



## Session 5

# Estonian Qualifications Framework and EQF

Olav Aarna

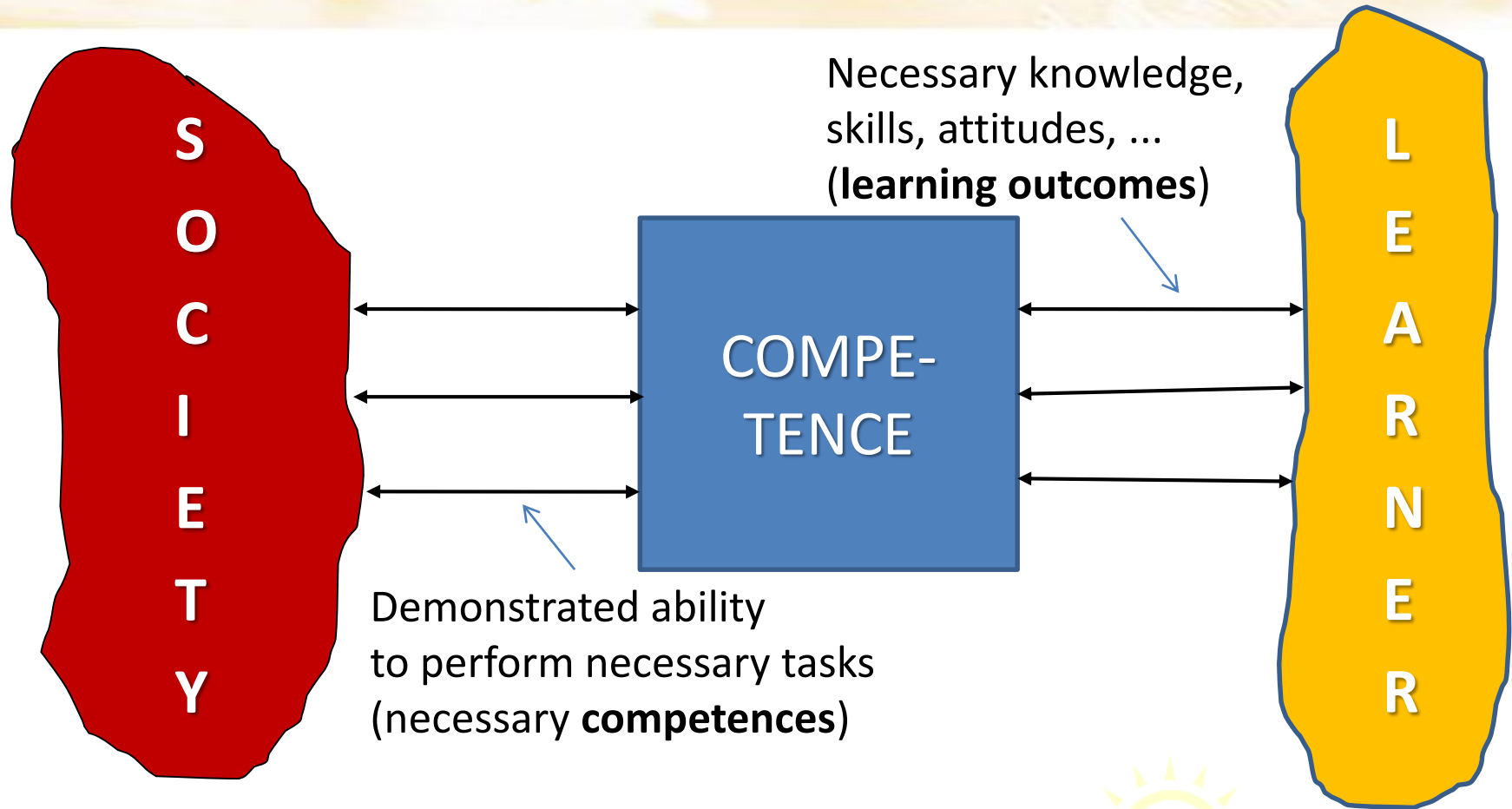
Estonian Qualifications Authority

NQF workshop – Tbilisi, 28-29/03/2019

# Context

- **Globalisation, competitiveness, mobility :**
  - Lisbon process (2000)
- **Development of the European area of lifelong learning:**
  - Bologna process (1999)
  - Copenhagen process (2003)
  - European qualifications framework for lifelong learning (EQF) (2008)
- **Learning outcomes (competences) based approach**
  - New paradigm in teaching and learning

