

NQF state of play

 **Kosovo 2024**

Table of contents

- Chapter 1 - Overview
- Chapter 2 - Introduction and context
- Chapter 3 - Policy objectives
- Chapter 4 - Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications
- Chapter 5 - Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement
- Chapter 6 - Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways
- Chapter 7 - NQF implementation and impact
- Chapter 8 - Referencing to the EQF
- Chapter 9 - Important lessons and future plans
- Chapter 10 - National qualification framework (NQF)
- Chapter 11 - Acronyms
- Chapter 12 - References
- Chapter 13 - Notes

Overview

Stage of development: Activation stage

NQF linked to EQF: ✓

Scope of the framework:

Comprehensive NQF including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training and non-formal and informal learning.

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Republic of Kosovo (2008). Law 03/L-060 on national qualifications (in English)

NQF/EQF website:

[MASHT](#)

Introduction and context

1.1. Policy context

Kosovo became a candidate for accession to the EU in 2023. Relations with Serbia remain tense, which influences relations with the EU.

Measures imposed by the EU on Kosovo following violent escalations in the country's north in May 2023 remain in place and included a freeze of financial support. In consequence, planned EU-funded projects, including in education and training cannot proceed ([1]).

GDP in Q1 of 2024 rose by 5.6 %, mainly driven by higher real disposable incomes ([2]). The Economic Reform Programme projects annual GDP growth rates of 4.8 % for 2025 and 4.4 % for 2026, based in part on increased public investment.

IMF figures document annual GDP growth at 4.3 % for 2022, 3.3 % for 2023 and project 3.8 % for 2024 ([3]).

Kosovo's resident population is diminishing. The 2024 census recorded about 1.6 million people living in the country, a decrease of about 155,000 since 2011, or a contraction of circa 9 %. Migration outwards remains high - the country's registered diaspora is circa 600,000, though the actual figure, as some do not register for the census, will be higher.

The population decline was previously evident from school enrolment figures, which dropped by 23.3 % from school year 2013-14 to school year 2023-24. For the latter school year, 215,431 pupils were enrolled in primary and secondary education ([4]).

At upper secondary level, VET remains second choice. The enrolment rate of upper secondary school students in VET programmes has remained at around 50 % since 2015. All students have the chance to sit State Matura exams, regardless of which programme they enrol in. While this regulation creates high permeability, it is also criticised for enabling weaker students to circumvent higher academic standards in general education.

Education and training reform

The management of pre-university education is shared between the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) and the municipal education directorates (MEDs) and schools. MESTI, with

support from international partners, drew up the Education Strategy 2022-2026, which the Government approved on 30 September 2022. Its objectives address the levels of early childhood education, pre-university education, VET, higher education and, as a cross-cutting policy, digitalisation of education.

In 2024, a Working Group was set up to draft the concept note for a new VET law. After public consultations on the concept note, it was approved in September of the same year. The concept note indicates the intention of the government to merge the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) with the Agency for VET and Adult Education (AVETAE). At the time of drafting this note (June 2025) the Working Group tasked with drafting the text of the new VET law is finalising a first draft.

1.2. NQF legal basis

[Law No 03/L-060](#) on national qualifications, adopted on 7 November 2008, established the Kosovo NQF, sometimes called the KQF. This foundational law establishes the National Qualifications System, based on the NQF and regulates the development and maintenance of the NQA, and the awarding of qualifications.

Under the provisions of the Law on National Qualifications, the National Qualifications Authority regulates the awarding of qualifications in the framework except for qualifications which are regulated under the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and qualifications explicitly regulated by other legislation. Relevant secondary legislation includes:

- a. Administrative Instruction No 28/2014 on criteria and procedures for the verification of occupational standards.
- b. Administrative Instruction No 31/2014 for prior learning recognition.
- c. Administrative Instruction No 32/2014 on criteria and procedures for quality assurance in VET institutions' internal processes.
- d. Administrative Instruction No 35/2014 on criteria and procedures for the validation and approval of national qualifications and accreditation of institutions providing qualifications in Kosovo.

Administrative instruction No. 09/2019 on criteria and procedures for the accreditation of institutions that implement recognition of prior learning in Kosovo.

