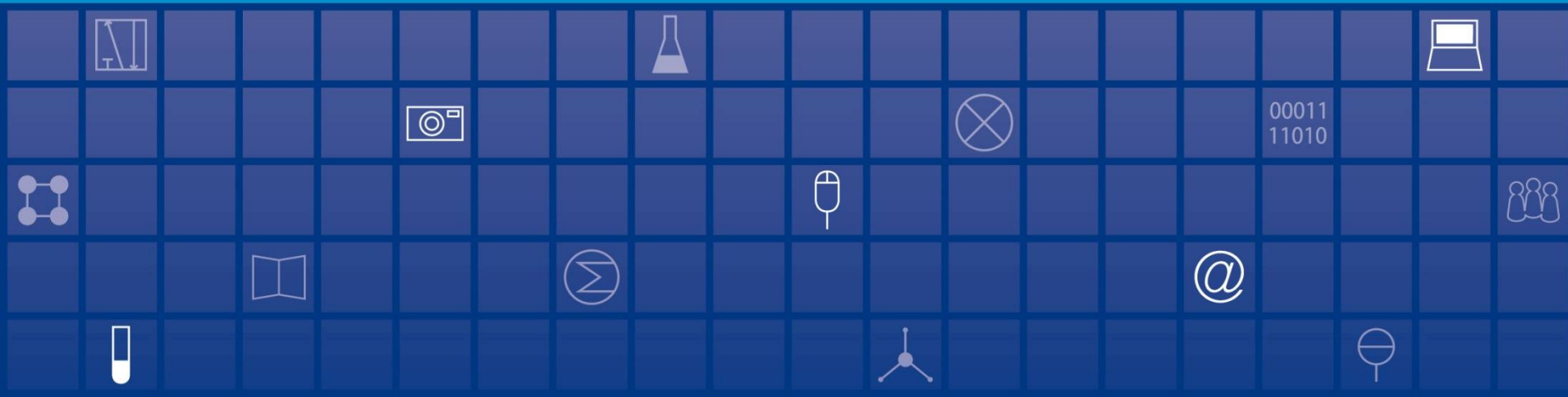


Qualifications as currencies

Reflections from the perspective of the chemical industry

Cedefop Conference 5&6 October 2009

Mirjam de Jong





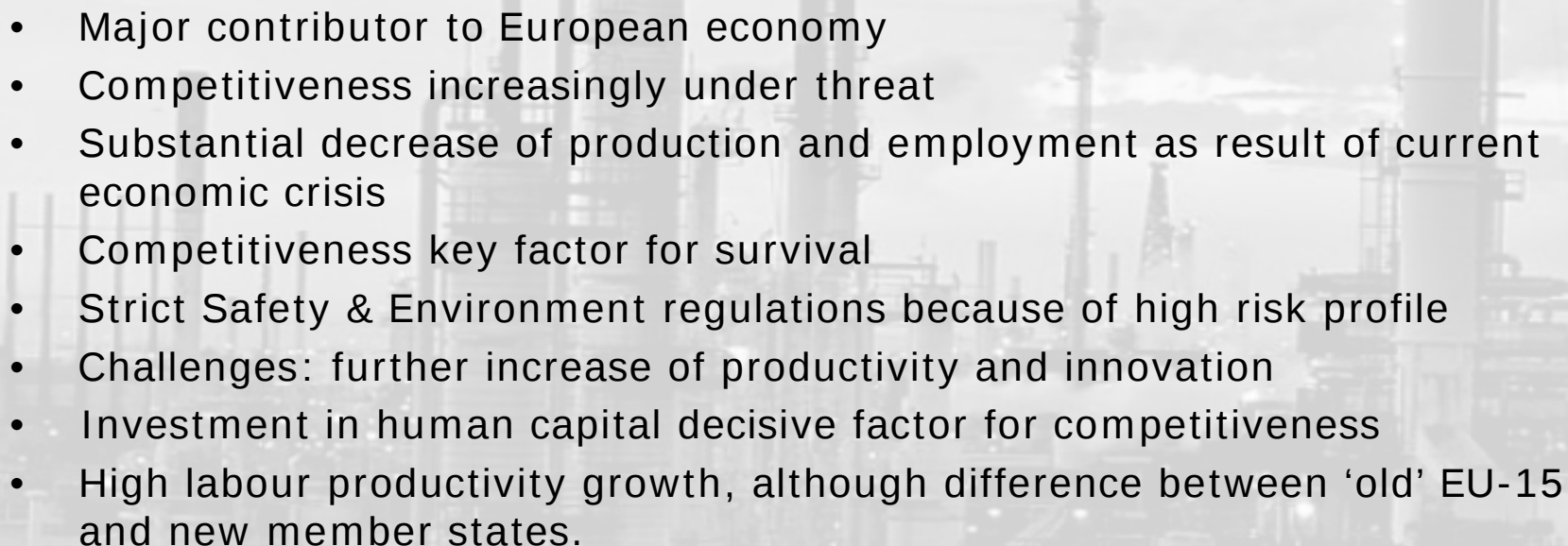
■ EMPOWERING **PEOPLE AND INDUSTRIES**

Content

- **Background Chemical Industry**
- **Introducing 5 Core Themes**
- **Issues for Discussion**



Background Chemical Industry

- 
- A faded background image of a chemical plant with various towers, pipes, and structures.
- Major contributor to European economy
 - Competitiveness increasingly under threat
 - Substantial decrease of production and employment as result of current economic crisis
 - Competitiveness key factor for survival
 - Strict Safety & Environment regulations because of high risk profile
 - Challenges: further increase of productivity and innovation
 - Investment in human capital decisive factor for competitiveness
 - High labour productivity growth, although difference between 'old' EU-15 and new member states.

5 Core Themes

- Human capital as a decisive factor for competitiveness
 - Qualifications or competence?
 - How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?
 - Validation of in-company training and work experience?
 - Need for commonly accepted standards
- 
- A small blue square located in the bottom left corner of the slide.

Human capital as a decisive factor for competitiveness

Main challenges:

- Structurally older workforce; lack of younger employees and older generation about to retire
- Skills gap due to changing nature of jobs; trend from lower skilled to medium and higher skilled employment

Agenda:

Need to invest in human capital
Changes in required competences
Future skills and knowledge needs

Debate at all levels.

New Skills for New Jobs
initiative of European Commission

Human capital as a decisive factor for competitiveness

Perspective of individual employer and employee

Point of view of individual employer:

- How can I assure that I have personnel with required competences now and in the future?
- How can I get the most out of my personnel in order to improve my competitiveness?



Point of view of the individual employee:

- How can I prove that I have the required competences for a job?
- How can I keep developing my competences so that I remain employable?



