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***BUILD UP Skills – REbooting the GRreek national  
platform and UPdating the national roadmap***

**BUS-REGRoUP**

**Deliverable Title: *Sustainability plan for the National  
Qualification Platform***  
**(WP2, Task 2.3 – D2.2)**

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## **BUILD UP Skills – REbooting the GRreek national platform and UPdating the national roadmap – BUS-REGRoUP**

**BUS-REGRoUP** aims to support the revitalisation of the Greek **National Qualification Platform (NQP)** created in the first phase of the **BUILD UP Skills** initiative (project **BUS-GR**), further expanding its scope by involving new stakeholders.

Then the **Status Quo Analysis** and the **National Roadmap** will be updated to reflect the new realities of the building sector in Greece, addressing the skills development activities related to digital technologies, smart buildings, resource efficiency, circularity, integration of renewable energy technologies, industrialised deep renovation, LCCAs, etc. As the focus is on all relevant skills needed to enable the EU Renovation Wave, the mainstreaming of NZEBs, and the inclusion of resource efficiency considerations, the Status Quo Analysis and the National Roadmap will be updated for ‘blue-collar’ professionals and upgraded with new content in order to map the skills needs of ‘white-collar’ professions (i.e., architects, designers, engineers, building managers, etc.), thus reflecting the needs of the entire building value chain.

The **Status Quo Analysis** will compile all the necessary information on the current situation of the national building sector regarding continuing VET, energy performance and contribution to the 2030 targets, as well as existing barriers and gaps, as a basis for an informed discussion among the stakeholders. The **National Roadmap** will provide a set of priority measures for the various professions to meet the defined targets, an action plan for these measures until 2030, an identification of actors and resources needed to drive the implementation, and measures to monitor the progress of the proposed activities.

### **BUS-REGRoUP Consortium**

Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES)  
**Project Coordinator**



Decision Support Systems Laboratory, School of Electrical & Computer Engineering, National Technical University of Athens (EPU-NTUA)



Small Enterprises Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (IME GSEVEE)



Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE-GSEE)



Technical Chamber of Greece (TCG)



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### **Further information**

More details on BUILD UP Skills can be found at [www.build-up.ec.europa.eu](http://www.build-up.ec.europa.eu)

More details on the LIFE CET programme can be found at [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en)

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## 1. Introduction

The times we live in are characterised by a rapid pace of change and developments in many areas of our society. Labour markets, businesses and occupational requirements are constantly evolving, and to remain competitive and adaptable, we need to invest in the sustainability of human capital development. In this context, the BUS-REGRoUP project's National Qualification Platform is a critical tool to achieve professional development and sustainability in our time.

The BUS-REGRoUP project, which is part of the European BUILD UP Skills Initiative – ‘Strategies and training interventions enabling a decarbonised building stock’, is implemented by a consortium of research organisations, educational institutions, representatives of social partners and professional chambers. More specifically, the partners of the Greek consortium of the BUS-REGRoUP project, as already mentioned, are:

- Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES), the BUS-REGRoUP project coordinator,
- Decision Support Systems Laboratory, School of Electrical & Computer Engineering, National Technical University of Athens (EPU-NTUA),
- Small Enterprises Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (IME GSEVEE),
- Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE GSEE),
- Technical Chamber of Greece (TCG).

In addition to the BUS-REGRoUP partners, there are a large number of stakeholders who follow the ongoing efforts of the consortium to actively ensure their supportive role in the project, including the Ministries responsible for energy and lifelong learning issues in Greece, sustainable buildings experts, associations of companies engaged in Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and energy-efficient (EE) building products, building industry related research institutes/organisations, federations of craftsmen (‘blue-collar’ professionals) and associations of ‘white-collar’ professionals (architects, designers, engineers, product manufacturers, building managers, etc.) working in the building and construction sector, certification and accreditation bodies, the ‘social partners’, who make up the National Qualification Platform (NQP).

One of the main objectives of the project is to relaunch the NQP created in the first phase of the BUILD UP Skills initiative (under the BUS-GR project), as well as to broaden its scope with the involvement of new stakeholders. Similarly, the aim of this paper is to formulate a proposal for the sustainability of the content of the NQP in the sense of identifying and recording the skills that emerge in order to update the qualifications of human resources through the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system.

## 2. The National Qualification Platform (NQP)

The National Qualification Platform (NQP) was established during the first phase of the BUILD UP Skills Initiative, in the framework of the then national project of Pillar I of the Initiative, i.e. BUS-GR. As the first NQP was established about ten years ago, one of the first actions of the BUS-REGRoUP project was to revitalise and relaunch the National Qualification Platform (NQP) of the building sector workforce, now bringing together all the key stakeholders of the country's construction sector, and to expand its scope with the involvement of new stakeholders, as the project's activities - updating the "Analysis of the Current Situation (Status Quo)" and the "National Roadmap" of the building sector's workforce upskilling - should reflect the needs for new skills of the sector (digital technologies, smart buildings including e-mobility, resource efficiency, circularity, integration of renewable energy technologies, industrialised deep renovation, Life Cycle Carbon Assessments, etc.), while the analysis extends to the needs of 'white-collar' professions (architects, designers, engineers, building managers, etc.), thus reflecting the new reality and needs of the entire building value chain.

