Introduction

The notion of Recognition of Prior Learning is a pertinent topic in contemporary education and training discourse. Within the context of the ILPO55 project, the over 55 employees might want to map their prior learning against a job requirement in order to remain employable, or else to further reflect on how they can contribute towards the benefit of the financial services sector. Furthermore, RPL can also be used as a process to benchmark current knowledge and skills gained through family life, work, leisure activity and various experiences for personal development or career planning. The document being presented is the penultimate step within the ILPO55 reference framework, following the compilation of the career development plan (which can serve as a stand-alone tool or also as part of a holistic RPL process) and prior to the final self-assessment and reflection on the IlPO55 Framework steps undertaken.

It is to be emphasised that banks and financial institutions are not empowered to grant credits, however such can recognise the importance of RPL and how this can be used in the workplace. This document is designed to serve as a guidance instrument for the over 55 individuals. This applies both for their own personal development and how learning can be applied to current work practice and also in their role as possible mentors, trainers and/or facilitators in their work with younger employees. Consequently this document shall introduce the rationale behind RPL together with the key principles for a better understanding of the topic. This is then followed by an overview of RPL in employment, particularly within the context of ILPO55.

1. What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which the prior learning of an individual, obtained through formal, informal or non-formal learning, is validated against a number of set criteria and assigned credit value. Such credit, obtained through RPL, may:

   a. grant access/entry to specific programmes of study and/or;
   b. be used to claim achievement of parts of a qualification.

2. Uses of RPL

Learning can be gained in a variety of ways. The main aim of Recognition of Prior Learning is to analyse the prior learning of an individual and the knowledge, skills and competences that s/he already possesses prior to his/her entry in a specific course of study and/or qualification, and validate these against the requirements of the same qualification. Through the process of RPL, previous Learning is assigned credit value which can in turn be used by the individual to file an RPL claim on an entire qualification or part thereof.

Different study programmes may have a number of common elements which can be easily transferred from one onto another. Similarly, other forms of learning obtained through different life experiences, working environments, work based learning, and training courses etc. may equip the individual with a set of knowledge, skills and competences which are relevant to the said qualification. Recognition of Prior Learning is therefore a tool for validating the skills that an individual possesses and transforming them in tangible credit which s/he can apply to facilitate the progression of his or her studies.

This is directly in line with the principles of Lifelong Learning. RPL may provide an opportunity to individuals to follow programmes which otherwise they wouldn't have had access to. Similarly it may also provide them with an opportunity to reduce the time needed to complete a programme by marking specific Unit/ Modules as obtained through RPL. This is mostly relevant to individuals in employment, whose time is therefore limited and cannot follow full-time education.

3. How is RPL assessed?

RPL claims can be assessed in different ways; however there are some basic features which are common to various systems. Such features include:

3.1. Initial Enquiry / Call for application

The first step of any RPL process is the Initial enquiry which:

1. can either come from a prospective RPL candidate to an institution offering RPL or;
2. in the form of a Call for applications by the specific organisation.

This stage normally marks the first contact between prospective applicants for RPL consideration and the organisation offering RPL. It is not always clear whether an individual is eligible for RPL. For this reason most organisations offering RPL also offer a support system to guide prospective applicants in the application for RPL consideration.

Guidance on RPL needs to be provided by an RPL

3.2. Confirmation of Eligibility

Following the initial application, most organisations would have a mechanism by which to inform applicants whether they are eligible for RPL or not. In some cases an applicant may:

1. be eligible for RPL on multiple qualifications including the one s/he applied for;
2. be eligible for RPL on qualifications other than the one s/he applied for;
3. not be eligible for RPL.

Once again the role of guidance is vital in this section in order to help the applicant make an informed choice.

3.3. Portfolio/Repository of Qualifications / Certifications

All RPL claims are built upon the Prior Learning of an individual which can be obtained either formally, informally or non-formally. A quick definition of these types of learning is:

a. **Formal Learning**: Is learning achieved through formal education which is at the base of school education. It is organised, built upon a structured curriculum, delivered by qualified teachers and leads to a formal certificate which is, most of the time, recognised by multiple organisations both locally and internationally. It is usually valued in terms of credits which can be transferred between qualifications, institutions and countries.

b. **Informal Learning**: Is the learning obtained in everyday life. There is no set curriculum, no credits and the main qualification of the persons delivering the "lessons" is experience (for example: parents; grandparents; friends etc.). This form of learning is gradual, passive and accumulated through time.

c. **Non-Formal Learning:** Is the type of learning which occurs outside of compulsory education. It can be either organised or not, and it is usually flexible, hands-on, learner-centred and it is led by a teacher or a leader. Unlike formal learning this form of learning does not result in a formal degree or certificate.

It is important that every individual applying for an RPL claim provides evidence of his/her qualifications. A portfolio of competences is usually ideal for this. These Portfolios are usually an extension of the Individual's CV, and contain more detail. The Portfolio may or may not be used as the main tool for submitting evidence related to the RPL claim, and for the assessment and validation of the said claim.

3.4. Submission of Evidence

Not all Prior Learning will be relevant to every RPL claim. A selection exercise needs to be conducted in order to determine which experiences are best suited as evidence for the RPL being claimed. Most institutions will offer guidance to applicants in the process of building and presenting their evidence.

All evidence submitted for evaluation needs to be:

- **Valid** – All evidence submitted by an applicant must be related to the content of the Unit or qualification being claimed by RPL. It should, where possible, demonstrate that the individual possesses more than one dimension of competency in his/her work.

- **Authentic**: All evidence submitted by an applicant should clearly relate to his/her own effort and achievements. In this sense applicants can only produce something they have prepared, worked-on, or has been written about them, as evidence for an RPL Claim. Additionally, in the case of formal qualifications these need to bear the authentic stamps of the institution issuing them. They should ideally also bear clear information on the level and/or the breakdown of the course followed.

- **Current**: the date in which the presented evidence was obtained is important to determine its relevance towards the RPL claim. In the case of formal certification the date in which it was obtained is the most relevant detail for demonstrating currency. For Non-Formal and/or Informal evidence, the applicant would need to find other ways to demonstrate the currency. This is normally calculated by the number of years in which the activity was performed and when it was performed last.

- **Sufficient** – It is important that any evidence submitted covers most if not all of the aspects related to the RPL claim. Therefore if an applicant is making a claim to achieve a specific unit by RPL, any evidence submitted needs to cover all or a majority of the criteria related to the said unit.

