



# NQFs across Europe: main trends and developments

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**CEDEFOP**

European Centre  
for the Development  
of Vocational Training

**Building the European  
map of qualifications**

Latest NQF developments



**21 March 2024**  
**9.15-13.00 (CET)**  
Virtual event

#NQFs



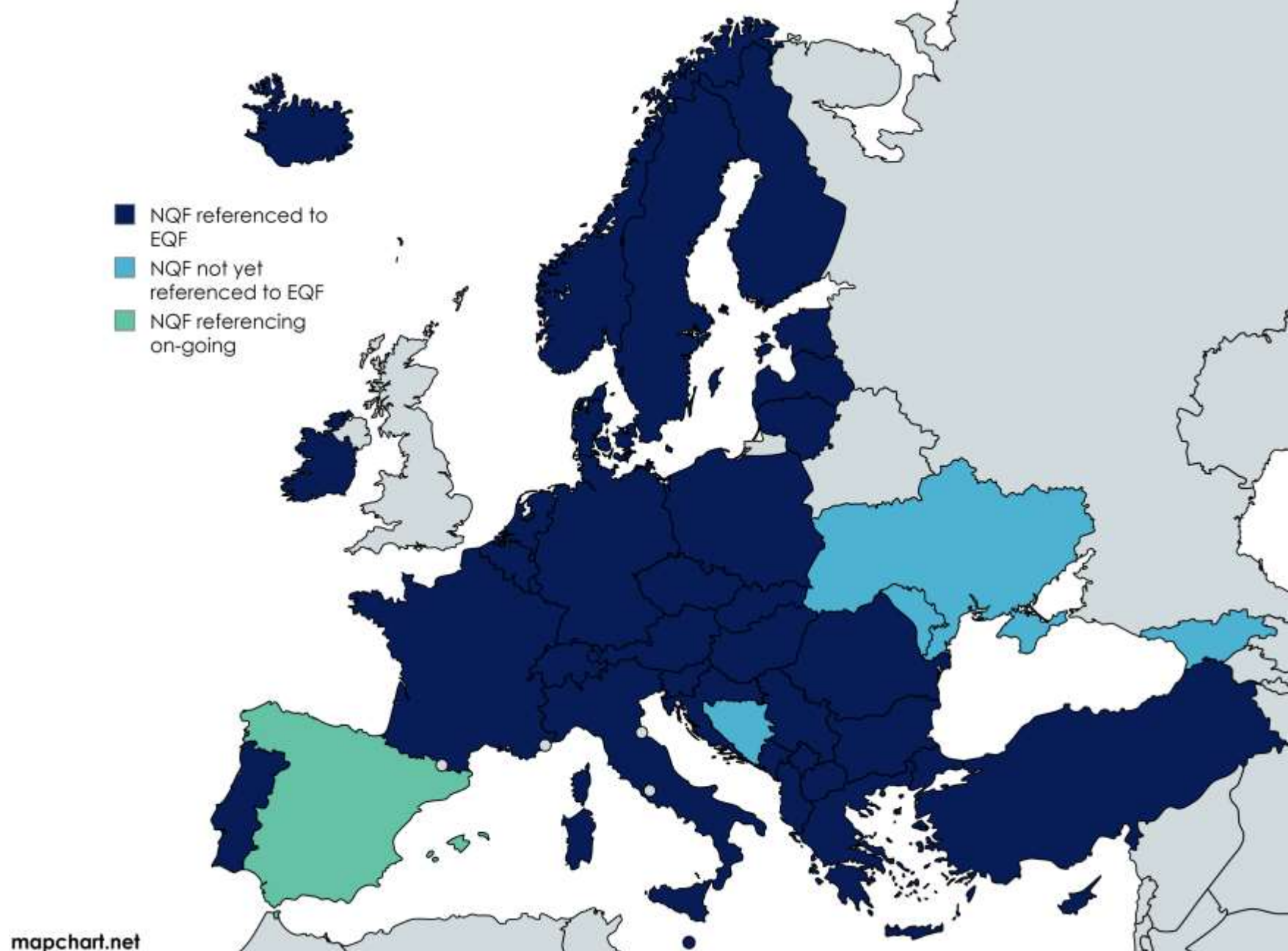
# Overview of NQFs in Europe

QUALIFICATION