Thus, throughout the duration of the project, the NQP has and will continue to have close cooperation and communication with the BUS-REGRoUP project consortium, actively participating in regular consultation meetings, as it will play a key role in the process of updating both the National Status Quo Analysis and the National Roadmap, with a view to the final acceptance of the National Roadmap.

The process for the relaunch and revitalisation of the NQP started already from the proposal submission phase for this project, as a total of 26 Letters of Support were collected from such organisations, with a supportive and empowering nature. When the project was launched and following a structured communication process aimed at ensuring the involvement of all major stakeholders in the National Qualification Platform (NQP), many more bodies showed interest in participating in the joint effort for Greece, including this time occupational associations and federations, professional chambers, accreditation bodies, as well as the collective bodies/representatives of VET providers in Greece.

The main communication channels used to attract and invite new 'participants' for the platform were the announcement of the project launch/invitation via email (the 1<sup>st</sup> edited press release was also a strong communication/information campaign about the project's purpose and actions) and follow-up telephone communication.

The completion of the NQP update process led to a very interesting combination of a large number of stakeholders consisting, in addition to the partners of the BUS- REGRoUP consortium, of representatives of the Ministries responsible for energy and lifelong learning issues in Greece, sustainable buildings experts, associations/companies engaged in renewable energy sources (RES) and energy-efficient building materials, research institutes/organisations related to the building industry, trade unions (manual staff), as well as professional associations such as architects, designers, engineers, product manufacturers, building managers, etc. working in the building and construction sector, certification and accreditation bodies, as well as social partners.

A total of 44 stakeholders (excluding the 5 project partners, which are also represented in the NQP) are the members of the revitalised NQP for Greece, while 25 members have officially appointed representatives for the NQP (permanent and alternate members respectively).

**Table 1: Bodies, members of the National Qualification Platform**

A/A	Name	Category
1	General Secretariat for Energy and Mineral Resources - Ministry of Environment and Energy	Public Authority
2	General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, lifelong Learning & Youth - Ministry of Education Religious Affairs & Sports	Public Authority
3	National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD) → <i>EIEAD was abolished on 18/04/2022 and its staff joined the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (now part of the said Ministry)</i>	Supervised Entity (by Ministry)
4	National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)	Supervised Entity (by Ministry)
5	Hellenic Accreditation System (ESYD)	Supervised Entity (by Ministry)
6	Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works (PEDMEDE)	Actors in the Building Industry
7	Association of Greek Contracting Companies (SATE)	Actors in the Building Industry
8	Panhellenic Union of Public Works Constructors Associations (PESEDE)	Actors in the Building Industry
9	Hellenic Association of Consulting Firms (HELLASCO)	Actors in the Building Industry
10	INZEB (Institute of Zero Energy Buildings)	Sustainable Buildings Experts
11	Aluminium Association of Greece (AAG)	Industry / Professional Association
12	Hellenic Union of Heating & Energy Companies (HUHEC)	Industry / Professional Association
13	Greek Solar Industry Association (EBHE)	Industry / Professional Association
14	Hellenic Association of Photovoltaic Companies (HELAPCO)	Industry / Professional Association
15	Hellenic Association of Insulating Material Companies (PSEM)	Industry / Professional Association
16	Hellenic Association of Expanded Polystyrene (HEPSA)	Industry / Professional Association
17	Panhellenic Federation of Craftsmen in Aluminium and Metal Constructions (POVAS)	Industry / Professional Association
18	Panhellenic Federation of Electrical Contractors Association (POSEH)	Industry / Professional Association
19	Hellenic Federation of Craftsmen & Plumbers (OBYE)	Industry / Professional Association

20	Panhellenic Federation of Glass Tradesmen & Manufacturers (POEVY)	Industry / Professional Association
21	Greek Federation of Refrigerating Engineers & Technicians	Industry / Professional Association
22	Association of Technical Employees of Greece (STYE)	Industry / Professional Association
23	Panhellenic Energy Federation (PEF)	Industry / Professional Association
24	Panhellenic Metalworkers Federation	Industry / Professional Association
25	Hellenic Federation of Electricians	Industry / Professional Association
26	Federation of Building and Wood Workers of Greece	Industry / Professional Association
27	Hellenic Association for the Cogeneration of Heat and Power (HACHP)	Industry / Professional Association
28	Panhellenic Federation of Combustion Installations Professionals (POETEK)	Industry / Professional Association
29	"IFAISTOS" - Panhellenic Association of Licensed Installers & Maintainers of Liquid and Gaseous Fuel Burners and Boiler Plant Maintenance	Industry / Professional Association
30	"ESTIA" Association	Industry / Professional Association
31	"PROMITHEAS" - Professional Association of Combustion Technical Installations of Northern Greece	Industry / Professional Association
32	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)	Industry / Professional Association
33	Athens Chamber of Tradesmen	Industry / Professional Association
34	Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce	Industry / Professional Association
35	Panhellenic Association of Graduate Mechanical and Electrical Engineers (PSDM-H)	Professional Association
36	Panhellenic Association of Chemical Engineers	Professional Association
37	Hellenic Association of Civil Engineers (SPME)	Professional Association
38	Association of Architects Graduates of Higher Schools – Panhellenic Association of Architects (SADAS – PEA)	Professional Association
39	Ktiriakes Ypodomes S.A.	State-owned body for public buildings construction

