

NQF-in Project:

“Developing Organisational and Financial Models for Including Non-formal Sector Qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks”

**Including Non-Formal Sector Qualifications
in the National Qualifications Framework in
Poland**

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Foreword

This country report was prepared within the NQF-in Project: *Developing Organisational and Financial Models for Including Non-Formal Sector Qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks* financed by the European Union within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme.

The NQF-in Project corresponds with policy learning and policy transfer initiatives advocated in the EU, which focus on the exchange of ideas, policies and policy instruments among different national qualifications systems. The main rationale for this project is the assumption that knowledge about policies in one national system may be used for the benefit of developing policies in another system (Dolowitz, Marsch 2000, Chakroun 2010).

The aim of the NQF-in Project is to provide evidence-based support to national governments, EU agencies and key stakeholders in developing policies for including qualifications in national qualifications frameworks, with a particular focus on qualifications awarded outside the formal education system (*non-formal sector* qualifications). This aim is achieved by conducting two sets of activities in the project: (1) providing systematised knowledge about the organisational and financial solutions applied in seven EU countries for including non-formal sector qualifications in their NQFs, and (2) developing organisational and financial models for the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs.

Within the NQF-in Project, we collected the experiences of seven European countries that are at different stages of NQF implementation: Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and Scotland. Each NQF-in Project partner prepared a country report that describes the systemic solutions used to include non-formal sector qualifications in the NQF. This report presenting the case of Poland is one of the seven country reports produced within this project. Based on an analysis of the content of country reports and national solutions, the NQF-in Project aims to develop organisational and financial models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs.

In order to ensure that country reports refer to the same set of themes in a comparable way, a methodology of preparing country reports consisting of basic terms and concepts as well as a report structure have been developed. Each of the seven reports is structured according to the following chapters:

- Chapter 1. Historical Context
- Chapter 2. National Qualifications Framework– Basic Premises
- Chapter 3. Institutional Setting
- Chapter 4. Types and Legal Status of Qualifications Included in the NQF
- Chapter 5. Procedures of the Inclusion of Qualifications in the NQF
- Chapter 6. Quality Assurance of Qualifications Included in the NQF
- Chapter 7. Costs of Including Qualifications in the NQF
- Chapter 8. Current Debates on Further NQF Developments.

More information about the methodology of preparing country reports and the NQF-in Project outcomes can be found at the project's website www.nqf-in.eu.

Abbreviations and acronyms

EQA – external quality assurance

EQAE - external quality assurance institution

EQF – European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

IBE – Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych (*Educational Research Institute*)

IQA – internal quality assurance

IQR – Integrated Qualifications Register

IQS – Integrated Qualifications System

NQF – national qualifications framework

PQF – Polish Qualifications Framework

Explanation of the basic terms used in the report¹

Archival qualification – a qualification in the IQS which is „inactive” due to its being out-of-date, and is no longer awarded within the IQS.

Awarding body/certifying institution – an institution authorised to award particular qualifications.

External quality assurance institution – an entity authorised by the relevant minister responsible for a qualification to assess the quality assurance system of awarding bodies. The external quality assurance institution shall not have any relationship with any awarding body that it may be authorised to assess.

Formal education – learning within the framework of programmes leading to an awarded full or partial qualification, provided by an institution operating on the basis of legal regulations governing the general, vocational and higher education systems.

Formal general and vocational education (*system oświaty*) – the Polish national education system is divided into “*system oświaty*” and higher education. Many documents on Polish education translate the term “*system oświaty*” into “education system”. From the perspective of this report, such terminology lacks precision for two reasons: it does not refer directly to vocational education and may suggest that it also includes higher education. For this reason, “*system oświaty*” is being translated in this report as “the formal general and vocational education system”.

Full qualification – qualifications awarded solely within the formal general, vocational and higher education systems, after the learner has achieved the learning outcomes required for the qualifications attained in specific stages of education.

Informal learning – attaining knowledge, skills and competences through various means other than organised learning (formal or non-formal education systems). Informal learning can include: autonomous self-learning (e.g. foreign language, computer skills); learning through other activities – while working, performing household duties, developing a hobby, etc. (learning outcomes then become an added value of the activities performed, which are not undertaken with the intention of learning).

Integrated Qualifications System – a distinguished part of the national qualifications system governed by the regulations of the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System. Qualifications not included in the integrated qualifications system can function in Poland, but they are not assigned a PQF level and cannot be entered into the Integrated Qualifications Register.

¹ Based on the *Słownik Zintegrowanego Systemu Kwalifikacji (Glossary of the Integrated Qualifications System)*, IBE 2017.

Integrated Qualifications Register – the publicly accessible, national register of qualifications in the IQS. Qualifications included in the IQS are entered into the IQR regardless of whether they also exist in other registers (lists, catalogues) administered by other ministries, economic sector organisations, communities or institutions.

Internal quality assurance – the monitoring and periodic evaluation performed by awarding bodies relating to the process of awarding qualifications.

Market qualification – a qualification not regulated by legal regulations, developed by various entities and communities (social organisations, associations, corporations or other groups) on the basis of their experiences. All market qualifications included in the IQS are categorized as partial qualifications.

National qualifications system – all of the solutions implemented to develop and award qualifications and ensure their quality.

Non-formal education – organised institutional learning in the form of programmes that are not part of a formal education system. The education programmes of non-formal education do not have to lead to the attainment of a qualification. Qualifications awarded through non-formal education can be included in the IQS (and be assigned a PQF level).

Partial qualification – all qualifications in the IQS that are not full qualifications.

Qualification – a specific set of learning outcomes, defined according to established standards, whose attainment has been formally confirmed by an authorised institution.

Regulated qualification – a qualification established by legal regulations, awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems. Regulated qualifications may, but do not have to, be included in the IQS. The relevant minister decides whether it is to be included in the IQS. All regulated qualifications in the IQS are partial qualifications.

Relevant minister – the minister responsible for a specific area of government administration within which a given regulated and/or market qualification functions.

Suspended qualification – a qualification in the IQS which is momentarily “inactive” and cannot be awarded because of the temporary lack of an authorised awarding body.

1. Historical Context

Work in Poland on the national qualifications framework was started already in 2006, when the minister responsible for higher education appointed the Working Group for the NQF for Higher Education, assigning it the task of preparing an initial model of the framework (see Marciniak 2013 et al.).

In October 2008, the Minister of National Education appointed a team of experts recommending the preparation of a draft model of a Polish qualifications framework. (Chmielecka 2010). The team, which included experts representing different educational sectors, prepared a concept of the national qualifications framework and preliminary guidelines for its implementation.

In 2010, the Prime Minister appointed the *Inter-ministerial Taskforce for Lifelong Learning, including the National Qualifications Framework* in order to manage work on the Polish Qualifications Framework at the governmental level. This Taskforce was led by the Ministry of National Education. At the same time, the Minister of National Education commissioned the Educational Research Institute (IBE) to prepare wide-ranging proposals for the development and implementation of the Polish Qualifications Framework and to prepare the Referencing Report (see Sławiński, Dębowski et al. 2013). This task was carried out within the framework of an EFS funded project: *The Development of Terms of Reference for the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Register for Lifelong Learning*, implemented from June 2010 to November 2015. From January 2013 to November 2015, this project was accompanied by two supplementary projects, also financed from ESF funds: *Developing the National Qualifications System – Organising and Institutionalising the Integrated Qualifications Register* and *Developing the National Qualifications System – Pilot Implementation of the National Qualifications System and its Promotional Campaign*.

Those three systemic ESF-funded projects were implemented by IBE to support the Ministry of National Education and the Polish government in the work of designing systemic solutions and preparing legal acts to implement an integrated qualifications system based on the NQF. Within the scope of these projects, the main components of the qualifications system in Poland were developed: level descriptors of the NQF, qualifications standards and levelling procedures, standards for quality assurance, validation, a proposed outline for the functioning of a qualifications register as well as credit accumulation and transfer. An important part of this work was to develop and promote the use of a common terminology, defined in a glossary of the most important terms relating to the qualifications system (Sławiński ed. 2013, Sławiński ed. 2015, Sławiński 2016).

The concept of the national qualifications framework was described in the Referencing Report, presented, after governmental approval, to the EQF Advisory Group of the European Commission in May 2013. The concept of the NQF reflected the reforms in higher, general and vocational education that were begun in the late 1990s, including the most important shift in the 2010s of basing education on learning outcomes. As a result of these reforms, the approach to developing qualifications that takes into account learning outcomes, their transfer, validation and quality assurance in accordance with European standards was introduced to the entire formal education

system before the PQF was established, and provided the foundation for its implementation (Sławiński, Dębowski et al. 2013).

