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Template 4: National Qualifications Framework

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Country:	**TURKEY**

Developments concerning the National Qualifications Framework

Some aspects to take into account (if applicable):

- National Qualifications System;
- Structure of the NQF;
- Legislation regulating the NQF;
- Descriptors of the qualification levels in the NQF;
- Correspondence between national qualification levels and EQF levels.

1. QUALIFICATIONS IN THE TURKISH EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Designated Institutions are responsible for the legislation, procedures and coordination required for the determination, description and provision of qualifications to be included in the education and training system. Designated institutions ensure that qualifications required by the business world and society are described based on "learning outcomes" approach according to some specific criteria and achieved by the individuals. Designated institutions include primarily the MoNE, CoHE and VQA. However, the legislation provides also for other designated institutions8.

If the individual succeeds in achieving the learning outcomes of the qualification he/she desires to achieve as a result of assessment and evaluation, training providers and certification bodies authorized by the designated institutions take over responsibility for the certification of relevant qualification. Training providers primarily comprise of education and training providers and schools under the MoNE, providers of higher education (universities, higher vocational schools and institutes etc.), while certification bodies primarily comprise of VQA authorized certification bodies with TS EN ISO/IEC 170249 accreditation. However, there are some other certification bodies in Turkey and TQF implementation will include dedicated studies to determine such bodies.

2. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)

The law of Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) was accepted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in September 2006 and was published in the official gazette on 07 October 2006. The establishment of VQA will achieve a system that will enable mobility among academic and vocational fields appropriate for assessment at all levels, grading and certification based on the accepted occupational standards. VQA has two major responsibilities that are crucial to the strengthening of the relationships of the TVET system to employment:

- VQA is expected to develop occupational standards (OS) based on actual competencies required by the labour market. These OS will shape the development of training standards to be used by all training institutions in the country. They will provide TVET schools with much needed objectives in terms of competencies-based curricula. To the extent that social partners are involved in this task their commitment to the TVET system will increase and the relevance of TVET to employment will improve.
- VQA also has important responsibilities in the area of student assessment and certification. It will contribute to overcome a major weakness of the Turkish TVET system, namely the lack of standardised mechanisms to assess and control the quality and the relevance to employment of the learning process that takes place in training institutions.
- The European Qualification Framework (EQF) is being used as a reference to develop the Turkish Qualification Framework (TQF). TQF will encompass all levels of education including adult learning, initial TVET, secondary education, teacher training and higher education.

2.1 The Basis for Turkish Qualifications Framework

Qualifications awarded in vocational and general education and training programmes including primary, secondary and higher education, as well as those achieved in other learning environments are described in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF), which is the National Qualifications Framework of Turkey, which is

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designed to be in harmony with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). TQF covers all quality assured qualifications achieved in all learning environments at all levels within Turkey's education and training system.

A qualification is defined in the European Qualifications Framework as;

"Qualification means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards."

(Recommendation 2008/C 111/01, 2008)

In Turkey the qualification is defined by the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) Law no 55445. This definition provides that a "qualification" shall refer to;

"The individual's set of knowledge, skills and competence recognized by the competent authority".

(VQA Law, article 2 - (1) h)

The two definitions are not conflicting, which indicates that qualifications to be included in the TQF must be developed based on learning outcomes and TQF must be designed based on this structure.

3. THE STRUCTURE OF TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Scope of Turkish Qualifications Framework

Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) has been designed as a single integrated structure allowing for the classification of Turkish qualifications to accommodate all quality assured qualifications achieved at general, vocational and academic education and training programmes including primary, secondary and higher education, as well as those achieved through other means of learning. TQF primarily includes qualifications awarded under Ministry of National Education (MoNE) mandate, national qualifications under Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) mandate, higher education qualifications awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), and other qualifications awarded under the mandate of some designated institutions. Many vocational qualifications which are available and will be required in the Turkish labour market are covered by TQF under VQA responsibility. TQF includes MoNE and VQA qualification systems and Turkish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF-HE).