40	Hellenic Association of Accredited Certification and Inspection Bodies (Hellas Cert)	Association of Certification and Inspection Bodies
41	Hellenic Association of Vocational Training Centres (ELSEKEK)	Association of Training providers
42	Panhellenic Association of Vocational Training Centres (PASIKEK)	Association of Training providers
43	Panhellenic Association of Learning Centers (PEKEM)	Association of Training providers
44	Panhellenic Association of Private Vocational Training Institutes (PEIIEK)	Association of Training providers

The process of revitalising the NQP has been completed as of February 2023, and a total of four meetings, apart from the 1<sup>st</sup> NQP Meeting (21<sup>st</sup> February 2023) – the one aimed at getting together all members of the NQP again, have been implemented during the project’s duration. Thus, the 1<sup>st</sup> Consultation Meeting was held on May 9, 2023 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation Meeting on July 18, 2023, both on the topic of the "Status Quo Analysis". A 3<sup>rd</sup> Consultation Meeting of the NQP – this time on the draft of the National Qualifications Roadmap - was held online on Tuesday January 23, 2024, while the last (4<sup>th</sup>) one was also held online on Friday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. The choice regarding the online implementation of the various consultation meetings of the NQP was based on the project consortium’s experience with previous meetings, as all participants had expressed a preference for online meetings in view of better serving their professional obligations.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> consultation meeting (33 participants) the basic structure of the report on the ‘Analysis of the Current Situation (Status Quo)’, one of the 2 main deliverables of the project, was presented to the participants and members of the NQP, which includes essentially all the necessary information on the current state of the country's building/construction sector, continuing education and training, energy efficiency and contribution to the achievement of the 2030 targets, as well as existing barriers and gaps. The key role of the NQP is to advise the consortium on the various issues approached and analysed within the ‘Analysis of the Current Situation’ and, therefore, a very constructive and enlightening discussion and exchange of views took place during the meeting among the platform and project partner representatives.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation meeting was about the Status Quo Analysis Report, which was almost completed at that time (actually submitted at the end of the same month). Thus, this meeting, also held online, was implemented with a very satisfactory participation of a large number of representatives. The final version of the Status Quo Report was presented in detail to the participants, including the approach and methodology used and the main results. Particular emphasis was placed on the steps and methodology used to identify the skills gaps between the current situation and the needs for 2030, and in particular the steps to explore the gaps in terms of both interventions in the country's existing building stock to increase its energy efficiency and the construction of new buildings. Typical quantitative data were presented, as well as the main barriers identified regarding access to training for ‘blue-collar’ and ‘white-collar’ workers.

It is worth noting that, in order to identify the barriers, related to the training of professionals employed in the buildings sector on the new skills necessary to achieve the 2030 energy and climate targets, two different questionnaires (one for each of the above-mentioned categories of professionals) were developed and sent to the members of the NQP for completion. The responses provided were discussed in detail during the consultation and led to the identification of the barriers



that exist in terms of insufficient training, lack of relevant training programs and lack of recognition of training in the market.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Consultation Meeting of the revitalized NQP was held online on January 23, 2024, with the subject of discussing the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the National Roadmap, which was completed at that time, and was implemented with a very satisfactory participation of a large number of representatives. During the meeting, first the structure of the National Roadmap was presented in detail, including the methodology used. The Roadmap's axes of measures (market, skills, institutional framework) and the evaluation and prioritisation of the proposed measures method were then presented. Thorough reference was made to the measures and actions of the National Roadmap. The Action Plan of the National Roadmap was then presented, together with the indicators for monitoring the progress of the proposed measures. Furthermore, the results of the questionnaires regarding the priorities for the buildings workforce training to address the identified gaps were presented. This was followed by a constructive discussion among the participants.

At the closing session of the meeting, all NQP members were invited to provide their feedback in two ways, namely by providing comments on the draft National Roadmap through the [consultation platform](#), and by completing a special online questionnaire developed to capture the views of the NQP members with the aim of determining the priority of the measures of the National Roadmap and evaluating the contribution of each measure regarding:

- the national environmental and energy goals;
- the economic dimension in terms of cost and financial sustainability;
- the social dimension of its implementation, including employment, the integration of women and young workers into the value chain of the building sector, and the reskilling of professionals previously working in the fossil fuel sector.

When the National Roadmap had taken its almost final form, after the comments collected and taken into account by the members of the NQP and the members of the Strategic Planning Committee, as well as the comments obtained from the public consultation in which the National Roadmap had been set, the fourth and final NQP Consultation Meeting was implemented (April 26, 2024). In this meeting the NQP members who were not actively involved in the various consultation processes (regional and cross-sectoral meetings / round tables) that took place in framework of WP5 of the BUS-REGroUP project during the last two months of its duration were invited as a priority. In addition to the work that has been done for the National Roadmap, the members of the NQP who attended were also presented with the consortium's plans for the sustainability of the National Qualification Platform, i.e. the ways in which it will become sustainable and functional even after the end of the project. A fruitful dialogue with the participants followed and the meeting concluded with the directions given by the consortium to the NQP members on how to proceed with the acceptance of the National Roadmap by their agencies.

