



The Development of National Qualifications Frameworks in Europe

26 November 2008

Introduction

This note reflects the situation November 2008 as regards the development and implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) in countries taking part in the Education and Training 2010 process as well as in the pre-accession countries.

The country descriptions reflects the input made to the EQF Advisory group, the Cluster on recognition of learning outcomes and the peer learning activities in Budapest (October 2007) , Krakow (June 2008) and London (October 2008)¹.

The information is gathered and presented according to five main headlines² and themes:

- *Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives*
- *Levels*
- *Descriptors*
- *Use of learning outcomes*
- *Legal base/National Coordination point*

Due to the rapid developments in this field the current note should be seen as a basis for continuous updating. This mapping must take into consideration the political character of NQF developments. These are processes involving stakeholders with different and sometimes conflicting perspectives and we therefore everybody involved in the national developments to carefully read the note and give us feedback on the text.

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¹ The following written sources have been used:

- Bologna Process Stocktaking London 2007¹
- Responses to the Cedefop questionnaire to the Directors General of Vocational; Training (DGVT) spring 2008
- Responses to the Cedefop 'Refemet' questionnaire spring/summer 2008
- Cedefop (2008); *The shift to learning outcomes; European policies and practises*, comparative study of 32 European countries.
 - Appendix 1: learning outcomes at systemic level
 - Appendix 2: learning outcomes: qualifications systems

² This structure will have to be further developed as NQFs are being developed and implemented. A more detailed structure is used for the UK and reflects the stage of developments reached here.

Austria

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

The aim is to develop a single overarching NQF based on learning outcomes. Working groups were set up summer 2006 to prepare an NQF based on in-depth research. In February 2007 a national steering group for the development of the Austrian NQF was established. All stakeholders have been involved in the consultation process which was concluded November 2008. A total of 265 responses were received and the steering group will present its conclusions and recommendations end 2008. Development are being coordinated by the General Directorate of the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. The NQF is planned to be ready by 2010.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

In 2005, the ministry launched a project for the development of quality standards for core elements of both general education and vocational training. The (training) standards define target outcomes in specialised and cross-curricular skills that learners should acquire by a certain point in their learning career.

A shift which will lead to learning outcomes being more clearly identified and influential is taking place in Austria. This is reflected in the responses to the consultation process where the learning outcomes approach is supported by the main stakeholders and where the link to validation of non-formal and informal learning is emphasised.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Belgium (Flanders)

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

An NQF is seen as a necessary pre-requisite for relating Flemish qualification levels to the EQF. A set of 8 draft reference level descriptors was developed during 2005/2006 and led to a discussion note published in October 2006. All relevant ministries as well as all official advisory bodies in the field of education and training gave an opinion on this document. A report on the development of a central qualifications database (qualification repertoire) has been completed and a prototype will be developed.

In July 2008 the Flemish Government has adopted the draft Decree on the Flemish NQF. Currently, advice from the different advisory bodies is being collected and will feed into a draft Decree to be presented to the Flemish Parliament in January 2009. The final adoption of the Decree is expected by May 2009.

Levels

The NQF draft uses 8 reference levels.

Descriptors

The Flemish level descriptors are based on knowledge, skills, context and autonomy-responsibility.

Use of learning outcomes

There is full agreement that NQF must be based on learning outcomes. A series of pilot projects were finalised in spring 2007 testing the learning outcomes approach and the link to the qualifications framework in a range of sectors (EQF levels 1-5). Similar projects have also been carried out by Bologna promoters for EQF levels 6-8. The general conclusion of these test projects is that the descriptors developed for the Flemish framework are useful for classifying qualifications and only require minor changes and adaptations.

Legal base

The formal decision on the establishment of an NQF will be based on a Decree.

National Coordination point

Belgium (Wallonia)

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

An NQF is seen as a requirement and precondition for a functioning EQF. A formal decision on setting up an NQF was made in March 2006. A group of experts was set up autumn 2006 to outline the main features of a future NQF. The result of the work will form the basis for future developments.

Levels

An 8-level structure will be chosen for the framework.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

As in Flanders, the emphasis on learning outcomes is essential to the ongoing work. It is noted that some parts of the education and training system (adult learning, vocational education and training, the new system for validation of non-formal learning) have significant experiences in using the learning outcome approach, others sub-sectors have less experience.

Legal base

A draft legal proposal was prepared spring 2008 outlining steps to reinforce the coherence of higher education by introducing a qualifications framework covering

EQF levels 6-8 (responding to the EHEA). It is for the moment unclear how this proposal will link into the overarching NQF signalled in 2006.

National Coordination point

Bulgaria

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

Bulgaria is committed to implement EQF while observing the terms provided for in the EQF Recommendation.

The national authority responsible for implementation is the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry emphasises the need to involve all relevant stakeholders in the development of a NQF and the implementation of the EQF. The overall goal of establishing NQF is to give impetus and to facilitate the mobility of the Bulgarian citizens within the education systems and within the labour market in Europe. The NQF will aim at more transparency of Bulgarian qualification system while creating conditions for better understanding and mutual trust. The Bulgarian NQF is intended to be an integrated Framework of Qualifications.

A task force has recently been set up (constituted by an Order of the Minister of Education and Science in April 2008) aiming at the comparison of existing national educational degrees with the EQF levels; as well as at drafting of a proposal for establishing a NQF and for introducing necessary amendments into the legal basis.

At its' second meeting (9 October 2008) the abovementioned task force arrived at a decision that the EQF levels 6, 7 and 8 and the national "Bologna framework" levels are fully compatible. (The national "Bologna framework" has been elaborated by a working party of highly qualified specialists, however, official approval and adoption is still pending). The task force is currently drafting a proposal for the first level of the NQF encompassing the first four degrees of the basic general education to cover the first EQF level. The most important assignment is considered to be the shift to the "learning outcomes". A decision has been taken on behalf of the task force to apply the national "Bologna framework" as a "pattern-description" of knowledge, skills and competences for the rest of the NQF levels.

