

Models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in the NQF

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Plan of the presentation

1. Developing models within the NQF-IN project
2. Concepts and terms relating to models
3. Creation of models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs

Part 1.

Developing models within the NQF-IN project

NQF-IN Partnership:

1. Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
2. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership
3. French Centre for Research on Qualifications (Céreq)

4. Educational Research Institute (IBE)

5. National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre and Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers (Czech Republic)

6. University of Split (Croatia)

7. Educational Authority (Hungary)

The main aim of the NQF-IN project:

to provide support to national governments, EU agencies
and key stakeholders

in developing policies on including qualifications
in NQFs

How did we plan to achieve the aims of the project?

- preparing country reports of 7 European countries
- developing models of including non-formal sector qualifications in national qualifications frameworks

NQF-IN project is funded by:

the Erasmus+ Programme, KA2, VET
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Part 2.

Key concepts and terms relating to models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs

“Inclusion of qualifications in the NQF”

solutions and procedures leading to the assignment of an NQF level to a qualification and its entry in a register

introduction of qualifications into a qualifications system based on a national qualifications framework

“Non-formal sector qualifications”

qualifications awarded outside the traditional formal education system (type B and type C qualifications)

“Model”

“a model of a system or process is a theoretical description that can help you understand how the system or process works, or how it might work”

[Collins dictionary, nd.]

Following the Collins Dictionary definition, we defined the model of including qualifications in a qualifications system as:

a configuration of complementary legal, financial and organisational solutions.

Why we decided to use the model approach?

“exporting policies within or between countries is often discounted on the basis that the ‘context’ is different and hence lessons from host countries cannot be learnt. However, a focus on conceptual models can obviate some of these problems by focusing on the key elements of the system that is being studied. By applying concepts related to the functioning of the system, it is thus possible to discern similarities and differences in patterns and practices across contexts”.

Exworthy (2008)

Part 3.

Creating models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs

Models of including non-formal sector qualifications were created:

- based on the information in the country reports
- joint discussions within the NQF-in partnerships
- analyses of solutions in other countries (outside NQF-IN)
- literature review
- deductive reasoning

Models were created in four steps :

1. Selection of key characteristics of the qualifications system

2. Identification of variants distinguished in each characteristic

3. Analysis the impact of a given variant on the defined properties of a qualifications system

4. Combining selected variants identified for each of the characteristics to propose a given model of including non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs

Creating models:

Step 1. Identifying key characteristics of a qualifications system relating to the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications

The term “characteristics” of a qualifications system refer to its several particular features/qualities that influence solutions used to include non-formal sector qualifications in national qualifications systems.

See Raffe (2003), Coles (2006), Allais (2017)

The following characteristics of qualifications systems were identified:

1. Types of qualifications that may be included in an NQF-based qualifications system, according to the typology of qualifications proposed by the NQF-in Project
2. Ownership of a qualification included in an NQF-based - qualifications system

3. Allowable level of similarity of the qualifications included in an NQF-based qualifications system

4. Character of the legal regulations on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system

5. Scope of the regulations on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system

6. Degree of centralization of the decisions taken on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system

7. Role of different stakeholder groups in activities relating to the inclusion of qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system

8. Fees for including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system

9. The formal, legal and financial benefits of having a qualification included in an NQF-based qualifications system

For the needs of other analyses,
it is also possible to distinguish additional characteristics of
qualifications systems, e.g.

- the scope of the functioning of qualifications registers
- the significance of occupational standards
- the role of credit systems

Creating models:

Step 2. Distinguishing basic variants within each characteristic

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>1. Types of qualifications that may be included in an NQF-based qualifications system, according to proposed typology of qualifications in the NQF-in project</p>	<p>Variant 1.1 All types of qualification may be included in the qualifications system</p> <p>Variant 1.2 Only some types of qualifications may be included in the qualifications system</p>

Taking into account the legal basis criterion, we proposed following types of qualifications:

Type A - state regulated qualifications awarded in the education system (e.g. matura certificate, Master's degree)

Type B - state regulated qualifications awarded outside the education system (e.g. diver's licence, tax advisor, tourist guide)

Type C - non-regulated qualifications (e.g. certificate of risk management in banking, tennis coach, tour guiding)

Examples of qualifications categorised according to the proposed typology are presented in Annex 2 of the Report: “Proposed models of including...”

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>2. Ownership of a qualification in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 2.1 Qualifications included in the system remain the property of the submitting institution</p> <p>Variant 2.2 Qualifications included in the system become a public good</p>

Scotland, France, and Ireland (except for the CAS system) are countries in which variant 2.1 has been implemented,

whereas

Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Croatia are applying variant 2.2.

