

Implementation of the National Qualification Framework in Latvia - lessons learnt

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Development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework (NQF)

- As of 2015, 152 countries took part in the development and implementation of the qualification frameworks and creation of the national qualification systems
- The process of NQF development and implementation requires active participation of the social partners, common understanding and application of unified terminology

National qualification system

The combination of legal and institutional regulation mechanisms for demand and supply for qualifications of specialists on behalf of the labor market includes the following:

- **National qualification framework** is a structured description of qualification levels recognized in the labor market
- **Sectoral qualification frameworks** are structured descriptions of qualification levels recognized in the sector. It is a list of labor activities (professions) and qualifications, where professions are grouped by areas of professional activity and levels of qualification
- **Professional standards** and procedures (rules and mechanisms) of their development and recognition (registration)
- Independent **system of certification**
- **Educational standards**

National Qualification Framework in the National qualifications system



Conceptual framework of the NQF (1)

Qualification is the official result of the procedure of assessment and recognition of the *learning outcomes* defined by an authorized institution in accordance with a certain standard (the European Union recommendations on EQF, 2008)

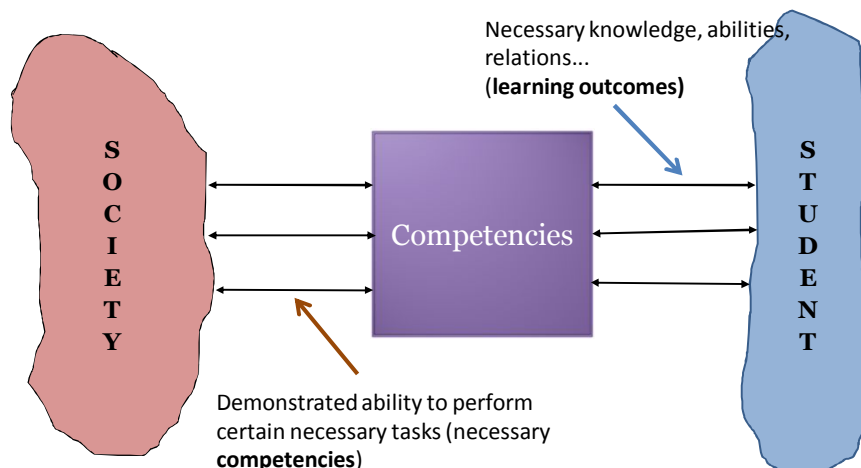
Main elements,
which form the qualification:



Conceptual framework of the NQF (2)

- Qualification is measured by learning outcomes
- **Learning outcomes** are the validation of what a human being knows, understands and is able to do after the completion of education (formal, informal or spontaneous)
- Learning outcomes are **common theoretical denominator**, which underlies all the European Union policy instruments in the area of education
- **Competency** is the ability to perform professional tasks and demonstrate obtained knowledge, abilities, skills and relations

Competencies and learning outcomes



The main objective of the NQF

- ❖ Ensuring understanding and **compatibility** of qualifications and their **transparency**
- ❖ Creation of the **unified standards of education quality**
- ❖ Facilitating the **mobility** of students and professors
- ❖ Ensuring the **internationalization** of education and creation of a single educational area
- ❖ **Streamlining** the process of obtaining life – long education, ensuring expanded access to obtaining qualifications: continuity and official recognition of qualifications
- ❖ Creation of the **methodological framework** for the development of professional and educational standards
- ❖ Creation of the foundation for justified classification of existing or new qualifications
- ❖ **Creation of an opportunity to design an individual educational trajectory**, changing it both vertically and horizontally

Bologna process in Latvia

- Declaration was signed in 1999
- Bachelor's and master's degrees since 1993
- Mandatory supplement to diploma introduced since 2004
- Credit points: national credit points
- Quality assurance: accreditation since 1995

Cycles:

- Short cycle: 2 – 3 years, approx. 120 – 180 ECTS
- First cycle: bachelor, 3 – 4 years, 180 – 240 ECTS
- Second cycle: master, 1 – 2 years, 90 – 120 ECTS
- Third cycle: doctor, 3 – 4 years

