



Implementation Guidance for Strengthening Quality Assurance in Adult Education and Training in Portugal

KEY FINDINGS

A **highly skilled workforce** is critical to help countries meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, and aid their recovery from the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

In recent years, Portugal has made great strides in boosting adults' educational attainment, with the 2016 **Qualifica Programme** making large scale investments into re- and up-skilling of adults. However, with the expanded provision of adult education and training opportunities, quality issues have surfaced.

What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance refers to a set of policies and practices needed to ensure minimum quality standards of adult education and training opportunities, which should be maintained and improved over time.

This project's analytical framework distinguishes between two key quality assurance dimensions:

- ▶ **Recognition and certification of adult education and training providers;**
- ▶ **Monitoring of adult education and training providers, and of adults' outcomes.**

RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROVIDERS

| CHALLENGES | RECOMMENDATION | IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE | GOOD PRACTICE |
|---|---|---|---|
| The certification system is highly decentralised and lacks common standards | 01. Develop a quality label to verify core, common certification standards | > Define common certification criteria > Put more emphasis on quality of staff > Provide common guidelines to support uptake amongst providers | Austria's and Switzerland's common quality labels |
| The efficiency and rigour of certifications processes can be further strengthened | 02. Centralise all the relevant information about certification processes | > Create an online information centre outlining certification timelines and costs > Introduce a centralised online certification portal, based on existing information about providers | Australia's certification website and portal |

MONITORING OF ADULT EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND ADULTS' OUTCOMES

| CHALLENGES | RECOMMENDATION | IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE | GOOD PRACTICE |
|--|---|---|---|
| There is limited capacity to monitor and evaluate the performance of providers | 03. Develop a common monitoring framework | > Ensure that indicators capture key quality input, output and process factors > Set a "poor performance" threshold > Define frequency for the use of the monitoring framework | Slovenia's monitoring framework for adult education providers |
| Monitoring of Qualifica Centres could be more targeted and in-depth | 04. Track outcomes in adult education and training | > Establish a dedicated working group > Start by restricting tracking of outcomes to initial vocational education and training > Incentivise providers' use of satisfaction surveys | Estonia's student satisfaction surveys |
| There is limited capacity to systematically track adults' outcomes | | | |



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

KEY MILESTONES AND ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The project integrates first-hand insights of a wide variety of **stakeholders and local experts** working in close proximity of the Portuguese quality assurance system, as well as of several **international experts and practitioners**.

During a fact-finding mission to Lisbon, two online workshops, virtual study visits, several working group sessions and bilateral meetings between December 2019 and March 2021, the OECD engaged with a range of ministries, government agencies and over 70 Portuguese and international stakeholders.

European Commission's experts

International and local experts

International and local practitioners

| SCOPING | ASSESSMENT | RECOMMENDATIONS | IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>[Q4 2019 – Q1 2020] Introduce the project, and discuss and agree on key goals, timelines and outputs</p> <p>Meetings with government representatives</p> | <p>[Q2 – Q3 2020] Map quality assurance system, and identify and agree on key challenges</p> <p>Good practices workshop, bilateral meetings and research</p> | <p>[Q4 2020] Draft policy recommendations and test them with key stakeholders</p> <p>Policy recommendations workshop, working group sessions</p> | <p>[Q1 2021] Develop targeted implementation guidance and refine it with key stakeholders</p> <p>International study visits, bilateral meetings</p> |

Strengthening quality assurance in adult education and training in Portugal in collaboration with DG REFORM and the OECD Centre for Skills

The Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) of the European Commission provides support for the preparation and implementation of **growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms** by mobilising EU funds and technical expertise.

DG REFORM has agreed to provide support to Portugal, together with the OECD Centre for Skills, in order to help strengthen Portugal's quality assurance system in adult education and training. This **multi-stakeholder effort with a prominent international peer-learning component seeks to deliver technical guidance for implementing concrete quality assurance reforms in adult education and training by the Portuguese authorities.**

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