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>3. Allowable level of similarity of the qualifications included in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 3.1 Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system precludes the ability to include the submitted qualification in the system</p> <p>Variant 3.2 Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system does not preclude the ability to include the new qualifications</p>

Note:

Implementation of variant 3.1 and 2.1 may lead to the monopolisation of an NQF-based system

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>4. Character of the legal regulations on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 4.1 Specific regulations on inclusion have the character of required legal norms</p> <p>Variant 4.2 Specific regulations on inclusion do not have the character of required legal norms</p>

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>5. Scope of the regulations on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 5.1 Specific regulations govern all significant elements in the process of including qualifications</p> <p>Variant 5.2 Only general guidelines are provided, leaving a wide margin of discretion for specific stakeholders</p>

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>6. Degree of centralization of the decisions taken on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 6.1 One institution decides on including qualifications (as well as determines their level)</p> <p>Variant 6.2 Many institutions can decide on including qualifications (as well as determine their level)</p>

Characteristics of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>7. Role of different stakeholder groups in activities relating to the inclusion of qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 7.1 The roles of public authorities and social partners are balanced in the process of including non-formal qualifications in NQF-based qualifications systems.</p> <p>Variant 7.2 Social partners have a weak role in the process of including non-formal qualifications in NQF-based qualifications systems</p> <p>Variant 7.3 Social partners play no role in the process of including qualifications.</p>

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
8. Fees for including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system	<p>Variant 8.1: Fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system</p> <p>Variant 8.2 No fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system</p>

Characteristic of a qualifications system	Basic Variants
<p>9. The formal, legal and financial benefits of having a qualification included in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<p>Variant 9.2 Including qualifications in the system provides no practical formal or financial benefits for various stakeholder groups</p> <p>Variant 9.1 Including qualifications in the system provides various types of formal and financial benefits to learners, training institutions and awarding bodies (scholarships, discounts, the right to seek financing or refunds)</p>

Creating models:

Step 3. Analysis of the impact of a given variant on the defined properties of a qualifications system

The following properties of qualifications system were chosen for analysis:

- the coherence of the qualifications system
(strengthens or weakens)
- incentives for stakeholders to include qualifications
(encourages or discourages)

- absorption capacity of the national qualifications system
(increases or decreases)
- dominance of resourceful institutions
(strengthens or weakens)
- proliferation of qualifications in the qualifications system

Each given variant (or configuration of variants) distinguished for the characteristics of the qualifications system can influence its properties

Variants can influence the properties of the system in various ways.

For example:

- variants strengthening the coherence of a qualifications system may weaken incentives to submit qualifications for inclusion in the system
- variants providing incentives to submit qualifications can lead to excessive proliferation of qualifications in the qualifications system

In Table 13 of the Report: *Models of inclusion...*
we present our hypotheses regarding the impact of each
variant on the properties of a qualifications system

Table 13. Relationships between the variants of the characteristics and properties of a qualifications system

Symbols indicating the impact of the variants on the properties of a qualifications system used in the table				
Coherence of an NQF-based qualifications system	Incentives for stakeholders to include qualifications	Proliferation	Absorption capacities	Domination of resourceful institutions
<p>+ indicates that the given variant strengthens the coherence of the system</p> <p>- indicates that the given variant weakens the coherence of the system</p> <p>N (neutral) indicates that the given variant has no impact on this property of the qualifications system</p>	<p>+ indicates that the given variant strengthens the incentives of stakeholders to submit qualifications to the system</p> <p>- indicates that the given variant discourages stakeholders to submit qualifications to the system</p> <p>N (neutral) indicates that the given variant has no impact on this property of the qualifications system</p>	<p>+ indicates that the given variant favours proliferation</p> <p>- indicates that the given variant limits proliferation</p> <p>N (neutral) indicates that the given variant has no impact on this property of the qualifications system</p>	<p>+ indicates that the given variant favours the inclusion of a large number of qualifications in the system in a short period of time</p> <p>- indicates that the given variant does not favour the inclusion of a large number of qualifications in the system in a short period of time</p> <p>N (neutral) indicates that the given variant has no impact on this property of the qualifications system</p>	<p>+ indicates that the given variant favours the dominance of large and affluent awarding bodies in the qualifications system</p> <p>- indicates that the given variant does not favour the dominance of large and affluent awarding bodies in the qualifications system</p> <p>N (neutral) indicates that the given variant has no impact on this property of the qualifications system</p>

