004	4282	SIT 139.511.10 € 582.169,50	3559	SIT 350.294.175 € 1.461.751,69	3558	SIT 116.764.725 € 487.242,43	SIT 4.108.668.007 € 17.145.167,78		SIT 780.018.134 € 3.254.957,99	SIT 4.888.686.141 € 20.400.125,77
	2005	4282	SIT 672.516.369 € 2.806,36	3559	SIT 1.340.355.826 € 5.593.205,75	3558	SIT 446.785.276 € 1.864.401,91				
2005/06	2005	4282	SIT 200.000.000 € 834.585,21	3559	SIT 330.677.944 € 137.989,25	3558	SIT 110.225.981 € 459.964,87	SIT 3.334.391.072 € 13.914.167,38		SIT 1.285.216.298 € 5.363.112,57	SIT 4.869.262.982 € 20.319.074,37
	2006	4282	SIT 600.000.000 € 2.503.755,63	3559	SIT 803.978.543 € 335.496,02	3558	SIT 267.992.848 € 1.118.314,34				

Source: Educational programme and NVQ acquisition – certificates for the unemployed “Programme 10000+” for school year 2004/05 and “Programme 10000+” for school year 2005/06

The Report on the Implementation of the Educational Programme for the Unemployed “Programme 10000” for the year 2004/5 clearly shows that the financing of the NVQ acquisition for the unemployed is a part of the Programme. From the following year onwards, the funds for NVQ will have been provided solely by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and ESF.

It is not possible to obtain data for previous years because at the time NVQs acquisition was funded from the Active Employment Policy, more precisely within the item Functional Education, NVQs were also financed from integral budgets of the Programme “5000”. Thus, the Employment Service of Slovenia did not separate financial data for NVQ from other functional education programmes in terms of statistics and analysis.

It is evident from the above mentioned report that the Employment Service of Slovenia allocated SIT 40,296,263.00 for the implementation of the NVQ programme (incurred costs) in the school year 2004/05. Table 12 reveals the expenditure. The information on the incurred costs for the school year 2005/06 has not been made available yet.

Table 12: Expenditure for the NVQ for school year 2004/05 by the Employment Service of Slovenia

Total - Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs - expenditure	4.108.668.007	Expenditure of funds for NVQ	
Realised - Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs - expenditure	2.062.690.375		
Allocated to NVQ	SIT 40.296.263 EUR 168.153,33 (PP 3559, 3558)	SIT 26.250.602.06 EUR 109.541,82	Tuition fees/preparation for the NVQ certification
		SIT 5.712.220,00 EUR 23.836,67	Transport costs
		SIT 8.333.441,00 EUR 34.774,83	Other costs

Source: Report on the Implementation of the Educational Programme for the Unemployed "Programme 10000" for the year 2004/5

It is evident from the data that the ESF provided the funds allocated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs to the Employment Service of Slovenia for NVQ. In the annual report on the incurred costs from the ESF for 2005, funds were allocated to the subactivity NVQ as a part of the development and strengthening of the strategy for active employment policies.

The contract on the implementation and co-financing of subactivity NVQs in the period 2005-2007 concluded between the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (as well as annexes to the contract) clearly sets out resources allocated to the financing of NVQs. Appropriations total SIT 470,170,605.81, out of which SIT 352,627,954.35 is received from EU funds (ESF), and SIT 117,542,651.46 comes from individual participation. The funds for individual years are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Anticipated funds for individual years

Year	Budget item	Sum in SIT and EUR	Total in SIT and EUR
2005 (from 1.9. onwards)	3559	SIT 95.159.612,77 € 397094,03	SIT 126.879.483,70 € 529.458,80
	3558	SIT 31.719.870,93 € 132364,68	
2006	3559	SIT 147.916.872,93 € 617246,59	SIT 197.222.479,24 € 822.996,82
	3558	SIT 49.305.624,31 € 205748,72	
2007	3559	SIT 109.551.498,87 € 457006,99	SIT 146.068.624,87 € 609.533,57
	3558	SIT 36.517.156,22 € 152383,39	
Total:			SIT 470.170.605,81 € 1.961.987,38

Source: Annual report on the use of ESS funds in 2005, Employment Service of Slovenia

It is evident from the same source that the Employment Service of Slovenia spent only 4.6 % (SIT 5.896.403,24) of funds allocated to them in that period in 2005. They established that the low percentage of incurred costs is a direct result of small number of participants in the NVQ procedures. The reason for small number of participants is that the adoption of the legal basis by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs for the implementation of subactivities has been delayed. There is also a shortage of training providers for the assessment and recognition procedure as well as a lack of recognition providers. The fact that employers did not view the NVQ system as a challenge and a quick response to changing conditions on the labour market did not help as well.

2.3.c) Who pays for the assessment and recognition processes? If an individual is to pay, how much is it cost to him/her? Break down the cost by levels assessed or by types of subjects assessed, if relevant. Are there any cost-sharing arrangement between educational institution and employers, between education institution and government, etc.? Describe the cost arrangements.

The Methodology on the NVQ Acquisition (OG 97/2003, 108/2004) stipulates the financing for NVQ recognition process.

The pricing methodology has been set by the Rules on Method and Procedure for the Assessment and Award of National Professional Qualifications (OG 13/2001). **Appendix 5** presents breakdown of fields and evaluation. In 2004, the Rules Amending the Rules on Method and Procedure for the Assessment and Award of National Professional Qualifications (OG 108/2004) were adopted and they fixed a new pricing methodology.

Having filed the application for NVQ acquisition, the applicants are obliged to pay the costs of the procedure for obtaining the certificate in accordance with the aforementioned methodology. Costs of the unemployed are borne by the Employment Service of Slovenia, while the employed have to meet the costs, or the employer shares financing or whole financing. Prices are represented in Table 14.

Table 14: Price for NVQ acquisition

Year	NVQ acquisition	Price according to methodology
2001 – 2004	awarding on the basis of documents	SIT 17,000 EUR 80,94
	awarding on the basis of documents and direct assessment	SIT 23,000 EUR 95,98
As of 7 October 2004	awarding on the basis of documents	SIT 25,500 EUR 106,41
	awarding on the basis of documents and direct assessment	SIT 34,500 EUR 143,98

Source: Methodology of NVQ Acquisition (OG 97/2003, 108/2004)

The Employment Service of Slovenia (co)finances (taken from the Catalogue of Measures for Active Employment Policy in 2006):

- services rendered by providers: conducting preparation for NVQ identification, assessment and awarding procedures;
- cash benefits awarded to participants: costs for NVQ assessment and awarding procedures, medical assessment costs, public transport costs, accommodation costs, compulsory health insurance contributions, purchase costs for mandatory learning materials and/or learning tools, personal learning tools costs, costs arising from assistance provided by another person.

The records kept by the Employment Service of Slovenia also specify average costs in the training programme and NVQ assessment and recognition procedures per unemployed applicant. Cost specifications are revealed in Table 15.

Table 15: Cost specifications per participant in the programme for NVQ acquisition (unemployed)

School year	Anticipated time of participation	School fees	Reimbursement of living expenses	Transport	Health insurance	Medical examination	Learning material and tools	Total costs per participant
2003/04	6 months	199,690	44,748	56,520	19,548	21,020	26,275	SIT 367,801 EUR 1534.81
2004/05	6 months	200,000	-	30,000	20,400	-	22,200	SIT 272,600 EUR 1137.54

Source: Training programme and procedure for acquisition of NVQ certificates for the unemployed - "Programme 10000" in the school years 2003/04 and 2004/05, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sport).

In addition to the data on costs per participant which was compiled for the unemployed, we also gathered data from the most successful Slovenian pharmaceutical company Krka, who is also a recognition provider for NVQ for their needs. The costs per participant for the NVQ training and recognition are as follows:

NVQ level III – EUR 970

NVQ level IV – EUR 1220

The data indicated that the costs per participant which we acquired for the unemployed and for the Krka employees do not differ significantly.

Table 16: Share of public expenditure for formal education in GDP according to the level of education in Slovenia 2001–2004

Share in GDP	Levels of education					
	total %	preschool education	elementary education	upper secondary education	tertiary education	not allocated by levels
2001	6,13	0,59	2,51	1,69	1,33	0,01
2002	6,02	0,59	2,62	1,48	1,33	0,00
2003 ¹⁾	6,09	0,56	2,69	1,48	1,36	0,00
2004	5,96	0,49	2,72	1,39	1,35	0,01

1) estimate

Table 16 shows the share of public expenditure according to the level of education. Funds allocated to non-formal education and recognition of non-formal and informal learning (shown in 2.3.3.) are not included. Data for this item in 2.3 is incomplete, therefore we cannot establish connections between formal and non-formal education and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

2.3.d) How many assessment centres and/or assessors exist to date, if any? Where are such assessment centres located? Please specify the areas/regions with characteristics of such

areas/regions (e.g. the average income, the income disparity, etc.). How was the decision made where to locate such centres? How much does it cost to maintain such centres and/or assessors? How many training programmes exist: specify how many in a given year, if there are significant increases per year? How much does it cost to train such assessors? Break down by levels assessed, if relevant.

The establishment of the network of recognition providers falls within the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

Applicants for recognition providers file a proposal for entry into the register of providers. The entry proposal can be lodged for an individual vocational qualification following its publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia.

The register of providers is a public document, and is maintained by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. It is available at the web site of the National Reference Point.

The entry into the register is open to chambers, schools, adult education organisations, educational centres, institutions, societies and other legal entities fulfilling material and staffing conditions as laid down in the catalogues of knowledge, skills and competences.

The applicant is also obliged to prepare an annual estimate of the number of issued certificates which has to be in line with the data on the regional labour market (Rules on Keeping the Register of Providers of Procedure for Assessment and Awarding of National Professional Qualifications, OG 107/2005). Table 17 shows the number of recognition providers according to statistical regions.

The institutions which obtain the status of recognition providers are financed from other activities (normally education), while the work of committee members in the NVQ acquisition procedure is being paid on the basis of a fixed methodology.

Table 17: Number of providers per statistical regions

Regions	Number of providers*
Osrednjeslovenska	28
Gorenjska	8
Obalno-kraška	4
Notranjsko-kraška	1
Goriška	5
Jugovzhodna Slovenija	2
Spodnjeposavska	2
Zasavska	2
Savinjska	10
Koroška	1
Podravska	6
Pomurska	4
Total	73
* Source: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs - October 2006	

The biggest number of providers is found in Osrednjeslovenska region (28), followed by Savinjska (10), Gorenjska (8) and Podravska (6) regions. The data is collected in terms of the head office of the providers awarding the certificate.

The comparison of the data with Table 18 clearly indicates that Osrednjeslovenska region issued the most certificates. Podravska region ranks second in the number of certificate holders, while it is fourth in the number of providers, followed by Savinjska region which comes second among the number of

providers. Jugovzhodna Slovenia is ranked fourth among the number of providers, and comes seventh in the number of certificate holders.

Table 18: Regional distribution of NVQ certificate holders in terms of the head office of the provider

Region	Number
Pomurska	0
Gorenjska	473
Goriška	403
Jugovzhodna Slovenija	417
Koroška	0
Notranjekraška	0
Obalnokraška	218
Osrednjeslovenska	10392
Podravska	2218
Savinjska	1114
Spodnjeposavska	0
Zasavska	24
Total	15259

Source: The data was calculated on the basis of the Report on the Results of Performance of Professional Tasks in 2006, National Examinations Centre.

In order to provide for high-quality external assessment of knowledge, skills and competences as set out in catalogues, one needs to maintain the appropriate structure and number of assessors. External committees assess and recognize the applicant's knowledge and the recognition providers have to comply with material conditions.

Professional tasks are performed by public institutions at national level. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education trains assessors for assessment and awarding of vocational qualifications, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training qualifies counsellors, and the National Examinations Centre awards licenses to assessors, sets up commissions for assessment and awarding of vocational qualifications and keeps the database of assessors. The network of assessors for NVQ assessment and awarding was established following proposals from chambers and trade unions until the adoption of the new National Professional Qualifications Acts. After the Act was amended, the network has been set up on the basis of the invitation to tender issued by the National Examinations Centre.

Training of assessors for NVQ assessment and awarding has been conducted since 2001 and is financed exclusively from participant fees. Training costs are indicated in Table 19. Costs for counsellor's training were in the range from SIT 20,000 to SIT 40,000; costs were borne by ESF in the last year.

Table 19: Participant fees for assessors

Year:	Amount (VAT is included)
2003	SIT 31.000,00 / EUR 129.36
2004	SIT 31.000,00 / EUR 129.36
2005	SIT 59.000,00 / EUR 246.20
2006	SIT 59.000,00 / EUR 246.20

(Source: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education)

The data kept in the records of the National Examinations Centre reveals that the number of commission members amounts to 297, while there are about 320 counsellors, but not all of them are performing their roles (source: National Examinations Centre).

Training programmes preparing for NVQ assessment and awarding are organised for the majority of vocational qualifications subject to awarding. The exact data on the number of programmes and participation rates is not available as the programmes are informal and the participation is optional.

APPENDICES TO THE COMPONENT 2

Table of appendices

Appendix 1	Legal basis for the functioning of the certification system
Appendix 2	Legal basis for regulated professions
Appendix 3	Graphical presentation of institutions involved in the procedure of NVQ assesment and awarding
Appendix 4	Table of public resources allocated for adult education in the period 2004-10
Appendix 5	Breakdown of fields and evaluation

Appendix 1: Legal basis for the functioning of the certification system

- National Professional Qualifications Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, 81/2000, 83/2003, 118/2006, 1/2007)
 - Rules on Method and Procedure for the Assessment and Award of National Professional Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 13/2001, 97/2003, 108/2004)
 - Rules on the Standard Classification of Occupations (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 77/2003, 27/2004, 73/2004, 108/2004, 18/2005, 54/2005, 103/2005, 21/2006, 50/2006)
 - Rules on Composition of the Commissions for the Assessment and Accreditation of National Professional Qualifications and on Method and Procedure to Grant and Withdraw the Licence (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 13/2001, 97/2003, 108/2004, 18/2005)
 - Rules on Keeping the Register of Providers of Procedure for Assessment and Awarding of National Professional Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 26/2001, 77/2003, 107/2005)
 - Rules on the Certification Examination for Inspectors of National Vocational Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 16/2002)
 - Rules Concerning the Adoption of Catalogues of Professional Knowledge and Skills Standards for Obtaining National Vocational Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 67/2003)
 - Order on the Public Document Form Concerning National Vocational Qualification – Certificate (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 97/2003)
 - Order Setting up the Training Programme for the Assessment and Award of Vocational Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 16/2002)
- Act Regulating the Recognition Procedure for Qualifications of Citizens of EU Member States relating to Access to Regulated Professions and Professional Activities in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 21/2002)

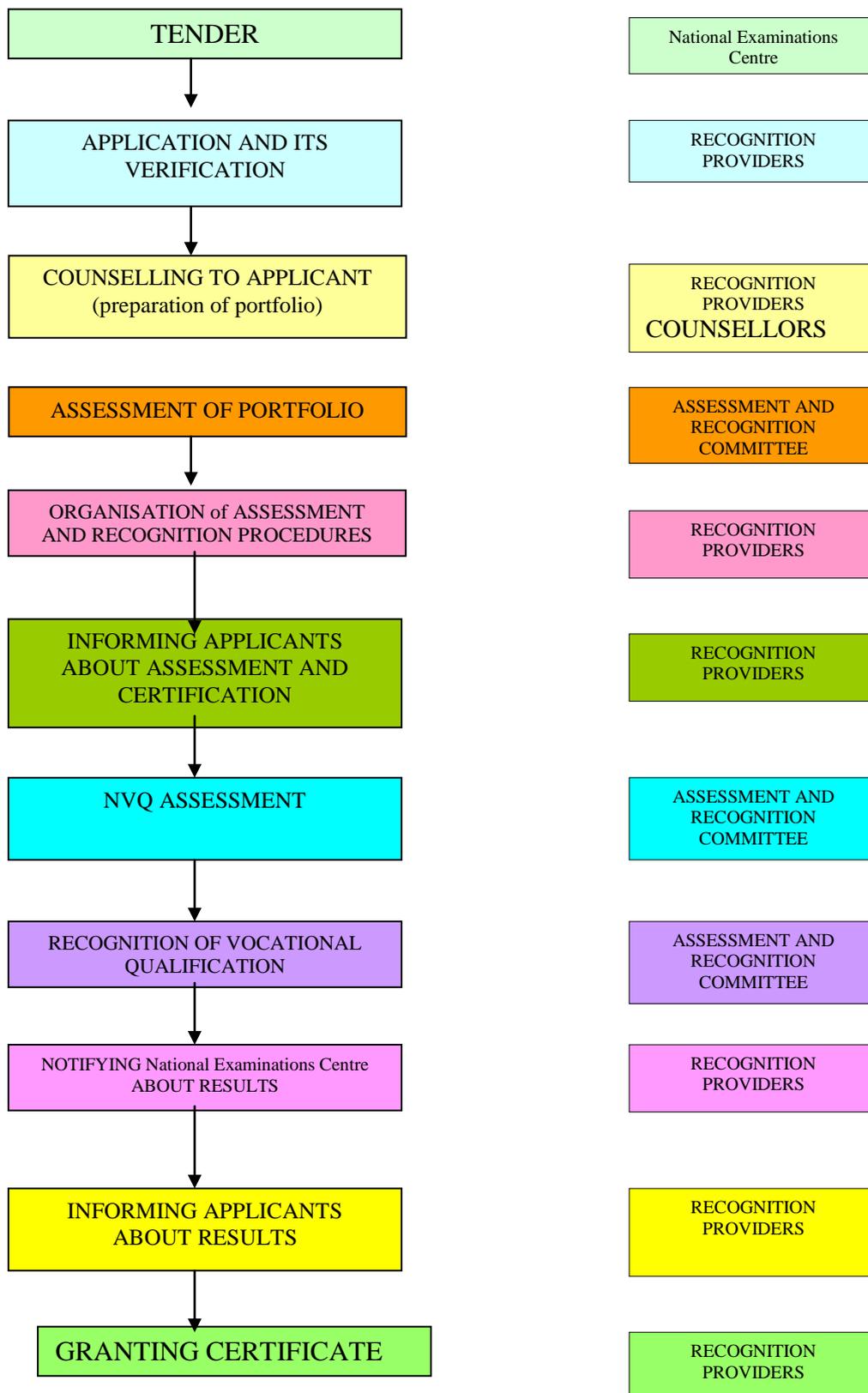
Appendix 2 : Legal basis for regulated professions

