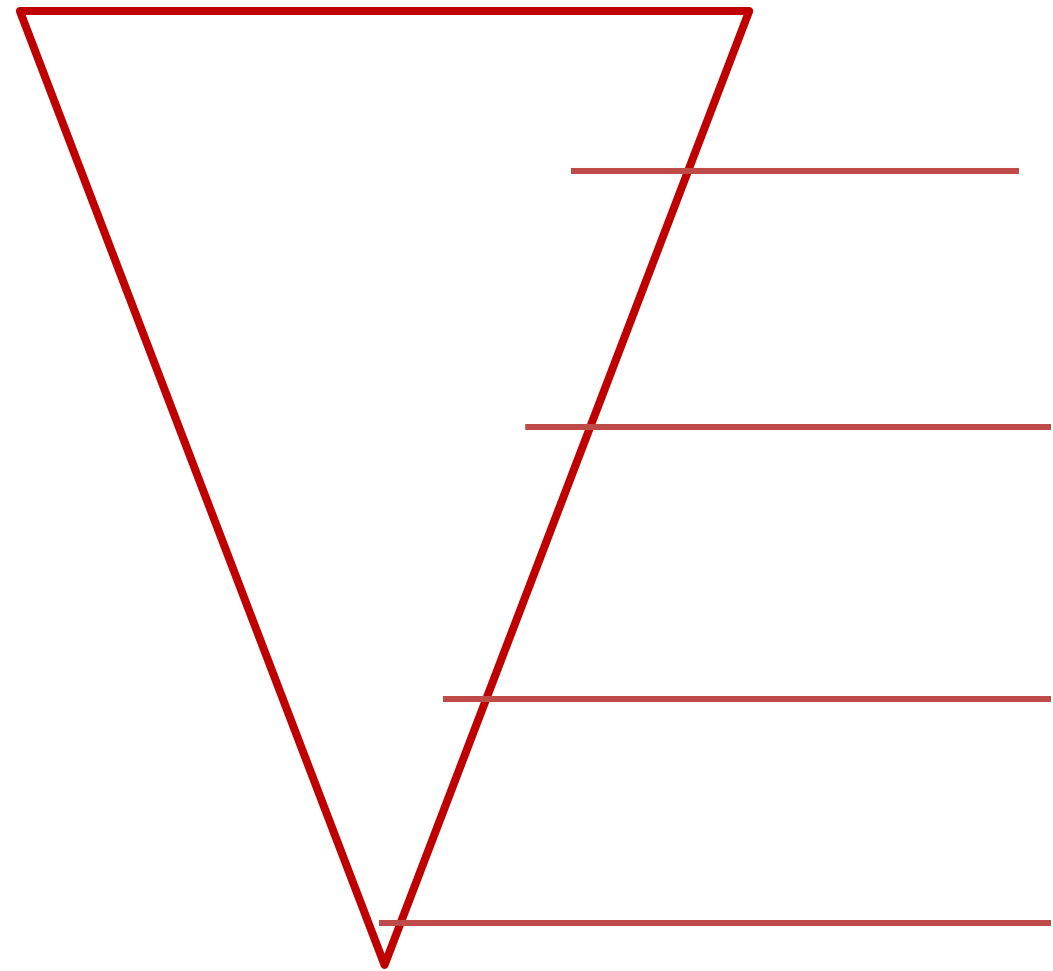


Microcredentials from theory to practice

Elisa Petrucci, Head of Unit - International Projects
Manuela Costone, Senior Project Manager
Federica Sancillo, Junior Project Manager

Micro-GEAR
Kick-off meeting
Tbilisi, January 17-18, 2024

AGENDA



- 1) EU and international policies on Micro-credentials
- 2) CIMEA in micro-credentials: policies and projects
- 3) Micro-credentials courses at the European University of Rome
- 4) MICRO-Gear: Expected results of the project, sharing previous experiences for developing targeted solutions

EU and international policies on Micro-credentials

Why national and international policies on micro-credentials?

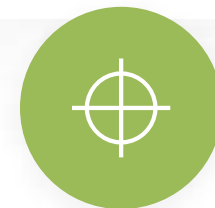
- Enhancing Workforce Skills
- Increasing Employability
- Promoting Lifelong Learning
- Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Strengthening the Education System

Not a new concept as such...



