

# **MATCHING**

## **MODELS AND TOOLS FOR CERTIFYING AND HIGHLIGHTING INFORMAL AND FORMAL EXPERIENCES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GUIDANCE**

*Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 – Leonardo Da Vinci*

*Multilateral Projects Transfer of Innovation*

### **NATIONAL REPORT**



### **The System of Evaluation and Certification of competences in Poland**

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# I – NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL EXPERIENCES IN RELATION TO EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF)

## 1.1 EQF – European Qualification Framework

After four years of preparation, in 2008 European Parliament and Council of Europe, gathering governments of the member countries, have signed the common recommendation regarding establishment of **EQF (European Qualification Framework)**. The system will allow the common recognition of education and experiences gained in different EU member countries. According to the recommendation EQF should be implemented in 2012 the latest.

The system assumes dividing the education into eight levels (so called “reference levels”), to which different stages of education and gained qualifications can be compared. The lowest level is equal to the qualifications obtained upon completion of obligatory education, sixth – to Bachelor’s degree, seventh – to Master’s degree and the highest – eighth – to Doctor’s degree or equivalent.

The EQF levels will depend on the education as well as on vocational qualifications, so high qualified candidates could prove their high reference level which cannot be read directly from scientific degrees.

In order to enable applying EQF in different educational systems, the reference levels are based not on formal assumptions of training programs (length of learning experience, type of institution etc.) but on the outcomes of learning (what particular student knows, understands and is able to do).

According to European Commission, the EQF system will enable promoting mobility among EU workers, because it reduces the barriers of qualifications misunderstanding. There was an example set in EC statement of a Irish company hesitating to recruit a Hungarian candidate, because of not understanding the candidate’s qualifications.

The system, which is voluntary and doesn’t have to lead to changes in educational system, will be implemented under supervision of national institutions. EC emphasizes that mutual trust of national authorities will play the key part in granting EU citizens “reference levels” in a clear and reliable way. The national systems are already implemented in Great Britain, France, Ireland and Malta. (Source: PAP, article from 2008-04-23)

## 1.2 Describing and promoting national vocational qualification standards in Poland

### 1. International conference “Vocational qualifications standard system”

Year 1993 is considered being the first time when public interest in the vocational qualification standards was risen, on the 10-11<sup>th</sup> of December an **International conference** was held by BKKK

### 2. PHARE’98 Project “Training needs analysis”

The first projects were held in 1998-2000 and were initiative of Ministry for Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Education with the support of European Training Foundation from Turyn and they resulted in setting the **methodology for examining employer’s demands**.

### **3. PHARE2000 project “National system for vocational training”**

The project was supervised by Ministry for Economy and Labour between 2002-2004, the 40 standards were described as well as (project nr PL0003.11 part II) the computer system that includes two databases was designed:

#### **1. Standards of vocational qualifications**

#### **2. Modular vocational training programs**

The system is managed and systematically updated by the department for the Labour Market of the Ministry (MGIP). It is directed especially to those interested in usage of databases for designing vocational training and education programs, as well as setting standards for examination requirements

- 1. Project PHARE 2002 “Improving the qualifications of Public Labour Forces in the range of implementing European Employment Strategy in Poland and participating in EURES system”**
- 2. Within the Ministry for Labour and Economy project 7 standards were set for the vocations and specializations in labour offices**

#### **5. “Describing and promoting national vocational qualification standards” Project**

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy project **regarding standard of qualifications**. It was implemented in **2006-2007** and it was financed with European Social Fund in the SPO RZL., Action 1.1 The development and modernization of labour market instruments , Scheme a) “Strengthening the potential of public employment services”. The project was designed for the beneficiaries representing economical and labour market on one side and vocational education on the other.

The project’s main goal was designing and developing tools usable for:

- decision making in the range of employment and education policy
- assuring high quality of lifelong learning, especially in non school forms
- developing vocational mobility of adult employees by increasing the qualification transparency and its application to labour market needs.

The above goals are corresponding with Strategy for Vocational training until 2010, adopted by the Council of Ministers in July 2003. Standards for vocational qualifications are described there as a basis for setting educational standards as well as a factor for ensuring quality in vocational and lifelong learning.