Human capital as a decisive factor for competitiveness

The changing job of an operator in a chemical plant



Increasing complex, automated, processes

Intervention in case of deviations

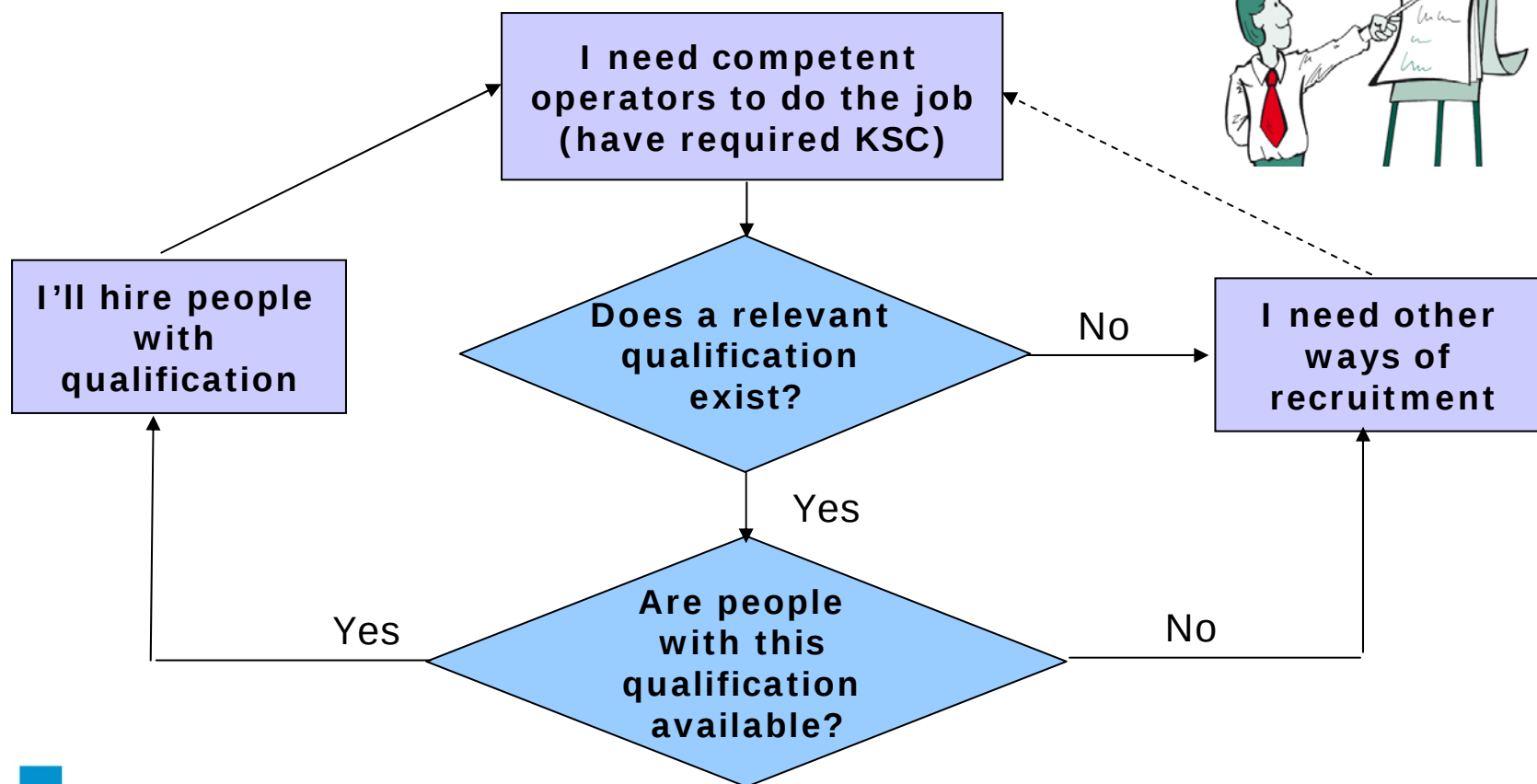
High risk profile

7 x 24 work in shifts

Qualification at VET level

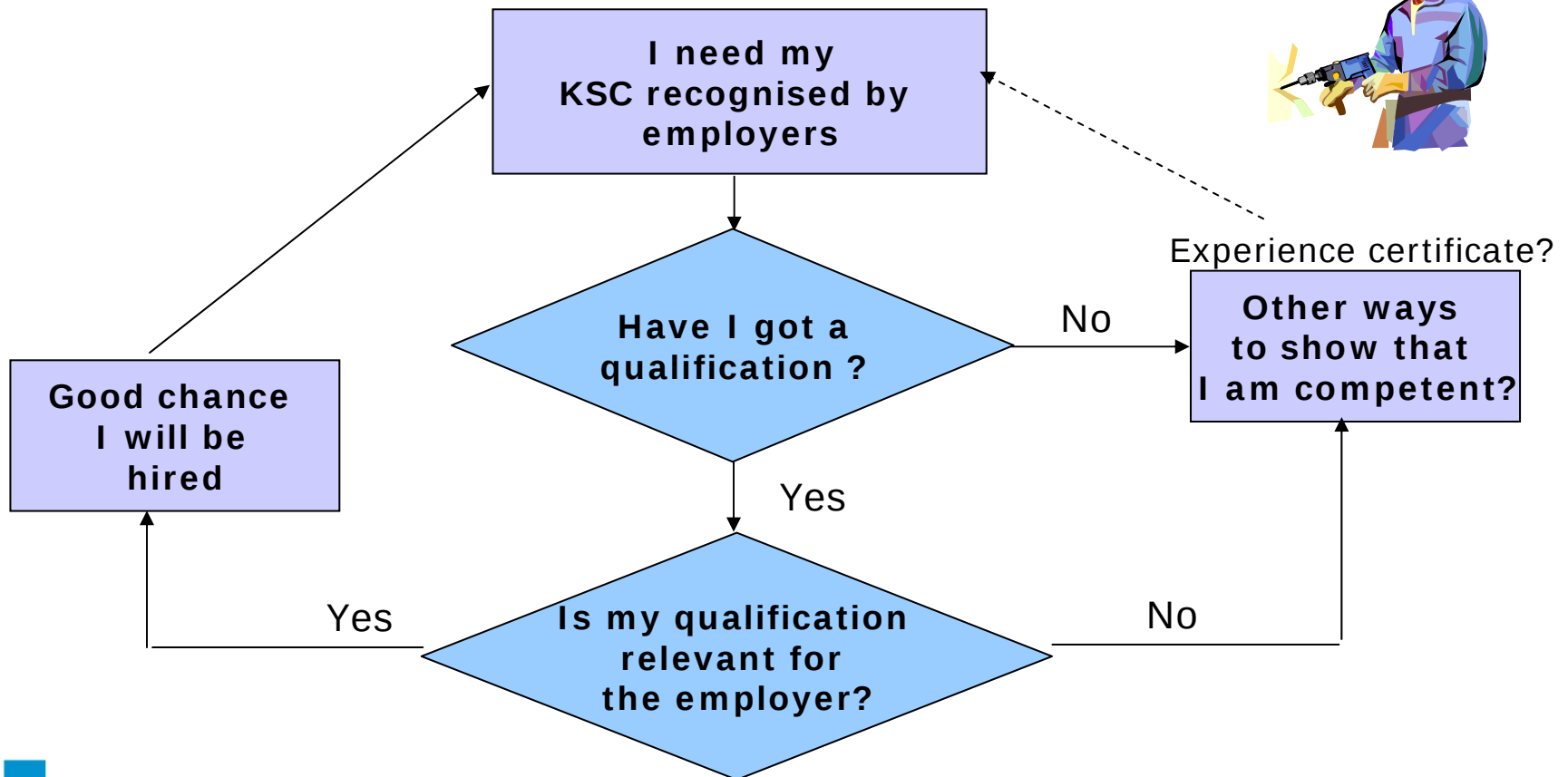
QUALIFICATION or COMPETENCE?

