



Session 6

Qualifications and Quality System in Estonia

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National Qualifications System

- **National Qualifications System (NQS)** 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**
- NQS includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to **quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications**
- NQS **may be composed of several subsystems** and may include a NQF

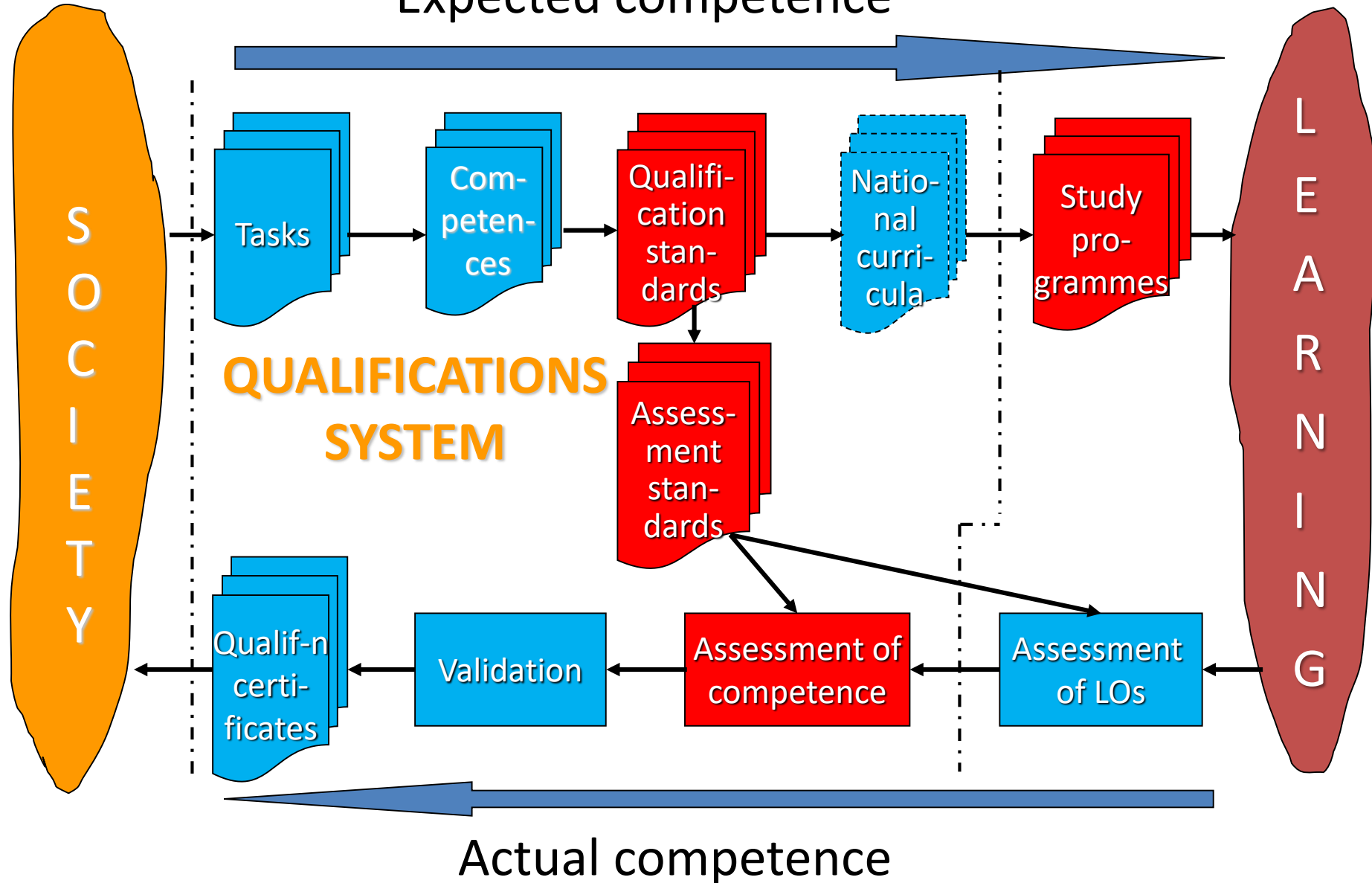
Recommendation on EQF 2008 and 2017

Guiding Principles (1)

