



The Estonian Experience in Legislating and Implementing Micro-credentials

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Today's topics

- Estonian education system
- HEI and Continuing Education (CE) market in Estonia
- Legal framework for micro-credentials and QA in Estonia
- Micro-credentials implementation
- Q&A



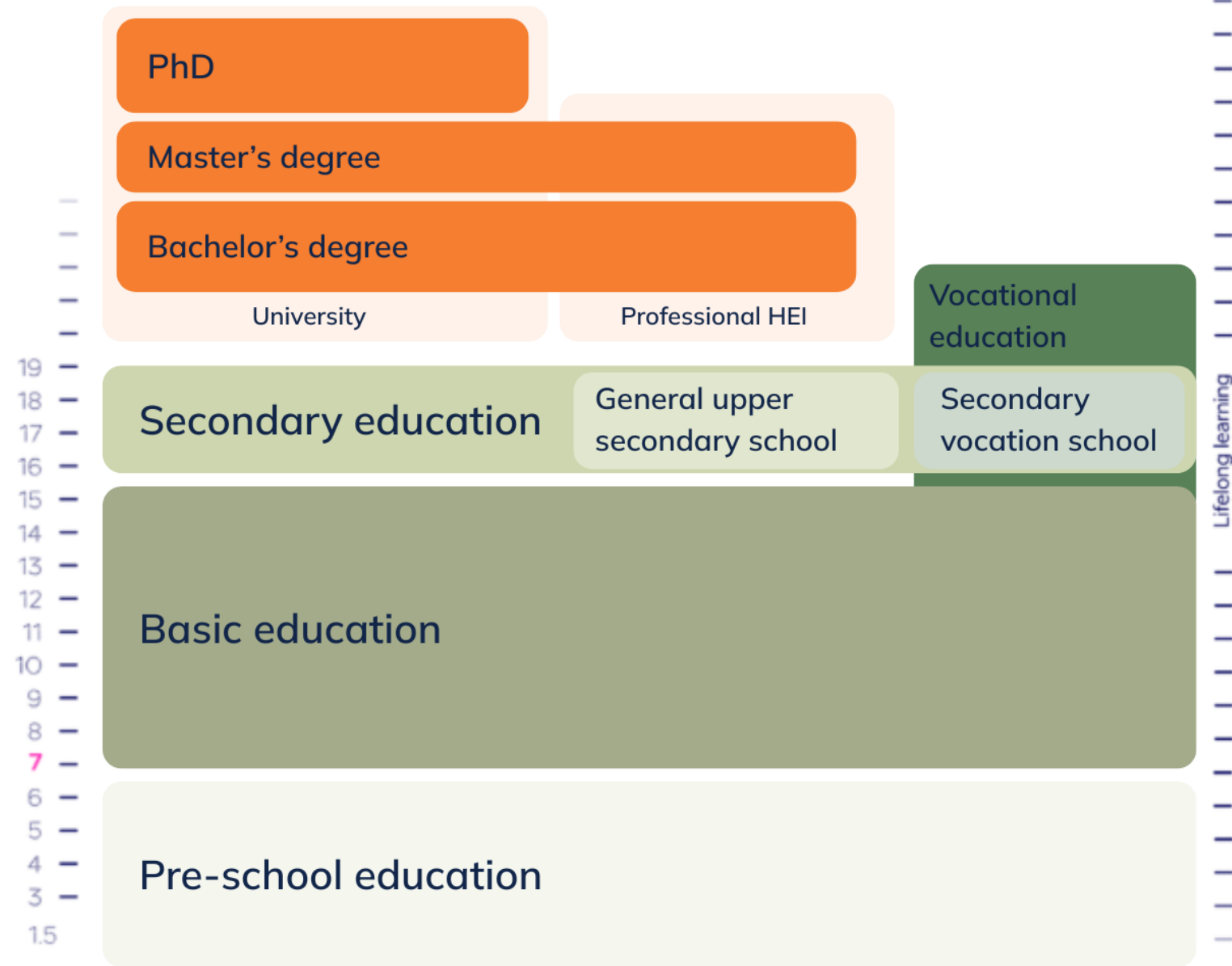
Estonian education system

