



European Training Foundation

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – SERBIA



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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 NQF snapshot

The Law on the National Qualifications Framework was adopted on 5 April 2018 and published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia on 6 April 2018. The National Qualifications Framework of Serbia (NQFS) has 8 levels and 4 sublevels.

The NQFS Law defines four qualification types:

- general - basic education and secondary education;
- vocational education and adult education;
- academic - higher education;
- vocational - higher education.

The NQFS Law specifies the institutional framework:

- an NQFS Council for strategic management of further NQF development and implementation. The Council is an advisory body that gives recommendations on planning and development of human capital in accordance with public policies in the field of lifelong learning, employment, career guidance and counselling.
- a Qualifications Agency that performs administrative and technical tasks for the Council.
- sector skills councils, whose main function is to define the needs for qualifications in the labour market in Serbia.

The Law on Adult Education defines recognition of prior learning (RPL) as one of the paths for acquisition of qualifications. The NQFS Law foresees RPL procedures, based on the standard of qualifications, for qualifications at levels 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the NQF. Operational details will be regulated in a bylaw. A pilot to implement RPL was scheduled to start in late 2020 to early 2021.

Serbia is an EU candidate country and participates in the EQF Advisory Group. Serbia completed referencing of the NQFS to the EQF in February 2020.

The implementation structure is established, and the principal working methods and instruments have been developed and put in place. The NQFS is gradually playing a role in improving transparency and comparability of qualifications at national and international level. Therefore, Serbia is at the activation stage.

1.2 Policy context

Serbia is an EU candidate country. The Economic Reform Programme (ERP) identifies significant challenges in the areas of labour market and employment, education and skills, social inclusion and social protection. The ERP builds on various strategic documents such as the National Employment Strategy 2011-2020 and the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2012-2020.

The main objectives of the National Employment Strategy 2011-2020 are:

- encouraging employment in less developed regions and development of regional and local employment policies;

- improving the quality of human capital (this includes development of career counselling, competence development of unemployed people by establishing a system of short training programmes, plus RPL);
- institutional capacity development and expansion of active employment policy programmes.

The Strategy for Education Development 2012-2020 is covered in detail in the Policy Objectives section below.

Another important strategic document in this context is the Digital Skills Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2020 to 2024 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 21 of March 6, 2020)¹.

1.3 NQF legal basis

There is one main legal act for the NQFS, the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of Serbia, adopted by parliament in April 2018.² Amendments to the Law on the NQFS were adopted in early 2020. The Law on Foundations of the Education System, the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Adult Education are consistent with the NQFS.

Based on the Law on the NQFS, the following bylaws have so far been adopted by Ministers³:

- Rulebook on the content and appearance of the initiative form for the development and adoption of qualification standards (Official Gazette of RS, No. 53 of April 9, 2020);
- Rulebook on standards of career guidance and counselling services (Official Gazette of RS, No. 43 of June 19, 2019);
- Rulebook on standards and manner of conducting the procedure of recognition of prior learning ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 148/2020);
- Rulebook on the methodology for the development of qualification standards ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 156/2020);
- Rulebook on the content and method of maintaining the Register of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 159/2020);
- Rulebook on the system for classification and coding of qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia; ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 159/2020).

Several other bylaws are expected, including on additional quality assurance mechanisms and external evaluation of Publicly Recognised Organisers of Adult Education Activities (PROAEAs).

The education system of the Republic of Serbia is regulated by the following laws⁴:

- the Law on Foundations of the Education System ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 88/2017, 27/2018 – other law, 10/2019, 27/2018 – other law and 6/2020);
- the Law on Preschool Education (RS Official Gazette, No 18/10,101/17,113/17–other law and 10/19);
- the Law on Primary Education (RS Official Gazette, No 55/13,101/17,27/18–other law and 10/19);
- the Law on Secondary Education (RS Official Gazette, No55/13,101/17and27/18–other law);

¹ <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2020/21/2/reg/>

² RS Official Gazette, No 27/2018; <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ZAKON-NOKS-18.pdf>

³ http://noks.mpn.gov.rs/sr_lat/zakoni-i-propisi/

⁴ <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/dokumenta-i-propisi/zakonski-okvir/>

- the Law on Dual Education (RS Official Gazette, No 101/17)⁵;
- the Law on Adult Education (RS Official Gazette, No 55/13,88/17–other law and 27/18–other law);
- the Law on Dual Model of Studies in Higher Education (Official Gazette of RS, No. 66/2019)⁶;
- the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia (RS Official Gazette, No 27/18, 6/20);
- the Law on an Education Inspectorate (RS Official Gazette, No 27/18).

