Comparing country approaches
Proposal for a comparative framework

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Comparative framework – aspects for in-depth analysis

Policy aspects

- Aim and expectations of the NQF and ongoing strategic developments

Contextual aspects

- Basic features of NQFs
- Legal and institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement
- Quality assurance
- Transparency of (non-formal) qualifications

Core aspects

- Incorporating non-formal learning and non-formal qualifications in NQFs
- Qualification design and development
- Links between NQFs and validation arrangements

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- What is considered "non-formal" differs between countries

- The understanding of what a qualification is also differ

→ Can we still create a common understanding for the purpose of a comparative analysis?

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Questions for the breakout session

- What is the gain of including non-formal learning/qualifications in NQFs, and make sure that there are validation processes for this type of learning?

- What are we risking by **not** including non-formal learning/qualifications in our NQFs?

- If we imagine a situation where non-formal learning/qualifications are included in NQFs, how do we ensure quality and trust in these qualifications?

If we have time:

- How can we practically enhance the synergies between NQFs and validation arrangements? Please share a good practice example and tell us why you see this as a good example.

- A peak into the future: What does the future look like in your country on this topic?

Is the proposed comparative framework missing any elements?

Your input is important!

In addition to the discusion today, you can send us more detailed feedback after the workshop:

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Including non-formal qualifications in NQFs

Non-formal inclusion

- Are non-formal learning/non-formal qualifications included in the NQF? If not, why? Are some sub-sectors (of the "non-formal" sector) being left out/excluded, for example companies, volunteer organisations, etc?

- What are the benefits of an inclusive framework vs a non-inclusive?

- Is there a national strategy/plan to include non-formal qualifications in the NQF in the future?

Levelling of non-formal qualifications

- If non-formal qualifications are included, what are the criteria? How are they included? How is the "levelling"-process and procedures organised?

- Who decides on the level? What factors are considered when deciding level?

- What is the "smallest" qualification that can be included?

- What is the official body that decides, which qualifications can be included and levelled in the NQF? Who is involved in the process of validating the qualification before/during a "levelling" procedure?

- Who is allowed/authorised to have qualifications included in NQFs? Who is allowed/authorised to have non-formal qualifications included in NQFs? Who can apply for "levelling"?

Lifespan of and validity of levelling decisions

- How long is a levelling decision valid?

- Is there a difference of validity between formal and non-formal qualifications?

- Are there clear procedures for revising qualifications? How often are the learning outcomes revised during the lifespan of a qualification?

- How often/how much can the learning outcomes in a qualification be changed before it should be considered a new qualification?

- Can a decision of qualification level be revoked? If so, when/why?

Qualification design and development

Who develops/designs non-formal qualifications

- Which actors/stakeholders are involved in developing non-formal qualifications?

Standards behind the qualification

- What types of standards, for example national occupational standards, training standards etc. are behind qualifications?

- What type of bodies are responsible for designing the standards? Are the standards developed in cooperation with relevant stakeholders?

How are non-formal qualifications designed

- Are there examples of qualification dossiers/files? What information is included in the dossier/file? Are the criteria in the EQF recommendation annex VI met?

- Are the qualifications modular and are part-qualifications included in the NQF? Are part qualifications given an individual level?

- Are micro-credentials included in the NQF?

Use of learning outcomes in validation

- Are assessment criteria described in learning outcomes?

Use of learning outcomes for designing non-formal qualifications

- Are qualifications/standards behind qualifications described in learning outcomes?

- Are there national guidelines for writing learning outcomes?

- Are the learning outcomes included in the diploma/certificate/etc? Are diploma/certificate supplements or other supporting documents used?

- Who oversees developing and formulating the learning outcomes in non-formal learning?

- Is there stakeholder cooperation in terms of learning outcome development? If yes, how?

- How are the learning outcomes quality assured?

Links between NQFs and validation arrangements

Linking validation arrangements with NQFs

- Are VPL arrangements seen a normal route to qualifications? Are formal qualifications open for VPL in general? Is that limited to specific NQF levels?

- Are full qualifications awarded through validation?

- Are part-qualifications awarded through validation? Is it possible for learners to accumulate part-qualifications towards a full qualification?

- Is there an individual (legal, subjective) right to validation linked with the NQF?

- Is the same "standard" being used when validating prior learning as for awarding qualifications through a formal pathway?

Awarding of non-formal qualifications

- Is it possible for individuals to be awarded non-formal qualifications through validation?

- Is it possible for individuals to be awarded parts of non-formal qualifications through validation?

Qualification design and development

Purpose

- What is the overall purpose of the implementation of a National Qualifications Framework?

- What is the overall aim of the NQF?

- Was the decision to implement an NQF top-down or bottom-up?

- What was the interest from stakeholders outside of formal education?

Expectations

- What do countries expect from their NQFs?

- What is the intended effect/result?

What is a qualification?

- Is there a common definition of what a qualification is?

- Is it a specific definition linked with the NQF?

- Is it aligned with the definition in the EQF recommendation?

Strategic developments and future plans

- Are there foreseeable strategic developments in terms of VPL and linking non-formal qualifications including micro-credentials to the NQF?

- Is the NQF seen as (or used as) a driver for enhancing the possibilities/uptake of validation in general or specifically for non-formal learning? If yes, how? Or was validation a driver for the NQF?

- Are there developments in terms of strengthening VPL in the non-formal learning sector?

  – Are there strategic developments?

  – Are there projects?

  – Is there grassroot development?