3.2 The Design of Turkish Qualifications Framework

There are various quite distinct qualifications widely acknowledged and utilised by the education and training and business community in Turkey. In addition to that, VQA supervises the development of national qualifications which are in harmony with the international trends and EQF approach. The aim of providing a single structure to accommodate qualifications developed with various approaches has led to many challenges concerning TQF design. These challenges have been taken into account in TQF design so as to achieve TQF objectives.

TQF design provides for a single integrated structure to describe and classify all quality assured qualifications so that links among qualifications can be determined. TQF offers a reference framework for existing qualifications.

TQF implementation will also allow for the following;

a) Development of new qualifications,

b) Recognition of prior learning,

c) Mutual recognition and comparison with international qualifications.

TQF has been designed to encompass all qualifications described at each level and achieved at consecutive phases of school education as well as those achieved through experience based learning and individual learning that takes place at the work place or other non-formal and informal learning environments. TQF allows for the development of qualifications that will enable the appropriate recognition of learning outcomes to be achieved by individuals with special needs.

TQF structure comprises of levels and level descriptors. Levels are described through level descriptors and supported by qualification types. Qualification types are described through qualification type specifications.

4. THE LEGISLATION

Turkey enacted many laws and secondary legislation to regulate its education and training system. However, many of them had entered into force before TQF was prepared. Thus, they need to be harmonised with the legislation on TQF. The institutions designated for the relevant laws and secondary legislation need to

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harmonise their legislation with the principles and procedures provided in the TQF regulation once it enters into force. However, it may be difficult to amend those laws that do not comply with the principles of TQF regulation.

Once TQF implementation starts, institutions designated for the quality assurance of qualifications will have to regulate some issues, which will require the legislation to be amended.

Legislation requiring vocational and technical education and training at all levels comply with National Occupational Standards and National Qualifications, and the legislation on equivalence of different qualifications at the same level and transfer among qualifications may need to be updated or new regulations may be required.

New regulations may be required to harmonise the existing legislation with new areas of development concerning quality assurance, recognition of prior learning and informal learning, calculation of qualifications' work load and credit accumulation and transfer.

5. LEVELS AND LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

TQF has been designed to comprise of eight levels. Each level of TQF has been described based on the learning outcomes required for the achievement of qualifications at a given level. The set of statements about learning outcomes, defined in terms of knowledge, skill and competence, describing each level is the level descriptor. Level descriptors constitute the core of TQF, and they provide the basis for all other structures and instruments within TQF.

Level descriptors are the set of instruments used for describing learning outcomes at a given level, associating the qualifications with the relevant level, and for referencing TQF with international frameworks.

Learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skill and competence; thus, level descriptors are organised based on these three components of learning outcomes. For each of the eight levels, there are descriptors including set of statements for these three components. TQF levels are defined without reference to any particular field of learning. There are common minimum learning outcomes for different qualifications at the same TQF level.

TQF Level 1 qualifications describe qualifications concerning the fulfillment of basic duties, while Level 8 qualifications describe qualifications concerning innovative working and learning, solving emerging complicated problems using methods and approaches under various disciplines. TQF level descriptors are provided below.

Table 1

Turkish Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors

KNOWLEDGE Under the scope of TQF "knowledge" is defined in general as theoretical and/or practical knowledge involving the comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to an area of work or learning. **SKILL** Under the scope of TQF "skill" is defined in general as "utilisation of knowledge", "problem solving", "transferring knowledge and skills to others" which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning. **COMPETENCE** Under the scope of TQF "competence" is defined as utilisation of knowledge and skills in an area of work and/or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination and satisfaction of learning requirements.		
LEVEL 1	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess basic knowledge to perform simple activities in line with the given instructions in familiar environments of learning or work.
	SKILL	Perform routine activities in line with the instructions using the basic knowledge in familiar environments of learning or work.
	COMPETENCE	Take limited responsibility to perform routine activities under guidance and supervision.
LEVEL 2	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess basic theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge related to the standard tools, instruments and methods required to perform clearly defined activities related to an area of work or learning.
	SKILL	Utilise the knowledge required to perform clearly defined activities related to an area of work or learning

