Pilot microcredentials in higher education within The Netherlands

EPIC – 1st of June 2022

What to expect today

- What are microcredentials?
  - The EU definition and the demarcation within the pilot
- Timeline 2019 – 2023
  - A brief history and glimpse into the future of the pilot
- Participating institutions, governance and organisation
- Highlights from the quality framework for the pilot
- Examples of micro-credentials from the participating institutions and lessons learned so far
- Questions from the audience

What are 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 have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses 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 standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

The pilot focuses on

- Micro-credentials for professionals / Lifelong Learning

- Micro-credentials with an indicative size between 3 and 30 ECTS

- Micro-credentials issued by HEIs in the Netherlands

- Micro-credentials must meet the quality framework of the pilot

A Brief history of the pilot microcredentials in The Netherlands

2020   2021   2022   2023

Flexibilisation

Preparatory discussions within Dutch HE exploratory note on micro-credentials by AeF

Describing the preconditions and the quality framework for the pilot

June – Sept '21 Application

Okt '21 – Start pilot

Dec '22 - All universities have offered at least 1 microcredential
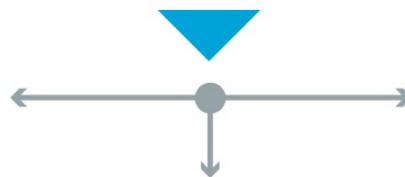
'23 Start peer-reviews

Learning communities
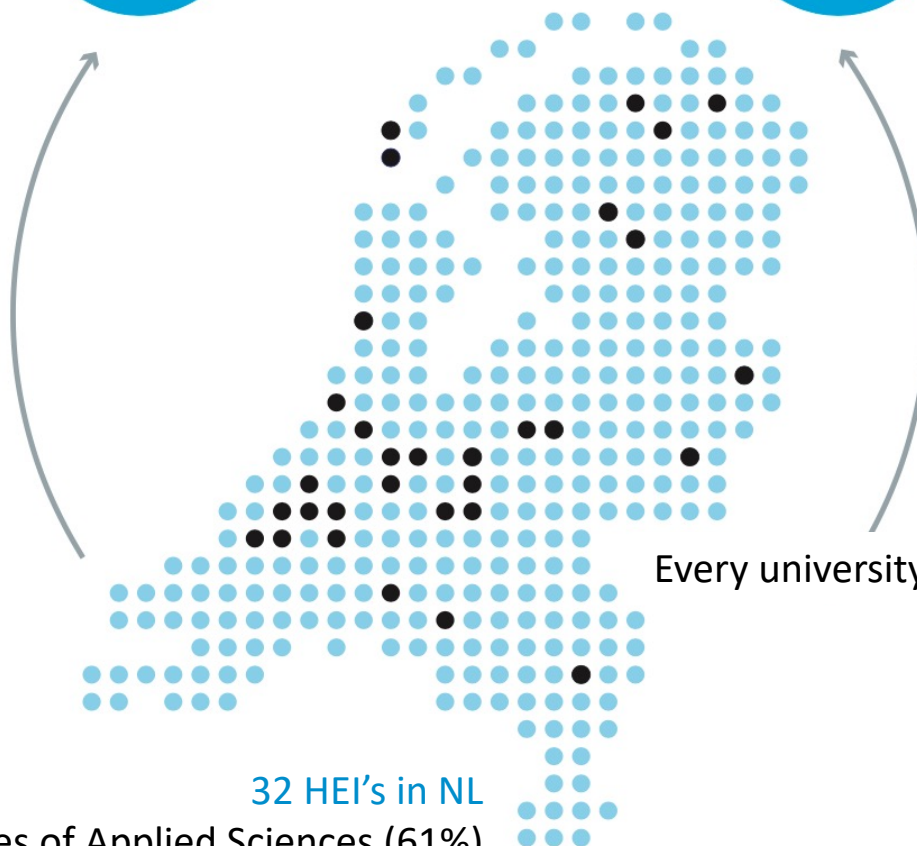Communication
Quality assurance
The educational description of MCs
Logistics and administration

Central project leaders meetings
Calibration and knowledge sharing
between project leaders
Aligning the tactical and strategic
approach of the pilot