5 professional levels of qualifications since 1999

1. Theoretical and practical readiness to perform **simple tasks** in a certain area of activity
2. Theoretical and practical readiness giving an opportunity to perform qualified **work of an implementer**
3. Enhanced theoretical and professional training giving an opportunity to perform the **duties of an implementer**, which include **planning and organization of performed work**
4. Theoretical and practical readiness to perform **complicated work of an implementer** as well as **organize and manage** the work of other specialists
5. **The highest qualification of a specialists** in a certain sector giving an opportunity to plan and conduct scientific research in the relevant sector

Creation of the Latvian qualification framework

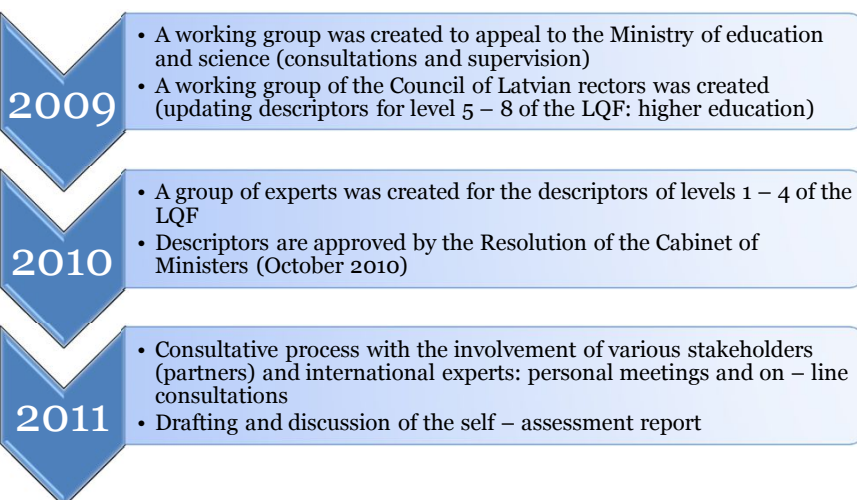
- In 2008 Latvia supported the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (April 23, 2008) on the creation of the European qualification framework in the area of life – long learning, to ensure human development, competitiveness, employment and social cohesion of the population as a whole as well as develop and assess acquired knowledge, abilities and skills
- Since 2008 the Center of academic information has been awarded the status of the National coordination center (NCP) for the implementation of the European qualification framework