From short learning experiences...

- Present in legislation of some European countries: not specific regulation but allows for the provision of micro-credentials (as defined in the [European approach to MCs](#))



...to micro-credentials

A new boost and a shift in the vision and an opportunity to rethink higher education role in lifelong learning



The international policies on micro-credentials



European Union



Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czechia
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden

Policy context: European Union

➤ European Union:

- [European Skills Agenda](#) (June 2020): identifies micro-credentials as a way to up-skill and re-skill professionals, to value learning outcomes and to increase permeability and flexibility between different education sectors and pathways.
- [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#) (Sept. 2020): considers micro-credentials a tool to support the relevance, quality and inclusiveness of European education and training at all levels.
- [European Approach to micro-credentials](#) (Feb. 2021): a common definition of micro-credentials, presentation of building blocks, and a roadmap of actions for their development and adoption in Europe. Final report delivered in February 2021 by a group of experts established by the European Commission.
- [European Education Area](#) (Feb. 2021): micro-credentials are seen as a way to diversify the student population and to make higher education more inclusive by 2025 by supporting lifelong learning and providing more flexible and modular learning opportunities.



Policy context: European Union

- o [European strategy for universities](#) (Jan. 2022): micro-credentials as a mean of contribute to professional **reskilling and upskilling** to meet new and emerging needs in society and labour market, and to **develop skills and competences and technological innovation** for the digital and green transition.





COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 16 June 2022

on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability
(2022/C 243/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 149 and 292, 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas

1. Within Europe, a growing number of people need to update and improve their knowledge, skills and competences to fill the gap between their formal education and training and the needs of a fast-changing society and labour market. The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the digital and green transitions have accelerated the pace of change in how we live, learn and work. They have also highlighted the need for people to be better equipped to deal with current and future challenges. The pandemic has affected the career prospects of both young people and adults. It has also increased unemployment and damaged the physical, mental and emotional well-being of hundreds of millions of people in Europe.
2. One of the major challenges facing European businesses and employers is an insufficient supply of relevant skills in the EU labour market. Simultaneously, workers are being upskilled and reskilled in how work is organised. In addition, task profiles and skills requirements are changing significantly due to the digital and green transitions. As outlined in Council Directive (EU) 2021/1348 of 13 October 2021 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (1), Member States and the Union are to work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce, as well as labour markets that are future-oriented and responsive to economic change. Continuous upskilling and reskilling are essential for workers to respond to the needs of their current job or to transition to new jobs and expanding sectors, such as the green and digital sectors, in particular in the context of demographic ageing.
3. People need access to quality training and learning provided in different ways and settings, to develop their personal, social, cultural and professional knowledge, skills and competences. There have been calls for education and training systems to become more flexible and to find solutions to deliver more learner-centred, accessible and inclusive learning to a wider range of profiles. Non-formal providers of education and training are also addressing this need by providing easy and innovative opportunities for upskilling and reskilling.
4. An effective culture of lifelong learning is key to ensuring that everyone has the knowledge, skills and competences they need to thrive in society, the labour market and their personal lives. It is essential that people can access quality and relevant education and training, upskilling and reskilling throughout their lives. Lifelong learning opportunities should be part of the long-term strategy of education and training institutions to improve their responsiveness to the fast-changing needs of employers and learners. This would enable a more diverse body of learners (including graduates of these institutions and other adult learners) to upskill and reskill. It is recommended that higher education institutions, vocational education and training (VET) institutions, adult learning providers and other providers of micro-credentials, including employers, cooperate and integrate the latest research findings in the design and uptake of learning opportunities.