Evidence for RPL can take different forms. It can vary between documents, multimedia files (photos and videos) and tangible artefacts (although these are the least popular). Once again, organisations will guide applicants on what is acceptable as evidence and what is not. There will definitely be variations between different organisations and different countries. The most common form of evidence is documents, and there are various types which can be presented.

Some examples of evidence are:

- Resume/CV (paper and/or online);
- Covering letter/s;
- Formal Education Certificates;
- On the job training Certificates; CPD Certificates;
- Reference Letters from current and past: employers, peers, supervisors, clients etc.;
- Performance Appraisals, Evaluation forms, letters or appreciation; letters of recommendation;
- Performance Awards;
- Samples of Work Performed: Memos; Reports; Plans; Procedures and Forms; Hand-outs; Marketing plans etc.;
- Photographs and/or videos showing work produced by the applicant and/or the applicant at work;
- Minutes of meetings featuring work/tasks;
- Email communications etc.

Evidence in the Portfolio should be accompanied by the applicants own self-reflection, and thoughts in order to prove his/her strengths and map/explain the relevance of the evidence being presented towards the RPL claim. Such explanation will facilitate the work of the assessor/evaluator when evaluating the documents submitted and will ensure that the evidence is interpreted as intended.

3.5. Verification and assessment of Evidence and RPL Claim

All evidence submitted by applicants will be reviewed by a representative of the organisation offering RPL, and assessed against the criteria of the Unit or Qualification being claimed by RPL. The RPL assessor/evaluator will review the evidence submitted and will validate its relevance towards the RPL claim. S/he will also review the application and the individuals descriptions submitted by the applicant claiming Prior Learning on Specific tasks, and will decide whether in his/her professional opinion, the applicants' claim can be considered as valid or not.

Given the subjective nature of these types of evaluations some organisations might appoint multiple evaluators and/or a board of Evaluators in order to review the same RPL application, in an attempt to provide a fairer evaluation to the applicant. The evaluation board reserves the right to contact the

applicant for interviews in order to ask for clarifications. In some cases they may also decide to put the applicant to the test, asking him/her to perform specific tasks in order to assess his/her skills and competencies.

Both the Compilation and the Evaluation of Evidence can take several days to be completed, however if successful, the time required to obtain a specific qualification can be substantially reduced.

4. National Policies and Initiatives for Recognition of Prior Learning in Partner Countries

One of the aims of the ILPO55 Framework is that of improving the employability of Over 55 individuals within the Financial Services Sector. One of the ways it tries to achieve this is by providing Over 55 individuals with information on National and/or International initiatives which are available to them and which will help improve their employability and prospects for career progression. As part of the work related to the ILPO55 Framework the ILPO55 consortium conducted a research on the National Policies and Initiatives related Recognition of Prior Learning available in their countries. The list below aims at being a library of the main strategies and practices related to Recognition of Prior Learning available in the partner countries (the list may not be exhaustive and other minor initiatives may be available).

1. The Netherlands (NL)

Current Situation
In the Netherlands RPL is called "EVC" (stands for Erkenning Verworven Competenties), RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) or APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning).   EVC offers the opportunity to certify all the knowledge and expertise that an individual would have learnt in school, at work or in private. Individuals are helped to gather relevant information about themselves in general and their skills and competences in a structured manner and create a formal Experience Certificate. This certificate will give an objective picture of an individual in terms of his knowledge, skills, competences and expertise with respect to a particular standard training.   This is one of the best and most useful tools for those who want to further develop their education or want to provide a clear picture of his/her skills and competences and educational level and background.   *Process*   An EVC-range takes an average of 6 to 12 weeks, and proceeds according to the following steps: • After completing the non-committal Quick Scan the participant performs an interview with an RPL supervisor which will explain the procedure and will help the participant to determine which prove of skills are available.   • The result of the interview will determine whether the candidate is eligible for RPL.   • If yes, the participant will be invited to start collecting evidence from the field that

demonstrates his/her skills, such as: job descriptions, advice records and diplomas from previous exams.

- The participant groups these records in his portfolio and presents them for assessment.

- Following the portfolio assessment the applicant is invited to a final interview about the portfolio with two assessors where he will be asked to demonstrate competencies.

- Upon completion of the process and the final interview participant will receive a Skill Certificate, which describes recognition for his experiences.

- Based on the Experience Certificate the participant can request a training plan with the relevant training. The training plan will have components which the individual has to follow and others which s/he is exempt from based on his/her abilities and previous achievements accredited in the EVC process.

Relevant Authorities or Institutions offering RPL in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands there is an official List of Approved RPL; VPL; APL Providers which is available at : https://www.ervaringscertificaat.nl/evc/aanbieders

Legislation and/or Public Incentives for RPL

RPL in the Netherlands was introduced in the early nineties as an initiative of the social partners with the stimulation, but not regulation, of the Government. The introduction of APL came from the shift of focus from job security to improved employment security of both the government and the social partners. The collaboration between social partners and the government brought about the creation of a "*Quality Assurance Model for APL (RPL) Inspired by EU principles on the validation of formal and non-formal learning (European Commission 2004) which contained the following features:*

- *accredited APL providers are listed in a register,*

- *only professional can be supervisors or assessors,*

- *a standardised APL report format and national registration and inspection of APL providers*

- *the APL report should include the career objectives, the proven competencies, a conclusion in respect to the further development and a reference to the portfolio."*[1]

In 2006 the "Covenant to encourage recognition of previously acquired competencies as part of lifelong learning"[2] was signed and this brought about the quality code for APL. The creation of the quality code facilitated the implementation and provision of APL through a set of guidelines which standardised the way APL is offered between different providers. Since the first signing of the covenant discussions on, and the provision of, APL ensued and continued to evolve, taking a threefold approach (as explained in the 2016 Country Report issued by Cedefop):

"Recognition of prior learning – an informal procedure that leads to a career or learning advice, in the

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[1] http://lll-radar.baq-bremen.de/images/stories/LLL%20RADAR-short-study-NL-ibw.pdf
[2] https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2016-59145.html

form of a validated portfolio or 'Ervaringsprofiel',

Accreditation of prior learning – a formal procedure in which a candidate can get accreditation of his/her learning outcomes measured against a national qualification standard ('Ervaringscertificaat'). Since 2015 (MOCW/SZW, 2015), other VPL-instruments can also be used for this purpose, including intake-assessment, e-portfolio, competence tests, etc. There is no monopoly for the 'ervaringsertificaat' in accrediting people's learning outcomes.