# Competence, competences and learning outcomes



# Competence and qualification

- Competence is an ambiguous concept!
- **Competence** – demonstrated ability to perform successfully in a certain field, described through the relevant performance criteria or learning outcomes
- **Qualification** – officially recognized competence in certain field as a result of validation by a competent body

# National Qualifications Framework

- **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** 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**

*Recommendation on EQF 2008 and 2017*

# Estonian qualifications framework

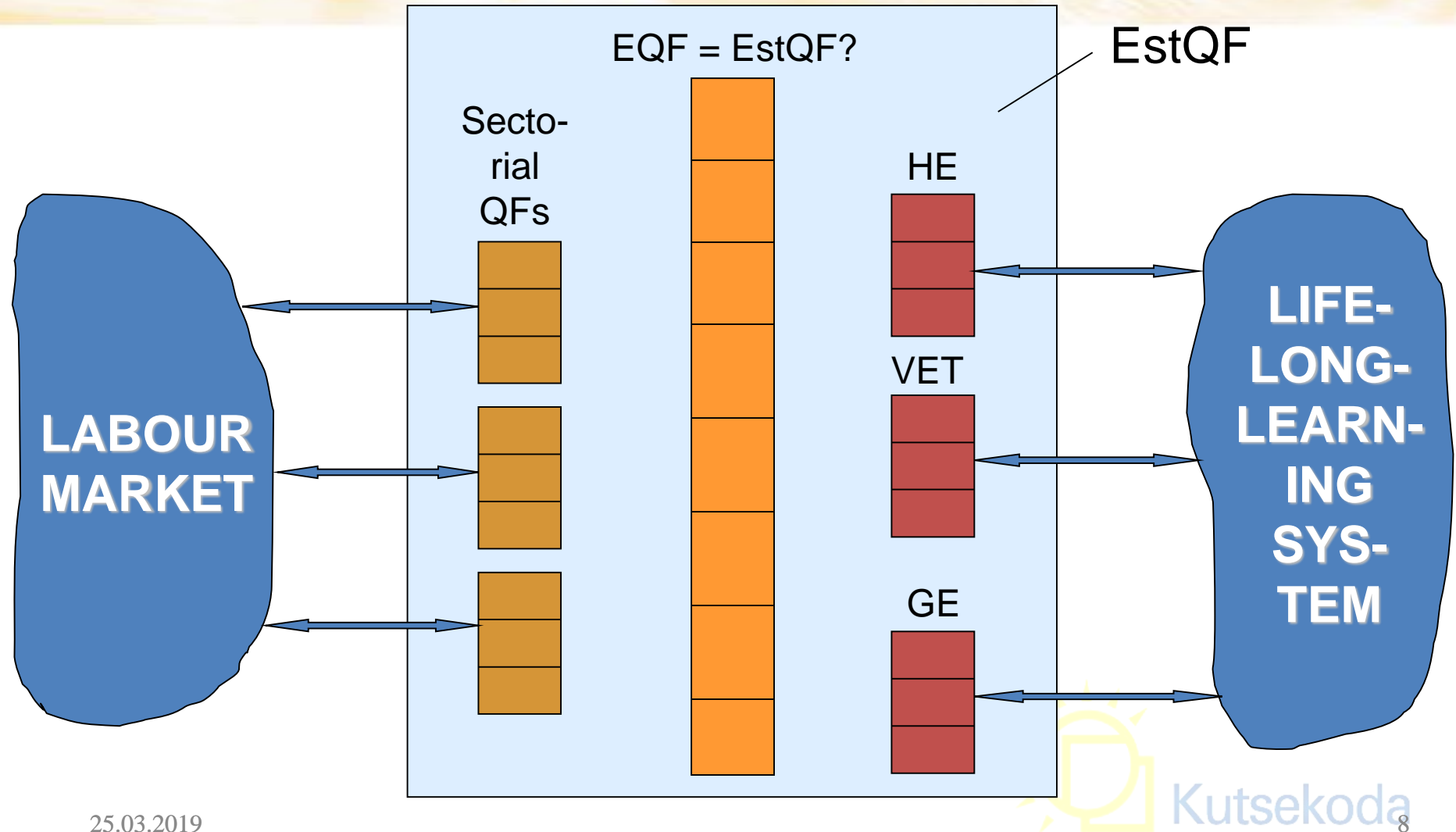
- EstQF is an **8-level overarching framework**, established by the **Occupational Qualifications Act** (Professions Act) in 2008 (amended in 2015)  
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/501072015005/consolide>
- EstQF consists of **four sub-frameworks**: for general education, VET, higher education and occupational qualifications with relevant quality assurance systems
- EstQF **includes all state recognised** (quality assured) **qualifications**, which meet two criteria:
  - Are defined in learning outcomes-based qualifications standards (e.g. national curriculum or occupational qualification standard)
  - Awarded by state recognised institutions

