



The recognition of prior learning and the homologation of qualifications

November 12, 2021

Concept Note and Agenda

CONTEXT

When considering the challenges of labor migration in terms of its governance, the recognition of prior learning and its certification by labor competencies occupies an increasingly relevant place. The challenges are stated in terms of the need to make recognition and certification more accessible to migrant workers, which implies reviewing, making more flexible and simplifying the procedures for obtaining it, making it accessible, disseminating its usefulness and the procedure for managing it, among others. As intraregional labor migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean increase, the urgency of advancing along these lines of action becomes even greater.

According to calculations by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, n/d), the migrant population in Central America was estimated at 4.4 million in 2017. Migratory flows from Venezuela in recent years and migratory movements between the northern countries of Central America have reconfigured the characterization of some countries as countries of origin or transit of migration, to be conceived as a destination for many people seeking livelihoods.

As demonstrated by the data published in the "World Migration Report 2020"¹ the Central American and Caribbean region is identified as one of the main intraregional migration corridors, with Nicaraguans and Panamanians moving to Costa Rica in search of temporary or permanent jobs, and Central Americans (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) migrating to Belize due to instability and lack of employment opportunities in their country of origin. In the Caribbean, Haitians migrate to the Dominican Republic.

In general, migrant workers from Central America and the Caribbean are of productive age and are therefore a fairly young population that will need to enter the labor market as one of their priorities:

Table No. 1. Average age of international migrants

Country	Belize	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico	Nicaragua	Panamá	Dominican Republic
Average age of international migrants	38.1	38.2	32.6	36.3	32.5	14.2	30.5	40.0	31.2

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. International Migration 2019.

¹ World Migration Report 2020. 2019 International Organization for Migration (IOM).

http://efaidnbmnnnibpajpcgclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fpublications.iom.int%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fpdf%2Fwmr_2020_es.pdf&clen=9424122&chunk=true



GOBIERNO DE
MÉXICO



Conferencia Regional sobre Migración
Regional Conference on Migration

XXVI
REGIONAL
CONFERENCE
ON MIGRATION

Upon arrival, this migrant population faces a number of challenges, including those related to the differential treatment they receive in terms of labor rights, hence the importance of generating regional proposals on the protection of rights, equitable access to opportunities and the creation of legal frameworks harmonized with international agreements, in which the recognition of their labor skills takes on special importance.

Considering that we are in a region where intraregional movements are becoming increasingly relevant, it is strategic for a migrant to be able to certify his or her competencies acquired through experience upon arrival in a host country and for the competencies certified in another country of the same region to be recognized in the same country. This same situation is crucial for integration in the face of return, particularly due to the increase in repatriations and returns from the United States, which is the main destination country in the region

Labor competency recognition and certification systems are closely linked to national qualifications systems. Normally each national system has its own regulations, levels and quality assurance mechanisms. Several countries in the region have initiated reforms in their qualifications systems aimed at improving quality, comparability and benchmarking between their education and job training processes. These reforms have often embraced the idea of developing national qualifications frameworks, which are nothing more than a single reference for all levels of education in a country, expressed in terms of learning outcomes rather than curricular content, as had traditionally been the case.

The ILO's Inter-American Center for Knowledge Development in Professional Training (Cinterfor) has drawn up an analytical inventory of the qualifications frameworks² under development in the region. One of the findings indicates that at least eight countries have advanced, to varying degrees, towards the implementation of this tool. A National Qualifications Framework is a single, agreed-upon instrument that brings together a set of qualifications, presenting them in an orderly fashion by levels associated with different types of qualifications that can be regional, national and sectoral in scope. The design of the framework usually foresees the ways in which a person moves upwards or between different qualifications, as well as its mechanisms for managing and assuring the quality of qualifications (ILO/Cinterfor, n.d., 1st and 2nd paragraphs).

The connection between qualifications recognized and certified within a national framework can make a difference when it comes to their recognition in another country. National frameworks can be compared with each other. In fact, experience in Europe, Asia Pacific and Africa has shown that the generation of a Regional Qualifications Framework helps in the construction of a regional space for mobility and recognition of competencies.