Validation of prior learning (VPL) – the umbrella-term that includes all forms of validation: the two formal ones already mentioned, but also the informal use of VPL by anyone or any organisation when trying to link someone's prior learning outcomes to more than a formalised lifelong learning perspective, such as a job-promotion, transition from work-to-work, validation as a volunteer, etc."[3]

In 2013 the process of APL was evaluated and updated to and this lead to the creation of 2 distinct paths for validation of prior learning:

- *"The labour market route: VPL is geared at career guidance of adults on the labour market. Prior learning outcomes of individuals are validated against sector/ industry standards or formal qualifications. A learning programme – not necessarily a qualification-oriented programme – is designed to support intra- or inter-sector employability of people. VPL-tools are the e-portfolio, portfolio-training, the 'ervaringsprofiel', competence tests, etc. If a formal EVC-procedure is followed, the result can also be an 'ervaringscertificaat'.*

- *The education route: learning and competences of an individual are validated against a national qualification. The goal for the learner is to validate his or her competences in order to obtain a formal qualification. VPL-tools are intake-assessment, e-portfolio, competence tests, ECVET-methods, etc. An 'ervaringscertificaat' can be part of someone's learning outcomes but is no longer essential for obtaining exemptions or a partial/full qualification. Since this dual pathway is organised, there is no longer an exclusive role for the 'ervaringscertificate'. The awarding bodies for qualifications (in general exam committees of VET-schools or universities) can also use the other mentioned VPL-instruments."[4]*

One of the main incentives offered in the Netherlands in relation to RPL is that the Applicant may choose to have costs for a RPL-procedure can reduced from the amount of "income" tax the participant has to pay: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/middelbaar-beroepsonderwijs/vraag-en-antwoord/wat-is-een-ervaringscertificaat-evc

The latest Revision of the *Covenant to encourage recognition of previously acquired competencies as part of lifelong learning* was signed in 2016.[5]

Useful Links for the Dutch Over 55 looking for information re: RPL in the Netherlands

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[3] Country Report: Netherlands, page 4, Cedfop, 2016 available at:
file:///C:/Users/albert.agius/Downloads/2016_validate_nl.pdf
[4] Ibid.
[5] http://www.stvda.nl/nl/publicaties/persberichten/2016/20161108-convenant-evc-ondertekening.aspx

- Covenant to encourage recognition of previously acquired competencies as part of lifelong learning - https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2016-59145.html

- https://www.ervaringscertificaat.nl/evc/aanbieders - List of Approved VPL, APL, RPL Providers

- https://www.nibesvv.nl/opleiding/evc-voor-financials.html - RPL-procedures for the financial sector.

- https://www.nibesvv.nl/nibesvv-nieuws/alternatief-wft-diploma-halen-met-evc-procedure.html - Describes the alternative of RPL to obtain diplomas in the financial sector.

- https://www.evc-centrum-nederland.nl/ - Provides information about RPL-procedures by field. And offers a free Quick scan that determines in seven minutes whether starting an RPL-procedure is useful.

- https://www.ervaringscertificaat.nl/ - Registry to safeguard the authenticity of experience certificates and to increase the civilian impact and prevent fraud. Established by the National Knowledge Centre EVC (RPL) in consultation with the social partners. Exclusive experience certificates - drawn up and issued by authorized EVC (RPL) Providers - can be included in the registry.

- http://www.nationaal-kenniscentrum-evc.nl/ - The National Knowledge Centre EVC (RPL) applies the Certificates of Recognition. In addition, new clues as an authorized EVC provider may be requested.

- http://www.stvda.nl/ - Link to the website of the Labour Foundation (national consultative body organised under private law. Its members are the three peak trade union federations and three peak employers' associations in the Netherlands. The Foundation provides a forum in which its members discuss relevant issues in the field of labour and industrial relations. Some of these discussions result in memorandums, statements or other documents in which the Foundation recommends courses of action for the employers and trade unions that negotiate collective bargaining agreements in industry or within individual companies)

2. **Romania**

Current Situation

In Romania, the governmental body which regulates the qualification, as well as the process and methodology of assessment and certifying of the competences and skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, that meet European requirements is the **National Qualifications Authority[6].**

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[6] **Autoritatea Nationala a Calificarilor-ANC -** ANC- http://www.anc.edu.ro/

The latest legal document approved in November 2016 was the:

Instructions regarding the Authorization of Centres for Evaluation and Certification of Professional Competences Obtained in other ways than the Formal Ones, and it was based on the following legal basis**:**

- National Education Law no.1 / 2011, with subsequent amendments and completions;
- Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 regarding the professional training of adults, republished;
- Government Decision no. 522 for the approval of the Methodological Norms for the application of the provisions of Government Ordinance 129/2000 on the vocational training of adults, with subsequent amendments and completions;
- Government Decision no. 556/2011 on the organization, structure and functioning of the National Authority for Qualifications, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Procedure of evaluation and certification of professional competences obtained in other ways than formal ones, approved by OMECT / OMMSSF no. 4543/468/2004, with subsequent amendments and completions.

In accordance with these Instructions a Centre for the Evaluation and Certification of Professional Competencies obtained through other means than formal ones, is a legal entity governed by public or private law which is authorized to organize evaluation processes and to certify professional competences obtained on other than formal channels. It is legally effective once it is authorized through the authorization procedure. After a number of 1-3 years, depending on its level of performance, the centre can be reauthorized.

The body which registered the authorised assessment centres is the: **Registrul National al centrelor de evaluare si certificare a competentelor profesionale obtinute pe alte cai decat cele formale – National Register of Centers for the Evaluation and Certification of Professional Competences obtained in other ways than formal ones.[7]**

In 2017 a number of 188 assessment centres are registered in the following domains of activity: construction, social assistance, food, hoteling and tourism, cosmetics and make up etc.