# Countries in the EQF process

41 EQF countries –  
36 countries have linked  
their NQFs to EQF

*The sample of this analysis is  
38 country-specific reports*



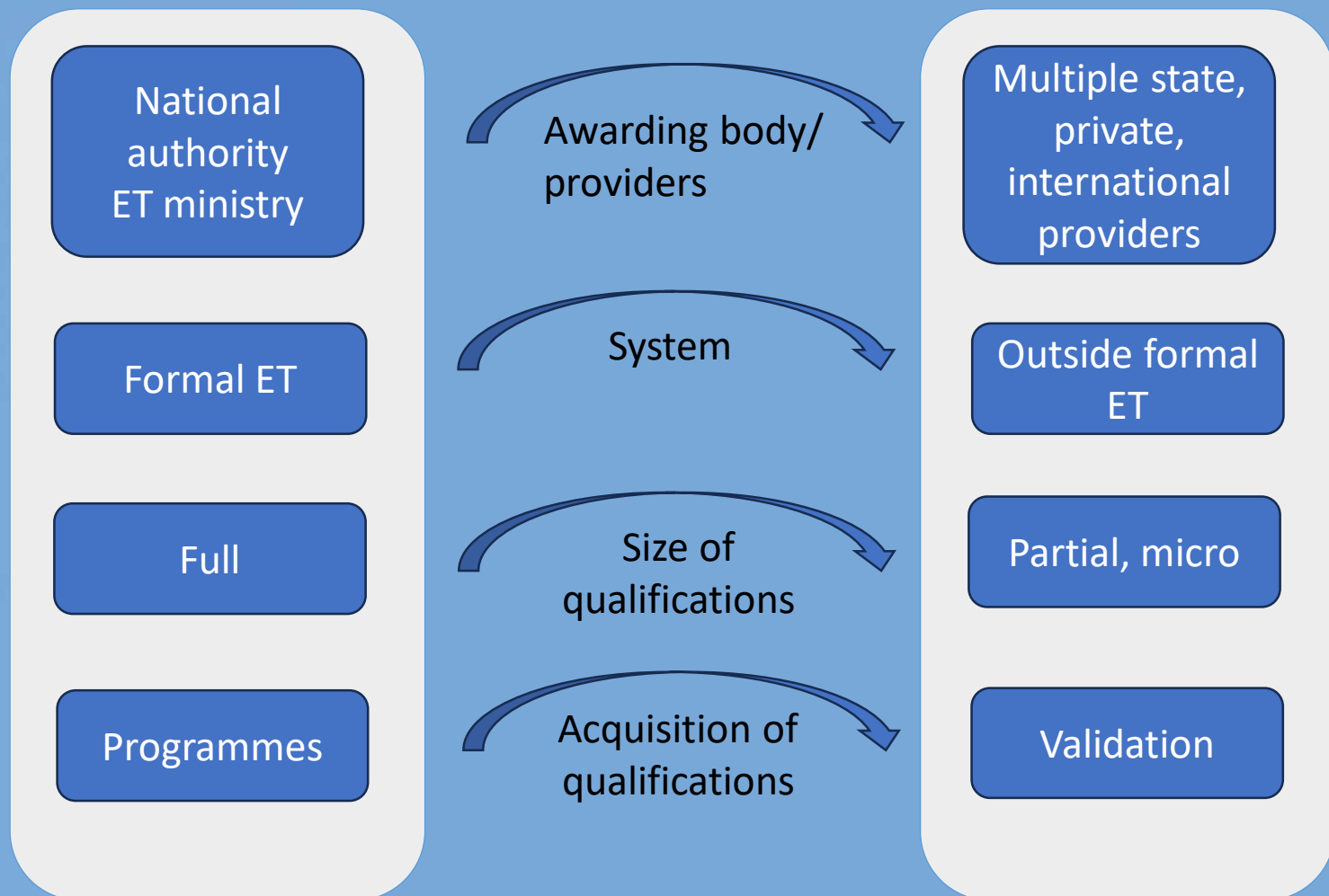
# Are we progressing?

- ✓ NQFs are becoming more mature
- ✓ Countries are working in updating their referencing reports
- ✓ Countries are opening-up their NQFs
- ✓ Long way to go...