NQF-related legislation includes:

- a. the Law on Vocational Education and Training (No 02/L-42, 23

- February 2006), which defines occupational standards, whereas the Law on national qualifications (No 03/L-060, 7 November 2008) provides a more general definition of standards.
- b. Law No. 04/L138, 201 on Vocational Education and Training.
 - c. Law No 04/L-032 on pre-university education (20 August 2011) addresses levels of qualifications.
 - d. Law No 04/L-037 on higher education (20 August 2011), addressing the levels and accreditation of higher education programmes and institutions, is carried out by the KAA, while the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad is carried out by MESTI.
 - e. Law No 02/L-24, on adult education and training (22 July 2005) defines certification as well as informal and non-formal learning.
 - f. Law on Adult Education and Training (Law No. 04-L-143, 2012). This law ensures that recognition of prior learning (RPL) is based on the NQF, with criteria and standards set by the NQA. It enables adults to gain formal qualifications through non-formal and informal learning.
 - g. Law No 03/L-068, on education in the municipalities of Kosovo (2008).
 - h. Law No 03/L-018, on final examination and the State Matura examination (2008).
 - i. Law No 02/L-52, on pre-school education (2006).
 - j. Law No. 06/L-046 on the education inspectorate (2019).

Policy objectives

The objectives of the NQF, based on the Law No 03/L-060 on national qualifications, are to:

- a. provide a basis for cooperation and mutual recognition of qualifications between the NQF and EQF.
- b. ensure transparency by clarifying the nature of qualifications and the relationships between them, and to provide a basis for comparing all achievements at the levels of the education and training system.
- c. ensure that qualifications are relevant to employment, learning, and meet the needs of students, the economy, and education and training institutions.
- d. promote the development of lifelong learning, including the continuous development of skills for adults.
- e. increase access to assessment and certification by encouraging flexible and individualized learning processes.
- f. establish a system for the accumulation and transfer of credits.
- g. enhance the quality and significance of education and training by promoting the development of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills, and competences comparable to international levels and supported by rigorous quality assurance.
- h. increase employment and learning opportunities for individuals by providing the basis for the recognition and certification of learning and achievements, and to support the continuation and sustainability of education and training system reforms based on demand.

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

3.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

Kosovo's NQF consists of eight qualifications levels, covering general education, higher education, and vocational education and training sectors. It is a lifelong learning framework, so that its qualifications cater to all types of learning contexts, such as formal, non-formal and informal learning. The qualifications levels are learning outcomes-based, as per the existing levels descriptors, distinguishing knowledge, skills, and wider competences.

The descriptors, as well as the framework overall, are strongly influenced by the EQF.

3.2. NQF scope and coverage

There are six specified types of qualification recognized in the NQF:

- a. Higher Education Qualifications.
- b. General Education Qualifications.
- c. Combined National Qualifications.
- d. National Professional Qualifications.
- e. Qualifications Based on International Standards.
- f. Customized qualifications.

Qualifications are developed on unit or modular structures, in both VET and HE.

The NQF is open to and includes qualifications awarded outside the formal education and training system, including partial qualifications. Such qualification types meet the need to recognize skills acquired outside the formal system, such as in professional training, industry certifications, and specific skills development programmes. Indeed, two of the above-listed qualification types, National Professional Qualifications, and Qualifications Based on International Standards, are considered as covering non-formal qualifications.

KQF accommodates international qualifications. This includes those belonging to one of the above-cited qualification types, namely Qualifications Based on International Standards. Their purpose is to capture general or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, at

Levels 1 to 5 of the NQF. These qualifications are based on the standards of other countries, or international standards which are accepted and used within a recognized profession or a field of competences.

Given the increasing importance of flexible learning pathways and the recognition of skills acquired through short-term learning programmes, efforts are being made to integrate micro-credentials within the framework. This will ensure their alignment with quality assurance standards and their recognition within the broader qualifications system.

3.3. Use and renewal of learning outcomes and standards

The NQF is built on the principles of learning outcomes. The qualifications are defined through the learning outcomes which state what the learner is expected to know and to be able to do on the successful completion of the module or of the full programme. For professional qualifications, the learning outcomes derive directly from the competences identified in the occupational standards.

Law No. 03/L-060 (Article 2) defines standards as measurable indicators of achievement, defined either in terms of qualitative or quantitative criteria that are required to be achieved by candidates for the award of qualifications.