Since the beginning of the work on the NQF in Poland it was assumed that in order to be a policy driver, the NQF has to be complemented by other elements of the qualifications system, including: a standard way of describing qualifications, quality assurance and validation procedures, credit accumulation and transfer principles. Therefore, work on the reforms was not only concentrated on NQF implementation, but it was much broader – on integrating the entire qualifications system. The introduction of a national qualifications framework in Poland covering all types of education came to be treated as the concluding act in the series of formal education system reforms and the impetus for changes in non-formal education. The framework would allow for the greater integration of the qualifications system and provide a better response to the lifelong learning challenges that Poland was and is still facing (Kocór, Worek (2017), Dębowski, Stęchły (2015), Szczucka, Turek, Worek (2012); Debowski, Lis, Pogorzelski 2010). An overarching NQF came to be perceived as one of the most important lifelong learning policy tools in Poland.

The IQS was developed in a participatory manner, following a number of debates with various stakeholders initiated and led by IBE (Chłoń-Domińczak, et al., 2011). Additionally, stakeholders were included in the conceptual work on developing the main elements of the system. The debate meetings provided the opportunity for social partners to actively participate in the development of a modernised qualifications system. This was important when the proposed Act on the IQS went through the legislative process. The acceptance of social partners provided a strong incentive to the newly elected government to adopt the Act in its first months of governance.

The Act on the Integrated Qualifications System establishing the Polish Qualifications Framework was passed in December 2015 and came into force in January 2016. Following the adoption of the Act, extensive activities were launched to ensure that the Integrated Qualifications System could start functioning. The implementation of these activities has been supported by funding from the European Social Fund, in particular within the framework of the systemic projects implemented by IBE (see Chapter 8 for a description of these project activities).

2. The Integrated Qualifications System – Basic Premises

2.1. Aims of the IQS

The aim of the Integrated Qualifications System based on the Polish Qualifications Framework is to raise the level of human capital in Poland (by increasing the number of learners and the effectiveness of investments in human capital) and to improve the ability to match supply and demand in the labour market, particularly with regard to qualifications awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems.

The solutions and mechanisms presented in the IQS Act serve to more effectively implement the lifelong learning policies corresponding to the needs of a modern knowledge-based economy. The IQS also increases the accessibility of qualifications offered in Poland, improves their quality and enables them to be compared to each other and referenced to the European Qualifications Framework, as the result of being assigned a level in the Polish Qualifications Framework.

Currently, two autonomous but internally consistent systems of formal education function in the Polish legal framework governing qualifications – the formal general and vocational education system (*system oświaty*) and the higher education system. The development and awarding of qualifications for both these systems are governed by legal regulations, which comply with European standards.

Awarding qualifications outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems is characterized by a great variety of regulatory approaches (legal and organisational) and varying degrees of required legal norms relating to the particular fields in which these qualifications operate. What is lacking are basic common standards guaranteeing the credibility of qualifications – from standards on how they are described and named, to validation and certification principles, as well as quality assurance procedures for awarding qualifications. Also striking is the lack of a connection between the qualifications awarded in various fields and qualifications systems.

The way the “qualifications market” currently operates in Poland affects attitudes towards lifelong learning. As a result, Poland, compared to other European Union countries, has relatively low investments in human capital (to increase and supplement competences after the completion of formal education) made by both adult Poles and the companies employing them.

The essence of the IQS Act is the introduction of a set of simple and consistent systemic solutions for qualifications awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems and the greater integration of all areas within which qualifications are awarded (formal general, vocational and higher education, regulated qualifications and market qualifications).

The IQS Act has introduced a new order in the area of awarding qualifications. The Act defines the roles and responsibilities of different entities operating in the area of qualifications and the relationships among them. It introduces uniform terminology and common rules for awarding and ensuring the quality of qualifications attained outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems (analogous solutions were introduced to these systems earlier).

Qualifications not included in the IQS can continue to function in Poland, but they are not assigned a PQF level and will not be able to be entered into the Integrated Qualifications Register.

The key solutions adopted in the Act on the IQS are as follows:

- All qualifications awarded in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems (after having completed first and second cycle studies and the doctorate degree) are included by law in the IQS.
- Other qualifications awarded in higher education (e.g. after completing post-graduate studies) and qualifications awarded outside the general, vocational and higher education systems may also be included in the IQS.
- Qualifications awarded outside the general, vocational and higher education systems are included in the IQS by ministers responsible for the qualification (relevant minister).
- All qualifications in the IQS will be entered in the Integrated Qualifications Register.
- Each qualification in the IQS must be described in the manner specified in the regulations and have a PQF (Polish Qualifications Framework) level assigned.
- Qualifications defined in the Act as a full qualification have their PQF level assigned by law.
- The remaining qualifications are assigned a PQF level as the result of comparing the required learning outcomes for the given qualification with the level descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework.
- A qualification in the IQS is awarded on the basis of achieving a positive result in the process of verifying that a person attaining the qualification has mastered its required learning outcomes (validation).
- Qualifications in the IQS can only be awarded by institutions authorised by legal regulations or by the relevant minister responsible for the qualification (certification).
- Each institution awarding qualifications included in the IQS is required to comply with internal and external quality assurance provisions that are consistent with the relevant regulations of the law.
- The relevant ministers of given qualifications are responsible for overseeing the awarding of qualifications and quality assurance.

The functioning of the integrated system is coordinated by the Minister Coordinator of the IQS with the support of the IQS Stakeholders Council.

2.2. Main elements of the integrated qualifications system

2.2.1. Polish Qualifications Framework

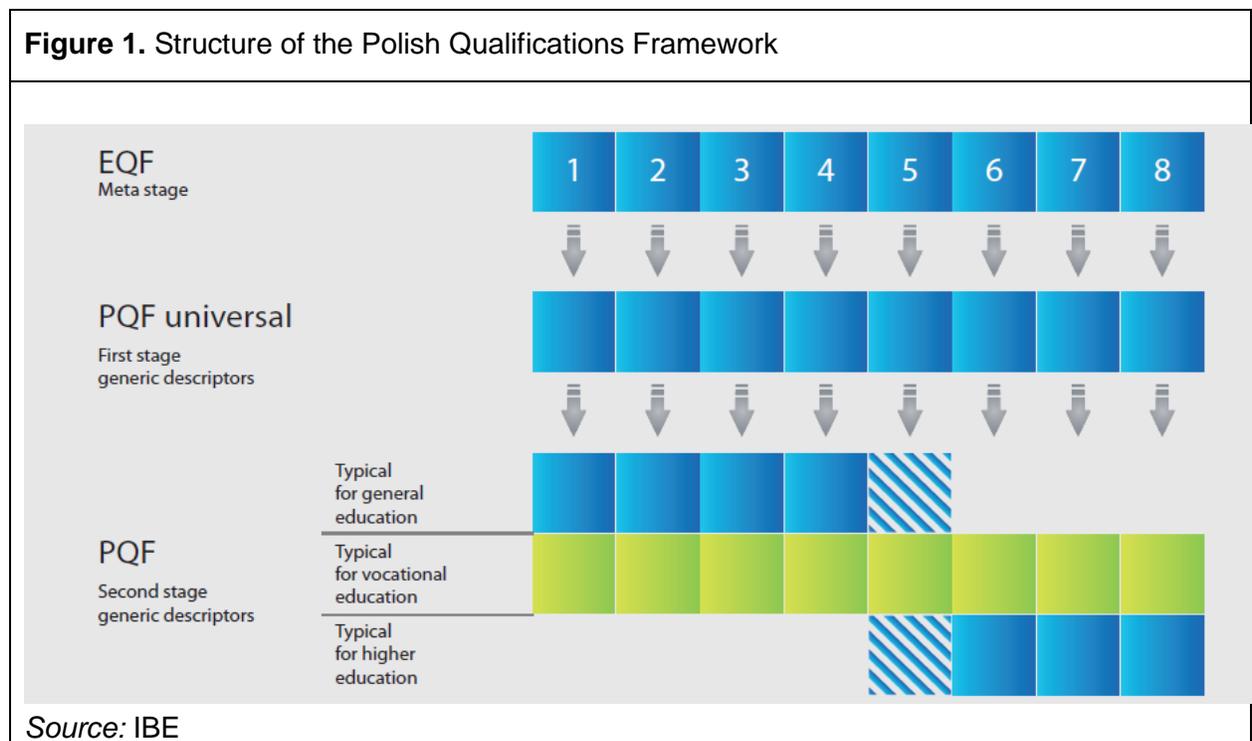
The Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF), like the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), consists of eight qualification levels. Each PQF level is described with the use of descriptors. The descriptors in the PQF capture the full spectrum of learning outcomes. They reflect progress from the lowest to the highest level achieved by the learner. The PQF descriptors show how the following abilities advance at successive levels through learning in different contexts and stages of life:

- knowledge (e.g. depth, scope),
- skills (including problem-solving, the innovative application of knowledge in practice, learning and communication),
- social competence (e.g. readiness to work with others and to assume responsibility for assigned tasks).

