

# MONTENEGRO

## European inventory on NQF 2016

### Introduction and context

Montenegro became an independent State in 2006. It gained the status of European Union (EU) candidate country in 2010, and began accession negotiations two years later. The economic crisis resulted in a decrease in economic activity and labour demand in the country from 2008, and to a change in the structure of demand compared to the previous period. Activity declined in the trade and industry sectors and increased in construction and tourism. Skill and qualification mismatch between the supply from the education and training system and demand on the labour market is a key challenge (ETF, 2018). Labour market indicators have shown improvement over the recent years. The rate of unemployment decreased to 15.2% in 2018, and the activity rate increased to 56.0%; 73.1% of those in employment are in the service sector <sup>(1)</sup>. With regard to the ET 2020 benchmarks, the latest figures show that Montenegro has a smaller percentage of early leavers from education and training (18 to 24 age group) compared to the EU average (at 5.1% compared to 10.6% in 2018) and tertiary educational attainment (30-34) has been increasing steadily, from 18.7% in 2010 to 34.3% in 2018, approaching the EU average. The situation remains challenging in respect of adult participation in learning (25 to 64), at 3.3% in 2018 against the EU average of 11.1%, and the employment rate of recent graduates (aged 20 to 34) was 61.3% in 2017, compared to the EU average of 80.2% <sup>(2)</sup>. According to the 2015 results of the programme for international student assessment (PISA) <sup>(3)</sup>, student performance in basic skills is low, with slightly over 50% of 15-year-olds being underachievers in maths and science, and 41.9% in reading; a working group was established to achieve improvements in the 2018 PISA testing round. The 2018 progress report on Montenegro (European

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<sup>(1)</sup> Montenegrin Statistical Office (Monstat), *Labour force survey 2018*.  
[https://www.monstat.org/userfiles/file/ars/2018/ARS%20saopstenje\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://www.monstat.org/userfiles/file/ars/2018/ARS%20saopstenje_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>(2)</sup> Eurostat, *EU labour force survey*.  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/eu-benchmarks> [accessed 5.4.2019].

<sup>(3)</sup> OECD, *PISA 2015*.  
<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=MNE&treshold=10&topi c=PI> [accessed 5.4.2019].

Commission, 2018) noted that significant changes were introduced in the country from pre-school to higher education, and progress was made by implementing revised curricula based on learning outcomes, revised enrolment policies, and introduction of practical learning.

As part of the wider set of economic, labour market and education policies to support human capital development, Montenegro decided to develop a comprehensive national qualifications framework (NQF) for lifelong learning (the Montenegrin qualifications framework, MQF) in 2006, with EU assistance. The Strategy for establishment of the national qualifications framework <sup>(4)</sup>, developed by a multi-stakeholder working group, was adopted in 2008. Activities for initial framework development, including capacity-building in key institutions and drafting of legal basis, were supported through a 2007 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) project.

The MQF was adopted in 2010 <sup>(5)</sup> and has reached an early operational stage. It has eight qualification levels, with sub-levels at levels 1, 4 and 7. Level descriptors are based on learning outcomes in three categories: knowledge, skills and competence. The framework includes educational qualifications from all formal education sub-systems (general, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education), national vocational qualifications (NVQs), and additional qualifications. It is intended as a transparency, comparability and reform instrument.

The MQF was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) and self-certified against the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in November 2014.

## Policy objectives

The government sees MQF development and alignment to the European qualifications framework (EQF) as an important political priority. The law on the MQF <sup>(6)</sup> defines the qualifications framework as an instrument for classification, comparison, development and understanding of qualifications, for understanding the relationships between them and the pathways for acquiring qualifications, to

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<sup>(4)</sup> Government conclusion 03-9831 of 16 October 2008.

<sup>(5)</sup> Law on Montenegrin qualifications framework, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, 45/2010. <http://www.cko.edu.me/Library/files/Law%20on%20MQF.pdf>

<sup>(6)</sup> Law on Montenegrin qualifications framework, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 45/2010. <http://www.cko.edu.me/Library/files/Law%20on%20MQF.pdf>

meet the needs of the labour market and society. Apart from its transparency and comparability functions, the MQF is seen as an important tool in reforming the qualifications system using the learning outcomes approach, increasing coherence by linking the different education and training subsystems, facilitating access to qualifications and recognising non-formal and informal learning (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 22).