In the context of the development of a system of professional qualifications for Kosovo, there are two main applications of the term 'standards'. Occupational standards are descriptions of expected work tasks and responsibilities in an occupation. Learning outcomes within the adopted qualification standards are measures of assessed learning achievements.

As indicated above, defining occupational standards should be the starting point for development of curricula and assessment for outcomes-based VET qualifications and competence-based VET programmes.

The specifications for a vocational education and training qualification also include a requirement for evidence of consultation with labour market stakeholders.

3.4. Quality assurance arrangements

The legal basis for quality assurance is provided by Law No 03/L-060 on qualifications: Article 5 (NQF), and Article 15 (Regulation of the award of qualifications).

NQA is responsible for standard-setting for the validation, or approval, of qualifications and the accreditation of providers i.e., the authorisation to develop, offer, and assess qualifications. Qualifications or modules are developed by MESTI, AVETAE, relevant ministries and other providers, public, private and third sector. NQA itself does not develop qualifications.

VET qualifications must be based on occupational standards if they are to be placed in the NQF. Occupational standards should be used to provide a reference point for identifying the learning outcomes that should be covered in different modules of the qualifications. The main tasks generally identified in the occupational standards will lead to the definition of modules for learning and assessment.

To achieve registration in the NQF, the following procedures apply.

Proposal of Qualification for Registration

- a. qualifications to be registered in the NQF must align with the standards of the NQF and be described in accordance with the requirements of the education and training system (VET) or higher education
- b. educational and vocational training institutions, as well as other qualification providers, must submit a registration proposal that includes details about the qualification, including its purpose, content, and criteria for recognizing individual skills.

Evaluation of the Qualification by the NQA

- a. NQA evaluates and verifies the qualifications proposed for registration. The NQA assesses the alignment of the qualification with the standards of the National Qualifications Framework to ensure that the qualification meets the relevant requirements.
- b. The NQA may request changes to the qualification's content or may ask for additional information to verify that the qualification complies with the requirements established by the NQF.

Registration in the NQF and publication

- a. after approval and preparation of the necessary documentation, the qualification is registered in the NQF. This process is managed by the NQA, which ensures that all registered qualifications comply with national and international requirements.
- b. once registered, the qualification becomes accessible to everyone, included in the list of registered qualifications in the NQF, and may

be published on platforms and resources available to individuals and institutions.

Monitoring

- a. after registration of qualifications, monitoring is an important process to ensure that they remain up-to-date and relevant to labour market demands and new developments in relevant sectors.
- b. if necessary, the qualification may be revised or improved to align with new needs or to integrate changes in the standards for qualifications.

The [NQA administrative instruction](#) defines the process of accreditation of providers. So far, NQA has accredited almost 100 providers or institutions in total. These are private vocational training centres (VTCs); public VTCs, which provide training for adults, including jobseekers; other VET providers; public VET schools; and private VET schools.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is the institution responsible for quality assurance in the higher education system. Universities develop their own qualifications, quality-assured by the KAA.

The criteria for the evaluation and procedures for accreditation of higher education institutions include internal policies and procedures for quality assurance of their study programmes and awards. In higher education, 21 institutes are accredited. KAA is also responsible for accrediting post-secondary VET colleges.

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

4.1. Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

The NQA, established in 2008, has the overall responsibility for implementing the NQF. It answers to a governing board of 13 members who represent VET, general education, higher education, trades unions, employers and employers' organisations, chambers of commerce and voluntary bodies. It is also the designated agency in international cooperation.

There are generally about 12 NQA staff, including its director; specialists in quality assurance, qualifications, occupational standards, monitoring, recognition of prior learning officer; plus administrative staff for budget and finance, IT, and general support. administrative assistant.

NQA during a typical year engage around 100 external experts to conduct the verification, validation and accreditation processes.

As indicated above, at the time of writing, discussions were underway about a possible integration of NQA's functions into other institutions, and so dissolution of the agency as an autonomous body.

4.2. Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

While the NQA leads and coordinates the NQF, it shares responsibility for developing and implementing the framework with MESTI, in general educations and KAA for higher education.

The NQA is responsible for registering VET and adult education qualifications developed by providers such as VET schools or special professional schools or academies, such as the police college, within the framework. As indicated above, it is responsible for the accreditation of VET providers and conducts quality assurance processes relevant to the validation, assessment, and certification of these qualifications to ensure that they are of sufficient quality to be included in the NQF.