A unique Polish solution is to distinguish two stages of descriptors in the PQF levels:

- first stage generic (universal) descriptors – these relate to all sectors of education,
- second stage generic descriptors – these detail the first stage generic descriptors.

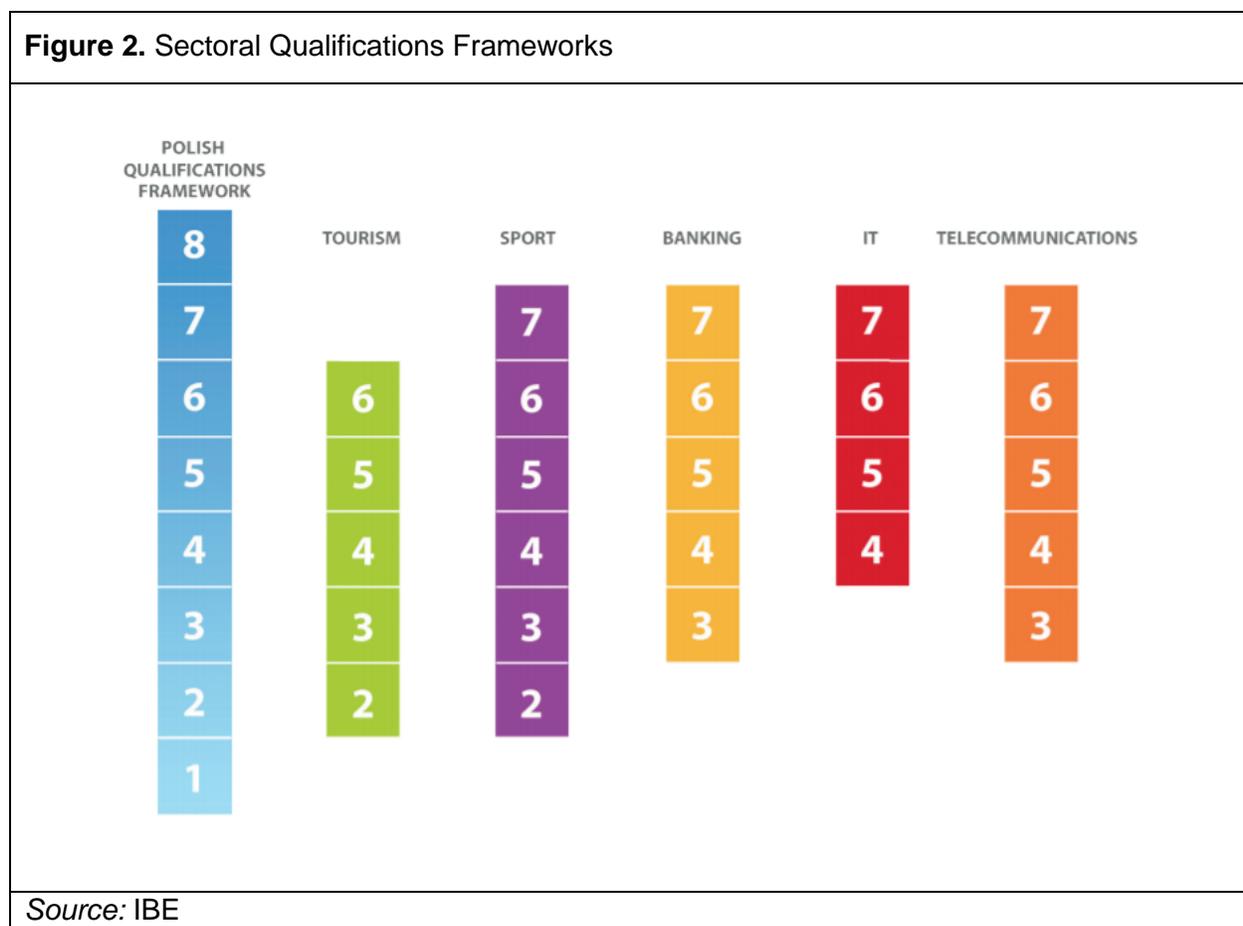
Universal descriptors and second stage generic descriptors should be read together. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the Polish Qualifications Framework.



The Polish qualifications system can also have third stage generic descriptors. These descriptors already function in fields of learning in higher education. They are also used to describe specific fields of activities (sectors) – known as “sectoral qualifications frameworks”.

The purpose of the sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQFs), which are able to be referenced to the PQF, is to organise the qualifications and competences of a given industry, thus enabling a better understanding and comparability of its qualifications and creating better conditions for occupational mobility, both locally and internationally. They also provide both employers and employees with an intentional and individualized approach to career development (Trawińska-Konador et al. 2015).

Developing sectoral qualifications frameworks is the domain of interested sectors, but the decision of relevant ministers determines the inclusion of these frameworks in the IQS. Including a SQF in the IQS is voluntary. A decision to include a SQF in the IQS can be made after it has referenced its descriptors to those of the Polish Qualifications Framework.



2.2.2. Integrated Qualifications Register

The IQS Act establishes the Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR), a public register accessible through an on-line portal at the following website: <http://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/>.

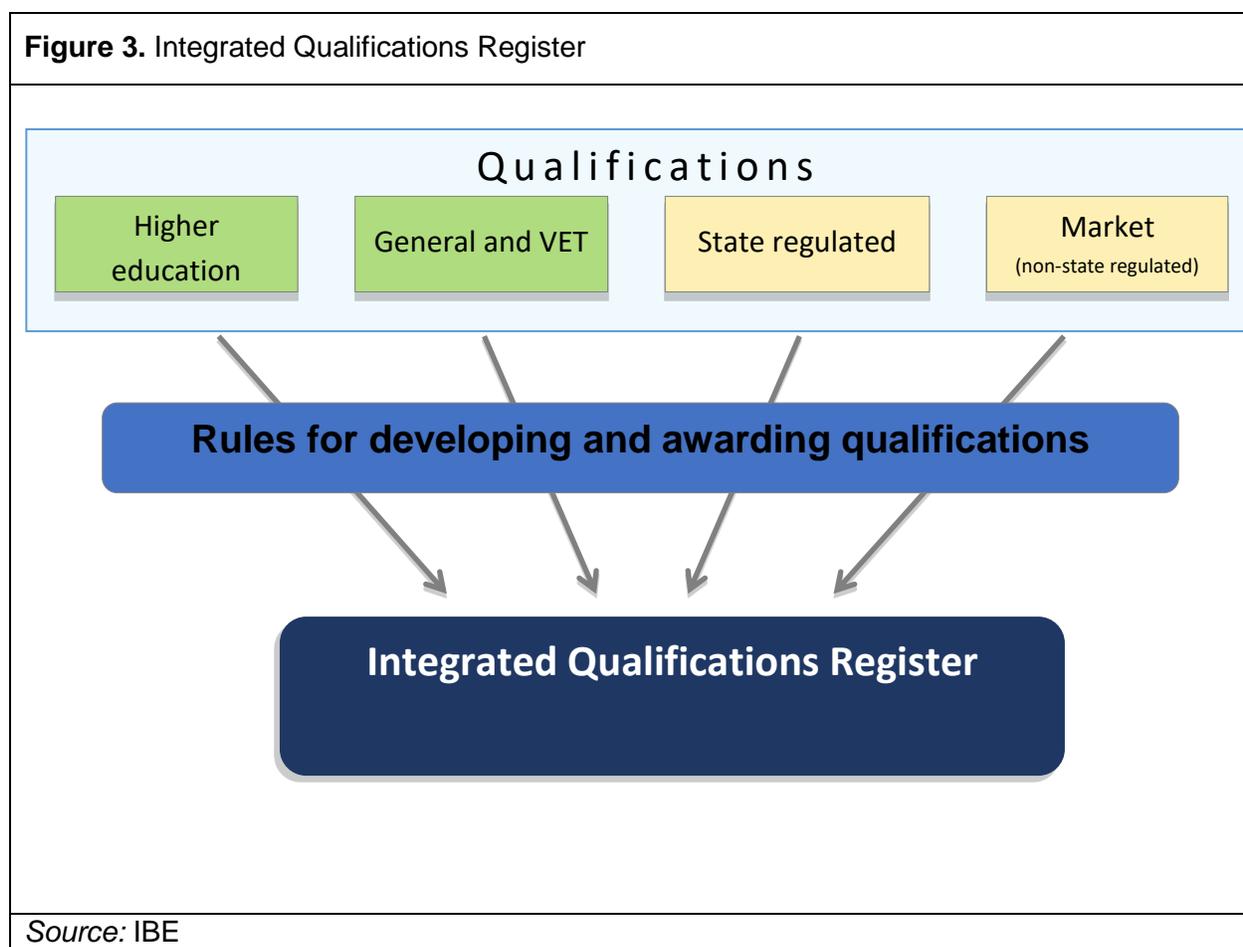
The Register includes all qualifications in the IQS – those awarded in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems, regulated qualifications and market qualifications.

