

**NATIONAL REPORT**  
**Comparing Slovenian qualifications framework**  
**with the EQF**

**PREPARED BY: Urška Marentič**

**National Institute for VET**

*(Center of the Republic of Slovenia for vocational education and training)*

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## **Comparing Slovenian qualifications framework with EQF**

The criteria:

### **1) *Targets pursued with the frameworks (political and operative)***

In Slovenia, a consensus emerged between relevant ministries (the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, as well as the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs) and social partners about the need to set up the Slovenian Qualifications Framework.

In January 2010, a National steering committee for referencing NQF levels to the EQF was nominated by the Government. It is composed of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sport (chair), the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Institute of The Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia, Association of Employers in Small business and Craft, Slovenian Association of Free Trade Unions, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Student Organization of Slovenia.

***The National Steering Committee for the SQF*** has formal decision making powers when it comes to the development of the SQF. Its basic tasks are:

- appointing the National Coordination Point in accordance with the Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework;
- preparing the Strategy and referencing procedures of Slovenian qualification levels to the European Qualifications Framework in line with relevant criteria;
- drafting positions for the Consultation Group within the European Commission;
- approving expert groundwork with the view to set up the Slovenian Qualifications Framework;
- drafting guidelines to implementation groups and preparing substantive groundwork for the commitment of earmarked funds from the ESS
- monitoring the process of the establishment of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework and providing for referencing of individual qualification standards.

Administrative support is provided by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training.

A proposal for a single comprehensive Slovenian qualifications framework has been developed by the National Steering Committee for SQF with the expert group in April 2011. It will include qualifications from VET, HE, general education, adult education as non-formal learning (e.g. NVQ). The proposal was subject of a broad and inclusive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders from education and labour market in spring 2011.

The main purpose of the Slovenian qualifications framework (SQF) is to integrate and harmonise Slovenian qualifications subsystems and enhance transparency, accessibility, progress and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.

The proposal attempts to consider national characteristics of the Slovenian education system and labour market, both in the number of levels set up as in the basic logic behind descriptors allowing for gradation. It is also in conformity with the EQF serving as the basic reference framework for the EU Member States. In the light of expected labour market trends, the expert group included also the National Vocational Qualifications in the framework as they might prove to be an important complement to formal learning paths in the following period. This approach was adopted and therefore the SQF “provides the reference level for resolving problems pertaining to inadequate cooperation between the VET system and certification system as well as for the assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning” (Cedefop, 2009, p. 79, 80).

Thus, the proposed qualifications framework in the first place pursues the objective of transparency of qualifications systems in the state by taking into consideration the national context, notably drawing inspiration from KLASIUS. KLASIUS stands for the Classification System of Education and Training used for recording, collecting, processing, analysing, transmitting and disseminating statistical and analytical data which are important for monitoring socio-economic and demographic situation and trends in the Republic of Slovenia.

In the light of its position within the system and its application, the framework can also accomplish other tasks:

- a) better quality and performance of the education and training system;
- b) providing for international comparability of national qualifications and for assessment of international qualifications;
- c) improving transfer possibilities between different education systems, primarily between the education system and labour market;
- d) evaluating and recognizing learning outcomes in less formalized learning settings, especially if such a setting has a very positive influence on the level of acquired competences;
- e) enhancing regulation on work flexibility in respect of the social and economic situation, notably for retraining, adult learning and drop-outs;
- f) impacting migration flows inside and outside Slovenia.

**2) Number of levels**

In draft proposal the Slovenian qualifications framework has 10 levels. This proposal builds on KLASIUS, which has an eight-level structure with two sublevels (at levels 6 and 8). The proposal argues that 10 levels strike an appropriate balance between education and qualification system. It also provides a basis for better recognition of qualifications and recognition of formal and informal learning / skills / competencies.

**3) Level structure**

In the draft proposal of the SQF levels 3 to 6 are open to VET, while levels 7 to 10 are designed for higher education.

<b>LEVEL SQF*</b>	<b>Type of qualification</b>		
	<b>Education</b>	<b>National vocational qualification</b>	<b>Supplementary qualification</b>
10.	Doctorate of science		
9.	Master of science (MSc)		
8.	Master (second Bologna cycle)		
7.	Professional /academic higher education (first Bologna cycle)		
6.	Post-secondary vocational and Higher vocational education		
5.	Secondary technical education (4 year VET General education		
4.	Secondary vocational education (3 year VET)		
3.	Lower vocational education (2 year VET)		
2.	Completed elementary school		
1.	Uncompleted elementary school		

**\*SQF – Slovene qualifications framework**

#### 4) *Principles of construction of the framework (which descriptors, which concept of competence)*

The levels descriptors for SQF are defined in terms of outcome criteria - knowledge, skills and competences:

- **Knowledge** is the result of learning and acquisition of concepts, principles, theories and practices. It is obtained in different settings: in educational process, at work and in the context of private and social life.
- **Skills** are in the context of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework described as cognitive (e.g. use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and/or practical (e.g. manual skills and the use of materials, tools and instruments).
- **Competences** pertain to the ability to use and integrate knowledge and skills in educational, work, personal and/or professional situations. Competences vary in the light of their complexity, independence and responsibility for action. We distinguish between generic and vocationally specific competences.

**The classification of education in SQF is based on basic types of education by levels, as defined by KLASIUS,** and is placed in the SQF on the principle of perfect fit. All others are placed on the principle of best fit. Educational structure was set up in relation to the qualification structure, which currently has 8 levels (described in stages from simple to very complex work activities).