# NQF scope and coverage

# In which ways NQFs have evolved?



# Developing comprehensive NQFs

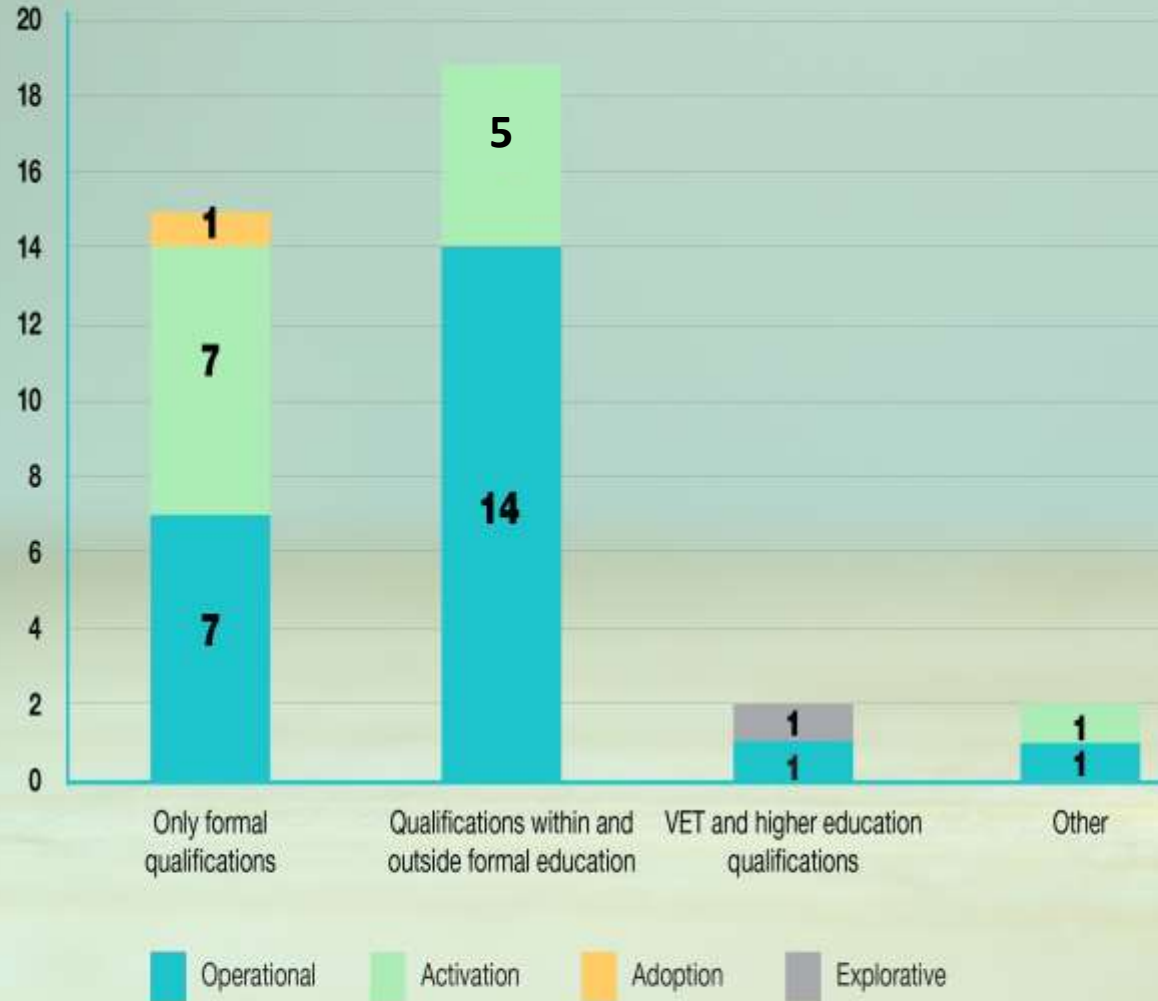


- ✓ In 13 countries at least one type of a levelled qualification can be considered as a microcredential.
- ✓ 6 countries have already included international qualifications and 5 are planning to do so.
- ✓ In some cases, countries incorporate professional qualifications as a sub-framework.



# Coverage of NQFs

- ✓ More advanced NQFs tend to be more open.
- ✓ Considerable progress in including qualifications awarded outside formal education and training.
- ✓ More countries plan to include such qualifications in their frameworks.



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# NQFs and validation

Linking an NQF with VNFIL is another way to make the framework more inclusive.