The main policy objectives of the MQF as defined by law <sup>(7)</sup> are:

- (a) enabling the definition of qualifications using learning outcomes;
- (b) valuing of qualifications from the different parts of the qualification system;
- (c) supporting and promoting lifelong learning;
- (d) connecting and aligning the different parts of the education and training system;
- (e) indicating and improving horizontal and vertical progression pathways;
- (f) aiding international comparability of qualifications;
- (g) promoting key vocational competences;
- (h) increasing the quality of qualifications.

The principles underlying the development of the MQF are an emphasis on learning outcomes; classification of qualifications in levels and sublevels; credit transfer; comparability with the EQF; quality assurance of qualification development and acquisition; cooperation among all stakeholders; and transparency of procedures.

The aims of the MQF are aligned with policy priorities for VET development outlined in the Vocational education and training development strategy 2015-20 <sup>(8)</sup>: increasing VET quality, efficiency and relevance for the labour market; ensuring equal opportunities to acquire VET qualifications; promoting lifelong learning and mobility. To reach these aims, specific actions for the coming years include: revision of existing qualifications and development of new ones based on learning outcomes; creating conditions for quality work-based learning in all sectors; ensuring that students develop vocational and key competences for life and work; and improving teacher training (ETF, 2018).

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<sup>(7)</sup> Idem.

<sup>(8)</sup> Ministry of Education (2014). *Vocational education and training development strategy of Montenegro 2015-20*.

<http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=207298&rType=2&file=Strategija%20razvoja%20strucnog%20obrazovanja%20u%20Crnoj%20Gori%20>

## Levels and use of learning outcomes

The comprehensive MQF has eight learning-outcomes-based levels, with sublevels at levels 1, 4 and 7. Sublevels were introduced to aid placement of qualifications obtained prior to the adoption of the law on the MQF and to address requirements of the labour market. All types of qualification are covered, classified according to the law on the MQF in three groups:

- (a) educational qualifications, attained upon completion of a study programme in the formal education and training system (general education, VET and higher education) and representing attainment of an education level.
- (b) national vocational qualifications (NVQs), oriented towards the labour market, attained through assessment of vocational ability to perform sets of tasks linked to an occupation. Demonstrated knowledge, skills and competences can be acquired through formal or non-formal learning, including special education programmes or part of formal education programmes that corresponds to an occupational standard.
- (c) additional qualifications, attained by acquiring knowledge, skills and competence that supplement those of an existing qualification and enable the holder to perform specific tasks on the labour market. Additional qualifications do not increase a person's qualification level, but supplement it. Procedures for development of additional qualifications are currently being elaborated.

Level descriptors are defined in three categories of learning outcomes, increasing in complexity from level 1 to 8, similar to those of the EQF: knowledge (factual and theoretical), skills (cognitive and practical) and competence (autonomy and responsibility) <sup>(9)</sup>. The first four levels include qualifications from primary and secondary general education and VET. Level 5 is an intermediate level reserved for post-secondary VET qualifications. Levels 6 to 8 cover qualifications awarded by higher education institutions. All MQF levels accept labour-market-oriented vocational qualifications, as defined by the Law on national vocational qualifications (NVQs) adopted in 2008 <sup>(10)</sup> and most recently amended in 2016, and the law on the MQF.

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<sup>(9)</sup> Level and sublevel descriptors are defined in the rulebook on level and sublevel qualification descriptors, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 51/11.

<sup>(10)</sup> Law on national vocational qualifications [Zakon o nacionalnim strucnim kvalifikacijama], *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 80/08, 14/09, 80/10, 18/11, 40/11 and 40/16. <http://www.cso.gov.me/biblioteka/zakoni>

The development of qualifications at levels 1 to 5 entails the development of a qualification standard based on an educational, occupational or ‘additional’ standard. At levels 6 to 8, higher education programmes are based on the qualification description, which includes the qualification profile defined by overall learning outcomes for the whole qualification/programme, objectives and outcomes for specific subjects or modules, and assigned credit points to programme parts (subjects/modules) based on complexity of learning outcomes and estimated workload (ETF, 2018).