	Coherence of an NQF-based qualifications system	Incentives for the inclusion of qualifications	Proliferation of qualifications in the system	Absorption capacities – including a large number of qualifications in the system in a short period of time	Domination of “large” and resourceful awarding bodies in the qualifications system
<p>Variant 2.2</p> <p>Qualifications included in the system become a public good</p>	<p>N / +</p> <p>This variant moderately contributes to the coherence of the qualifications system.</p> <p>Introducing solutions using this variant contributes to limiting the number of similar qualifications in the system, which may positively affect the coherence of the system.</p>	<p>-</p> <p>This variant negatively affects incentives for submitting qualifications to the system as some institutions may not be willing to share their know-how and ideas with other institutions and the public.</p> <p>This variant may block international awarding bodies from submitting their qualifications to the system.</p>	<p>-</p> <p>This variant contributes to limiting the proliferation of qualifications in the system.</p> <p>Awarding bodies do not need to create new qualifications in order to enter the system, as they can apply to become awarding bodies for qualifications already included in the system.</p> <p>This variant is in strong synergy with variants 3.1 and 3.2 with respect to proliferation in the system.</p>	<p>N</p> <p>This variant is neutral regarding absorption capacities.</p>	<p>N / -</p> <p>This variant can moderately contribute to limiting the domination of large and affluent awarding bodies, as these institutions will not be allowed to block “their” qualifications from other awarding bodies. Therefore, the risk of monopolisation and the concentration of qualifications in the system are lower.</p>

	Coherence of an NQF-based qualifications system	Incentives for the inclusion of qualifications	Proliferation of qualifications in the system	Absorption capacities – including a large number of qualifications in the system in a short period of time	Domination of “large” and resourceful awarding bodies in the qualifications system
<p>Variant 5.1</p> <p>Specific regulations govern all significant elements in the process of including qualifications</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>This variant positively affects the coherence of the qualifications system.</p> <p>This variant is in strong positive synergy with variants 4.1 and 6.1.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N / -</p> <p>This variant can negatively affect incentives for inclusion as the regulation defined at the central level may be too difficult to follow by some awarding bodies willing to submit their qualifications.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>This variant may strengthen resourceful institutions, as they are more likely to have the capacities required to adapt qualifications to specific regulations defined at the central level.</p>

Having analysed Table 13, the following observations can be made:

- Some variants are assumed to impact more on the properties of the qualifications system than other variants

- Variants that have the strongest impact on strengthening the coherence of the system (5.1, 6.1) and the strongest impact on limiting proliferation (2.2, 3.1) at the same time contribute most to weakening incentives for stakeholders to submit qualifications to the system

- Variants assumed to have the greatest impact on strengthening the coherence of the system and to limit proliferation are assumed to strengthen the dominance of resourceful institutions

Creating models:

Step 4. Combining selected variants identified for each of the characteristics to propose a given model of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in an NQF

The starting point for constructing models was the observation that the variants with the strongest impact on the proposed properties of a qualifications system (variants: 2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 8.1) are assumed to:

- strengthen coherence
- limit proliferation
- and weaken incentives for stakeholders to submit qualifications to the system

We proposed four theoretical models of including qualifications in an NQF:

Model 1 leads to the coherence of an NQF-based qualifications system in a country

Model 2 leads to incentives for stakeholders to submit qualifications to an NQF-based system in a country

Model 3 was developed based on Model 1.

In Model 3, some variants limiting proliferation were replaced by variants strengthening incentives

Model 4 was developed based on Model 2.

In Model 4, some variants strengthening incentives to submit qualifications to the NQF were replaced by variants strengthening coherence

Model 1: Model for the coherence of an NQF-based national qualifications system

Variant 1.1

All types of qualification may be included in the qualifications system

Variant 2.2

Qualifications included in the system become a public good



Variant 3.1

Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system precludes the ability to include the submitted qualification in the system

Variant 4.1

Specific regulations on inclusion have the character of required legal norms

Variant 5.1

Specific regulations govern all significant elements in the process of including qualifications



Variant 6.1

One institution decides on including qualifications (as well as determines their level)

Variant 7.1

The roles of public authorities and social partners are balanced



Weakening incentives

Variant 8.1

Fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system



Variant 9.2

Including qualifications in the system provides no practical formal or financial benefits for various stakeholder groups



Strengthening coherence

limiting proliferation

Commentary to model 1:

- In constructing Model 1, the main aim was to select the combination of variants that ensures coherence (variants 4.1, 5.1, 6.1) and limits proliferation (variants 2.2, 3.1, 8.1)
- In Model 1 institutional and organisational requirements for including qualifications are set at a high level

- No institution can block other institutions against awarding qualifications that were included in the national qualifications system (selected variant 2.2)
- Model 1 assumes that the inclusion of qualifications will require more effort from the state as well as stakeholders
- The number of qualifications being included in the national qualifications system will increase slowly

Model 2: Model for incentives to stakeholders to submit qualifications

Variant 1.1

All types of qualification may be included in the qualifications system

Variant 2.1

Qualifications included in the system remain the property of the submitting institution

Variant 3.2

Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system does not preclude the ability to include the new qualifications

Variant 4.2

Specific regulations on inclusion do not have the character of required legal norms

Variant 5.2

Only general guidelines are provided, leaving a wide margin of discretion for specific stakeholders

Variant 6.2

Many institutions can decide on including qualifications (as well as determine their level)

Variant 7.3

Social partners play no role in the process of including qualifications.