MESTI oversees general education qualifications and develops secondary school-level general qualifications, such as the lower secondary leaving diploma and the upper secondary Matura.

In HE, the KAA oversees HE provision and accredits higher education

institutions as providers. Universities generally develop their own qualifications, quality assured by the KAA. KAA is overseen by its governing board, the National Quality Council.

The Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (CVETAE) is the advisory body on VET and Adult Education policies to the Minister of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation in Kosovo. It is a tripartite body, engaging government, employers, and trade unions in VET. CVETAE consists of fifteen members, who represent the education and labour ministries, other relevant ministries, NQA, AVETAE, the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce and the social partners.

CVETAE has statutory responsibility for approving occupational standards for the VET system. It is the responsibility of CVETAE to ensure that the standards proposed meet the needs of Kosovo's labour market as well as ensuring support from all interested parties. It forwards approved occupational standards to the NQA for the verification process.

AVETAE has extensive responsibilities in VET, including the coordination of study programmes concerning VET and adult education, engagement of social partners and supervision and coordination of the development of occupational standards. Although AVETAE is supposed to fulfil this function for all VET schools, it currently does so only for the six so-called Centres of Competence, which are donor-funded VET schools that specialise in one sector e.g., business/commerce. Its relationship with the NQA and other actors and their respective remits needs to be clarified as the agency develops.

Stakeholders from outside the key state institutions are engaged via the CVETAE and NQA Governing Board. The Kosovo Chambers of Commerce, and the Kosovo Business Association and other sectorial representatives, contribute their expertise to the Agency as representatives, and to the NQA Governing Board as co-decision makers.

Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

5.1. Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

Design of a system for Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) in Kosovo commenced in 2011, with the endorsement of the NQF and the development of the first guidelines on the benefits and uses of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Since then, national policies, secondary legislation, and training modules for the implementation of RPL have been developed. Two bylaws have been developed and endorsed by the Minister for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation:

- a. Administrative Instruction No 31/2014 for recognition of prior learning, endorsed in 2014. It outlines scope, general provisions, principles, responsibilities, and procedures for recognition of non-formal and informal learning, within all the levels of the NQF.
- b. Administrative instruction No. 09/2019 on criteria and procedures for the accreditation of institutions that implement recognition of prior learning in Kosovo, endorsed in 2019. It outlines principles, responsibilities, and procedures for accreditation of VET providers to implement RPL. However, it includes only the accreditation of CVET qualifications and does not cover IVET qualifications.

Both administrative instructions are in alignment with the Council Recommendation on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning.

Validation can lead to both partial and full NQF qualifications, depending on the assessment outcomes. If a candidate demonstrates competence in certain units of a qualification, they may receive partial certification and accumulate credits that can later contribute to obtaining a full qualification.

For now, VNFIL is only possible for National Vocational Qualifications that are quality-assured by validation and approved on the NQF. Currently, there are 125 verified and approved National Occupational Standards in the NQF.

So far, eight providers have been accredited to award qualifications via RPL in fields including hairdressing, welding, and electrical installer.

NQA offers a digital platform in which candidates register their interest in being assessed for awards by accredited institutions. NQA has also developed an E-accreditation platform for the accreditation process.

Kosovo presented its one-off report on VNFIL to the EQF Advisory Group in February 2020, describing the legislation developed and the next steps to be taken in implementing RPL.

Now that VNFIL is firmly established in the country, it is also used as an Active Labour Market Measure (ALMM) to increase access to employment for jobseekers.

5.2. Credit systems

NQA has developed a VET credit system based on ECVET recommendations. One credit is awarded for 20 notional learning hours.

The NQA's credit system uses learning outcomes, categorises qualifications by measuring the volume of learning, and identifies providers that have a role and responsibility in allocating credits. NQA regulates the credit system by accrediting providers and setting criteria to determine which providers can submit qualifications for inclusion in the NQF. These criteria include strict [procedures for allocating credits](#), which ensures that providers have the necessary capacity and expertise.