Qualifications included in the IQS are entered in the IQR regardless of whether they appear in other registers (catalogues, lists) maintained by individual ministries, industries, communities and institutions.

The presence of a qualification in the Register means that its credibility has been confirmed by public authorities and that it has a defined PQF level.

Qualifications that are not included in the IQS cannot be entered in the Register.

The data collected in the IQR about qualifications are publicly available from the IQS portal. The Act defines the methodology of obtaining the information listed in the IQR. Information on the listed qualifications is regularly updated.



2.2.3. Standards of describing a qualification

The IQS Act does not change the standards for describing qualifications awarded within the formal general, vocational and higher education systems. The provisions of the Act on the standards of

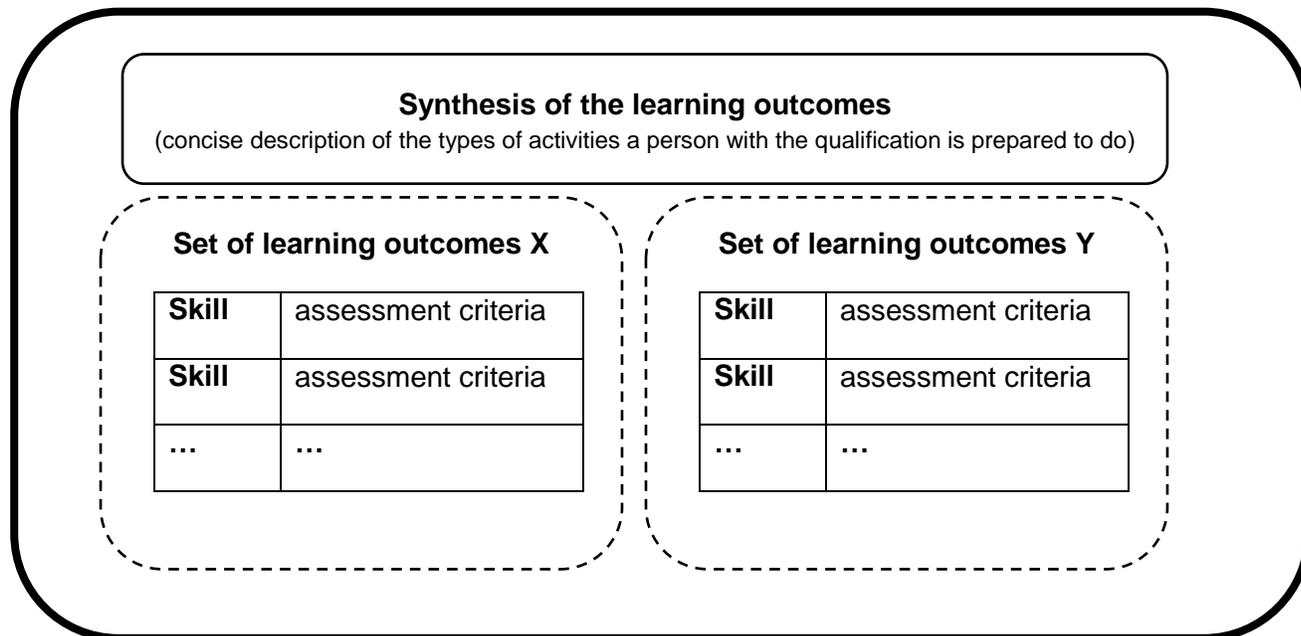
describing a qualification apply only to qualifications originating outside of these systems.² The provisions define the requirements for the scope and manner of presenting information about regulated and market qualifications in the application for including a qualification in the IQS and Integrated Qualifications Register.

In preparing the requirements for describing a qualification, it was assumed that information will be included on the qualification that is, above all, important from the point of view of those wishing to attain it, but also for validating and certifying institutions, as well as the government authorities responsible for policy development.

The most important part of the description is the presentation of the learning outcomes required for the qualification. According to the description requirements, learning outcomes are to be defined in several, complementary ways that include:

- 1) A synthesis of the learning outcomes – a concise description of the types of activities a person with the qualification is prepared to do,
- 2) Sets of required learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and social competence),
- 3) Descriptions of the individual learning outcomes comprising the sets and their verification criteria, which precisely state the scope of the required skills and define the knowledge and social competences relating to these skills that a person should have acquired.

Figure 4. Description of the learning outcomes of market qualifications included in the IQR



² In this report, “standard of describing a qualification” is understood as the set of required information about a qualification, as well as the adopted approach to describing each element, based on guidelines (method).

The description of the learning outcomes is supplemented by the requirements for validation (examination). Validation requirements play a key role in ensuring the quality and comparability of qualifications awarded by various institutions. All components of the description of learning outcomes required for a qualification constitute an entirety – they are complementary and only read together, will they properly present the specific character of the qualification.

2.2.4. Validation and certification

A basic premise of the IQS is that only authorised institutions will be able to award qualifications in the integrated system.

Authorization to award qualifications arises directly from the law or is granted by the relevant minister pursuant to the provisions of the IQS Act. A qualification can only be awarded on the basis of a positive result of the validation of its required learning outcomes.

According to the provisions specified in the Act, the description of each regulated and market qualification must present the validation requirements, which are applicable to all institutions awarding the qualification. This ensures that the validation process conducted by different institutions can be compared.

2.2.5. Quality assurance of qualifications

The IQS Act does not change the quality assurance mechanisms applied in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems. These systems have had quality assurance solutions functioning in accordance with European standards and the provisions set out in the IQS Act for many years.

The IQS Act requires that the validation and awarding processes of each awarding body operating outside formal education systems must be internally and externally quality assured.

The awarding body must develop an internal quality assurance system in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The internal quality assurance system assesses the rules of conduct, procedures, methods and organisational solutions. The purpose of the internal quality assurance system in the awarding body is to ensure that validation and certification are properly performed and improved.

The IQS Act defines external quality assurance as monitoring and the periodic evaluation of activities relating to awarding qualifications, performed by an entity that is external to the awarding body. The external quality assurance institution strengthens the supervision of compliance with the standards of awarding qualifications and assists awarding bodies in improving validation and certification processes.

The provisions of the IQS Act require the IQS minister coordinator to develop and maintain a list of entities authorised to carry out external quality assurance activities.

Chapter 6 provides more information about quality assurance.

3. Institutional Setting

3.1. National authorities and IQS Stakeholders Council

The institutional framework of the integrated qualifications system is set out in the IQS Act.

The Act stipulates that the Integrated Qualifications System in Poland is coordinated by **the minister coordinator**, who is the Minister of National Education. The minister:

- leads the Inter-ministerial Taskforce for Lifelong Learning,
- coordinates the activities of other ministries and leads activities on the development of the IQS,
- monitors the functioning of the IQS, prepares reports on qualifications at the request of the Council of Ministers,
- manages the IQS portal that links to the Integrated Qualifications Register,
- cooperates with the IQS Stakeholders Council and provides organisational support.

The **IQS Stakeholders Council** plays an advisory and supportive role to the IQS minister coordinator. The IQS Act states that the Council:

- supports the IQS minister coordinator to ensure the consistency of the qualifications system,
- monitors the functioning of the IQS, as well as analyses and exchanges experiences among groups of stakeholders,
- provides opinions on proposals of new legal acts on issues relating to the IQS,
- provides opinions on the recommendations prepared by teams of experts regarding the assignment of a PQF level to a qualification,
- provides opinions on sectoral qualifications frameworks before their inclusion in the IQS.

The IQS Stakeholders Council consists of representatives from: the National Chamber of Commerce, employers' organisations and trade unions, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, the Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools Poland, the Central Examination Board, entities operating in the field of non-formal education, local governments, and the minister coordinator of the Integrated Qualifications System. The IQS Act provides detailed rules for appointing members of the Council, the duration of their term of office, selecting the chairperson of the Council and the way it operates.

The ministries play an important role in the IQS. **Relevant ministers** decide on the inclusion of qualifications and sectoral qualifications frameworks appropriate to their ministry. For example, the decision on including the qualification of wine maker in the IQS is made by the Minister of Agriculture, while the qualification of fitness trainer is processed by the Minister of Sports and Tourism. The ministers also perform periodic reviews of the qualifications that fall within their area of responsibility. The relevant minister also:

- authorises awarding bodies to award qualifications,
- supervises the process of awarding qualifications and its quality assurance.