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		and to work out solutions for the problems foreseen.
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility in the performance of clearly defined activities under guidance and/or supervision, and determine needs and goals of learning under guidance.
LEVEL 3	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess theoretical and practical knowledge required to perform uncomplicated activities in different environments related to an area of work or learning.
	SKILL	Interpret data, evaluate results, select appropriate standard tasks and methods and apply them systematically, provide solutions to unforeseen problems related to uncomplicated activities in an area of work or learning.
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility in performing uncomplicated activities under limited guidance and/or supervision; determine needs and goals of learning under guidance, when guidance is required.
LEVEL 4	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess theoretical and practical knowledge required to perform complicated activities in different environments related to an area of work or learning.
	SKILL	Analyze data, interpret results, select appropriate tasks and methods and apply them systematically, provide solutions to unique and/or unforeseen problems related to complicated activities in an area of work or learning; transfer knowledge and skills to others when required.
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility in performing complicated activities in standard settings; undertake supervision and limited audit over activities which are performed by others under one's responsibility; satisfy needs of learning and set future goals of learning..
LEVEL 5	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess theoretical and practical knowledge required for expertise in an area of work or learning.
	SKILL	Analyze data that belong to complicated and interrelated activities in an area or work or learning, evaluate results with an interrogative approach, draw conclusions, define appropriate tasks and methods and apply them or have them applied systematically; develop evidence based solutions to unique and/or unforeseen problems encountered for the first time; transfer knowledge and skills to others..
	COMPETENCE	Take limited responsibility in performing complicated activities in environments where unforeseen changes take place; undertake supervision and audit over activities which are performed by others under one's responsibility; satisfy learning needs in line with learning goals, guide people under one's responsibility related to the determination of their learning needs and development of their performance.
LEVEL 6	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess advanced theoretical and practical knowledge required for expertise in an area of work or learning..
	SKILL	Analyze approaches, methods and tasks related to activities in an area of work or learning with a wholistic perspective, evaluate results critically, suggest

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		improvements based on research and evidence; predict likely problems in new practices and suggest preventive action; inform others about improvements and solutions developed.
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility as an individual or a team member in performing complicated activities in environments where unforeseen changes take place; conduct an advanced assignment or project partially independently; plan and manage activities for the project based development of others under one's responsibility; Plan and manage activities to develop self performance and performance of others under one's responsibility in line with goals of learning.
LEVEL 7	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess advanced theoretical and practical knowledge which provide a basis for the development of original ideas in an area of work or learning; Comprehend interdisciplinary interactions related to the area.
	SKILL	Interpret knowledge one has gained in an area of work or learning through integrating them with knowledge in other disciplines, formulate new knowledge, methods and approaches; Solve complicated unforeseen problems in one's are through using research methods; Transfer newly formulated knowledge, methods, approaches and suggested solutions to others.
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility as an individual or a team member in performing complicated activities in environments where unforeseen and complicated changes exist and under conditions requiring new strategic approaches; conduct an advanced assignment or project independently; Lead studies in his/her area, evaluate the strategic performance of persons and groups under one's responsibility and manage improvement.
LEVEL 8	**KNOWLEDGE**	Possess highly advanced knowledge in development of original thoughts, approaches, design, method and techniques in area of work or learning; relate these to multidisciplines.
	SKILL	Develop an innovative thought, method, approach, design and/or application in an area of work or learning or adapt an already recognized thought, method, approach, design and/or applications to another area, conduct research on, comprehend, design and apply an original theme; solve emerging complicated problems in one's area using approaches and methods of different disciplines, transfer research and applications results to others.
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility as an individual or a team member or take leadership in themes requiring innovation and creativity; conduct an advanced original assignment or project independently; encourage continuous learning through activities within and out of one's area, contribute to the sustainable development of the society.

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National Coordination Point for the implementation of the EQF:	Vocational Qualifications Authority-VQA (Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu -MYK) http://www.myk.gov.tr/
National Coordination Point for the implementation of the ECVET:	
Related Links:	http://www.myk.gov.tr/

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