A credit system has been established for the higher education sector and is aligned to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

5.3. Promoting lifelong learning

The NQF is lifelong learning in scope. One of its objectives is to facilitate the accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes between different learning contexts or systems. This includes outcomes acquired via formal and non-formal learning. Such transfer supports learners' geographical and occupational mobility by enabling them to accumulate and combine learning outcomes from different settings and use them in different educational pathways.

The framework includes qualifications developed by bodies outside the formal, national system.

NQF implementation and impact

6.1. Stage of implementation

Kosovo has adopted an extensive legal framework, established a dedicated lead agency, placed qualifications in the NQF, and certificates bear level indications. However, the NQF does not yet consistently provide a platform for stakeholders, and it cannot yet be said that it fully supports or influences related reforms, e.g., in curricula. Its NQF is therefore at the activation stage.

Important progress has been made in populating the framework with qualifications defined by the six types. Formal and non-formal qualifications are included. Their labour-market relevance is ensured through use of occupational standards, based on dialogue with, and input from, employers and other labour market actors.

Employer-developed qualifications also feature now in the NQF and the register of qualifications. For example, 'Shehu' and 'Dekoriti', private companies in the wood and furniture sector, have developed a qualification in carpentry, which is included in the NQF at Level 4. Similarly, the Kosovo Energy Corporation, a public-private company, has developed a Level 4 qualification.

In addition to the qualifications in the KQF (see section 7.4 below), the number of occupational standards adopted has increased from the 2018 figure of 88 to 125 now. A further 30 standards are currently undergoing verification.

Since the 2018 Inventory, there has been progress in preparing the conditions for the implementation of RPL. Secondary legislation has been adopted and the accreditation of providers to conduct RPL has started. Piloting is ongoing. Kosovo presented its one-off report on VNFIL to the EQF Advisory Group in February 2020.

6.2. Indicating RQF/NQF levels

NQF and EQF levels appear on almost all qualifications documents, such as certificates, diplomas and certificates, and on Europass and diploma supplements in VET and HE.

6.3. NQF dissemination

There is no overall communication strategy in place, but media used

includes hard copy leaflets, TV advertisements and social media content.

At a more technical level, the NQA issues specific guides to the NQF. It has published a [handbook on the NQF](#). The handbook covers the most recent revisions to the NQF. It is used by various stakeholders, including government institutions, chambers of commerce, civic associations, schools, and other providers. It both supports stakeholders in their general understanding of the framework, e.g., its purposes, its structure, etc., and assists active users who can consult the handbook to apply its guidance in processes such as qualifications development. These guidelines have been distributed hard copy to NQF stakeholders.

6.4. Qualifications databases and registers

The Kosovo Register of Qualifications (KRQ) is still under development and not yet operational as an integrated platform. However, the NQF already contains 145 VET qualifications at Levels 1 to 5, and 355 HE qualifications.

Qualifications in general education are awarded at the end of a learning programme by MESTI. These qualifications are developed and quality-assured by the pre-university education department of MESTI based on national standards for the qualifications and their curriculum areas. They are automatically included or levelled in the NQF. The standard general school-leaving qualifications is the Matura, at Level 4.

Learning outcomes descriptions are used in the KRQ. Kosovo uses the Europass certificate, and diploma supplements for VET and HE, where short learning outcomes are described.

Kosovo also maintains lists of occupational standards, and HE programmes, which are linked to the qualifications register. The register is accessible in Albanian, Serbian, and English.

Until now, the qualifications register has been separated into three categories, VET, HE and general education, but NQA is in the process of developing an integrated KQR, which will provide a single format for all types of qualification.

The current KRQ already largely follows the fields in Annex VI of the EQF Recommendation, which proposes data fields for the electronic publication of information on qualifications with an EQF level. The new KRQ platform structure is intended to adhere even more closely. NQA plans interoperability with EU systems and tools, including linking the KQR to the Europass Platform, and ensuring that the data model

developed for publishing information is compatible with the European Learning Model[5].

6.5. Use of NQF in recognition of foreign qualifications

Kosovo's NQF provides a basis for co-operation and mutual recognition of higher qualifications between Kosovo and other countries. A first step is ensuring compatibility with the 'Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area', developed by ENQA.

Recognition of foreign qualifications in higher education is regulated through the NARIC office in Kosovo. MESTI is responsible for formal VET programmes (schools). In non-formal VET, the NQF serves as a tool of recognition based on common elements.