- **Qualifications system (QS)** is an **interface between society and the system for lifelong learning**
- **Occupational QS** is a sub-system of qualifications system (an **interface between labour market and the system for lifelong learning**)
- QS in Estonia follows **integrated qualifications system model**
- QS is a **quality assurance system**
- **Quality** – a measure of compliance of an entity's characteristics' to stakeholders needs and expectations (ISO 9000)

Competence circle

Expected competence



Guiding Principles (2)

- **Social partnership** of the labour market stakeholders (Government, employers' organisations, employees' organisations) is of crucial importance
- **NQF is a backbone** of the NQS
- **Development** and implementation **of the NQS is a process**
- Developing and implementing the **NQF is a driver of the process**

Institutions involved in quality and qualifications system

- **Ministry of Education and Research** <http://hm.ee/en>:
 - Strategic management of the system
 - Licensing of education and training providers
 - Keeping the register of formal education qualifications
- **Estonian Qualifications Authority** (*Kutsekoda*)
<http://kutsekoda.ee/en/kutsekoda>
- **Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education** (EKKA) <http://ekka.archimedes.ee/en/>
- **Foundation Innove** <http://www.innove.ee/en>

Quality assurance of curricula and formal education qualifications

- **Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA):**
 - Quality assessment of study programme groups in HE
 - Institutional accreditation of HEIs
 - Thematic assessment in HE
 - Quality assessment of study programme groups in VET
- **Foundation *Innove*:**
 - Development of national curricula for general education and upper secondary VET
 - Administering national examinations

Occupational qualifications system in Estonia

- Labour market is divided into **14 sectors**
- Each sector is managed by a **sectoral council (SC)** responsible for:
 - Development of **occupational qualification standards** in the sector
 - **Awarding of occupational qualifications** in the sector
 - Issuing licences for the awarding bodies

Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Kutsekoda*) (1)

- ***Kutsekoda*** is a support structure for the national occupational qualifications system
- **Occupational qualification** means a qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession resulting from work based learning
- **Established in 2001** based on Occupational Qualifications Act
- **Foundation** in private law (established by five institutions representing the Government, employers and employees)

Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Kutsekoda*) (2)

Founders:

- Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Estonian Confederation of Employers and Industry
- Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation
- Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research

Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Kutsekoda*) (3)

- *Kutsekoda* is:
 - organising and coordinating the activities of SCs and working groups (developing occupational qualification standards)
 - providing counselling and assistance for awarding bodies
 - keeping the [register of occupational qualifications](#)
- NCP for the EQF implementation
- NRP for vocational qualifications
- *Europass* centre
- EPALE centre



KUTSEKODA

Sectoral Councils

- Institutions represented at SC are nominated by the Minister of Education and Research (10-20 institutions)
- Persons representing institutions are nominated by *Kutsekoda*
- Typically institutions represented at SC are:
 - Employers organisations of the sector
 - Employees organisations of the sector
 - Professional associations of the sector
 - Education and training providers
 - Responsible ministries

Awarding Bodies

- Awarding body is a legal entity nominated by SC as a result of public competition
- Awarding body establishes Occupational Qualifications Committee(s) (OQC) for awarding one or several qualifications of the sector
- OQC has the right to establish suitable number of Assessment Committees
- Typically institutions represented at OQC are:
 - Employers organizations of the sector
 - Professional associations of the sector
 - Education and training institutions

Periods of Development (1)

- 1991 – Estonia regained independence; Soviet type qualifications system was abolished
- 1991-1997 – deep restructuring of all aspects of social life (economy, education, ...); development of general legal framework
- 1997 – Employers' organisations initiated the development of occupational (vocational, professional) qualifications system

Periods of Development (2)