A key factor that gives added value to the sustainability of the NQP is that, during the NQP processes, it was understood by the representatives of public bodies, as well as the employers' and workers' representatives participating in the NQP consultation processes, the usefulness of the project in future employment and that the National Roadmap can be an important tool for the state and the social partners in fulfilling the national obligations, but also for the participation of employees in this effort. The outcome of the project ensures the mutual trust of the state (through the public bodies involved or supporting the project) and the social partners of the sector, thus ensuring support for its implementation.

Already from our previous project (BUS-GR), it became clear that the development of occupational profiles of the professions/specialties (discussed below) involved in the construction sector can

provide reliable information on the required qualifications and even ensure the common agreement of employees, employers and the state. Agreement on the occupational profiles means that there must also be agreement on the education and training programmes to be developed on the basis of these profiles.

## 3. The need for the NQP - Ways to enhance its sustainability

### 3.1 The need for the NQP

Sustainability, as a conceptual term, is the necessary factor for the maintenance and development of our society in all areas of life. In the era of digitalisation and technological advancement, the sustainability of mechanisms for monitoring the content of occupations and skills, as well as the development of education and training programmes compatible with changes in the workplace, is of particular importance and is a confirmed necessity.

The NQP is a dynamic and important tool for the assessment, development and management of the qualifications of people working in the construction sector, enabling them to respond to the needs of the labour market and promote professional development. The sustainability of the NQP is necessary and required for a number of reasons, as it should aim to:

1. Monitor developments at regular intervals under the current situation both in the building sector (in terms of technologies) and in terms of demand for qualifications.
2. Provide the necessary input of valid data for the monitoring and possible updating of the National Roadmap, in order to continuously assess and adapt policies to achieve the energy targets.
3. Enable citizens to develop their qualifications and improve their skills, helping them to be competitive in the labour market.
4. Support entrepreneurship in developing business initiatives by facilitating the identification of people with the necessary skills for new business ideas.
5. Help to create jobs and reduce unemployment by matching skills with the needs of the building sector.

### 3.2 The ways to enhance the sustainability of the NQP

Despite the advantages of the NQP and its linkage to important policy issues, there are some challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its sustainability, such as:

1. The necessary and active cooperation among the various stakeholders, including education policy makers, businesses and employees.
2. Forming coherent links with public policies, mechanisms and procedures.
3. The use of public policies, such as the governance system of Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, which has been established by Law 4763/2020.
4. The use of existing reliable mechanisms for the identification of skills, which ensure the consensus and mutual trust of employees, employers and the state, as in the case of Occupational and Skills Profiles.

In order to protect the NQP from stagnation, a key parameter is the continuous monitoring and updating of human resources skills. To ensure this process there is a strong necessity to find the linkages to existing institutional functions that have a compatible and specific purpose in monitoring and updating the skills of human resources in the construction sector. Therefore, the ways in which the sustainability of the NQP can be achieved are:

- I. Use of the existing institutional framework for the development of Occupational Profiles of the specialties of interest for the building sector. The institutional framework gives exclusive responsibility for their development to the social partners and, in particular, to the professional organisations of workers and employers representing the profession in question. **The key element in this policy framework is that the bodies responsible for developing the profiles are the same bodies that are involved in the NQP.**

It goes without saying that the result of the consultation carried out between employees and employers in the process of developing the Occupational Profiles, in order to identify the knowledge, skills and competences of specific occupations, is also what is sought by the NQP.

It should be noted here that the occupational profiles, given that they require a time span for being updated, do not negate the work of the NQP, which should annually confirm the skills possessed by workers in the field of interest or identify new ones required according to technological developments.

Based on the above, it is understood that it is vital to update the Occupational Profiles in order to have valid occupational profiles, which would provide the basis for the design of training programmes.

- II. Use of the existing institutional framework for lifelong learning, which stipulates that continuing training programmes must be designed on the basis of the approved occupational profiles by a competent public body, which in our case is EOPPEP.

The institutional framework offers a specific legal procedure which links the Occupational Profiles with the human resources skills upgrading programmes.

- III. The successful implementation of the roadmap in terms of human resources and the achievement of the national targets in accordance with the specific time milestones are both part of the work of the NQP. Its successful operation requires a committee that will have institutional status and an organised function even after the completion of this funded project. Therefore, there should be a legislative initiative by the competent Ministry or Ministries to establish the NQP, describe its composition and work, and define the human and financial resources for its smooth and uninterrupted operation.

- IV. An important factor in the Roadmap's success is the entry of new employees, but also the strengthening of the retention of existing human resources in the sector. A key incentive in this direction is the regulation of the professional rights of the specialties in the field under consideration. The regulation of professions is the responsibility of the State, which authorises specific services, institutions or organisations, through relevant legal provisions, to certify professional competence and grant relevant professional licences.