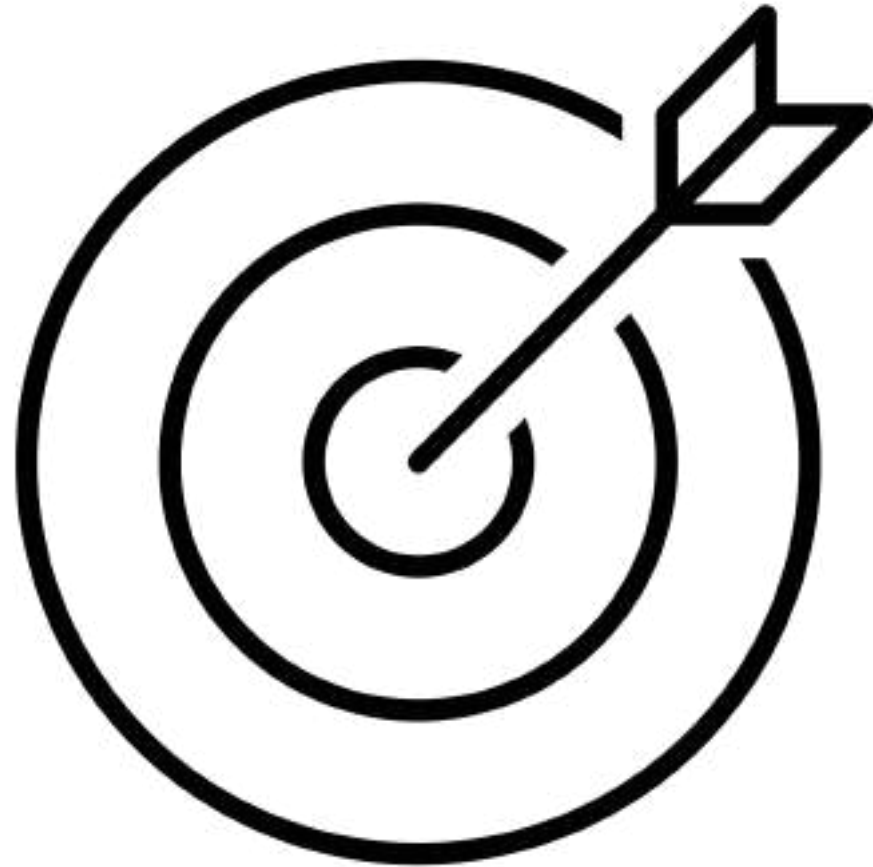
(1) OJ L 378, 16.10.2021, p. 1.

Council Recommendation on micro-credentials

- ➔ **WHO:** Council of the European Union
- ➔ **WHAT:** common definition of micro-credentials, actions to create an 'ecosystem for micro-credentials', recommendations on their use for learners, support uptake and developments
- ➔ **WHERE:** European Union
- ➔ **WHEN:** adopted in June 2022
- ➔ **WHY:** upskill and reskill (green and digital transition, post-pandemic recovery), putting all the diversity under a common framework



Objectives



- 'enabling individuals to **acquire, update and improve the knowledge, skills and competences** they need to thrive in an evolving labour market and society (...)
- supporting the preparedness of providers of micro-credentials to **enhance the quality, transparency, accessibility and flexibility of the learning offering** in order to empower individuals to forge personalised learning and career pathways;
- fostering **inclusiveness, access and equal opportunities** and contributing to the achievement of resilience, social fairness and prosperity for all (...).
- Member States are recommended to use micro-credentials, where appropriate, as a **tool to strengthen and complement existing learning opportunities**, increase participation in lifelong learning

Source: [Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#) 2022

Definition of micro-credentials



'Micro-credential' means the **record of the learning outcomes** that a learner has acquired following a **small volume of learning**. These learning outcomes will have been **assessed** against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with **specific knowledge, skills and competences** that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market **needs**. Micro-credentials are **owned** by the learner, can be **shared** and are **portable**. They may be **stand-alone** or **combined** into larger credentials. They are underpinned by **quality assurance** following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

Source: [Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#) 2022

European Higher Education Area (EHEA)



Source: www.ehea.info

Albania	Kazakhstan
Andorra	Latvia
Armenia	Liechtenstein
Austria	Lithuania
Azerbaijan	Luxembourg
Belgium	Malta
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Moldova
Bulgaria	Montenegro
Croatia	Netherlands
Cyprus	North Macedonia
Czech Republic	Norway
Denmark	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Finland	Romania
France	San Marino
Georgia	Serbia
Germany	Slovakia
Greece	Slovenia
Holy See	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
Iceland	Switzerland
Ireland	Türkiye
Italy	Ukraine
	United Kingdom

Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 2020

«Flexible and open learning paths, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of **student-centred learning** and are in increasing demand in our societies. In addition to full degree programmes, many higher education institutions offer or plan to offer **smaller units of learning**, which enable learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal skills and competences at various stages in their lives. We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these **smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials**, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tool» (Rome Communiqué, Nov. 2020)