Every university has an implemation team and project leader

32 HEI's in NL
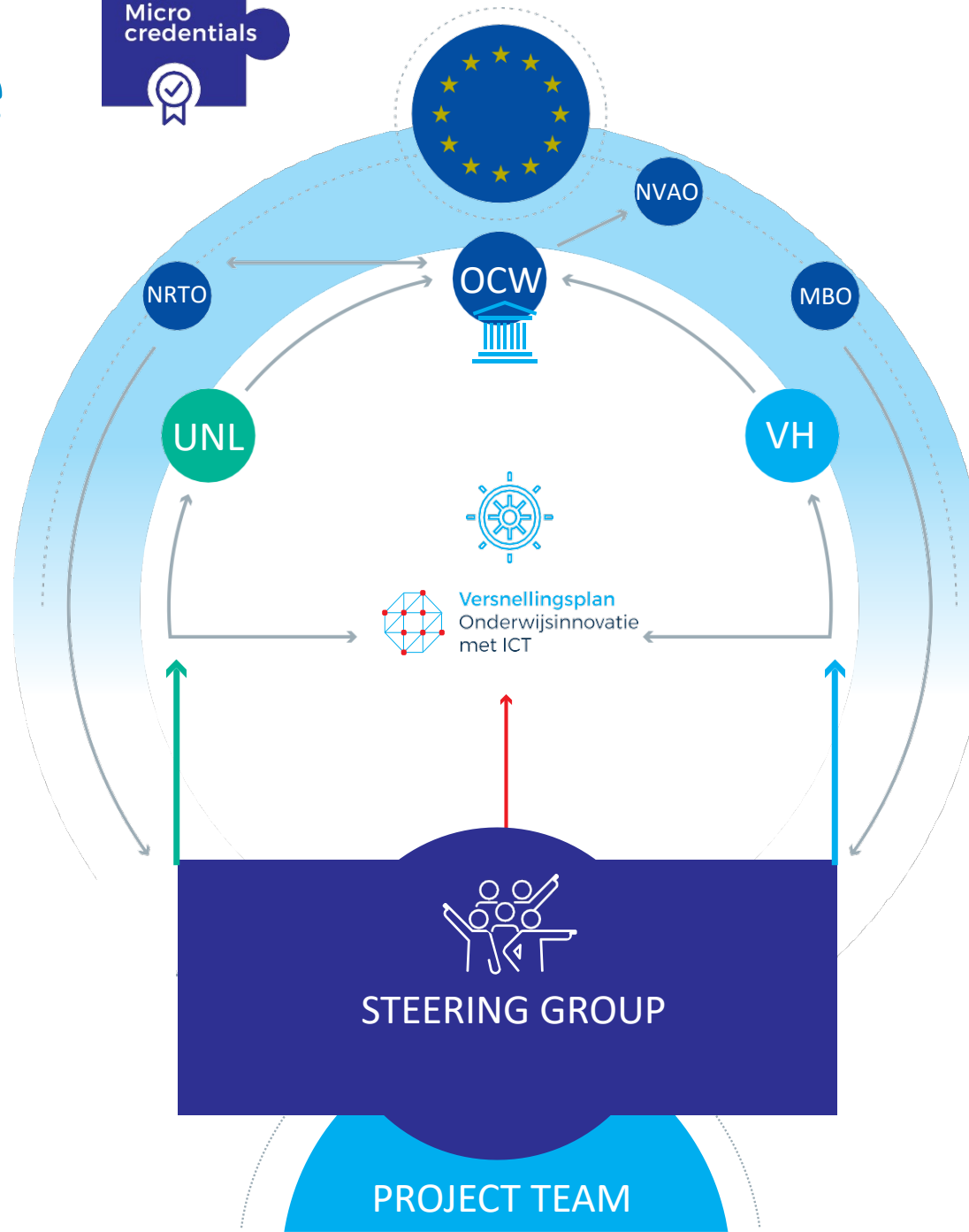22 Universities of Applied Sciences (61%)
10 Research Universities (71%)

Governance structure

Universities of the Netherlands

The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences

Quality framework for the Dutch pilot micro-credentials

1. The quality of courses certified with micro-credentials is guaranteed on the basis of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

2. The Executive Board is familiar with and consciously opts for the use of micro-credentials based on the institution's LLO vision

3. The institution has set up an internal quality assurance process for the design, recognition and quality assurance of the micro-credentials

4. The institution has designated a body or bodies that can guarantee the quality of micro-credential-certified education

5. A form of education evaluation, participation and the possibility to submit complaints has been organized for participants of mc-certified education

Quality framework for the Dutch pilot micro-credentials

6. The guideline for micro-credentials is that it concerns units of study that are not smaller than 3 EC and not larger than 30 EC

7. The education that is certified with a micro credential is substantively related to the education and/or research portfolio of the institution. This can be both existing and new (further) developed education

8. It is clear who the intended target audience of the course is, requirements for admission and how these are tested is clear.