6.6. Career guidance and counselling

MESTI, with support from LuxDev, has created a [platform for professional orientation, career education and guidance](#). The platform supports both pupils and students, as well as institutes in career education and guidance.

The platform offers several tools and information on the platform concerning the following steps in career orientation:

- a. Self-recognition through career tests.
- b. Validation of career-related skills - Basic Check Potential Assessment Test.
- c. Exploring the labour market.
- d. Exploring educational institutions in Kosovo.
- e. Identifying job and/or internship opportunities.
- f. Online advisor.

The platform offers institutes, policy makers and business four modules to facilitate interaction between education and the labour market:

- a. Industrial Liaison.
- b. Training Needs Assessment.
- c. Skills and Knowledge Needs Assessment.
- d. Monitoring and Evaluation.

6.7. Awareness and use of the NQF

NQA has been active over the years in engaging providers, employers and donors to raise awareness of the KQF, its functions and added value. It has variously used TV advertisement, social media, outreach workshops

and other face to face events.

Institutional stakeholders such as VET schools, some qualification developers e.g., the Police College, who of necessity come into contact with the NQA and KQF when seeking accreditation of programmes or validation of qualifications, and learners, have quite high awareness of the framework.

Guidance and counselling practitioners in employment offices use the NQF in consultations with people to support their decisions on career paths, qualifications, and programmes.

Stakeholders in industry and commerce and the trades unions are institutionally linked to the NQF via the NQA Board and the Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education. Broader contacts with such partners are made include through meetings with chambers of commerce, unions and employment offices, and invitations to seminars, public discussions, etc.

The Employment Agency of Kosovo (EAK) plays a crucial role in connecting job seekers with the labour market and providing guidance on skills development and qualifications. However, the level of awareness and engagement with the NQF and EQF among these services is still evolving.

The NQF handbook covers all the information and functions of the implementation of the NQF mechanism. The reviewed draft (2020) of NQF handbook has been developed by the NQA staff, supported by various experts and consultants.

NQA is developing digital platforms for occupational standards.

6.8. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

No comprehensive evaluation of the NQF's impact or use has been conducted yet.

6.9. Impact of the NQF

Section 7.4 indicates the number of qualifications in the NQF and the register. These qualifications are available to the public directly due to the NQF and its quality assurance criteria, as applied by the NQA and KAA.

The implementation of the NQF in Kosovo has significantly promoted the use of learning outcomes across various education and training

subsystems, in qualifications, standards and curricula.

In VET, the NQF has ensured that qualifications, in particular via occupational standards introduced via the NQF processes, are aligned with labour market needs. In general education, the NQF has contributed to more structured and outcome-focused curricula. In higher education, the NQF has aligned Kosovo's qualifications with European standards, enhancing quality assurance and academic recognition.

The NQF in Kosovo has significantly enhanced the international mobility of citizens by aligning Kosovo's qualifications with the EQF, while visibility has been raised via the stamping of NQF and EQF levels on certificates and certificate supplements.

Referencing to the EQF

7.1. Referencing to the EQF

Kosovo has been a member of the EQF Advisory Group since 2015 and referenced its NQF to the EQF in 2016. NQA provides regular updates to the Advisory Group on progress of the Kosovo NQF, including its 2020 report on VNFIL.

Kosovo is not a member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), or Bologna Process, and so cannot join the QF-EHEA, due to political opposition or veto from Serbia and some EU Member States.

7.2. International cooperation

A key objective of the NQF, specified in the NQF law, is to provide a basis for cooperation and mutual recognition between the NQF and the EQF. NQA is the designated National Coordination Point for participation in the EQF process.

ENQA has changed the status of the KAA to 'under review', a downgrade of its previous assessment. The KAA is full member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

EU assistance to Kosovo under the priority sector Education, employment & social policies (financial assistance under IPA II focuses on: (i) improving the functioning of the labour market; (ii) raising education standards; (iii) promoting skills development; and (iv) restructuring the social welfare system.

Measures imposed by the EU on Kosovo in June 2023 are still in place, restricting high-level contacts and flow of bi-lateral cooperation funds. In effect, significant amounts of EU assistance have been withheld because of these measures.