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

2.1 Education and training reforms

2020 is the last year of the current Strategy for Education Development. Serbia has begun drafting the new strategy for the period 2020-27, adoption of which is expected by mid- 2021.

The main objectives set forth by the Strategy for Education Development 2012-2020 are:

- increasing the quality of the processes and outcomes of education to the maximum attainable level - arising from scientific knowledge on education and proven effective educational practice;
- increasing participation by all demographics in education and training at all educational levels, from preschool education to lifelong learning;
- achieving and maintaining the relevance of education, particularly where fully or partially funded by public resource, by aligning the educational system structure with the immediate and developmental needs of individuals and economic, social, cultural, media, research, educational, public, administrative and other systems;
- increasing the efficiency of use of all education resources i.e. completion rate within the stipulated period, with minimum extended duration and reduced dropout rates.

The Action Plan⁷ for the implementation of the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia was adopted in 2015. The Action Plan describes individual actions, defined by objectives and priorities of the Strategy, and the method of their implementation, deadlines, key actors and facilitators, including monitoring tools and performance indicators.

In the ERP 2020-2022, Serbia will focus on the reform of secondary vocational education by further implementation of the dual education system, introduction of industry 4.0 into the dual education system, implementation of a dual model of higher education studies, further development of the NQF and the establishment of regional training centres. These reforms should ensure a more efficient education system response to the needs of the economy and labour market, support technological innovation in education and meet the need for modern competencies.

⁵ <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/zakon-o-dualnom.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ZAKON.pdf>

⁷ http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Akcioni_plan.pdf

2.2 Aims of NQF

The aim of the NQFS is to structure and improve the qualification system in such a way that it is aligned with the requirements of socio-economic development, supports lifelong learning and facilitates workforce mobility⁸.

The goals of establishing the NQFS are⁹:

- ensuring the readability and transparency of qualifications, as well as their interconnection;
- developing qualification standards based on the needs of the labour market and society as a whole;
- ensuring a learning outcomes-based education system;
- improving access and flexible learning paths in both formal and non-formal education;
- ensuring identification and recognition of non-formal education and informal learning;
- affirming the importance of key, general and cross-curricular competencies for lifelong learning;
- enhancing cooperation between relevant stakeholders and social partners;
- establishing a quality assurance system for the development and acquisition of qualifications;
- ensuring comparability and recognition of qualifications acquired in Serbia with those acquired in other countries.

3. LEVELS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

3.1 NQF scope and structure

NQFS is an instrument to identify, create and classify qualifications in accordance with the demands of the labour market, lifelong learning, science and society.

NQFS defines processes and institutions (bodies, organisations) responsible for defining qualifications and qualification standards, methods and conditions for acquiring, comparing and recognition of qualifications, along with other mechanisms for quality assurance.

The NQFS consists of 8 levels and 4 sublevels. Levels 6 and 7 are each divided in two sublevels, reflecting qualifications of different volume at the same NQF level (e.g. level 6.1 180 ECTS, level 6.2 240 ECTS).

NQFS level descriptors have been defined in terms of learning outcomes and use the domains “Knowledge”, “Skills” and “Abilities and Attitude”.

⁸ The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (2020). *Report on referencing National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and Self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area*.

⁹ National Qualifications Framework in the Republic of Serbia <http://noks.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Национални-оквир-квалификација-у-Републици-Србији.pdf>

3.2 Types of qualifications

The NQFS Law defines four qualification types:

- General qualifications: this type of qualification covers primary education and gymnasium education.
- Vocational qualifications: covering vocational secondary education and training. This type of qualification also includes secondary artistic qualifications.
- Academic qualifications: covering accredited academic study programmes (bachelor, master, specialised and doctoral studies). This type of qualification also includes academic artistic qualifications.
- Applied qualifications: covering accredited applied study programmes (bachelor, specialised and master).

Qualifications belonging to regulated professions are determined by a separate law, in accordance with EU Directive 2013/55 / EU, and are an integral part of the NQFS.

For the moment, Serbia does not foresee partial qualifications being included in the NQF. But through non-formal education in accordance with a qualification standard, it is possible to recognise sets of learning outcomes or individual vocational competencies acquired, or to obtain a certificate for a partially accomplished standard of vocational competencies.