- Rules Laying down Detailed Rules for Qualification Recognition Procedure relating to Access to Regulated Professions or Professional Activities in the Republic of Slovenia

based on EU Sectoral Directives (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 41/2004, 107/2005)

- Rules Laying down Detailed Rules for Qualification Recognition Procedure relating to Access to Regulated Professions or Regulated Professionals Activities in the Republic of Slovenia based on the First and Second General System Directives for Recognition of Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 41/2004)
- Rules Laying down Detailed Rules for Qualification Recognition Procedure relating to Access to Regulated Professions or Regulated Professional Activities based on the Third General System Directive for Recognition of Qualifications (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 41/2004)
- Rules on Detailed Contents and Method of Keeping Registers in the Field of Mutual Recognition of Qualifications of the EU Member States' Citizens with regard to Pursuing Regulated Professions or Professional Activities in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 41/2004)
- Register of Regulated Professions or Regulated Professional Activities in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 50/2006)

Appendix 3: Graphical presentation of institutions involved in the procedure of NVQ assessment and awarding



Appendix 4: Table of public resources allocated for adult education in the period 2004-10 in MIO SIT/€

year resources	SIT 2004	€ 2004	SIT 2005	€ 2005	SIT 2006	€ 2006	SIT 2007	€ 2007	SIT 2008	€ 2008	SIT 2.009	€ 2.009	SIT 2.010	€ 2.010	TOTAL in SIT	TOTAL in €
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport – own resources	1652,9	6,897552	1698,5	7,0878405	1806	7,536438	1986,6	8,2900818	2185,3	9,1192569	2403,8	10,031057	2664,2	11,117707	14377,3	59,996473
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport- private funding – total	166,8	0,696056	293,1	1,2231063	263,7	1,1004201	290	1,21017	319	1,331187	351	1,464723	386	1,610778	2069,6	8,6364408
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport – total	1819,7	7,593608	1991,6	8,3109468	2069,7	8,6368581	2276,6	9,5002518	2504,3	10,450444	2754,8	11,49578	3030,2	12,645025	16446,9	68,632914
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs - own resources	2487,3	10,3795	2504,9	10,452948	2755,4	11,4982842	3030,9	12,647946	3334	13,912782	3667,4	15,30406	4034,1	16,834299	21814	91,029822
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs – private funding – total	572,4	2,388625	688,5	2,8731105	722,7	3,0158271	530,5	2,2137765	742,5	3,0984525	816,8	3,4085064	898,4	3,7490232	4971,8	20,747321
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs – total	3059,7	12,76813	3193,4	13,326058	3478,1	14,5141113	3561,4	14,861722	4076,5	17,011235	4484,2	18,712567	4932,5	20,583323	26785,8	111,77714
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport - EU funds	503,1	2,099436	806,4	3,3651072	791	3,300843	870,1	3,6309273	957,1	3,9939783	1052,9	4,3937517	1158,1	4,8327513	6138,7	25,616795
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs - EU funds	1926,6	8,039702	2277,3	9,5031729	2168,1	9,0474813	1591,6	6,6417468	2250	9,38925	2475	10,328175	2722,5	11,360993	15411,1	64,31052
EU funds – total	2429,7	10,13914	3083,7	12,86828	2959,1	12,3483243	2461,7	10,272674	3207,1	13,383228	3527,9	14,721927	3880,6	16,193744	21549,8	89,927315
Other EU programmes	91,8	0,383081	327,5	1,3666575	327,5	1,3666575	327,5	1,3666575	327,5	1,3666575	327,5	1,3666575	327,5	1,3666575	2056,8	8,5830264

Other ministries	386,4	1,612447	206,4	0,8613072	233,2	0,9731436	256,2	1,0691226	280,5	1,1705265	300,5	1,2539865	321,5	1,3416195	1984,7	8,2821531
Municipalities	603,7	2,51924	322,5	1,3457925	364,4	1,5206412	400,2	1,6700346	438,2	1,8286086	469,6	1,9596408	502,3	2,0960979	3100,9	12,940056
TOTAL	8391	35,01564	9125	38,078625	9431,9	39,3593187	9283,7	38,74088	10834,2	45,211117	11864,3	49,509724	12994,4	54,225631	71924,5	300,14094

Source: The funds from the Phare programme and the European Social Fund had been approved until 2006, and estimated from 2007 onwards. The ministerial funds from 2006 till 2010 are also an estimate.

Appendix 5: Breakdown of fields and evaluation

Cost fields	number of units
A professional coordination	
notices from the National Examinations Centre	0.5
about the invitation to tender and about	1
commission members	1
keeping minutes	0.5
issuing the certificate	
reporting and keeping records	
B information and communication	
informing the applicant	2
preparing the materials	
and submitting documentation to the	2
commission	
C counselling	
introductory counselling 1 hour	2
documentation review 1-2 hours	2
providing assistance to applicants in portfolio	4
preparation 1-2 hours	
D examination and awarding of national vocational qualifications	
· based on documents – portfolio assessment	7.5
· direct examination	
holding examination	6
E material costs	
premises, equipment and material for direct	
examination	3
Total number of units for awarding based on documents	25.5
Total number of units for awarding based on documents and direct examination	34.5

Source: Methodology for Acquisition of a NVQ Certificate (OG 97/2003, 108/2004)

Unit value amounts to SIT 1,000 (gross amount).

3.1. Qualifications, qualification systems, qualifications framework

3.1.a) What term does your country use for ‘Recognition of non-formal and informal learning’? Please provide the original term in your own language as well as the literally translated term in English. Please describe if the term has certain connotations, implications, specific associations, etc.

On the basis of the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Common Objectives for Education and Training by 2010, Copenhagen Declaration and Maastricht Communiqué, the last amended National Professional Qualifications Act (2006) uses a well-established term “assessment of non-formal (neformalno) and informal (priložnostno) learning (učenje)” in order to assess learning achievements falling outside the scope of the formal education system. The term non-formal learning is rarely used to denote non-formal education, and the term opportunistic learning (aformalno učenje) is on rare occasions used to describe aformal learning. The term non-formal learning evokes the same substantive associations as the English original term, but contrary to the English original informal learning is to a large extent associated with randomised, mutually unrelated, leisure and voluntary forms of learning.

3.1.b) Describe if recognising of non-formal and informal learning is linked to qualifications, qualification systems, or qualifications framework in your country. Provide data, if any, the impact of such linkages.

It is generally possible to distinguish between two fundamental types of qualifications:

1. **Broad-based qualifications:** define the level of education and content of a vocational qualification, and the type of general, professional and vocational knowledge, skills and competences.
2. **Narrow-based qualifications** define the content of a vocational qualification; and the type of general and professional knowledge, skills and competences.

The latter category makes it possible to distinguish between different types of vocational qualifications:

- **key vocational qualifications**
- **basic vocational qualifications**
- **supplementary vocational qualifications**

²¹ The following individuals have submitted information by answering the questions, thereby contributing to this paper: National Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Slava Pevec Grm, MSc, Veronika Šlander), Faculty of Management (Assist. Prof. PhD Nada Trunk Širca, Doris Gomezelj), Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (Štefan Žemva, Urška Kavčič), Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of RS (Albin Kralj, PhD), Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of RS (Elizabeta Skuber), Ministry of Education and Sport of RS (Boštjan Zgonc, Anton Slanc), Chamber of Craft of Slovenia (Janja Meglič, MSc, Nataša Štirn, MSc), National Examinations Centre (Gašper Cankar, PhD, Andreja Ogrin, Jelka Kozjak Jezernik, MSc), School Centre Novo mesto (Tomaž Pintarič), College of Business Maribor (Suzana Cergol) and Association of People's Universities of Slovenia (Andrej Sotošek, MSc).

In 2006, the Government adopted a Decree on the Introduction and Use of a Classification System of Education and Training (KLASIUS, OG: 45, 2006), which represents one of the formal foundations for the creation of the Slovenian qualifications framework.

This classification is based on eight levels which include all three groups of qualifications: qualifications obtained through educational programmes at the formal educational level which end with awarding of a certificate, diploma or other evidence of publicly recognised education; a certification system of national vocational qualifications (NVQ), which enables the acquisition of working vocational or professional training and recognition of non-formal knowledge with a publicly recognised document, further and supplementary training by which an individual deepens knowledge and develops competences for life, work, mobility and career promotion. It is based on eight levels incorporating all the above enumerated groups of qualifications, from primary school to doctoral studies, in relation to learning outcomes:

- the first level includes the uncompleted first stage of primary school education
- the second level includes primary school education
- the third level includes lower vocational education
- the fourth level includes secondary lower vocational education
- the fifth level includes secondary general education and secondary technical education
- level six has two sublevels 6/1 includes post-secondary vocational education, while sublevel 6/2 includes the professional type of higher education (the former and current programmes) and university type of education (the first level according to the Bologna Programmes)
- level seven includes education at Master's level (the second level of the Bologna Programmes) and university graduate education according to former university programmes
- level eight has two sublevels: 8/1 includes the former Master's degree whilst 8/2 includes PhD

A vocational qualification at a certain level of vocational education brings together adequately structured contents: general, professional, practical knowledge and skills, social and vocational as well as personal and individual properties demanded by a certain work system or process. Such qualification covers a spectrum of knowledge, properties and behavioural patterns qualifying an individual to perform certain works and tasks in a specific occupation (Muršak, 1999)²².

A two-tier system for recognition of qualifications is currently in place in Slovenia. Young people have a possibility of obtaining qualifications primarily through a traditional school education system (responsibility of the Ministry of Education), whereas adults can also acquire (vocational) qualifications through the certification system of NVQ for occupations not included in a formal education programme (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour), or can sit the exam at the Chamber of Craft or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. We should mention that this kind of division is not taking into account all exceptions, which are kept marginal in the sense of number of programmes as well as enrolment. To demonstrate: It is possible to gain qualification for the cook's assistant and the tyre repairman through the certification system and also through the programmes of the secondary vocational education in the school.

We can expect a certain level of fusion of both systems (certificate and school) in the future as an intensive modernisation of the programmes based on the modular approach is taking place in secondary education. An individual will thus be in a position to acquire several qualifications (which

²² Muršak, J. (1999). Qualifications, Competences, Professions: Synthesis Attempt, *Sodobna pedagogika* (Contemporary Pedagogy) 2, 28-46.

are equivalent to the module in the formal education system) within the NVQ system and will consequently meet a large part of requirements for the certificates issued in the formal education system (see article 12 of the National Professional Qualifications Act).

For the time being, the following methods for assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning (hereinafter referred to as “NIL”) leading to publicly recognised qualifications are available in Slovenia²³:

- **The certification system for recognition of vocational qualifications.** This system for obtaining qualifications through assessment and recognition of NVQ is governed by the National Professional Qualifications Act. The Act states that the certification system for NVQ assessment and recognition does not provide for a title awarded after the completion of a vocational or professional education programme, or a professional title awarded after the completion of publicly established education or study programmes. For the moment, 9 committees with 73 providers have been entrusted with the task of elaboration of vocational standards and catalogues of knowledge, skills and competences for NVQ in Slovenia, with their work being coordinated by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training. Table 1 shows a number of the awarded certificates by the sectors in the period 2001 – 06.

Table 1: The number of the awarded certificates by the sectors in the period 2001 – 06

Sector	Number of awarded certificates
Art, culture	76
Computer science	30
Technics	458
Production (manufacturing) technology	328
Architecture, construction	306
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	1020
Health care	312
Social work	344
Personal services	1871
Transport services	7823
Security	2561
Total	15259

Source: Materials for the consultation organised for national vocational qualification providers and counsellors. National Examinations Centre. Ljubljana.

²³ In our opinion, the formalisation of learning (especially) in the Slovenian area merits monitoring according to several criteria. This approach surpasses the rigid definition which many times leaves us in doubt as to which learning should be labelled as formal, non-formal and informal. It is possible to use criteria in order to form a “flexible opinion” on the scope of formalisation of a certain method. The basic division is connected with the following question: Is it possible for educational institutions and employers to formally recognize non-formal and informal learning? The level of formalisation can be measured by various indicators in both systems, such as: conscious decision on the part of participants to enrol into the learning process, organisation of learning (timetable, obligatory presence...), assessment methods, target group (youth, adults), validity of certificates, etc.

- **The master craftsman examination at the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia.** The foundation for a renewal of the master craftsman examination (abolished in 1963) was laid down by the Small Business Act. The Act contains a special chapter setting up the apprenticeship system (dual system of vocational education), final (journeyman) examination and master craftsman examination constituting a basis for acquiring the title master craftsman. The Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1996 lists the master craftsman examination among nationally recognised examinations within the education system leading to a successful completion of a secondary professional education programme. The examination consists of four parts: a practical part, professional and theoretical part, managerial and economic part as well as pedagogical and adult education part. By taking into consideration applicants' 3- or 1-year work experience (depending on the finished educational programme) in the appropriate work field and their passed master craftsman examination; applicants successfully complete a secondary professional education programme. Following fulfilment of additional conditions, it is possible to continue one's education at vocational and professional colleges. Table 2 provides numerical examples of awarded master craftsman examinations at the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia by the end of 2005.

Table 2: The number of awarded master craftsman examinations at the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia by the end of 2005: examples show the highest number of passed examinations.

Number of awarded master craftsman examinations	Number of people successfully passing the examination
Master hairdresser	261
Master car mechanic	240
Master electrical installer	99
...	...
TOTAL	1611

Source: Chamber of Craft of Slovenia

- **The manager and foreman examinations at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.** The Rules on Foreman (foreman in energy, construction foreman, woodworking foreman and foreman in food industry) and Manager Examinations (shop manager and catering manager) at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Slovenia stipulate that the manager and foreman examinations test if an applicant is qualified for managing a group, establishment, engineering site, workshop, shop, premises etc., if he/she has a command of basic patterns, methods and techniques for the provision of services in the respective professional area and if he/she is capable of transferring knowledge and experience to co-workers, new colleagues, apprentices and students. The examination has four parts: a practical part, professional and theoretical part, managerial and economic part as well as pedagogical and adult education part. The contents of an individual part are determined by the examination catalogues. The content is proposed by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and finally approved by the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. A professional and theoretical part, managerial and economic part as well as pedagogical and adult education part of the examination consist of both written and oral components in accordance with the examination catalogue. The data on successfully passed examinations available for this year is revealed in Table 3.

Table 3: Statistics on successfully passed examinations at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia in 2006 (data by November, 2006).

	Certificate holders by 2006	Certificate recipients in 2006	TOTAL
Shop manager	109	20	129
Catering manager	10	0	10
Construction foreman	123 ²⁴	19	142
Electricity foreman	107	11	118
TOTAL	349	50	399

Source: In-house data of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

- **Formal education programmes in which work practice is organized as practical work with an external provider** (e.g. individual and collective learning contracts are successors of dual system of education in the system). In the period from 1997/98 to 2005/06, 8,852 apprentices accounting for 4% of the entire population enrolled into different vocational education programmes in the dual system of education; woodworking, car mechanics, hairdressing and catering were among more popular choices.