The IQS Act requires ministers to review all regulated qualifications within their area of responsibility in order to determine which of them should be included in the IQS. A transitional period is provided to allow regulated qualifications that existed prior to the Act to be included in the IQS.

The Act does not limit the existing scope of the competence of ministers on matters relating to qualifications. In order to reduce the number of new tasks relating to qualifications, other institutions may be authorised by particular minister to implement them.

An **institution operating the Integrated Qualifications Register** (IQR) is another crucial part of IQS institutional set-up. Initially, the IQR was operated by the Polish Agency of Enterprise Development (PARP), but since January 2018, this task was relegated to the Educational Research Institute (IBE). All qualifications included in the IQS are to be entered in the Register. Information on these qualifications is publicly available through the IQR portal, which began operating in mid-July 2016. The IQR operator is responsible for:

- registering qualifications and updating information on qualifications, awarding bodies and external quality assurance institutions,
- assessing the formal aspects of all types of requests made to the relevant ministers,
- collecting information on developments in the Integrated Qualifications System (statistical reports on awarded qualifications, evaluation reports, etc., contributing to labour market intelligence),
- informing awarding bodies about modifications made to qualifications,
- administering the part of the IQS portal relating to the Integrated Qualifications Register.

The IQR plays an important role in the integration of the qualifications system in Poland, as it contains all the different types of qualifications included in the IQS.

3.2. Awarding bodies

The awarding bodies functioning on the basis of the School Education Act (*system oświaty*) and higher education acts are included in the IQS by law. However, the qualifications of these education sectors are not covered by the provisions of the IQS Act for validation, certification, the quality assurance principles of awarding qualifications or the principles of supervising the awarding of qualifications. It is assumed that the formal education system in Poland fully complies with IQS requirements and no changes are needed here.

A relevant minister is not only responsible for including regulated qualifications falling within the applicable sectors administered by his/her ministry in accordance with the IQS Act, but also for appointing awarding bodies and external quality assurance entities for those regulated qualifications.

In the case of market qualifications (non-statutory), institutions wanting to become awarding bodies apply for such authorisation to the relevant ministers. Upon a successful assessment of their capacity to meet the criteria to award qualifications (among others, on their organisational conditions and personnel capacity to conduct validation, and eventually other conditions pertaining to a given qualification), the relevant minister includes the institution as an awarding body in the Integrated Qualifications System. Ministers may also rescind authorisation to award or remove an entity from the list of awarding bodies in certain situations defined by the Act.

Awarding bodies may authorise other entities to conduct validation if they fulfil the requirements. Authorizing another entity to conduct validation, however, does not release the awarding body from the responsibility of ensuring that validation is properly performed.

Fees are charged to apply for the authorisation to award qualifications, as well as when an authorised awarding body awards qualifications (proportional to the income from the fees paid by persons to attain the qualifications).

3.3. Institutions responsible for quality assurance

The IQS Act also defines the principles of quality assurance.

In the case of qualifications awarded in the formal education system (general, VET, HE), the quality assurance of qualifications is ensured by relevant existing institutions functioning according to European standards and recommendations.

In the case of market and regulated qualifications, all awarding bodies (certifying institutions) must have a system of internal quality assurance and also be included in an external quality assurance system. External quality assurance is provided by an external quality assurance institution (EQAE) selected by the relevant minister from a list of external quality assurance entities administered by the minister coordinator (see Chapter 7 on the quality assurance of qualifications).

4. Types and Legal Status of Qualifications Included in the NQF

4.1. Types of qualifications included in the NQF

Any qualification awarded in the national qualifications system in Poland can be included in the integrated qualifications system (IQS) if it complies with the relevant provisions regarding:

- the description of qualifications (using the learning outcomes approach),
- quality assurance (external and internal),
- the quality of validation/examination,
- the quality of the levelling process.

Some qualifications are included in the IQS by law; others will have to follow an application procedure (see more in Chapter 5). Including qualifications in the IQS that are awarded outside the formal education system is not obligatory. Qualifications not included in the integrated system can still function in Poland however, such qualifications are not assigned a PQF level and cannot be entered into the Register.

Two criteria distinguish different types of qualifications in the IQS, although they are not stated explicitly in the legislation. The first criterion is whether the qualification relates to a level of formal education or not. The second criterion is the legal basis that governs the process of awarding the qualification.

The IQS Act states that full qualifications are those awarded in the formal general and vocational education system (*system oświaty*) after completing stages of education and the first, second and third cycle qualifications as defined in the Act on Higher Education.

Partial qualifications are those that are included in the IQS and are not full qualifications.

A reason for distinguishing full and partial qualifications was to have the IQS differentiate between qualifications confirming learning outcomes attained in a multi-year cycle of education relating to the completion of a particular level of education, and qualifications confirming the attainment of smaller sets of learning outcomes.

Full qualifications relate to the level of education and the traditional path of attaining qualifications in the formal education system. Another reason for the division between full and partial was the fear that the distinction between formal education system qualifications and the remaining ones would become blurred. It was feared, among other things, that students would stop acquiring skills in the formal education system in favour of attaining smaller, specialized qualifications that have been assigned high PQF levels.

While designing the systemic solutions in Poland and preparing the Referencing Report, discussions took place on whether Poland's systemic solutions would allow partial vocational qualifications awarded outside the formal higher education system to have levels above 4 and 5.

Initially, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education was against this. The argument of having a clear distinction between full and partial qualifications helped soften the position of the Ministry. Full and partial qualifications also use different graphic symbols to denote the level of the qualification on certificates and diplomas.

Figure 5. Graphic symbols for the level of a qualification	
The graphic symbol for a partial qualification at level 4 of the Polish Qualifications Framework	The graphic symbol for a full qualification at level 4 of the Polish Qualifications Framework
 <p>Kwalifikacja cząstkowa na poziomie czwartym Polskiej Ramy Kwalifikacji</p>	 <p>Kwalifikacja pełna na poziomie czwartym Polskiej Ramy Kwalifikacji</p>
<p>Source: Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 July 2016 on the graphic symbol to be used to inform about the Polish Qualifications Framework level assigned to a full or partial qualification included in the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016, item 1022).</p>	

It should be added that the term “partial qualification” used in Polish documents, including the Referencing Report, does not fully reflect the concept behind this term in Polish. *Kwalifikacja cząstkowa* in the Polish language means that this is a smaller qualification and not necessarily a part of something larger (although it could be a part of a “larger” qualification). In this sense, the term *minor qualification* seems to better reflect the meaning of *kwalifikacja cząstkowa*.

The second criterion of distinguishing categories of qualifications is the legal basis governing their awarding process:

- The process of awarding qualifications in the formal general and vocational system (*system oświaty*) is governed by the School Education Act,
- The process of awarding qualifications in the higher education system is governed by the Act on Higher Education,
- State regulated qualifications are governed by legal acts, but not awarded in the formal (school) education system,
- Market qualifications are not regulated by legal acts and are awarded on the basis of the principle of economic freedom.

The scheme of the types of qualifications found in the IQS is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Types of qualifications in Poland's Integrated Qualifications System

Note: the awarding bodies are named in brackets

	Qualifications awarded within the formal general and VET education systems	Qualifications awarded within HE	Regulated qualifications	Market qualifications (non-state regulated qualifications)
Full qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Certificate of completing primary school [<i>school</i>] – Certificate of completing lower secondary school [<i>school</i>] – Matura certificate [<i>regional examination boards</i>] – Vocational Diploma [<i>regional examination boards</i>] – journeyman certificate (for occupations listed in the classification of vocational school occupations administered by the Ministry of National Education) [<i>boards of craft chambers</i>] 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – diploma certifying the title of <i>licencjat</i> – diploma certifying the title of <i>inżynier</i> – diploma certifying the title of <i>magister</i> – diploma certifying the title of <i>magister inżynier</i> <p>[<i>HE institutions</i>]</p>	N/A	N/A

Partial qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vocational certificate [<i>regional examination board</i>] 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – certificates of completion of non-degree post-graduate studies [<i>HE institutions</i>] 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Diver – class one/two/three [<i>Divers' Qualifying Commission of the Director of the Maritime Office in Gdynia</i>] – Tax advisor [<i>National Examination Board on Tax Counselling after having passed the examination for becoming a tax advisor</i>] 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Certificate of Risk Management of the Warsaw Institute of Banking [<i>Warsaw Institute of Banking</i>] – ECDL Certificates [<i>ECDL Poland</i>]
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Source: proposed by the authors

Depending on the type of qualification, there are different procedures for their inclusion in the IQS:

- Full and partial qualifications awarded within the formal general and vocational education (*system oświaty*) and full qualifications awarded in HE are included automatically in the IQS,
- Partial qualifications in HE (non-degree post-graduate studies) are included in the IQS by the decision of higher education institutions, scientific institutions of the Polish Academy of Sciences or research institutions authorised to provide post-graduate studies,
- Regulated qualifications, which are always partial, are included in the IQS by the decision of the relevant minister,
- Market qualifications, which are also always partial, are included in the IQS based on the relevant minister's approval of an application from an interested institution.

