

# **Social inclusion – education and training**

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## **What is *social inclusion*?**

**It is easier to define the term by its opposite: *social exclusion* - a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.**

## **Aspects of social inclusion:**

- working with groups or minorities: socio-economics, ethnic, religious, sexual, gender, disabled, other (i.e. travellers);**
- dealing with globalisation, technical/information environment impact, continuous changing of work environment, etc.;**
- studying the relation between social exclusion and education, governance, political decision etc. and, of course, any possible combination among these aspects.**

**And further more, one may ask “What is good for education/training?” and “What is education/training good for?”**

**Those twin questions about the causes and consequences of education/training are high on the agenda of any responsible country, concerned about its future.**

**Usually, the answer to the first question is related to more money, higher standards, and accountability.**

**For the second question, the most common answer is related to economic competitiveness, technological progress, and economic growth.**

**The answers are not the most important issue, but the fact that the *economic returns for the investments in human capital are high and apparently growing.***

**One reason that students from different minority or social groups and/or impoverished backgrounds are disadvantaged educationally is precisely because they lack access to productive *social capital*, both inside and outside the school and/or training facilities.**

- Physical capital refers to physical tools that enhance productivity (regardless the size and price)
- The human capital is another form of capital that comprises the skills and education and can also enhance productivity.
- The observation that social networks (and the associated norms of reciprocity and trust) can also have powerful effects on productivity led to the term “social capital” to refer to these effects.

**There is a distinction between “*bonding*” social capital (that is, ties within a given social or ethnic group) and “*bridging*” social capital (that is, ties between groups) - and due to the human condition, *bridging social capital* is harder to build than *bonding social capital*.**

**Social cohesion is an increasingly prominent concern in most countries, partly because social and ethnic diversity is rapidly increasing everywhere, and social and economic inequalities are also increasing in many countries.**

**The knowledge economy itself has a distinctive dependence on social capital, so even from a strictly economic point of view, the coming generation in all countries must be equipped not merely with intellectual skills and knowledge, but also with skills in teamwork and “bridging social capital”.**



**Successful countries implemented a policy mixture of:**

- cost cutting;**
- improving institutions;**
- investing in future growth, through dynamic research, education and technology diffusion.**

**The main common elements for all the successful countries turning to the modern knowledge society are:**

- good or excellent use of ICT;**
- high growth in manufacturing;**
- excellence in education/training and research;**
- high productivity.**

**The new “knowledge workers”, demanded by the knowledge society, requires, mainly:**

- higher education;**
- technical and/or managerial skills;**
- mastering several languages;**
- cross-cultural approaches;**
- comfort to travel;**
- IT and internet (must be a second skin);**
- innovation and creativity.**

**The new challenges are not suppressing the traditional questions related to education/training and social inclusion:**

- 1. What level of skill demand is required to meet economic and/or social objectives?**
- 2. How is the demand expected to change over the medium term?**
- 3. What is the nature of any identifiable skill deficit?**
- 4. What role could the initial education play in meeting the skills deficits?**
- 5. What role could the adult learning system play in generating missing skills?**
- 6. To what extent the social, economic, educational and health opportunity of individuals are constrained by their skill level?**
- 7. How and to what extent can the state mitigate market failure, particularly in adult training? etc.**

**The answers must take into account the skill demand by life context. We must imagine skills on three levels:**

### **1. Fully portable:**

- numeracy;
- oral communication: speaking and listening;
- written communication: reading and writing;
- intra-personal ability to learn: motivation and metacognition.

### **2. Largely portable:**

- using tools associated with technologies of production;
- analyse and problem solving: decision making, job task planning and organising, significant use of memory;
- work-place interpersonal relations: teamwork, leadership, practical intelligence.

### **3. Narrowly portable:**

- firm and job specific skills and bodies of knowledge.