The shift to learning outcomes is seen as an essential part of NQF development. The law on the MQF introduced the learning outcomes orientation as a standard for all levels of qualification; methodologies were developed to support appropriate redesign. Occupational standards were introduced in VET as a basis for devising qualification standards and curricula. In higher education, revisions or proposals for upgrading study programmes were initiated. With learning outcomes principles adopted, work continues to define qualifications and curricula based on them.

The Montenegrin credit transfer system (MCTS) has been introduced through the law on the MQF to articulate the volume of learning based on the time needed to complete a certain workload, and to allow transfer of learning outcomes across different contexts. Each qualification in the MQF needs to have a certain number of credits assigned. Credits are transferable and can be allocated not only to qualifications, but also to units, modules, projects and research activities. One MCTS credit refers to 25 hours of workload. The MCTS is aligned to the European credit system for vocational education (ECVET) and to the European credit transfer system (ECTS). Use of the ECTS is a requirement for all higher education institutions since 2004.

## Stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangements

The qualifications system and framework are governed by the Law on the Montenegrin qualifications framework adopted in December 2010 <sup>(11)</sup>, which defines the structure of the NQF and responsibilities of all bodies involved in proposing, developing and placing qualifications in the framework. Related regulations in education and training include the Law on national vocational

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<sup>(11)</sup> Law on Montenegrin qualifications framework, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 45/2010. <http://www.cko.edu.me/Library/files/Law%20on%20MQF.pdf>

qualifications <sup>(12)</sup>. A set of rulebooks and methodological documents set out more detailed procedures for specific aspects of NQF development and implementation <sup>(13)</sup>.

The Ministry of Education has overall responsibility for education policy and provides strategic direction for MQF development and implementation. The framework is managed by the Montenegro Qualifications Council, in cooperation with the National Council of Education and the Higher Education Council, which also provide policy advice to the ministry. Responsibilities of the national coordination point for the EQF (EQF NCP) lie with the Division for qualifications at the ministry, established in 2011. The role of the EQF NCP is to ensure harmonisation of the MQF to the EQF and international cooperation in qualifications framework development; to maintain the qualifications register; to propose procedures for qualification development; to ensure access to information about the MQF; to implement the measures adopted by the Qualifications Council; and to provide administrative and technical assistance.

The Qualifications Council was established in line with the law on the MQF <sup>(14)</sup> to improve the qualifications system, and to monitor MQF development. The council consists of representatives from higher education institutions, Employment Agency of Montenegro, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Chamber of Economy, employers association, trade union, Ministry of Education, Centre for Vocational Education, Bureau for Educational Services, and the Examination Centre. The presidents of the National Council for Education and the Higher Education Council are also members of the Qualifications Council, to ensure coordination of work on the qualifications system. The Qualifications Council is a permanent body and its main tasks include:

- (a) making decisions on inclusion and classification of new and existing qualifications in the MQF;

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<sup>(12)</sup> Law on national vocational qualifications [Zakon o nacionalnim strucnim kvalifikacijama], *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 80/08, 14/09, 80/10, 18/11, 40/11 and 40/16. <http://www.nqfl.li/Portals/0/BBG.pdf>

<sup>(13)</sup> Rulebook on descriptors for qualification levels and sub-levels, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 51/11.

Rulebook on procedures for developing qualifications from level 1 to level 5, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 21/12.

Rulebook on procedures for developing qualifications from level 6 to level 8, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 21/12.

<sup>(14)</sup> Decision of the Government of Montenegro on constitution of the Qualifications Council, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 29/11.

- (b) making proposals for new qualifications to institutions in charge of developing them;
- (c) making decisions on methodological documents for classifying qualifications;
- (d) establishing the sectoral commissions, defining criteria for their memberships, adopting instructions and guidelines for their work, and making decisions on their proposals.