Bulgaria will take all necessary measures to observe the terms laid down in the Recommendation – by 2010 to establish NQF and by 2012 to fully implement EQF.

Levels

The NQF is still under elaboration.

Descriptors

Each level of the NQF will be described as a set of standards of knowledge, skills and competence expressed as learning outcomes. These sets of standards will be agreed at national level most probably by introducing and adopting amendments to the legal basis.

Use of learning outcomes

The drafting of the NQF will be based on the learning outcomes.

State educational requirements (standards) for the different vocations are in a process of revision to the effect of applying learning outcomes principle. (Up to present the standards for 9 vocations have been renewed and it is expected that until the end of 2008 the standards for another 30 vocations will be finalized.)

Legal basis

All necessary amendments to the legal acts will be duly introduced upon drafting the NQF.

National Coordination point

The National Coordination Point for Bulgaria is the Directorate for European Integration and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Education and Science.

Croatia

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

First steps towards the development of an overarching lifelong learning Croatian Qualifications framework (CROQF) have been taken. During 2006 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports formed a joint working group of experts from VET and HE. The proposal of this group has been discussed during spring 2007 with all the relevant stakeholders.

The Croatian framework is expected to be complete by 2009.

Levels

The framework will have 8 levels with additional four sublevels reflecting the particularities of the Croatian qualifications system.

Descriptors

The levels have been described through credit ranges, links to levels in the EQF and types of qualifications gained after the completion of studies within a certain level. Elements of key competences are also included in the first four levels.

Use of learning outcomes

A wider commission of experts from all stakeholders was nominated in September 2007, which will define common standards and descriptions for all levels which will serve as a basis for development of detailed descriptions for all qualifications based on measurable learning outcomes and competences.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Cyprus

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

In Cyprus a proposal for a political decision regarding the creation of an NQF has been prepared.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

The principle of learning outcomes is accepted, but with a continuing emphasis on inputs.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Czech Republic

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

The Czech Republic started work on an NQF already in 2003-2004 prior to the launching of the EQF. This work formed part of the national reform agenda, partly supported by the EU social funds.

The NQF can be viewed as a publicly accessible register of all complete and partial qualifications confirmed, distinguished and recognised in the Czech Republic. The NQF builds on units (complete and partial qualifications) and standards (for qualifications and assessment).

Existing projects have been targeted towards lower qualification levels. Activities in the area of higher education facilities are only limited to opening discussions.

Projects (now completed) have been targeted towards lower qualifications levels. Activities in the area of higher education and addressing higher qualifications levels have only reached the initial stage of work.

Levels/Descriptors

The Czech NQF is based on 8 levels, including a set of reference level descriptors reflecting the principles promoted by the EQF.

Use of learning outcomes

The Czech Republic has an NQF based on learning outcomes, defined as target knowledge, skills and competences.

Legal base

An outline of an NQF has been developed and laid down in the 2006 law on recognition of continuing education results. This law entered into effect August 2007.

National Coordination point

The NCP in the Czech Republic (in Czech - Koordinacni centrum EQF) is based in the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NUOV). The NCP CR was established in August 2008 after an approval from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and its full activity is scheduled to begin in January 2009.

The NCP CR consists of three parts:

- The NUOV Working Group (responsible for NCP CR organisation, communication with relevant national and international partners and bodies, cooperation with the National Europass Centre, monitoring etc.)
- The Advisory Group – consists of 15 stakeholders from various authorities and organisations (responsible for consultations, evaluation of the materials related to the further development of the NQF, dissemination of information etc.)
- The Sector Group – newly formed group (will consider concrete questions on the relation of the NQF to the EQF), acts as a working group of the National Council for Qualifications.

<http://www.nuov.cz/koordinacni-centrum-eqf>

Denmark

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

The overall purpose of the National Danish Qualification Framework is to support lifelong learning and mobility by allowing users to get a comprehensive view of all publically recognised qualifications in the Danish educational system and by making the pathways to these qualifications visible hence improving transparency in the educational system.

The following aims have been defined for the NQF:

- The NQF shall support lifelong learning by making visible pathways through the educational system and enable comparison and recognition of qualifications
- It shall underpin mutual recognition of qualifications achieved in Denmark and in other countries by establishing a reference between the NQF and EQF and other qualification frameworks outside of Denmark.
- It shall support validation of informal and non-formal learning so that citizens may get recognition for knowledge, skills and competences no matter how or where they are obtained.
- It shall clarify the interrelationship between education and labour market and between education in different educational sectors and at different levels by focusing on learning outcomes.

As a response to calls for increased transparency, an inter-ministerial working group was established in early 2007 with the task to develop a proposal for a coherent national qualification framework including qualifications achieved in VET, higher education and possibly other education and training sub-systems. In August 2008 the working group finalised a draft proposal for an NQF. This proposal is now used as a basis for for hearing and political decision. The proposed framework is a 'bridging framework' according to the typology suggested by Mike Coles. It features a set of level descriptors which are common to all qualifications that are to be referenced to the framework.

During the same period, the Danish national framework for higher education has been finalised, and a system for accreditation of higher education degrees has been established by law.

As an important background for this development, it should be noted that the Danish Government's strategy on globalisation "Progress, Innovation and Cohesion – Strategy for Denmark in the Global Economy" from May 2006, includes goals and measures that targets the needs for increased permeability of the educational system, calls for increased portability of qualifications between educational sectors and between education and workplaces, and finally points to the need to establish a link between the Danish education and training system and the EQF.

Levels

Eight levels are proposed, from school leaving certificate (9th grade) to PhD including certificates in adult education and training.