From the perspective of the individual employer

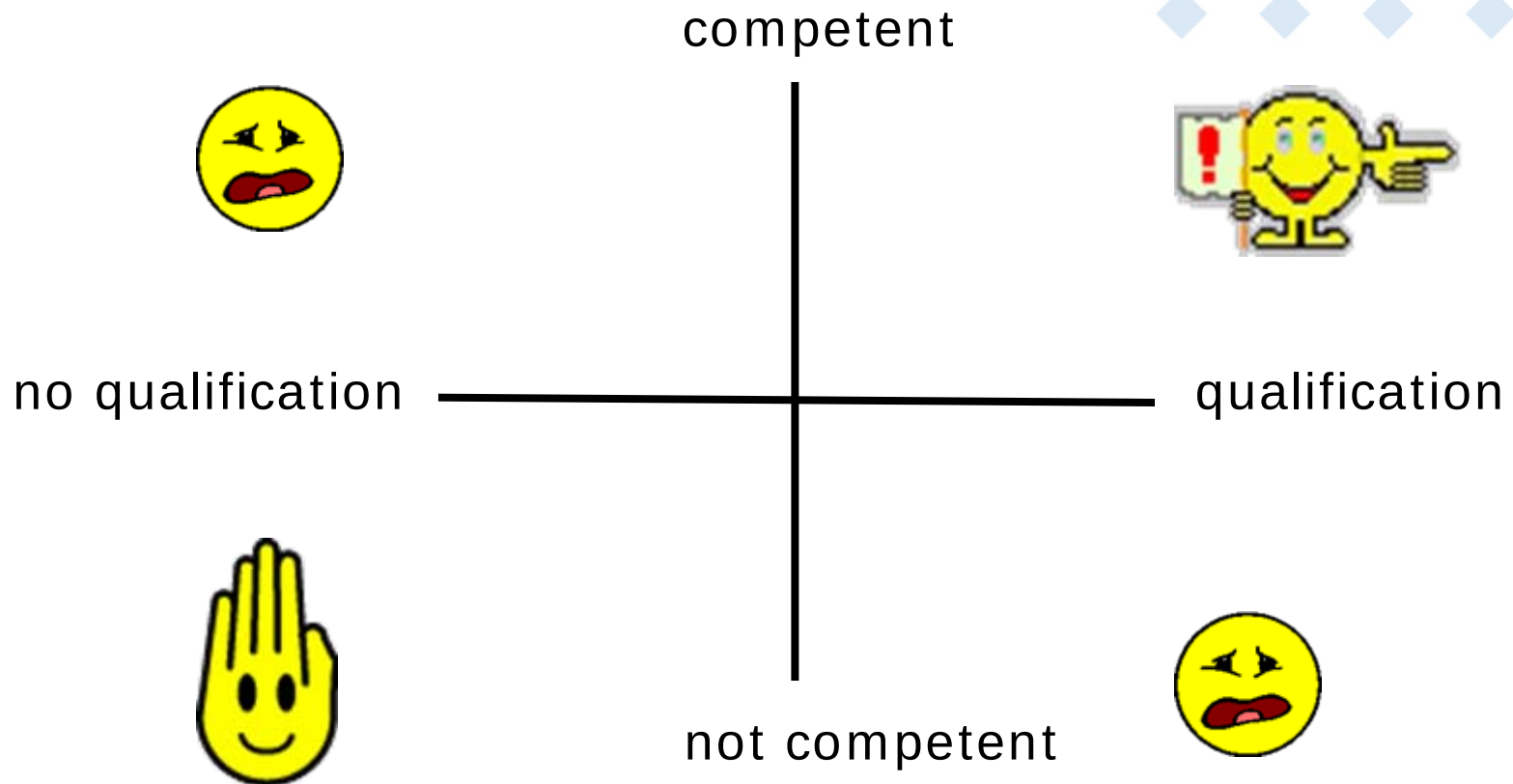


QUALIFICATION or COMPETENCE?