**In order to increase the chances for social inclusion:**

- **initial education must focus on the first and partially second level;**
- **further training is mainly focusing on the third level.**

**There for a paradigm shift in education/training is necessary:**

- **focus towards *learning*, rather than *teaching*;**
- **focus towards a *competence-based curricula* rather than a *subject-based curricula*, combining knowledge with the development of personal qualities and social skills.**

**This new paradigm results from a vision of a “*learning society*” focusing less on the *acquisition of information* and academic subject knowledge, and more on the *competences to learn and to continue to learn throughout life*.**

**These competences or *life skills* range**

**from**

***sound basic literacy and numeracy skills, initially acquired in the learners' mother tongue***

**to**

***analytical, problem solving and critical thinking skills, to the personal qualities and social competences required for social inclusion, co-operation and participation in social and economic life,***

**in a way that is respectful of the dignity of all.**

**Recently, *lifelong learning* concept is being enriched with a new dimension: *lifewide learning*.**

**The concept of “learning” is becoming bi-dimensional:**

- one side is lifelong – meaning education and training for the entire life (sometime quite literally);**
- the other side is lifewide – meaning the recognition of all learning “dimensions”: formal (in an organised environment), in-formal (random and unorganised contacts with different sources of learning: socio-professional, family, friends etc.), non-formal (mainly self instruction).**



**It is easy to observe that the recognition and/or assessment of, especially, *in-formal* and *non-formal* acquired competences is another way to increase social inclusion.**

**The *lifewide learning* concept is further pointing out the responsibilities transfer from the state toward the individual, being obvious that the motivation and seizing of the opportunities is “person oriented”.**



**The environments and contexts in which the learning process occurs are diversifying, involving more actors from an increased number of sectors.**

**Further education/training is more and more interdisciplinary and is now crossing more or less formal boundaries between education, labour market, industry, social, regional, etc.**

**This is imposing a reshaping of the communications and coordination among central and local authorities, state and private agencies, government and social partners.**

# **Some practical aspects**

**Ana Costin**  
**National Adult Training Board**

# **Social Partnership in Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

**ROLE: Contribution to the economic inclusion in which VET is related to labour market**

- identification of needed competences;
- identification of needed work force by occupations/ qualifications;
- promoting continuing vocational training

## **INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK:**

- National Adult Training Board;
- Sector Committees;
- Regional Consortia - regional plans of action for education;
- Local Committees for Social Partnership Development - local education plans

# NATIONAL ADULT TRAINING BOARD NATB

- **Social Dialogue Institution** – tripartite structure – adults’ vocational training
- **Role:**
  - 1999 - Consultative – development of CVT policies and strategies
  - 2003 - Decisional
    - Coordination of the CVT providers’ authorization process
    - Authorization of the Competences Assessment Centres
    - Approval of the occupational standards
  - 2004 – **National Authority for Qualifications**

# National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ) Sector Committees

## GOAL:

Creating a national transparent qualifications system in vocational education and training (VET), in view of supporting the coherent enhancement of the actual initial (TVET) and continuing vocational training (CVT) system, in a LLL perspective, benefiting of social partners full participation through sectoral agreed partnerships