In order for the specialties of the professions represented within the scope of the project to gain attractiveness, prestige, recognition, as well as economic and social benefits, the competent Ministries should promote relevant legislative regulations, as proposed in a specific section of the Occupational Profiles (Educational Pathways for the acquisition of skills).

## 4. Occupational Profiles in Greece

### 4.1 Conceptual definitions

The interpretation of the terms used in one way or another to describe professions with specific specialisations, as well as the translation of the relevant English terms into the Greek language, present difficulties. In the Greek language the terms work, job, employment, vocation can be considered as relevant, while in English this applies with the terms work, job, occupation, employment, vocation, profession. All the above terms could be considered within the conceptual scope of the term occupation and, for this reason, the term proposed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is finally adopted.

The term 'employment' is more closely associated with labour force status and integration into the formal or informal labour market. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) refers to persons in employment or the employed population, which comprises all those of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit (ILO, 1982). Obviously, based on the above definition, which has also been adopted by the OECD, we are referring to the labour status of the economically active population, so employment is essentially defined in opposition to unemployment.

Based on the above, and on the basis of the degree of regulation of a specialty, two types of professions can be distinguished:

- Regulated professions. These are professions for which the conditions of practice and their content are set out in detail. For those of these specialties with a relatively complex mix of qualifications, regulation is linked to the completion of a certain level of education and/or work experience, continuing training -if required- and, finally, examinations for the award of the professional licence.
- Non-regulated professions. These are professions that usually, but not in all cases, require a basic/essential mix of qualifications to be exercised. The absence of regulation for these occupations may be due to insufficient justification of the need for regulation or due to occasional practice (thus workers in these occupations do not consider the occupation as an element of their 'identity').

In the above typology it can be observed that, moving from one type of practice to another, not only the degree of regulation but also the complexity and the prestige of the specialty decrease. This is precisely what highlights the broader importance of the development policies of Occupational Profiles (OPs), as well as the importance of social partners' involvement in it, since OPs have an intrinsic function: they confer prestige and 'recognise/institutionalise' occupations/specialisations, contributing to the broader social recognition of workers and their professionalisation.

Given that the distribution of qualifications in the labour market is not socially neutral; the importance of this side function of the OPs is obvious. On the other hand, it is precisely this dimension of OPs that highlights the importance of the choice of the occupations/specialisations for which it is proposed to develop a profile, as there is a risk of fragmenting the content of an occupation if each set of tasks is assigned a different specialisation.

Therefore, it is necessary to point out that the specialisation of a profession is not just a series of daily repetitive tasks but it contains three important dimensions, as:

- a. it is part of the identity of the citizen and of the social recognition of the work he or she does,

- b. it creates a set of rights through the exercise of employment,
- c. it has a performance function, in the sense that the professional of a regulated and recognised specialty is expected to carry out his or her work with specific results.

In view of the above, the importance of developing OPs for the world of work becomes obvious. In addition to what has been mentioned, two further issues emerge:

- a. the technical/operational, i.e. the integrity of the standards and procedures for the development of OPs in order to ensure their broadest possible use, and
- b. the developmental, i.e. the indirect contribution of OPs to the upgrading of human resources' skills.

## 4.2 Institutional framework

### 4.2.1 Law 3369/2005

In Law 3369/2005 the definition of the Occupational Profile (OP) is found for the first time. It is defined as 'the set of main and individual functions that make up the scope of work of a profession or a specialisation, as well as the corresponding knowledge, skills and competences required to respond to these functions' (§3.2). As can be seen, some of the terms that later appear in the OPs are introduced for the first time (main and individual functions, knowledge, skills and competences, meeting qualifications).

In addition to the definition, the first regulations-pillars that determined the development and implementation of OPs in our country are listed. The main regulations are:

- It is explicitly stated that "the design and certification of Lifelong Vocational Training programs are based on the development of occupational profiles".
- It is specified that the OP, apart from its technical dimension, essentially constitutes 'common ground' for employees and employers, since the legislator clearly states that for the relevant bodies that have the right to develop OPs 'the tertiary trade unions' to which the proposed Professional Profile corresponds 'will be represented by both sides (employers-employees)'.

### 4.2.2 CMD n. 113708/2005

This is a Common Ministerial Decision of the Minister of Economy and Finance and the Minister of Labour and Social Security, which concerns the certification of programmes and the certification of knowledge, skills and competences. Specifically:

- 'The direct link between the content of vocational training programmes and the corresponding occupational profiles' is defined.
- It is explicitly stated that 'the basic requirement for the accreditation of a programme is the link of its content to the certified occupational profile of the corresponding profession or part of it'.
- The Advisory Committee for the accreditation of a programme also includes representatives appointed by the tertiary trade unions to which the profession/specialty belongs.
- For each educational unit of the programme, the association with the evaluation criteria as developed in the profile is required, and the same applies to the identification of the expected learning outcomes.