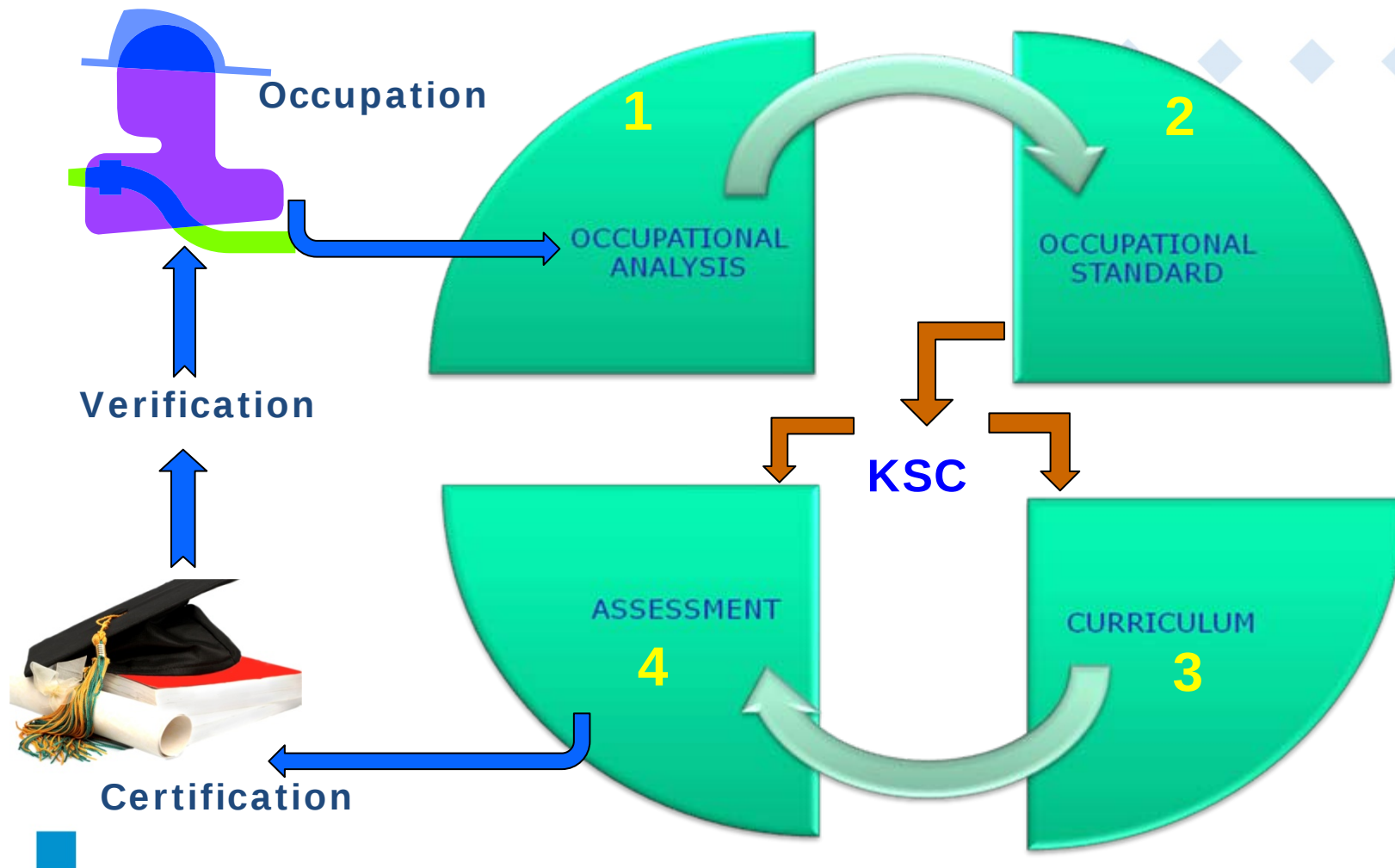
From the perspective of the individual employee



QUALIFICATION or COMPETENCE?



How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?



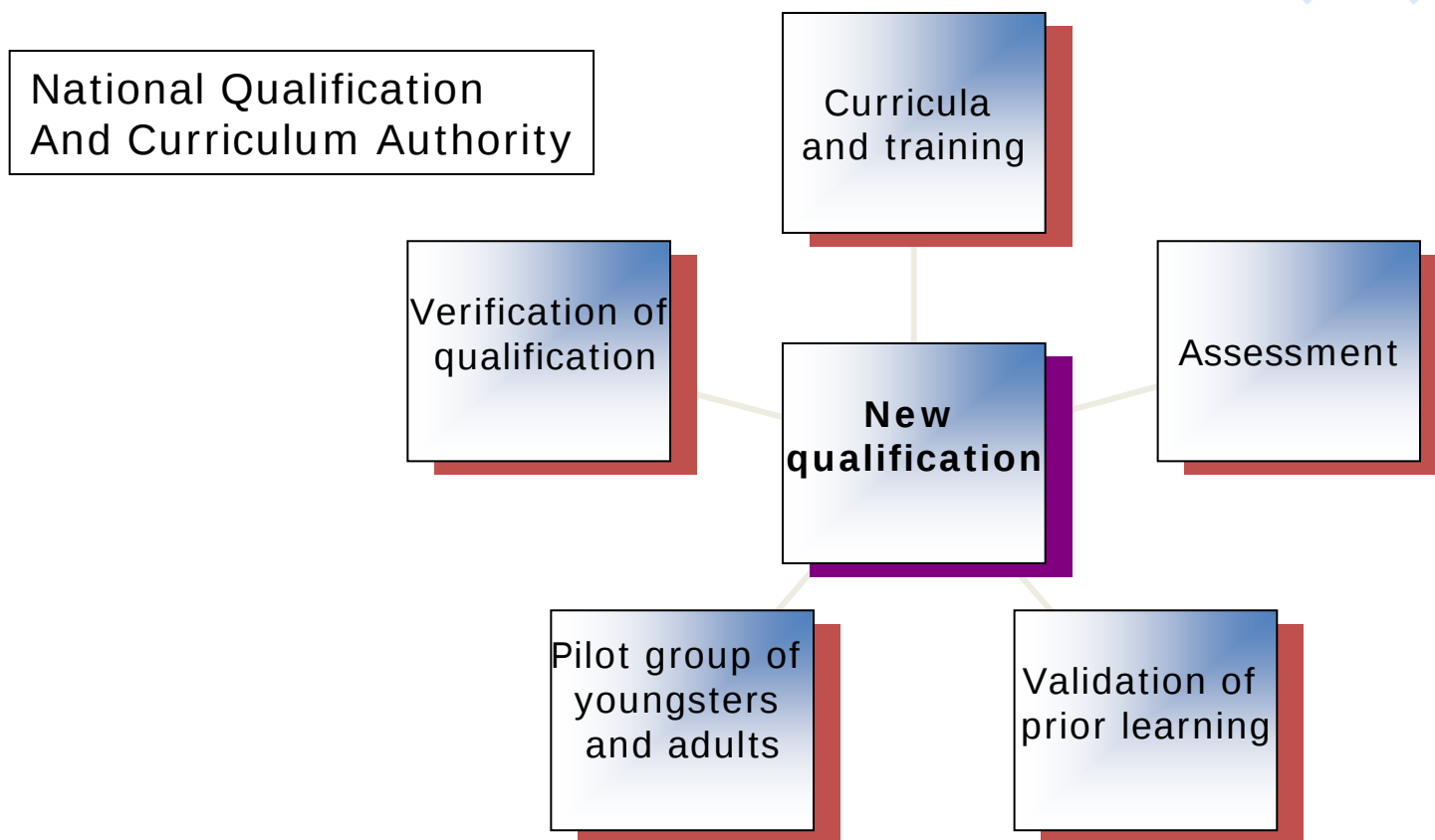
How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?