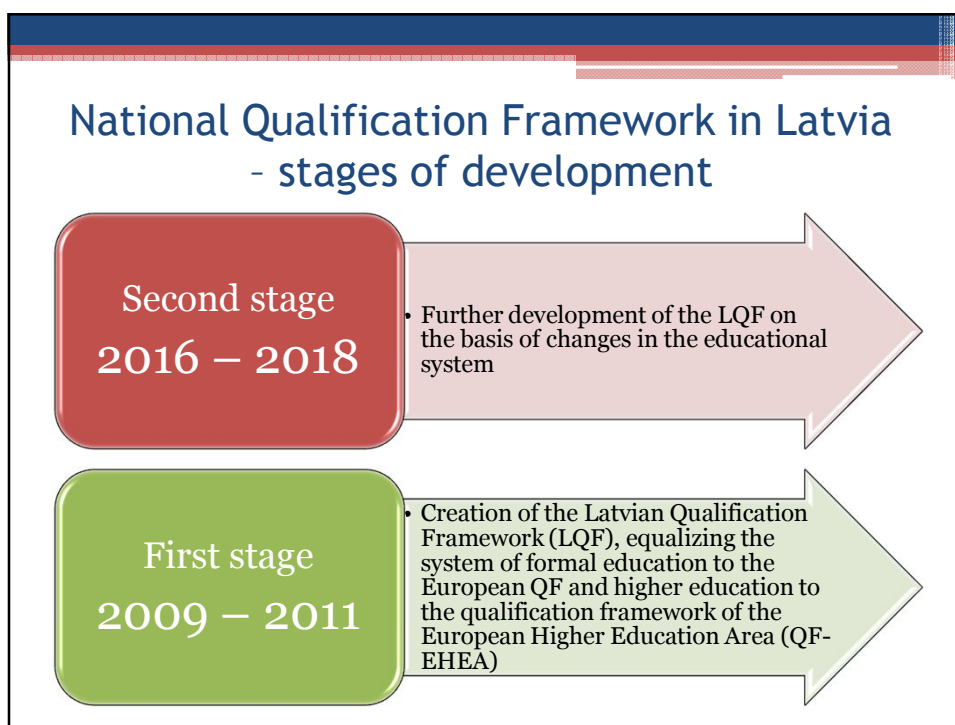
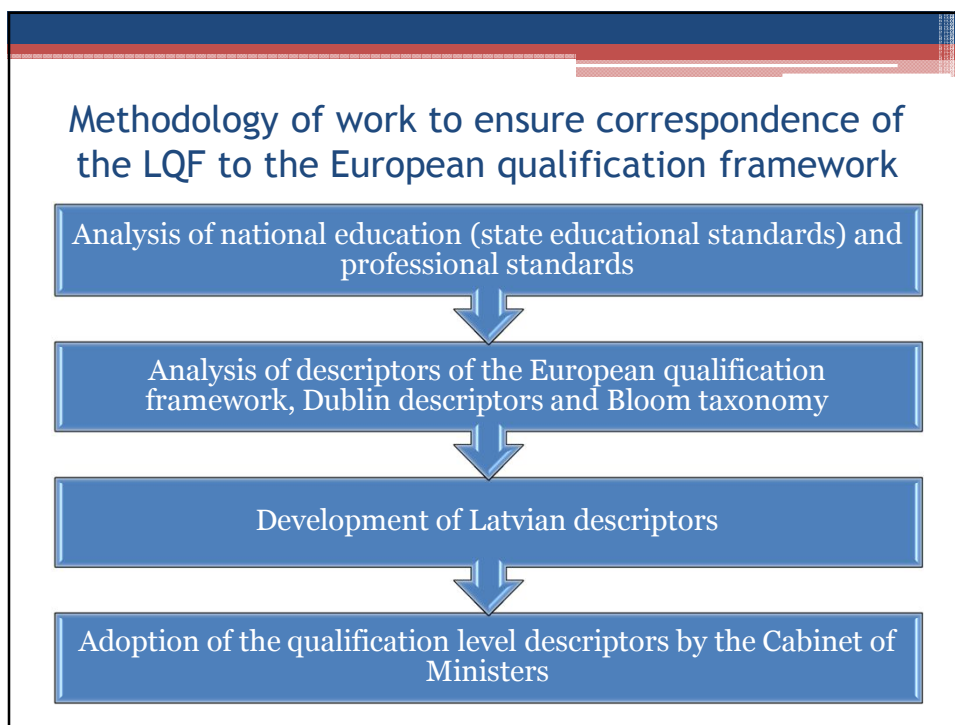
Attracting social partners