### 4.2.3 CMD n. 110998/2006

This is the basic legislative text that still regulates the procedures for the development of OPs. It is essentially the text in which detailed reference is made to the conditions and steps for their development and certification. It contains explicit reference to the **individual targets** associated with the analysis and listing of the content of the professions and the ways of obtaining the qualifications required to practise a profession, which are codified as follows:

- T 1.** The direct link between the content of vocational training programmes and the corresponding OPs.
- T 2.** The institutionalisation of methods, specifications and criteria for the development, evaluation and certification of OPs.
- T 3.** Strengthening the credibility of vocational training and linking it more closely to the labour market needs.
- T 4.** Improving the professional qualifications of the country's human resources and facilitating the integration of the unemployed and vulnerable social groups into employment.
- T 5.** Strengthening the role of social partners in the lifelong vocational training system.
- T 6.** Quality assurance and effectiveness of programmes implemented in the context of lifelong vocational education and training.

Of the above targets only T2 could be considered short term, while all the others can be considered medium to long term.

The operational specialisation of target T2 specifies in detail all the components of the OP and provides an indicative table of the subsections that must be included. The provision of 'proposed routes of obtaining qualifications' could be seen as linked to target T1, and in fact constitutes a distinct section of the OP. It is further provided that knowledge and skills will be divided into general, basic and specific. The same article defines the evaluation criteria and the scope of implementation and introduces a further concept, namely occupational activity, which is essentially the combination of the title of a professional function, the evaluation criteria and the scope of implementation.

The operational specification of target T5 assigns an important role to the social partners for the development and certification of the OPs. According to the provisions of §4.3, *'the right to develop a job description is granted to the relevant bodies, in which the tertiary trade unions of employers and employees that co-sign the National General Collective Labour Agreement (EGSSE), and in which the proposed occupational profile is included, will necessarily be represented.'*

It is obvious that, as far as the OPs are concerned, there is a continuity in the institutionalisation process, which starts with Law 3369/2005 and is completed with CMD n. 110998/2006, which lasts until today.

By attempting an overall valuation of the individual provisions of the legislative framework, it is possible to identify the strong elements that have facilitated the implementation of the Occupational Profiles policy. Four elements that could be described as pillars of this policy [i.e. the central role of the OPs in linking education and employment, the key role of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), the link between the profiles and the programmes, and the active role of the social partners] can be identified in every legislative initiative, and their importance is constantly increasing. Obviously, stability in the above four elements can only be linked to broader dimensions of the policy in question, such as the credibility of the national certification body and the firm position of the social partners to play an active role in this issue.

Another strong point is the detailed description of the ‘technical elements’ (structure of the OP and sub concepts), which remain unchanged in all legislative interventions. Another strong point is the operational specification of the targets of CMD n.110998/2006.

### 4.3 The approved content of the Occupational Profiles

Pursuant to no. 12832/15-04-21 Decision of no. 443/14-04-21 Meeting of the Board of Directors of EOPPEP, the methodology of development and the content of Occupational Profiles with detailed reference to specific sections that reflect the defined institutional framework were approved. The sections and their content are summarised below.

#### SECTION A: ‘TITLE AND DEFINITION OF THE PROFESSION’

Basic information is provided on the definition of the Profession, the correspondence with the current Classification System of Occupations and Economic Activities, the economy and the business environment, human resources and employment conditions, the trade unions or scientific organisations related to the profession, the relevant forms or other media or sources of information, the institutional framework for the operation of the profession, the technologies/technological changes affecting the profession, as well as the developments concerning climate change and environmental protection affecting the profession.

#### SECTION B: ‘ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSION AND/OR SPECIALISATION – SPECIFICATIONS’

The section focuses on the synthesis of the reference framework of the profession, which is broken down into:

- **Essential Job Functions:** These are broad sets of activities whose performance fulfills the basic purpose of the profession. They describe what needs to be done to achieve the central purpose of the profession.
- **Individual Job Functions:** They refer to broad and distinct areas of the professional role. Each relates to a specific, autonomous and integrated area of the professional role.
- **Professional Tasks:** The smallest dimension into which an occupational activity is subdivided. Distinctive, independent and ‘visible’ individual action.

It also includes:

- **Evaluation criteria:** These are the critical points/indicators of each occupational function on the basis of which it will be judged whether the employee/professional meets the requirements of each individual job function.
- **Scope of Implementation:** It refers to the conditions, means, materials, application environments, etc. by which or within the context of which each Individual Job Function can be developed.

#### SECTION C: ‘ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES’

The main body of the section is set out below:

- **Professional knowledge:** It is the knowledge that is considered necessary for the performance of a specific Individual Job Function and is directly related to the corresponding Evaluation Criteria and Scope of Implementation.
- **Specific Professional Knowledge:** It relates to the particular conditions of its practice in specific work environments or, in certain occasions, to the particular conditions of the specific occupational field.
- **Skills:** The skills required to perform the tasks of each Individual Job Function are listed.



- Competences: The competences required to perform the tasks of each Individual Job Function are listed and selected from those listed in the European Reference Framework on key competences for lifelong learning.

SECTION D: 'EXISTING AND PROPOSED ROUTES FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS'

The section includes alternative learning pathways that can be followed in order to acquire the Knowledge, Skills and Competences necessary for the exercise of the profession in question. They refer to educational qualifications, work experience and continuing vocational training, where appropriate.