Involvement of labour market in training and assessment

- Trend towards training and assessment of learning outcomes in the professional practice; not new for the chemical industry
- Skills and competences required for a chemical industry operator are best learnt and assessed in the professional practice of the workplace
- West-European chemical industry has a long tradition with on the workplace training and assessment, also for qualifications for operators and technicians
- New member states lack this tradition, even though most new member states are in the process of a reform of their VET systems
- Examples Romania and Bulgaria

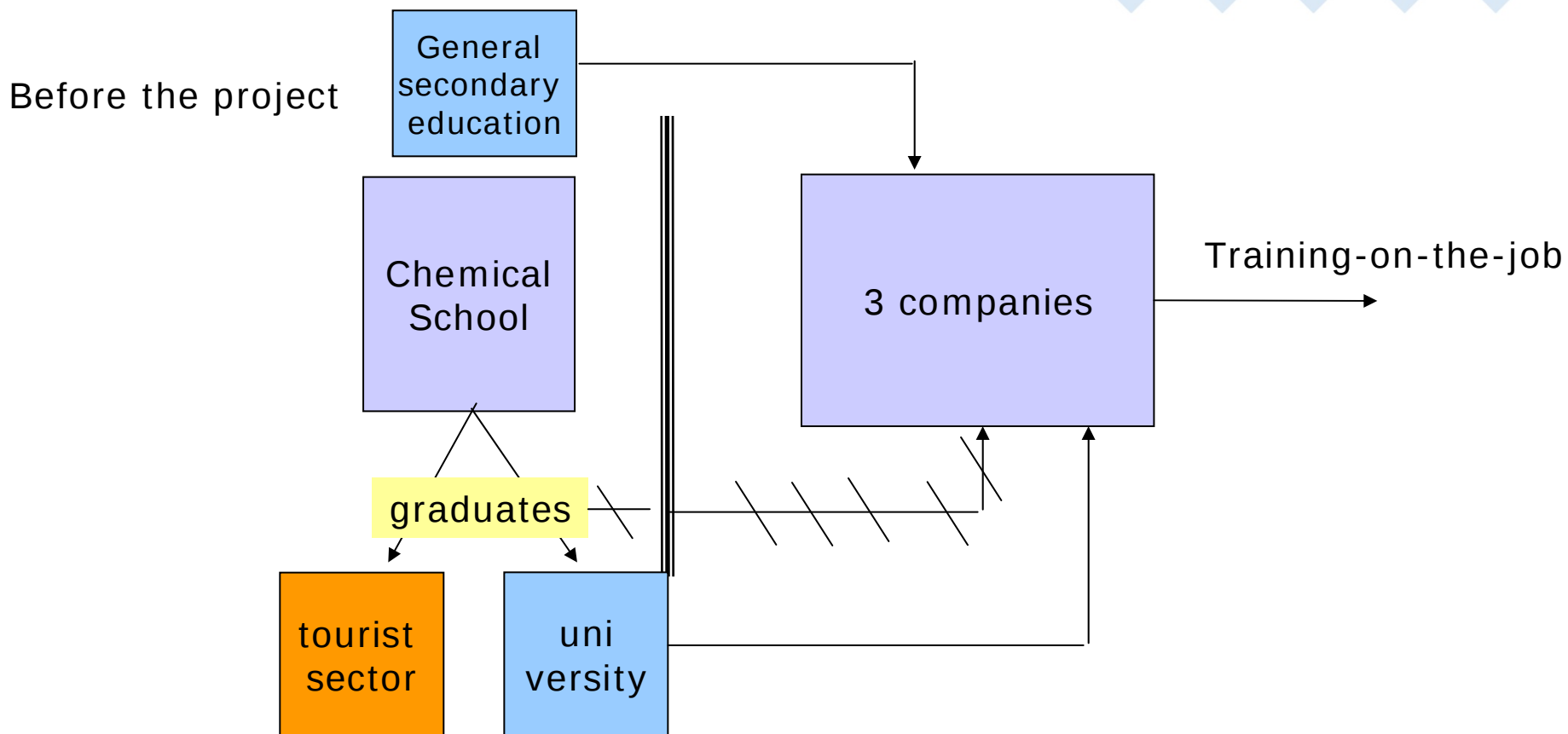
How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?

Example Romania: strategic VET and capacity building project



How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?

Example Bulgaria: Company + school partnership Varna region



How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?