It should be noted that market qualifications can be awarded by institutions that also award full, partial and regulated qualifications in the formal education system. For example, a university or VET school could decide to develop a short training programme (responding to the needs of employers or society) concluding with a qualification, but the training and awarding process for this qualification is not part of any study or school programme regulated by a legal act.

The IQS Act also defines the following types of qualifications based on their status in the IQS. Distinguishing these qualifications is technical in nature.

- Qualifications included in the IQS – a market or regulated qualification is deemed to be included in the IQS as of the date the notification is published of its inclusion in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*). An included qualification may not necessarily be awarded, because an awarding body has not yet been chosen (see more on this issue in Chapter 6).
- A qualification functioning in the IQS – a market or regulated qualification is deemed as functioning in the IQS as of the date an agreement has been signed between the awarding body (certifying institution) and an external quality assurance institution (see more on this issue in Chapter 6).
- Archival qualification – as the result of a review by the relevant minister, a given qualification may be deemed an archival qualification if it meets the conditions set out in the IQS Act. Notification of this is made through an announcement in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).
- Suspended qualification – if the authorisation of all awarding bodies for a given qualification has expired, the relevant minister announces that the qualification has the status of a suspended qualification in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).

4.2. Legal status of qualifications included in the NQF

The IQS Act does not specify the requirements for the formal general, vocational and higher education systems relating to validation, certification, qualifications' quality assurance or oversight of the process of awarding qualifications. Formal general and vocational education qualifications are established by the Minister of National Education, who determines the regulations governing all aspects relating to them. The qualifications (study programmes) offered in higher education are developed by higher education institutions, which own these programmes.

In the case of regulated qualifications, the relevant minister is formally responsible for defining the qualification and awarding system. The relevant minister designates the awarding body(ies) for the qualification.

A specific feature of the Polish system is that in the case of market qualifications, awarding bodies can be appointed for qualifications already entered in the Integrated Qualifications Register. Once a market qualification is entered in the Register, it becomes a public good. The institutions applying to have the qualification entered in the IQR cannot reserve the exclusive right to award it. Any institution interested in awarding a qualification already entered in the Register and being awarded by other entities can apply for the authority to award it and be included in the list of awarding bodies (see Box 1).

This solution is designed to protect the market of the Polish qualifications system from becoming excessively monopolized by particular entities.

<p>Box 1. Granting the authority to award market qualifications</p>
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Let's use a hypothetical example: the Warsaw Confectioners Association applied to have a qualification included in the IQS, called "making jelly doughnuts". After approval by the relevant minister, the qualification is entered in the IQS and the Warsaw Confectioners Association is authorised to award the qualification. A year later, the Kraków Association of Confectioners asks whether it can also offer the same IQS-entered "making jelly doughnuts" qualification. The answer is yes. Under the IQS Act, the Kraków Association of Confectioners can apply to the relevant minister to become an awarding body for the qualification of "making jelly doughnuts". The minister makes the decision, and in doing so, does not need to obtain the consent of the Warsaw Confectioners Association, which originally applied to have this qualification entered in the IQS. The Kraków Association of Confectioners can achieve the status of awarding body as long as it meets the requirements specified in the IQS Act.

5. Procedures of Including Qualifications in the NQF

As indicated in Chapter 4, there are different procedures for including qualifications in the NQF depending on its type.

Formal general and VET qualifications are developed by the Ministry of National Education and when the relevant core curricula are accepted and entered into the law (by issuing regulations), they are automatically included in the IQS at the moment of their creation. The Minister of National Education is responsible for the process of assigning a PQF level to these qualifications by comparing their learning outcomes with PQF level descriptors.

Full higher education qualifications (*licencjat/inżynier, magister, doktor*) are assigned to a PQF level by the IQS law. When higher education institutions develop study programmes, they must reference them to the level descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework (to the second stage level descriptors). The appropriateness of the study programme's level and its compliance with the PQF level descriptors is verified by the Polish Accreditation Committee.

Market qualifications are included in the IQS by the relevant minister based on a request submitted by an interested institution (e.g. private training provider, business chamber, sectoral organisation). The relevant minister can include regulated qualifications in the IQS that are within his/her scope of ministerial responsibilities (sectors) based on the regulations and procedures described in the IQS Act.

The procedures of including regulated and market qualifications are similar. In this chapter, both of these procedures are described in detail, in addition to other activities required for the effective functioning of these qualifications in the system.

5.1. Market qualifications

5.1.1. Procedure of including market qualifications

Market (non-regulated) qualifications can be included in the IQS at the request of entities conducting organised activities in areas of the economy, labour market, education or training. For example, such an entity could be: a private company, an organisation of construction industry entrepreneurs, an association of shoe manufacturers, an association of training companies, etc. The intention of broadly defining the entities that can apply to have a qualification included in the IQS is to ensure that the system is open to different qualifications and groups of stakeholders.

An interested entity submits an electronic application to the relevant minister responsible for the qualifications of a given field through the Integrated Qualifications Register portal. The IQR

operator³ assesses the formal aspects of the application – this process cannot take longer than 14 days. The IQR operator then electronically transmits a correctly completed application to the relevant minister. The minister should review the application within four months, but this time period can be extended if needed.

Upon receiving the application, the relevant minister takes the following steps, which are described in the IQS Act (a diagram of the process of including market qualifications in the IQS is provided in Annex 3):

Step 1. Conduct consultations with stakeholders

The minister consults the proposed market qualification with relevant stakeholders. The minister sends information about the qualification to relevant stakeholders, announces on the IQS portal that the consultation process is starting and that opinions can be submitted. Then, the minister responds to the submitted opinions and prepares a summary of the results of the consultations. The summary is sent to the applicant (submitting body) and simultaneously published in the IQS portal.

Step 2. Obtain the opinions of specialists

After the consultations, the minister selects specialists and requests that they provide an opinion on the social and economic need for including the proposed qualification in the IQS. The minister provides the specialists with the opinions obtained from the stakeholders (the summary of the consultations). The specialists involved in this step:

- 1) have practical experience in the field of the market qualification,
- 2) represent various stakeholder groups for whom the market qualification is relevant,
- 3) have the competence to assess the individual learning outcomes of the proposed market qualification.

Step 3. Assess the application

After obtaining the opinion of the specialists, the minister assesses the application and makes a positive or negative decision. The following elements are taken into consideration:

- 1) the learning outcomes are assessed in relation to the tasks that a person with this particular qualification must perform; the adequacy of the validation requirements for these learning outcomes is also assessed,
- 2) the purpose of including the market qualification in the IQS is assessed, primarily by taking into consideration:
 - a) the extent to which the proposed market qualification conforms to social needs, the needs of the labour market and employers,

³ IBE is the IQR operator as of January 2018.

- b) the adaptability of the qualification's requirements to objective circumstances and the ability to achieve the intended learning outcomes in a foreseeable amount of time,
- c) the similarity of the market qualification to qualifications already included in the integrated qualifications system. There is a general rule that the IQS cannot have two qualifications in the Register that are the same or differ only superficially.

If the relevant minister rejects the application, the applicant is informed of this decision and provided justification for the rejection. It is important to note that there is no possibility to appeal a rejection to the administrative court. If the assessment results in a positive decision to have the qualification included in the IQS, the minister takes the steps described below.

Step 4. Assign a PQF level (levelling)

The relevant minister appoints a team of experts, which compares the learning outcomes required for the qualification to the Polish Qualifications Framework level descriptors. They then present their recommendation to the minister on the specific PQF level to be assigned. In addition to the proposed PQF level, the recommendation also contains a description of the learning outcomes required for the qualification (in accordance with art. 9, para. 1, item 1 of the IQS Act), as well as a reference to the level of the respective sectoral qualifications framework, if such a framework has been included in the IQS.

The minister coordinator issues regulations on the conditions to be met by the experts, how they are to be appointed, the procedure of comparing the learning outcomes required for a given qualification with PQF level descriptors, as well as the manner of documenting the course of the levelling process (art. 21, para. 8).

If the recommendation is that a particular qualification should be assigned to PQF level 6, 7 or 8, the relevant minister may request the opinion of the Minister of Science and Higher Education (art. 21, para. 5) to confirm the validity of the result of the comparison made by the experts.