# Sub-frameworks of qualifications

- **Formal education qualifications:**
  - Sub-framework for **higher education qualifications** (levels 6-8)
  - Sub-framework for **initial and continuous VET qualifications** (levels 2-5)
  - Sub-framework for **general education qualifications** (levels 1,2 and 4)
- Sub-framework for **occupational** (sectoral, work based) **qualifications:**
  - Sectoral qualifications on levels 2-8



# Estonian Qualifications Framework (2008)

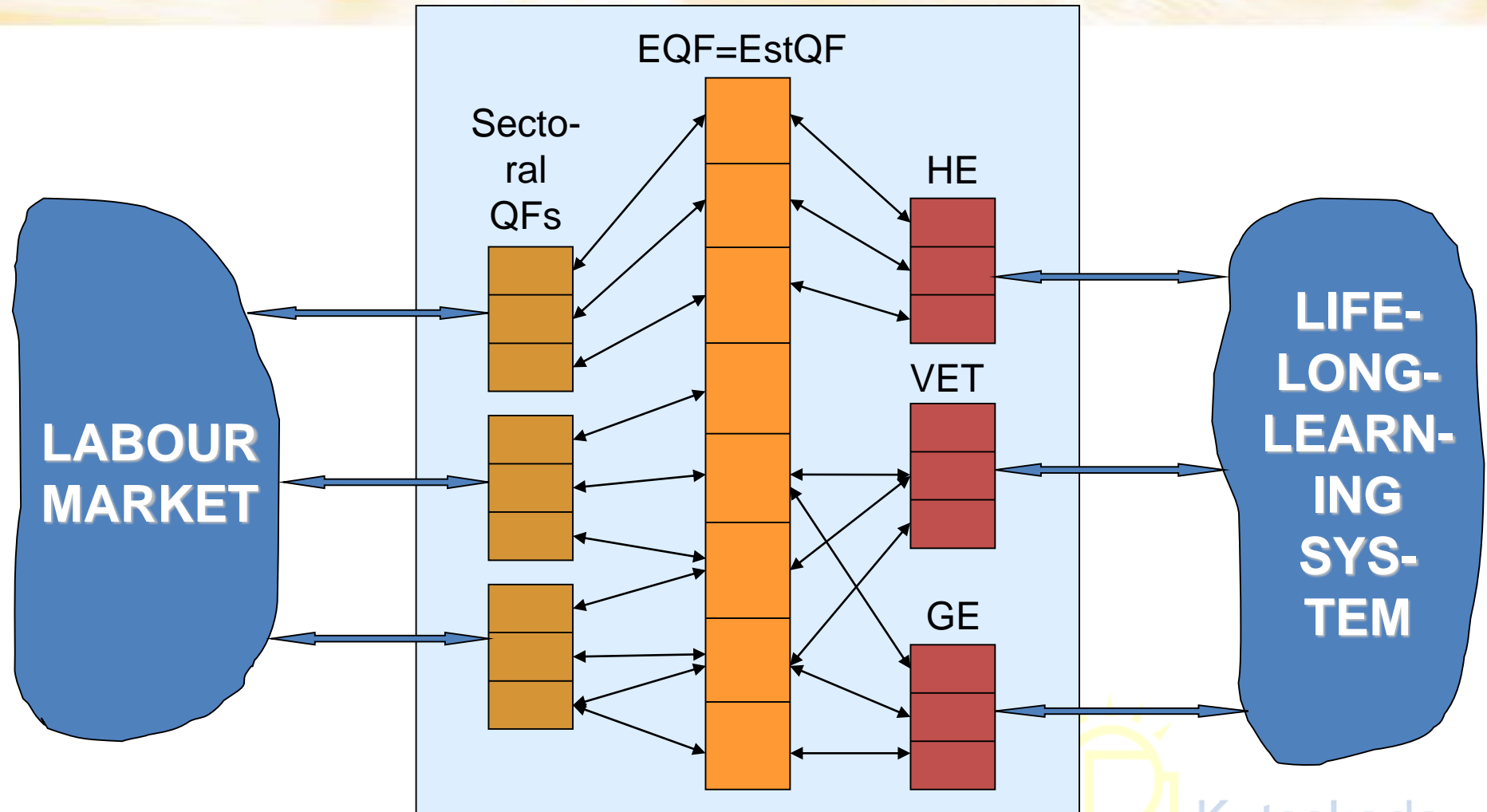