² See in: [Inventario analítico de experiencias de construcción e implementación de marcos de cualificaciones en América Latina | OIT/ Cinterfor](#)

By addressing the transferability of skills and the recognition of qualifications in a regional context where the movement of workers is increasing day by day, the construction of a regional qualifications framework makes a lot of sense as it would facilitate the recognition of qualifications from one country to another. However, not all countries have systems for certifying competencies or consolidated national qualification frameworks, so moving towards regional schemes requires first reviewing progress at the national level and then directing efforts towards regional construction. It is possible, however, to learn and be guided by the experiences of other latitudes and of the Latin American and Caribbean region itself.

JUSTIFICATION

When the need to recognize and certify the competencies of migrant workers is raised, as mentioned at the beginning, it refers to challenges. This is of utmost importance for the countries of origin, destination and return. There is little information about the labor and educational profile of migrants, which makes it difficult for the competent institutions to design training or retraining programs and to accept documents proving their skills in order to contribute to their employability.

There are restrictions related to the national identity documents required of migrant workers, which they do not always have; furthermore, those who are in an irregular migratory situation are excluded from these services. In the Central American and Caribbean region, diversity stands out in terms of legal requirements related to migration, which, once satisfied, trigger access to a catalog of rights and services. Due to the length of the procedures, many people are forced to abandon them; the costs associated with them are also a discouraging element in some cases. Other reasons have to do with the lack of knowledge of the procedure on the part of the employer sector, but also on the part of the migrants themselves, information that should be provided before departure (Concha and Arredondo, 2020).

The effort towards the construction of a regional framework of qualifications that facilitates the recognition and certification of competencies in transnational spaces requires looking at national systems.

The knowledge or exchange of good practices among the Member Countries of the RCM constitutes a means to advance in both lines of action. There are valuable experiences within and outside the region that can guide decision-making in this field, since it is possible to show the progress, challenges and the way in which they have been addressed, as well as the results obtained, which translates into the ideal opportunity to delve deeper into the subject.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, valuable experiences can be identified that show progress towards the creation of regional certification frameworks and systems. These include the countries that make up the Pacific Alliance, i.e. Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico, which have consolidated national systems for the evaluation and certification of labor competencies: in Chile, the National Labor Competencies Certification System Commission, through ChileValora, the National Training Service



GOBIERNO DE
MÉXICO



Conferencia Regional sobre Migración
Regional Conference on Migration

XXVI
REGIONAL
CONFERENCE
ON MIGRATION

(SENA) of Colombia, the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru and the National Council for the Standardization and Certification of Labor Competencies (CONOCER) of Mexico.

It should be noted that in this technical area of recognition and revalidation of qualifications obtained by migrants, it is the Ministries of Education of each country that lead the processes, in addition to the efforts of the Ministries of Labor and Professional Training Institutions.

In view of the increasing circulation of workers in these four countries, the Pacific Alliance is moving towards the construction of a "Route towards the Homologation of the National Systems for the Certification of Labor Competencies" in order to reach, later on, a homologation agreement between these systems. These countries have also advanced, to varying degrees of achievement, towards a National Qualifications Framework for their respective labor and education training systems; in Peru, a standard for the adoption of its national framework was approved in August.

The Network of Training Institutions of Central America and the Dominican Republic, with the support of Spanish cooperation, promoted a process of standardization of Labor Competency Standards in the construction and tourism sectors, both with a strong presence of migrant labor. In South America, under a sectoral model, there are efforts in relation to the standardization of competency standards for the construction sector, as in the case of the Argentinean Construction Workers Union (UOCRA) which, for this purpose, promoted the signing of an agreement in 2008, with the support of ILO/Cinterfor. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has a Regional Framework for English-speaking countries based on the framework developed by Jamaica. This has been approved by CARICOM for use in all member states (Billorou and Vargas, 2010). ILO/Cinterfor, in collaboration with OAS and UNESCO is advancing in a course-workshop towards the implementation of a regional qualifications framework for Latin America and the Caribbean and a synthesis document is expected next October. UNESCO has also been working on a global inventory of national and regional frameworks³.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To analyze the relevance and feasibility of building regional schemes for the recognition and certification of competencies.