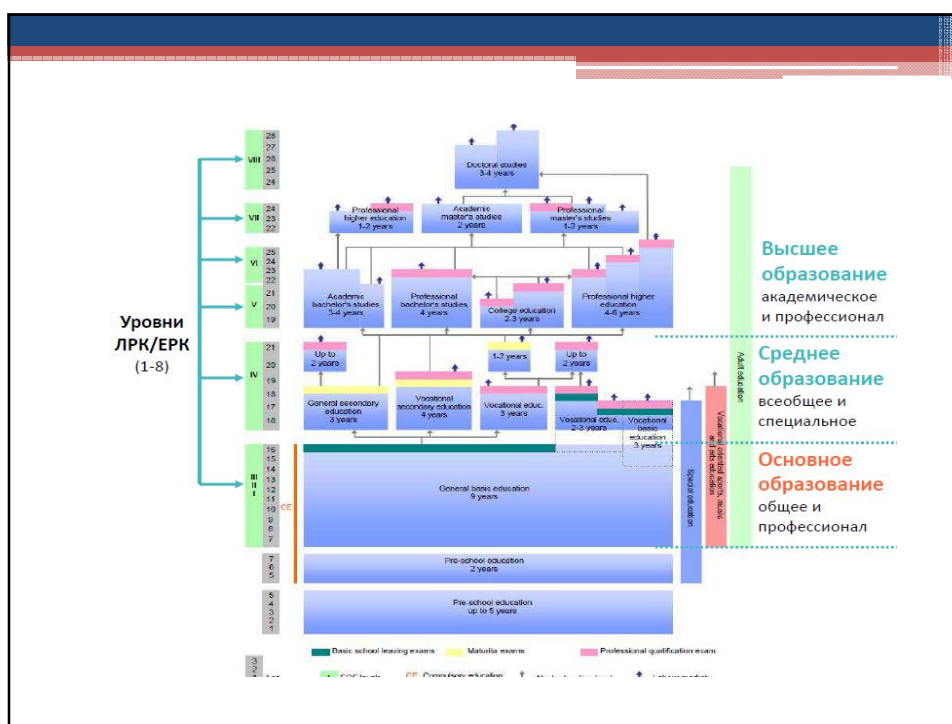
The leading group includes (2009):

- The Ministry of education and science
- The Latvian chamber of crafts
- The Council on higher education
- The Center of academic information (NCP, ENIC/NARIC)
- The Higher education quality assessment center
- The Union of free trade unions of Latvia
- The Confederation of Latvian employers
- The Association of colleges
- The State service of education quality
- The Latvian association of local self-governance bodies
- The Latvian Council of rectors
- The Latvian union of students
- The National Centre for Education

Process of qualification framework development





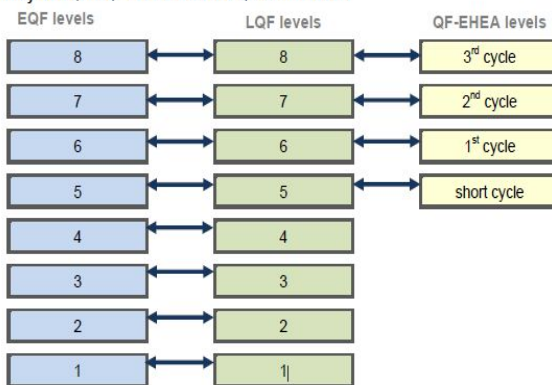


The table of qualifications adopted in the LQF / EQF since October 2010, approved by the Latvian Cabinet of ministers

Documents on education in Latvia (qualifications)	Level
Certificate of general secondary education Diploma of secondary vocational education	4
Diploma of higher vocational education 1 st level (college, 2 – 3 years of studies)	5
Bachelor's diploma Professional bachelor's diploma Diploma of higher vocational education (2 nd level of higher vocational education, not less than 4 years of studies)	6
Master's diploma Professional master's diploma Diploma of higher vocational education (2 nd level of higher vocational education, not less than 5 years of studies)	7
Doctor's diploma	8