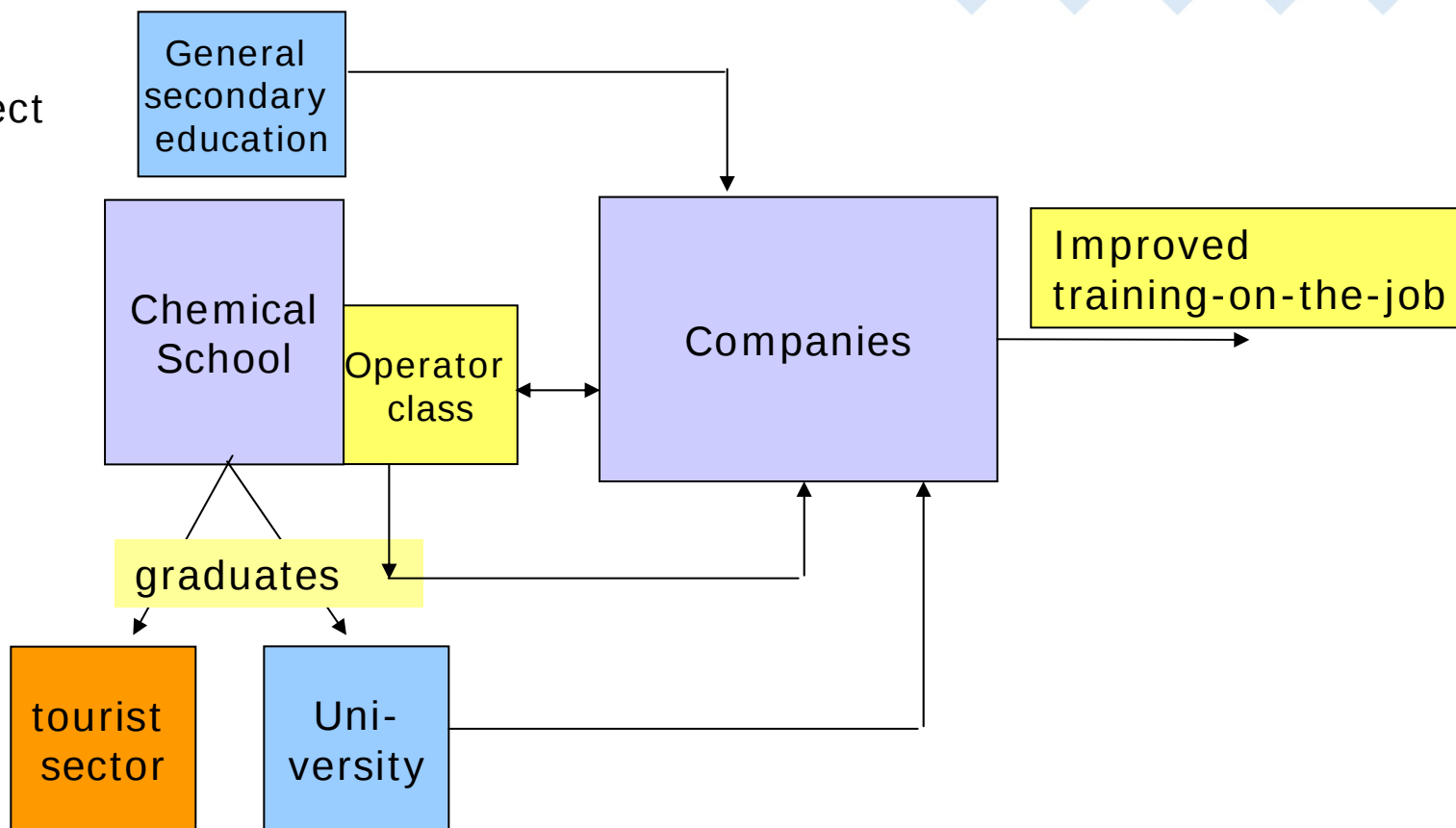
Example Bulgaria: the project

- Involvement chemical school
- Learning module Safety for Operators using a competence based learning and competence based assessment method
- Training of company trainers and school teachers
- Theoretical part by the school with input from company staff
- Practical part based on risk inventory
- Practical assignments executed on the workplace, guided by company instructors
- Practical assessment at the workplace executed by company assessors
- Pilot with operators

How to sustain and renew the value of qualifications?

Example Bulgaria: Company + school partnership

After the project



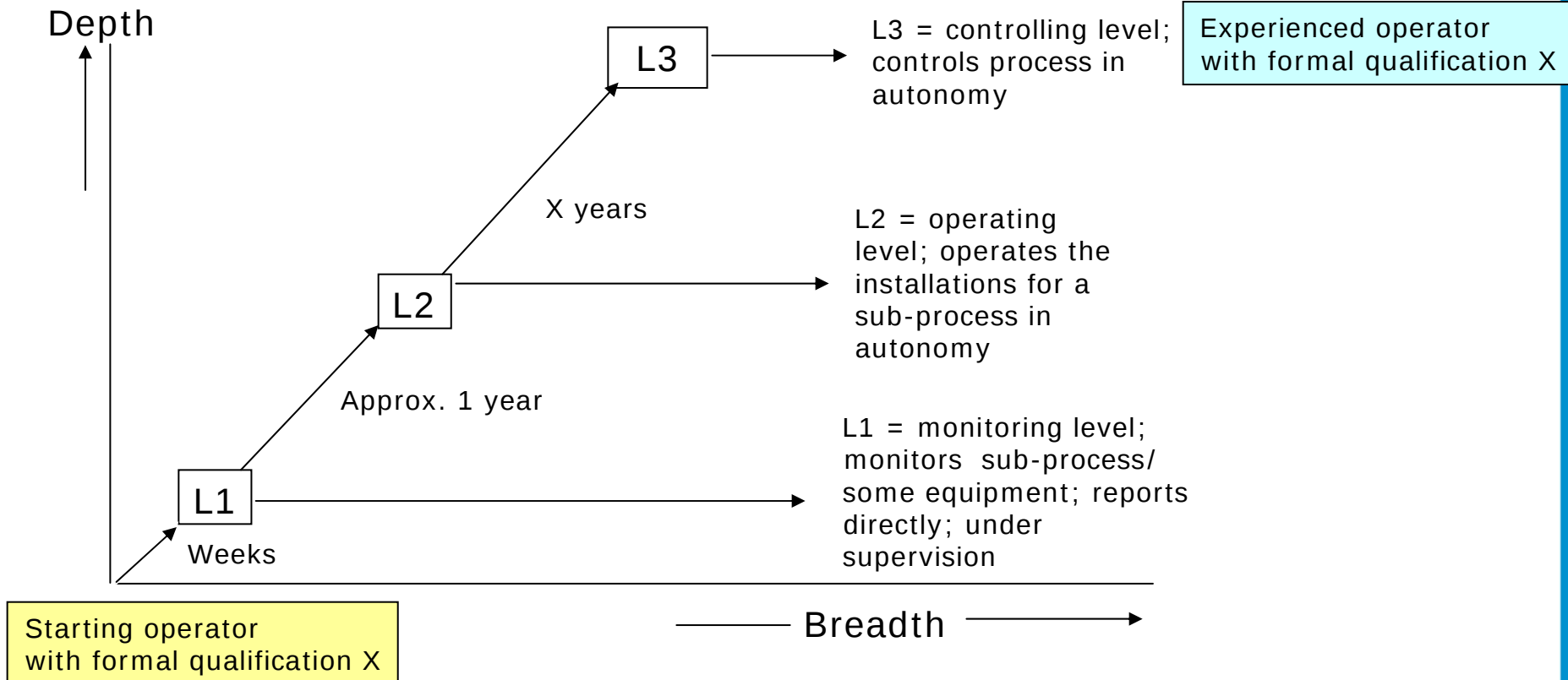
Validation of in-company training and work experience?

Chance for older workers to achieve a formal qualification

- Formal qualification as entry level
- Many older workers without formal qualification
- Value of experienced workers high for company, but hard to prove for employee
- Examples of good results with recognition / validation of prior learning
 - Procedures leading to exemptions in formal qualification program: VPL
 - Procedures describing KSC: Experience certificate
- Main challenges in coming years: Mutual trust in procedures and methodologies for assessment and validation of non-formal and informal learning and in quality assurance

Validation of in-company training and work experience?

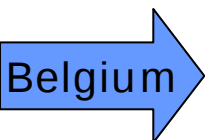
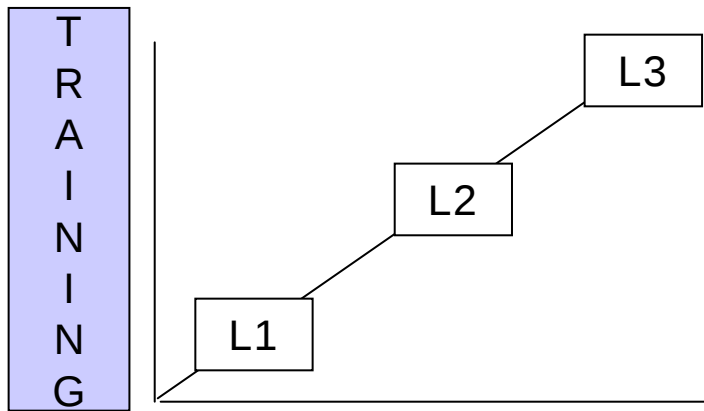
Chance for experienced workers to increase their value?



Validation of in-company training and work experience?