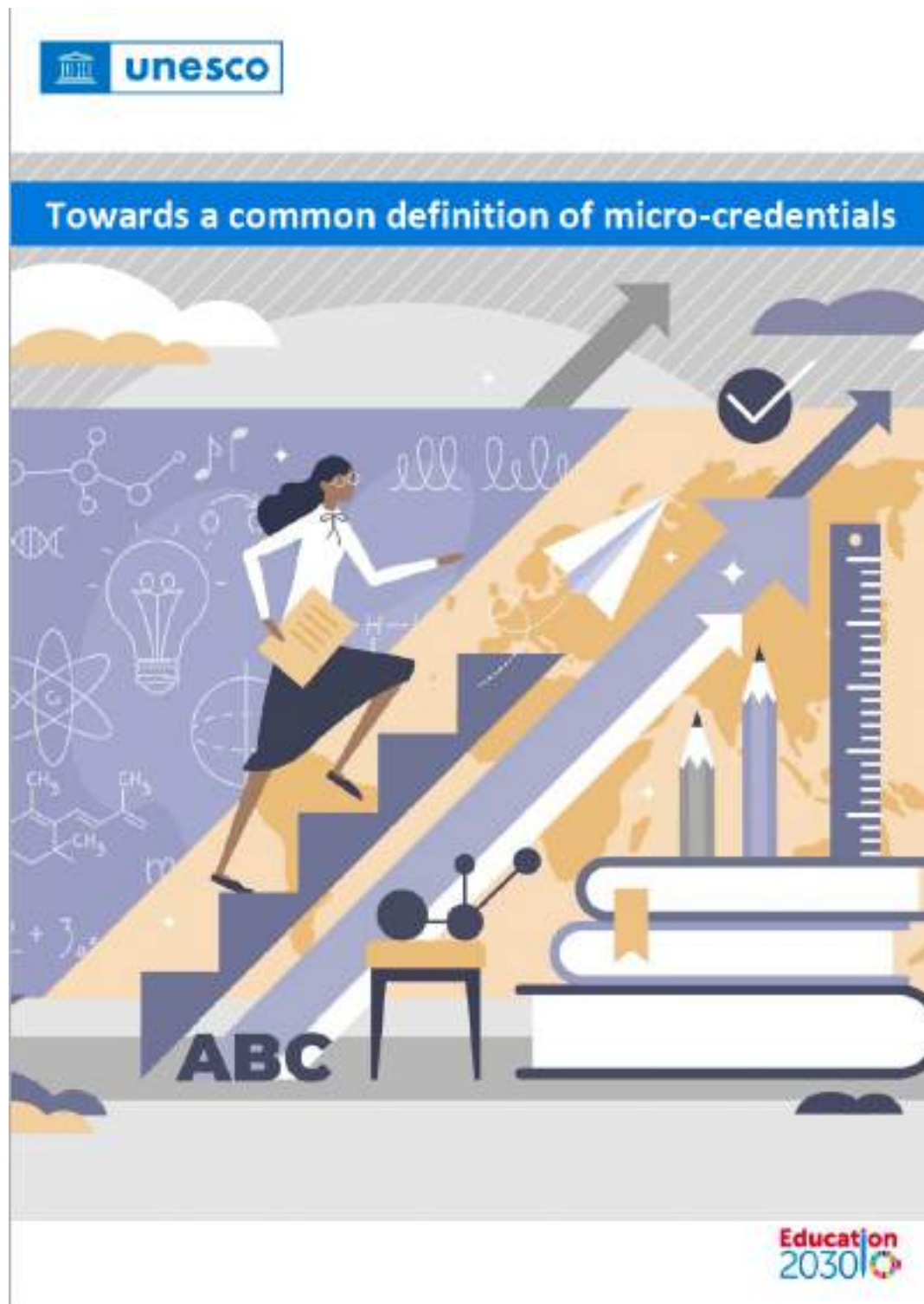


Towards a common definition of micro-credentials

- Policy analysis: where are we at with micro-credentials?
- Towards a shared definition of micro-credentials
- The proposed definition of micro-credentials
- Conclusion and next steps