SECTION E: 'INDICATIVE METHODS OF ASSESSING THE REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES'

The section refers to the assessment of professional knowledge and skills which requires the selection of the appropriate method and methodological tools.

## 5. The need to update the Occupational Profiles - The contribution of the NQP

A key parameter of the validity of the occupational profiles is the possibility of revising them in a way that ensures that the actual parameters of the exercise of each profession are up-to-date. Updated Occupational Profiles shall also include updated professional knowledge, skills and competences of the occupations under consideration if the need to revise them arises. Each update provides new elements to the NQP, which are used appropriately.

The forms of updates are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

### 5.1 Update/revision based on major events

A 'major event' can be defined as any institutional change of which:

1. The scope of implementation is such that it is reasonable to suspect that it will have a decisive and significant impact on both the content and the structure of the occupational profile.
2. The timing of occurrence cannot be predicted on the basis of available data, mainly because it depends on the deliberate regulatory action of institutional actors with the legitimacy to modify broader implementation conditions.
3. Its institutional origin makes its implementation directly applicable, on the basis of provisions of formal or substantive law, including the terms of collective labour agreements at national and sectoral level.

The proposed categorisation is organised into three sub-categories: institutional framework, methodology and regulation of professions.

1. The first category concerns major events related to significant changes in the institutional framework for the development of occupational profiles. For instance, we could imagine changes in existing legislation that would significantly modify the procedures for the shaping or approval of occupational profiles as a whole. In this case it would be likely that adjustments of the approved methodology would be needed, making it necessary to urgently review and update all available profiles, even those whose initial development is considered relatively recent.
2. The second case of major events relates to potential major methodological changes. Even without changes to the broader institutional framework, the approved methodology can be modified affecting the content, structure or even the way the data are presented. The last major modification of the methodology for the development of 2020 occupational profiles created essentially 'two-speed' occupational profiles, the 'old' and the 'new' ones. However, it is understood that methodological changes should be reflected in all available profiles, avoiding methodological inconsistency. Consequently, a key eligibility criterion for the profiles to be updated is the adaptation of the older profiles to the newer methodological projections.
3. Finally, the third category concerns the introduction of extensive decisive regulatory provisions on the exercise of a specific profession or a group of professions. These are institutional changes that may relate to provisions on the award and protection of professional rights or contractual terms and conditions at national and sectoral level. The very nature of these changes, to the extent that they relate to provisions of formal and/or substantive law that shape the current collective labour law, is likely to require the immediate amendment of the relevant occupational profiles in order to maintain their validity.

## 5.2 Periodic updating

If we accept that major events, mainly due to their unpredictable and unavoidable nature, will always override the eligibility procedure for the occupational profiles to be updated, it is considered appropriate to have a predictable -due to its fixed periodicity- update. This may incorporate changes of a limited scope and of objectively minor importance, and may not be limited exclusively to incorporating changes of a mandatory nature, but it may also include those arising as quality changes in the working conditions and the exercise of a certain profession.

It is a process of long-term monitoring of the quality characteristics of the occupational profiles with the ultimate aim of their possible periodic partial revision at specified intervals, through predefined and standardised procedures, which requires human and financial resources.

A time period of three (3) years, due to the milestones of the National Roadmap, since the date of its adoption by EOPPEP, is estimated to be a sufficient period during which we are likely to have some data from its initial use.

During the three-year period there may be a **review process** every year. In this case it is not an updating process, but in principle an evaluation of the available data in terms of maintaining their validity. The review will result in a set of findings and a specific proposal as to the form and extent of the necessary (or not) intervention in the occupational profile under consideration. This brief review process is more likely to point to the need for mild interventions and revisions, rather than radical comprehensive 'updates'.

The review, therefore, is a periodic checking process that precedes each update. The purpose is not to revise, modify or supplement an approved profile, but to identify items and data groups that may require revision. In theory, and excluding "major event" cases, it is likely that at least in the first periodic reviews, a limited number of items will be identified as requiring revision and to a limited extent. In any case, however, some findings will emerge which will need to lead to a general recommendation on what would be the most appropriate potential interventions.

## 5.3 The contribution of the NQP

The NQP can make an important contribution to the periodic review process. Through annual research or some other type of process among its bodies, the NQP can meet the requirements of the periodic review results for the field specialties. This process will identify areas that need to be reviewed, and at the same time it will highlight potentially new skills and professional knowledge arising from new developments in the field.

From all the findings of this process, a specific proposal can be made as to the form and extent of the necessary (or not) intervention in the occupational profiles under consideration. The proposal can also be formally forwarded to the relevant social partners (it should be noted that the social partners participate in the NQP with their representatives), who in cooperation and consultation with the (other) members of the NQP will decide on the necessity and the extent of revision of occupational profiles with the most appropriate interventions.

## 6. Proposals for the operation and maintenance of the NQP

The members of the National Qualification Platform (NQP) expressed their strong willingness to continue its operation after the end of the BUS-REGRoUP project. The proposals aim to support the sustainability of the NQP after the end of the project contract. The specific proposals were agreed following consultation among NQP members.