- **Formal education programmes in which NIL is recognised as a part of performed obligations.** The numerical data is not available, but this category primarily deals with individual examples of secondary school students/higher education students enjoying individual treatment by every higher education institution; people's universities offer similar tailor-made treatment for adults. To provide an example for assessment of NIL within formal education system in this category, we shall have a look at the policy of the Faculty of Management Koper²⁵. The system of assessment of NIL was put in place at the Faculty a year ago, whereby students with sufficient years of service had their professional practice recognised, students presenting supporting documents testifying to their successful completion of computer workshops in informal institutions had some parts of practical training recognised, some students had an elective course recognised if they were able to prove their proficiency and knowledge by providing certificates to certify it (broker examination, quality assurance examination, entrepreneurial detailed report ...).

The Faculty has so far come to the conclusion that the recognition of NIL is still scarce but they intend to strengthen and upgrade the system. Students have been informed about the possibility of the recognition of NIL and have been positively viewing the implementation of the system.

- **Formal education programmes in which NIL is recognised as the requirement for enrolment into some specific educational programmes.** The data is not available: the relevant register is kept by individual educational institutions. It has to be mentioned that the assessment of NIL is primarily linked to postgraduate programmes. For example: at the Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Ljubljana), NIL represents one half of the grade for the selection of an applicant, while the other half comes from the average undergraduate grade.

- **Vocational and professional chambers.** NIL is taken into consideration when passing professional examinations, extending and maintaining the licence awarded by certain professional chambers (e.g.

²⁴ Last data: 146 certificate holders, with 54 applicants awaiting the completion of the procedure by the end of the year.

²⁵ The Faculty of Management charges around EUR 42 for the recognition of NIL. The data was submitted by Doris Gomezelj.

Slovenian Chamber of Engineers, Slovenian Chamber of Pharmacy, and Medical Chamber of Slovenia), however, in addition to NIL it is necessary to hold a degree from the formal education system.

- Individual companies and organizations. NIL is also taken into account upon passing professional examinations and programmes within individual companies and organisations. This examination is not publicly recognised in most cases (e.g. Slovenian Railways).

We could not find scientifically supported research on the influence and significance of assessment of NIL at the national and individual levels. We can only refer to the observations of experts stating that NIL certification procedures save time and cut costs required to obtain a publicly recognised certificate when compared to the formal education system. Apart from quicker employability, the system enables employers to allocate workers easier and pinpoint talented employees, to improve self-confidence and motivation of employees for lifelong learning and develop one's own talents. Such form of learning recognition upgrades formal education with up-to-date qualifications, increases employability and mobility of the workforce and enables drop-outs to be reintegrated into the system. The results of the assessment of NIL take into account many arguments advocating its establishment (see Item 3.1.e).

It is also worth repeating that the certification system for obtaining national vocational qualifications currently represents the most prominent method for the assessment of NIL in Slovenia. It is being developed as a relatively autonomous systemic form. It serves as the upgrade and addition to a traditional school system and is designed only for adults.

3.1.c) What kinds of qualifications (e.g. certificates, diplomas, degrees, licenses, etc.) are more linked to recognition of non-formal and informal learning? What are the difficulties or obstacles in linking recognition of non-formal and informal learning to qualification framework?

The majority of methods for obtaining qualifications highlighted in the previous answer (see 3.1.b) are linked to the recognition of NIL. The practice shows that assessment of NIL is significantly less present in the formal education system, although appropriate legal basis is already in place (e.g. Articles 10 and 31 of the Vocational and Technical Education; Articles 14, 16 and 21 of the Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act; Article 6 of the Higher Education Act). Legislation states that it is possible to fulfil a part of study obligations through practical work and non-formal learning in post-secondary vocational and higher education programmes. Vocational education and training programmes incorporate on-the-job learning as an integral part of educational programmes, one of the examples being an individual and collective learning contract (Article 33 of the Vocational and Technical Education Act of 2006). These educational programmes include work practice based on NIL which takes the form of practical work with an external provider.

Although employers in numerous sectors call attention to the fact that qualifications acquired in schools are not sufficiently relevant to the workplace and that those completing education are not able to transfer their knowledge into practice, both formal education system representatives and social partners remain rather sceptical about the quality of informally obtained qualifications. When compared to non-formally acquired qualifications, formal school qualifications have been highly valued in Slovenia for long, both in terms of people's mentality and legislation. Hence, there is a fear that recognition of non-formal and informal learning might undermine the status and quality of formal education system, with vocational education and training programmes being particularly vulnerable in this context. In addition, integration of non-formal and informal learning into a uniformly developing qualifications framework is also characterised by financial constraints.

The formally adopted National Qualifications Framework has not yet been elaborated in Slovenia; however, certain foundations for it are already in place, the most often cited reference being the expert grounds for the certification system enabling recognition of vocational qualifications. Despite the non-

existence of the qualifications framework, one can at this point in time already anticipate barriers standing in the way of integration of NIL into the National Qualifications Framework:

- lack of visibility of certificates in the environment and underestimated significance of NIL;
- poor integration of NIL into the formal education system;
- apathy of trade unions;
- poor links between certification of NIL and salary brackets, remuneration and classification of posts;
- fear of undermining of the formal education system.

3.1.d) Describe if there are differences in such linkages depending on whether the qualifications are professional or academic recognition? Can the link to the qualification systems legitimacy of such recognition be a means for establishing 'legitimacy' both in working life and in the educational system?

When discussing professional qualifications of the most typical professions (Anglo-Saxon perception), such as doctors, lawyers, priests or engineers, it has to be said that qualifications pertaining to these professions in Slovenia are closely linked to formal higher education educational programmes. We cannot even begin to talk about recognition of NIL in these programmes. At a later stage, some professional chambers require constant participation in various forms of NIL in order to obtain and keep a licence for practicing the profession (e.g. doctors, lawyers...). In cases when professional qualifications are linked to a wide range of professions supported by higher education educational programmes (continental perception), only individual examples for recognition of NIL within the education system could be found (Faculty of Management Koper is mentioned in Item 3.2.f). The system providing for evaluation of NIL in professions supported by complementary university programmes has so far not yet been developed in Slovenia. It can be established that professional qualifications in Slovenia are mostly always founded on a prior completion of a higher education programme, while it is impossible to obtain education on the basis of practical experience. Although appropriate legal basis has been passed (Article 9 of the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes), the integration of professional and academic qualifications into a uniform systemic framework in Slovenia hardly seems possible at the moment.

3.1.e) If your country has a national qualification framework or in the process of establishing one, has the development towards recognition of non-formal and informal learning been of the drivers for your country to establish one? Is the development of the qualification framework and its implementation in practice with the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in parallel?

Although legislation (National Professional Qualifications Act, Vocational and Technical Education Act and Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act) often makes reference to the National Qualifications Framework, an official version of this document is still in the early stages of development. There has not yet been a consensus on the ratio between school qualifications and qualifications resulting from the recognition of NIL. Slovenia has already designed internationally comparable expert grounds as well as legislation and the system for recognition of national vocational qualifications, which in view of the experts, comes closest to the National Qualifications Framework.

As it is possible to infer from the role of the (developing) National Qualifications Framework in the existing legislation, the Framework is being produced hand in hand with the recognition practice of NIL. In other words, the National Professional Qualifications Act foresees the setting up of a qualifications framework providing for horizontal and vertical transfer of qualifications, which will apply both to formal education system and to the recognition of NIL. In this context, the main emphasis will be placed on striking the balance between broad-based qualifications primarily acquired in the formal education system on one hand, and independent qualifications obtained predominantly through the certification system on the other hand. It should be highlighted what are the main reasons behind the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework:

- harmonization with EU policies and economic guidelines. Slovenia is confronting Community pressure to reform educational policies;
- a need to quickly respond and adapt to employees at the labour market;
- a possibility for certification of new knowledge and competences which have not yet been incorporated into formal educational programmes;
- a possibility of obtaining formal qualifications necessary for employment more rapidly;
- a possibility for certification of knowledge of adults who have already left the education system and require an increasingly individualised approach;
- integration of the education and certification system offering a possibility for adults to return to education system by way of horizontal and vertical upgrading;
- relatively low rate of population completing post-secondary vocational and higher education programmes;
- involvement of employers in assessment and awarding procedures;
- increased employability, self-employment and employment abroad;
- possibility for knowledge certification for individuals with low employability.

3.1.f) What are some potential threats of recognition of non-formal and informal learning to higher education institutions, employers, and individuals? How can resistance from the higher education sector be overcome to embed the recognition of non-formal and informal learning into the qualification framework?

The amended National Professional Qualifications Act already refers to the recognition of NIL in higher education in Articles 3, 4 and 5a, and the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes in Article 9 also provide for that possibility, however, practice shows that except for isolated cases this tool has not yet been fully implemented. Article 33a of the Higher Education Act explicitly mentions a possibility for organising study programmes aimed at upgrading of skills in the context of lifelong learning. These programmes primarily focus on upgrading and complementing knowledge, while higher education institutions could also additionally organise different forms of NIL, such as summer schools. The Act does not govern if such forms of learning could be assessed by way of credit points and within the education system.

Experts feel that reckless and simplified recognition of NIL lacking complexity could give rise to devalued meaning of higher education institutions, both in terms of their functioning and in terms of individuals who were awarded degrees from these institutions. Apart from knowledge transfer, higher education institutions in Slovenia also perform an important role when acting as knowledge creators for professional groups, and significantly contribute to preservation of language and national identity. It would be possible to depart from the current restraint of higher education institutions towards recognition of NIL and its inclusion into the qualifications framework primarily through the establishment of a well considered certification model of such knowledge in order to:

- enable drop-outs to return to education;
- maintain the autonomy of universities and higher education institutions;
- permanently adapt to changes in the environment;
- provide for matriculation of new target groups, especially adults;
- strike an appropriate balance between key theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

The educational institutions advocating the recognition of NIL found that another argument supporting its inclusion is a possibility of bridging the gap in decline of the number of full-time students by including adults. Higher education institutions expect that the recognition of NIL in the form of certain study obligations might attract a higher number of adults in their ranks. The same applies to secondary school students.

3.2. Credit accumulation and transfer

3.2.a) Describe any formal credit arrangements for non-formal and informal learning, if they exist. What are general policies, objectives, and legislative, regulatory or sectoral agreement frameworks for such credit arrangements? How are the arrangements used - at similar levels, between different levels, or between different sectors. Provide data, if any, of actual users (number of users, at what level, which sector, transition path, etc.)

The legal basis for credit assessment of learning achievements in secondary and professional education as well as in post-secondary vocational education programmes has been in place, while the credit system in higher education has been operating in practice for a number of years. Credit systems primarily pertain to the assessment of formal education programmes and subjects; however, it is presumed that the same credit system will also apply to the assessment of NIL. Article 15 of the National Professional Qualifications Act provides for modular credit assessment and methodology for recognition of NIL in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). National vocational qualifications which can be obtained in validated educational programmes are awarded the same number of points as the modules leading to vocational qualifications through the certification system.

Article 14 of the Vocational and Technical Education Act also makes provisions for credit assessment of various forms of education in vocational education and training, whereby it foresees the harmonization with the European Credit System for Vocational Education and training (ECVET), and with the already adopted principles for the assessment of NIL in the European Qualifications Framework, Europass and the European Framework on Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training.

Article 24 of the Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act governs the credit assessment of obligations in line with ECTS in post-secondary vocational education. The credit system in post-secondary vocational education programmes has not yet been put in place (reformed programmes are currently in the pipeline), but some educational institutions have already recognised previously acquired NIL, primarily as a part of received practical training, and rarely as a part of theoretical subjects. As for higher education, the Higher Education Act also lays down criteria for assessment of a formal part of study programmes in line with ECTS; the system has been implemented in practice for some years. This policy is of utmost importance for international student exchanges.

3.2.b) Who is/are responsible for credit arrangements for non-formal and informal learning? Is it different from the arrangements for formal learning?

It can be anticipated that the credit assessment of NIL under the certification system for recognition of national vocational qualifications will be in the hands of the same institutions which were entrusted with the task of their current implementation, i.e. National Examinations Centre, National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, social partners and expert councils. Individual educational institutions will be responsible for the recognition of NIL in the formal education system, and their work will be coordinated by the competent ministry.

3.2.c) How is a credit counted? Number of hours of a course? Please specify how credits are counted on what base in your country.

Despite the fact that Slovenia has implemented the credit system as a method of recognition of formal learning outcomes only in higher education, the legislation foresees that qualifications acquired informally within the formal education system should be assessed by way of the same credit system as formal education at all education levels.

To illustrate, vocational education and training uses 1 credit point to assess 25 hours of student's education work, whereby:

- lower-secondary vocational education provides for acquisition of 120 credit points;
- secondary vocational education awards from 180 to 240 credit points;
- secondary professional education from 240 to 300 credit points;
- vocational technical education 120 credit points;
- vocational course programmes from 60 to 90 credit points;
- master craftsman, foreman and manager examinations 60 credit points.

As for post-secondary education, the Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act aims to assess student's workload as expressed in credit points. Credit points are calculated by bearing in mind the time necessary for students to complete all planned education activities, such as attending lectures, seminars, practice, individual work, project design, research etc. A single year of studies is assessed with 60 credit points, and post-secondary study programmes are assessed with 120 credit points and last 2 years, while study programmes for further education are assessed with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 35 credit points. It needs to be stressed that a part of credits (depending on individual programme) includes practical education. The school may recognise student's prior acquisition of NIL by awarding him/her a specific number of credits.

As far as higher education is concerned, an appropriate Act has also been adopted containing assessment criteria for study programmes according to ECTS. A credit point is in this case a unit of measurement for assessing student's work and translates into 25 to 30 hours of students' workload, whereby 1 study year should consist of 1500 to 1800 hours.

Post-secondary professional study programmes and university study programmes are composed of 180 to 240 points, and they last up to 4 years. Masters study programmes consist of 60 to 120 credit points, and take 1 to 2 years to complete. Doctoral study programmes, on the other hand, comprise 180 credit points and last up to 3 years. The Act also envisages NIL assessment as part of fulfilled study obligations, but fails to provide any details.

3.2.d) What are the incentives or disincentives for participants to gain credit and providers to give credit?

As has already been referred to, a credit system of NIL recognition has not yet been implemented. Like in other countries, such system would provide individuals with an opportunity to gradually acquire formal and informal qualifications according to their capabilities. Such system would not necessarily have to go hand in hand with the enrolment into the formal educational programme, which in turn would mean less costs and time-saving both for the state and individuals. Those employers who have established their own education systems would take a step forward through the credit system toward the public recognition of qualifications which have been acquired in this way.

3.2.e) Describe, if any, how the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is integrated in your VET system through credit system: e.g. the dual system to integrate experiential learning.

In Slovenia, the new Vocational and Technical Education Act of 2006 extended positive elements of dual system to the entire vocational education system as well as upgraded the dual system by introducing both the individual learning contract - to be entered into by the employer and the student – and the collective learning contract concluded by the school and the employer. The Act foresees credit assessment of these programmes in the course of 5 years. For the time being, practical work to be carried out with employers within dual system programmes is as follows (please note that these dual system programmes shall not be initiated with the 2007/2008 school year):

1st year: 10 - 12 weeks with an employer,
2nd year: 24 weeks with an employer,
3rd year: 23 weeks with an employer.

A student with an individual learning contract will be able to attend work-based practical training for up to 53 weeks, while a student with a collective learning contract will be able to have 24 weeks altogether in the course of his/her education.

It is important that practical training in real working environment is part and parcel of complete vertical vocational education.

Practical training of an apprentice in the work process takes 38 hours per week. As far as post-secondary (amounting to 400 hours) and higher education are concerned, the scope of practical training depends on individual education institution and educational programme.

3.2.f) Provide data, if any, how the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is integrated in your HED system through credit system: e.g. research on the growing number of take-up of internships, etc.

The credit system for recognition of formal learning achievements has been in place in Slovenia in higher education for a couple of years. The legislation envisages the introduction of credit system that is also to recognise the applicant's knowledge and qualifications by assessing NIL (Article 9, Accreditation Criteria for Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes).

Also, appropriate work experience, various certificates and other documents, products, services and students' own copyright work will be taken into consideration when recognising learning obligations. According to the Act, all mentioned achievements will have to be assessed under ECTS criteria, while details of implementation will be determined by individual higher education institutions – appropriate practices and available data are in short supply.

For example: At the Faculty of Social Sciences, NIL is assessed as an optional criterion for the enrolment into any part of postgraduate study programme, while assessment of NIL as a part of learning achievements is more the exception than the rule.

3.3. Assessment methods and procedures [1]

3.3.a) Describe the assessment arrangements. Who carries out assessments, and with what type of approaches? Who validates the results of the assessments? How long will the assessment procedures take? If methods or procedures vary depending on sectors, list the name of the sectors and the methods used for the recognition for the sector. What assessment procedures do participants go through to get their non-formal and informal learning recognised? Describe different stages.