In 17 countries, NQF and validation policies are explicitly linked.

One of the main functions of NQFs is to support VNFIL procedures.

The most common approach is using level descriptors, learning outcomes and standards included in the NQF in VNFIL



• AWARD QUALIFICATION  
• in the NQF



• AWARD EXEMPTIONS  
• (as credits or modules)



ACCESS TO  
QUALIFICATIONS  
in the NQF

# Raising awareness of NQFs

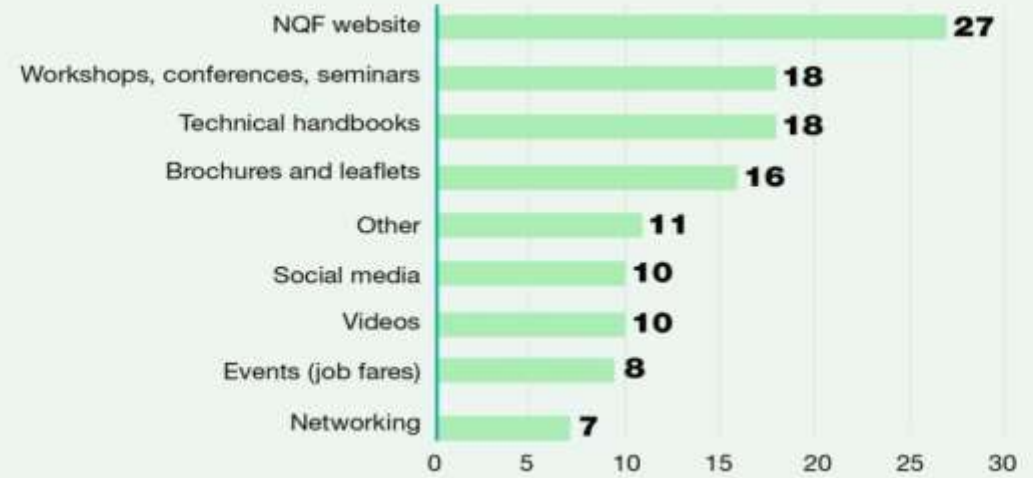
# Progress made... still a long way to go

- ✓ Two main target groups:
  - NQF developers and implementers
  - system beneficiaries and end users
- ✓ Awareness of NQFs/EQF among end users has gradually increased, but often remains the lowest.
- ✓ Individuals most often use NQF/EQF levels to ease their international mobility and orientation within the ET system
- ✓ 24 NQFs are used by labour market stakeholders; 15 countries have reported that NQF/EQF levels are used in job ads and/or recruitment procedures (usually not extensively)

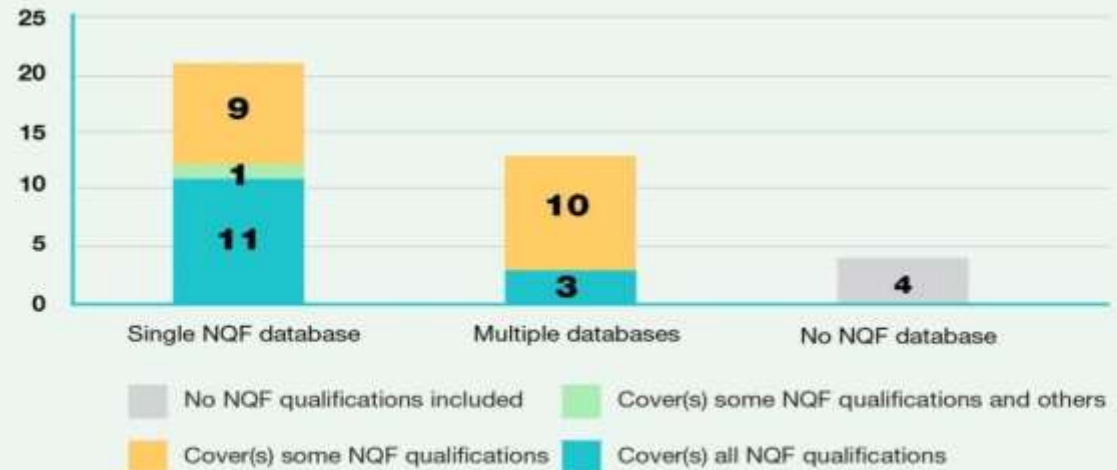
Learners, workers,  
jobseekers, employers,  
labour market  
stakeholders



# NQF communication tools



## Coverage of NQF databases/registers



# Indicating NQF/EQF levels



Source: Cedefop.