Specific objectives

1. To identify the existing links between national schemes for the recognition and certification of competencies, as well as their referencing towards a possible regional qualifications framework.

³ [The Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks 2017, Volume II | UIL \(unesco.org\)](#)



2. To promote the exchange of good practices in order to learn about the progress and challenges in the construction of national competency certification schemes and national and regional qualifications frameworks.
3. To identify, based on shared experiences, the challenges in access to services for the recognition and certification of competencies of migrants with reference to national frameworks and with a view to a regional qualifications framework.

PARTICIPANTS

It is recommended to invite (virtually) representatives per country (ideally at the level of Department Directors in the case of the public sector), with the following distribution:

- 2 representatives from labor ministries (labor migration unit and unit responsible for active employment policies, training and certification);
- 2 representatives of migration institutes or directorates linked to labor migration issues;
- 1 representative of Ministries of Foreign Affairs or Chancelleries related to labor migration issues;
- 2 representatives of the vocational training institutes of the unit in charge of the certification of competencies;
- 2 representatives of the ministries of education from the unit responsible for dealing with national qualifications frameworks.

In addition, it is proposed to invite, at the regional level:

- 2 representatives of representative organizations of workers.
- 2 representatives of employers' representative organizations.

Observer organizations of the RCM and the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RNCOM), who wish to participate, are welcome.

AGENDA

NOVEMBER 12		
Time (Mexico Time, GMT-6)	Activity	Directs
09:30-09:45	Welcoming Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of the Labor Migration Group, INM and STPS • ILO Representative, Noortje Denkers 	RCM Executive Secretary
09:45-10:30	Systems for the recognition and certification of labor competencies and qualifications frameworks:	Coordinator of the Working Group on Labor



	<p>conceptualization and linkage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fernando Vargas, Senior Specialist in Professional Training, Inter-American Center for the Development of Knowledge in Professional Training (CINTERFOR)</i> (30 min presentation/15 min exchange) 	Migration
10:30-11:15	<p>Panel: Advances in the development of systems for the recognition and certification of labor competencies in the region and the access of migrants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFOTEP, Ramona Mejía, Department of Curriculum Design, Dominican Republic • CONOCER, José Omar Villarreal Ochoa, Secretariat of Public Education, Mexico • INSAFORP, Jorge Echegoyén, Strategic Planning and International Cooperation Unit, El Salvador <p><i>(20 min. per presentation and 15 min. of exchange among participants)</i></p>	ILO
11:15-12:30	<p>Recapitulation and plenary session</p> <p>Based on the experiences presented, what could be the contribution of the RCM to advance towards the construction of a regional system for the certification of labor and professional competencies and a regional qualifications framework?</p>	ILO
12:30	Closing	Working Group on Labour Migration (WGLM), INM and STPS



GOBIERNO DE
MÉXICO



Conferencia Regional sobre Migración
Regional Conference on Migration

XXVI
REGIONAL
CONFERENCE
ON MIGRATION

References

- Billorou, N., & Vargas, F. (2010). *Herramientas básicas para el diseño e implementación de marcos de cualificaciones. Guía de trabajo*. (EUROSOCIAL, & O. I. Trabajo, Edits.) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean; International Training Center and Inter-American Center for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (ILO).
- Concha, X., & Arredondo, G. (2020). *ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO SISTEMAS DE EVALUACIÓN Y CERTIFICACIÓN DE COMPETENCIAS LABORALES DE LAS PERSONAS EN LOS PAÍSES DE LA ALIANZA DEL PACÍFICO..* (EUROSOCIAL, Ed.).
- Grupo Ártico 34. (2020). *Cualificación profesional: diferencias con la competencia profesional*. Retrieved from <https://protecciondatos-lopd.com/empresas/cualificacion-profesional/>
- International Labour Organization. (2004). Human resources development recommendation (No. 195). Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/es/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R195
- International Organization for Migration, International Labour Organization, International Training Centre. (n.d.). *DESARROLLO E IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE ACUERDOS BILATERALES SOBRE MIGRACIÓN LABORAL. MESOAMÉRICA*.
- United Nations. (2019). International Migration 2019. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/files/documents/2020/Feb/un_2019_internationalmigration_wallchart.pdf