The National Council for Education makes proposals for adoption of formal education programmes and determines the compatibility between education programmes and qualification standards. It is responsible for the qualification attainment process, and organisation of learning and teaching in formal education, adult education and special education. Its work is supported by the Bureau for Education Services and the Centre for Vocational Education.

The Higher Education Council is in charge of quality assurance in higher education, particularly the accreditation of study programmes, reaccreditation and ranking of higher education institutions, and proposals for improving quality of higher education.

In addition to the three councils, involvement of stakeholders in MQF implementation is carried out through 15 sectoral commissions set up by the Qualifications Council, one for each of the 15 activity sectors defined in the Law on the MQF. These are composed of representatives of employers, trade unions, universities, relevant ministries and institutions involved in education development. Their purpose is to ensure alignment of qualification provision to the needs of the labour market, by:

- (a) identifying and helping predict labour market demand for qualifications and skill shortages;
- (b) setting up priorities and making recommendations for revision and updating of existing qualifications and occupational standards and for development of new ones;
- (c) elaborating qualification descriptions;
- (d) setting up sectoral qualifications frameworks;
- (e) promoting qualifications and employment opportunities in the sector.

## Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways <sup>(15)</sup>

The legal framework for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) is provided in Montenegro by the law on VET, the law on national vocational qualifications (2008, amended in 2016), the law on adult education <sup>(16)</sup>, and the 2010 law on the Montenegrin qualifications framework <sup>(17)</sup>. Validation is also referred to in a number of strategic documents <sup>(18)</sup>.

The law on the MQF allows for qualifications obtained through non-formal learning to be placed at all levels of the MQF. However, current education policies in the country focus primarily on formal education. VNFIL is limited to the VET sector, with minimal involvement of higher education institutions. The MQF is seen as a bridge between formal education and non-formal and informal learning at levels 1 to 5, through occupational standards <sup>(19)</sup>, common to both educational qualifications and national vocational qualifications (NVQs). A formal VET qualification is based on several related occupational standards and a NVQ is based on one occupational standard related to a module within the formal VET qualification. While a full VET qualification cannot be obtained through validation, candidates may be awarded credits and part of a formal qualification via validation, or can gain access to formal programmes. The law on VET allows for validation only in continuing vocational education and training (CVET).

The law on national vocational qualifications stipulates that NVQs can be acquired via formal programmes and via direct assessment of knowledge, skills and competences. Amendments to this law in 2016 transferred responsibility for assessment of knowledge, skills and competences for qualifications at MQF

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<sup>(15)</sup> This section draws mainly on input from the 2018 update of the *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning* (European Commission et al., forthcoming).

<sup>(16)</sup> Available at: <http://www.cso.gov.me/biblioteka/zakoni>

<sup>(17)</sup> Law on Montenegrin qualifications framework, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 45/2010. <http://www.cko.edu.me/Library/files/Law%20on%20MQF.pdf>

<sup>(18)</sup> The Strategy for development of vocational education in Montenegro 2015-20; the Adult education strategy 2015-25 and Adult education plan 2015-19; the Strategy for lifelong career orientation 2016-20; the National strategy for employment and human resource development 2016-20 *Labour market in the European path*; the Employment and social reform programme 2015-20; and the Strategy of development and financing of higher education 2010-20.

<sup>(19)</sup> Qualifications at MQF levels 6-8 are not based on occupational standards (European Commission et al, forthcoming).

levels 1 to 5 from the Examination Centre to licensed education providers; this is expected to lead to an increase in assessments. Assessment for qualifications at these levels is carried out based on examination catalogues proposed by the VET Centre and issued by the National Council for Education. The examination catalogues and standards used are the same as those for qualifications obtained through formal education. Higher education institutions can carry out assessments for qualifications at MQF levels 6 to 8.

Between 2008 and 2016, 318 national vocational qualifications were issued through VNFIL, the majority in the tourism sector. No qualifications have been awarded after 2016, as part of the secondary legislation defining the procedures for VNFIL in accordance with the revised law on national vocational qualifications is yet to be adopted. A rulebook prescribing the format of the certificate for national vocational qualifications, and a rulebook on the procedures for issuing and revoking validation assessors' licenses, were planned to be developed in 2018. The law on national vocational qualifications also regulates the implementation of Europass, expected to support validation processes by enabling better understanding of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in both formal and non-formal contexts.