A brief overview of our system



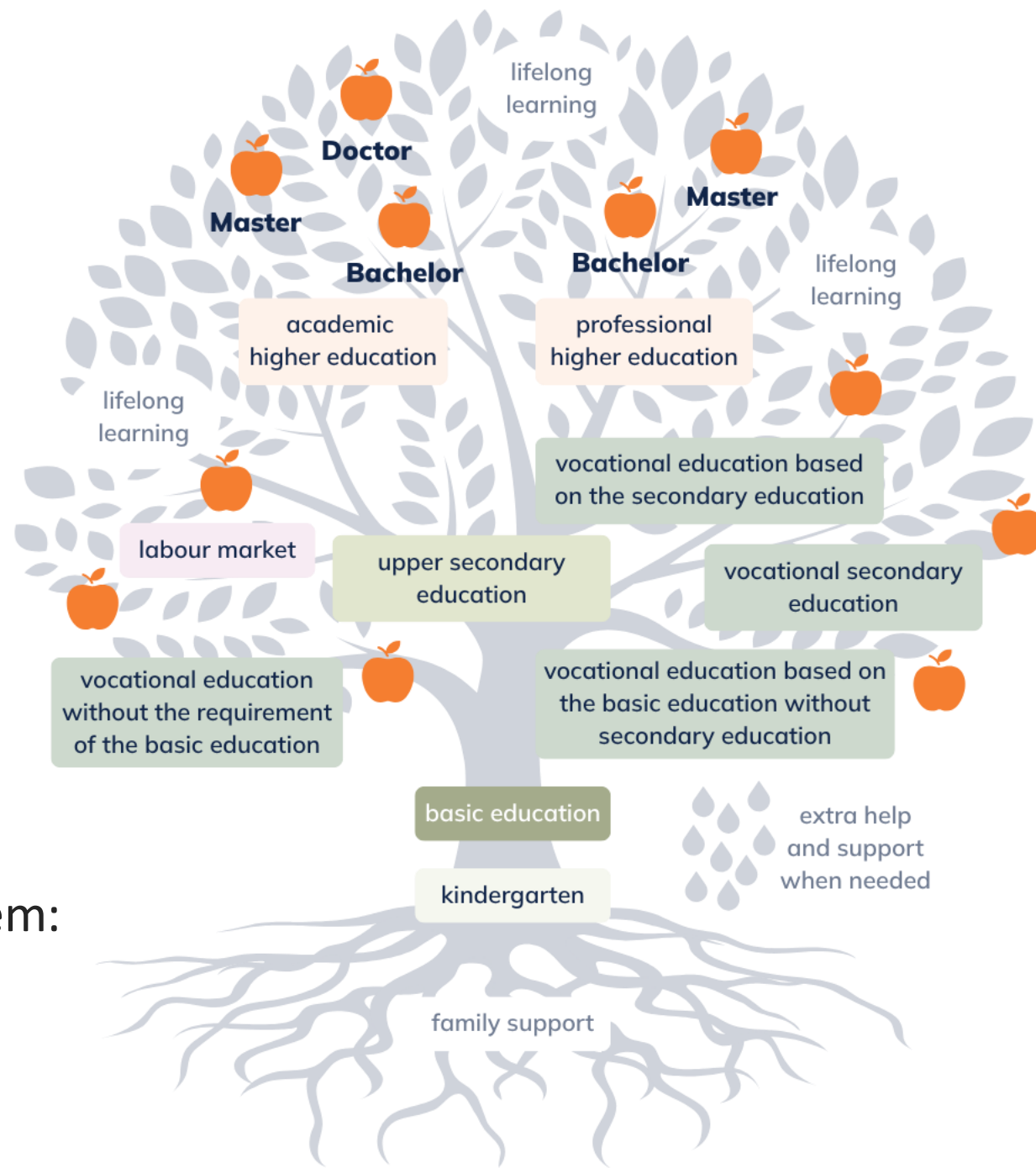
Estonian education in numbers

- **1,3 million** people
- 510 general education schools
- 30 vocational education institutions
- 13 higher education institutions



The strength of the tree depends on its roots

Estonia has a comprehensive school system: all children get the same education from grades 1–9.



