

# GREEN CIRCLE BRIEFING REPORT: MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN THE PORTUGUESE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR – A POLICY GUIDE



Portugal's approach to micro-credentials is evolving, with notable activity in higher education but significant gaps in vocational and industry-led training. While universities and polytechnics are developing MCs under Decree-Law 27/2021, the vocational training system has yet to formally integrate MCs into its framework. For trainers in the construction sector, this represents a strategic opportunity to design flexible, short-duration credentials that address urgent skills shortages in green building, digitalisation, and sustainable construction.

## Key Challenges for Trainers

**Lack of Formal Recognition:** Existing short courses are not recognised as MCs within the national qualifications system.

**Fragmented Offer:** Training is divided between formal CNQ-aligned programs and non-formal continuous training, with no bridging mechanism.

**Information Gap:** There is little documentation or guidance on how to develop, accredit, or quality-assure MCs in the construction sector.

**Funding and Accessibility:** Many existing MCs in higher education are fee-based, limiting access for workers and SMEs.

## Strengths and Opportunities

**Strong National Framework:** The CNQ and UFCD structure provide a foundation for stacking MCs into full qualifications.

**Industry-Academia Partnerships:** Models like TecMinho, CICCOPN, and Casais Group show how tailored training can meet market needs.

**Digital Credentials Potential:** Portugal is well-positioned to adopt Europass Digital Credentials for secure, portable certification.

**EU Green Transition Funding:** Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) funds support upskilling in green and digital areas.



## Policy Recommendations

### Advocate for the Integration of MCs into the CNQ

Participate in the CNQ revision process to propose MCs as stackable units of competence.

Use the current UFCD structure (25h/50h) as a basis for developing recognised MCs.

Propose a MC Framework for Construction: Collaborate with sectoral partners to define priority MCs in green skills, digital tools, and safety.

### Develop Industry-Led, Practice-Oriented MCs

Focus on High-Demand Skills

Combine theory with practical, site-based training to ensure immediate applicability.

Follow the Casais Academy model to co-design and deliver training that meets real workforce needs.

### Ensure Quality, Transparency, and Recognition

Pursue DGERT Certification: Ensure non-formal MCs are delivered by certified training institutions to enhance credibility.

### Promote Access, Inclusion, and Lifelong Learning

Target Underserved Groups: Design MCs for:

- Career changers and lateral entrants (e.g., migrants)
- Women (to address gender imbalance in construction)

Use blended, online, and evening courses to accommodate working professionals.

Leverage Funding Programs: Tap into PRR, ESF+, and IEFP funding to subsidise MCs for employed and unemployed learners.

### Foster Collaboration Across the Ecosystem

Partner with higher education, VET centres and companies to create integrated pathways.

Ensure MCs are recognised in collective bargaining agreements and industry standards.

Share Best Practices

### Monitor, Evaluate, and Improve

Track Learner Outcomes: Collect data on employment, promotion, and skill application post-MC.

Regularly engage with construction companies to ensure MCs remain relevant.

Ensure completed MCs are recorded in the SIGO platform and linked to the individual's qualification record.



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