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Theoretical approaches and evidence in providing insights into the impact of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework

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DO NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS MAKE A
DIFFERENCE? MEASURING AND EVALUATING NQF IMPACT
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Introduction – basic facts on Lithuanian Qualifications Framework

- Designing started in 2008
- Approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 2010
- Referenced to the EQF in 2012
- 8 levels
- Competence-based
- Level criteria: characteristics of activities – complexity, autonomy of performer, changeability

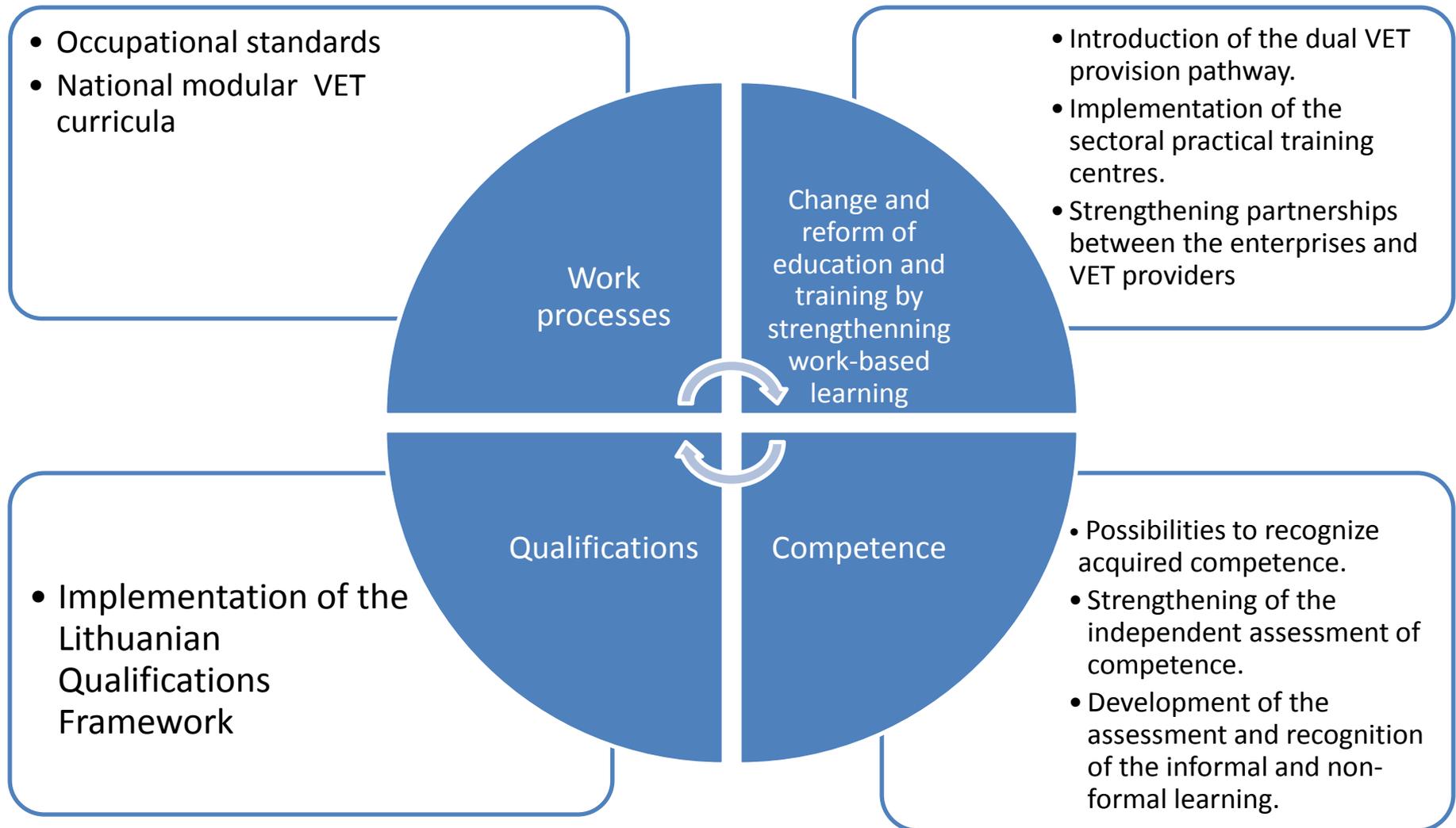
What evidence exists on the purpose/role of LTQF?