It is various chambers, employer's associations, professional organisations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions and competent ministries that are in charge of NIL assessment when it comes to the awarding of vocational qualifications. Above all, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training plays a significant role in development and consultation, while the National Examinations Centre features prominently in coordination and assessment in the certification system of awarding of national vocational qualifications. The latter system is at present the most important system for NIL assessment, and its function is determined by the National Professional Qualifications Act. In all described cases an important question arises, i.e. level of integration of the NVQ assessment committees in the institutions providing the assessment. It can be noticed that recognition providers use external providers in most cases.

NIL as an occasional method of recognition of specific obligations within the school education system has until now been assigned to individual educational institutions. For instance, it is the Chamber of

Craft that is in charge of coordination and consultation when applicants take the master craftsman examination, while the Chamber of Industry and Commerce plays a similar role in the foreman and manager examinations. The same applies to individual professional organisations and chambers (e.g. the Medical Chamber, Pharmacy Chamber) which, in cooperation with educational institutions, are also providers.

Irrespective of NIL assessment system, there are 2 fundamental evaluation methods in place - evaluating a portfolio of documents confirming NIL, as well as the examination (written or oral) and practical examination of knowledge. More detailed NIL assessment procedures are described under individual institutions.

The National Examinations Centre issues a license to the members of the committee in charge of assessment and recognition of national vocational qualifications. A committee member may obtain more than one licence provided that he/she fulfils staffing requirements for individual vocational qualifications as listed in the catalogue of knowledge, skills and competences, provided that they have had work experience in vocational qualifications in the course of last 5 years, and provided that they have completed the appropriate training programme. A three-member committee is appointed by the National Examinations Centre to carry out the procedure of assessment and recognition of national vocational qualifications.

The procedure of assessment and recognition of national vocational qualifications begins as soon as the applicant files an application form to obtain the certificate from the recognition provider. The provider is obliged to supply the applicant with counselling. The applicant needs to submit documents confirming his/her acquired knowledge and skills, and together with their counsellor, designs the portfolio or a folder of documentation.

Upon receipt of the application, the provider examines the application for completeness and no later than within 15 days calls the National Examinations Centre to appoint the committee

The National Examinations Centre issues a decision on the appointment of a committee of three, while the recognition provider submits the applicant's documentation to the committee. The committee then examines the submitted documentation and decides whether the applicant meets all the requirements as laid down in the catalogue. Provided that the applicant fulfils all the catalogue requirements, the committee awards vocational qualifications and the provider issues the certificate. If the applicant fails to satisfy all requirements as laid down in the catalogue, the committee instructs the applicant to undergo examination and determines the examination content.

Within 30 days upon receipt of the application, the provider informs the applicant about the scope of knowledge and skills he/she will have to demonstrate in the course of the examination procedure, and sets the date by which the applicant needs to confirm participation in the examination.

The method of the examination depends on the adequacy of the applicant's portfolio (documents) and the area in which the applicant would like to obtain the appropriate certificate. In the examination procedure, the applicant demonstrates in particular the knowledge and skills which cannot be established on the basis of documents. The committee acquaints the applicant during the procedure with the examination procedure itself, the criteria, the beginning and duration of examination. The commission evaluates the applicant's knowledge and skills as successful and unsuccessful, and awards him/her an appropriate qualification, while the provider supplies him/her with the certificate within 8 days following the examination.

The Chamber of Craft is in charge of the procedure to acquire master craftsman examinations through master craftsman examination committees. The chairman and the members of the committee are appointed for a 4-year period by the Minister of Labour. Each committee is responsible for specific practical and theoretical part, while there are special committees in charge of examining managerial and economic part and teaching and adult education part.

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Chamber of Crafts publishes a public tender for taking master craftsman examinations. The application deadline is until the end of the year. The procedure to

acquire the master craftsman examination is initiated when the applicant submits an application (prerequisite being 1 to 3 years of experience at an appropriate workplace), whereupon the applicant receives learning material, of course as the case may be the applicant can also attend preparatory seminars. The examination consists of 4 parts. The practical part includes a working test which is performed in school workshops and lasts up to 8 hours as well as the master craftsman examination which is taken at the applicant's operation facility and lasts up to 100 hours.

On the other hand, professional and theoretical part is composed of 3 to 5 written examination units. Having taken their written examination, the less successful applicants are obliged to undergo an oral examination. The managerial and economic part takes the form of a 90-minute written examination, while the teaching and adult education part is conducted as a 180-minute written examination together with a practical demonstration lasting up to 45 minutes. The master craftsman qualification not only awards formally recognised professional qualifications but also an appropriate education level (ISCED 3).

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry carries out a procedure to acquire manager and foreman examinations through competent committees and commissions. According to its rules, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry at least once a year publishes a tender together with appropriate deadlines for foreman and manager examinations: all applicants who have had from 1 to 3 years of appropriate work experiences (given the school they have completed) are eligible for applying.

The examination consists of four parts: a practical part, professional and theoretical part, managerial and economic part as well as teaching and adult education part.

The practical part consists of written assignment and working assignment. The written assignment takes the form of a seminar paper which encompasses elements of the working process as defined in the examination catalogue for the practical part. By producing the written assignment, the applicant demonstrates that he/she has a command of the required level of expertise, correspondence, managerial, organisational and information knowledge.

The written assignment may encompass a minimum of 5 pages and a maximum of 15 pages, and should be submitted to the competent examination committee within the prescribed deadline. The working assignment may last 8 hours maximum, and it means the applicant's competence to be in charge of a group in the field that plans to carry out a demanding work procedure, or the applicant carrying out such an exacting working procedure or a service alone.

Defending written or working assignments (practical examination, service) takes up to 20 minutes, whereby the applicant is given at least 3 questions regarding his/her work or written assignment, and is provided with at least 15 minutes to prepare for the defence. Provided that the applicant meets all the requirements, the examination committee may decide that this applicant should undergo 5 working tests to demonstrate his/her mastery of individual working processes. A work test should not take more than 4 hours.

On the other hand, professional and theoretical parts, managerial and economic parts and teaching and adult education parts can be conducted in writing or orally, whereby any written examination can last 5 hours maximum, while oral presentation can last up to 30 minutes.

The applicant has successfully passed the examination, if he/she has obtained a passing grade from all examination parts. The examination committee or the examination commission decides on the grade of individual examination part.

Individual educational institutions

Various practices of NIL assessment differ among individual educational institutions. Therefore, it is important to emphasize a number of starting points for NIL assessment in higher education. These starting points stipulate that NIL assessment proceeds similarly as examinations of knowledge in education. Individual educational institutions draw up most appropriate assessment methods taking

into consideration objectives, standards of knowledge to be examined: oral or written exam, discussion / argumentation, interview, argumentation of a seminar paper or a project, evaluation of a product developed by students, evaluation of procedures applied by students in practical tests (work, service...) and evaluation of demonstration, performance, simulation and role play.

The project group has concluded that the degree of recognising these principles varies among individual educational institutions, not least because identifying, validating and recognising prior knowledge and skills is a highly demanding organisational activity. Therefore, the project group recommends that each school defines procedures, powers and responsibilities of its staff in advance as well as determining the timeframes of individual activities. Where possible, each school should ensure the engagement of more lecturers or any other professional staff when it comes to performing individual activities, not least because this approach will significantly contribute to the harmonisation of standards in all procedures at the school level.

The Business College Maribor is a prime example of introducing best practices. When submitting an application for knowledge certification, student also provide a list of informal education activities with a short portfolio drawn up in consultation with ECTS counsellor, together with the description of competences and notes on his/her project, expert's detailed report, innovation, patent, publication etc.

Having submitted all the documentation, the student has certain knowledge and skills recognised.

When there is ambiguity as to the student's competence, the student attends an interview with the subject provider and ECTS counsellor. When it comes to recognising knowledge and skills acquired through self-education and experiential learning, the student submits, together with the application for knowledge assessment and recognition, a portfolio with the emphasis on reflection on his/her own competences.

The Student Affairs Committee, together with the subject designer, determine the method and form of assessing students' knowledge, skills and competences, with the focus on student's ability to recognise his/her own competences in relation to subject specific competences.

In the course of the assessment, the student attends an interview with the subject designer and ECTS counsellor. Having obtained all necessary information, the committee, together with the project designer and ECTS counsellor, define recognition (complete recognition, partial recognition, application rejection) as well as determine the number within ECTS.

What is more, the Faculty of Management Koper has also followed an intricately defined procedure. The Faculty of Management Koper is another fine example of introducing sound practice when it comes to NIL assessment. An applicant wishing to have his/her knowledge and skills - acquired through formal, non-formal and/or informal education prior to enrolment and during the studies – assessed and recognised, needs to submit an application for knowledge and skills recognition. The application for knowledge and skills recognition should contain the applicants' personal data, information on types of knowledge and skills that the applicant wishes to enforce. Moreover, it should also include the applicant's CV and portfolio vividly illustrating his/her area of work and the competences acquired prior to enrolment. Before submitting his/her application, the applicant should hold an interview with the counsellor who helps him/her create his portfolio. The counsellor has office hours during which he/she is available to applicants to help them create their own portfolio. The applicant attending an interview with the counsellor should provide all public documents, certificates and other documents to help have his/her knowledge and skills recognised. The procedure whereby the complete application is received and the decision issued to the applicant should take place within 30 days, and no later than within 2 months from the date when the applicant submitted the complete application. Having drawn up application and portfolio, the applicant submits the application to the registrar office. If the application is complete, the registrar office enters it into the records of applications. The application is then deliberated at the commission. Provided that the applicant wishes to establish public documents that do not exceed 30 credit points, the commission can take the decision considering the recognition of his/her knowledge and skills based on the submitted documents. If the committee, however, cannot decide whether to recognise his/her knowledge and skills, the committee may then ask for the opinion of an appropriate higher education teacher, or it can

appoint a committee of three which gives its opinion on the matter. Provided that the applicant enforces his/her public documents, certificates or any other documents that were issued more than 5 years ago, and when more than 30 credit points are to be recognised, the commission should decide on additional examination of knowledge (partial or complete examination) to be undertaken by the applicant in question. What is more, the applicant should be informed about the date of additional examination in time, but no later than 14 days prior to the examination. The applicant's success in examination of his/her knowledge and skills is assessed with a descriptive mark "pass" or "fail". The commission completes the applicant's application with all necessary information on the examination and performance.

3.3.b) Describe different types of assessment methods and procedures. Provide data on advantages and challenges for the different types of assessment (e.g. competence-based assessment, summative assessment, portfolio assessment, etc.) What are the principle drivers of costs of different types of assessments to different actors? Provide evidence, if any, of certain types of assessment may become beneficial or a barrier to participants (e.g. psychological, financial, etc.).

This section sets out direct, indirect and combined assessment types, i.e. practical knowledge examinations, written and oral examinations designed to test knowledge, and evaluation of a file folder or portfolio. Two institutions acting as providers of these examinations were approached to present their views and give answers about assessment types of NIL.

The National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the **National Examinations Centre**. National vocational qualifications can be assessed and awarded in various ways, depending on the type of a vocational qualification. One can distinguish between:

- awarding of qualifications on the basis of a portfolio if an applicant meets all conditions laid down in the catalogue of knowledge, skills and competences standards,
- practical examination in the area in which an applicant fails to produce supporting documents for awarding of qualifications (the commission determines the content of the practical examination upon the examination of the portfolio).

There are also a number of practical examination forms (depending on the type of a vocational qualification):

- on-the-job observation,
- practical and written examination,
- only practical examination.

The amended Rules on Examination for National Vocational Qualifications were approved on 7 October 2004, and the price for assessment and recognition of a national vocational qualification was set at EUR 144 (portfolio examination and practical examination) or EUR 106.4 (awarding of a qualification on the basis of the portfolio).

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia²⁶ provided an example from the Construction and Building Materials Industry Section²⁷ responsible for organisation and management of the examination leading to the title construction foreman. The data reveals that applicants are predominantly in the age group from 35 to 50, and have on average 10 years of service or practical experience accumulated in different construction works and sites. It is understandable that these individuals encounter greater difficulties in written or oral forms of knowledge examinations when returning to school after more than 10 years and are consequently less successful in technical and theoretical contents. They are less skilful in taking a written and also oral examination; therefore they need more time for preparation in comparison with secondary school or higher education students who have been in the education system longer.

²⁶ The net price of a manager and foreman examination adds up to EUR 717.75, with the average wage being EUR 764.58.

²⁷ The description was submitted by Štefan Žemva, independent consultant at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

These applicants experience difficulties in reading the task and understanding the written content of the problem, as well as in expression which the commission duly considers in its deliberations. This phenomenon has been especially observed with the applicants from other republics of the former Yugoslavia. They require more time to resolve problems and formulate answers. It came as a surprise that they do not make use of prohibited resources and instruments when taking written examinations, there were also no visible signs of copying and cooperation between applicants. In a nutshell, they are extremely disciplined and every applicant takes the test completely independent.

Organisers are faced with a complex task when they have to make preparations for a practical part as it is performed in the field, construction site or workshop during regular working hours. The examination proceeds as follows: an applicant selects a number of possible topics from a wide range of practical examination topics and forwards them to the examination committee. Prior to the submission of topics, the applicant also chooses the employer and construction site at which the examination will take place, as well as the mentor. The organiser accompanied by the applicant and mentor then examines possibilities and conditions for conducting the examination and establishes if the employer and mentor are sufficiently qualified and competent. If these conditions are complied with, the applicant is handed down the title of the topic which may be subject to certain supplements. The applicant has a 45-day deadline to carry out written preparations which take the form of a seminar paper. Having submitted the paper to the assessor, the examination committee appoints the examination committee which is responsible for the observation and assessment of the applicant performing practical work of a foreman on a given task on the examination day. The assessment consists of written preparations, practical part and the assessment given by the mentor. In addition to complex arrangements in the described course of the examination, financial costs are even higher if one bears in mind the time the commission members need to invest to travel to different examination locations in the entire Slovenia. Material costs of the implementation and mentorship costs are borne by the employer. The success rate of this examination is high and substantially better when compared to theoretical examinations. The applicants are relaxed as they carry out tasks and the examiners do not feel an excessive burden. In addition to demonstrating their professional skills, such tasks make it possible for applicants to show their resourcefulness and organisation skills which otherwise would not have come to light or would not have been subject to assessment. These properties, however, are essential for construction foremen. The impact of theoretical and practical knowledge uptake is more profound than it is at a written examination taken in the class.

The master craftsman examination is organised at **the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia**²⁸. A practical part of the examination consists of two examination units: the work examination is organised at the school workshop, and the master craftsman examination work takes place at the plant or at the applicant's premises. The master craftsman examination work concludes with a finished product or a service, whereby duration is not uniformly fixed and depends on the master craftsman title, while the work examination consist of a short, narrow-based task from a respective professional field.

The applicant's knowledge is being tested in a comprehensive manner and providers establish that both forms of the examination, i.e. a school form and a direct knowledge examination in the work process, are needed. The applicants find the practical knowledge examination particularly stressful as they come from the work environment in which customers are normally satisfied with their products or services, but then examiners at the national level might state that their competence is not adequate. They arrive at a conclusion that high-quality practical knowledge depends on a number of factors, yet it is of primary importance how demanding are the clients in their everyday work.

²⁸The description was drafted by Nataša Štim, MSc, from the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia. The master craftsman examination is charged from EUR 1439.66 to EUR 1627.44 since the Chamber as the provider has to provide for various materials, equipment, premises etc. for the applicants.

3.3.c) Describe the current relationship between academic standards, professional standards, and occupational standards in your country. Who owns and controls such standards?

In Slovenia, occupational standards form a basis for vocational education and training programmes as well as for certification systems leading to vocational qualifications. When designing occupational standards, all social partners are involved in both cases, i.e. companies, organisations, chambers, associations and ministries. However, there is a profound difference in assessment of qualifications resulting from respective standards - the contents of vocational qualifications included in a corresponding educational programmes are set by the Ministry of Education, and the qualifications which could be obtained through the certification system for recognitions of qualifications are impacted more strongly by other social partners in the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

There is a weak link between educational and employment segments in occupations or professions bound by a university educational programme. Universities and faculties are autonomous in designing the so-called academic standards. These standards have every right to bear the name academic standards; many faculties are of the view that they are the ones which in fact generate occupations in their domain. The exceptions are those educational institutions participating with professional chambers when drafting a study curriculum and conducting (pre)preparations for students taking a professional examination.

3.3.d) Has the issue been raised in your county of how the assessment practice should be balanced with the right of individuals to have their learning completely independent of assessment and recognition processes be retained? Describe the debate to date, if any.