9. The educational programme, the learning environment and the quality of the teaching team make it possible for the learner to achieve the intended learning outcomes outcomes and the educational level and scope of the microcredential. The participating institutions describe this in an unambiguous manner ,

10. Insight is given into the learning in line with European agreements (Bologna) and developments in Brussels*

11. Institutions recognize the (validated) learning outcomes of micro-credentials obtained elsewhere. Whether this eventually leads to intake and/or exemption remains under the mandate of the Examination Board or another body designated for that purpose by the institution.

12. Testing supports the learning process of the participant and the assessment is valid, reliable, transparent for participants, and sufficiently independent.

Quality framework for describing the content of micro-credentials

- Learning outcomes - the European definition of learning outcomes is used, institutions choose their own method to describe learning outcomes.

- Level
  - Well-formulated learning outcomes give the reader an indication of the level of the microcredential.
  - Institutions use the indicators of EQF / NLQF to indicate the level of the micro-credential. The institution must be able to justify this itself.

- Study load - Describing the study load in ECTS or hours is widely applicable for both accredited and accreditation-worthy courses. This promotes interchangeability and is preferred for micro-credentials.

AUAS: *Make IT Work & Be an Engineer*

- Reskilling professionals for in-demand job skills in the Dutch workforce (in IT, Education, Engineering and Healthcare)

- Part of the 'FastSwitch' network

- Programs offered at various Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences

ICT
Make IT Work
IT Academy Noord Nederland (Groningen)
Hogeschool van Amsterdam (Amsterdam en Hilversum)
Fontys Hogeschool ICT (Eindhoven)
HAN University of Applied Sciences (Arnhem)
Hogeschool Rotterdam
Haagse Hogeschool

Techniek
Be an Engineer
Hogeschool van Amsterdam
HAN University of Applied Sciences (Arnhem)
Hogeschool Saxion (Enschede en Deventer)
Hogeschool Rotterdam
Hogeschool Utrecht (Utrecht en Amersfoort)
Hanzehogeschool Groningen

Zorg
FastSwitch Hbo-v
Hogeschool Windesheim (Zwolle)
HAN University of Applied Sciences (Nijmegen)
Hogeschool Saxion (Enschede en Deventer)
Hanzehogeschool Groningen
Zuyd Hogeschool (Heerlen)
Inholland Hogeschool (Amsterdam)
Hogeschool Utrecht

Onderwijs
FastSwitch Onderwijs
Iselinge Hogeschool (Doetinchem)
Hogeschool Windesheim (Zwolle en Almere)
HAN University of Applied Sciences (Arnhem en Nijmegen)

Pilot microcredentials AUAS: *Be an engineer*

- <u>Early stages</u>: selecting suitable units of learning from new energy transition programs

- Program concludes with certification by microcredentials and a job market

- Learning outcomes, volume and levels are yet to be determined

<u>Potential</u> microcredentials

1) Smart buildings
2) Smart cities
3) Smart industry
4) Sustainability: Clean harbors
5) Construction & installation
6) Building information modelling (BIM)

Pilot microcredentials AUAS: *Make IT Work*

- <u>Final stages</u>: badgedesign & communication

- Isolated 10 units of learning within the software engineering track (equivalent to 3-12 ects)

- Formulated learning outcomes (using tuning methodology & soon to be peer-reviewed)

- Referenced EQF/NLQF for level (5)

Microcredentials:
1) *Introduction to programming*
2) *Advanced programming*
3) *Object oriented programming*
4) *Agile software development*
5) *Back-end developer*
6) *Front-end developer*
7) *Full stack developer*
8) *Databases: modelling*
9) *Databases: SQL basics*
10) *Software architecture*

MAKE IT WORK
Advanced Programming 2021

MAKE IT WORK
Object Oriented Programming 2021

Lessons learned (already?)

- <u>Very</u> multidisciplinary project

- Integrations are key (or the promise thereof)

- Scaling up will be interesting

- One more thing…

WUR Microcredentials offerings

Courses from degree programmes (diplomagericht onderwijs)

- Experience with online MSc since 2014
- Already existing microcredential: edX MicroMasters

Courses for professionals (cursorisch onderwijs)

- From "Wageningen Academy"
- Blended, online or on-site

Two examples

Managing Public Space

- 3 mixed classroom courses (for students and professionals)

Circular Fashion

- MOOC + on-site course = microcredential

Pilot microcredentials: quality assurance

Board of professional education

- Ambassador role
- Shaping role in quality assurance (didactics, assessment, vision on learning, performance)
- Shaping innovation

- Determining the portfolio with types of education products for professionals that WUR offers B2C within the financial frameworks;
- Regularly assessing the quality and performance of the types of products in the portfolio;
- Report to the Executive Board

Questions from the audience