Descriptors

A proposal for a set of descriptors has been developed. Each level is described by knowledge, skills and competences. Within each of these categories, the descriptions follow a common schema for description in order to ensure comparability of descriptors and to clarify the progression between levels.

Use of learning outcomes

The proposal requires that qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes, which is already the case for most of the relevant qualifications.

Legal base

Legal base is expected to be established as part of the implementation.

National Coordination Point

A national coordination committee is expected to be established as part of the implementation of the new national qualification framework. Decision about an EQF – reference point in Denmark will be taken in October 2008.

Estonia

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

There is a proposal in Estonia for an overarching, lifelong learning NQF.

Levels

A proposal for an 8 level NQF has been made, but discussions on the appropriate number of levels are still taking place.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

A set of new learning outcome based national curricula for VET is expected to be in place by 2008. To these will be added a new model of professional standards to be gradually developed in the period 2008-2013. The 5 years of experience with a competence framework for VET is being used to consider a widening of the use of learning outcomes in general education and higher education.

Legal base

In 2007 a draft legislation of Professions Act was drawn up. It proposes a transition from the present competence-based 5-level qualifications framework to a new 8-level framework.

National Coordination point

The National Coordination Point in Estonia is the Estonian Qualification Authority.

Finland

Development of National Qualification Framework; main objectives and initiatives

A committee appointed by the Ministry of Education drafted a proposal for a Finnish framework for HE related to EHEA in 2005. The committee decided to describe higher education degrees by means of workload involved, the level, the stated learning outcomes and the eligibility for further education and the professional competence they provide, as well as, how different degrees relate to each others. Learning outcomes for first cycle (polytechnic, university), second cycle (polytechnic, university) and doctoral degrees were determined. Main division of learning outcomes was knowledge, skills and competence.

In December 2007 the Government issued a Development Plan for Education and Research. The development plan covers the years 2007-2011 and outlines education and science policy in accordance with goals presented in the Government Program.

In compliance with the Development Plan the functioning and clarity of the Finnish qualification system will be improved by drawing up a national qualification framework based on the description of learning outcomes by the end of 2010.

The Ministry of Education appointed a working group consisting of representatives of relevant ministries, labour market organizations, rector's councils and student unions to draft an overarching national qualification framework in August 2008. The committee is expected to put their proposal by the end of June 2009.

Levels/ Descriptors

They are not yet ready.

Use of learning outcomes

Finland has extensive experience in applying a learning outcomes approach to its education and training system. This applies in particular in VET but increasingly in general and higher education.

Legal base

The legal basis is the acts and decrees concerning the qualification systems and qualifications at all levels of the Finnish education system (under the Ministry of Education and other ministries)

National Coordination Point

The Ministry of Education made the official decision and appointed the Finnish National Board of Education the National Coordination Point of EQF in June 2008. According to the decision tasks of the Finnish National Coordination Point are:

- to support and guide the NOF and EQF referencing process in Finland
- to take part in the development process of NOF and implementation of EQF
- to inform citizens and social partners and other groups involved in this process about EQF, NQF –issues and how qualifications are referenced in frameworks
- to guide them in implementing framework
- to take part in the international and national cooperation and to do other tasks appointed by the Ministry of Education.

The Finnish National Board of Education is preparing websites of the National Coordination Point (in Finnish, Swedish and English).

France

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

The NQF in place since 2002 is being revised to bring it into line with the EHEA and EQF. The key element of the French framework is the national repertoire of professional qualifications.

Levels/Descriptors

The ongoing revision of the French framework may imply a reconsideration of the number of levels (currently 5) used.

Use of learning outcomes

France uses the notion of outcomes of learning in both general education and VET. Occupational profiles with associated competences form a learning outcomes basis for school-based and apprenticeship VET. For compulsory education a common basic core for all has recently been introduced based on broad areas of competence.

Legal base

There is the legal basis since 2002 to bring the various classifications together in a French NQF.

National Coordination point

The National Coordination Point in France is the National Commission for qualifications and occupations (CNCP).

Germany

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

An NQF for the higher education sector (related to EHEA) was implemented in May 2005.

Germany has declared its intention to create an NQF covering all areas and levels of education and training. In the summer of 2007, the Federal Government and the Länder appointed a national working group for the development of an overarching NQF linked to the EQF. This group will present a proposal for an NQF by the end of 2008.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

The shift to learning outcomes is supported by major stakeholders, but some emphasise the need to protect the German vocational training model and warns against a modularised model watering down the existing dual model combining school and work practise. A pilot project has been set up to formulate competence-based vocational training regulations in a few selected occupations.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Greece

Development of National Qualification Framework; main objectives and initiatives

A working group, chaired by the Secretary for Higher Education, has been set up to develop an NQF for higher education (related to EHEA).

Development of an NQF for lifelong learning is being considered but concrete steps have not yet been taken.

Hungary

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

There is a commitment to develop an NQF in Hungary and the NQF work is part of the national development plan 2007-2013. In the spring of 2008 a motion will be submitted to the Government regarding accession to the EQF and setting up the NQF. The introduction of the NQF and accession to the EQF is expected to take place in 2013.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

The learning outcomes based approach is seen as a prerequisite for success. Reforms have been carried out in segments of the education and training system, in particular in VET and adult education. Some reforms have also been carried out in general secondary education and in higher education.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Iceland

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

The overarching objective of Icelandic work on frameworks is to increase transparency of the education system, increase participation in learning and facilitate recognition of all sorts of learning, non-formal and informal. The objective is furthermore to provide a tool for recognition of learning taking place abroad.

Iceland has committed itself to the development of an NQF for higher education (related to EHEA). In 2006 a new law on higher education was adopted. Following this legislation the Minister of Education has implemented an NQF for higher education as of 2007. All the different departments of various higher education institutions have initiated work on writing descriptions of their study programmes expressed in learning outcomes. The structure will be evaluated in 2009 in coherence with the upper secondary qualification framework.