These assessment and certification centres follow a precise working methodology based on the following principles:
- -the principle of *validation* , which takes into consideration the evidences of competences based on the occupational standard;
- -the principle of *credibility* that uses methods which conducts to the same results;
- -the principle of *impartiality* that permits the participation of all interested individuals at the assessment process;
- -the principle of *equity* facilitating the open access to the qualification programmes without any discrimination;
- -the principle of *quality* of the training programmes related to the specific standards;
- -the principle of *relevance* according to which education responds to the needs of the

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[7] **Registrul National al centrelor de evaluare si certificare a competentelor profesionale obtinute pe alte cai decat cele formale** - http://www.anc.edu.ro/?page_id=1120

labour market;

- -the principle of *efficiency* concerning the relation between high quality results obtained by using adequate spaces of learning;
- -the principle of *ensuring equal opportunities* facilitates the participation of very individual that want to take part at the process of assessment and recognition of professional competences obtained in non-formal and informal contexts;
- -the principle of *flexibility* means that the assessment is adapted to the needs of the candidates and the working place;
- the principle of *confidentiality* respecting the privacy of the candidate;
- the principle of *simplicity* refers to the easy understanding of the process in which individuals are involved.

Using this legal framework the candidates who want to assess and certify their knowledge, competencies and skills emerged from other contexts than the formal one, have the opportunity to improve professionally and personally and to transfer to other young employees some of their work experience.

The Process

The process of assessment is carried out by a minimum of two professional competence assessors and it is based on the competence units of the occupational standard for the particular vocational area.

The professional competence assessor is a specialist with recent experience of work and / or coordination in the occupations / qualifications for which s/he is designated by the centre and is also certified by the **National Qualifications Authority** on the basis of the occupational standard "professional competence assessor".

The assessment and certifying process is based on the Guide of assessment[8] which is put at the disposal of the candidates to inform them about the evidences which they need to provide in order to prove their competencies. The first guide has been elaborated in 2005 under the name of: Ghidul practice al evaluatorului /Practical Guide of the Assessor.

Now the ANC is updating the guide under a new name : Ghidul practic al evaluatorului de competente profesionale /Practical Guide for Assessor of professional competences. (Link not yet available)

In Romania, the recognition of Prior Learning is conducted through the application of a number of pre-set tools and exercises which in turn produce the evidences required to prove the competences of the Individual. The assessment instruments include

- a written test;
- an oral test;

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[8] http://www.patrosec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ghid-eval-cp.pdf

- a direct observation session – where the candidate's performance in real or simulated working conditions is observed and evaluated;
- any a Project to be accomplished by the candidate;
- other activities which generate evidence prior to the assessment process such as: peer reports; portfolio of qualifications and/or records of work etc.

The following is the process which any candidate who wished to follow the RPL Process in order to assess and certify his/her knowledge, competencies and skills needs to follow:

1. Fill in a **Self-Assessment Questionnaire** in which s/he shows and self-evaluates his/her knowledge and competences.

2. Meet the 2 Assessors and form a **plan of examination**. The plan usually consists of at least 3 samples where the candidate can demonstrate his/her knowledge, skills and attitude. Since the oral sample cannot be challenged, it is compulsory to include a written sample as part of the 3 samples in this plan. The other 2 samples will be included based on the results of the discussion between the applicant and the assessors, according to the needs of the individual.

3. Follow a t mandatory a practical test, the nature of which will be decided by the examiners according to the application and the individual.

4. Submit a personal portfolio of competence (recommendations, reports, project etc.) to be assessed by the 2 examiners

5. If the assessors are not satisfied with the tests, they may recommend supplementary course(s) in order to complete the knowledge and experience for a specific occupation or qualification. 6. If the candidate meets the quality standards, the candidate is given a certificate of professional competence which is recognized nationally and gives him/her the right to work.

RPL for the Financial Services Sector

For the domain of banking and Financial Services there is also a CENTRE FOR ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES IN THE FINANCE AND BANKING FIELD   which forms part of the Romanian Institute for Banking.

The Institute is an authorized Centre for Assessment, registered in the National Register[9] of Centers for the Evaluation and Certification of Professional Competences obtained in other ways than formal ones, is offering certificates for 15 occupations in the field of banking and finance services.

The assessors for the examinations are professionals in banking, they act like experts who have been authorized by their expertise for the system. They followed the same legal procedure to obtain this qualification. The process follows the same rules and patterns of the one described earlier on.

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[9] http://www.anc.edu.ro/?page_id=1120 -

Useful Links for the Romanian Over 55 looking for information re: RPL in Romania
- http://www.anc.edu.ro/ - Autoritatea Nationala a Calificarilor/National Qualifications Authority.
- http://www.ibr-rbi.ro/center-for-evaluation-and-certification-of-professional-skills-and-competencies-for-the-financial-and-banking-sector/?lang=en - Centrul de evaluare si certificare a competentelor profesionale pentru sectorul financiar bancar /Centres for Evaluation and Certification of Professional Competences obtained in other ways than the formal ones
- http://www.anc.edu.ro/?page_id=1120 - Registrul National al centrelor de evaluare si certificare a competentelor profesionale obtinute pe alte cai decat cele formale – National Register of Centers for the Evaluation and Certification of Professional Competences obtained in other ways than formal ones.

3. Italy

Current Situation
Life Long Learning is a topic which is increasingly gaining popularity and importance in Italy, in fact both Public institutions (national and regional) as well as social actors agree on its importance. These same institutions also agree on the Importance of Recognition of Prior Learning in order to validate skills and competences obtained through formal and informal learning. However, given Italy's complex / unique structure, in which regions play an important part (especially in education and training system), no Legislation to govern Life Long Learning and/or RPL has been developed on a National Level. Similarly, Italy is still missing a National Qualifications Framework, which is an important element for an education which is formally structured into levels and which is based on Learning Outcomes. The National Qualifications Framework and an education system based on learning Outcomes are the basic elements required for the successful implementation of RPL, and it is thus very difficult to have RPL without a National Qualifications Framework. In recent years some technical work towards the establishing of an NQF has been carried out. According to the European Inventory on the NQF 2016 (CEDEFOP), "one of the challenges has been to achieve effective inter-regional coordination with a view to encouraging recognition of the regional qualification systems and inter-regional mobility, especially with reference to the labour market[10] ".
Throughout the years there have been some pilot projects at regional level. "Regions such as Basilicata, Valle d'Aosta, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont, Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige have been directly involved in defining the policy and strategy to promote the national qualifications framework using standards based on learning outcomes. Some regions, such as Emilia-Romagna, have also worked on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes for the award of credits to gain admission to the formal education and training system, or to obtain a full qualification."[11]

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[10] file:///C:/Users/albert.agius/Downloads/italy_-_european_inventory_on_nqf_2016.pdf
[11] https://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/44600408.pdf

The reason for the lack of National Legislation can be mainly attributed to "traditional difficulties in Italian labour policies that impede the achievement of this target. These hurdles are:

  – the legal value of formal education;
  – the traditional weakness of continuing education and adult education (which is not structured and widespread as in other European countries);
  – the lack of a unitary national qualification framework (although there are different types of systems at regional level);
  – the large number of institutions involved in these policies at national, regional and local level. (ISFOL, 2012, p. 83)"[12]

Examples of RPL Initiatives in Italy

The provision of RPL in Italy is sporadic and limited to some regions who have carried out some form of project for the adoption of such systems. There are on-going discussions at National level and a number of institutions act towards the promotion of the introduction of RPL in Itlay. An important turning point at National Level was marked by the introduction of the law n. 92/2012 "Riforma del mercato del lavoro" (Labour Market Reform) "which includes provisions concerning the definition of a national system of competence certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning,"[13]

Below is a list of some examples of RPL in Italy.