Legal framework for Micro-credentials and QA in Estonia



Adult Education Act (1993-2015-2025)

1993

1st Adult
Education Act
(AEA)
established in
Estonia

2015

New AEA
clarified
continuing
education
regulations

2020

Universities
introduced the
concept of
micro-degree
in continuing
education

2021

Study on
implementing
micro-credential
Stakeholder
discussions,
insight
Draft amendment
to AEA prepared

2025

April 1st, renewed
AEA entered into
force
September 1st,
**micro-
credentials**
entered into
force

Scope of Adult Education Act and Standard (2025)

1. Management and development of area of adult education
 2. Requirements for Management of Continuing Education Institutions
 3. Provision of Continuing Education and Disclosure of Information
 4. Learner's Right to Study Leave
 5. Organization of Financing of Continuing Education
 6. State and Administrative Supervision
- Establishes the **requirements** for continuing education curricula,
 - The requirements for documents issued regarding participation in or **completion** of continuing education,
 - List of **curriculum groups** for continuing education (ISCED-F 2013).



Estonian legal background for micro-credentials

Adult Education Act (TäKS)

- **Micro-credential** means the set of acquired, certified and recognised knowledge and skills in continuing education that corresponds to the needs of the labour market or the society.
 - Institutions of professional higher education and universities (hereinafter institutions of higher education) may name **micro-credential** a **micro-degree** if the subjects of the level of higher education make at least one-half of the volume of micro-degree curriculum.
- Sets the necessary requirements for conducting micro-credential studies including the necessity of passing the quality assessment in specific curriculum group.

The Standard of Continuing Education

- Sets the requirements for curricula and documentation.

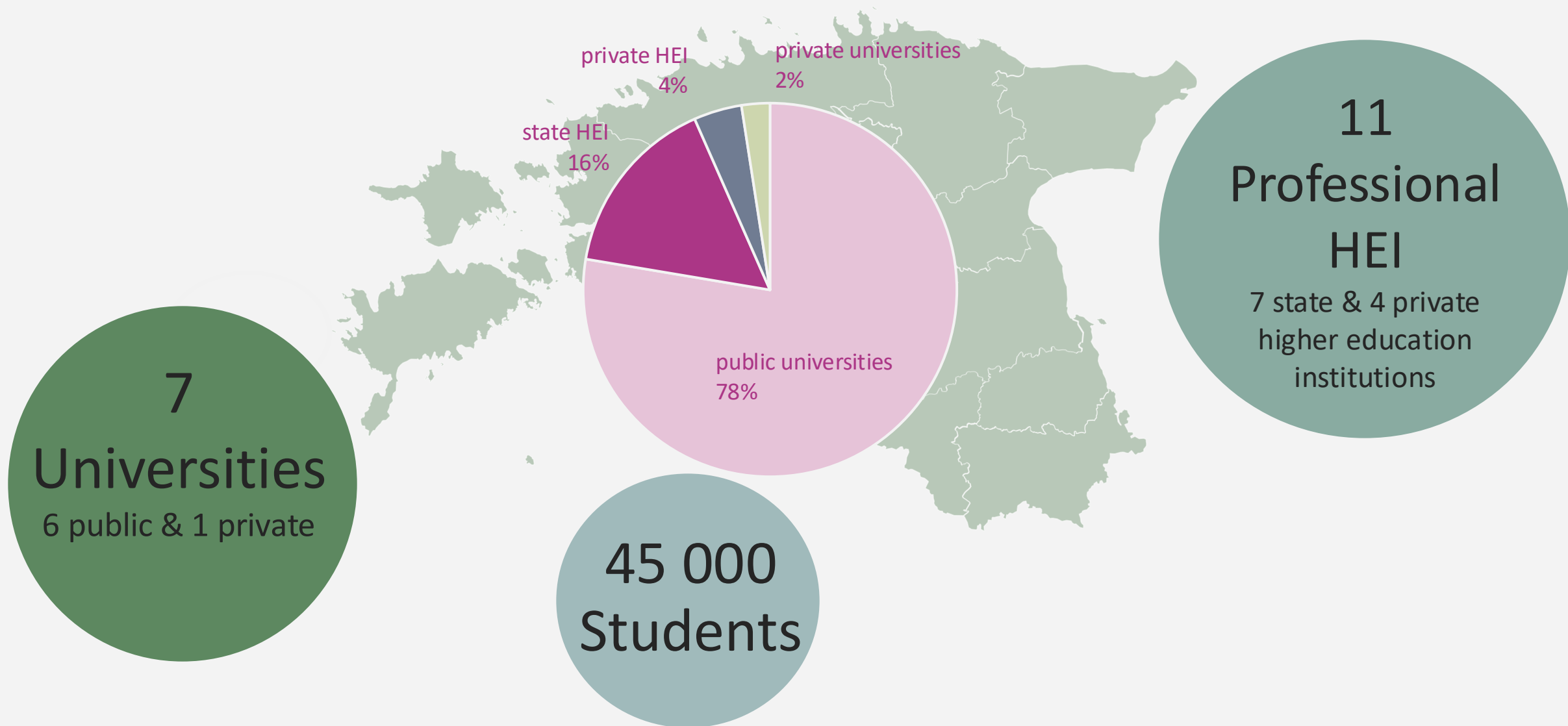
Conditions and procedures for curriculum group based quality assessment of continuing education institution