With the adoption of the Act on Upper Secondary Education no. 92/2008 a first provision for an NQF for upper secondary education has been established. A draft descriptor document has been put forth, but will need to be elaborated on further.

Establishing an overarching NQF, connecting the two frameworks, is being considered, but as of yet no final proposal has been made.

Levels/Descriptors

Higher Education NQF: three cycles with five levels, informed by both the EQF and the Dublin descriptors.

Upper Secondary NQF: five levels which have been developed along the lines of the EQF descriptors, but rephrased.

Use of learning outcomes

Iceland has made substantial progress as regards the use of learning outcomes in describing curricula. This applies in particular to VET and adult education but is increasingly influencing general and higher education.

Legal base

Act on Higher Education no. 63/2006 and National Qualifications Framework for Iceland no. 80/2007.

Act on Upper Secondary Education no. 92/2008.

National Coordination point

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
Sölvhólsgrata 4, 150 Reykjavík, Iceland.

Ireland

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

Ireland established a National Framework of Qualifications in 2003. Work is ongoing at a national level to deepen implementation of the Framework across the different sectors of education and training, particularly with regard to the use of learning outcomes by awarding bodies/providers of education and training. The policy goals of the NFQ are:

- To create an open, learner-centred, coherent, transparent and widely understood system of qualifications in Ireland that is responsive to the needs of individual learners and to the social and economic needs of the country
- To facilitate access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners within and across the different levels and sectors of education and training

Basic implementation of the NFQ was completed for Higher Education and Training in 2004 and Further and Vocational Education and Training in 2006. Work is continuing on the deepening of NFQ implementation across all sectors on an ongoing basis particularly with regard to the use of learning outcomes.

The NFQ is an integrated Framework of Qualifications.

Ireland is committed to the full implementation of EQF. Under the aegis of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Ireland's National Coordination point for EQF, Ireland will commence the referencing of its National Framework of Qualifications to EQF in October 2008. The process is likely to extend to the late Spring/early summer of 2009 and will be used as a vehicle for more widespread

communication about EQF to relevant stakeholders. The referencing process will also be used to alert stakeholders to the measures that will need to be put in place to ensure that the referencing of EQF levels in qualification certificates and Europass documents is achieved by 2012.

Ireland verified the compatibility of its National Framework of Qualifications with the 'Bologna' Framework in 2006. This process was overseen by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Ireland's NCP for EQF. The experiences gleaned from the verification exercise will inform the referencing process for EQF, and the outcomes of the former process will be taken on board in the latter. Ireland fully accepts the compatibility of the two overarching frameworks and the Qualifications Authority includes information on both in much of its communications activity.

Levels

The Irish NFQ has ten levels which capture the full range of qualifications awarded.

Descriptors

Each level of the NFQ is based on nationally agreed standards of knowledge, skills and competence that are expressed as learning outcomes.

Use of learning outcomes

The learning outcomes approach is central to the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, and the associated legislation, national qualifications framework and system reform. The qualifications framework is grounded upon principles, aims, and elements of implementation relating to learning outcomes. The outcomes are expressed as knowledge skills and competences on a 10 level frame intended to apply to all qualifications. The outcomes are indicators of what a person knows, can do and understand, rather than time spent on a programme.

Legal basis

The National Framework of Qualifications was established on foot national legislation - the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999.

National Coordination point

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland is the National Coordination Point for Ireland. <http://www.nqai.ie/>

Italy

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

An EQF is a widely shared priority and initial work has started. Mid 2008 a national committee (Tavolo Unico Nazionale) met for the first time. The purpose of this committee is to define and implement an NQF. The main stakeholders in such this process are the Labour Ministry, the Ministry of Education, universities, regions and

social partners. The aim will be to integrate the different titles, qualifications and diplomas delivered by these stakeholders (and the employment service) into one framework.

This work is linked to the National System of Minimum Occupational, Training and Certification Standards completed in May 2007. This system recognises/catalogues all the institutional and social directories concerning occupational standards. The definition and implementation of national minimum standards in the various economic and professional sectors is planned to take place by 2010, their implementation in the regions by 200

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

Learning outcomes play an important role in this development, in particular in VET and higher technical education.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Latvia

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

Latvia will develop an NQF by building on the existing 5-level structure in VET and the 3-level structure existing for higher education.

Work on a national framework for higher education (related to EHEA) has started. A new law on higher education is under preparation and linked to this.

The link between Latvian qualifications levels and the EQF will be the responsibility of a tripartite committee working on a new law on vocational education and training.

Levels

The Latvian NQF will have 8 levels.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

There is a growing emphasis on learning outcomes in Latvia although the term is not widely used. Skills and knowledge are the terms in common usage. There is no system level statement or development that refers to learning outcomes. However, standards for VET are labour market linked (tripartite agreement) and stipulate goals of education programmes as well as content. HE draft legislation introduces the terms and principles of learning outcomes.

Legal base

The work on an NQF for higher education is covered by a draft law on higher education.

National Coordination point

The Academic Information Centre is the Latvian NCP.

Lithuania

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

Lithuania is currently developing an overarching NQF as an integrative part of the National Qualifications System (NQS) which is being designed at the moment. The system of qualifications consists of the qualifications framework and the process of the designing, provision, evaluation and the recognition of qualifications. It is planned that NQS implementation will be finalised in 2012.

Levels

The Lithuanian NQF will have 8 levels.

Descriptors

The characteristics of the level descriptors will follow the pattern of the EQF.

Use of learning outcomes

Lithuanian legal texts do not refer explicitly to learning outcomes, although such an approach is being used in developing a new qualification system. Qualifications systems in VET and HE are based on skills, competences and learning outcomes.

Legal base

A new national Law on Qualifications will be issued to provide a basis for the framework. The NQF will also be covered by the new Law on vocational education and training.