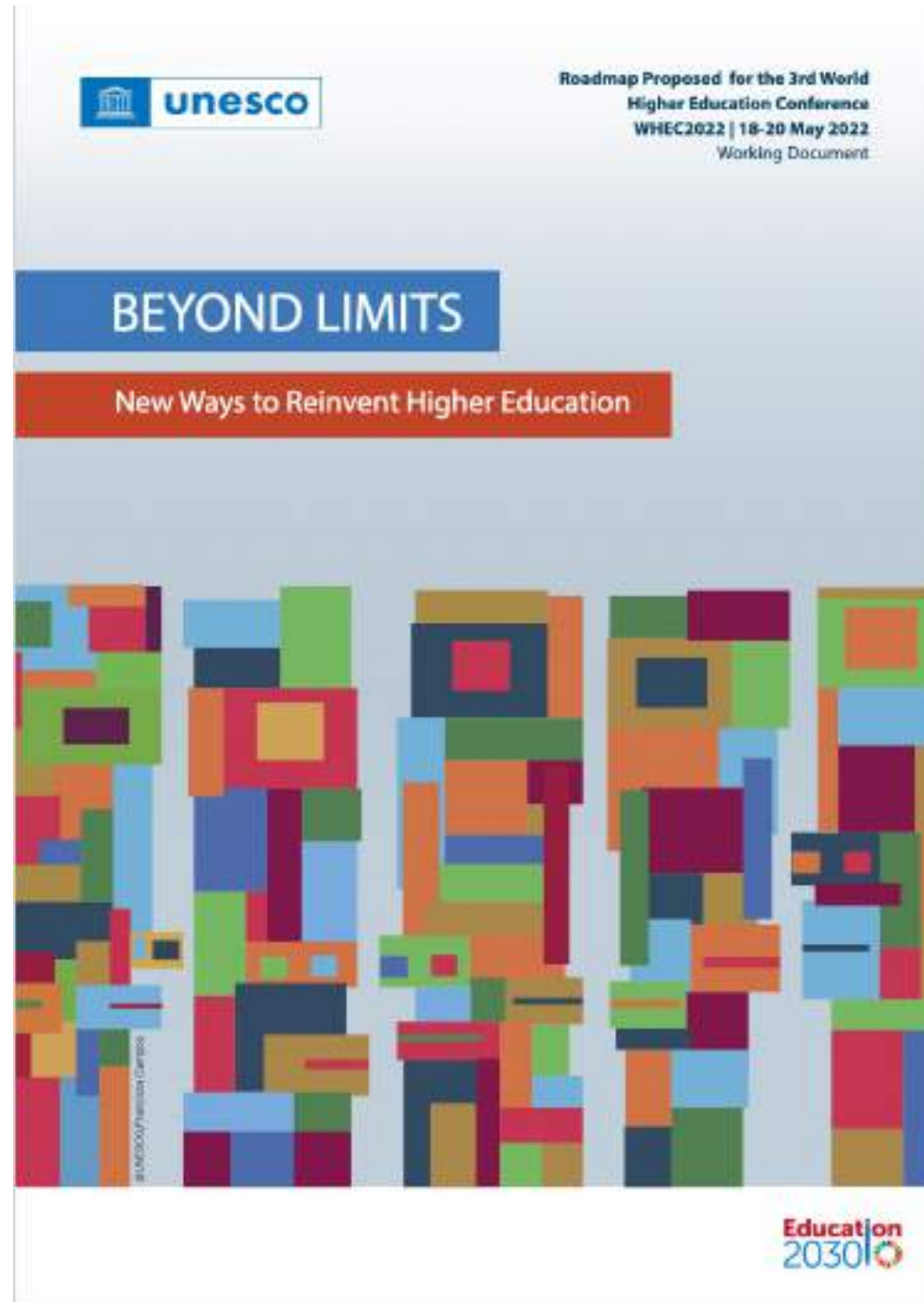
Definition:

- Is a record of **focused learning achievement** verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do.
- Includes **assessment** based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider.
- Has **standalone value** and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning.
- Meets the standards required by relevant **quality assurance**.