The minister sends the experts' recommendation to the IQS Stakeholders Council for their opinion. If the opinion is positive, the minister assigns the PQF level to the qualification according to the recommendation. Otherwise, a team of experts once more prepares a recommendation, which refers to the opinion of the Council, and then the minister assigns the PQF level to the qualification in accordance with the new recommendation.

The recommendation prepared by the teams of experts on the PQF level is binding for the minister.

Step 5. Announce the inclusion of the market qualification in the Integrated Qualifications System

The announcement includes information on:

- 1) the name of the market qualification,
- 2) the type of document certifying that the market qualification has been awarded, the time period of its validity and (if needed) the conditions required to extend its validity,

- 3) the market qualification's assigned PQF level and its reference to the Sectoral Qualifications Framework level (SQF), if a relevant SQF has been established for the given sector or industry,
- 4) the learning outcomes described in accordance with the IQS Act (art. 9, para. 1, item 1),
- 5) the validation requirements and the entity conducting validation,
- 6) if needed, additional requirements ensuing from the character of the given qualification, relating to:
 - a) the scope and frequency of the internal evaluation,
 - b) the scope and frequency of producing reports from the external quality assurance process,
 - c) the scope and frequency of reporting on activities,
- 7) if needed, additional conditions to be met by the institution applying for the authorisation to award the qualification,
- 8) if needed, the conditions to be met by the person who will be undergoing validation, particularly relating to the required level of education,
- 9) the time period after which the qualification is reviewed.

The announcement is published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*). The date of the announcement is the day that the market qualification is included in the IQS (art. 25, para. 3).

Note: a market qualification included in the IQS achieves the status of a qualification functioning in the IQS only when the relevant minister appoints the external quality assurance institution for at least one of the awarding bodies authorised to award this qualification.

Step 6. Send this information to the Integrated Qualifications Register operator

The Minister informs the IQR operator about the inclusion of a given qualification in the IQS and provides information about the qualification (in accordance with the scope set out in art. 84, para. 1).

Step 7. Announce that institutions may now apply for the authorisation to award the qualification

The minister places an announcement in the IQS portal that institutions may now apply for the authorisation to award the qualification.

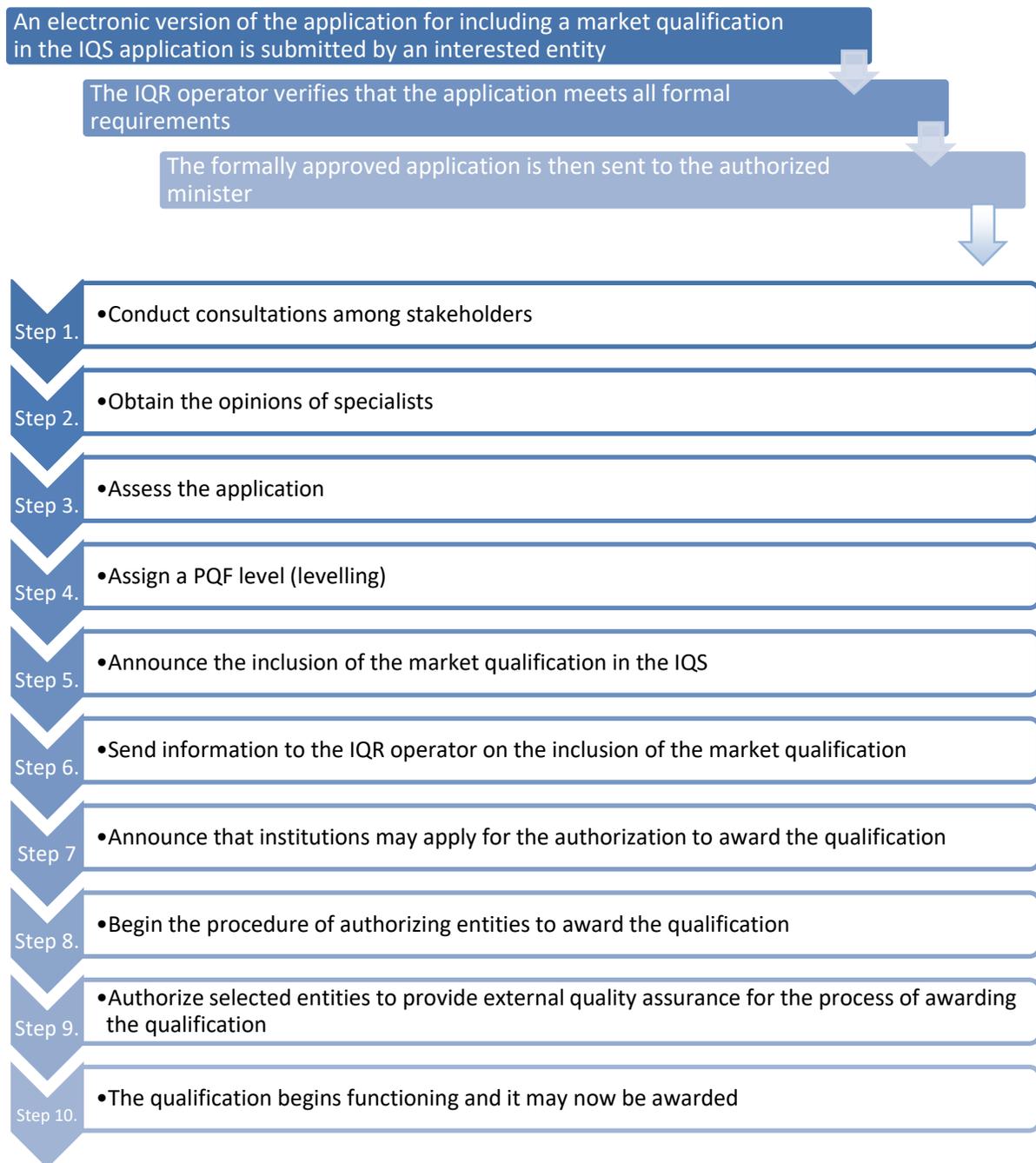
Step 8. Begin the procedure of authorising entities to award the qualification (art. 26)

In the case when an entity requesting the inclusion of a market qualification in the IQS also applies for the authorisation to award this qualification, the minister initiates both procedures simultaneously. Applying both for inclusion of qualification and authorisation to award this qualification decreases the fees (see Chapter 7 for more information on this).

Note: The minister, specialists and the team of experts work with the submitting body during the consultations, preparing the opinion on the validity of including the qualification in the IQS, assessing the application and assigning the PQF level (art. 22). The aim of this cooperation is to obtain necessary clarifications and to eventually modify the description of the qualification, if needed.

The above listed and described steps are reflected also in the figure below.

Figure 1. Steps of including market qualifications in the IQS



Source: Own work based on the IQS Act.

5.1.2. Granting the authority to award market qualifications included in the IQS

The IQS allows only institutions authorised by the relevant minister to award market qualifications. A request for the authorisation to award a market qualification can be submitted by an entity conducting business activities, if it satisfies the conditions set out in art. 41, para. 2 of the IQS Act (among others, ensuring that the institution meets the organisational conditions and has the personnel able to conduct validation in accordance with the requirements specified in the announcement of including the qualification in the IQS, and any additional conditions presented in this announcement).

An interested entity submits an electronic application for the authorisation to award a qualification to the relevant minister through the Integrated Qualifications Register portal. The IQR operator assesses the formal aspects of the application and submits it electronically to the relevant minister.

If the application does not meet the formal requirements, the minister concludes the process according to the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure. An application meeting the formal requirements is reviewed, and if there are no questions about the information provided, the minister issues an administrative decision authorising the entity to award the market qualification indicated in the application (art. 41, para. 1).

If the administrative decision to grant certification authority is final, the minister chooses an entity from the list of external quality assurance entities (EQAE) and under an agreement, entrusts that entity to perform the external quality assurance activities for the awarding body of the given qualification (art. 59, para. 1). The awarding body may begin to award the market qualification as of the date the contract with the EQAE is concluded (art. 62).

When choosing an entity from the EQAE list, the minister takes into account:

- 1) the provision of the IQS Act stating there can be no more than five external quality assurance entities for one market qualification,
- 2) the economic rationale and effectiveness of the use of existing resources,
- 3) the principle of the balanced distribution of tasks among the entities included in the EQAE list (art. 59, para. 3).

Bearing in mind the efficiency of the procedure for issuing a decision on awarding authority, the minister may appoint other entities to perform this function, such as: a state body, the director of a subordinate organisational unit or one under the minister's supervision, or an entity of a professional self-governed organisation or business organisation. This authorisation is granted by issuing a regulation. In cases where decisions on granting awarding authority are made by an entity appointed by the minister, the appeal of a decision is considered in the first instance by the minister (art. 45, para. 1).