Variant 8.2

No fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system

Variant 9.1

Including qualifications in the system provides various types of formal and financial benefits to learners, training institutions and awarding bodies

Strengthening incentives

Weakening coherence

Favouring proliferation

Commentary to model 2:

- In constructing Model 2, the main aim was to select a combination of variants that support incentives to submit qualifications to the national system (variants 2.1, 3.2, 4.2, 5.2, 8.2)
- Focusing on incentives can lead to proliferation and the lack of coherence in the qualifications system

Commentary to model 2:

The state is not required to develop specific rules on inclusion in the form of legal regulations (variants 4.1 and 5.1)

which may allow non-formal sector qualifications to be included in an NQF system in a shorter period of time

Commentary to model 2:

The absorption capacity envisaged by this model may be high, as many institutions will be able to decide on including qualification (e.g. ministries, state institutions, branch organisations, stakeholders councils)

Stakeholders willing to submit qualifications in the system will not need to give up their ownership rights

Commentary to model 2:

Therefore it is expected that filling the qualifications system with many new qualifications is much easier than in Model 1

Model 3: Model for the coherence of an NQF-based national qualifications system moderately incentivizing stakeholders to submit qualifications

Variant 1.1

All types of qualification may be included in the qualifications system

Variant 2.1

Qualifications included in the system remain the property of the submitting institution

Variant 2.2

replaced by 2.1

Variant 3.2

Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system does not preclude the ability to include the new qualifications

Variant 3.1

replaced by 3.2

Variant 4.1

Specific regulations on inclusion have the character of required legal norms

Variant 5.1

Specific regulations govern all significant elements in the process of including qualifications

Variant 6.1

One institution decides on including qualifications (as well as determines their level)

Variant 7.1

The roles of public authorities and social partners are balanced in the process of including non-formal qualifications in NQF-based qualifications systems.

Variant 8.1

Fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system

Variant 9.2

Including qualifications in the system provides no practical formal or financial benefits for various stakeholder groups



Weakening incentives



Strengthening coherence

Favouring proliferation

Model 3 protects the coherence of the system but provides more incentives for stakeholders to submit qualifications than Model 1 in a trade-off favouring proliferation

Model 4: Model for incentives to stakeholders to submit qualifications and the moderate coherence of an NQF-based qualifications system

Variant 1.1

All types of qualification may be included in the qualifications system

Variant 2.1

Qualifications included in the system remain the property of the submitting institution



Variant 3.2

Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system does not preclude the ability to include the new qualifications

Variant 4.1

Specific regulations on inclusion have the character of required legal norms

Variant 4.2 was replaced
by variant 4.1

Variant 5.1

Specific regulations govern all significant elements in the process of including qualifications

Variant 5.2 was replaced
by variant 5.1

Variant 6.2

Many institutions can decide on including qualifications (as well as determine their level)

Variant 7.3

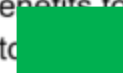
Social partners play no role in the process of including qualifications

Variant 8.1: Fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system

Variant 8.2 was replaced
by variant 8.1

Variant 9.1

Including qualifications in the system provides various types of formal and financial benefits to learners, training institutions and awarding bodies (scholarships, discounts, the right to financing or refunds)



Strengthening incentives



Strengthening coherence

Favouring proliferation

Limiting proliferation

Model 4 provides incentives to stakeholders to submit qualifications and is still prone to proliferation, however at the same time, it strengthens the coherence of the system

This model anticipates that the number of new qualifications in the system can grow at a significant rate while maintaining moderate coherence of the qualifications system

Based on Table 13 more models could be proposed and analysed

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The four theoretical models provide a starting point in thinking about the use of models in designing procedures of including non-formal sector qualifications in NQF based qualifications systems

Thank you for your attention

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How to include non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs?

The main goal of the NQF-IN project is to provide evidence based support to national governments, EU agencies and key stakeholders in developing policies on including non-formal sector qualifications into national qualifications frameworks.

For more information about the NQF-IN project visit our website