## Sector Committees:

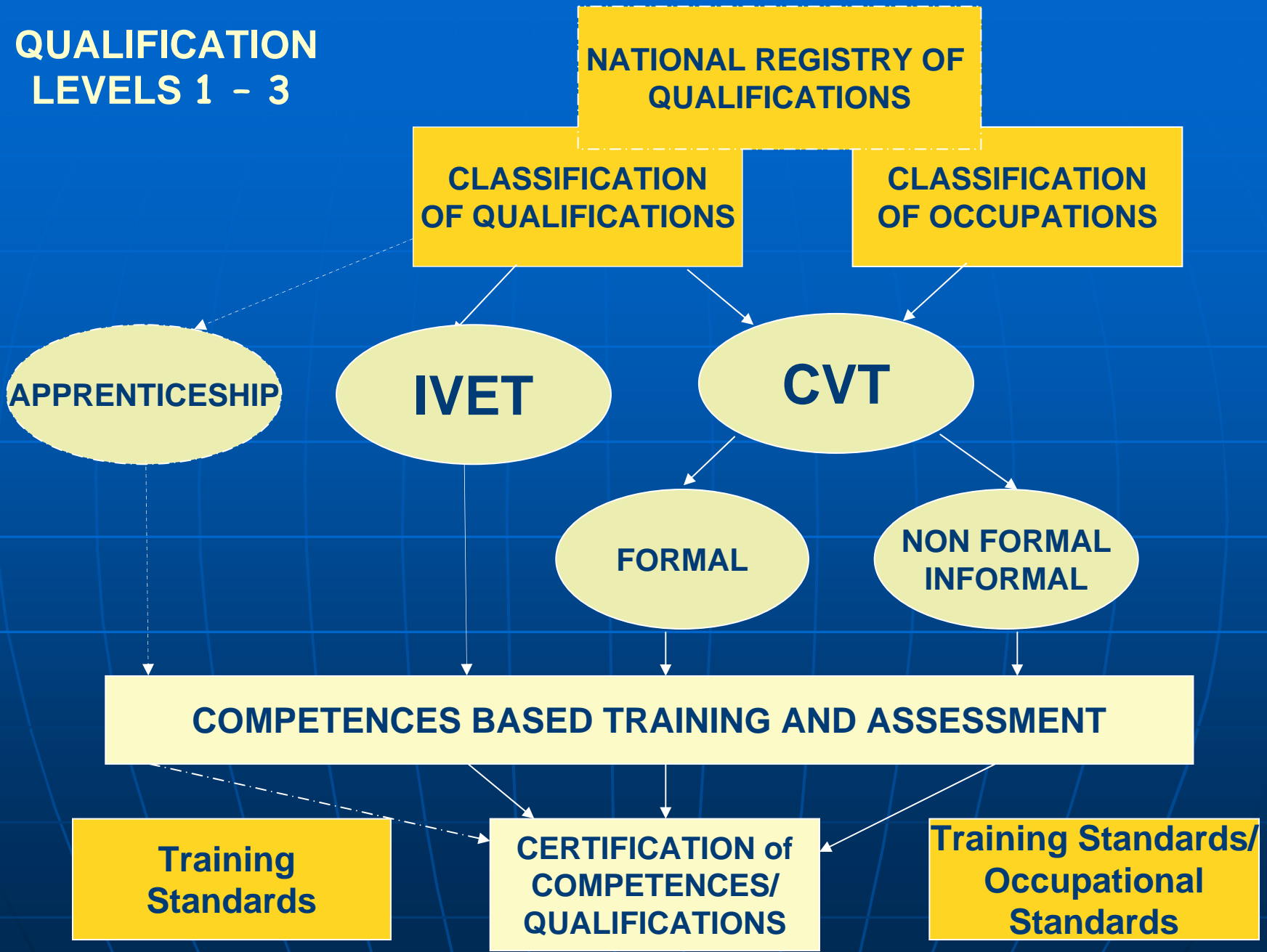
- Social dialogue structures at sector level (23)
- Sector Agreements (16)
- Stakeholders: employers, TUs, professional associations, regulating authorities...
- Coordinated by NATB/NAQ
- Main role – development and validation of qualifications

# **ROMANIAN VET system(s)**

## **Competences based**

- **VET System(s) – learning outcomes oriented/competences based**
  - **Qualification – group of competences units**
  - **Competences units – coherent and explicit set of competences**
  - **Competences – identified on the basis of occupational analysis**
  - **Social competences – included**
  - **Training Standards/Occupational standards**
  - **(Development and) Validation of qualifications – responsibility of the social partners**