National Coordination point

Luxembourg

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

A working group, coordinated by the Ministry of Education, was set up in 2006 to prepare an NQF proposal to be submitted to the relevant stakeholders during 2007. The work is delayed due to preparations for a reform of the VET system.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

Luxembourg is introducing major outcomes related reforms. Plans are thorough, though with hesitations about how to apply to parts of general education. The primary objective is to reform publicly provided VET onto a competence basis, but the reforms are intended to be across the whole system.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Malta

Development of National Qualifications Framework; objectives and initiatives

Malta launched its NQF in 2007.

Levels

The NQF has 8 levels.

Descriptors

The descriptors have been defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence

Use of learning outcomes

The learning outcome approach is seen as fundamental. Many of the existing VET-courses are already designed on the basis of this approach and will be extended to other qualifications as well.

The Malta Qualifications Council has been established recently and its work programme includes designing vocational qualifications in terms of learning outcomes taught. The framework is based on the principle of learning outcomes regardless of the specific qualification. Embedded within the NQF is a strong accent on the achievement of Key Competences at the early stages of formal, informal or non-formal education and training. The NQF shifts the focus away from the traditional approach of an input awarding qualifications system. The focus is now on learning outcomes defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

Legal base

National Coordination point

Malta Qualifications Council is NCP.

The Netherlands

Development of National Qualifications Framework

A national steering committee has been set up to consider the question of an NQF.

The form and scope of a future Dutch NQF has still to be decided and is still subject to investigations. In 2008 the Dutch House of Representatives – the Parliament – asked an external research organisation to perform a study on the introduction of new, competence based qualification files in (secondary) vocational education (MBO) in the Netherlands. Part of this study consists of reflecting on experiences with qualification framework in the member states of the EU, also in relation to the European Qualification Framework.

The Dutch Education Council produced a report (2007) on NQF.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

The focus on learning outcomes is strong in the Netherlands, in particular in VET and adult education and training.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Norway

Development of National Qualifications Framework: main objectives and initiatives

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research recognise the importance of both the Bologna process for higher education and the Copenhagen process for vocational education and training (VET), in enhancing the focus on mobility and transferability of qualifications and will implement both the overarching qualification framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA-QF) and the EQF.

Norway has committed itself to the development of an NQF for higher education (related to EHEA). A working group with participants from the Ministry and from the higher education sector has worked out a proposal which was sent to all stakeholders as part of a broad consultation process. On the basis of amongst other things these responses the Ministry will redraft the proposal and put it forward for a political decision.

As for the implementation of the EQF, work has started on developing descriptors for upper secondary VET. The Directorate of Education and Training is commissioned to work out a draft proposal for hearing and political decision in close cooperation with the social partners and other relevant stakeholders by 1st of June 2009.

A working group with the mandate to consider whether and if so how tertiary VET (fagskoleutdanning) can be referenced to the EQF has also been established. The working group will conclude by 1st of December 2008.

An overarching NQF for lifelong learning will be considered, but so far no proposal has been put forward. In accordance with the recommendation, an NQF is not a precondition for referencing the national qualifications systems to the EQF.

Levels/Descriptors

The EQF descriptors were used in developing the proposal for the NQF for higher education.

A draft proposal for a set of descriptors for upper secondary VET will be developed as part of the work commissioned to the Directorate of Education and Training.

Use of learning outcomes

The learning outcome approach is extensively used in VET and increasingly so in general and higher education.

Legal base

There is a legal base for the NQF in higher education.

National Coordination point

Decision about an EQF reference point in Norway will be taken by the end of 2008.

Poland

Development of National Qualifications Framework: main objectives and initiatives

A decision has been taken to create an integrated overarching NQF (KRK) included in priority III “High level of education system” within Human Resources Operational Programme “Human Capital 2007-1013”.

A working group with members from the different education and training sectors was set up mid 2008 to develop a concrete NQF proposal. Work on a NQF for Higher Education was started in 2006.

Polish higher education is already engaged in the process of developing a qualifications framework. An overarching framework is seen as interesting as it could consolidate links to other forms of education and training and increase the use of learning outcomes.

Polish developments are furthermore linked to current efforts to increase attractiveness and relevance of VET. A new examination system for VET has been introduced enabling certification open to different forms of learning. A set of national competence based standards have furthermore been completed. A NQF is seen as an opportunity to better integrate these initiatives into the overall system.

Levels/Descriptors/Use of learning outcomes/Legal base/National Coordination point

Portugal

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

An agreement was signed between the government and the social partners in 2007 on key elements to form part of the NQF. This 2007 Tripartite Agreement has created a National Qualifications Catalogue, which integrates 123 qualifications.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

Portugal is in a period of reform, and learning outcomes (competences) form a significant dimension of the reforms. The Ministry of Education has revised the secondary education system and the curricula are being designed to achieve learning outcomes specified in terms of cognitive competences, functional competences and social competences. VET is undergoing similar reforms.

Legal base

National Coordination point

The National Agency for Qualification will be the NCP for the EQF implementation in Portugal.

Romania

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

CNFPA (National Adult Training Board) was appointed as National Authority for qualifications, with the role to develop a unitary national system of qualifications and to coordinate the activity of the sectoral committees, to which an important role was awarded. A multi-annual Phare programme was dedicated to the enhancement of the new structures (NAQ, SCs).

A national agency for qualifications in higher education has also been set up, with the aim of developing and implementing a national qualifications framework (related to EHEA).

The development of an overarching Romanian NQF has yet to be decided. Such a framework will have to build on the NQF for higher education and the NQF for VET recently agreed between the government and the social partners.