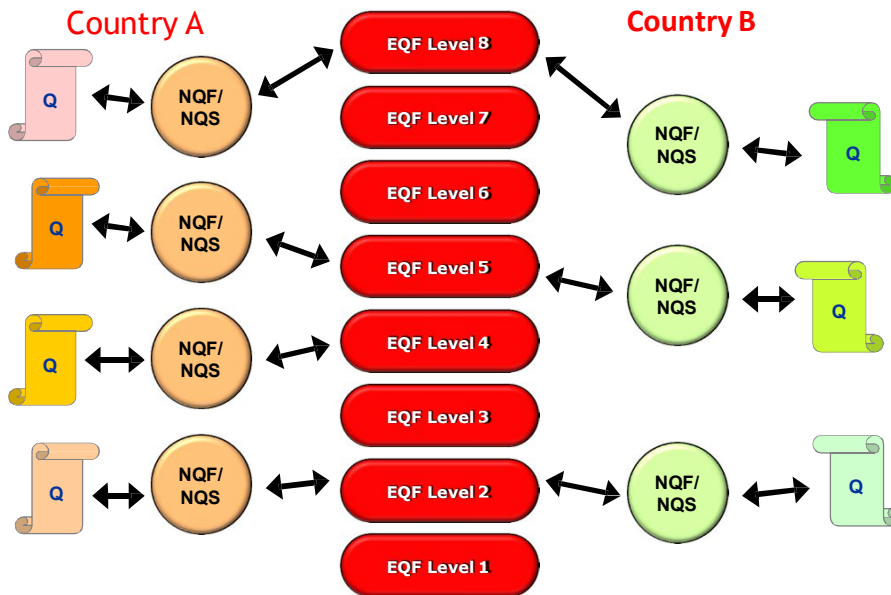
Comparison of the levels of LQF / EQF with the levels of the European Higher Education Area

The compatibility of LQF/EQF levels with the QF-EHEA levels



Country A

Country B



Normative foundation of the Latvian qualification framework (1)

Amendments to the Law on education. Definition of the LQF, description of the LQF levels

Latvian qualification framework is system of eight levels which includes all degrees of education (fundamental education, secondary education and higher education), all types of education (universal education, vocational education, academic education), as well as professional qualifications acquired outside the system of formal education

Descriptions of eight levels are based on *learning outcomes*, which have three distinctive features:

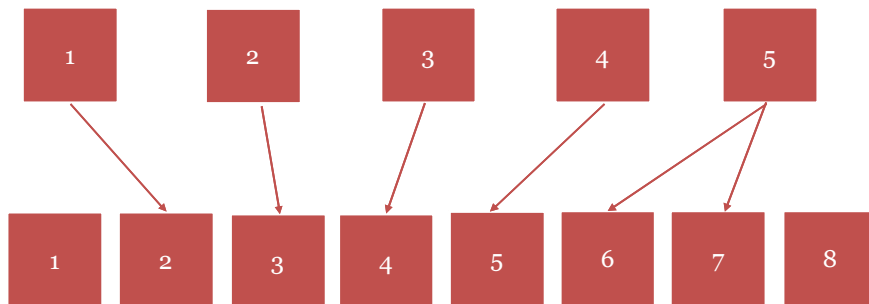
- Knowledge (knowledge and understanding)
- Skills (ability to apply knowledge, communication, general skills)
- Competencies (analysis, synthesis and assessment)

Normative foundation of the Latvian Qualification Framework (2)

Amendments to the Law on vocational education define the following:

- Correspondence of 5 levels of professional qualifications to the levels of Latvian qualification framework
- Starting from **January 1, 2017**, the documents recognized by the state which certify obtained vocational education and acquired professional qualification, **should indicate the level of the Latvian qualification framework**

Correspondence of 5 levels of professional qualifications to the Latvian qualification framework Amendments to the Law on vocational education