Within the project implementation 3 major actions with corresponding tasks were introduced:

1. Describing 200 national vocational qualification standards including:
  - *Task 1.1* – Leading an informational campaign as well as setting vocational qualification standard needs
  - *Task 1.2* – planning and running research in enterprises for 200 chosen vocations /specializations
  - *Task 1.3.* – Preparing 200 descriptions of vocational qualification standards for the chosen vocations./specializations
2. Dissemination of information on vocational qualification standards including:
  - *Task 2.1.* Issuing (in a brochure form) 240 descriptions of national vocational qualification standards and it’s distribution (200 new standards and 40 studied in Phare 2000 Project)
  - *Task 2.2* Preparing and publication of articles and books regarding vocational qualification standards

- *Task 2.3* Organization of two conferences promoting vocational qualification standards as well as project outcomes, participated by international experts (**National qualification standards – way to building national qualification frameworks**, 29 September 2006, Ministry for Labour and Social Policy in Warsaw)
3. Conducting research regarding usage of vocational qualification standards by potential users, including:
- *Task 3.1* Designing methods and tools for studies of usage of vocational qualification standards and its evaluation
  - *Task 3.2* Conducting a research of usage of vocational qualification standards (twice – at the beginning and at the end of the project)

The project was implemented by a consortium of 3 partners:

Doradca Consultants Ltd., Gdynia (spółka pełniąca rolę lidera), Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji – Państwowy Instytut Badawczy w Radomiu, Demos Polska Sp. z o.o. w Warszawie, Łódzkie Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli i Kształcenia Praktycznego accompanied by subcontractors Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych w Warszawie, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych in Warszaw, Pracownia Badań Społecznych DGA in Sopot.

In order to fulfill the project's assumptions, 200 author groups were established and trained. Research completed in December 2006 included 2865 enterprises and institutions, where 11460 workplaces were examined. The people engaged in the Project exceeded 10 000. It should be acknowledged that a significant number of employers and employees, as well as institutions representing them, took part in the project. It can be hoped that the vocational qualification standards described with their help will contribute to improving the quality of vocational training and will become tools broadly used on the labour market during recruitment and selection process, evaluation of work, employee evaluation as well as professional development planning.

The set of systematically described vocational qualification standards is available on the internet database set on the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy's website address:

<http://www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl>.

## II – THE VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL (INCIDENTAL) AND INFORMAL LEARNING WITH THE USAGE OF NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARDS)

### II. The validation of non-formal (incidental) and informal learning with the usage of national vocational qualification standards

While discussing the quality, mobility, transparency and recognition of vocational qualifications, it should be taken into consideration what differentiates the **formal education from informal and non-formal (incidental)** one – and, as a consequence, the problem of validating the qualifications acquired in other than formal education and training systems appears. The instruments that might turn out useful here are **validation of vocational qualifications as well as national vocational qualifications standards.**

According to The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) dictionary, **validation** is defined as the process of identification, evaluation and recognition of wide range of skills and competences acquired by people in a lifelong learning during self education, work or leisure. In the informal lifelong learning validation is the key element ensuring visibility and comparability of skills and qualifications by assigning to them the adequate value/meeting and confirming the outcomes of education gained in different places and at a different times during one's life.

In order to successfully validate one's vocational qualifications, there is a need for naming a standard describing the level of skills and competences is needed to perform a particular job. That could be the standard for vocational qualifications, that describes employee's skills connected with the described range of assigned tasks.

Among other potential usages of the vocational qualifications standards, enabling the validation of qualifications is the most important one, as it unifies formal, informal and non-formal (incidental) education.

It is obvious that the **standards of education** and **standards of examination** are derivative of vocational qualification standards describing performance at work. According to recognition no qualification standards are needed during validation process (f.ex. training programs, standards of didactical accessories), but only standards of vocational qualifications and as a result – examining standards.

In a longer perspective, linking formal, informal and non-formal education into one system with the help of national vocational qualifications standards and validation process, is the first step towards development of lifelong learning and supporting by that the personnel of the knowledge based modern economy. Some conditions of the system are laid In the Ministry for National Education's new disposition (f.ex.. Ministry for Education Act from 18 September 2007 r. regarding eksternal examinations) as well as assumptions in changing of the model for examination confirming vocational qualification as set in Operational Program Human Capital (PO KL) 2007-2013

#### 2.1. Certification of skills acquired in formal learning in Poland

The Qualification Framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (called 'bologna') should act as an inspiration for national qualification frameworks, Bologna framework of qualification is sort of a translation device for qualification acquired in one country to qualification acquired in another.

## European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning – basic levels

| EQF     | Polish educational system |
|---------|---------------------------|
| Level 1 | Pre-school                |
| Level 2 | Primary school            |
| Level 3 | Gymnasium                 |
| Level 4 | High school               |
| Level 5 | college/ seminars         |
| Level 6 | Bachelor's studies        |
| Level 7 | Masters studies           |
| Level 8 | Doctor's studies          |

### *How to build the qualification frame for higher education?*

#### Cycles of education

- Three Basic cycles
  - BA – In Poland bachelor and engineer
  - MA – In Poland Master
  - Ph.D. – In Poland doctor studies graduate
- In-between those (before or after) there can be intermediate levels. They were not characterized in bologna description, each country can design them according to own tradition and needs, but they should have a clear implication to the three main cycles.