Name of Institution/s – ISFOL/INAPP
Region – National
Description/ Process - The main National institution researching the introduction of RPL in Italy, in conjunction with other measures for the employee was the ISFOL - Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori (Institute for the professional development of workers). ISFOL is a national research institute under the supervision of the Italian Ministry for Labour.
It conducted and promoted study, research, experimentation, documentation, information and evaluation. ISFOL also provided active support to National and Regional institutions by drafting documents and/or organising dissemination events as well as piloting projects in relation to Validation of prior Learning. Throughout the years ISFOL carried out a number of studies regarding the validation and certification of competences including a number of publications which are available on their website (link below).

One of the main activities in relation to employee skills and competences is the Libretto Formativo del Cittadino which was kick-started in 2005. This booklet is intended as a repository of the skills and competences obtained through formal, informal and non-formal ways. This tool was mainly tested between 2007 and 2010 in 13 Regions and autonomous Provinces with encouraging results. Following this testing, "some provinces/ regions adopted the booklet for specific targets such as unemployed citizens (economically supported) and foreign workers"[14].

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[12] http://www.lifelonglearning.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/06030230/_temp_/Essay_Carlo_Terzaroli.pdf
[13] http://www.uniroma3.it/news2.php?news=5308&p=1
[14] http://www.isfol.it/temi/Formazione_apprendimento/certificazione-delle-competenze/copy_of_validazione-e-certificazione-delle-competenze

With the Legal Notice n.150 of 14th September 2014, ISFOL was changed to INAPP - L'Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche. "INAPP was born on 1 December 2016 as a transformation of ISFOL transformation (active since 1973), following the provisions of Legislative Decree 24 September 2016, n.185[15]. As a public research body, supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, the provisions of the Legislative Decree of 25 November 2016, no. 218[16] . At present, INAPP has about 450 employees, including research staff and technical-administrative staff."[17]

Website Links:

- ISFOL - http://www.isfol.it/temi/Formazione_apprendimento/certificazione-delle-competenze/copy_of_validazione-e-certificazione-delle-competenze
- INAPP - http://www.inapp.org/it

Name of Institution - Università Roma Tre

Region - Lazio

Description /Process – Roma Tre University is one of the earliest examples of RPL in Italy. "In the field of recognition of prior learning, *Roma Tre* University24 has done some research action, didactic, organizational and institutional activity. Some benchmarking analysis have been made, in particularly with the French *VAE* system and the British *APEL* model."[18] This University is responsible for the development of a set of procedures which were tested in 2008-2010 with "145 adults attending a degree course in Education and Development of Human Resources."[19]

Name of Institution - Università della Basilicata

Region - Basilicata

Process – The University of Basilicata offers the opportunity for the Recognition of Prior learning of its prospective students. The following is text is taken from their official website

"The University of Basilicata recognizes the achievements of learning outcomes acquired by people in non-formal and informal learning contexts through CFU credits, as long as they are similar to the ones in formal education and satisfy the University's qualification requirements.

In this case, by recognizing non-formal and informal learning, Universities highly contribute to offer possibilities for achieving HE qualifications to those who have acquired various types of learning activities in different contexts such as professional, ICT and language skills, job training and other knowledge and competence achieved.

Assessment of the learning outcomes, in terms of credits (max. 60 credits for a 1st cycle degree programme - Laurea and Laurea Magistrale a ciclo unico - and 40 credits for 2nd cycle degree programme - Laurea Magistrale), takes place according to a pre-established evaluation criteria

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[15] http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legislativo:2016-09-24;185!vig=).

[16] http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2016/11/25/16G00235/sg

[17] http://www.inapp.org/it/istituto/chisiamo

[18] https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/Italy_nfil.pdf *page 12*

[19] https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/Italy_nfil.pdf *page 12*

clearly defined in the regulation of each course of study.

The Course of study Committee can reduce the ordinary length of the study course depending on the number of recognized credits."[20]

Website Link - http://internazionale.unibas.it/site/home.html

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Useful Links for the Italian Over 55 looking for information re: RPL in Italy

- http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4153?NL=69 - CEDEFOP Publications - European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning – 2016 update.

- http://www.isfol.it/ecvet/ecvet-1/i-concetti-e-gli-elementi-chiave - ISFOL – ECVET Key elements

- http://www.isfol.it/sistema-documentale/banche-dati/normative/2013/normativa-statale_2013/decreto-legislativo-16-gennaio-2013-n.-13 - ISFOL – Decreto Legislativo 16 gennaio 2013, n.13

- http://www.bollettinoadapt.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/wp_4_2016_simoncini.pdf - Certification of Skills: definition and legal framing a review on reference literature.

- http://www.librettocompetenze.it/materiali/Validazione-competenze-da-esperienza-approcci-pratiche-in-Italia-in-Europa.pdf - Validation of skills Experience: Approaches and Practices in Italy and in Europe Updated Edition 2013

- http://www.lifelonglearning.uniwuerzburg.de/fileadmin/06030230/_temp_/Essay_Carlo_Terzaroli.pdf - Recognition and Validation of prior learning in Italy: strategies, practices, perspectives

- http://librettocompetenze.isfol.it/materiali/Linee-Guida-processo-di-validazione-competenze-sito.pdf - ISFOL - Guidelines For The Validation Of Experience Competences

- http://www.indire.it/progetto/ida-istruzione-degli-adulti/ - INDIRE

- https://iris.uniroma3.it/handle/11590/145393#.WQBt7aLYWUk - Adult education and experiential learning recognition

- http://www.euvetsupport.eu/index.php?id=118&L=5 - EUVET Support

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4. Spain

Current Situation

The National system for the Recognition, Assessment and Accreditation of Qualifications, in Spain,

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[20] http://internazionale.unibas.it/site/home/ects-guide/study-at-unibas/the-italian-university-system/articolo9501229.html

which also includes the Recognition (assessment and accreditation) of professional skills acquired through work experience and other instances of Non–Formal Learning, is managed by the Instituto Nacional de Cualificaciones[21] (INCUAL). This Institute has a set of procedures and tools for the provision of Recognition of Prior Learning services which follow "principles that guarantee the assessments reliability, objectiveness and technical rigour"[22]

The process was set up in 2013 and it was run by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour.