3.3 Quality assurance of qualifications

The NQFS Law describes quality assurance as “managing the process of developing qualifications based on standards and learning outcomes, as well as the quality system in the process of acquiring and evaluating qualifications”.

The NQFS Law describes specific arrangements and procedures for:

The qualification standard: the qualification standard describes the qualification itself and the link with the occupational standard. However, as occupational standards are not developed yet, job descriptions are used. A methodology for development of qualification standards has been adopted and is published in the Official Gazette. In addition to the basic qualification data, the qualification standard also contains data on the connection of the qualification with the occupational standard(s), which enables the integration of data from the education system and data from the labour market.

Submitting an initiative to develop and adopt a qualification standard: an initiative for developing and adopting standards for a new qualification can be submitted by a Sector Skills Council, the Council for Vocational Education and Adult Education, the National Education Council, the National Council for Higher Education, the National Employment Service, a higher education institution, a state body or other legal entity (a company, a PROAEA, etc.). The proposal is submitted to the Qualifications Agency, which assesses whether the proposed qualification standard is already covered by an existing qualification standard in the Register (if so, the applicant will be notified). If the proposed standard is new in scope, the Agency will send the proposal to the relevant Sector Skills Council for a recommendation. On a positive recommendation by the Sector Skills Council, the Agency will develop the proposed qualification standard.

Drafting a new qualification standard: the Qualifications Agency will draft the new qualification standard and submit it within 60 days to the NQFS Council. On positive advice of the Council, the

Minister responsible for education will adopt the new qualification standard for inclusion in the Register.

Inclusion in the Register: the Qualifications Agency enters qualifications in the national qualifications sub-register. General and vocational qualifications of NQFS levels 1 to 5 that are adopted by the minister responsible for education are added to the register by the Qualifications Agency within eight days from the date of receipt of the act by the ministry. Academic and vocational qualifications at NQFS levels 6.1 to 8 that are accredited in accordance with the law governing higher education are registered in the national qualifications sub-register by the Agency after receiving an accreditation notification from the National Body for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

3.4 Use of learning outcomes and standards

The NQFS is based on qualification standards and learning outcomes. Description of learning outcomes is one of the elements of a qualification standard. Learning outcomes are used in the following standards in the Serbian education system¹⁰:

Education standards: these standards include general cross-curricular competencies describing the goals and outcomes of general pre-university education, as well as the key competences based on the European framework of key competencies for lifelong learning.

Qualification standards: these standards are based on a description of the duties (vocational competencies) and tasks (units of competency) for a specific occupation or group of occupations and cover knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes at the level of the overall qualification.

Certification standards: these standards are used in primary, general secondary and secondary vocational education (including adult education) and include assessment criteria based on learning outcomes and aimed at the evaluation of the final achievement of competencies prescribed in the education and qualification standards.

Standards in higher education: these include standards for the initial accreditation of higher education institutions and standards for accreditation of study programmes. The first standard is respecting the Dublin Learning Outcome Descriptors for a given study level. The second, concerning study programmes, describes general and subject-specific competencies of graduates of a specific study programme in terms of learning outcomes.

3.5 Credit systems

The NQF Law mentions credits in terms of ECTS points for HE programmes only. The descriptions of the qualifications in the NQFS database <http://noks.mpn.gov.rs/en/> give volume of qualifications in years for qualifications at levels 1 – 5 (in years or in hours) and in ECTS points for qualifications at levels 6-8 e.g. level 6.1 180 ECTS, level 6.2 240 ECTS.

¹⁰ The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (2020). Report on referencing National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and Self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

4.1 Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

Based on the NQFS Law, an NQFS council, a dedicated qualifications agency and 12 sector skills councils have been established.

The *NQFS Council*, exercises strategic management of the NQFS' development and implementation. The Council is an advisory body appointed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

The Qualifications Agency is a specialised, technical body which performs administrative and technical tasks and expert support for the Council and proposes quality assurance measures throughout the entire education system.

The Sector Skills Councils' main task is to define the need for qualifications in the labour market in Serbia.

