Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)"

Germany is home to around 19.3 million people with a migration background. They make up about 23.6 percent of the population. There are a number of factors which cause unemployment to be roughly twice as high among people who have a migration background compared to those who do not. In recent years, immigration to Germany has risen significantly—from other EU countries and from war-torn regions around the world. Many of these people hold professional qualifications or other valuable credentials that are frequently not recognised in Germany. At the same time, skill shortages are becoming increasingly noticeable in Germany.

It is therefore essential to actively tap into all available potential, particularly that of people with a migration background. The Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)" works to improve employment opportunities for people with a migration background. One central objective is to ensure that professional qualifications acquired outside Germany more frequently lead to employment appropriate to one’s level of education, regardless of residence status. In the 2019–2022 funding round, provision for professional recognition will be significantly expanded. 72 advice centres for credential recognition and job training as well as 169 projects supporting training in the context of the Recognition Act have been launched across the country. In addition, the priority area “Regional skilled worker networks - immigration” has been added to the programme.

The first two priority areas of the Network IQ are funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the European Social Fund (ESF). Priority areas three and four are funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). In cooperation with:

Contact details of all IQ partners can be found at www.netzwerk-iq.de

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**Priority areas of Network IQ**

**Advice on credential recognition**
This priority area deals with providing advice on the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad as well as advice on job training within the context of the Recognition Acts of the federal government and the federal states. Those seeking guidance receive competent advice on bridge training or compensatory measures in order to attain full recognition and secure employment appropriate to the level of their professional qualifications.

**Job training schemes in the context of the Recognition Act**
The second Network IQ priority area provides bridge training in order to support the full recognition of foreign professional credentials. The qualifications required for full recognition in regulated professions can be compensated for by means of job training schemes. For academics from non-regulated professions, bridging measures are offered to support employment equivalent to the qualification.

**Development of intercultural competence of key labour market stakeholders**
In the third priority area, the Network IQ offers training and advice on the development of intercultural competence in job centres, employment agencies, municipal administration as well as small-and-medium sized enterprises and their associations. The goal is to raise awareness of intercultural issues, to initiate intercultural opening processes, and to eliminate discrimination.

**Regional skilled workers networks – immigration**
As of 2019, the fourth priority area “Regional skilled worker networks – immigration” will involve the funding of regional structures to support the labour market integration of recent immigrants who are skilled workers. To support this, networking with the stakeholders involved is to be established or expanded. Provision of information and advice for companies and skilled workers is to be more closely interlinked. Furthermore, existing skilled worker networks will be supported by IQ stakeholders with expertise specific to the target group concerned.

**Structure of the programme**

The principal task of the 16 regional networks delivering around 380 projects is to implement the network’s activities. Each regional network is managed by a regional coordinator and covers a range of further subprojects operating locally. They offer advice on credential recognition throughout the country and develop and offer bridge training. Professional integration is most successful when stakeholders in the labour market come together and work towards a common goal. The regional networks therefore work together closely with the relevant local stakeholders. These include, for example, employment agencies, job centres, recognition authorities, chambers, and counselling centres.

Besides the regional networks, there are five competence centres at the federal level dealing with migrant-specific issues. They provide expert advice and assistance to the regional networks. They develop job training schemes, tools, and recommendations for the professional integration of people with a migration background. The centres also advise decision-makers in politics, business, and public administration. This advice can range from the drafting of quality standards, qualifications, and training materials to the dissemination of scientific findings.

The network is organised at the national level via the IQ Dissemination Project (IQ DP). IQ DP supports the collaboration between network stakeholders, promotes the transfer of best practice and is responsible for the public relations of the Network IQ. The Support Fair Integration (SFI) project supports the Fair Integration advice centres in the fulfilment of their role with expertise, public relations work, and networking efforts. “Recognition in Germany” is the multilingual web portal of the federal government for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. The project works in close cooperation with the Network IQ.

All contact details can be found at www.netzwerk-iq.de