Certain elements of the Montenegrin education and training system provide a good basis for future work on VNFIL: the principles underlying the MQF, particularly the gradual shift to learning outcomes; modular design of VET qualifications; well-established provision for development of professional competences; licencing of staff involved in the verification of national vocational qualifications; and work to expand the network of licenced adult education providers<sup>(20)</sup>. By June 2018, 30 vocational education programmes were modularised, allowing gradual acquisition of formal VET qualifications and the acquisition of national vocational qualifications by students who do not complete formal education and students with special educational needs. All formal VET qualifications are expected to be modularised by 2020.

Higher education is underpinned by lifelong learning principles; redefinition of higher education qualifications and the use of credit transfer are expected to support VNFIL implementation. However, there is no system in place yet and validation measures have been limited so far to the University of Montenegro, which addressed adult higher education and VNFIL in its 2012 lifelong learning strategy.

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<sup>(20)</sup> A total of 102 adult education providers were licensed by the end of 2017 (European Commission et al., forthcoming).

While it is recognised in the country that people's skills are underused and that validation of non-formal and informal learning could be a solution to the existing skills mismatch on the labour market, there is also concern that valuing learning acquired in non-formal contexts could lead to a reduction of students in formal education and undermine the quality of qualifications. The main challenges to be tackled to advance VNFIL implementation include adoption of the remaining secondary legislation in line with the 2016 law on national vocational qualifications; addressing the lack of information about VNFIL, both among the general public and among labour market stakeholders; and promoting VNFIL opportunities in a systematic manner.

## NQF implementation

The eight-level comprehensive MQF has reached an early operational stage. The law on the MQF <sup>(21)</sup> was adopted in 2010, defining the principles and objectives of the framework, its levels and sublevels, qualification types and governance structure. It was followed by development of methodological documents setting out the procedures for development of qualifications and allocation of qualifications to MQF levels <sup>(22)</sup>. The governance bodies have now been established and implementation actions are underway, funded from the State budget and EU sources, such as the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), Erasmus+ grants and Tempus projects. All 15 sectoral commissions specified by the law on the MQF were established and became operational; their composition is published on the MQF website (ETF, 2018). Qualifications from VET, higher education, and those obtained through non-formal learning were given priority.

The qualifications framework information system <sup>(23)</sup> was designed within a 2007 IPA project and includes a register of qualifications, as well as information

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<sup>(21)</sup> Law on Montenegrin qualifications framework, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 45/2010. <http://www.cko.edu.me/Library/files/Law%20on%20MQF.pdf>

<sup>(22)</sup> Rulebook on descriptors for qualification levels and sub-levels, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 51/11.

Rulebook on procedures for developing qualifications from level 1 to level 5, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 21/12.

Rulebook on procedures for developing qualifications from level 6 to level 8, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 21/12.

<sup>(23)</sup> Available at: [www.cko.edu.me](http://www.cko.edu.me)

on current activities, meetings of sectoral commissions and the Qualifications Council, existing regulations and adopted documents, and data on training providers and assessments. It is maintained by the EQF NCP. The register of qualifications<sup>(24)</sup> currently includes 160 qualifications from formal VET (diplomas) and from the national vocational qualifications system (certificates) at MQF levels 3, 4 and 5, with complete description of NQF sector and subsector codes, ISCED codes, verification and expiry date, learning outcomes, credit requirements, progression to related qualifications, and assessment methods (ETF, 2018). MQF levels are indicated in the register. Since 2015/16, both MQF and EQF levels have been indicated on the Europass certificate supplement and on new qualification documents (diplomas and certificates) for qualifications at levels 2 to 5. Neither MQF, nor EQF levels are currently included on qualification documents or Europass diploma supplement at MQF levels 6 to 8; however a by-law regulating the content of qualification documents at these levels is expected to be revised in the near future, aiming to make it more informative (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018). In accordance with the law on national vocational qualifications, the Ministry of Education has adopted a rulebook on the content and form of Europass documents and the manner of filling them out<sup>(25)</sup>.