The discussion on the competence for evaluation of vocational qualifications has been conducted indirectly in parallel to the establishment of the certification system for recognition of vocational qualifications. A lengthier debate could be expected upon the institutionalization of the National Qualifications Framework. As educational institutions have a leading role in the assessment and recognition of qualifications, it might be anticipated that the system for qualifications examination in the future will also be based on more formalized forms of evaluation and assessment.

Preparations for assessment and accreditation procedures are not formalized and run independently of the certification procedure. Individuals decide for themselves about participation in a preparatory course or might opt to directly test their knowledge, skills and competences. Programmes are left to the market and they are mostly offered by providers of assessment and awarding of knowledge, skills and competences.

3.3.e) How is the recognition of non-formal and informal learning quality-assured in your country? Who is responsible for the quality assurance process? How is the issue of quality assurance treated in the internationalisation context?

Responsibility for quality assurance of non-formal and informal learning is divided among different entities. The highest level includes the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, with the operative level consisting of the following entities:

- **The National Examinations Centre** controls the work of commissions by monitoring the work of commission members and the course of assessment and recognition of national vocational qualifications. If committee members are not qualified to work in the committee or if they violate regulations on the recognition of qualifications, the licence is taken away from them. A maximum of one member drafting the training and advanced education programmes, or preparing applicants for the examination can sit on the commission.

Members of the examination committees set up a database of questions and tasks in the National Examinations Centre for individual vocational qualifications requiring a written examination.

Written tests are submitted to the president of the commission one day prior to the examination (e.g. the vocational qualification road transport driver).

Also, committee members formulate assessment forms for the committee testing vocational qualifications in a practical examination. The forms contain certain criteria and standards for a certain task and a list of questions and answers for a written examination (e.g. the vocational qualifications chiropodist, make-up artist).

Committee members exchange views, experience in assessment and recognition procedures, evaluate individual questions and tasks within the closed expert forum. The ultimate aim of continuous training of committee members in preparation, monitoring and evaluation of assessment tools and of permanent contact within the forum is to provide for the external examination.

The National Examinations Centre would like for the members of assessment and awarding of vocational qualifications commissions to embrace certain ethical principles via training, which would consequently contribute to the high-quality recognition of NIL. Ethical principles refer to maintaining the integrity of an individual, communication skills and professionalism in assessment procedures.

- **The Chamber of Craft of Slovenia** with members of master craftsman examination committees. In order to assure quality, the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia published a special manual setting out clearly prescribed instructions for assessors about how to conduct knowledge assessment.
- **The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia** with providers for the foreman and manager examinations. Similar to other European countries, Slovenian public institutions cooperate with public organisations by setting up a network of committees for qualifications examination where the state has a limited role, and the quality to a large extent depends on the public recognition of acquired certificates.
- **Individual educational institutions** are responsible for the assessment of NIL in formal education system. Article 16 of the Vocational and Technical Education Act stipulates that the school council appoints quality assurance commission following a proposal by the principal. The Act does not exactly define the role of the commission in the assessment of NIL, while quality indicators for vocational education and training are set by the competent expert council.

3.4. Others

3.4.a) Provide any other technical arrangements that you think are the most important characteristics that exist in your country, which have not been addressed in above Component 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

As described under Item 3.1.b., a two-tier system for recognition of qualifications has been currently in place in Slovenia: young people have a possibility of obtaining qualifications primarily through a traditional school education system (in competence of the Ministry of Education), whereas adults can get (vocational) qualifications also through the certification system for recognition of qualifications for occupations not included in a formal education programme (in competence of the Ministry of Labour). The NIL recognition system in the Slovenian context is in the first place linked to the certification system for recognition of vocational qualifications, which is also legislation driven, and is implemented by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the National Examinations Centre. Thus, the account of technical arrangements under Items 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 particularly refers to the aforementioned certification system for recognition of vocational qualifications, and to a much lesser extent touches upon other arrangements discussed under Component 3. Let us just briefly repeat the latter:

- Master craftsman examination at the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia.
- Manager and foreman examinations at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.
- Formal education programmes in which work practice takes the form of practical work with an external provider.
- Formal education programmes in which NIL is recognised as a part of received obligations.

- Formal education programmes in which NIL is recognised as a matriculation requirement for certain educational programmes.
- Vocational and professional chambers.
- Individual companies and organisations.

To conclude, NIL in Slovenia is on the one hand consolidating as the autonomously regulated system provided by special state institutions within the remit of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and chambers; and on the other hand, it functions as the integrated system for NIL recognition within the formal education system.

COMPONENT 4: STAKEHOLDER BEHAVIOUR

Angelca Ivančič

Component 4.1. Characteristics of stakeholders

4.1.a) Identify all possible stakeholders involved (with specific characteristics) and complete a list below concerning non-formal learning and informal learning in your country to complement the list for Component 2.2. The 2.2 lists to map out governance and the role of government while this list aims to map out the relationships between providers of non-formal learning or types of informal learning, recognisers of such learning, recognition to be received, regulatory of such recognition, and main users of such recognition. Please note, due to the difference of nature of non-formal and informal learning, that the grid for non-formal learning uses a provider of non-formal learning or an input-side as a starting base- first column – as non-formal learning seems to be more recognised after going through a non-formal learning programme. On the other hand, the grid for informal learning uses output/ skills as a starting point because it is not feasible to list all types of informal learning where there is no such supplier as the individual is the active entity to create such learning opportunities. Therefore, there is a separate grid for non-formal and informal learning. The annex also aims to examine characteristics of users for aggregation of data, but please provide micro-level data about users in this section.

Non-formal learning (Characteristics of Stakeholders Grid)

Non-formal learning in Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-formal learning is of utmost importance for the development of human resources in NGOs in Slovenia. NGOs employ just a small number of people, most work on a voluntary basis, therefore the recognition of non-formal learning is very important to them. As there are no specialized formal programmes for volunteers and mentors of volunteer work, or other NGO employees, non-formal learning seems to have been the only suitable way of education. According to the research conducted by the Youth Guild in 2005 in which 440 young adults, mostly students, were interviewed, 80% of them participated in non-formal learning in addition to formal learning in the scope of the school system. More than half of the respondents were of the opinion that they did not have enough non-formal learning. Among the courses they attended most frequently were language, dance and computer courses as well as volunteer work. Most of the respondents thought that employers take non-formal learning of employees into consideration, while 17% felt that the employers do not take it into account.²⁹ MC Brežice (Youth Centre) carried out the research in 7 Slovenian regions bordering Croatia. The research included interviews with 107 individuals, out of which 46%

²⁹ Jože Gornik , a director of CNVOS (Association Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of NGOs), personal communication, December 19, 2006.

were male and 54% female. They found out that the state should give more support to non-formal learning programmes in the future so that they will be accessible to more people. NGOs organize non-formal learning in the following fields: communication and team work (11%), volunteer work (10%) and social inclusion (8%), democracy, human rights and protection of minorities (6%), organisation management (6%), intercultural learning (6%), European/active citizenship and participation (5%), computer courses (5%), partnership, network, coalition building (5%), financial and programme management (4%), PR (4%), regional planning and project partnership for EU programmes (4%), networking at the regional level (4%), foreign language courses (4%), development of local communities and countryside (4%), professional training of marginalized groups (3%), public-private partnership (2%), development of public policies and advocacy (1%), mediation (1%)... Most of the respondents highly valued non-formal learning.

After finishing such non-formal learning activities provided by NGOs, people usually obtain a supporting document attesting that they have successfully completed non-formal learning. The following tables provide the examples of recognition of non-formal learning, which are much rarer phenomenon than mere non-formal education.

Non-formal learning provider (e.g. universities, profit-making private companies, in-house company training, government, NGOs etc.)	Recognising body for non-formal learning (e.g. government, quasi-government, universities, companies, professional bodies, trade unions, etc.)	Types of recognition received (e.g. academic qualifications – degrees, diplomas, credits, awards, certificates, professional qualifications, etc.)	Regulator (e.g. quality assurance agency, professional body, government etc.)	Main user(s) (Specify)	
ECDL Contractors under the auspices of the Slovenian Society Informatika	Test centres perform examinations. Test centres – 16 were approved for issuing ECDL CORE in 2005 (basic certificate);	Certificate (confirming that the holder knows how to use a personal computer and general computer applications)	Approved body - ECDL Foundation (registered office in Dublin), supervision once a year (check some of the selected test	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working professionals
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People after military service
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Highly-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Low-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Retired people (Specify the retirement age in your country.) ³⁰

³⁰ According to Article 36 of the Pension and Disability Insurance Act (consolidated version) (ZPIZ-1-UPB4), Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 109/2006 as at August 23, 2006, the minimal conditions for retirement age are the following:

- (1) The insured person acquires the right to pension when he is 58, if he has 40 years of pension qualifying period (male) and 38 years of pension qualifying period for women.
- (2) The insured person has the right to pension when he is 63 years old (for male) and 61 years old (for woman), if he/she has 20 years of pension qualifying period.
- (3) The insured person has the right to pension when he is 65 years old (male) and 63 years old (woman) if he/she has at least 15 years of pension qualifying period.

However, Article 37 lowers the retirement age due to children.

- (1) The retirement age of the insured person from the previous Article is lowered for each born or adopted child, who is a citizen of Slovenia, if not agreed otherwise with an international agreement and for whom he/she took care for his/her upbringing at least 5 years, namely the retirement age to the insured person is lowered for each 8 months for each child, for 20

(testing centres)	7 approved test centres for ECDL Advanced and 3 test centres for ECDL CAD certificate		centres) The Slovenian Society Informatika checks all test centres once a year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (over 30 years old)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training) aged between 15/16-30
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify)

It has been possible to acquire the ECDL certificate in the Slovenian language since 2001. Until the end of 2006, 1850 certificates were issued, 13,000 examinations were conducted and the pass rate was 93%. The most numerous among the issued certificates were ECDL START certificates for 4 passed examinations (more than 1000), approximately 770 ECDL certificates were awarded for 7 examinations, whereas 50 ECDL ADVANCED certificates and 12 ECDL CAD certificates were issued. The ECDL Expert Certificate for the successfully passed examinations in 4 advanced modules was issued as well.³¹

ECDL is a project of the international association of professional informatics societies CEPIS (Council of European Professional Informatics Society). The Slovenian Society Informatika has been its member since 1998 and is the only holder of the ECDL licence in Slovenia.

The eligibility criteria for becoming a test centre are as follows: appropriate documents testifying that the organization was established at least five years ago and a positive balance on the bank account. The Slovenian Society Informatika examines the premises, and the assessors have to hold ECDL certificates. The ECDL examination is intended for everyone who uses contemporary computer tools at the workplace and is less suitable for informatics engineers because they have more in-depth knowledge of the subject. A new European diploma for the ICT field is in the pipeline for this category of users (EPIC – European Professional Informatics Certificate). However, ECDL is recommended to those informatics experts who are in charge of end users, or for workers without computer education who need to use computers in their work. The aim of the document is for an informatics expert to get acquainted with international standards and the level of complexity of individual tools expected from the users. The applicant has to bear the costs of the ECDL examination, however, test examinations are free. The curriculum is made available. The applicant can learn for himself/herself or s(he) can participate in the training provided by the test centre according to the prescribed curriculum.

months for 2 children and 36 months for three children. For each following child the lowering of the retirement age increases for 20 months.

(3) In cases from previous paragraphs the minimal retirement age from the previous Article is lowered up to 56 years of age for woman and 58 years of age for male.

³¹ See://www.ecdl.si/index.php?1ng=slo&gr1=News&id=2005080317333115 (11. 10. 2006)

NGO Youth Guild	Non-formal recognition, Entry and seal of the organization providing non-formal learning and the signature of the person in charge	Nefiks – non-formal index (a booklet with entries)	Youth Guild, no external quality assurance body	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working professionals
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People after military service
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Highly-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Low-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Retired people (Specify the retirement age in your country.)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (over 30 years old)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training) aged between 15/16-30
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify) Firstly, it was intended for all groups of people up to 33 years of age, however, nowadays also older people can use it.

The project Nefiks by the Youth Guild addresses the recognition of non-formal learning gained through activities of active citizenship, volunteer work, courses, summer schools, work abroad, scout activities, work offered through the student employment service. Approximately 1500 Nefiks were issued in the period from 2002 until the end of 2006. The NGO Youth Guild also maintains the computer database, namely, each entry into Nefiks is registered into their database which comes in handy if the applicant loses the booklet. The Youth Guild attempts to forge contacts with employers and promotes its project in cooperation with ministries, the Employment Service of Slovenia and Office of Youth (Ministry of Education and Sport). Nefiks enables employers to get updated information about all forms of non-formal learning that an applicant has participated in. Employers can consult the data as the contact person responsible for non-formal education is registered into Nefiks.

Non-formal learning in companies

Although the recognition of non-formal learning in companies has had a certain tradition in Slovenia, it has been mostly confined to some larger companies. Of course, there are many more companies who offer non-formal learning programmes without validation. In 2000, 4338 companies and other organisations in Slovenia provided in-house training (out of 6449

organisations). The number of participants stood at 196,623. The number of paid working hours in continuing vocational training courses totalled 5,418,079.³²

However, the certificates awarded in companies are very often only valid in those companies. The exception is, for example, the second largest Slovenian pharmaceutical company Krka offering the possibility for certification of 6 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) which are valid nationally (see component 2.1.b, National Professional Qualifications Act).

In-house company training Second largest Slovenian pharmaceutical company KRKA	3 assessors per applicant for each of 6 different NVQs in the field of pharmacy (assessors have to have a valid licence of the National Examinations Centre, they renew it every five years)	Certificates which are nationally valid	Krka reports to the National Examinations Centre, which submits the report to the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs Quality assurance performed by the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia (it also supervises professional work of assessors)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working professionals
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People after military service
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Highly-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Low-skilled immigrants
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired people (Specify the retirement age in your country.)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (over 30 years old)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training) aged between 15/16-30
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify) At least two years of work experience

More than 200 applicants obtained NVQs in Krka in the period from 2002 until the end of 2006. This company also performs assessments for the biggest pharmaceutical company in Ljubljana LEK and for pharmacies. The training for obtaining NVQ comprises 200 hours in Krka (the same amount of hours as for level 4 of education). They also provide non-formal

³² Statistical Yearbook 2004, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. See www.stat.si/letopis (December 18, 2006).

education which amounts to 30 hours per employee a year. It is not approved by authorised national bodies

In-house company training LITOSTROJ Provider of non-formal education that lasts 5 years	A commission which consists of Litostroj employees One engineer, a technical director, one holder of PhD in metallurgy	Diploma which is valid internally as level four of education	No quality assurance body	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working professionals
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People after military service
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Highly-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Low-skilled immigrants
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired people (Specify the retirement age in your country.)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (over 30 years old)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training) aged between 15/16-30
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify) At least finished primary school

No formal education programmes for foundry technicians have been available in Slovenia since 1995, therefore the company Litostroj needs to provide training for its employees. There are only 5 such foundries in the world. Litostroj is a world renowned company, therefore its internal certificate is recognized and highly valued in other foundries, while the Litostroj employees who decide to work abroad do not have any problems in finding a job. The costs for 5 years of training amounts to SIT 250,000 (EUR 1043) per person. In addition, the company annually spends SIT 10,000,000 (EUR 41,730) for other forms of non-formal learning.

In-house company house training	Assessors and	Internal document	No quality assurance body	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working professionals
				<input type="checkbox"/>	People after military service
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Highly-skilled immigrants
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Low skilled

Holding Slovenian Railways L.t.d. Training and validation of non-formal learning of executive employees	trainers				immigrants
	Have to meet the following criteria:			<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired people (Specify the retirement age in your country.)
	adequate level of education, passed professional examination, sufficient years of work experience			<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (over 30 years old)
				<input type="checkbox"/>	NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training) aged between 15/16-30
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify) Adequate level of education, no work experience required

In the Holding Slovenian Railways, the examination for executive employees is a prerequisite for holding executive posts. What is more, regular and occasional professional training and periodical assessments of knowledge are also required. In 2005, 526 employees participated in professional training of executive railways employees, out of which 4,538 participated in regular professional training and periodic assessments of knowledge of executive employees and 240 employees participated in the second regular and occasional professional training and periodic assessment of employees' knowledge.

The Holding intends to start the procedures for acquiring NVQs in accordance with the National Professional Qualifications Act, mainly for executive railway employees. They are currently elaborating the qualification structure for occupational profiles in transport activities (4 NVQs) and traction activities (5 NVQs). They aim to include more occupational profiles from the following fields in the future: activities of maintenance, line construction and electrotechnical activities.