One of the main tools which facilitates the provision of RPL on a National Scale is the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications which incorporates lists of professional qualifications according to their professional competences and the corresponding Vocational Education and Training (VET) contents corresponding to each qualification, all grouped by module in one common document. The main aim of this tool is to standardise the provision of VET and bring it as close as possible to the current needs of the Industry. The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications focuses both on the provision of Initial VET programmes as well as the promotion of Life Long Learning, including the "recognition of competences acquired through informal and non-formal paths."[23] More information on this Catalogue can be obtained here.

In order to be eligible for the RPL Process an individual needs:

- *"To have the Spanish nationality, to have obtained the registration certificate of the community citizenship or the European Union citizen family card, or to be the holder of a residence authorization, or of residence and work in force in Spain, in the terms established in the immigration law of Spain.*
- *To be 18 years old in the moment of the registration, when it is about the competence units corresponding the qualifications of level I, and to be 20 years old for the levels I and III.*
- *To have work experience and/or training related to the professional competences that it is wanted to accredit:*

  – *In case of work experience. To justify, at least 3 years, with a minimum of 2.000 total worked hours, for the last 10 years passed before carrying out the official announcement. For competence units of level I, a two-year work experience with a minimum of 1.200 total worked hours, is required.*

  – *In case of training. Justify, at least 300 hours, for the last 10 years passed before carrying out the official announcement. Competence units of level I, at least 200 hours will be required. In cases in which the learning modules associated to the competence unit that is hoped to be accredited consider a minor duration, the established hours in those learning modules should be accredited.*

- *In cases referred in the article 10.0 b), to have a supporting document about the compliance with some of the additional planned requirements.*

- *People over 25 years old who satisfy the requirements of work training experience indicated in the text above, and can't justify them through the documents described in the article 12 of this Royal Decree 1224/2009 17th of July, could apply for his or her provisional registration in*

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[21] National Institute of Qualifications

[22] https://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice_recAcr_ing.html#2

[23] National Catalogue for Professional Qualifications -
https://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice_catalogoWeb_ing.html

the procedure. They will submit the justification through any fact admitted in law, about his or her work experience or non-formal training learnings. To study those cases, the competent administrations will designate the necessary consultants, who will issue a report about the provenance or non-provenance of the participation of the applicant in the procedure. If positive report, the definite registration will be proceeded."[24]

When the professional competences of an employee are assessed and they are not sufficient to complete the qualifications included in a diploma of vocational education and training or an Occupational Aptitude Certificate, a partial cumulative accreditation is awarded. Thus, if the employee wishes to do so, he/she will be able to complete the training in order to obtain the relevant diploma or certificate.

The Ministry of Labour and Immigration and the Ministry of Education, with the collaboration of the administrations belonging to the Autonomous Community, have set up a Committee for Information and Guidance, which allows getting information related to:
1. the accreditation and assessment procedure;
2. the official announcements and;
3. the training offers.
In addition, the necessary tools to make the self-evaluation and the path training election easier, have been included.

In Spain, over sixty per cent of working population does not hold a recognized accreditation of their professional qualification. Besides, there is a great amount of non-formal learning whose lack of recognition, especially for population groups like women, immigrants and unemployed, can cause situations of inappropriate mobility in the labour market with the resulting exclusion risk.

The Process for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Spain includes:

a. a Counselling Session;
b. an Assessment of the professional competences of the Individual, and;
c. Accreditation and recording of the professional competence.

This is in line with the process described by the ILPO55 Consortium earlier in this document. It is important to note that all the autonomous communities in Spain will have their own process. Below is an example of the process followed in Catalonia.

EXAMPLE OF PROCEDURE IN THE REGION OF CATALONIA (each autonomous community in Spain has its own procedure):

1) Registration in the recognition service: done through the registration service through specific recognition templates either filled by the users and brought to school or completed with the help of advisors.

2) Filling of the on the recognition service - proof of credits or modules which want to be recognized by the Board Recognition.

3) Preparation of the assessment and recognition Dossier, following an official model.

4) Appointment of the Recognition Board: responsible for conducting the tests (resolution of cases,

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[24] https://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice_recAcr_ing.html

exams, interviews...) necessary for training evaluation. Recognition Board prepares a list of questions per module as a guideline for the interview.

5) The Board reviews the results in the assessment and recognition dossier, using the model 03 D. Once the assessment is finalised, it calculates the percentage of recognition of training units and/or modules.

6) The final results are transferred to the online management site of [Ministry of Education and Vocational training](). The system generates the document: Certification of overcoming training units achieved through the academic recognition of learning achieved by the work experience or social activities.

7) The certificate must be stamped and signed by the both secretary and director of the training centre. The training centre will make appropriate backups and save to the file of the student.

Official templates: http://odissea.xtec.cat/

Useful Links for the Spanish Over 55 looking for information re: RPL in Spain

- http://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/pdf/Datos_Proc_Acre_2013_online.pdf - National Qualifications Agency

- http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/0081/c29dabf3-a966-45d2-90df-31b02903927e/ENS-1891_2012_flexibil.pdf - DECREE ENS/1891/2012, de 23 d'agost, flexible measures towards employability (DOGC núm. 6220 de 26.9.2012

- http://educacio.gencat.cat/portal/page/portal/Educacio/PCentrePrivat/PCPInici/PCPGestioServeisFP/PCPServeisAssessoramentReconeixement - Intructions 2013 on prior recognition of formal professional experience

  http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/0042/376375c6-11d4-43f5-b94a-b7f4b1196ef7/2013_01_18_Intruccions-del-DGFPIERE_Serveis_Assessorament_Reconeixement.pdf

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5. Malta

Current Situation

The Framework for the Validation of Informal and non-Formal Learning in Malta is governed by the Subsidiary Legislation 327.432[25] which was published in 2012. The validation of informal and non-formal learning falls under the remit of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education is an entity part of the Ministry of Education. Validation in Malta functions through separate Sector Skills Units according to particular sectors. Each Sector Skills Unit consists of 7 members who monitor the National Occupational Standards with the aim of ensuring their consistency and relevance. The National Occupational Standards define what individuals employed in an occupation within a particular sector must know and be able to do. Through Occupational Standards the Sector skills units can improve the skills and productivity of their sector's workforce; manage the alignment and standardisation of educational programmes for specific trades within specific sectors and ensure

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[25] http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11928&l=1

the recognition and certification of skills and competences.