The challenges related to MQF implementation so far include the need to improve efficiency of qualifications attainment with respect to labour market demands; the development of qualifications of different types and at different MQF levels; and development of sectoral qualifications frameworks (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018). Current work on MQF implementation includes measures based on feedback from experience and aimed to deepen and review a number of parameters and instruments (ETF, 2018):

- (a) analysis of regulations in different sectors and preparation of a methodological framework for classification of 'additional qualifications';
- (b) analysis of existing qualifications (levels 2 to 5) and identification of needs for their modernisation and/or development of new ones;

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<sup>(24)</sup> Available at: <http://www.cko.edu.me/ckoview/Default.aspx>

<sup>(25)</sup> The new rulebook on Europass covers the Europass certificate supplement, the Europass diploma supplement, the Europass mobility document, the Europass language portfolio, and the Europass CV. It has been published in the *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No 56/2018 of 3.8.2018, available at: <http://www.sluzbenilist.me/pregled-dokumenta-2/?id=%7b60872504-0EFD-4D17-AA87-9023A499EE1C%7d>

- (c) analysis and revision of existing methodologies for development of occupational standards, qualification standards, curricula, programmes of education and examination catalogues;
- (d) taking forward proposals to develop qualifications based on (occupational) standards adopted in 2015 and earlier;
- (e) planning for development of qualifications taking into account the work of sectoral commissions;
- (f) review of occupational and qualification standards and development of new ones for qualifications of different levels and types;
- (g) review of examination catalogues and preparation of new ones for assessments for national vocational qualifications.

Efforts over recent years were focused on developing and implementing the MQF, and no evaluations have been yet conducted on its use and impact. Based on experiences so far, the framework is seen as influencing the promotion and use of learning outcomes, the review and renewal of qualifications, and the improvement of quality assurance in the qualifications system. It has also supported dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders from different parts of the education and training system, and between stakeholders in education and those from the labour market. Setting up and implementing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning is regulated through the Law on the MQF and supported by other MQF implementation actions (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

## Referencing to the EQF

Montenegro completed the process of referencing the MQF to the EQF and self-certification against the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in November 2014. A joint report was presented and published on the EQF portal <sup>(26)</sup>. An updated referencing report is planned to be presented in the EQF advisory group in the last trimester of 2019 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

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<sup>(26)</sup> Montenegrin Ministry of Education (2014). *The referencing of the Montenegrin qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning and the qualifications framework for the European higher education area*. <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/referencing-reports-and-contacts>

## Important lessons and future plans

Work on the MQF was undertaken as part of Montenegro's accession to the EU and supported by resources and expertise accessed through EU programmes. According to the ETF (2018), a key success factor in the progress achieved so far was the strategic approach to developing and implementing the framework. The Strategy for establishment of the national qualifications framework, adopted in 2008, set out key actions over a medium-term perspective, the role of stakeholders and allocation of resources. The legal basis and governance structures for MQF implementation are in place, referencing to the EQF has been carried out and significant progress was made with the inclusion of qualifications in the national register. Efforts are continuing to review and redefine existing qualifications and develop new ones based on the learning outcomes approach, at all MQF levels. The necessity to communicate the MQF beyond the education and training system and to make it more visible and clearer to all relevant institutions and the general public has become apparent (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

An outstanding challenge in the country is the insufficient match between the skills and qualifications demanded on the labour market and those provided through the education and training system. One proposed solution to this issue is wider and more systematic involvement of labour market stakeholders (businesses, sectors, workers) in designing and awarding qualifications (ETF, 2018). For the MQF to fulfil its role as an instrument for qualification system reform, bridging education and the world of work, a number of necessary actions were outlined in the 2014 Referencing report; they remain key challenges for the upcoming period (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018):

- (a) enhancing the capacity of sectoral commissions so that they are able adequately to articulate the labour market and society's needs, identify qualification and skill gaps, and propose development of qualifications of different types and levels;
- (b) focusing on the application of learning outcomes as a means to increase transparency of qualifications and recognition of learning, and clarifying the approach to all stakeholders from both education and the labour market;
- (c) maintaining and enhancing the capacity of NQF management structures, including continuous knowledge development of NCP staff, so that they are able to provide adequate support to the Qualifications Council and sectoral commissions;
- (d) maintaining an open approach and making use of practical experience gained to strengthen policy-making;

- (e) improving access to vocational qualifications, improving procedures for assessment of non-formal and informal learning, creating the conditions for lifelong learning, and developing a comprehensive quality assurance system.