Informal learning (Characteristics of Stakeholders Grid)

Types of skills acquired in informal learning (e.g. ICT skills by using computers, literacy by reading books, numeracy, business protocol, negotiation skills etc.)	Recognising body for informal learning	Types of recognition received	Regulatory body	Main users (specify)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Working professionals

Language skills	Language schools teachers	Verified certificate	National Examinations Centre (language programmes for adults)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People after military service
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Highly-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Low-skilled immigrants
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Retired people (Specify the retirement age in your country.)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (over 30 years old)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training) aged between 15/16-30
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify)

Language schools organize groups of foreign language learners according to their prior knowledge. In the school year 2003/2004, there were 1,609 verified and 2,957 non-verified foreign language programmes in Slovenia.³³ The National Examinations Centre performs quality assurance control for the verified foreign language programmes. Those programmes do not guarantee a recognised level of education, but the development of language competences. The verified documents applicants receive after the completion of such a programme enable them to get the job more easily.

Component 4.2. Access

4.2.a) What are the eligibilities to go through the recognition process? If it differs in different sectors/levels (e.g. HEd, VET, upper secondary, basic education, professional, etc.), describe different eligibilities for different levels/sectors.

At for the general level, the access to the accreditation of a vocational qualification (certification system) is regulated by the National Professional Qualifications Act, vocational standards and nationally accepted catalogue of standards of professional knowledge and skills for individual vocational qualifications. The National Professional Qualifications Act stipulates that the persons who want to participate in the certification process have to be at least 18 years old. Exceptionally, the procedure is also open to the persons who are younger than 18 years, but their status of student or apprentice has already expired, and they can prove that they have adequate work experience. Apart from general legal conditions, special conditions can also regulate the access. These are defined in the catalogue of standards of knowledge and skills for the concrete vocational qualification. Special conditions can include the accomplished formal education as well as the fulfilment of special psychological and physical conditions and work experience. The requirement for meeting special conditions depends on the type of NVQ and professional activity/branch.

³³ The Statistical Yearbook 2006, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. See www.stat.si/letopis (December 18, 2006).

When applicants enrol into vocational or professional education programmes, training organisations are expected to validate prior knowledge and skills of applicants and recognize already obtained national vocational qualification (see Component 2, 2.2.).

In the enrolment into formal education programmes, applicants have the right to have their non-formal learning recognised if they meet legally defined entry conditions (see 4.2.b and 3.1.b).

4.2.b) How many educational institutions (in comparison with the total number of educational institutions) at different levels practice the recognition of non-formal and informal learning as admission policy?

Entry conditions for formal educational programmes at different levels of education are determined by school legislation and programmes. However, the legislation that governs different levels of education as regards the entry conditions into formal education does not envisage the recognition of knowledge acquired in non-formal education and informal learning alongside the supporting documents testifying to the fulfilment of formal conditions (such as school certificates, school leaving exam (*matura*), credit points). Thus, the following persons are eligible to enrol into post-secondary vocational education programmes: those who passed a general and vocational school leaving examination, or (s)he passed a head clerk, foreman or master craftsman examinations, or (s)he has completed a school leaving examination in vocational school, has three years of work experience and accomplished exam in general subjects in the scope which is defined for a school leaving examination in secondary vocational school. Nevertheless, individual post-secondary vocational programmes can specify special talents, skills and psychophysical capacities, which are important for performing a certain profession and serve as a precondition for enrolment. For each post-secondary vocational education programme, a public tender is published every year and this determines which secondary vocational or professional and technical education programmes are adequate. The same principle also applies to the enrolment into vocational and secondary technical education programmes and higher education programmes (see also 3.1.b).

The exception is the recognition of work experience instead of adequate educational programme in enrolment into secondary vocational and technical education programmes.

Accreditation of prior learning in fulfilling study obligations in the programme

Respective legal acts state that adults can enrol into education and training programmes for youth which are adjusted to the needs and particularities of adults. Article 64 of the Vocational and Technical Education Act (2006) stipulates that educational organisations have to take into consideration non-formally acquired knowledge which the applicant proves with the examination and in other ways respectively. New regulations (a regulatory decree, instructions of the minister) are currently (May-June 2007) being elaborated for the level of vocational and secondary professional education and they will introduce a new procedure of accreditation and recognition of non-formal knowledge. However, educational organizations will be in charge for drafting detailed criteria.

The ways of adapting, which have been in force until now, are defined in the Guidelines for Adapting Vocational and Secondary Professional Education Programmes to Adults (1998) and were issued by the Ministry of Education and Sport. These guidelines state that the accredited adult education organization can recognize prior learning on the basis of authentic

instruments issued by other accredited educational organizations or the competent examination centre. The eligibility criteria are as follows: the adult education organization can recognize prior learning for professional theoretical subjects if the authentic instrument had not been issued more than 10 years ago. In case the authentic instrument is older, the applicant has to sit the examination. Educational organisations can take into consideration positively assessed subjects which are equal according to the standard and which they examine on the basis of the subject name and comparison of the catalogue of knowledge, however, the difference in the scope of hours must not exceed more than 30%. A practical part of the educational programme can be recognized to those adult participants in education who can prove with the acknowledgement of an employer that they had performed adequate work for the employer in a period which is at least twice longer than is the duration of practical training in the formal education programme. Prior to the beginning of the education process, the adult participant in education can demand that the organisation assesses his/her prior knowledge linked to the individual subject or subject field in the programme. In such a way, the scope and the length of adult education can be shortened because they do not need to complete the whole programme. Schools and principals of educational organizations respectively decide about taking decisions in relation to the adaptation of the process of education and recognition of prior learning.

Unfortunately, the data on the number of educational organizations which perform recognition of non-formal and informal learning as a part of entry conditions is not available.

In the school years 1998/99 and 1999/2000, an extensive evaluation of formal secondary education of unemployed and the evaluation of the attempts of post-secondary vocational programmes for adults were conducted. As regards the recognition of prior learning, the results showed that educational institutions to a large extent recognize practical work in educational programmes on the basis of supporting documents of employers testifying to the adequate work experience.

The Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act defines expert grounds which in great detail determine the procedures and competences behind recognition of non-formally acquired knowledge in the process of education.

4.2.c) Describe the situation of access to information and communication. Is there one-stop information service centre or help-desk concerning questions which may arise about the recognition system? What medium has been used (leaflet, CD-ROM, website, etc)? If there is a website, please provide the figure of 'click ratio (how many clicks per month – please provide all the records available since the launch of the website.)'. Attach an example. What media channels have been used to publicise the existence of such medium (newspaper, journals, free journals, publicity on the metro, etc)? Specify the names of such media channels.

Adults (and youth) can obtain relevant information on the recognition and validation of prior knowledge and experience in the following ways:

- Information and Counselling Centres in adult education: in the network of 14 centres, all adults have free and equal access to all information connected to education and learning of adults. The information is provided over the phone, in personal communication, by E-mail and with the materials. Great emphasis is placed on the

promotion of those possibilities through local newspapers (also with Counselling E-forum for readers), radio (live broadcasts), television and web sites of counselling centres. Twelve thousand adults annually visit information and counselling centres. One can access the information on all counselling centres also at the following web address: <http://isio.acs.si>.

- The web portal of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. The Counselling E-forum - <http://www.acs.si/svetovalni/> targets all those who are interested in obtaining information on the supply of education and training for adults in terms of programmes, providers, forms of education and learning as well as other information connected with continuing and further education and learning. Approximately 3000 visits of the web site of the Counselling E-forum have been recorded annually.
- Counsellors for National Vocational Qualifications: Slovenia has 292 trained counsellors for National Vocational Qualifications, who are usually employed in organizations assessing individual vocational qualifications or in counselling centres for adult education. Counselling for National Vocational Qualifications is a complex activity comprising: informing the applicant about the procedure of validating National Vocational Qualifications, guidance in selecting the field and the level of difficulty of validation of National Vocational Qualifications, providing help with collecting adequate documents and supporting documents of acquired prior knowledge and assessment and relevance of documents. The counsellors also help the candidates prepare a portfolio and offer versatile support in overcoming the obstacles which an applicant might encounter on his/her way to acquiring National Vocational Qualifications. More information is available on the web address of NRP - National Reference Point for NVQs: <http://www.nrpslo.org>
- Slovenian Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance - CIPSeS: The network of 30 CIPSeS (there are different organizational forms in regard to their size). As a part of their activities they offer information on the possibilities of education and learning. Youth as well as adults - especially unemployed - address questions to them in relation to the validation of prior knowledge and experience, however, this represents a smaller part of their activities.
- The central information and counselling point in the sense of ONE-STOP INFORMATION SERVICE CENTRE for validation of non-formally acquired knowledge does not exist in Slovenia yet.

Component 4.3 Participation

4.3.a) How many people have actually taken up the process at different educational levels? Provide any evidence on the patterns of participants (gender, age, socio-economic groups, ethnicity, employment status, marital status, educational levels and their family educational levels)?

No data available

4.3.b) Provide details of any survey – national household survey, user survey, etc. – that explains any linkage of the background of participants and the uptake of the recognition process.

No survey in Slovenia, either the census or the European Social Survey, has yet touched the matter of recognition process and applicant's background. The closest it came to this issue was the Participation in Adult Education Survey carried out in 2004 by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. There was a question asking non-participants and inquiring them under which conditions would they be prepared to participate in educational activities by offering multiple choices and answers. Possible answers included one relating to the recognition of non-formal education and learning. At the level of the whole population, recognition of non-formal education and training would induce approximately 60% of non-participants to consider it as well as 91.2% in the 16 to 24 age group, 87% of the 25 – 39 age group and 70.8% of the 40 – 49 age group. Apart from these, 85.2% of those who have finished a four-year upper secondary education programme³⁴ would consider education and training. Recognition was an important issue in all subpopulations and recorded over 50% of answers. It came as the fifth most important reason of the employed respondents without or with limited supervisory responsibilities.

4.3.c) Provide evidence, if any, that the recognition of non-formal and informal learning worked as an innovative pathway for disadvantaged groups to get on the 'learning leads to learning' and 'training leads to training' track? Who constitutes the 'disadvantaged group' in your country?

See Component 5 Case Study: Home care worker. The "disadvantaged group" in Slovenia consists of migrants, dropouts, ethnic groups, unemployed, handicapped and women.

Component 4.4. Incentives and disincentives

4.4.a) Provide evidence of any, if not all, that the recognition of non-formal and informal learning functions as a transitional or multi-directional pathway in your country (e.g. a way to further studies, shorten study period, find a job, change a job, get a better salary, etc.) If it functions as a way to find a job from the unemployment status, is there any evidence that the length of unemployment influences the transition.

Since recognition of non-formal and informal learning is an exception in the Slovenian formal education system practice and largely depends on individual schools and higher education institutions as well as individual teachers and lecturers, there has been no systemic regulation of the effects and also no studies dealing with this issue have yet been conducted. National Vocational Qualifications obtained according to the National Professional Qualifications Act represent the only existing mode of such recognition. These qualifications are expected to be recognised when enrolling into further studies and to improve individual employment prospects of the employed and unemployed alike. As already stressed, for the time being they are not a part of the education system and are formally not considered in the access to further education. However, some good practice examples are in place where National Vocational Qualifications obtained in the certification system are recognised and individual training programmes are adjusted accordingly (see Component 5).

³⁴ This was the most important reason for this group out of 17 possibilities.

Considering labour market outcomes, except for certain economic branches who have taken account of National Vocational Qualifications in their collective agreements (road economy sector, health and social care activities), the value of these qualifications in the employment system has not yet been regulated by respective state or private legislation and they have no systematic effect on individual labour market outcomes. The treatment mostly depends on individual employers. There are good practice examples where National Vocational Qualifications enable access to secure jobs and to better salary such as social care sector (see the case study in Component 5), but there is no follow-up system in place which could provide information for the whole population obtaining National Vocational Qualifications.

Since 2004, the Government scheme intended for improving educational attainment of the unemployed 'Programme 5,000/10,000+' also enables assessment and recognition of National Vocational Qualifications in the certification system. Twenty five unemployed persons passed the system in 2004. In 2005, a new activity was introduced – preparatory training for assessment and certification of qualifications. Consequently, no figures on numbers passing the assessment and recognition system are available for 2005; they are replaced by numbers of unemployed participating in preparatory training. No evaluation of effects of qualifications obtained in this way has been carried out yet.

4.4.b) Provide evidence, if any, of detailed case studies where the actual length of studies was shortened by the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (e.g. number of such cases, the maximum and minimum reduced length and thus, the costs of the study, the most practised subject areas, etc.)

Educational institutions are in charge of the implementation of procedures of recognition of non-formal and informal learning of adults on the basis of which the individuals may be exempted from parts (subjects) of training. No data about this has been made available yet because the training organisations are not obliged to submit this information. In the school years 1998/1999 and 1999/2000, two evaluation studies were performed in the field of formal education of adults (secondary vocational and professional, and post secondary vocational education) and they dealt with the questions of adaptation of formal education programmes to adults. On the basis of their results, one can conclude that training providers most frequently recognise work experience of participants based on supporting documents (acknowledgement) of employers (see 4.2.b). Such practices are more frequent in post-secondary vocational education programmes. According to the study from 1999/2000, 14.5% of adults who were included in post secondary vocational education programmes were exempted from practical training due to their work experience.

4.4.c) Provide data, if any, of the returns of investments for different stakeholders. Any evidence of better private returns of investment (e.g. earnings) afterwards? Any evidence of fiscal returns? Any evidence of recognition that this type of learning contributes to democracy and citizenship as social outcome of learning?

No evidence exists. However, based on some cases it may be suggested that everything depends on individual employers and individual economic branches. Some people who obtained NVQs reported about improvement in their salary. For the evidence that this type of learning contributes to democracy and citizenship as a social outcome of learning see component 1.5. Social developments.

4.4.d) Provide data, if any, of practices of fiscal incentives for employers (e.g. tax incentives).

In the Personal Income Tax Act I, which was in force until January 1 2007, there were no tax incentives for employers who invest in validation of non-formal and informal learning. At the same time, the Personal Income Tax Act II, which has been in force after January 1 2007, does not provide any tax incentives for employers who perform validation of non-formal and informal learning of workers (Article 20). These are the latest amendments to the Personal Income Tax Acts, further changes of such laws are not envisaged for now (the end of March 2007).

4.4.e) Has the government made an explicit statement about promoting equity and social cohesion by using the recognition of non-formal and informal learning? If so, what kinds of schemes exist?

Strengthening of social and territorial cohesion is defined in terms of (i) decrease of regional disparities in employment, unemployment and productivity; (ii) prevention of exclusion from the labour market and strengthening social inclusion, above all of deprived groups (e.g. disabled, ethnic minorities etc.) (The Reform Programme for the Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, October 2005: 30). The main Government strategic document Slovenia's Development Strategy highlights the promotion of equity and social cohesion as a part of the national priority within the title 'Modern Social State and Greater Employment'. The creation of the labour market conditions which will enable greater participation of excluded groups in the labour market is among key goals connected to social and regional cohesion. The recognition of informal knowledge and competencies in employment is listed among measures facilitating improvement in the adaptability of the labour market (UMAR 2005:37). It has to be stressed that the first legal basis for certification of qualifications not based solely on formal training was provided by the Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act which limited access to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to the unemployed population. The Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act (§ 53.c), which is currently in force, defines certification of NVQs as means for the unemployed to obtain or improve their professional competencies for work.³⁵ Also, the Master Plan for Adult

³⁵Article 53 of the Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act sets out :“In order to improve their labour market prospects unemployed persons who possess or acquire knowledge and skills required to perform an occupation, can – on the basis of their employment plan – get enrolled into the process of certification of NVQs in line with the respective legislation. The applicants are entitled to financial subsidies and to the remuneration of costs as stated in the bylaw defined by the paragraph 51 of this Act.”

Education until 2010 identifies the strengthening of social cohesion as one of strategic goals in adult education. According to this document, the priority areas in adult education encompass general non-formal education of adults, education for increasing educational level of adults and education and training for the development of the labour force. Assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning are in line with this document as one of the crucial supporting activities for realisation of the goals stated.

Currently, this national policy orientation is most evident in the Programme of the Active Employment Policy adopted by the Government. As stressed in the previous paragraph, the Government scheme intended for improving educational attainment of the unemployed 'Programme 5,000/10,000+' has also enabled assessment and recognition of NVQs in the certification system since 2004. In 2005, preparatory training for NVQ assessment and certification was introduced within this scheme (see the Employment Service of Slovenia 2004, 2005).

4.4.f) Describe a situation in your country if stigmatisation exists for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (as opposed to the formal recognition) in the academic world and/or in the labour market? If yes, have there been any attempts to change such effects and to increase up-take of such recognition? What strategies have been tested so far?