#### Expectations against National Qualification Frame in Poland

- better characteristics of educational levels:
  - describing the general and specific competences by describing the measurable outcomes of education assigned with profiles, levels and (if applicable) intermediate levels
- better characteristics of educational profiles
  - academic/vocational/general based on the outcomes of the education
- better characteristics of specializations/faculties and clarification/reduction from the list
- clear identification of range of independency in designing training programs on the central, interschool and school levels
- ensuring better flexibility and diversity of educational programs

## **Expectations against National Qualification Framework in Poland: labour market**

- graduate's qualifications vs. labour market requirements
- employability vs. vocationality
- employability vs. vocational qualifications standard
- employees representatives participation in NQF designing bodies
- recognition of acquired goals apart from educational system

## **National Qualification Framework (NQF) in Poland**

- Progress of the works: designing stage
- Established Bodies:
  - Workgroup and
  - NQF Committee At Ministry for Science and Higher Education
- The main change: designing studies on all decision levels begins with „training effects” – it's a system change.

## **2.2 Certification of skills acquired in informal education in Poland (examples – language skills and trainer's skills)**

### **2.2.1 Common European Framework (CEFR) for language skills**

Accredited by Council of Europe document known as Common European Framework includes indications for the language training as well as suggests the descriptions for the level of knowledge of all European languages together with the descriptions of speaking, reading, writing and listening skills on each of the levels. CEFR emphasizing their diversity, while on the same time placing them on the same scale, unifying them. Council of Europe and CEFR authors propose 6 levels of knowledge: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. For each of the level there is a description of four basic skills. Today, being on B2 level in English or Danish means possessing exactly the same equivalent skills. Common European Framework for language skills is a positive approach to evaluation of the skill, basing on what the student knows so far. Above all, he can describe himself on a scale, find the description of his skills and by that, receive a objective information on at development stage he is at the moment and allows to set a goal: what skills do I want to acquire. At the same time he can deliberately plan his process of education, the time how long it would take and link the methods of education with the set goal and time.

### **2.2.2 The Trainer's competence profile according to European Qualifications Framework – Wszechnica of Jagiellonian University**

The development of training services market has improved recently. Performing trainer's profession has become more popular so more and more people decide for practical and theoretical development of trainer's skills. As it turns out the opportunities aiming at promoting high standards of lifelong training are available only for few and it's only recently that it has been pointed out that these should be the obvious consequences of trainer's profession popularity. At the same time from the time when Poland joined EU, polish training market has a significant point of reference for all actions aiming at improving quality of services, Wszechnica UJ has made an attempt to prepare the Trainer's Competence Profile based on European Qualifications Framework. Specialists in the field of lifelong learning were invited to work on the profile. Eight

levels of knowledge of trainer's skills enables the works on diagnostic and developmental solutions. Wschechnica UJ has started the program for Trainer's Competence Certification for level: 4 (trainer) and 5 (master trainer) of EQF. The certification is a 4 month program enabling diagnosis of acquired competence as well as the development in the range defined in accordance with individual needs of a certified trainer.

The certification process relies on the profiled coaching program, which develops key aspects of vocational performance. Granting a certificate is based on the results of a written exam (knowledge test and case studies), practical exam (trainer's assessment in a real training situation) as well as summarizing discussion.

The certification training program of Wszechnicy UJ was designed to develop the quality of training services by:

- promoting trainers providing services of the highest standard
- supporting the development of trainer's competences

The program aims at both verification and development of the competences. It's participants can count on the complex diagnosis of the current level of development as well as on the personalized support in achieving the set goals.

1. the certificate is dedicated to the practicing trainers willing to compete and verify their competences
2. It is granted on two levels of development to those people whose knowledge and skills match the requirements of the Trainer level or Master Trainer level in competence profile by Wszechnica UJ described in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework.
3. The certificate is the proof of competence, so it's a little more than just a statement of completing a program or course. The condition for obtaining it is demonstrating the desired knowledge and skills level during the examination process.
4. the certification process is also a development program based on individual coaching of trainer's skills accompanied with short, specialized trainings to be chosen by participants from the proposed list.