Beyond limits

New ways to reinvent Higher Education



- Lifelong learning approach, aimed at serving the diverse education needs of youth and adults, is one of the six major challenges that need to be overcome in reinventing Higher Education, according to the Roadmap proposed for the UNESCO 3rd World Higher Education Conference on 18-20 May 2022 "[Beyond limits. New ways to reinvent Higher Education](#)"
- Flexible learning pathways, recognition, mobility, and internationalization are one of the 9 ways to navigate towards 2030.

CIMEA in micro-credentials: policies and projects



MicroBOL - Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments

- ➔ **Goal:** explore whether and how the existing Bologna tools can be used and/or need to be adapted to be applicable to micro-credentials in QA, recognition, ECTS and QF
- ➔ **Outcomes:**
 - [Desk research report on micro-credentials](#) (August 2020)
 - [Report on the state of play of micro-credentials](#) in the European Higher Education Area (February 2021)
 - [Recommendations](#) from the MICROBOL project for the European Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (July 2021)
 - Common [Framework for Micro-credentials](#) in the EHEA (March 2022)

Diversity as a strength – need for common understanding and approach



Common Framework for Micro-credentials in the EHEA

Common definition

A micro-credential is a certified small volume of learning

Purpose

Micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills, and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs

- A way to increase and diversify lifelong learning provision to support individual learning pathways and widen access to higher education
- They provide a timely and relevant response to learners' and labour market needs
- **Collaboration** is an important aspect for the provision of micro-credentials



Common Framework for Micro-credentials in the EHEA

Use

Credentials are owned by the learner, are portable and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications

- Micro-credentials can be earned before, during and after higher education degree programmes and as a new way to certify competences acquired earlier in life
- **Learners** are at the heart of micro-credentials
- **Catalogues** of existing micro-credentials can be an important source of information for learners
- **Certificates** for micro-credentials can be awarded in many formats
- **Link between education and research:** micro-credentials can facilitate a smooth knowledge transfer → learning opportunities for the benefit of society



MicroBOL framework

➤ Link to Bologna key commitments

Quality Assurance

- Providers are responsible to assure the quality of the micro-credentials they offer through their internal QA processes
- External QA should focus on the institutional approach to micro-credentials
- A register of trustworthy providers could support the acceptance and recognition of micro-credentials

Recognition

- Micro-credentials can be assessed in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention principles, provided that all constitutive elements are properly displayed
- A micro-credential can be recognized on basis of a proof of the learning outcomes achieved by a learner, according to transparent requirements and after assessment

Qualifications Framework & ECTS

- Micro-credentials should be included in the NQF, whenever possible
- The learning outcomes approach can be useful when developing micro-credentials
- ECTS, as a recognisable system, can support the development and description of micro-credentials

Source: microcredentials.eu

TPG-LRC CoRE

Joint document on microcredentials

1. Provide HEIs with a hands-on tool to develop, issue, quality assure and assess micro-credentials
 - Addressing both input and output phases
 - Increasing clarity and transparency about what fits the definition of micro-credential considering - different varieties of micro-credentials



Structure and main contents

1. Introduction

- What this is for – guidance to the document.

2. Methodology

- Evidence based documents (starting from surveys to HEIs and actors of the education system)

3. 10 steps to quality micro-credentials starting from HEIs' experience

- Key relevant elements of the work on micro-credentials by the 3 groups + practical examples. 10 steps to effective micro-credentials

4. Resources and additional information

- Key reference documents and tools available: documents; EU projects; Networks. Practical list of resources divided into different categories with a short description of their contents and purposes.

5. Final considerations

- Reflections on what emerged from the document.

MICRO-credentials for Life-Long Learning and Employability:

Building Capacities for Developing Agile Educational Interventions in Southeast Asian Universities



➔ **Goal:** share the European experiences and build institutional capacities in Southeast Asia to co-create, promote, and deliver short competence-oriented educational units leading to micro-credentials with the goal of solving various economic and social problems.