# Qualification standards and EstQF

- General trend of development – **towards learning outcomes based standards:**
  - Higher education standard (2008)
  - Vocational education standard (2009, 2013) + national curricula for VET (54)
  - National curriculum for basic school (2011)
  - National curriculum for upper secondary school (2011)
  - New generation of occupational qualification standards (2010-...)

# Estonian Qualifications Framework (2011)



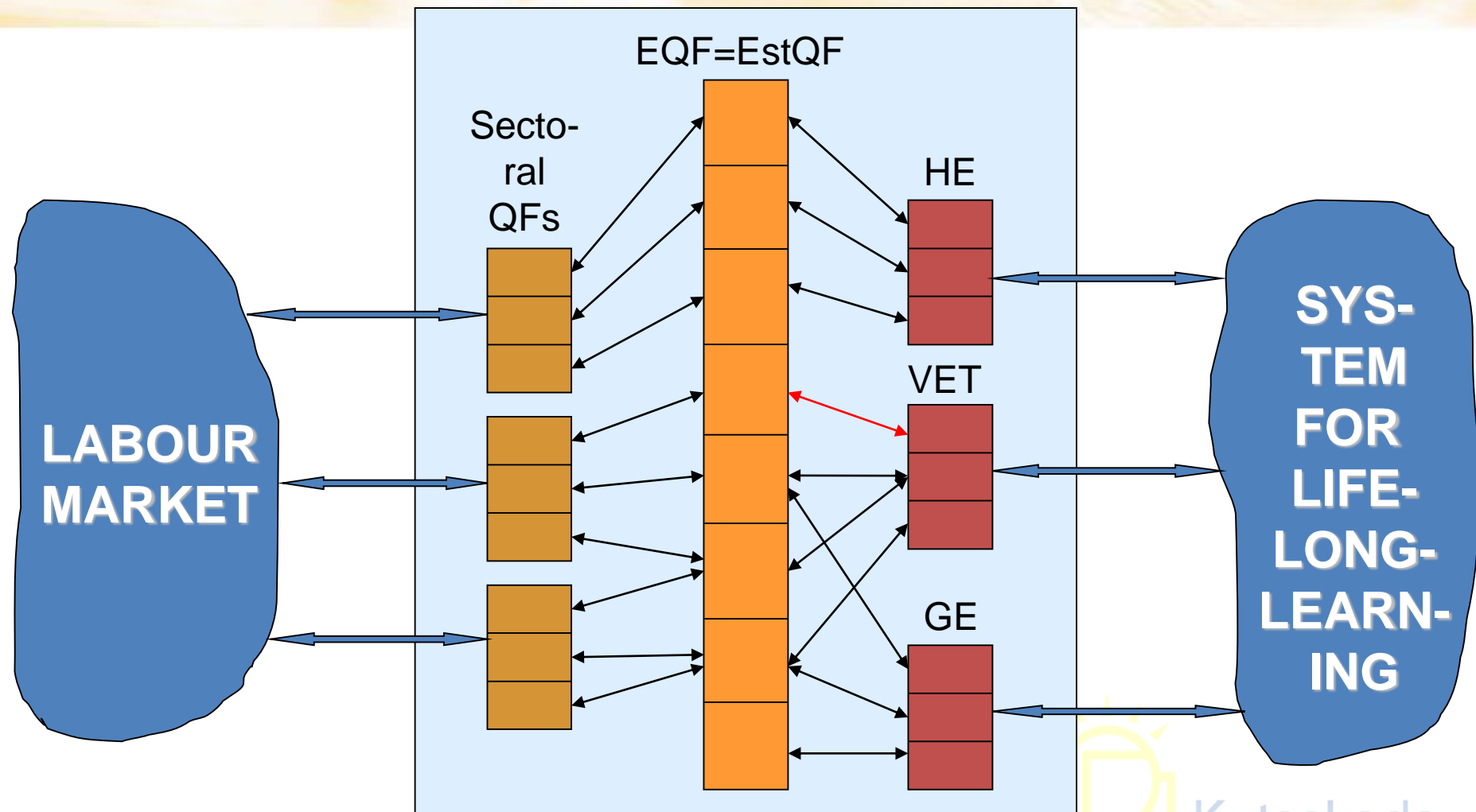
# EQF implementation and referencing process (1)