**The certification** program includes the following elements:

1. one day information-diagnosis workshops dedicated to explaining the rules and criteria of certification, as well as preliminary trainer's skills self esteem evaluation and setting development goals
2. meeting with the coach supervising the process, evaluation of trainer's skills self esteem
3. individual coaching program oriented at improving trainer's skills and raising the quality of trainings, including completing individual development tasks (7 meetings, every 2 weeks)
4. participating in specialized trainings improving chosen trainer's skills (two 2-day trainings to be chosen from the proposed list) – optional
5. Examinations
  - written exam (knowledge test + case studies)
  - practical exam (trainer's assessment in a real training situation)
  - summarizing discussion (summary of the achievements, presentation of the training project, statement regarding performing required number of training hours, decision of granting the certificate)

**Certificate:** Trainer's Certificate or Master Trainer's Certificate in relation to EQF

**Methodology:** Trainer's certification in Wszechnica UJ is a 4-month process of competence development, including (among others) individual coaching program and participating in specialized trainings. The aim of development program is strengthening of the participant's most important trainer's competence and preparation for the examinations.

**Training materials:** Each of the participants receive his set of materials including: reading list (book list), information on the certification process as well as description of the desired competence profile (competences, factors of their achievement and evaluation tools).

### III – SWOT ANALYSIS

| STRENGTHS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | WEAKNESSES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b><u>1. Polish legal regulations regarding recognition of vocational qualification acquired in EU member states:</u></b></p> <p><i>Act from 18 march 2008 r. regarding recognition of vocational qualification acquired in EU member states (Dz.U. 2008.63.394)</i></p> <p>2. Directive nr 2005/36/WE of European Parliament and Council of Europe from 7 September 2005 r. regarding recognition of vocational qualification</p> <p>3. Existing of a database including and regulation of vocations in Poland<br/><a href="http://www.buwilm.edu.pl/eu/public/db/?fullinfo=true">http://www.buwilm.edu.pl/eu/public/db/?fullinfo=true</a></p> <p>4. Existing of a computer system of vocational qualifications standard and training vocational modular programs <a href="http://www.mpips.gov.pl">www.mpips.gov.pl</a>;<br/><a href="http://www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl">www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl</a></p> <p>5. Strategy for lifelong training development until 2010, adopted by Cabinet of Ministers in July 2003</p> <p>6. Program PO KL 2007-2013</p> <p>Current results:</p> <p>7. descriptions of over 250 national vocational qualifications standards, closely connected with the requirements of the labour market and economy</p> <p>8. Implemented procedures for assuring the quality of standard's contents</p> <p>9. positive outcomes of cooperation between experts in interdisciplinary author programs, results measured by evaluators, reviewers, members of Commission approving the standards as well as final versions acceptance by Ministry's employees from Department for Labour Market</p> <p>10. documents with national rank are introduced, it is suggested for using when the quality of employed school or other training courses graduates qualifications should be supervised</p> | <p>1. lack of knowledge on vocational qualification standards</p> <p>2. voluntary legal status of the standards. Without formal rank with legal act, the standards are unlikely to become common and will not be implemented neither by the employers not by the training institutions.</p> <p>3. limited intention of cooperation in this range between social partners and governmental institutions</p> <p>4. a long way for building systems on the national level</p> |

| OPPORTUNITIES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | THREATS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. enabling recognition of qualifications acquired in informal and non-formal (incidental) forms of education</p> <p>2. in the international range the standards are used in promoting worker's mobility</p> <p>3. new diploma supplements based on outcomes of education in the description of qualification</p> <p>4. reaching the balance between economy's needs and effectiveness of educational system</p> | <p>The most important designing problems:</p> <p>1. Relation between Bologna structure and European structure (LLL) – Polish aspect</p> <p>2. Legal acts: existing terminology and intentions collisions (example: vocationality vs employability)</p> |

## SUMMARY

Polish achievements regarding EQF revolves around the experiences gained during implementations of several projects by Ministry for Labour and Social Policy and partners. A precise description for over 250 national vocational qualifications standards were prepared in the form of documents recommended by the Ministry. The procedures assuring the quality of the standard's contents were introduced: there was a positive outcome of the cooperation between experts in interdisciplinary author programs, results measured by evaluators, reviewers, members of Commission approving the standards as well as final versions acceptance by Ministry's employees from Department for Labour Market. Documents with national rank are introduced, it is suggested for using when the quality of employed school or other training courses graduates qualifications should be supervised.

Relatively new, but promising field where the vocational qualification standards can be implemented is enabling recognition of qualifications acquired in informal and non-formal (incidental) forms of education. In the international scope, the standards will be used in developing and encouraging workers' mobility. So called qualification recognition instruments such as European/National Qualifications Framework or ECVET points should be based on reliable descriptions of vocational demands as described in qualifications standard.