➔ **Working on:**

- Survey on the perception and awareness in South-East Asian HEIs on micro-credentials in their territories
- Comparative study based on the survey results
- White paper for microcredential adoption
- Pilot courses development



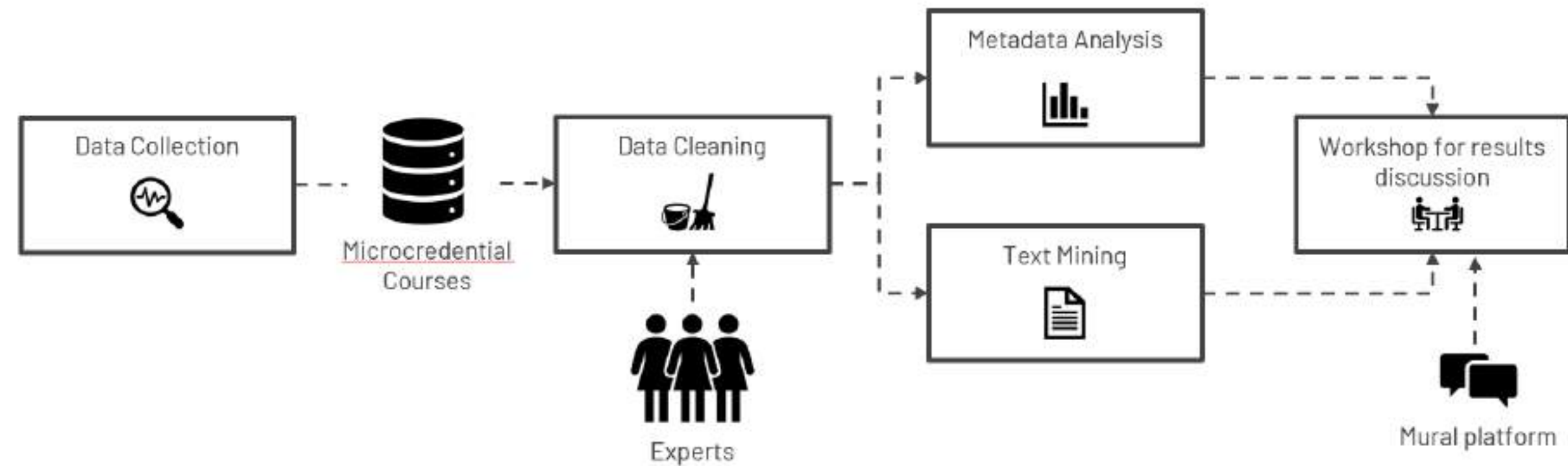
MARTe objectives

- **Goal:** support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting automatic recognition and this will be achieved by seeking the **specific objective** of verifying the practical application of automatic recognition to micro-credentials
- **Focus on:**
 - Learning outcomes
 - Involvement of a non-academic actor
- **Working on:**
 - Text mining
 - Pilot



Text-mining technology applied to the repositories of micro-credentials

Identification of common patterns in learning outcomes acquired through micro-credentials



MICRO-Gear
WP2 expected results,
sharing previous experiences
for developing targeted
solutions

WP2 - Dialogue on standardization and mutual recognition of micro-credentials

ACTIVITY	YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Task 1.1 Regional micro-credentials study: Status-Quo												
Task 1.2 Workshop “ Council Recommendation on micro-credentials: practice of implementation”												
Task 1.3 National Roadmaps for micro-credentials introduction												
Task 2.1 Roundtable “Micro-credentials for Georgia and Armenia”												
Task 2.2 Guidelines on Micro-credentials												
Task 2.3 Dialogue on micro-credentials recognition												
Task 3.1 Capacity building for academic staff in partner countries												
Task 3.2 Technical capacity building for digital micro-credentialing												
Task 4.1 Course co-design and development												
Task 4.2 Evaluation Trial												
Task 5.1 Dissemination and Communication planning, monitoring and reporting												
Task 5.2 Project website												
Task 5.3 Social media presence and campaign												
Task 5.4 Traditional dissemination												
Task 5.5 Final project Conference												
Task 6.1 Project management infrastructure												
Task 6.2 Coordination and Administration												
Task 6.3 Quality Control mechanism												

TIMETABLE

WP2 activities

beginning:

M10 (October 2024)

T2.1 Roundtable “Micro-credentials for Georgia and Armenia”

Start: M10 (Oct-2024)

End: M30 (Jun-2026)



Description

The consortium will organize 2 roundtable meetings in each country bringing together the **academic, governmental experts** (e.g. representatives of the Ministries, Agencies or other relevant authorities) and **business stakeholders** (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, major business Associations).