**In the mapping of educational and qualification level,** we rely on the present practice of placing occupational standards in relation to programs of vocational training and national vocational qualifications. We took into account the level of difficulty of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences).

#### **We followed the criteria:**

- complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding;
- necessary level of support and teaching;
- required level of involvement, autonomy and creativity;
- scale and complexity of application / practice;
- degree of transparency and dynamics of situations.

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5) *Checking (comparing) the contents of the used terms by analysing glossaries. Note that glossaries are part of the EQF (parliament's decision) and of the NQFs*

KEY TERM	GLOSSARY EQF	GLOSSARY SQF
<b>Qualification</b>	means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards	an official result of the assessment process and the recognition by a competent authority deciding that an individual achieved learning outcomes in line with defined standards. A qualification has currency in the labour market, formal education system and lifelong learning
<b>National qualifications system</b>	means all aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework	The <b>Sectoral qualifications structure</b> is a list of all nationally recognised occupational standards and catalogues for NVQ classified into sectors according to the standard classification of activities and the level of difficulty.

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KEY TERM	GLOSSARY EQF	GLOSSARY SQF
<b>National qualifications framework</b>	means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society	an instrument for development and classification of qualifications into agreed system. Qualifications are in terms of learning outcomes and descriptors assigned to the levels shown relations between the qualifications indicated the potential for horizontal and vertical transitions between skills. Qualifications Framework contributes to improving the quality, accessibility and recognition of qualifications in the labour market in the country or internationally
<b>Sector</b>	means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology	
<b>International sectoral organisation</b>	means an association of national organisations, including, for example, employers and professional bodies, which represents the interests of national sectors	

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KEY TERM	GLOSSARY EQF	GLOSSARY SQF
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence	involves knowledge, skills and competences standardised at certain qualification level. It is a statement explaining what an applicant at a certain qualification level knows, can do and decide after finishing a learning period. Learning outcomes can be formulated in connection with courses, programme units, modules and programmes. Learning outcomes in these connections lead to qualification or educational attainment.
<b>Knowledge</b>	means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual	is the result of learning and acquisition of concepts, principles, theories and practices. It is obtained in different settings: in educational process, at work and in the context of private and social life.
<b>Skills</b>	means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European	are in the context of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework described as cognitive (e.g. use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and/or

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KEY TERM	GLOSSARY EQF	GLOSSARY SQF
	Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)	practical (e.g. manual skills and the use of materials, tools and instruments).
<b>Competence</b>	means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy	pertain to the ability to use and integrate knowledge and skills in educational, work, personal and/or professional situations. Competences vary in the light of their complexity, independence and responsibility for action. We distinguish between generic and vocationally specific competences.

#### 1. Comparing sectoral qualifications frameworks (sectoral approaches) with the SQF

**Currently, there are no official Sectoral qualifications frameworks in Slovenia.** It is necessary to prepare and implement the Slovenian qualifications frameworks first and then we can start to prepare Sectoral qualifications frameworks.

The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) has been entrusted with the operative implementation of the project “The Slovenian Qualifications Framework” which is planned for the period 2009-2013. The primary objectives of the project are the development of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework and its implementation in all sectors, meaning a gradual development and the adaptation of sectoral qualifications to the EQF.

In the first phase of project, the draft proposal of the SQF was prepared by the national experts working group, whose tasks was to draft a methodology for designing the SQF, taking into account national specifics and international experience, and to developed a transparent methodology to the EQF. The methodology was approved in the second phase by the government project team, whose tasks include defining a NCP EQF, approval of the methodology and criteria for aligning Slovenian qualifications, certificates and diplomas with the EQF and approval of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework. It is important that both groups comprise representatives from social partners and competent ministries, as well as experts.

The third phase involves testing the methodology and implementation at the sectoral level. This is a national activity at the sectoral level, which will include experts and social partners in specific areas. The CPI and social partners are planning the development of sectoral qualification tools that will assist in the more detailed organisation of qualifications by level. Currently, a pilot implementation of Sectoral qualifications framework is carried on in the sector of hospitality and tourism and also in the sector of ICT. The members of the working group are the representatives of the social partners (chambers, ministries, trade unions).

**It is important that the sectoral qualifications frameworks will be prepared in cooperation with the representatives of social partners.** As basis for preparing sectoral qualifications frameworks we took:

- a methodology of SQF: 10 levels and 3 types of qualifications and also
- sectoral qualifications structures for VET qualifications.

***The types of qualifications in SQF are:***

1. ***Education*** - Publicly recognised education is obtained after successfully completing publicly approved educational programmes.
2. ***National vocational qualification*** - A national vocational qualification is defined as work related vocational or professional capacity required to perform an occupation at certain level of complexity.
3. ***Supplementary qualification*** – A supplementary qualification is the result of education and training complementing, deepening and expanding an individual's knowledge, skills and competences for life and work.

**In Slovenia, the Sectoral qualifications structure is a list of all nationally recognised occupational standards and catalogues for NVQ classified into sectors according to the standard classification of activities and the level of difficulty.** VET qualifications are classified in Sectoral qualification structures approved by Sector committee for occupational standards. Minister responsible for labour, family and social affairs established 10 Sector committees for occupational standards composed of experts and representatives of Chambers, Ministries and Trade Unions.