A large international donor community is active in the country. NQA receives donor support from Germany's DVV International. Other donor support to Kosovo's VET system comes from international organizations e.g., the UN, and bilateral donors such as Luxembourg, Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

Important lessons and future plans

Enabling factors in progressing the KQF include its expert direction in the shape of the NQA. KQF includes significant numbers of qualifications and is laudably open to all types including nonformal. Progress has been strong in developing new standards. Another success has been establishment of a validation system to recognise and certify competences acquired outside formal education.

While the NQA is a critical actor in VET reform in Kosovo, the overall education governance structure, the definition of roles, and the allocation of functions, is complex. Government intends that, on the VET side, the draft legislation, once enacted, will iron out these problems.

Full engagement of the various stakeholders such as government departments, social partners, agencies, and institutions necessary to ensure a sustained implementation of the NQF in the long term has proven difficult. However, it must be said that the absence of a large and thriving private sector, which would include enterprises big enough to spare attention to education and training, is an understandable reason.

Although development of the number of occupational standards has substantially increased in recent years, the number of approvals could be increased by identifying priority occupations.

The number of accredited qualifications developed by VET public providers is still limited.

Priorities include:

- a. populating the framework with new qualifications that are useful for people's needs and at the same time are subject to a quality assessment and suitable for the labour market.
- b. supporting the above goals, development of new, and revision of existing, occupational standards by the sector representative actors.
- c. development of new programmes that lead to qualifications that will support people's employability.
- d. overhaul of the qualifications register, which would move it closer to EU lines, with data organised around EU tools like ELM; making the register more user or public-friendly.

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	<p>Doctorate - Bologna 3rd cycle Category Higher Education Qualifications (type A)</p>	8
7	<p>Master - Bologna 2nd cycle Category Higher Education Qualifications (type A)</p>	7
6	<p>Bachelor - Bologna 1st cycle Category Higher Education Qualifications (type A)</p>	6
5	<p>Bologna Short-cycle - Diploma Level V Category Higher Education Qualifications (type A)</p> <p>Post-secondary VET Diploma Level V Category Combined National Qualifications (type C), National Professional Qualifications (type D), Qualifications Based on International Standards (type E)</p> <p>Post-secondary VET Certificate Level V Category National Professional Qualifications (type D), Qualifications Based on International Standards (type E)</p>	5

4	<p>High secondary General education Diploma Category General Education Qualifications (type B)</p> <p>High secondary VET Diploma Category Combined National Qualifications (type C), National Professional Qualifications (type D)</p> <p>VET Certificate Category National Professional Qualifications (type D), Qualifications Based on International Standards (type E), Customized Qualifications, (type F)</p>	4
3	<p>High secondary VET Certificate Level 3 (two-year secondary education) Category Combined National Qualifications (type C), National Professional Qualifications (type D)</p> <p>VET Certificate Level 3 Category National Professional Qualifications (type D), Qualifications Based on International Standards (type E), Customized Qualifications, (type F)</p>	3
2	<p>Lower secondary education Diploma Category General Education Qualifications (type B)</p> <p>VET Certificate Level 2 Category National Professional Qualifications (type D), Qualifications Based on International Standards (type E), Customized Qualifications, (type F)</p>	2

1

Primary education Diploma

1

Category

General Education Qualifications (type B)

VET Certificate Level 1

Category

National Professional Qualifications (type D),
Qualifications Based on International Standards (type
E), Customized Qualifications, (type F)

Acronyms

ALMM	Active Labour Market Measure
AVETAE	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education
CVETAE	Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education
CEENQA	Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
DVV International	Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul Verband (adult education association)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EU	European Union
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ERP	Economic Reform Programme
GE	General Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education

IT	Information Technology
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
KRQ	Kosovo Register of Qualifications
LO	Learning outcomes
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NDS	National Development Strategy
NQA	National Qualification Authority
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
VET	Vocational education and training
VNFIL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
VTC	Vocational training centres

References

European Training Foundation (ETF). (2024). *Validation of non-formal and informal learning - Kosovo 2023*.

European Training Foundation (ETF). (2025). *Key policy developments in education, training and employment - Kosovo, 2024*.

Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. (2022). *Education Strategy of Kosovo*.

Office of the Prime Minister. (n.d.). *National Development Strategy 2030*.

Notes

[1]Key policy developments in education, training and employment - Kosovo 2024 | ETF

[2]idem

[3]idem

[4]idem