“Microcredentials in Practice – Lessons from Moldova”

L. STIHI
State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Research

Regulatory framework

National Qualifications Framework	Government Decision No. 330/2023
Regulation on adult education	Government Decision No. 222/2024
Nomenclature of vocational training fields	Government Decisions No. 294/2024, 293/2024, 412/2024
Methodology for developing programs	Order of the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) No. 1483/2025
Recognition of studies and micro-certificates	Government Decision No. 206/2026 (Art. 15)
Education Code and validation of prior learning	Law No. 152/2014 (Title VII, lifelong learning); MECC Order No. 65/2018

Qualification

The result of an assessment and validation process, obtained when a competent authority determines that a person has acquired **learning outcomes corresponding to certain standards**

Partial qualification (microqualification)

A set of learning outcomes acquired within a module/short program, **officially certified** in accordance with unified qualification and quality assurance standards, for a specific level of the National Qualifications Framework.
A partial qualification/microqualification, which on its own does not meet the full conditions for access to the labour market and/or for continuing studies, **can be combined with a full qualification for professional activity or with several qualification parts**, in order to obtain a full qualification according to a qualification standard, with the issuance of a professional competence certificate (microcertificate)

Microqualification

+ other qualification parts

= Full qualification

Microcertificate issued

Place in the education and training system

Microqualification → **+ other partial qualifications** → **Full qualification**

National Qualifications Framework · NQF Levels 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Adult education

Government Decision No. 222/2024

Vocational training fields

Government Decisions No. 294, 293, 412/2024

Program development

MER Order No. 1483/2025

Programs are developed separately by NQF level

NQF Level 3	NQF Levels 4, 5	NQF Level 6	NQF Level 7
150-900 hours	**150-1800 hours**	**150-1800 hours**	**150-1800 hours**
5-30 study credits	5-60 study credits	5-60 study credits	5-60 study credits

Programs are developed within a vocational training field

NQF Level 3	→	Nomenclature..., GD No. 294/2024
NQF Levels 4, 5	→	Nomenclature..., GD No. 293/2024
NQF Levels 6, 7	→	Nomenclature..., GD No. 412/2024

Strategic anchoring and European alignment

1 National strategies

Embedded in the “Education 2030” development strategy and “European Moldova 2030”

2 MER Action Plan 2025–2030

Action 2.3.1 makes institutional micro-qualification modules an operational priority

3 EU accession

National Program for EU Accession 2025–2029 (Government Decision No. 306/2025, Chapter 26)

4 European alignment

8-level NQF referenced to the EQF, with Cedefop, ETF and UNESCO; external quality assurance by ANACEC

Experience and results

Partial qualification programs	Total	NQF Level 2	NQF Level 3	NQF Level 4	NQF Level 6	NQF Level 7
2026 (January–October)	203	90	48	21	34	10
2025	101	–	46	8	40	7

- The total number people trained in vocational field during January –October 2026 =**13464**

Certificate of Professional Competence - NQF Levels 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
Certificate of Advanced Training - NQF Levels 3, 4, 5, 6
Certificate of Retraining - NQF Levels 3, 4, 5, 6
Specialization Certificate - NQF Levels 3, 4, 5, 6

Over 50,000 adult training certificates issued annually

Professional competence

Upskilling

Requalification

Over 200 providers and national platforms

1 Higher education

Four major universities (UTM, USM, KSU, ASEM) scale microcredentials

2 VET providers+Privat sector

13 VET Centres of Excellence and other 63 accredited institutions, Privat sector – more than 100

3 Validation centres

19 accredited centres for non-formal learning

4 National register

RNC (rnc.sime.md) holds accredited qualification standards

5 Verification

QR-coded MER portal (ctice.md/verif) and ANACEC registry

6 European standards

Moving towards Europass EDCI and educational badges

Pilots and donor-supported initiatives

Higher education pilots	USM: Mobile Cultural Heritage Management; UTM: Cybercor, ISDEGO; KSU: biopharma, agriculture, IT (Erasmus+ HERE/SPHERE)
VET and youth employment	GIZ YEP: 5 micro-qualifications, 965 NEET youth; CREATIVO II: 12 VET micro-qualifications
Green skills	ILO/Swisscontact: green construction, renewable energy, digital commerce

Stages of program development



1	2	3	4	5
Identifying needs/ Labour market demand	Designating the team	Reviewing the program with economic operators	Approving the program within the institution	Coordination with the line ministry, where applicable/ Authorization/ accreditation

Constituent elements of programs

Program description	Training concept, objectives, purpose, target group, access conditions, regulatory acts in the field of training
Learning outcomes	Knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy, transversal, general professional and specific competences
Labour market relevance	Need for the program
Employment opportunities	A partial qualification can be combined with a full qualification or with other parts...
Implementation conditions	Means, methods, time resources, forms and methods of assessment, training team, educational premises
Study plan	Specifies the course units/modules and the number of hours allocated
Curriculum	For each course unit

Challenges in developing microqualifications

1 Programs not aligned with labour market needs

Offer is not always based on employers' real skills demand

2 Training staff lack up-to-date industry knowledge

Trainers are insufficiently qualified and out of touch with latest practices

3 Limited access for rural and disadvantaged groups

Rural and disadvantaged learners face barriers to access

4 Lack of specialists to develop programs in demand

Requested programs cannot be developed without sector experts

5 Quality assurance and employer trust

Uneven quality assurance reduces trust in microcredentials

6 Limited recognition and stackability

Microcredentials are hard to combine into full qualifications

Systemic gaps to address

1 Uneven adoption in universities

Offer concentrated in Erasmus+ pilots; university-wide ECTS credit stacking rules are needed

2 Dependence on external assistance

Curriculum development and pilots rely on donors; national budget integration is needed

3 Digital badge interoperability

QR verification works; native Open Badges (EDCI/Europass) need further integration

4 Low SME awareness

SMEs often lack HR frameworks to assess microcredentials; public campaigns are needed

Opportunities and national targets

Opportunities

- Embed ECTS-bearing microcredentials in all public universities through Action 2.3.1
- Expand validation centres, benefiting returning emigrants and refugees from Ukraine
- Upgrade the RNC to issue Europass digital credentials

National targets

- 15 university micro-qualification modules per year
- Validation to cover 60% of market demand by 2030 (5% baseline)
- 25,000 adults in Romanian language and professional skills programs

Priorities for further development and regional cooperation

National priorities

- Align programs with labour market demand through employer involvement
- Strengthen training staff with up-to-date industry knowledge
- Widen access for rural and disadvantaged learners
- Strengthen quality assurance, recognition and stackability

Regional cooperation

- Exchange of experience and good practice on micro-credentials
- Peer learning on quality assurance and recognition
- Sharing sector expertise and trainer exchanges
- Alignment with the European approach to micro-credentials

Thank you!