# NQFs interacting with their ecosystem

# NQF objectives



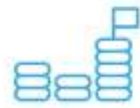
**36**  
IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY  
AND COMPARABILITY OF  
QUALIFICATIONS



**22**  
SUPPORT EDUCATION  
PROGRESSION AND LLL



**18**  
FOSTER INTERNATIONAL  
COMPARABILITY OF  
QUALIFICATIONS AND  
MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS



**17**  
RAISE QUALITY  
OF QUALIFICATIONS



**15**  
ENABLE VALIDATION  
OF NON-FORMAL AND  
INFORMAL LEARNING



**14**  
PROMOTE PERMEABILITY,  
REDUCING BARRIERS  
BETWEEN SECTORS AND  
INSTITUTIONS



**13**  
SUPPORT INTRODUCTION  
TO AND MOBILITY WITHIN  
THE LABOUR MARKET



**12**  
STRENGTHEN  
COOPERATION BETWEEN  
STAKEHOLDERS



**11**  
PROMOTE THE USE OF  
LEARNING OUTCOMES



**11**  
SUPPORT RECOGNITION  
OF QUALIFICATIONS



**9**  
SUPPORT SOCIOECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



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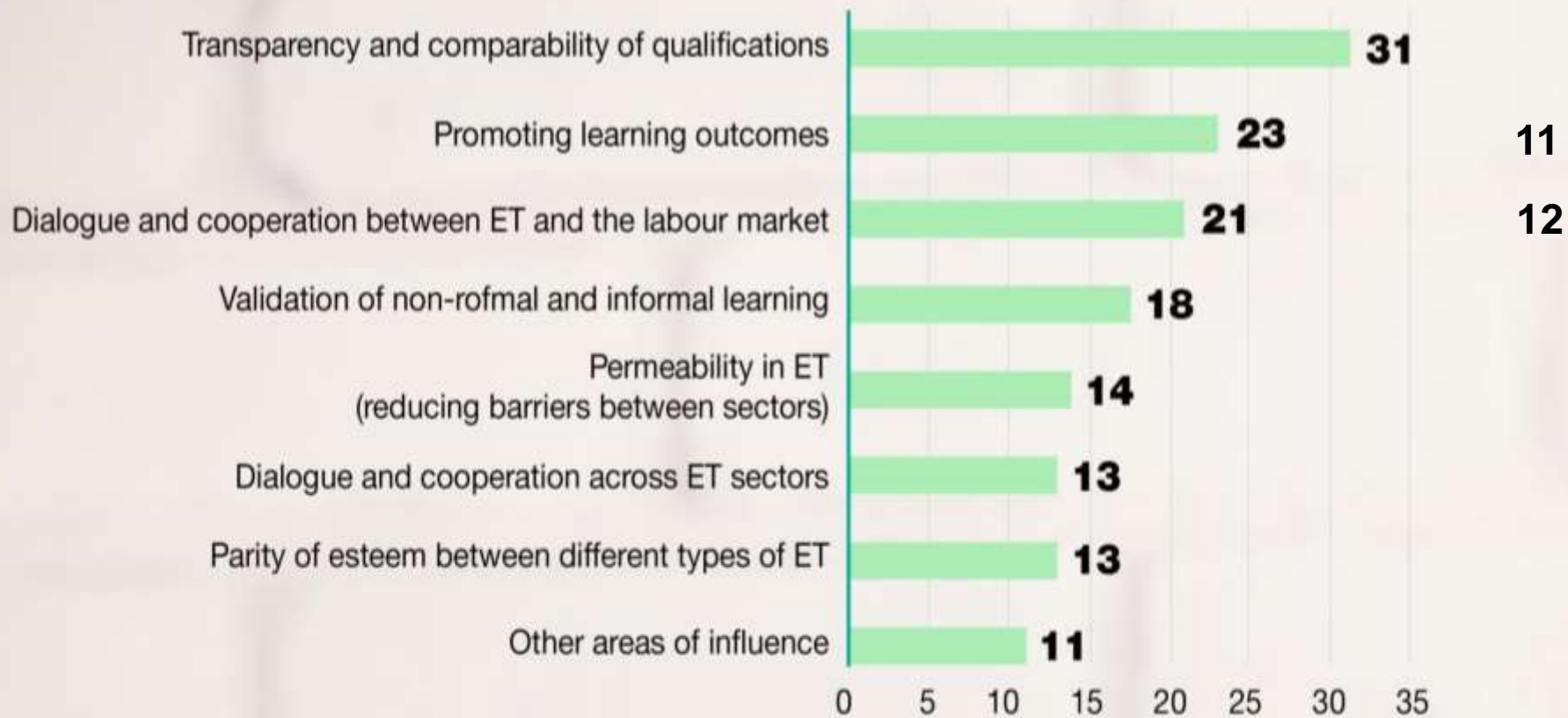