Levels

In 2003, specific legislation introduces a 5 level structure for all qualifications (1, 2, 3-preuniversity levels, 4-5-university levels) and gives priority to a learning outcomes approach which has been in development since early 90s. Yet, the more recent regulations related Bologna process describes the framework for HE on 3 levels.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

Romania is committed to giving a prominent place to learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are embedded for example in the competence-based outcomes that are at the centre of VET reforms, and the establishment of accreditation centres/committees for recognising informal and non-formal learning, supported by occupational standards for many sectors.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Slovak Republic

Development of National Qualifications Framework;l main objectives and initiatives

A working group of the Ministry of Higher Education was set up in December 2006 to develop an NQF for higher education (related to EHEA), which will be fully compatible with the EQF.

Positive steps have been taken towards the development of a NQF for lifelong learning. The Slovak Republic estimates a time schedule of 3-4 years for the development of this. The process is led by the Ministry of Education but involves other relevant stakeholders.

Levels

The framework will be based on 8 levels.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

The intention is that the framework will be based on learning outcomes.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Slovenia

Development of National Qualifications Framework

There is a positive attitude towards the development of an NQF and a first concrete step towards an NQF was taken in 2006 through the adoption of a national classification of qualifications.

Levels

An 8-level NQF structure is proposed covering the main types of qualifications.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

It is agreed that the learning outcomes approach is important for a future NQF. A redefinition of curricula according to a learning outcome approach has been in progress since 2003.

Legal base/National Coordination point

Spain

Development of National Qualifications Framework

Spain has started on the road towards an overarching NQF. However, current work is concentrated on separate frameworks for higher education (related to EHEA) and for VET is currently being developed and once it is finished, the remaining educational levels will be added.

Levels

Spain has a 5-level structure in VET and a 3 level structure for higher education. The links between these have yet to be defined.

Descriptors/ Use of learning outcomes

The standards that characterise the 5 VET-levels have been written in terms of learning outcomes and are defined taking into account professional competences demanded by employment sectors using criteria such as knowledge, initiative, autonomy, responsibility and complexity.

Legal base

The legal basis for the work with NQF has been established through the 2002 Law on "Qualifications and Vocational Training" and the 2006 Law on "Education".

National Coordination point

Directorate General for Academic Organisation and Evaluation is NCP in Spain.

Sweden

Development of National Qualifications Framework; main objectives and initiatives

Sweden does not have an all embracing national qualifications framework. An internal examination within the Ministry has shown that the Swedish national qualifications system largely contains the elements that are the foundation of EQF when it comes to the public educational system. The relations between different qualifications are relatively well defined as are the different levels.

Sweden has committed itself to the development of an NQF for higher education (related to EHEA). In the Government bill New world – new university (prop. 2004/05:162) the Government announced that a national qualifications framework for higher education would be established. The revised Higher Education Act and Higher

Education Ordinance came in to force the 1 of July 2007. In these documents the essential parts of the qualifications framework are established. The Higher Education Ordinance includes descriptions with learning outcomes of six general degrees, four degrees for the arts and almost 40 degrees for different professional degrees. The degrees are placed at one of the three cycle levels. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has been given the task to compile and publish the national qualification framework for higher education on the basis of the legal documents.

Upper secondary and post secondary: A working group within the Ministry of Education and Research have been discussing and analyzing different options on how to relate national systems to EQF. This work has resulted in a decision to implement EQF in Sweden. The starting point will be public education sector but the framework will be open for sectors who are interested to relate their qualifications. Discussions with social partners and sectors will start during autumn 2008. Details and time frame are currently being developed by the working group.

Levels/Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

The Swedish education system is already managed by objectives and its performance is measured by inspection, supervision and evaluation structures. The grading system is goal-related meaning that student achievement is assessed in relation to the goals stated in the course syllabi. Overall, learning outcomes are being used throughout the system.

Legal base

Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434) and Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100)

National Coordination point

A National Coordination point has not been appointed and the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research is acting as coordination point until further notice. A National Coordination Point is planned to be appointed in 2009.

Turkey

Development of National Qualifications Framework: main objectives and initiatives

A commission is being established to develop a national qualifications framework for higher education (related to EHEA).

The main elements of an NQF covering the entire scope of qualifications are in place in Turkey and further development will involve drawing the various elements together.

Levels

The NQF will consist of eight qualifications levels defined through learning outcomes and will cover general, vocational and higher education and training.

Descriptors

Use of learning outcomes

Learning outcomes is seen as an essential part of the development of the NQF, considerable amount of work already done in VET and HE.

Legal base

A new law on "occupational qualifications institution" was adopted on the 21 September 2006 and will facilitate the preparation of a NQF.

National Coordination point

Educational Research and Development Directorate has been designated as NCP in Turkey.

United Kingdom³

England and Northern Ireland

EQF implementation policy – overall aim

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England, in partnership with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland have been given the remit to implement the EQF in England and Northern Ireland in the context of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. A steering group (the England Northern Ireland EQF Referencing Group) has been set up as the National Coordination Point and will be responsible for overseeing the following tasks:

- referencing levels of qualifications within the national qualifications system to the EQF levels;
- promoting and applying the European principles for QA in education and training when relating the national qualifications system to the EQF;
- ensuring all methodology used to refer national qualifications levels to the EQF is transparent and that the resulting decisions are published;
- providing guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the national qualifications system;
- encouraging the participation of all relevant national stakeholders including, according to national legislation and practice, higher education and vocational

³ Developments in Wales will be updated later on.

education and training institutions, social partners, sectors and experts on the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level.

The ENI EQF Referencing Group is made up of qualifications agencies and regulators, quality assurance bodies, employment and skills organisations, sector representatives, stakeholders from the HE sector, awarding organisations, government departments and international experts. The group has met twice since March 2008. *The recommendation on the alignment between the levels of the QCF and levels of the EQF will be published in March 2009.* Work will continue after this date to ensure communication of the findings and to work towards the inclusion of the EQF level on certificates by 2013.