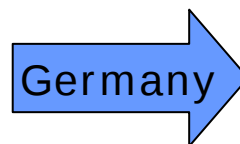
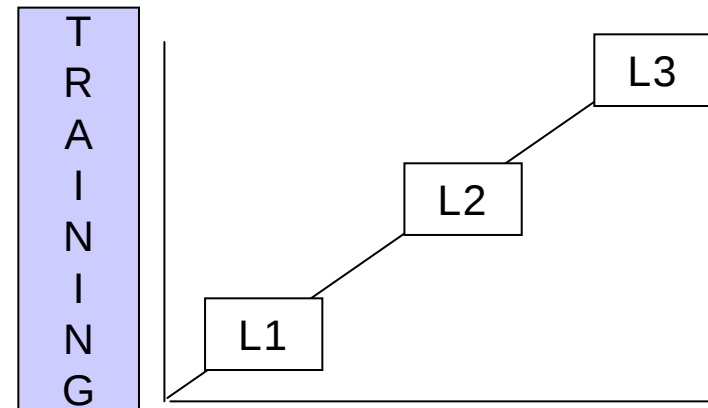
Example BASF

BASF Antwerp



No formal qualification
for operator

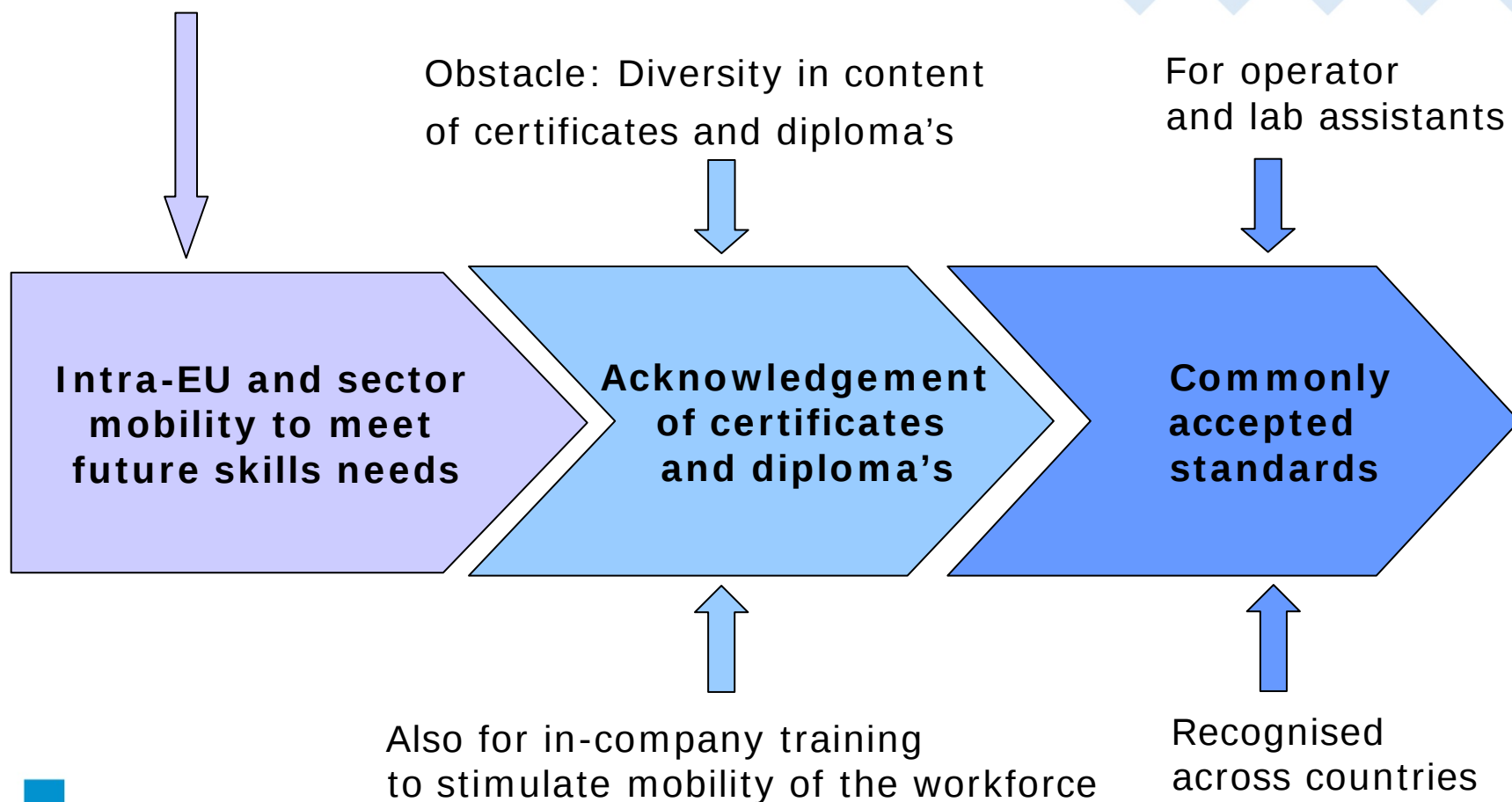
BASF Ludwigshafen



Formal qualification:
Chemikant

Need for commonly accepted standards

EU sector social dialogue chemical industry; ETLL



Need for commonly accepted standards

Sectoral or national?

- How will EU sectoral standards relate to national qualifications?
- Diversity in content of qualifications, similarity in content of required competences.
- No commitment for sectoral qualification framework chemical industry (yet)