There has not been any explicit evidence so far pointing to the stigmatisation stemming from the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. However, as already described in Component 1.6, there is general reasoning that any qualification not obtained in formal education cannot provide standards of knowledge and skills qualitatively equivalent to those obtained from formal education. The recognition of non-formal education and work experience has been limited to secondary and post-secondary education, higher education institutions are at the very beginning of the discourse. Just a few of them are exploring opportunities for an experimental introduction. No alternative ways of access of non-traditional students to higher education institutions exist. Also, at the level of secondary and post-secondary vocational education, links between formal and non-formal education have not yet been adequately developed in practice. The main concern of the education system about the certification system has been to make it clear that it cannot deliver formal educational qualifications. It might lead to formal education but not unconditionally. It appears that there is a belief among professionals that recognition of non-formal and informal learning may be appropriate in providing competencies for the labour market, but not for the delivery of complex academic knowledge, skills and generic qualifications. Such attitude may have additionally contributed to the fact that the system is more characteristic of lower level qualifications of a narrow occupation/job specific profile and for occupations for which no formal training programmes exist. However, our case studies carried out so far do not empirically support any such assumptions.

It is also typical that social partners in the labour market have not yet provided any legal incentives for participation in the system of assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, which may indicate some mistrust on their part.

In order to accelerate the development in this area, a strategy of the development of the National Qualifications Framework has been formulated, which stresses that the qualifications framework has to take account of non-formal and informal learning through the assessment and recognition system. The first step to the promotion of the system was done by its acknowledgment by the National Standard Educational Qualification System (KLASIUS). There are also negotiations being conducted with social partners in order to assure that

collective agreements at the branch level will systematically ensure economic and social value of qualifications based on non-formal and informal education and learning. On the other hand, the work on the development of modular organisation and competence based training has been intensified in the VET system. Modules should provide a reference point for recognition of non-formal learning in the formal education system.

4.4.g) Describe any incentives and levers that promoted public-private partnership in the recognition practices in the labour market? What schemes or incentives exist to encourage SMEs to engage in the recognition arrangements?

No data available.

Component 4.5. Others

4.5.a) Provide any arrangements of collective bargaining that exists in your country. If there are accomplishments gained by collective bargaining for recognition of non-formal and informal learning, please provide details (driving forces, technical arrangements, beneficiaries, etc.)

There are no arrangements regarding recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the majority of concluded collective agreements. The exception is the collective agreement for road transport sector. In the normative section, there are two tariff scales out of nine (Article 7) where NVQs within the certification system are listed as an option besides formal education. The entry condition for the work in the 3rd tariff scale (moderately demanding work) requires, in terms of education, a two-year vocational education and training or finished USO³⁶ programme and 2 years of work experiences or a NVQ. Such a solution would relate to the following occupations: roadmen, motorway maintenance worker and machinist on light building machinery. Occupations in the 4th tariff scale (demanding work) need two and a half years or three years of vocational education and training, or finished USO programme and 10 years of work experiences or a NVQ within the certification system. Thus, the recognition of non-formal education and informal learning is possible for those working as bricklayers and stonemasons, building frame and related trades, concrete placers and machinists of heavy building machinery, drivers, toll collectors and squad leaders. For the rest of the tariff scales, up to the most demanding ones, an attestation of finished formal education is required.

4.5.b) Provide any other technical arrangements that you think are the most important characteristics that exist in your country, which have not been addressed in above Component 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

See Component 3.3.

³⁶ The Act on Oriented Education (1983, Articles 61, 62, 63 and 64) stipulated that USO programmes were designed for persons who have already acquired professional education and for those who have finished compulsory 8 years of primary education without successfully completing it. Such programmes offered systematic introduction to work, acquisition of specific work related knowledge and skills as well as work experience, also basic and specific knowledge of safety at work. Furthermore, participants gained knowledge on self-management, organisation of work, management, technology, techniques and production processes in firms since the delivery of the programmes was predominantly in such environment and the emphasis of the programme was on practical knowledge and skills.

INTRODUCTION

The NVQ assessment and recognition system was formally introduced into the Slovenian context by the National Professional Qualifications Act (2000, OG 81/2000). The Act stipulates procedures for the elaboration of standards of professional knowledge and skills, as well as their assessment and recognition. The Act emphasizes learning achievements regardless of the possible options through which knowledge, skills and competences were acquired. NVQ assessment and recognition has been designed for adults only and proceeds on the basis of direct demonstration of knowledge, skills and competences, or on the basis of documents and other proof collected in the applicant's portfolio.

Many positive effects were anticipated as recognition and certification system for non-formally gained knowledge, skills and competences was implemented, but certain doubts and potential threats were expressed as well.

The NVQ certificate has won recognition in some professional sectors five years after the adoption of the Act, while other sectors still harbour mistrust towards the certification system. Despite of the latter sectors, positive effects of NVQ certification have been recorded at individual, local, entrepreneurial and national level. The state benefits from the system because the qualification structure has been improved and consequently this has had positive effects on currently unstimulative national statistics on the qualification structure of the labour force. Employers in particular praise a possibility of speedier adaptation of the labour force to new needs of the employers, as well as highlighting reduced time and lower costs of NVQ acquisition in comparison with school education programmes.

Anticipated positive effects can be classified as economic, social and individual (Šlander).

Economic effects:

- reduced time for gaining qualification and thus lower costs for the state, employer and individual;
- increasing the visibility of learning outcomes and thereby enhancing benefits for future economic gains;
- facilitating individuals the search for the right job, and for employers to find the right employee;
- supporting / promoting matching competences with the demands of the labour market and therefore increasing labour market mobility.

Social effects:

- promoting transformation from a traditional learning concept during youth to lifelong learning and mobility within the education system;
- enhancing flexibility and individualisation of learning pathways;
- improving social inclusion by integrating unprivileged/non-traditional participants;
- improved qualificational and educational structure;
- developing social climate, therefore enabling individuals to make a smoother transition from the education system to labour market.

The most positive effects can be observed in individuals who opted for NVQ acquisition by way of assessment and recognition, with positive effects being most pronounced in those who were unsuccessful at school. A few of the positive effects are enumerated in this section:

- expanding opportunities for individuals to obtain NVQs according to his/her interests, learning abilities and labour market needs, better chances for career development;

- boosting self-confidence and motivation for lifelong learning, bigger interest for discovering or identifying one's talents;
- upgrading the already acquired education with up-to-date qualifications, new qualifications and retraining of employed and unemployed, improved employability and mobility of the labour force at national and European labour market;
- new possibilities for NVQ acquisition for dropouts and other groups soon to be socially excluded;
- giving more options to individuals in terms of time, place ... learning;
- offering a "second chance" to dropouts.

Although NVQ assessment and recognition system confronted a number of obstacles in first five years of its existence; a number of positive experiences both in the economic sector and in social services (Report on the Implementation of the National Professional Qualifications Act 2004) could be identified:

- National Professional Qualifications Act enables quick responses according to changes in work processes;
- procedures of the determination of knowledge and competence have been shortened and costs have been reduced;
- applicants have the possibility of direct assessment and recognition organized by recognition providers;
- a quicker response to changes in work processes which are on the increase both in terms of size and frequency;
- employers are able to reallocate workers easier and to discover hidden potentials of their employees, the system helps employers in recruitment of new employees;
- certificate granted according to the National Professional Qualifications Act enables the applicants to acquire vocational qualifications required by the economy as they obtain qualifications for occupations enabling them to get the job immediately.

Local employment arrangements have been set up in some local environments. They also intend to deal with the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Here is an example of the local employment pact Maribor.

The employment pact contract constitutes a strategic and structural framework for the realization of the local employment pact in the area of Maribor. Public and local sectors have been involved in the preparation of the pact:

- Regional employment service
- Maribor regional services
- town of Maribor
- developmental agencies of the region
- local employers and employees representatives
- educational institutions
- other non-governmental and non-profit organizations

Incorporation of all the relevant local factors is in fact the key criterion for the successful realization of the pact.

It is also necessary for the stakeholders at the national and regional levels to connect their endeavours for the implementation of the local employment pact. The purpose of the pact is to set up an efficient partnership at the local level in order to harmonise employment policies at the local level as well as to carry out efficient measures on the labour market to boost competitiveness and common welfare.

The main goals are the following:

- increasing the employability of the youths (up to 25 years of age);

- raising the employability of long-term unemployed (aged 45 years or more);
- improving the employment and creating new jobs in the field of social services, healthcare, renewable sources and other developing areas;
- setting up a flexible system of short-term training according to temporary labour market needs;
- intensifying information, counselling, motivation;
- developing and making use of the coaching model in the companies in order to increase competitiveness and thus save jobs;
- developing and putting into place a model for validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in the work environment and other non-formal settings for increased competitiveness and worker mobility.

There are also some ideas on how to structure the records of non-formally gained knowledge in Slovenia. The next section highlights a good practice example of such projects – Nefiks - Index of non-formal education.

The main purpose of the project is to create a unified system of recording all non-formally gained knowledge and participation in activities. Its basic idea is to attribute greater value to non-formal education of the youth taking place in various institutions and levels.

Basically, all non-formally acquired knowledge is written down in a small booklet called index. The index “Nefiks” has been designed for various target groups, ranging from pupils, students to unemployed, the only condition being that they have to be at least 14 years old.

The project does not aim to lessen the importance of formal education, but to assert non-formal and informal learning as a supplement to formal education. Nefiks is complementing EU efforts for assessment and transparency of qualifications and competences.

The mission of the project is to enforce social validation of non-formally acquired knowledge and to contribute to better employability of youth on the labour market. Some of the main objectives are as follows:

- enabling systematic recording of non-formal education
- improving personal and professional development of individuals
- collecting data on non-formal training and informing Nefiks users
- offering personal guidance and counselling to the youth in their professional development
- establishing links between employers, faculties and students which enhances transparency of their needs.

Nefiks can be used in the following fields:

- Personal growth: ability to systematically monitor and upgrade one's personal growth.
- Easier preparation of the personal CV.
- Knowledge self-evaluation.
- Nefiks database: all index holders are registered.
- Links between employers and unemployed.

We shall now present the NVQ in the social care sector which can be seen as one of the most advanced cases of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The Social Chamber of Slovenia represents the main professional association in social welfare. It was established in 1993 on the basis of the Social Security Act and upon the initiative launched by a group of social welfare experts. It brings together professional workers, co-workers, other employees and volunteers of different profiles. The Chamber's activities, projects and tripartite financing of its operations (budget, membership fees, own activities, donations) enforces the principles of professional equality and autonomy, open communication, respect for diversity of professions and a balanced representation of public, non-government and private sector in social welfare.

The tasks of the Social Chamber directly or indirectly connected with NVQs are the following:

- determining training programmes;
- adopting the code of ethics for social welfare workers, promoting and monitoring its implementation and taking actions against violations;
- cooperating in the elaboration of legal regulations and expert grounds for social welfare programmes;
- launching initiatives for new vocational standards and catalogues.

The Social Chamber was instrumental in formulation of the following vocational standards until 2006:

- home care worker
- sick attendant in a social welfare institution,
- assistant sick attendant.

All vocational standards have also been approved by the Expert Council for Vocational Education and Training and the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

The vocational standard for the social network organiser is in the pipeline.

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION PROCEDURES FOR HOME CARE WORKERS

It is worth mentioning at the outset that the NVQ home care worker has already won recognition in the local environment. In the light of the rapidly ageing population, its prospects for development remain bright.

The NVQ for practicing the profession of a homecare worker can be granted to a person who has successfully completed primary school, is at least 25 years old and has a 5-year experience of working with people. The applicant also has to finish a social welfare training programme in social care (Rules on Standards and Norms in Social Welfare Services, OG, 120/2005). Having obtained the NVQ, level IV on the work complexity scale is acknowledged to the applicant. The vocational qualification cannot be acquired after the completion of vocational or professional education programmes.

In 2006, a new vocational standard was adopted which will serve as the basis for the reform of the NVQ certification catalogue. The entry requirements in the catalogue may change.

5.1. Economic benefits

5.1. a) Shortening the formal education process and thus reducing direct costs of learning and opportunity costs for individuals

Vocational qualifications for home care worker cannot be acquired following the completion of vocational or professional education programmes. The average duration of NVQ acquisition process (pursuant to the National Professional Qualifications Act (OG 118/2006) is somewhere between 3 or

4 months and takes a shorter time to complete when compared to the educational programme at complexity level IV expecting to last three years.

Up to date, only women have participated in assessment and recognition of the NVQ home care worker. 13 certificates were granted in 2000 as a part of the experimental implementation of NVQ assessment and recognition procedures, the number of the awarded certificates escalated to 183 from 2000 to 2005 (included). Data analysis includes 170 certificate holders from the period from 2003 to 2005. No certificates were granted in 2001 and 2002, while the data for 2006 has not been collected yet.

Certificate holders enrolled into the NVQ assessment and recognition system with various prior formal education :

Table 1: Formal education levels of certificate holders

Completed educational programmes	Complexity level	Numerical data	Share %
Primary school programme	II	70	41%
Lower and secondary vocational education programme	III and IV	75	44%
Secondary technical / professional education programme	V	24	14%
Post-secondary vocational education programme	VI	1	1%
Total		170	100%

It is evident from the education structure that most participants in the process of certification of non-formally gained knowledge have finished a vocational school. The level of their formal education does not increase with the certificate, but their mobility on the labour market is improved. They acquire appropriate qualification for a home care worker, which they were not in a position to acquire with their prior formal education..

The individuals who enrolled into NVQ assesment and recognition with completed primary school as their prior formal education increased their level of education from level II to IV and thus improved their position on the labour market.

It has already been mentioned that the NVQ acquisition process lasts on average from 3 to 4 months, which considerably shortens time in comparison with related formal educational programmes. Thus, the NVQ system significantly boosts responsiveness to the labour market needs. The costs of NVQ acquisition are also much lower: the price of NVQ assessment and recognition procedure amounts to SIT 78,000 /EUR 325.49 (gross) per applicant.

- The approximate price of a 120-hour training programme is SIT 152,000 / EUR 634.28. The programmes are most frequently financed by the Employment Service of Slovenia (for the unemployed applicants) or by the employer, the costs are only rarely borne by the applicant.

5.1.b) Increasing the visibility of non-formal and informal learning outcomes and thus enhancing potential benefits for future economic gains

The Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2006-2010 (OG 39/2006) sets out macroeconomic and social aspects of Slovenia's development. Slovenia pursues a long-term objective of sustainable welfare for its people, hence it is necessary to exceed the EU average development rate and alleviate risks in social welfare in the next ten years.

By taking the Lisbon Strategy and Slovenia's Development Strategy into account, this period should, apart from other trends, also be characterised by the following development trends directly linked to education and employment, which also extend to social welfare:

- increased employment, primarily of older and young employment seekers;
- increased participation of youth and adults in education (15-19 age bracket - 80% participation rate, 19-23 age bracket - 55% participation rate, improved educational structure and more lifelong learning);
- speedier development of service sector, including public services in health care, social welfare and education;
- quicker development of market oriented services, also in "social" services, and overcoming barriers in the EU internal market.

Slovenia's Development Strategy emphasizes the fact that the period ahead calls for changes in overall social policies, modernisation of social protection systems, increased goal-orientedness of social policies, while demographic changes press for special arrangements in relation to financial sustainability and system stability, implementation of different forms of public-private partnership, increased business streamlining of social systems and greater individual responsibility.

Needs for service provision in social care are linked to actual estimated needs in national strategies, while specific needs are determined by municipalities in their districts by considering findings and possibilities for organising the scope of public services and setting up professional networks.

Having obtained the NVQ home care worker, level IV of work complexity is recognised to the applicant. The collective agreements from the social welfare sector make provisions for inclusion of NVQ certificate holders into appropriate wage brackets.

5.1.c) Improving the allocation of human capital within organisations by matching the appropriate demands and supplies of skills and competencies

The Resolution on National Social Assistance Programme 2006-2010 (OG of RS, No. 39/2006) states that home care work is to be provided for a minimum of 10,000 people above 65 years of age. When considering the number of currently employed in the area, estimation in the previous national welfare programmes (by 2005) and expected increased scope of home care workers, we estimate that job positions for at least 1500 professional workers – home care workers - have to be created until 2010 (Rationale for Vocational Standards in Social Services, 2006).

The vocational standard, which serves as the basis for the catalogue of knowledge, skills and competences for the NVQ home care worker, also defines occupational competences. The applicant:

1. Plans, prepares, performs and controls his/her work which has been approved by the coordinator.
2. Performs nursing and care at the individual's home.
3. Stimulates organisation and maintenance of the individual's social network.
4. Takes action in the unexpected situations and conducts basic first aid procedures.
5. Assists with household chores.
6. Encourages healthy lifestyle.
7. Performs nursing and care according to valid standards and social welfare standards.
8. Uses energy, material, resources and time rationally.
9. Protects his/her own health, health of others and the environment, prevents infections.
10. Communicates with co-workers, individuals and professional services.
11. Develops entrepreneurial qualities, skills and behaviour.
12. Employs modern ICT.

Findings of the study carried out by Ms Hrovatič (2006) indicated that both certificate holders and employers place greater emphasis on the work experience during acquisition of required knowledge and skills for work in social care (certificate holders 48%, employers 51%), however, the influence

of education/training on competence development and acquisition was also quite strongly pronounced (certificate holders 37%, employers 41%).