**Main sources of information**

[URLs accessed 24.4.2019]

- The Montenegrin Ministry of Education hosts the EQF NCP:  
<http://www.mpin.gov.me/en/ministry>
- Montenegrin NQF website: <http://www.cko.edu.me/default.aspx>
- The register of qualifications: <http://www.cko.edu.me/ckoview/Default.aspx>
- Montenegrin Ministry of Education (2014). *The referencing of the Montenegrin qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning and the qualifications framework for the European higher education area.*  
<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/referencing-reports-and-contacts>

## Montenegrin qualifications framework (MQF)

NQF levels	Educational qualifications (formal education)	National vocational qualifications (NVQs) (*)	EQF levels
8	Diploma of doctoral studies	NVQ	8
	Diploma of master studies (**)		
7.2	Diploma of master studies	NVQ	
	Graduate specialist academic and applied studies diploma		7
	Higher education diploma (**)		
7.1	First cycle academic and applied studies diploma (**)	NVQ	
6	Diploma of first cycle academic and applied studies	NVQ	6
5	Diploma of post-secondary vocational education	NVQ	5
4.2	Master craftsman examination certificate	NVQ	
	Upper secondary school leaving diploma (general, gymnasium)		4
4.1	Upper secondary school leaving diploma (vocational, four years)	NVQ	
3	Diploma of secondary vocational education (three years)	NVQ	3
2	Diploma of lower vocational education (two years)	NVQ	2
1.2	Certificate of completed primary education (nine years)	NVQ	
1.1	Certificate of completed first cycle of primary education or completed functional literacy programme	NVQ	1

(\*) Labour-market-oriented qualifications, attained through assessment of vocational ability to perform sets of tasks linked to an occupation. Demonstrated knowledge, skills and competences can be acquired through formal or non-formal learning, including special education programmes or part of formal education programmes that corresponds to an occupational standard.

(\*\*) Pre-Bologna diplomas, in use until adoption of the Higher Education Act of 2002.

Source: Adapted from the Montenegrin Ministry of Education, 2014.

## Abbreviations

EQF	European qualifications framework
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession, the EU support programme for candidate and potential candidate countries
MQC	Montenegrin Qualification Council
MQF	Montenegrin qualifications framework
NCP	national coordination point
NQF	national qualifications framework
NVQ	national vocational qualifications
QF-EHEA	qualifications framework for the European higher education area
VET	vocational education and training

## References

[URLs accessed 9.4.2019]

European Commission (2018). *Commission staff working document: Montenegro 2018 report, accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - 2018 Communication on EU enlargement policy {COM(2018) 450 final}*. SWD(2018) 150 final, Strasbourg 17.4.2018.

<https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-montenegro-report.pdf>

European Commission and Cedefop (2018). *Survey on implementation, communication and use of NQF/EQF* [unpublished].

European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (forthcoming). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018: country report: Montenegro*.

European Training Foundation (2018). *Inventory of NQF in Montenegro*.

[https://connections.etf.europa.eu/wikis/home?lang=en#!/wiki/Wf591e43b607e\\_4ccf\\_8d94\\_a3256a255147/page/Montenegro%20-%20NQF%20Inventory](https://connections.etf.europa.eu/wikis/home?lang=en#!/wiki/Wf591e43b607e_4ccf_8d94_a3256a255147/page/Montenegro%20-%20NQF%20Inventory)

Ministry of Education (2014). *Referencing the Montenegrin qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning and the qualifications framework for the European higher education area*.

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