

GREEN CIRCLE BRIEFING

REPORT: MICRO-CREDENTIALS

IN THE SPANISH CONSTRUCTION

SECTOR – A POLICY GUIDE



Spain is in a dynamic phase of regulating micro-credentials (MCs), with three parallel processes led by Vocational Education and Training (VET), Higher Education, and Employment Authorities. While formal pathways in VET and universities are advanced, the integration of MCs into non-formal, labour-market-focused training remains underdeveloped. For trainers in the construction sector, this presents both a challenge and a significant opportunity to design flexible, recognised upskilling pathways that address critical skills gaps, especially in green and digital skills. This report outlines the current framework and provides targeted recommendations for trainers to lead this transition.

Three Regulatory Pathways

MCs in Spain are being shaped by three distinct systems, each with its own definitions and objectives:

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

- Governed by the National System of Qualifications and VET (Organic Law 3/2022).
- Managed by the National Institute for Qualifications (INCUAL) via the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications (CNCP).
- Short-duration training exists as Competence Units (UCs) and Short-term Training Units (UFCDs), but these are not yet marketed or recognised as “micro-credentials.”

Higher Education

- Regulated by Royal Decree 822/2021.
- Defines MCs as short courses of less than 15 ECTS, offered by universities for lifelong learning.
- These do not contribute to official degrees but can be recognised for credit.

Employment and Labour Market Training

- Managed by SEPE (National Public Employment Service) and FUNDAE.
- Training is aligned with the Catalogue of Training Specialties, but MCs are not yet formally integrated.
- Future reforms under Law 30/2015 aim to incorporate MCs into employment training, with recognition via collective agreements.



Key Challenges for Training

Fragmented System: Three different definitions and processes create confusion for learners and employers.

Lack of Labour Market Recognition: MCs from non-formal training lack formal accreditation and portability.

Quality Assurance Gaps: Especially in employment-based training, where providers vary widely.

Limited Information: Many existing short courses do not disclose key details (ECTS, workload, quality assurance).

Strengths and Opportunities

Strong VET Infrastructure: The CNCP and INCUAL provide a solid basis for stacking MCs into full qualifications.

Digital Transition Support: Initiatives like the Personalised Single Labour Record and Europass Digital Credentials will facilitate MC portability.

EU Funding & Policy Support: NextGenerationEU funds and the Spanish Active Employment Support Strategy 2021–2024 prioritise upskilling and digitalisation.

Policy Recommendations

Align Training with National and European Frameworks

Map courses to the CNCP: Where possible, link MCs to existing Competence Units (UCs) or UFCDs to ensure national recognition.

Adopt ECTS/ECVET standards: Use European credit systems to ensure portability and stackability.

Engage with INCUAL and ANECA: Participate in consultations to shape the emerging national MC framework.

Design Flexible, Industry-Relevant MCs

Focus on Green and Digital Skills:

- Energy efficiency & renewable energy systems
- Sustainable materials & circular economy
- BIM/digital construction technologies
- Water management & sustainable site practices

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