Based on the catalogue of knowledge, skills and competences, the acquisition of NVQ proceeds on the basis of the assessment procedure of the knowledge and skills, or on the basis of procedure for recognition of prior knowledge and skills (portfolio assessment).

Due to the mutual impact of education and work on competence acquisition, applicants (usually) undergo both types of assessment of knowledge, skills and competences.

Having obtained the NVQ certificate home care worker, certificate holders find employment at level IV of work complexity. They are usually employed in organisations and institutions who provide social home care. Such services are also offered by public institutions, but also concessionaires and private institutions.

5.1.d) Reducing skills shortages or skills mismatch by allowing more mobility within the labour market (occupational mobility)

Social care is designed for people who need assistance in their daily routine as they are no longer capable of taking care of themselves because of old age, handicap or disease. The Rules on Standards and Norms in Social Welfare Services (1995) lay down that social care primarily takes the form of the following two social welfare services: home care worker and social service network organiser.

The National Social Welfare Programme (2000) and the Programme for Welfare Development of the Elderly (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, 1997) determined the scope of public services until 2005 by formulating the following objectives:

- provide social care for 1.8% of people older than 65 years of age and for 400 handicapped, which in total represents services for 5000 users;
- guarantee service providers: they can be public social care institutions in social welfare, such as nursing homes for the elderly, social work centres or independent public institutions and other private providers with appropriate operating licences and awarded concessions, thereby making provisions for professional management and services; 50 managers and 1000 direct service providers were anticipated.

In the light of increased labour market needs (ageing population ...), the Resolution on the National Social Welfare Programme (OG 39/2006) envisages a substantial increase in the scope of services:

- providing social care at home for a minimum of 3% of people above 65 years of age and including at least 0.05% of other adults who need assistance at home or mobile assistance due to mental, physical or sensorial handicap, grave illness or other reasons.

Social care would thus be provided for at least 10,000 people older than 65 years and a minimum of 900 other persons. Hence, it follows that Slovenia has a shortage of social carers.

As we have already mentioned, 182 certificates were granted in the period 2000 - 2005.

Table 2: Number of awarded certificates

Year	Number of certificates
2000	13 (experimental group)
2001	0
2002	0
2003	59
2004	70
2005	40

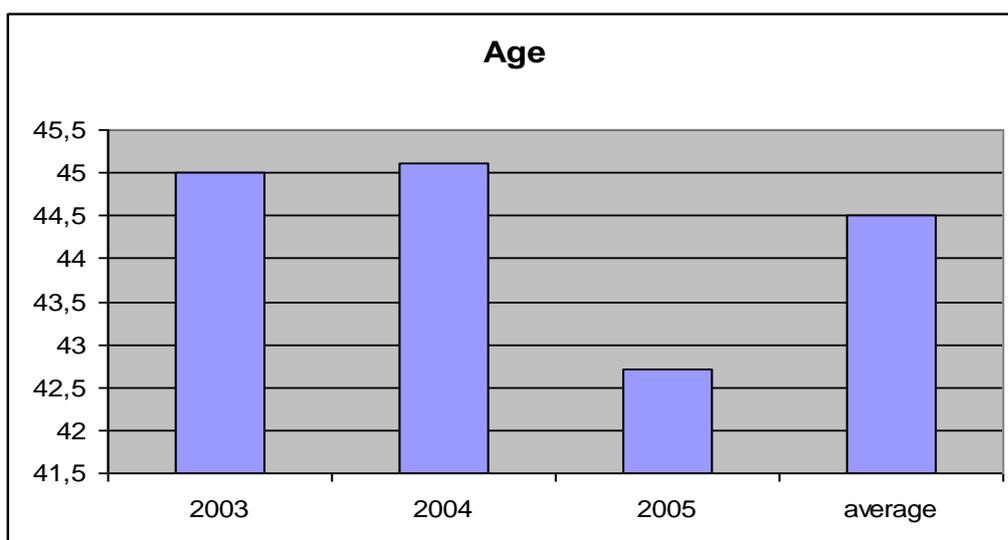
Total	182
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The estimation from 2000 showed that 800 individuals were employed in social care, and the National Social Welfare Programme (2000) anticipated 1000 direct service providers, while the Resolution on the National Social Welfare Programme adopted this year states that the need for at least additional 1000 direct providers can be foreseen. The extra number of providers will partly be covered with retraining of the unemployed in cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia.

5.1.e) Ensuring labour force to support economic growth by the active use of potential labour population (older workers, women, immigrants, unemployed youth etc.)

Such programmes promise active participation of potential labour population. This is the only programme intended for uneducated or undereducated women (Table 1). They represent a marginal group of women with lower employability and their average age is from 43 to 45. This distinctive feature makes the programme eligible for partial co-financing by the Employment Service of Slovenia within the system for retraining of workers from declining industries (textile industry, footwear...).

Graph 1: Age of certificate holders



5.1.f) Ensuring labour force to support economic growth by improving productivity of the current labour force

The qualification system is also open to individuals who already work as home care workers. By having their knowledge and work experience assessed, they maintain their eligibility to stay on the job.

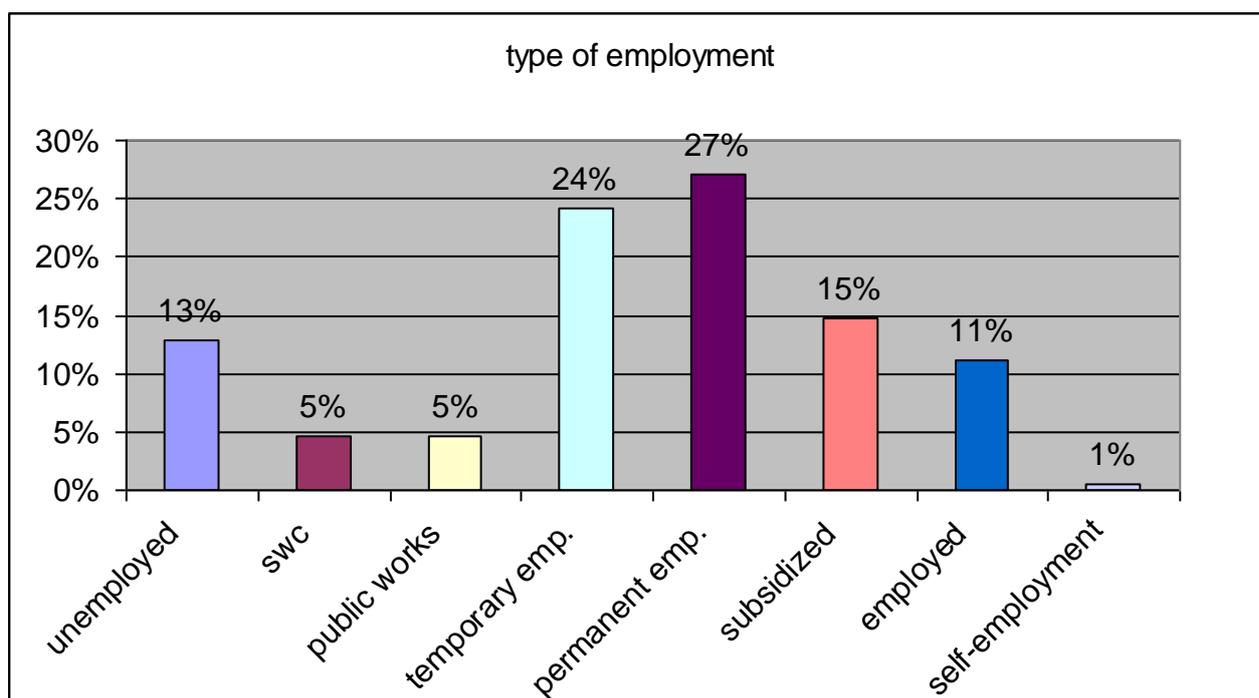
Table 3: Distribution of certificates between unemployed and employed in the period 2003 - 2005

	employed	unemployed
2003	70%	30%

2004	97%	3%
2005	93%	8%

At first glance, Table 3 reveals high employment rates, however only 27% of participants have permanent employment contracts. One person is self-employed. The rest have temporary employment positions, or they participate in employment policy programmes conducted by the Employment Service of Slovenia (public works, subsidised employment, jobs provided by social work centres – swc). The data submitted by 11% of participants did not clearly suggest the character of their employment. Results are shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2: Type of employment



5.2. Educational benefits

5.2.a) Reshaping the established concept of education from “terminal education” to “lifelong learning”

By taking “lifelong learning” concept into consideration, Slovenia set as one of its priorities to provide for visibility of non-formal, experiential and informal learning, with vocational qualifications being classified into the transparent national qualifications framework.

The home care worker programme was conceived as “non-school” training deriving from work sphere needs. Before taking the examination, every applicant undergoes monitoring and counselling process.

The Social Chamber performs verification procedures (for organisations intending to provide training in this field) by examining competences of the lecturers who are to carry out specific training. The Chamber requires that the lecturer comes from the ranks of social welfare, but he/she also has to be familiar with related fields (e.g. health care). In this way, provisions are made for the competence approach, which the Chamber regards as appropriate.

5.2.b) Providing flexible personalised learning pathways

When conducting NVQ assessment and recognition and giving preliminary training, the Chamber endeavours to adapt as much as possible to the applicant and his/her needs. The whole process on average takes from 3 to 4 months.

As the participant applies, an informative meeting is scheduled in order to inform him/her about the procedure, entry requirements, occupation complexity level and implications for the future. Every applicant participates in the individual counselling process which normally lasts 4 hours. The applicant compiles a portfolio together with the counsellor, followed by the assessment of his/her non-formal work experience and knowledge level. If the applicant's qualifications prove to be deficient, he/she is referred to a short non-formal upgrading educational programme or to the work environment in order to acquire required work experience. Consequently, the applicant completes training, which is, because of the nature of work, also a condition for being able to participate in NVQ assessment and recognition. The procedure can thus be adjusted to the applicant's abilities, which influences the duration of the whole process. Deadlines for a direct knowledge examination are normally announced twice a year.

5.2. c) Raising educational attainment levels by increasing the completion rates of secondary education qualifications

The granted certificate enables the applicant to raise his/her qualification level of required knowledge and skills. A large portion of the applicants completed just primary school or vocational education programmes. This group does not express any desire to enrol into educational programmes enabling them to increase their formal education attainment levels after acquiring the NVQ. The fact that there are no educational programmes in this field at complexity level IV and V is probably the reason for that.

In cases where appropriate educational programmes supporting NVQs are in place, our findings show that schools informing the applicants about the possibilities and inviting them to register play a very important role.

5.3. Social benefits

5.3.a) Building social institution to arrange smoother transition from education to work and from work back to education; increasing socio-cultural equity and social cohesion by providing pathways for formally excluded disadvantaged groups to be included

The Social Chamber of Slovenia, as the professional association active in social welfare, promotes acquisition of qualifications in social services, and also makes arrangements for the appropriate qualification structure of the employees in the field. Persons with lower employability are also taking part in NVQ assessment and recognition procedure.

5.3.b) Leading to the better societal values (e.g. promotion of democracy, intercultural understanding, better health, lower criminal rates etc.)

Public care for the elderly is considered a value (as it is also addressed by the Resolution), which calls for awareness raising, as well as organizing education of the staff assisting elderly and providing home care.

5.3.c) Enhancing flexibility to allow more mobility within the education and training sector (e.g. between VET and HE and from FE to HE, etc.)

As there are no formal educational programmes leading to the qualification home care worker one cannot expect mobility within the education system.

New vocational standards developed in 2006, however, demonstrate stronger connections of profiles of home care worker, care in social welfare institutions and partly also in health establishments. Social care still foresees NVQ examination and awarding as the only path for acquiring the qualification, but greater relatedness with other aforementioned qualifications obtainable within the educational programme will intensify continuation of education in a related educational programme (nurse/caregiver).

5.4. Personal benefits

5.4. a) Empowering individuals to have more control over where and when they learn

As the individual joins the process leading to the certificate acquisition, the Chamber tries to offer him/her as much freedom as possible in relation to time, modality... learning. Every applicant also undergoes an individual counselling process equipping him/her with necessary information, offering assistance in collecting supporting documents, defining the scope of required knowledge together with the counsellor, followed by determining where and how this knowledge can be obtained... Such work system does not create “dropouts”, or it is extremely rare for the applicant to abandon NVQ acquisition process.

Having been awarded the certificate, the applicant also boosts his/her self-confidence and self-image, while the process raises awareness and broadens the scope of his/her prior knowledge. The certificate also improves employment prospects.

Their work contributes to keeping solidarity and high-quality intergenerational human coexistence.

5.4. b) Motivate individuals who abandoned formal education system (dropouts) to complete a qualification

Being the provider of the procedure for assessment and awarding of knowledge and skills for NVQ social carer, the Social Chamber does not engage in special motivation measures to attract applicants. This role is left directly to social institutions cooperating with the Chamber. The applicants come to the Chamber in order to get their knowledge assessed and awarded, and it is observed that they are highly motivated to obtain the NVQ as they are given a possibility to find a job or maintain their current position.

5.4.c) Diminish the stigma attached to a qualification awarded on the basis of non-formal and informal learning

Employers see the benefits of the certificate in heightened competitiveness at the labour market and in more flexible form of retraining. They emphasize the importance of the procedure enabling the applicant to assert personal traits, mutual relations and other traits which are of utmost importance when working with people in need of help. Thus, the certificate characterizes a new form of qualification acquisition, and is especially suitable for people with experience. The field of social care has so far not yet perceived the stigma emerging due to inferiority of non-formal knowledge.

Component 6

Conclusions

6.a) With which of your country's goals is recognition of informal and formal learning connected the most? Are these goals connected with the lifelearning strategies?

The Lifelearning Strategy derives from the National Development Programme as well as from the legal basis. The legal basis offers a variety of education and training forms, and their integration into a coherent unit.

The following acts represent the basic formal legal basis: **the Vocational and Technical Education Act, Higher Education Act and National Professional Qualifications Act. Umbrella legislation has been adopted, but sectoral legislation is still missing.** The formal education system and certification system are linked together by laws to form a unified system, thus enabling the recognition of informal knowledge, skills and competences. The fundamental national development document called the **National Development Programme for the Period 2007-2013** contains the following goals connected with the paradigm of recognition of informal learning:

- stimulating the employability of job seekers and the inactive;
- promoting enterprise and adaptability of the work force;
- developing human resources and lifelong learning, which represent expert grounds for development of the lifelong learning strategy;
- equal opportunities and stimulation of social integration;
- institutional and administrative qualification as a support to the lifelong learning career orientation.

6.b) Which strategies (short term, midterm and long term) are needed to operationalise the recognition of all form of learning (formal, informal and nonformal)? What are the greatest challenges for the professional policies in the nearby future

To operationalise the system of the recognition of informal and non-formal learning into a unified formalised system, the following elements have to be fulfilled:

- National Qualification Framework needs to be set up;
- various systems have to be connected, and also
- basic elements for the links between different types of education have to be determined;
- contacts with international networks also have to be provided.

From the legislation perspective, the umbrella legislation needs to be linked to the sectoral legislation, sectoral policies need to be operationalised and united into a coherent unit in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework.

Further discussions are required at the national level in order to address connections between the education and certification systems as well as tackling the requisite infrastructure. The formal basis and instruments for the recognition of informal learning in the field of higher education also have to be developed.

6.c) Discuss other important matter, which haven't been discussed in the above mentioned questions

The system of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning has been put in place for adults as a complementary route to the traditional VET system. Both routes for acquisition of national vocational qualifications have national vocational standards as their common reference. We would like to emphasize that the network of assessment and recognition providers has already been established. It consists of VET schools, adult training providers and chambers. Some VET centers have recently endeavoured to integrate both routes.

Sectoral policies should deregulate their vocational qualifications according to the umbrella legislation for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, skills and competences.

6.d) How is the lifelong learning for all strategy included into the education after the end of the obligatory education

The certification system enables the formalisation of experience and informal learning at the secondary and tertiary level of difficulty by using the summative assessment methods of knowledge, skills and competences.

The certification system represents an additional possibility for obtaining professional qualification and training, which enables gradual professional growth of a individual as well as means of inclusion or return into the education system.

Despite the obvious positive results of the NVQ system, we can pinpoint the following weak points:

1. The diversification of the system among the ministries and public institutions and lack of coordination among them.
2. Most of social partner organisations (chambers and trade unions) did not play the expected role of developers and promoters as it was stipulated by the legislation.
3. The connection between the certification system and the education system is weak.
4. NVQ certificates do not enjoy appropriate reputation when compared to school diplomas on the value market.

Appendices to Component 1a and 1b will be added separately.

Annex 1 according to the OECD methodology will be also added separately.

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