Table 2 presents the main activities in the proposals, including the distribution of the NQP's responsibilities, which have been agreed to be implemented and supported in the post-contract period of BUS-REGRoUP Project.

**Table 2: Main activities and distribution of NQP responsibilities**

FIELD	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE BODIES
<b>Regulation of the NQP</b>	Drafting of relevant legislation to regulate the organisation and operation of the NQP	Ministry of Environment and Energy, CRES
<b>Drafting of operating rules</b>	Description of the organisational structure and functioning of the NQP	1. All NQP members (Consultation and agreement on the content of the regulation) 2. Ministry of Environment and Energy, CRES (for the approval of the operating regulation)
<b>Resources of the NQP</b>	Definition of financial and human resources for the operation of the NQP	Ministry of Environment and Energy, All consortium members
<b>Groups of specialisations</b>	Setting up groups by specialties by the members of the NQP	All NQP members
<b>Overview of qualifications/skills</b>	Annual review process of the skills of field workers. (Research procedures and consultation of NQP members to identify new skills)	- Working Group of NQP members for the research process. - All NQP members in the consultation process.
<b>Evaluation of the review and proposal for updating the OPs</b>	Analysis of the review data, drawing conclusions and proposal for updating the OPs, if necessary	CRES and Working Group of NQP members
<b>Information - publicity</b>	Information of public bodies and relevant social partners – publicity actions	All consortium members
<b>Updating of OPs</b>	Updating of the proposed OPs in accordance with the procedure of the institutional framework	INE GSEE, IME GSEVEE, CRES (technical support), EOPPEP
<b>Certification of OPs</b>	Certification of the updated OPs in accordance with the procedure of the institutional framework	EOPPEP

<b>Updating training programmes</b>	Updating Continuing Vocational Training programmes in accordance with the updated OPs	CRES and Working Group of NQP members
<b>Certification of training programmes</b>	Certification of updated training programmes in accordance with the procedures of the institutional framework	EOPPEP

## 7. Summary

The NQP is a dynamic and critical tool for the assessment, development and management of the qualifications of people working in the construction sector, enabling them to respond to the needs of the labour market and promoting professional development in this field of interest.

In order to protect the NQP from stagnation, a key parameter is the continuous monitoring and updating of human resources skills. To ensure this process it is vital to link it to existing institutional functions that have a compatible and specific purpose in terms of monitoring and updating the qualifications of human resources in the construction sector.

The sustainability of the NQP also faces challenges such as:

1. The necessary and active cooperation among the various stakeholders, including education policy makers, businesses and employees.
2. The formation of coherent links with public policies, mechanisms and procedures.
3. The use of public policies, such as the governance system of Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning.
4. The use of existing reliable mechanisms for the identification of skills, which ensure the consensus and mutual trust of employees, employers and the state, as in the case of Occupational and Skills Profiles.

The occupational profiles, based on the current institutional framework, analyse the respective specialisation and clearly indicate the professional knowledge, skills and competences required for the exercise of the professional activity in question. On the basis of these data, vocational training programmes can be designed on a reliable and quality basis. An important aspect is the fact that the occupational profiles are developed on the initiative of the employees and employers representing a specific profession and are approved /certified by the state (EOPPEP). The whole process ensures consensus and mutual trust of the state and the social partners. It should also be noted that the social partners who represent the professional specialties in the field and are responsible for the development of the respective specialties are also members of the NQP.

It is found that the targets of the NQP and the policies for the development of occupational profiles are fully compatible, since both aim to record the human resources qualifications. The two entities can be mutually reinforcing. Therefore, occupational profiles can be an important tool for the work of the NQP.

A key parameter of the validity of the occupational profiles is the possibility of revising them in a way that ensures that the actual parameters of the exercise of each profession are up-to-date. Updated Occupational Profiles shall also include updated professional knowledge, skills and competences of the occupations under consideration if the need to revise them arises. Each update provides new elements to the NQP, which are used appropriately.

The NQP may contribute to the regular periodic review of qualifications through research or other type of process among the bodies participating in the NQP. The process will identify areas that need to be reviewed, but it will also identify potentially new skills or even professional knowledge arising from new developments in the field.

From all the findings of this process, a specific proposal can emerge as to the form and extent of the necessary (or not) intervention in the occupational profiles under consideration.

In summary, the ways in which the sustainability of the NQP can be achieved are:

1. Use of the existing institutional framework for the development of Occupational Profiles of the specialties of interest. The institutional framework gives exclusive responsibility for their development to the social partners and, in particular, to the professional organisations of employees and employers representing the profession in question. The key element in this policy framework is that the bodies responsible for developing the profiles are the same bodies that are involved in the NQP.
2. Use of the existing institutional framework for lifelong learning, which stipulates that continuing training programmes must be designed on the basis of the approved occupational profiles.
3. The successful operation of the NQP requires a committee that will have institutional status and an organised function even after the completion of this funded project. Therefore, there should be a legislative initiative by the competent Ministry or Ministries to establish the NQP, describe its composition and work, and define the human and financial resources for its operation.