4.2 Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

The NQFS Council is an advisory body that gives recommendations on the process of planning and development of human resources in accordance with public policies in the field of lifelong learning, employment, career guidance and counselling. The NQFS Law describes the main competences of the Council as follows:

The Council:

- proposes qualification standards for all levels of the NQFS;
- proposes to the Government the establishment of sector skills councils for specific sectors of work or activities;
- monitors the work of the Sector Skills Councils and makes recommendations for the improvement of their work, based on regular progress reports;
- gives opinions to the minister responsible for education on the recommendations of the Councils regarding the enrolment policy in secondary schools and higher education institutions;
- makes recommendations on the process of planning and development of human resources in accordance with the strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia;
- makes recommendations on improving links between education and labour market needs;
- gives opinions on standards for self-evaluation and external quality assurance of PROAEAs;
- performs other duties in accordance with this Law.

The *Qualifications Agency* has been established to perform quality assurance and professional support to the NQFS Council and other competent organizations in all aspects of the development and implementation of the NQF. The Agency has the status of a legal entity. The NQFS Law describes the main competences of the Agency as follows:

- considers initiatives for the introduction of new qualifications;
- provides expert support to the Sector Skills Councils and prepares proposals for qualification standards;
- provides administrative and technical support to the work of the Councils;

- maintains the Registry and takes care of the entry of data into the appropriate sub-registries;
- classifies and encrypts qualifications according to the National Qualifications Classification System (CLASSNQFS);
- performs procedures for recognition of foreign school documents;
- carries out the procedure for recognition of a foreign higher education document for the purpose of employment (professional recognition), in accordance with this law and the law regulating higher education;
- performs the first validation of a foreign study programme, in accordance with the NQFS law and the law regulating higher education;
- grants approval to organizations requesting PROAEA status;
- decides fee levels for the recognition procedures of foreign school documents and higher education documents;
- keeps records of professional recognition in accordance with the NQFS law and the law regulating higher education;
- conducts an external quality control of the PROAEAs, once every five years;
- at the request of the ministry responsible for education, issues a report on the fulfilment of requirements regarding the plan and programme of adult education activities, programme implementation and staffing;
- prepares development projects, and carries out analysis and research relevant to the development of qualifications;
- monitors and measures the effects of the implementation of (new) qualifications on employment and lifelong learning;
- proposes measures for the improvement of quality assurance in the entire system;
- performs other duties in accordance with this Law.

Sector Skills Councils are advisory bodies established on the principle of social partnership. Their main task is to define the need for qualifications within a certain sector in secondary, vocational, higher and adult education. The NQFS Law describes the competences of the sector skills councils as follows:

- analyse the existing qualifications and determine the necessary qualifications in a specific sector;
- identify the qualifications to be modernised;
- identify those qualifications that no longer meet the needs of the sector;
- recommend development of new qualifications standards within its sector; (the Qualifications Agency will draft the standard, or arrange its drafting);
- give an opinion on the expected outcomes of knowledge and skills within the sector;
- promote dialogue and direct cooperation between the world of work and education;
- promote opportunities for education, training and employment within the sector;
- identify opportunities for training adults within the sector;
- consider the implications of the national qualifications framework on qualifications within the sector;
- propose lists of qualifications by levels and types that can be acquired by recognizing prior learning;
- perform other duties in accordance with the NQFS Law.

5. RECOGNISING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

5.1 VNFIL arrangements

The NQFS Law defines recognition of prior learning (RPL) as one of the paths for acquisition of qualifications. The Law foresees RPL procedures, based on the standards of qualifications, for qualifications at levels 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the NQFS. Operational details are defined by the bylaw.

A working group developed the "Concept of recognition of prior learning" in 2015. This concept note describes the framework for the introduction and development of the RPL system in Serbia. It defines the basic principles, assumptions, guidelines and standards for the future organisation and implementation of RPL. In June 2019, a new working group was formed to implement activities within the project: "Support to the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework in the Republic of Serbia". As part of this project, an RPL piloting plan has been prepared, qualifications and schools were selected to be involved in piloting and the following RPL procedures and different guidelines and rulebooks have been drafted:

- draft guidelines for quality assurance for RPL providers;
- draft guidelines for assessing the RPL process;
- draft Rulebook on Standards and Implementation of the Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning;
- guide for Schools for Acquiring the Status of Publicly Recognised Organiser of Adult Education Activities.

RPL procedures will shortly be piloted¹¹ in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and the National Employment Service (NES). Within the pilot, special attention will be paid to train schools and NES advisors to implement the RPL procedure.

6. NQF IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

6.1 Key achievements and main findings

Following adoption of the NQFS law in 2018, the NQFS Council, the Qualifications Agency and the Sector Skills Councils were established in 2019. They are now implementing the NQFS. An important milestone was the referencing of the NQFS to the EQF in February 2020.