Links between EQF implementation and Bologna implementation

The Framework for Higher Education for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ EWNI) is currently under review and is expected to complete self certification to the FQ EHEA in November 2008. Once this has been completed the HE sector will be in a position to make a decision about referencing the FHEQ to the EQF.

Details of National Qualifications Framework

The QCF is being developed as a jointly regulated credit and qualifications framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It has been designed to be a simple and rational organising structure for units and qualifications that reforms the current three country National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is capable of supporting the accumulation and transfer of credit achievement over time. The QCF is a new way of recognising skills and qualifications by awarding credit for qualifications and units. It enables people to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes.

The following four aims have been identified in developing the QCF. It should:

- ensure a wider range of achievements can be recognised within a more inclusive framework
- establish a framework that is more responsive to individual and employer needs
- establish a simpler qualifications framework that is easier for all users to understand
- reduce the burden of bureaucracy in the accreditation and assessment of qualifications.⁴

Policy goals

The QCF proposal sets out seven strategic benefits of implementing the new framework. These are:

1. The Framework is simple to understand, flexible to use, and easy to navigate;

⁴ Working specification for the Qualifications and Credit Framework tests and trials: Version 2
[Please note that this working specification is due to be replaced by regulatory arrangements for the QCF in August 2008. The regulatory arrangements will actually contain the updated technical requirements for the QCF]

2. The Framework is responsive so that employers and learning providers can customise programmes of learning/ training to meet particular needs;
3. Unit achievement is recognised and recorded;
4. All learners have an individual Learner Achievement Record;
5. Improved data quality in relation to qualifications and achievement for users, stakeholders and government; and
6. The introduction of the QCF reduces administrative bureaucracy and costs.

Date of implementation

The QCF has just been through a two year test and trial period (Summer 2006 – April 2008). Decisions on implementation are expected from Ministers in August 2008.

Type of NQF (sector based, bridging sectors, integrating sectors)

The QCF is an integrating framework.

Levels

The QCF comprises of 9 levels from Entry level to level 8 and covers all types of achievement.

Descriptors

The level descriptors provide a general, shared understanding of learning and achievement at each of the nine levels. As the framework is inclusive, the level descriptors are designed to enable their use across a wide range of learning contexts. The level descriptors build on those developed through the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS), the existing level descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and a range of level descriptors from frameworks in the UK and internationally. The five upper levels are intended to be consistent with the levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- Level is an indication of the relative demand made on the learner, the complexity and/or depth of achievement, and the learner's autonomy in demonstrating that achievement.
- The level descriptors are concerned with the outcomes of learning and not the process of learning or the method of assessment.
- The indicators for each level are grouped into three categories:
 - knowledge and understanding
 - application and action
 - autonomy and accountability.⁵

Use of learning outcomes

Learning in the QCF is described in terms of learning outcomes

⁵ Guidance for using unit level descriptors within the Qualifications and Credit Framework tests and trials Version 2

Legal basis

Responsibilities for regulating the QCF in England, Wales and Northern Ireland lie with three qualifications regulators.

- a. In England, the qualifications regulator for all external qualifications is the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (OfQual).
- b. In Wales, the qualifications regulator is the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), which regulates all external qualifications except for the formal accreditation of individual NVQs, which is the sole responsibility of OfQual.
- c. In Northern Ireland, the qualifications regulator is the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), which regulates external qualifications other than NVQs.⁶

National Coordination point

The QCA (in partnership with CCEA) has been designated the NCP by the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS)

Scotland

EQF implementation policy – overall aim

The Board of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) has established a Quality Committee which is designated as the group to manage the integrity of the Framework and has therefore the final overview of any work which involves referencing the SCQF to any other Framework. It has established a Steering Group to manage the activities of the NCP including

- referencing levels of qualifications within the national qualifications system to the EQF levels;
- promoting and applying the European principles for QA in education and training when relating the national qualifications system to the EQF;
- ensuring all methodology used to refer national qualifications levels to the EQF is transparent and that the resulting decisions are published;
- providing guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the national qualifications system;
- ensuring the participation of all relevant national stakeholders including, according to national legislation and practice, higher education and vocational education and training institutions, social partners, sectors and experts on the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level.

This work commenced in June 2008 and the intention is to complete consultation on the referencing and make recommendations via the UK to the European Commission

⁶ Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework July 2008 OfQual

by March 2009. The Steering Group includes representation from major stakeholders along with two European experts.

Links between EQF implementation and Bologna implementation

Scotland has completed its self assessment against the EHEA as part of the Bologna process. This work is now being taken account of within the referencing of the full SCQF to the EQF.

Details of National Qualifications Framework

The SCQF promotes lifelong learning in Scotland. It supports everyone in Scotland, including learning providers and employers by:

- helping people of all ages and circumstances to get access to appropriate education and training so they can meet their full potential;
- helping employers, learners and the general public to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of learning, and how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

The Framework:

- describes the courses and programmes that lead to qualifications;
- helps develop 'progression routes' for individual to follow;
- allows individuals to make the most of the opportunities to transfer credit points between qualifications.

The SCQF is intended to help describe programmes of learning that lead to the various qualifications; support the development of routes to progress from qualification to qualification; and maximise the opportunities to transfer credit points between qualifications. It will do this by making the overall system of qualifications and relevant programmes of learning easier to understand and providing a national vocabulary for describing learning opportunities. The SCQF is not a regulatory framework.

The SCQF assists in making clear the relationships between Scottish qualifications and those in the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond, thereby clarifying opportunities for international progression routes and credit transfer.

Policy goals

There are 3 Strategic Goals for the SCQF Partnership for the period 2007 – 2011 in line with the objects of the company. These are:

- Maintain the quality and integrity of the SCQF;
- Promote and develop the Framework as a tool to support lifelong learning; and
- Develop and maintain relationships with other frameworks in the UK, Europe and internationally

Date of implementation

The actual Framework was implemented in 2001. SCQFP as a company and charity was set up in 2006.