# Main areas of NQF use





# Main areas of NQF impact



policy

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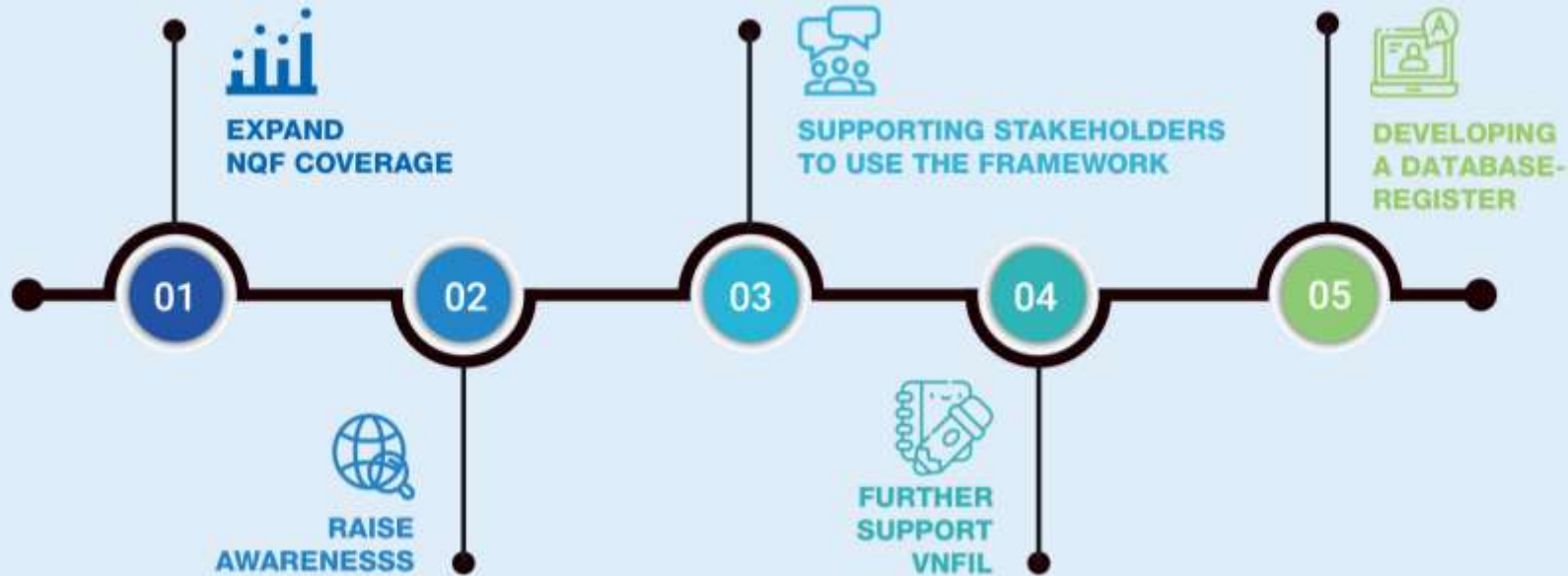


# Success factors and the way ahead

## Main success factors in NQF implementation



## Main future priorities




# NQF online tool



# National qualifications frameworks (NQF) online tool

 Introduction

 Overview

 Countries

 Country comparison

 Qualification comparison

 About

## Welcome


The NQF online tool is a rich source of information on the [qualifications frameworks](#) and systems of the 41 countries participating in the European qualifications framework (EQF) process. Policy-makers, researchers, and the wider public can learn about the structure and scope of the NQFs, and get information on their implementation, impact and future priorities.