Further progress has been made with the development of RPL procedures which will be piloted from late 2020. The methodology for developing qualification standards has been revised. By the end of 2020, 32 standards based on this new methodology and with the involvement of the Sector Skills

¹¹ The pilot is conducted with support of the IPA 2014 project 'Development of and integrated National Qualifications Framework in Serbia'

Councils had been adopted. 26 of these 32 qualification standards were published in the Official Gazette in 2020, while the remaining six standards are expected to be published in 2021.

Significant progress has also been made with the new NQFS register.

6.2 Qualifications registers and databases

The current Register consists of several sub-registers, including a National Qualifications sub-register (records data on qualifications, classified by level and type, in accordance with CLASSNQFS) a Qualification Standard sub-register and a sub-register of Publicly Recognized Organisers of Adult Education Activities.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) manages the Qualifications sub-register, accessible at: <http://noks.mpn.gov.rs/en/qualifications-database/>, in Serbian and English. By the end of 2020, 156 qualifications had been entered into the Qualifications database, of which 101 had been developed using either the previous or the new qualifications standard format.

A new NQFS register is under development, which will better integrate the various sub-registers identified above. The different elements of the register have been defined and based on these definitions and software is being developed. The Ministry began piloting the new register in late 2020. The NQFS register will be an integral part of the Unified Information System of Education for the Republic of Serbia, which should facilitate exchange of data between the sub-registers. The bylaw on the NQFS Register has been forwarded for publication in the Official Gazette and was expected to be adopted by late 2020 or early 2021.

6.3 Qualification documents

NQF and EQF levels are not yet included on certificates, diplomas and Europass supplements. A revision of the bylaw concerning certificates and diplomas is foreseen for 2021.

6.4 Career information and guidance

A national strategy for career guidance was adopted in 2010¹². The focus of the strategy was on coordinating activities between the stakeholders of the relevant sectors: youth, education and employment.

The Law on the Foundation of the Education System, its subsidiary Laws on Primary education and Secondary education and Adult education mention career guidance and counselling as a part of the school activities and introduce career guidance programmes in schools. Also, the Law on Youth emphasizes the importance of career guidance and defines aims and activities.

In 2019, the Rulebook on Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling Services was adopted (Official Gazette of RS, No. 43/19). Standards of career guidance and counselling services are part of public policies applied by state bodies, institutions and other organizations in the field of education, employment, social protection and youth policy¹³.

¹² Strategija karijernog vodenja i savetanja u Republici Srbiji, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 16/2010

¹³ <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/reg/viewAct/828f5355-f5dc-42dd-a088-f0fb4ff84b79>

In accordance with Article 11 of the NQFS Law, the NQFS Council in 2019 adopted Recommendations for the implementation of the plan for the application of standards of career guidance and counselling services¹⁴.

The National Employment Action Plan for 2020 provides for the promotion of careers guidance services and for the training of people in career guidance and counselling services¹⁵.

In accordance with the specified documents, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, in cooperation with NGOs specialised in career guidance and counselling services, has provided training to private providers on the standards of career guidance and counselling services. Moreover, career guidance and counselling has been included in numerous continuing professional development programmes for teachers and assistants in formal education from primary to secondary and adult education providers.

6.5 Recognition of foreign qualifications

Recognition of foreign qualifications is carried out by the ENIC/NARIC Centre, which is housed within the Qualifications Agency. The NQFS Law distinguishes between recognition of foreign school documents and those from foreign higher education. The Law stipulates recognition procedures and criteria for admittance to further education. Foreign qualifications receiving recognition are considered equivalent to the corresponding public document obtained in Serbia.

7. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORK/OTHER FRAMEWORKS

7.1 Referencing to regional frameworks

Serbia referenced its NQF to the EQF in February 2020 and self-certified in the same report against the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process).

7.2 International cooperation

Serbia adopted the RIGA 2015 conclusions on a new set of medium-term deliverables in VET for the period 2015-2020. MTD 3 is related to the NQF: enhance access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems, notably by offering efficient and integrated guidance services and making available validation of non-formal and informal learning.

MoESTD and the Qualifications Agency receive support from the IPA 2014 project “Development of an integrated National Qualifications Framework in Serbia”, to develop the capacity of the Agency and the standards and bylaws that should support the further implementation of the framework. IPA20 will focus on the development of non-formal education and further capacity building of the PROAEAs, the Sector Skills Councils, the Institute for the Improvement of Education and the Qualifications Agency.