- The EstQF established with the **Occupational Qualifications Act** (01.09.2008)
- The process of **referencing** the EstQF to the EQF **initiated**, steering committee (January 2010)
- EstQA (*Kutsekoda*) appointed as the **national coordination point** for implementation of the EQF in Estonia (February 2010)
- The first version of the referencing report prepared (May–November 2010)
- Referencing report discussed with stakeholders (December 2010–March 2011)
- Three **international experts involved** (December 2010–August 2011)
- Final version of the referencing report prepared (May–August 2011)
- Referencing report submitted to the EQF Advisory Group (September 2011)
- Referencing **report presented in the EQF Advisory Group** (October 2011)

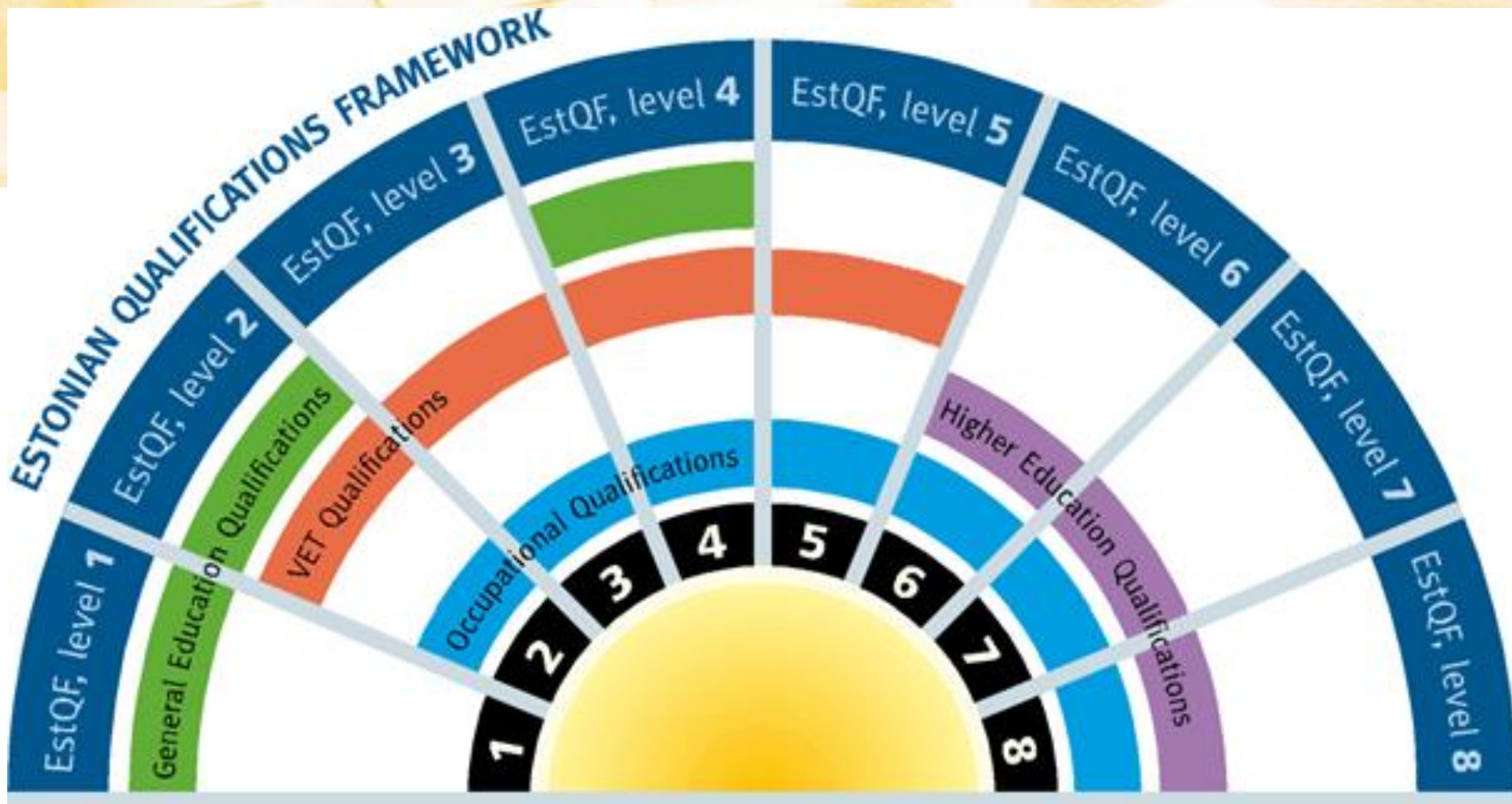
# EQF implementation and referencing process (2)

- Referencing **report placed into the EQF portal** (July 2012)
- **International launching conference** for the EstQF organised (October 2012)
- **New VET Institutions Act** adopted (September 2013)
- **New Standard for VET** adopted (September 2013)
- **New national curricula for VET** developed and implemented (September 2013 - ...)
- **New quality assurance system for VET** developed and implemented (September 2012 - ...)
- Referencing **report revised and amended** (September-November 2014)
- Referencing report **endorsed by the EstQF steering committee** (March 2015)  
<http://kutsekoda.ee/fwkc/contenthelper/10604836/10604837>
- Referencing report **presented to the EQF Advisory Group** (April 2015)