The NQF online tool presents, through an interactive map/grid, information on the state of play of the NQF of each [country](#) in 2018, 2020 and 2022. Information is organised in thematic categories, and can be compared for two countries ([Country comparison](#)). In addition, through the EQF users can compare qualification types between two countries ([Qualification comparison](#)), and have an '[Overview](#)' of the main features of all NQFs across Europe.


The information displayed in the tool is collected biennially by Cedefop together with the European Commission and ETF, in cooperation with countries and the EQF national coordination points.


We hope the wealth of information presented will inspire and support all those interested in developing transparent and accessible education and training systems, and those navigating through the various European qualification types.

Detailed information on 2022 developments in the accession and pre-accession countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine) will be available in the second quarter of 2024.

  
**Overview**  
of national  
qualifications

  
Detailed  
information on  
**NQF**

  
**Compare**  
NQF developments  
between two

  
**Compare**  
the qualification  
types of two

COUNTRY	REPORTING YEAR	SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK	NUMBER OF LEVELS	LEVEL DESCRIPTORS	LEGAL BASIS/STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT	NQF LINKED TO EQF	NQF/EQF WEBSITE	QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER/DATABASE
Albania	2022	Comprehensive NQF including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training and lifelong learning qualifications for adults and people undertaking specialised courses for professional development.	Eight	knowledge, skills, competences	NQF law (adopted in 2010, revised in 2018) (in Albanian) <a href="#">Activation stage</a>	2021	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">The National Catalogue of VET qualifications</a>
Austria	2022	The NQF is open to all types of qualifications from the formal and non-formal sectors. General education qualifications are not yet included in the framework.	Eight	knowledge, skills, competence	Federal Law 14/2016 on the NQF (in German) <a href="#">Operational stage</a>	2012	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Qualifications register</a>
Belgium-DE	2022	Comprehensive NQF for lifelong learning including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training.	Eight	occupational competence (knowledge and skills), personal competence (social competence and autonomy)	Decree on establishing a qualifications framework for the German-speaking Community (2013) (in German) <a href="#">Activation stage</a>			
Belgium-FL	2022	The NQF includes all levels and types of qualifications from formal education and training (educational qualifications) and professional qualifications that can be awarded awarded both inside and outside formal education.	Eight	knowledge / skills, context / autonomy / responsibility	Decree on the qualification structure (2009) (in Dutch) <a href="#">Operational stage</a>	2011, 2014 update, 2023 update	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Qualifications database</a>
Belgium-FR	2022	The framework includes educational and professional qualifications awarded by the public sector and skills certificates awarded through the validation of non-formal and informal learning.	Eight	knowledge / skills, context / autonomy / responsibility	Decree on cooperation agreement between the three francophone governments on the creation and management of CFC (2015) (in French) <a href="#">Activation stage</a>	2013	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Qualifications register</a>
Bosnia & Herzegovina	2022	Designed as a comprehensive NQF for lifelong learning including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training. Open to those awarded outside formal education and training.	Eight	knowledge, skills, competence	Decision of the CoM on the adoption of the baseline qualifications framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011) (in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian) (in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian)		<a href="#">Website</a>	





# National qualifications frameworks (NQF) online tool

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Country comparison

Qualification comparison

About

## Countries



Use the interactive map or the countries grid to display information on NQF developments across Europe. It is possible to compare countries based on reporting year, stage of development and whether the NQF has been linked to EQF.

Detailed information on 2022 developments in the accession and pre-accession countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine) will be available in the second quarter of 2024.

Reporting year

2022



Stage of development



NQF linked to EQF

- Any -



Apply

Reset

Map view

Grid view



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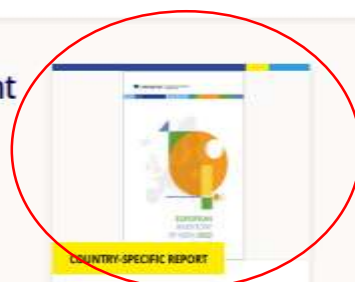


Expand all ▼

## NQF country report

- ▼ 1. National context
- ▼ 2. NQF objectives and functions
- ▼ 3. Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications
- ▼ 4. Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement
- ▼ 5. Recognition and validation of prior learning
- ▼ 6. NQF implementation and impact
- ▼ 7. Referencing to the EQF
- ▼ 8. Reflections and plans
- ▼ NQF table
- ▼ Main sources of information
- ▼ Acronyms
- ▼ References