**QUALIFICATION  
LEVELS 1 - 3**



# Competences based training and assessment

## ■ Matching the companies/jobs needs

## ■ Facilitating access to VET:

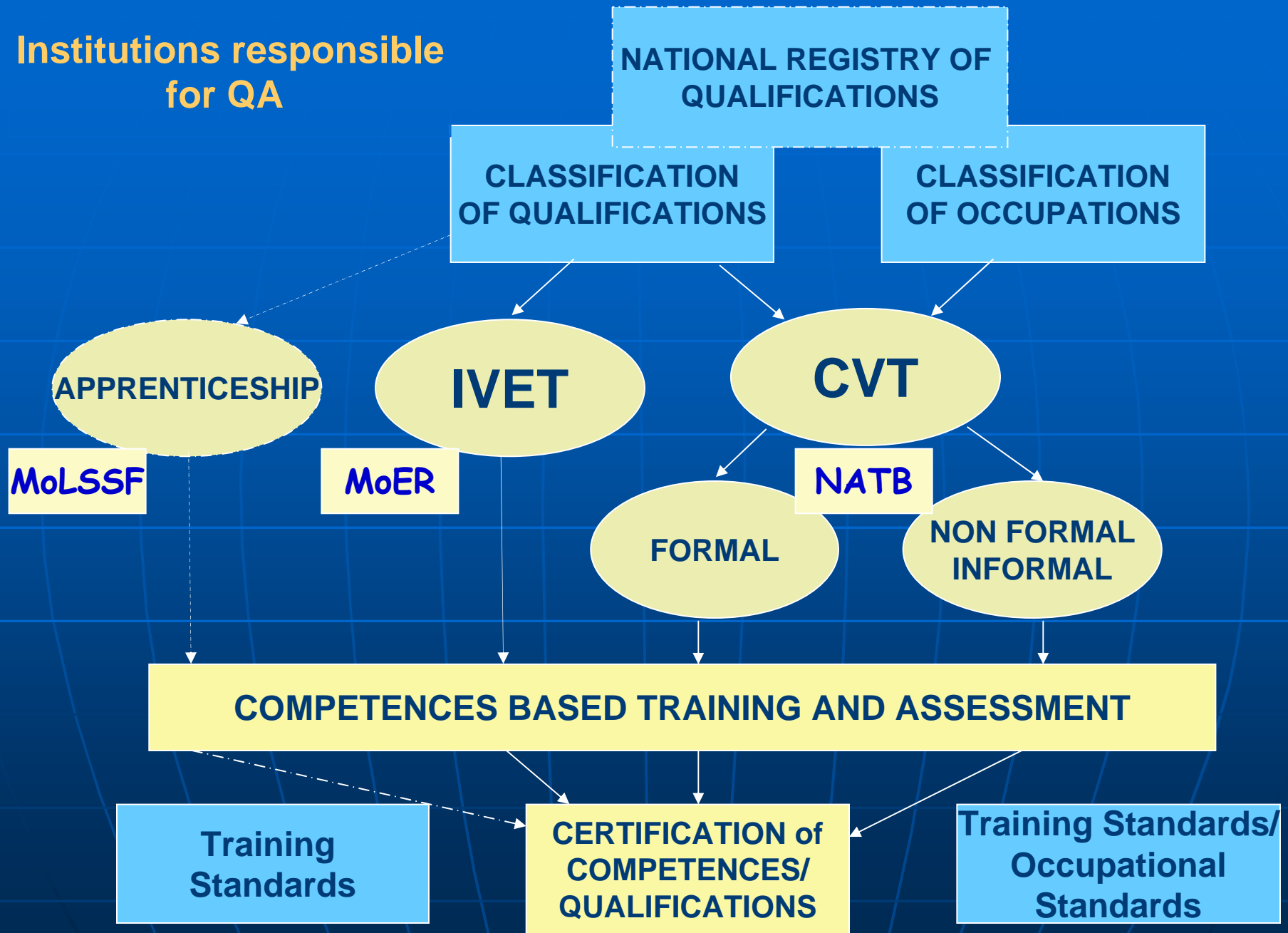
- Modular training – customized training;
- Competences recognition/certification;
- Competences accumulation – career development;
- Preparing credit transfer between parallel VET systems

## ■ Recognition of non formal and informal learning:

- Competences Assessment Centres;
- Certificates of competences – recognised in formal CVT system



## Institutions responsible for QA



# Quality Assurance in VET

## ■ Goal:

- protection of the students/trainees, enterprises;
- relevance of certificates;
- stimulating participation in VET

## ■ IVET

- Law 87/18 April 2006 – aims to provide Romanian VET with a *National Quality Assurance Framework* that matches European requirements and best practices;
- piloting phase – 122 schools

## ■ CVT

- authorization of the training providers;
- authorization of the competences assessment centres;
- nationally recognized certificates;
- regulations, criteria, procedures...

# **THANK YOU!**

**NATIONAL ADULT TRAINING BOARD**

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