- Sets the premise of what needs to be assessed during the quality assessment
- Sets that the assessment is conducted by the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA), an independent body within the Education and Youth Board.

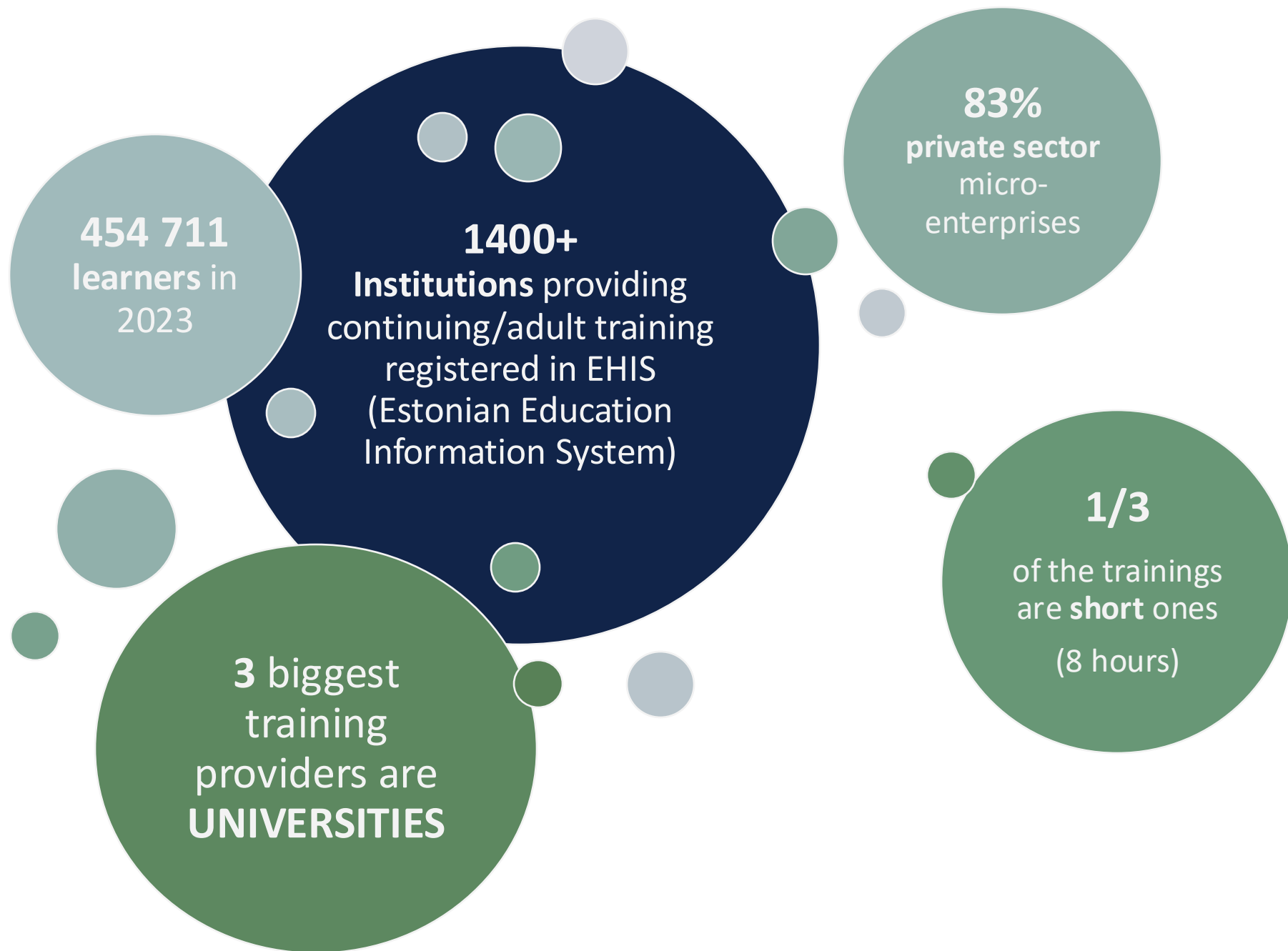
HEI and CE market in Estonia



Higher Education in Estonia



Continuing Education (CE) market in ESTONIA



Lifelong Learning has become a lifestyle in Estonia

Estonians within the 25-64 age group actively participate in learning at almost **double** the rate of the EU average -

