

Concept Note for the ETF corporate Conference 2011

“Qualifications Frameworks, from concepts to implementation”

Brussels, European Parliament 6-7 October 2011

Objectives

The conference aims to take stock of developments in the area of qualification frameworks since the last conference organised by the ETF in 2009 and to facilitate the discussions on the challenges of the implementation processes.

Focussing on processes

During the last conference, countries such as Albania, Australia, Canada, Morocco, South Africa and United Arab Emirates, presented their concepts for (re-)developing their qualifications frameworks. This event will have a practical focus on the development and implementation processes of Qualifications Frameworks and the roles of different groups of stakeholders rather than on the presumed impact of the current developments, or the formulation of concepts, the common language and the descriptors. The key question of our event is how the qualifications framework development and implementation processes can support systems and qualifications that are fit for purpose, ensuring that people are able to do more with their qualifications as a result of the establishment of an NQF. On request more opportunities will be offered for the exchange of experiences and discussions than in 2009.

On the occasion of the event, the ETF will present the findings of a *background study on QF implementation arrangements* in ten different countries and to introduce and launch the *Qualifications Platform* as a practical tool for sharing experience between actors that are involved in the development and implementation of QFs.

Understanding different implementation arrangements and the role of stakeholders

The links between the frameworks and the wider qualifications systems are important to understand how qualifications frameworks influence and change the role of stakeholders and institutions. Taking the development of QFs as a reality we would like to enlarge our understanding of their diversity looking in particular at the social and institutional arrangements around NQFs. The following questions will be addressed:

- 1. How are NQFs organised in terms of tasks and responsibilities of institutions and stakeholders?***
- 2. Why are those particular arrangements in place or planned?***
- 3. What are the main consequences of the (new) arrangements?***

The ETF study on QF implementation arrangements

The background study covers 10 countries worldwide, which have very different contexts and challenges for the development of their QFs and are at different stages in planning, developing and implementing their QFs. The study analysed the following key activities and functions:

- a) coordinating the framework
- b) elaborating standards and qualifications
- c) assessment, certification and quality assurance
- d) implications for training providers
- e) communicating the framework arrangements and improved qualifications

The study mapped the stakeholders and institutions involved in the key functions and evaluated what they do and what kind of issues they face in developing/ implementing their roles. The study is a working document and will present some early findings on challenges linked to the contexts of different countries and set out possible options in how these could be addressed. These will be reviewed and discussed with the participants. The findings of the conference will be integrated into the conclusions of the study.

Introducing and operationalising the Qualifications Platform

The *Qualifications Platform* is an ETF initiative to support stakeholders in different countries with the implementation of their own qualifications frameworks. It aims to bring stakeholders together; provide a help-desk function to address concrete issues which can be resolved with the help of colleagues; establish establishing regional and thematic clusters; provide an overview of developments internationally; and provide links to information such as national regulations, methodologies, websites, databases of qualifications, background studies. Moreover, the platform will also facilitate face to face meetings of peers by linking and building on existing events.

Participants and approach

The event is organised by ETF in cooperation with the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission and Cedefop. Participants will come from partner countries, the EU Member States (including members of the EQF Advisory Group) as well as relevant European institutions dealing with education and employment policies and external cooperation, and representatives of institutions from third countries and international organisations which are involved in the development and implementation of qualification frameworks.

Among the actors will be key ministerial staff, staff from specialised qualifications and quality assurance agencies, social partners and sectoral representatives and representatives from training providers and career counselling services with an involvement in the development of NQFs.