Malta is working to strengthen the administrative structures of the validation of informal and non-formal learning, and it is of utmost importance that a robust QA system continues to develop so as to improve this in Malta. So far, an official process for Recognition of Prior learning offered at National level is still unavailable in Malta; however a number of institutions are setting up their own departments and mechanisms for the provision of RPL services.

Below are some examples of RPL in Malta.

Name of Institution/s – Institute for Tourism Studies

Description/ Process – The process for the Recognition of Prior Learning at the Institute of Tourism Studies was introduced in 2016. It follows a process which is very close to the one described earlier in this document i.e. starting with an initial inquiry and application, collection and presentation of evidence, assessment and feedback. A full description of the process can be found here.

Prior to the commencement of the RPL process, the Institute for Tourism Studies offers guidance to prospective RPL applicants. The RPL is split into two distinct phases as follows:
1. Phase 1: Seeking guidance from ITS RPL expert; application; collection of evidence, and; sitting for an online self-assessment.
2. Phase 2: Following the outcome of the online-assessment the applicant may choose to process to the second phase in which s/he will be presented with the result of the assessment and related feedback. Candidates will be notified of any skills and/or competency gap and provided offered training accordingly. Administrative fees apply for the second phase of the process.

The ITS, has identified 3 main Key Competences as entry requirements and which need to be assessed for each applicant. Such competences include - English Language; Mathematical competence and; Digital competence.

RPL is offered for specific programmes of study offered at the institute. When applying for RPL, candidates are to indicate which units and Learning Outcomes they wish to attempt via RPL. The Institute allows only for 50% of a qualification to be obtained via RPL.
Evidence for the RPL process is to be presented in the form of a Portfolio. Any Formal Education Certificates are to be accredited by the recognised by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC)[26]

The ITS, provides a list[27] of documents which can be submitted as Evidence for RPL Purposes. This list categorises different evidence in Very Strong; Strong and Helpful thus giving applicants a clear idea of where they stand in terms of their evidence.

Website Link: http://its.edu.mt/recognition-for-prior-learning-rpl.html

Name of Institution/s – University of Malta

Description/ Process – The University of Malta is the largest institution for Higher Education in Malta. It offers a number of programmes in a variety of areas which are distributed amongst fourteen faculties. As of 2017 the University of Malta makes provisions for Recognition of Prior Learning as stated in the Admission Regulations, 2016 of the University of Malta as follows:

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[26] http://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Pages/All%20Services/mqric.aspx
[27] http://its.edu.mt/recognition-for-prior-learning-rpl.html

"Applicable for courses commencing from October 2017 onwards

Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL)

14. (1) Adult Learners may access a Course of study based on knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through prior learning and experientially. Such applicants shall receive adequate support from the RPL Administrative Office to enable them to identify and collect all the evidence required for the validation of their prior informal and/or non-formal learning.

(2) RPL applications shall typically be assessed by only one RPL assessor, provided that if the application relates to more than one major area of study more assessors may be involved. 9

(3) Once an application has been assessed, the RPL assessor/s shall submit a detailed report to the Faculty Admissions Committee which will subsequently submit its recommendation to the Board for a final decision"[28]

Website Links - http://www.um.edu.mt/

Name of Institution/s – Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)

Description/ Process – MCAST is Malta's leading vocational education and training institution offering courses in various vocational areas ranging from MQF/EQF level 1 to MQF/EQF level 7. MCAST is divided into three Colleges and seven Institutes, which together drive forward the development of courses and focused methodologies and pedagogies for the respective levels falling under their remit. Courses at MCAST take different forms i.e. Apprenticeship programmes, Skills kit programmes, Online Courses, Ad-hoc and Bespoke courses, Entrepreneurship courses etc. MCAST works in close relations with the industry to ensure that its programmes are flexible, relevant, and responsive to the aspirations of students and the needs of the industry.

Recognition of Prior Learning is part of MCAST's policy. In recent years MCAST carried out a number of case studies in Recognition of Prior Learning with employees from specific organisations wishing to offer up-skilling opportunities their employees via MCAST courses. In order to be eligible for RPL, applicants need to register for an MCAST qualification. So far, RPL was not offered formally to the public, however MCAST is refining its processes in view of an official launch of RPL in the coming years.

In the meantime, MCAST Admission Procedures include a Mature student and an Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning (APCL) clause. APCL is a process through which Prior Certified Learning obtained through Formal Learning is awarded credit on a specific qualification. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that s/he provides relevant evidence for his/her APCL claim and that evidence provided is authentic. MCAST reserves the right to accept or reject evidence accordingly.

Website Links: http://www.mcast.edu.mt/179

Links

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[28] Admission Regulations, 2016 of the University of Malta -
https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/265709/adminregs2016.pdf

5. RPL in Employment within the ILPO55 Framework

RPL is typically associated with an educational setting in order to match the skills of an individual to a qualification being offered and determine whether s/he fulfils all or some of the criteria in order to claim full or partial completion of the programme. However the same principle can be applied within an employment setting in order to determine whether an individual possesses the necessary skills for a specific position within an organisation and or in conjunction with in-house courses.

Whilst within an educational setting the comparison would be between the applicant's skills against a unit or course descriptor (with Learning Outcomes; Credits and assessment Criteria), in employment the comparison would be against a detailed job description, broken down in a number of tasks and/or duties. In order for this to be successful it is imperative that the job description is broken down into a number of sections/duties, each with their own clear set of tasks. The aim of the exercise would be for the applicant to reflect on his/her skills, weaknesses, education and employment history and identify how these have shaped him/her into the person s/he is today. Following this exercise the applicant would be in a better position to identify and provide the evidence from his prior experiences, to justify that s/he can perform the specific tasks listed within the job description. In doing so, the applicant is being allowed active participation in the recruitment process and helping the interview board to make a more informed decision.