# Estonian Qualifications Framework (2015)







Formal education qualifications	EstQF levels	Examples of occupational qualifications
Basic education certificate based on curriculum for students with moderate and severe learning disabilities	1	
Basic education certificate based on simplified curriculum Basic education certificate VET qualification certificate, level 2	2	Assistant gardener, Logger
VET qualification certificate, level 3	3	Electronic equipment assembler, Woodworking bench operator
Upper secondary general education certificate Upper secondary VET certificate VET qualification certificate, level 4	4	Harvester operator, Veterinary assistant
VET qualification certificate, level 5	5	Biogas plant operator, Mechatronic-technician
Diploma of Bachelor's degree, Diploma of professional higher education	6	Physiotherapist, Civil Engineer, Applied Architect
Diploma of Master's degree	7	Diploma engineer, Diploma architect
Diploma of Doctoral degree	8	Chartered civil engineer, Chartered



# Lessons learned

- Strategic planning and management of the processes
- Clearly defined conceptual framework supporting implementation of integrated NQF
- Real involvement of stakeholders
- Training on implementing the learning outcomes based approach and constructive alignment
- Importance of validating nonformal and informal learning
- Concentrating attention to the quality of assessment and certification processes
- Importance of involvement in the EQF implementation process, incl. EQF referencing



# Thank you for your attention!

[www.kutsekoda.ee](http://www.kutsekoda.ee)

[olav.aarna@kutsekoda.ee](mailto:olav.aarna@kutsekoda.ee)