Type of NQF (sector based, bridging sectors, integrating sectors)

The SCQF is seen as a bridging Framework as it brings together other sub frameworks within a meta framework. However it also has full integration in that the level descriptors and criteria for inclusion are completely common.

Levels

There are 12 Levels in the Scottish Framework.

Descriptors

There are common level descriptors which apply to all types of learning programmes and qualifications.

Use of learning outcomes

This is a requirement of the Framework that learning is described in terms of learning outcomes.

Legal basis

The Framework is maintained by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership which is a company limited by guarantee and also a Scottish charity. The Partnership is made up of the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Universities Scotland, Quality Assurance Agency, Association of Scotland's Colleges and Scottish Ministers.

National Coordination point

The SCQFP has been designated the NCP by Scottish Ministers

Wales

EQF implementation policy – overall aim

The Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW) has established an EQF Co-ordination Group. The role of the group is:

- Referencing levels of qualifications within the national qualifications system to the EQF.
- Promoting and applying the principles for quality assurance in education and training when relating the national qualifications system to the EQF.
- Ensuring the methodology used to refer national qualifications levels to the EQF is transparent and the resulting decisions are published.

- Providing guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the national qualifications system.
- Ensuring the participation of all relevant national stakeholders including, according to national legislation and practice, higher education and vocational education and training institutions, social partners, sectors and experts on the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level.

Links between EQF implementation and Bologna implementation

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for England Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) is currently carrying out a self assessment against the EHEA as part of the Bologna process. The EHEA is compatible with the EQF.

Details of National Qualifications Framework

The qualification system in Wales is best described within the context of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). The CQFW is a descriptive voluntary framework which was developed by bringing together a number of sub-frameworks already in existence in Wales: the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ); the National Qualification Framework (NQF) for regulated national courses; and the quality assured lifelong learning. It therefore embraces both academic and vocational qualifications.

Policy goals

The **CQFW** is clearly positioned as a key part of Wales' lifelong learning policy and strategy.

- CQFW enables any learning post-16 to be formally recognised and is not in itself a regulatory mechanism; any regulatory requirements are supplied through its relationship with regulating bodies.
- CQFW is unit-based, defines one credit as ten hours of learning time and has nine levels (the lowest sub-divided into three) with supporting levels descriptors.
- The technical specifications apply to all post-16 learning.

Date of implementation

The CQFW was formally adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2002.

Type of NQF (sector based, bridging sectors, integrating sectors)

Within the CQFW there are three pillars of learning.

Pillar 1. Higher Education

For all Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) in the UK institutional autonomy takes precedence over conformity to external frameworks. Surveys of HE practice suggest that current HEI practice in relation to qualifications framework is variable and develops gradually. There is no element of external regulation or a requirement to guarantee transfer of credits between programmes, qualifications or providers.

HEIs' participation in a number of European credit and qualifications developments significantly influences HE developments in the UK - for example, mapping credit values to the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) or levels to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

HEIs' programmes are quality assured by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). An established Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), which is not credit based, and is monitored through QAA institutional reviews, sets out the specifications for HE qualifications at five levels.

Comment

The HE sector has been involved in credit and qualifications developments for a long period. The culture of voluntarism and gradualism which characterizes development in autonomous HEIs has influenced some aspects of framework development to date. Adoption of a qualifications framework in HE brings consistency of approach and action within agreed principles, but will not necessarily lead to the standardization and common formats of a regulated qualifications framework.

Pillar 2. Regulated Qualifications - General and Academic Qualifications and Vocational Qualifications

The majority of qualifications offered in schools and post 16 technical further education college are offered through 120 private owned Awarding Bodies (ABs) such as City and Guilds, Pitman and are regulated by the Qualification Curriculum Authority (QCA) England, Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the Council for the Curriculum Examination and Assessment (CCEA) Northern Ireland; in Scotland regulated qualifications are offered through the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) an Scottish Executive funded body.

Pillar 3. Quality Assured Lifelong Learning

This is a complex and wide ranging areas of learning and recent research has shown there could be up 400 organisations are offering UK wide qualifications. These could range from Professional or Chartered Qualifications which may be post graduate – Civil Engineering, Accountancy to licence to practice at a technician level such as Certification of Recognised Gas Installer (CORGI).

Within Wales the intention is to include as much as this provision within the CQFW. Definitions of non-formal and informal learning vary and can refer to learning context, learning intention, learning structure, presence or absence of assessment and other factors. For the purposes of this report, both terms are used to apply to a variety of learning outside currently regulated qualifications.

CQFW Non-formal and informal learning projects:

- **CQFW** is working with Health Professions Wales – National Learning and Innovations Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) to develop a National Framework for the Education and Training of Health Care Support Workers
- **CQFW** Recognising Wider Learning 14-19 Pathways in Wales define, develop and widen individual learners' learning entitlement with a flexible blend of formal and non-formal learning together with support mechanisms.

Levels

There are 9 Levels in the CQFW – Entry plus eight levels. Hiba! A mezők szerkesztésével nem hozhatók létre objektumok.

Descriptors

There are common level descriptors which apply to all types of learning programmes and qualifications.

Use of learning outcomes

All qualifications and learning programmes within the CQFW are based on learning outcomes and must have quality assured assessment of these outcomes. The CQFW uses two measures to describe qualifications:

- The level of the outcomes of learning;
- The volume of outcomes, described by the number of CQFW credit points.

Legal basis

The CQFW has no legal basis but as an overarching meta framework captures three pillars of learning. The FHEQ and the NQF/QCF both have statutory regulations although the third pillar the Quality Assured Lifelong Learning pillar does not.

National Coordination point

The DCELLS within the Welsh Assembly Government has been designated the NCP.