## Related content



## Overview

Stage of development:

Operational stage

NQF linked to EQF: ✓

Scope of the framework:

The NQF covers all levels and types of formal qualifications apart from initial education qualifications (nursery school, primary school and first cycle/lower secondary level). It is open to qualifications awarded outside the regulated qualification system, including private-sector and international qualifications, and industry or sectoral qualifications (CQPs)

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Law No 2002-73 on social modernisation (2002)  
(in French)

Law No 2018-771 for the freedom to choose one's professional future (2018)  
(in French)

Decree No 2019-14 on the NQF of vocational and professional qualifications (2019)  
(in French)

NQF/EQF website:

[Website](#)

Qualifications register/database:

[National register of vocational and professional qualifications \(RNCP\)](#)

## Compare with other country

Country

– Select country –

Reporting year

– Select year –

Compare

trres?year=5340&nqf\_linked\_to\_eqf=AllFrance



## Qualification comparison



Select two countries and compare their qualification types through the EQF. For a detailed overview and analysis of NQF level descriptors in Europe, please click [here](#). To discover more on NQF qualification databases, you can check the [Europass portal](#).

### Select countries to compare qualifications

Country	Reporting year	Country	Reporting year
-- Select country --	-- Select year --	 -- Select country --	-- Select year --

EQF Levels





 Austria (2022)	 EQF	 Ireland (2022)
<b>NQF 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctorate (<i>Doktorgrade</i>)</li> <li>Level-8 professional qualifications in the health sector awarded by the Federal Ministry of Health <a href="#">Show details</a></li> </ul>	<b>EQF 8</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctoral degree</li> <li>Higher doctorate</li> </ul>
<b>NQF 7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master's degree (<i>Master- bzw. Diplomgrade</i>)</li> </ul>	<b>EQF 7</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master's degree</li> <li>Postgraduate diploma</li> <li>Level 9 professional award <a href="#">Show details</a></li> </ul>
<b>NQF 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor's degree (<i>Bachelorgrade</i>)</li> <li>Master craftsperson (<i>Meister</i>)</li> <li>Master of agriculture (<i>landwirtschaftliche/r Meister/in</i>)</li> <li>Engineer (<i>Ingenieur</i>)</li> <li>Health qualification awarded by the Federal Ministry of Health – nurse responsible for general care (RL 2005/36/EG) (<i>Gehobener Dienst für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege (Diplomierete Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegerin, Diplomierter Gesundheits- und Krankenpfleger)</i>)</li> <li>Level-6 professional qualification <a href="#">Show details</a></li> </ul>	<b>EQF 6</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honours bachelor's degree</li> <li>Higher diploma</li> <li>Level 8 professional award <a href="#">Show details</a></li> </ul> <b>NQF 7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ordinary bachelor's degree</li> <li>Level 7 professional award <a href="#">Show details</a></li> </ul>
<b>NQF 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VET college/school leaving certificate – 5-year programmes (BHS) (<i>Reife- und Diplomprüfung der berufsbildenden höheren Schulen</i>)</li> <li>Level-5 professional qualification awarded by the Federal Ministry of Defence – staff non-commissioned officer (<i>Stabsunteroffizier oder Stabsunteroffizierin (StbUO, Erstverwendung)</i>)</li> <li>Level-5 professional qualification awarded by the Federal Ministry of Justice – senior prison officer (<i>Exekutivdienst in der Verwendungsgruppe E2a im Justizressort (Dienstführenden Grundausbildung – mittleres Management)</i>)</li> <li>Level-5 professional qualification awarded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy (<i>Duale Akademie</i>) <a href="#">Show details</a></li> </ul>	<b>EQF 5</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge</li> <li>A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems</li> <li>Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change</li> <li>Review and develop performance of self and others</li> </ul>



# Thank you

For further information:

[Iraklis.PLIAKIS@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:Iraklis.PLIAKIS@cedefop.europa.eu)

Policy brief: Building a European qualifications map

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/9191>

NQF online tool

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/nqfs-online-tool>

European Inventory of NQFs

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/european-inventory-of-nqfs>

Project page

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/national-qualifications-framework-nqf>

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