Objective

Discuss the potential scenarios of the **micro-credentials development in this field and what is needed to build trust in micro-credentials**. Between the meetings, another online event will be organized in order to keep the exchange running.

Result

Definition of the **major recommendations** on the actions (regulation and implementation practice) to be carried out in order to **build trust in micro-credentials**.

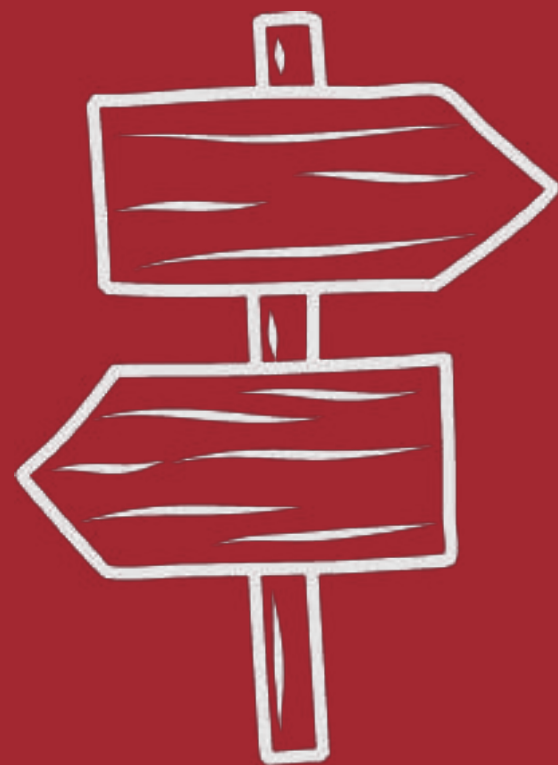
Participants involved

All partners in Georgia and Armenia, CIMEA and other EU Partners as supporters and observers.

T2.2 Guidelines on Micro-credentials

Start: M10 (Oct-2024)

End: M24 (Dec-2025)



Description

The project will set-up, in each partner country, a dedicated **task force composed of experts in accreditation, quality assurance, credentials evaluators, etc.** representing the consortium members. Additional experts will be also invited (academia, business, legislative bodies).

Objective

The series of local working (online/f2f) meetings will lead to the **development of the Guidelines document** to be officially published by national accreditation bodies (NCEQE and ANQA).

Result

Development of the **National Guidelines on Micro-credentials**, which will play a major practical enabling role for all providers planning the development and issuance of micro-credentials.

Participants involved

NCEQ, MOESGE, MESCS, ANQA, ArmENIC-core group, GTU, UG, GRENA, CENS, YSU, EIU and additional experts.

T2.3 Dialogue on Micro-credentials recognition

Start: M10 (Oct-2024)
End: M30 (Jun-2026)



Description

Georgian and Armenian ENIC Centres and CIMEA will jointly work on the development of recommendations and practical guidelines with regards to micro-credentials.

Objective

Facilitate mutual recognition of micro-credentials issued in the two beneficiary countries and the EU, in line with the emerging European standards.

Results

- i) **Permanent Task Force** that will develop the guidance report on how to recognize micro-credentials on the basis of the T2.2;
- ii) **Informative material** as an input for the 32nd and 33rd Annual Joint Meetings of ENIC-NARIC Network;
- iii) **Series of Online Working Meeting** with TKTA (Azerbaijani ENIC Centre) to inform on the outcomes obtained in WP1/WP2 and discuss cooperation.

Participants involved

NCEQE, ArmENIC, CIMEA, GIRAF

Milestone and Deliverables



MS4

National Guidelines on Micro-credentials are published
Deadline: M24 (December 2025)

Deliverables 2.1 (D2.1)

Roundtables "Micro-credentials for Georgia and Armenia" Report.

Lead: CIMEA

Deadline: M30 (June 2026)

The Report will be drafted on the insights received during the roundtable meetings described in the T2.1.

Deliverables 2.2 (D2.2)

Guidelines on Micro-credentials (report)

Lead: NCEQE/ANQA

Deadline: M24 (December 2025)

The Report on the guidelines will be prepared on the basis of the work done by the Task Forces established in each country, as described in the T2.2.

The actions implemented for the achievement of the D2.1 and the D2.2 will serve as operational basis for the implementation of the actions foreseen in the T2.3.

Thank you !



 CIMEA