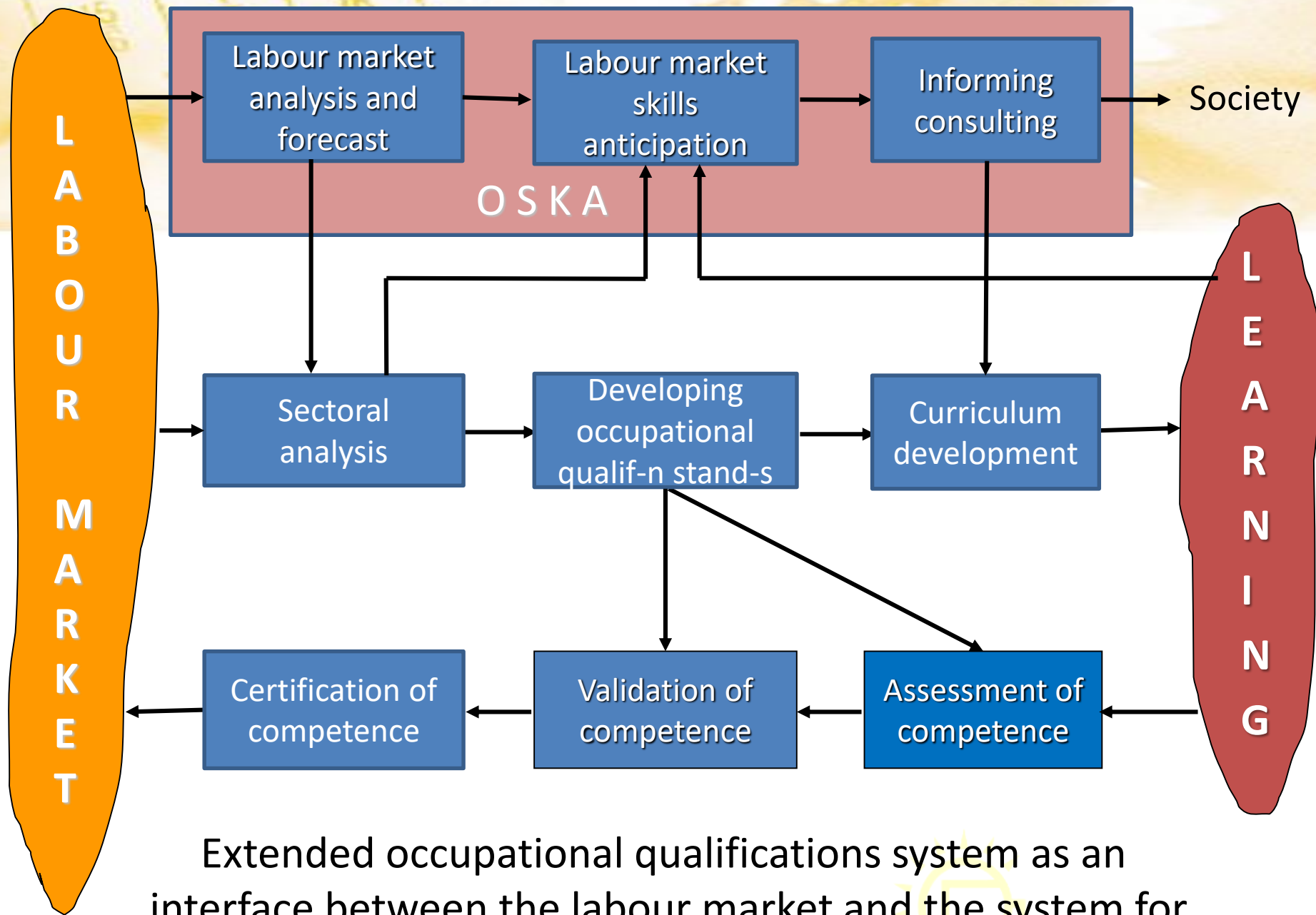
- 2001 – Parliament adopted the Occupational Qualifications Act; 5-levels occupational qualifications framework, institutional structure
- 2001 – Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Kutsekoda*) was established as support structure for the occupational qualifications system
- 2004 – Estonia joined the European Union and NATO
- 1998-2008 – bottom-up development process of the occupational qualifications system

Periods of Development (3)

- 2007 – Aim: Develop sustainable, flexible, internationally compatible **competence based qualifications system** meeting the needs of lifelong learning persons, knowledge based society and economy
- 2008 – Parliament adopted new Occupational Qualifications Act; 8-levels qualifications framework compatible with European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), competence (learning outcomes) based approach
- 2009 – *Kutsekoda* appointed as National Coordination Point (NCP) for EQF implementation

Periods of Development (4)

- 2009-2011 – referencing Estonian National Qualifications Framework (EstQF) to EQF
- 2009-.... – development of competence based occupational qualification standards (about 600)
- 2014 – preparation of new development programme OSKA (extension of the occupational qualifications system for skills anticipation)
- 2015 – launching of OSKA Programme
- 2015 – updating of the EQF referencing report
- 2018 – preparing OSKA+



Extended occupational qualifications system as an interface between the labour market and the system for lifelong learning

Lessons learned

- **Involve stakeholders** (government, employers, employees) in a balanced way
- Clearly **define conceptual framework**
- Standard is an agreement between stakeholders
- Concentrate attention to **the quality of assessment and certification processes**
- ...



Thank you for your attention!

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