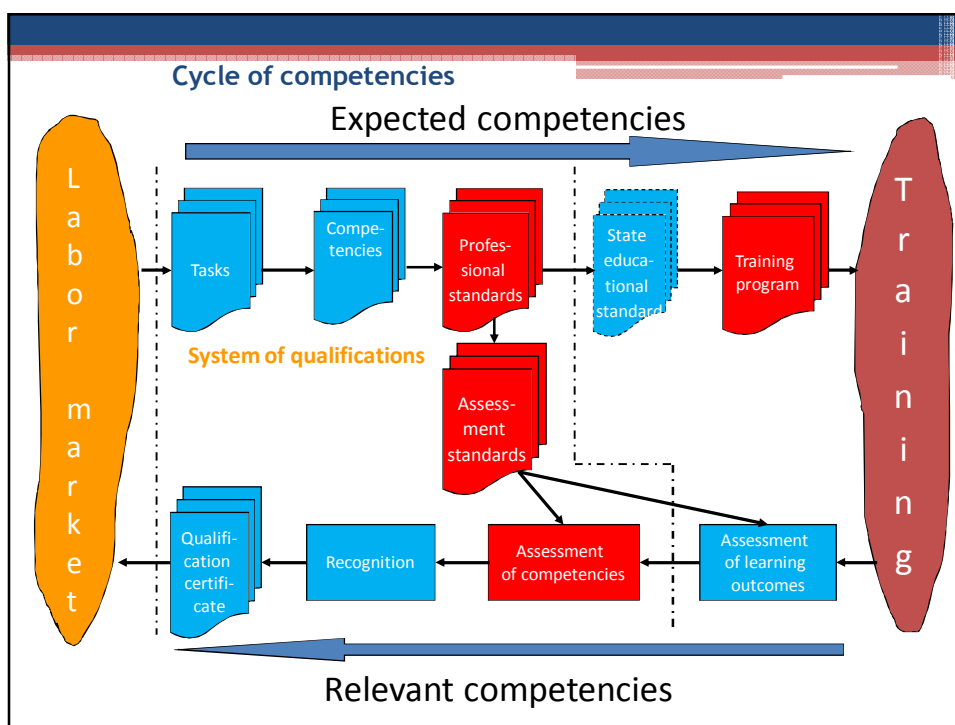


Development of sectoral qualification frameworks

**European Fund Project “Creation of sectoral professional qualification system and increased efficiency and quality of vocational education”
(December 1, 2010 – November 30, 2015)**

- **Establishment of 12 Sectoral expert councils** in industry (12 councils: tourism, textile, construction, electronics etc.)
- **Conducting research in 14 sectors** of economy and establishment of a professional structure for each sector (main profession, specialization, related profession)
- **Development of sectoral qualification frameworks for 14 sectors**
- **Development of new professional standards** or updating the existing ones (80)
- **Development of new elastic modular programs (56)**, based on competencies and learning outcomes (30)
- **Creation of a system recognizing competencies acquired informally**

Example of
profession map for the textile, garments and
leather items sector
(by qualification levels)



Problems in development and implementation of the NQF in Latvia

Problems	Positive experience in their solution
Formation of social dialogue	Establishment of Sectoral expert councils, their role is enshrined in the law
Irregular participation of stakeholders	Cooperation of all stakeholders
Varied understanding of qualification levels among sectoral specialists and other users	Development of methodological materials on the application of the NQF, which explain generalized formulation of descriptors
Absence of a unified approach towards qualifications in one sector	Development of a sectoral qualification framework based on the NQF
The education system is not ready to transfer to competencies – based approach	Improved qualification of educational staff
Inadequate normative framework	The normative framework is improved: the Law on education and the Law on vocational education were amended

Lessons learnt (1)

1. NQF is of **strategic** importance for the development of the educational system
2. Development and implementation of the NQF forms **legal and methodological basis** for fundamental changes in the system of education and the national qualification system
3. NQF acts as a **catalyst** of reforms in the educational system, but quick development of the NQS will not be understood without national policy measures
4. Development of the NQF is a long **process** aligned with the long – term modernization of the educational system on the basis of the labor market needs

Lessons learnt (2)

5. Development of the NQF envisages the development of additional **components** and **conditions**
6. The development process will require **time** for the elaboration of the concept, consultation with stakeholders, establishment of institutions and capacity
7. **Sectoral approach** is very important. It is necessary to develop Sectoral Qualification Frameworks on the basis of research in the main sectors, which will help determine the inter – linkage between qualifications by levels and create various trajectories of modular educational programs

Lessons learnt (3)

8. **The involvement of stakeholders** is the key factor. **Sectoral expert councils** will play the main role in this process
9. Development of the NQF requires the presence of a well considered **conceptual framework**
10. It is necessary to develop the **methodological framework** of the process
11. Common understanding and the application of unified terminology is important in the process of development and implementation
12. Specific attention should be paid to the quality of **assessment** and **certification** processes
13. Development of NQF and SQF based on competencies (learning outcomes) requires **change in the paradigm of education**



Thank you for your attention!