21% vs 12%, Eurostat 2022



Micro-credentials implementation

Estonian case study



Estonian micro-credentials

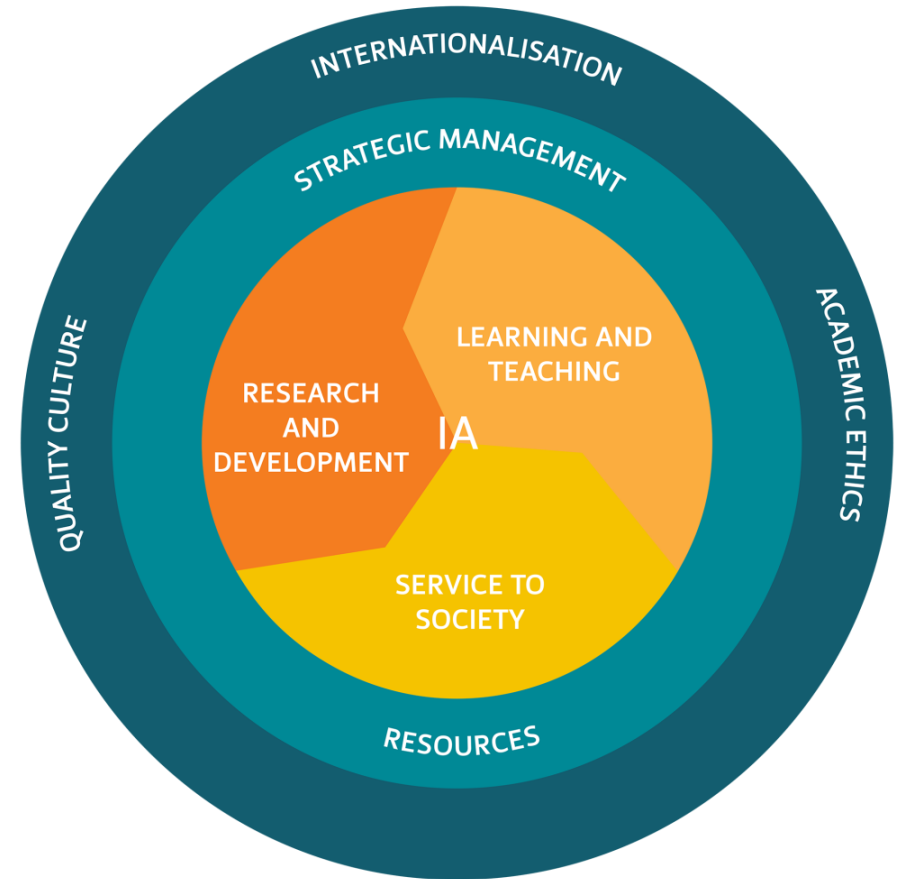


Micro-credentials are regulated by the law: **Adult Education Act and Standard**

- Study volume **5-30 ECTS** (130-780 h), 1 ECTS=26h
- CE courses, **all kind of formats**, no limitations
- **HEI and VET and Private providers**
- Universities using the term „**micro-degree**“ and „**micro-credentials**“
- VET and private using the term „**micro-credentials**“
- Private providers using the term „**micro-credentials**“

Micro-credentials in Estonian HEI

- Not a new concept
- Open University courses, continuing education, LLL courses - decades of experience
- Institutional accreditation model: standard for **Service to Society**
- About 300 Micro Degree programs annually
- 4-year experience on the market

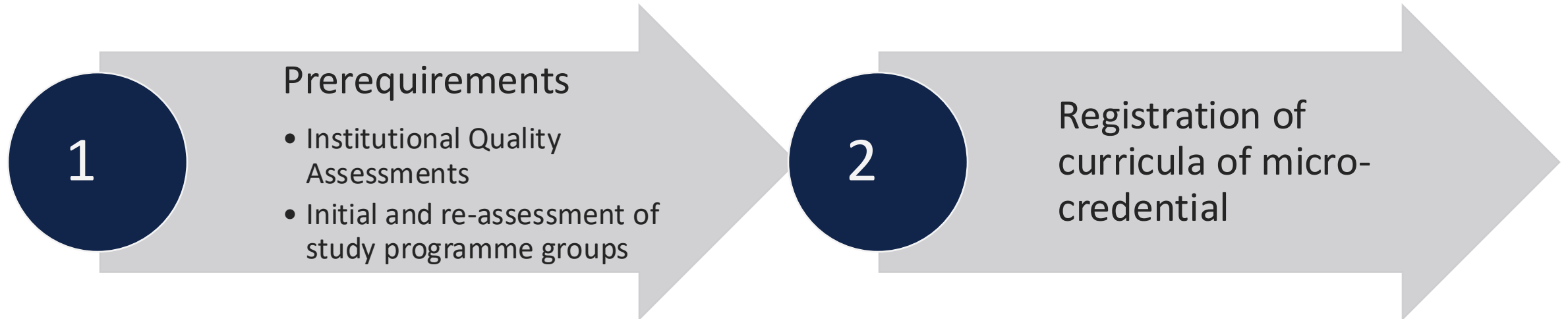


Application process for HEI and VET

in curricula groups where provider has teaching right (assessed IA)



HEI can use term **micro-degree** for courses, at least 50% of degree subjects.



Curriculum group-based quality assessment

- **For continuing education providers** who wish to start offering micro-credential training
- **For formal education institutions (HEI and VET)** that do not have the right to teach in a particular curriculum group where they wish to offer micro-credential training





Application process

Quality assessment is done by Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA).

Process:

- Provider self analyses
- Expert panels assessment

After positive results they have right to apply to register of micro-credentials.



Statistics (11.2025)

Micro-Credential Study Programmes registrations in Estonia (EHIS)



- By institution type:
 - Higher education institutions: 267
 - Vocational education institutions: 15
- Of which:
 - Micro-degree programmes: 230
- Curriculum groups:
 - Management and administration 37
 - Teacher training with subject specialisation 35
 - Software and applications development and analysis 16
 - Environmental sciences 4
 - Environmental protecting technology 3

MC status 2025-26



May-August 2025

Higer Education institutions and **vocational education** actively **register**
(in EHIS) micro-degree and micro-credential courses

September 2025

Initial providers (HEI and VET institutions) begin offering official micro-credentials, 300+ courses are registered in EHIS

August-October 2025

First private training providers are quality assessed by Quaity Agency (HAKA)

Beyond 2026

Expansion of MC courses across Estonian education and training sector

2026

State is building IT solutions for applying process (EHIS) and e-certificates

Thank you!

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