**Agree on:
Eurocompetence project**

Use as benchmark for
- national qualifications
- VET programs
- HRM in companies

Qualifications as currencies: 5 Core Themes

Qualifications or Competence

Qualifications
as entry level

**Need for
commonly
accepted
standards**

**Human capital as a
decisive factor for
competitiveness**

**How to sustain
and renew value
of qualifications?**

**Validation of in-company
training and work experience**

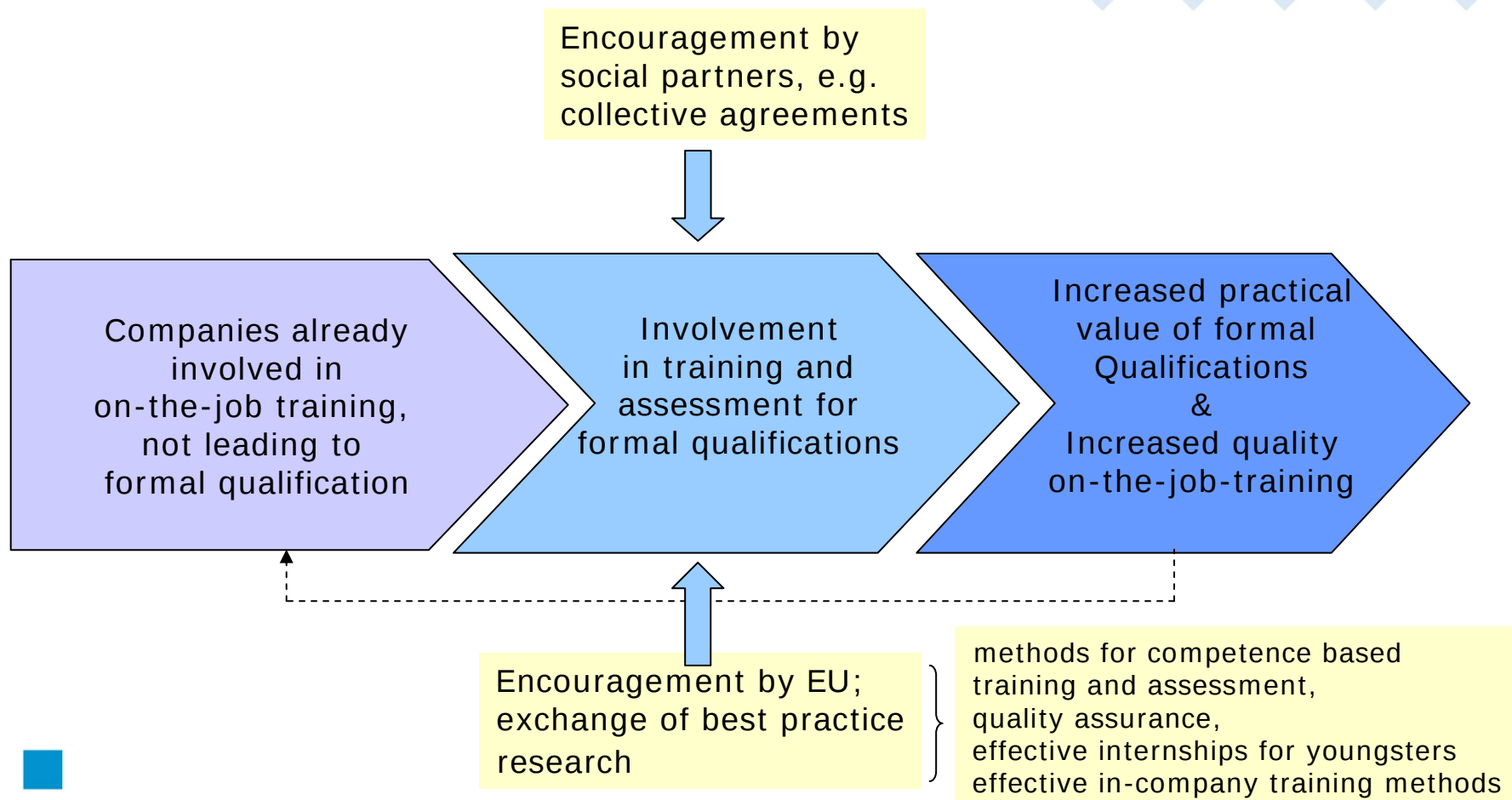
Non-formal
and informal
learning

EU sector
social dialogue



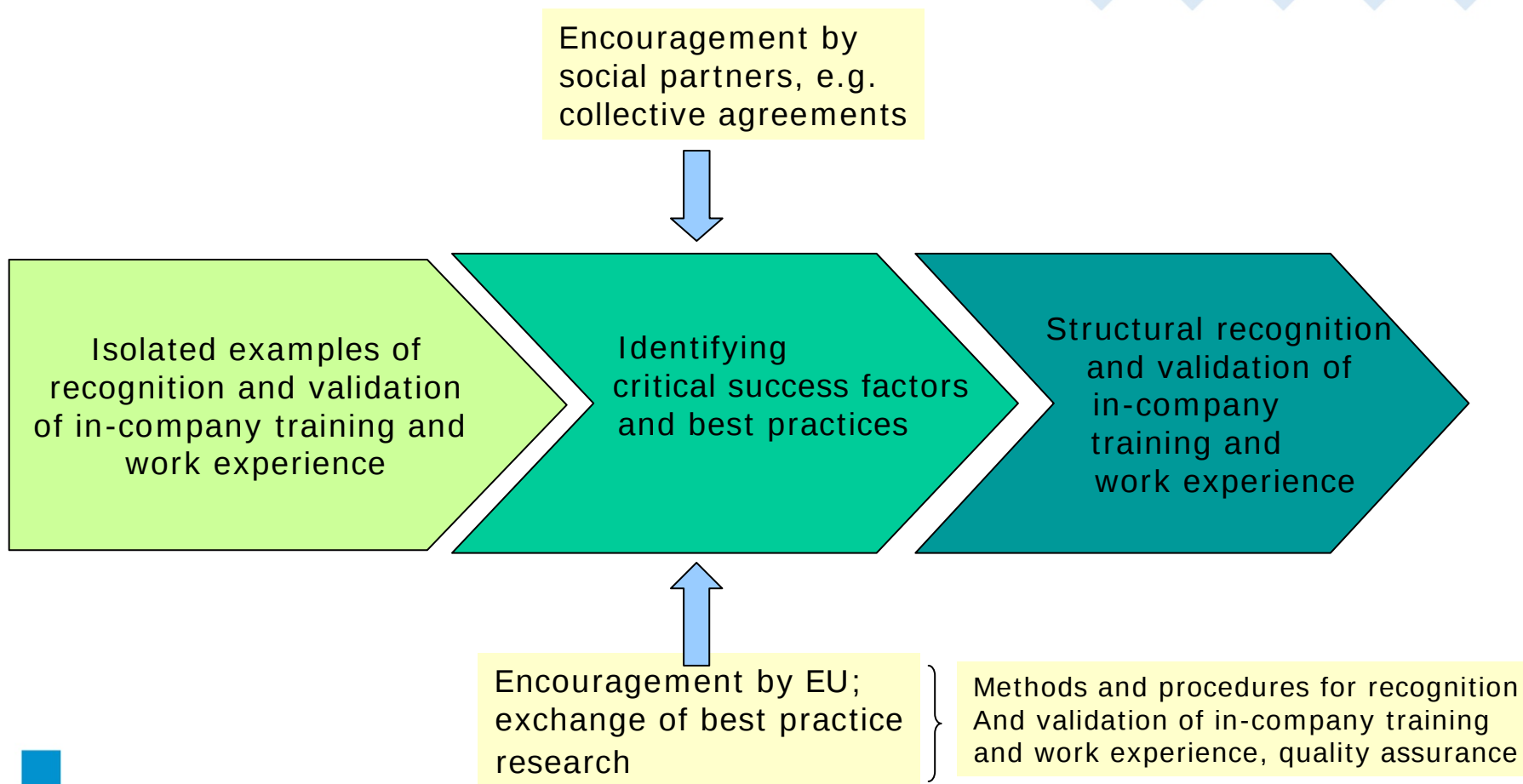
Issues for discussion

Action 1. Promoting active involvement of companies in training and assessment



Issues for discussion

Action 2. Recognition and validation of in-company training and work experience: from incidental to structural





■ EMPOWERING **PEOPLE AND INDUSTRIES**

Thank you for your attention!

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