- Introduction of the LTQF raised discussions and policy actions concerning the existing gaps and inconsistencies in the provision of qualifications.
- Ensuring coherence of the provision and awarding of qualifications with the changing needs of the labour market.

What evidence exists on the impact of the LTQF? (1)

- Impact of the LTQF can be analysed and regarded only in the context of the wider reforms and changes of the national system of qualifications.
- The main steps and fields of the reform of the national system of qualifications:
 - 1) design and implementation of the occupational standards in the sectors of economy;
 - 2) introduction of the national modular VET curricula;
 - 3) introduction of the study fields descriptors and ECTS credits in the higher education.
 - 4) introduction of the work-based learning alternative (dual apprenticeship) in the initial VET and development of the work-based learning environments in the VET system.

Relationships between the work processes, education and training, competences and qualifications



The concept of the LTQF and it's change

Comprehensive national framework of vocational and professional qualifications

Comprehensive national framework of the all qualifications

Separation between the levels of vocational qualifications (1-5) and the higher education qualifications (6-8)

Qualifications for work and qualifications for learning at the all / different levels

What evidence exists on the impact of the LTQF? (2)

- The process of design of the occupational standards disclosed, that LTQF fosters more systemic and holistic attitude towards the design of qualifications.
- The attention is paid not only to the specific requirements of qualification, but also to the positioning of qualification in the system and interrelations with the other qualifications referenced to the different levels.

To what extent does available evidence question the role of the LTQF?

These reforms and changes do not question the role of LTQF per se but lead to its re-thinking and concretisation:

- Guidance in structuring of qualifications and their inter-relations in the process of design and implementation of the occupational standards.
- Guidance in the establishment of the new learning and training pathways (introduction of the level 5 qualifications, higher professional qualifications) and reforming of the existing ones.
- Guidance in the quality assurance of qualifications.
- Important instrument for identification and analysis of the demand of qualifications in the labour market.

Major challenges in implementing competence-based occupational standards and Lithuanian Qualifications Framework

- Lack of coherence in understanding and/or accepting the idea of lifelong learning and implied variety of ways to acquire competence and qualification in different institutional ways (typical for education and training providers). It leads to the different kinds of competition and contestation for the rights to award qualifications referenced to the levels of LTQF.
- Lack of trust in the new instruments (occupational standards, modular VET curricula) caused by the lack of understanding of their functions and provided added value.
- Lack of know-how and expertise of competence-based VET provision amongst the VET teachers and trainers, as well as amongst the social partners.
- Need to widen involvement of stakeholders, institutions and civil society in the development of qualifications - formal dissemination of instruments developed by narrow circle of experts and stakeholders is insufficient to ensure the trust in these instruments and their “ownership” by users.

What baseline data or indicators could be useful in explaining NQF impact and could help continue political support for NQFs?

- The number of qualifications referenced to the NQF.
- The number of newly designed qualifications referenced to the NQF.
- The number of references of the foreign qualifications in the formal processes of their recognition in the national system of qualifications.
- Indication of the NQF levels in the certificates and diploma.
- Extent, to which NQF facilitates design and introduction of new qualifications in responding to the needs of labour market.
- Usage of the NQF in the practices of human resource management in the enterprises and sectors of economy (planning of staff, search of employees, recruitment, continuing training and competence development, career design and planning).
- Usage of the NQF in the social dialogue on the local, sectoral and national levels.
- Usage of the NQF in the national monitoring of the human resources.
- Usage of the NQF in the design and implementation of the education, employment, social and economic policies.

Which methodologies are most appropriate for measuring and evaluating NQF impact?

- **Quantitative approaches:**

- collecting data on the number of referenced qualifications,
- statistical data on the issued diploma and certificates with NQF reference.

- **Qualitative approaches:**

- analysis of the change of structure and contents of qualifications in the sectors of economy,
- evaluation of the relevance of NQF levels to the changing needs of economy and labour market (e.g. considering the implications of the advent of Industry 4.0 to the demand of qualifications at the different levels),
- critical assessment of the usage of the NQF at the different levels: national policy, sectoral economy, social dialogue, education providers, human resource management in the enterprises.

What kind of European cooperation on NQF impact assessment is possible and desirable?

Strategic partnerships of experts, researchers, policy makers and practitioners in analysing the applicability of the NQFs and its implications for the different fields, like:

- NQFs and access to education and qualifications,
- NQFs and mobility of learners and workers,
- NQFs and the global changes of economy, labour market and society (including the advent of the Industry 4.0),
- NQFs and development of the institutional pathways of skill formation.

Thank you for your attention.

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