The use of RPL in employment is not an entirely new concept. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) speak of RPL for Employers and how RPL can be used within an Employment setting in order to help employers in:

- *"identifying employees' skills effectively;*
- *identifying skills gaps in organisations;*

- *identifying appropriate training opportunities;*
- *reducing the time required in employee training due to minimised duplication of learning;*
- *increasing motivation and interest in workplace activities on the part of the employee/learner*
- *generating new ideas and developments for the organisation as a result of the employee/learner reflecting on work activities."[29]*

The SCQF also claims that RPL in Employment *"can lead to increased employee retention and reduced recruitment and training costs."[30]* This is directly in line with the aims of the ILPO55 project and it is an incentive for both the Organisation/s (as it reduces the costs and time required for training) and the Employee (as it reduces the effort needed in order to advance within his/her place of work).

RPL can be used as the main source of information for workforce and organisation development. The information gathered from RPL will enable the organisation to learn more about its own employees; identify gaps within the organisation and plan accordingly. The SCQF also states that "*Employers can use RPL to support all aspects of workforce development:*

- *Recruitment: By the incorporation of an RPL process into the interview, an applicant can be helped to reflect on their achievements, prior work and life experiences and leisure pursuits to identify and demonstrate the strengths, skills and values that they will need to successfully undertake the post they are applying for.*
- *Induction: Information gained in the interview through reflecting on prior experiences can be used as part of the induction process. By using RPL within induction processes new employees can be supported in building on what they have already gained in terms of core and other skills relevant to the job.*
- *Supervision and appraisal: RPL used as part of supervision and appraisal can encourage the reflective process to help an individual review their performance, identify particular areas for further personal and professional development and challenge poor work practice.*
- *Performance interviewing: RPL can support the process of application for promoted posts, by helping individuals to reflect on particular instances, where, for example, they have challenged poor work practices, considered the outcomes of their own or another's action or thought about how they might have dealt with a situation differently.*
- *Gaining qualifications: RPL can be used to support workers to recognise their learning, including those who lack confidence as learners and/or who are reluctant to engage in formal learning. It can also accelerate the process of achieving qualifications through the recognition and award of SCQF credit points for prior informal or non-formal learning".[31]*

Organisations may also decide to apply the principles of RPL for their own in-house courses in order to confer these to their employees. RPL can be applied to the 2 courses Developed as part of the ILPO55 project the: Adult Trainer and the Financial Services Sector Social Responsibility Facilitator. Since the ILPO55 project is mainly interested in improving the employability status of Over 55 employees, it goes without saying that through the years these individuals would have gathered a

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[29] http://scqf.org.uk/more/rpl/rpl-for-employers/ accessed on 28.03.2017
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

large portfolio of experiences, and therefore it is only logical to apply the principles of RPL to Over 55 employees. In fact both the Adult Trainer and the FSS Social Responsibility Facilitator courses were developed with the Over 55 individual in mind and based on the skills which these employees are more likely to possess. The prospect of reducing time needed to complete specific courses (in-house) and or that valuing prior experience as credit for promotion would further encourage older employees to follow these qualifications, prolong their employment and proceed with their careers.

The structure of the ILPO55 Framework facilitates the application of RPL. The most important element to the successful application of RPL is clear guidance and/or mentoring, a factor which is common throughout the entire process of the ILPO55 Framework. It is important that the person helping the over 55 employee as part of the framework, also acts as a facilitator for the recognition of prior learning. Moreover, some of the other tools forming the framework can easily be applied as tools for RPL. The E-Portfolio is one such tool. The information contained within the e-portfolio can be enhanced and developed in such a way as to serve as the main repository for the evidence needed to be assessed for RPL. In addition when the RPL Process is applied as part of the ILPO55 framework, it is easier to identify whether an individual is eligible or not given the information gathered about the individual throughout the process and therefore the Institution is ensuring that the time and effort spent on the RPL process is not wasted.

The RPL process can be a fairly lengthy process which requires complete dedication and commitment by:

- the applicant - in order to submit the information required and to answer any clarifications requested by the organisation, and;
- the organisation – in order to verify the authenticity of the elements within the applicant's claim and to provide the necessary guidance to the applicant throughout the process.

The ILPO55 Consortium therefore recommends that RPL for career progression is carried out with employees within own organisation and preferably as part of the ILPO55 Framework. Reference can be made to Opren (2006) who referred to the benefits of RPL in employment and on the lessons learned from a pilot held by the Institute for People Development, one of which was that *"RPL should be embedded within broader personal development path planning within any organisation to be personally and organisationally meaningful."[32]* This is in line with the proposal and recommendations of the ILPO55 Framework wherein RPL for Employment is being proposed as part of a holistic process for the personal development of O55 employees.

5.1. Tools for RPL Implementation

- **RPL Policy**
- **Job Description with RPL Consideration**
- **RPL Application**

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[32] https://www.skillsportal.co.za/content/rpl-makes-sense-employers-well-employees accessed on 28.03.2017

APPENDIX 1

FLOWCHART FOR THE APPLICATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Publishing of Call for Applications with │
│ RPL Consideration                        │
│ Owner: HR Department                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Initial Expression of Interest           │
│ Owner: Prospective Applicants            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Initial Interview with Prospective       │
│ Applicant to gather general information  │
│ of previous learning and to discuss the  │
│ RPL process and its requirements.        │
│ Owner: RPL Assessor                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐       Documents:
│ Confirmation of Eligibility and          │         • Job Description
│ Distribution of Documentation            │──────►   • RPL Process Instructions
│ related to the RPL Process               │         • RPL Application/tool
│ Owner: HR Department                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Building of RPL Application Package,      │
│ Selection of Evidence, and Submission    │
│ of RPL Claim.                            │
│ Owner: Applicant                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Evaluation of RPL Claim                  │◄────────────────┐
│ Owner: RPL Assessor                      │                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘                 │
                    │                                        │
                    ▼                                        │
              ╱───────────╲          ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
             ╱   More      ╲         │ Request from Applicant            │
            ╱  Information   ╲ YES    │ (and/either/or):                  │
            ╲  Required?     ╱──────► │   • Interview                     │
             ╲             ╱          │   • Practical Demonstration       │
              ╲───────────╱           │   • Further Evidence              │
                    │                 │          Owner: RPL Assesor       │
                    ▼                 └──────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Issuing of Evaluation Result             │
│ Owner: RPL Assessor                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
        ╭─────────────────────────╮
        │ Communication of Outcome │
        │                          │
        │ Owner: HR Department     │
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