¹⁴ http://sociojalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Nacionalni_akcioni_plan_zaposljavanja_2020.pdf

¹⁵ http://sociojalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Nacionalni_akcioni_plan_zaposljavanja_2020.pdf

8. IMPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Implementing the NQF Law has required new institutional arrangements, namely the NQF Council, the Qualifications Agency and the Sector Skills Councils. Coordination of tasks and competences between these new institutions and existing ones will be a significant challenge and a condition for successful implementation of the NQF Law.

The newly established Qualifications Agency is currently working with 60% of its planned staffing levels. Capacity-building of the Agency's staff to equip them for their tasks is crucial for the further implementation of the NQFS. IPA14 and the future IPA20 projects indeed provide for such training of Agency personnel.

Another challenge will be to find the right balance between the various procedures to ensure the quality of qualifications and the flexibility required to respond quickly to changing labour market needs. This cannot be solely the task of the Sector Skills Councils, which operate at national level. Regional and local actors must be involved. Structural arrangements to involve stakeholders at national, regional and local level can provide a continuous insight into obstacles and opportunities on the labour market and a solid basis for the Sector Skills Councils, Qualifications Agency and NQF Council to act upon.

After all the work on the NQFS, it will be important to communicate the framework to the different stakeholders. This can go hand in hand with the further development and implementation of the framework.

During 2020, COVID-19 slowed down implementation of the NQFS. Adoption of bylaws on the development of qualification standards, the new NQFS Register, CLASSNQFS, standards and the procedure for recognition of prior learning, was delayed as it was difficult to organise the required consultation processes with social partners. Also due to the pandemic, the pilots planned to test the RPL procedure had to be postponed.

9. MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (2020). Report on referencing National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and Self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (2012). Strategy for education development in Serbia 2020. <https://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Strategy-for-Education-Development-in-Serbia-2020.pdf>

Overview of laws and bylaws under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia: <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/dokumenta-i-propisi/zakonski-okvir/>

National Qualifications Framework in Serbia: <http://noks.mpn.gov.rs/en/>

10 INFOGRAPHIC OF THE NQF/NQF OVERVIEW TABLE

NQFS levels	Qualifications	EQF level
8	doctoral studies volume of 180 ECTS credits (with previously completed integrated academic, i.e. master academic studies)	8
7	7.2 specialised academic studies scope of at least 60 ECTS credits (with previously completed master academic studies)	7
	7.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ integrated academic studies scope of 300 to 360 ECTS credits ■ master academic studies scope of at least 60 ECTS credits, with previously achieved bachelor academic studies scope of at least 240 ECTS credits, ■ master academic studies scope of at least 120 ECTS credits (with previously achieved bachelor academic studies scope of 180 ECTS credits), ■ master applied studies scope of at least 120 ECTS credits (with previously achieved bachelor applied studies scope of 180 ECTS credits) 	
6	6.2 bachelor academic studies scope of at least 240 ECTS credits, specialised applied studies scope of at least 60 ECTS credits	6
	6.1 bachelor academic studies scope of at least 180 ECTS credits bachelor applied studies scope starting from 180 ECTS credits	
5	craftsman, i.e. specialist education lasting up to two or one-year non-formal adult education lasting minimum of six months	5
4	four-year secondary school education (vocational education, arts education, general education)	4
3	secondary vocational education lasting three years, non-formal adult education with training duration of minimum 960 hours	3
2	vocational training lasting up to one year, education for work lasting up to two years, informal adult education with 120-360 hours of training	2
1	primary education, primary adult education, primary music education, primary ballet education	1

Source: National Qualifications Framework in Serbia: <http://noks.mpn.gov.rs/en/>

ABBREVIATIONS

ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
CLASSNQFS	National Qualifications Classification System
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERP	Economic Reform Programme
NES	National Employment Services
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQFS	National Qualifications Framework of Serbia
PROAEA	Publicly Recognised Organiser of Adult Education Activities
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

Where to find out more

Website

www.etf.europa.eu

Online platform

<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu>

Twitter

[@etfeuropa](https://twitter.com/etfeuropa)

Facebook

facebook.com/etfeuropa

YouTube

www.youtube.com/user/etfeuropa

Live&Learn

<https://issuu.com/etfeuropa/>

Instagram

instagram.com/etfeuropa/

LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/european-training-foundation

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European Training Foundation