5.1.3. Reviewing market qualifications

One of the aims of establishing the IQS was to ensure that the qualifications functioning in the market are up-to-date. Therefore, market qualifications in the IQS are subject to mandatory reviews. The relevant minister is responsible for performing periodic reviews of qualifications under his/her jurisdiction by the dates specified in the announcement of their inclusion in the IQS. In cases justified by social or economic needs, the minister can perform such a review at an earlier time or under special circumstances.

The minister reviews the qualification in accordance with the relevant provisions governing market qualifications in the IQS (art. 19):

- 1) the qualification is consulted with stakeholder groups,
- 2) expert opinions and recommendations are obtained on extending the functioning of the given market qualification in the IQS, modifying the qualification, or discontinuing it due to the lack of a justification for its functioning (art. 27, para. 2).

As a result of the obtained opinions, the minister may:

- 1) acknowledge that the qualification will continue to function unchanged in the IQS,
- 2) make an appropriate modification to the qualification, or
- 3) change its status to that of an archival qualification.

5.1.4. Modifying a qualification

A modification to a market qualification cannot change its name or assigned PQF level. A modification (update) of the learning outcomes required for the qualification can be made only to the extent that this does not result in the need to change its name or PQF level. If more extensive modifications are needed, then a new qualification should be developed and processed for inclusion in the IQS.

The minister informs the public on modifications to a qualification in an announcement published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).

5.1.5. Changing the status of a qualification to an archival qualification

A qualification becomes an archival qualification by the decision of the minister when it meets the following conditions:

- 1) during the three years preceding the review, not a single document has been issued confirming that the qualification was awarded, or
- 2) the continued awarding of the qualification is not justified due to social and/or economic reasons.

Authorisations and contracts relating to the qualification being archived are terminated on the date the relevant minister announces that it is now an archival qualification. This announcement is published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).

Archiving a qualification does not invalidate previously issued documents certifying its attainment. Persons who are in the process of validating such a qualification on the day the change of status is announced will be able to attain the archival qualification as long as the validation result is positive.

5.1.6. Returning an archival qualification to the status of a qualification functioning in the IQS

An interested entity may request the minister to restore an archival qualification to its status as a functioning qualification. The interested entity initiates this process by submitting an electronic application to the relevant minister through the IQR portal. The IQR operator then assesses the formal aspects of the application and, if there are no problems, submits it electronically to the relevant minister.

The minister has four months to consider the application. He/she first obtains the opinions of experts on the rationale for having the qualification function again in the IQS. These opinions are general and not binding. Then the minister considers the application.

If the decision is positive, the minister informs the public by an announcement that the archival qualification is being restored to a functioning one in the IQS. This announcement is published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*). At the same time, notification is placed in the IQS portal that applications can be submitted for the authorisation to award this qualification.

If the decision is negative, the relevant minister informs the applicant of this decision and the reasons for it.⁴

5.2. Regulated qualifications

5.2.1. Inclusion of regulated qualifications in the IQS

As stated in Chapter 3, the relevant minister can include regulated qualifications within the scope of the ministry's responsibilities in the IQS based on the rules and procedures described in the IQS Act.

A qualification can be included in the IQS provided that this qualification has descriptions, among others, of:

- the learning outcomes, described in accordance with the IQS Act,

⁴ There is no appeal to the administrative court if a negative decision has been issued.

- validation requirements,
- institution(s) authorised as its awarding body(ies),
- if necessary, additional conditions to be met by institutions applying for the authorisation to award it,
- entities entrusted with the responsibility for external quality assurance,
- the term of validity of the document confirming the attainment of the qualification and (if necessary) the conditions for the renewal of this document.

Each regulated qualification to be included in the IQS must comply with the requirements enumerated above.

Step 1. Assign a PQF level

The relevant minister appoints a team of experts, which compares the learning outcomes required for the qualification with the PQF level descriptors and presents a recommendation on a specific PQF level for this qualification.

The conditions to be met by the experts, how they are appointed and the procedure for comparing the qualification's required learning outcomes with PQF level descriptors, as well as the manner of documenting the work of assigning a level, is determined by the minister coordinator, who issues a regulation defining these issues (art. 21, para. 8).

If the recommendation is at PQF level 6, 7 or 8, the relevant minister may request the opinion of the Minister of Science and Higher Education (art. 21, para. 5) to confirm the validity of the result of the comparison made by the experts.

The minister sends the recommendation of the experts to the IQS Stakeholders Council for their opinion. If its opinion is positive, the minister assigns the PQF level to the qualification according to the recommendation. Otherwise, a team of experts once more prepares a recommendation, which refers to the opinion of the Council, and then the minister assigns the PQF level to the qualification in accordance with the new recommendation.

Step 2. Announce the inclusion of the regulated qualification in the IQS

The minister informs the public in an announcement published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*) that the regulated qualification has been assigned a PQF level and is now included in the IQS. The date the announcement is published is the date the qualification is considered to be included in the IQS.

Step 3. Provide information to the IQR operator

The Minister informs the IQR operator that the qualification has been included in the IQS and provides information about the qualification. If granting the authority to award this qualification is made by administrative decision, then the relevant minister places an announcement in the IQS portal that interested entities may apply for such authorisation.

5.2.2. Granting the authority to award regulated qualifications included in the IQS

Awarding bodies are granted awarding authority for a given qualification when the relevant minister issues separate regulations or an administrative decision about this issue.

When an administrative decision is used to designate the awarding body for a given qualification, an entity operating a business can apply if it meets the conditions specified in the IQS Act (among others, ensuring the organisational conditions and personnel to conduct validation in compliance with the requirements defined in the announcement of the qualification's inclusion in the IQS, as well as fulfilling any other conditions listed in the announcement).

To become an awarding body, an interested institution submits an electronic application to the relevant minister through the IQR portal. The IQR operator assesses compliance with the formal requirements of the application and if there are no formal problems, submits it electronically to the relevant minister.

If the application does not meet the formal requirements, the minister concludes the proceedings according to the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure. An application fulfilling all the formal requirements is reviewed, and if there are no reservations, the relevant minister issues an administrative decision authorising the institution to award the regulated qualification indicated in the application.

The external quality assurance entity for the awarding body may be specified in the regulations governing the qualification. The relevant minister also can choose an entity to provide external quality assurance from a list and sign a contract with it to perform this function for the awarding body. The awarding can begin awarding the given qualification from the date the contract is signed with the external quality assurance entity.

Bearing in mind the efficiency of the procedure for issuing a decision on awarding authority, the minister may appoint other entities to perform this function, such as: a state body, the director of a subordinate organisational unit or one under the minister's supervision, or an entity of a professional self-governed organisation or business organisation.

5.2.3. Reviewing regulated qualifications

Within five years from the date of enacting the IQS Act, all ministers responsible for government departments are obliged to review the qualifications relating to the areas they oversee.⁵ This review identifies the qualifications to be included in the IQS in the opinion of the minister.

Following the review, the minister can include a regulated qualification in the IQS that does not meet the requirements specified in the Act if it is possible:

⁵ These qualifications are established by separate regulations and awarded according to the conditions defined in the regulations. They do not include qualifications awarded in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems.

- 1) to assign a PQF level to this qualification, and
- 2) identify an awarding body for this qualification.

The minister announces the assigned PQF level for such a qualification and its inclusion in the IQF by an announcement published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).

When including a qualification in the IQS in this manner, the minister is obliged to ensure that it meets the requirements specified in the Act within three years from the date of the announcement of its inclusion. If the qualification does not meet the requirements within this time, it will be designated as an archival qualification and announced as such in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).

6. Quality Assurance of Qualifications Included in the NQF

The quality assurance system for formal general, vocational and higher education reflects the principles and standards presented in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the EQF, as well as other related European documents and guidelines.⁶ However, the quality assurance measures for awarding qualifications outside the formal education systems do not always fully meet these standards.

One important aim of the Integrated Qualifications System is to extend systemic solutions for quality assurance to all qualifications listed in the Integrated Qualifications Register. Such qualifications must now comply with uniform quality assurance requirements, consistent with European guidelines.

The quality assurance of qualifications in the general, vocational and higher education systems continues to be overseen by the relevant ministers. Responsibility for the quality assurance of qualifications under the direct or indirect authority of other ministers will remain there and is overseen according to the principles defined in the IQS Act. The IQS Act stipulates that the process of awarding qualifications is quality assured, thus, the key definitions, description of entities and their expected tasks directly concern the process of awarding qualifications.

6.1. The quality assurance of qualifications awarded in the formal education sector

The formal general, vocation and higher education systems were modernised before the introduction of the Polish Qualifications Framework and the Integrated Qualifications System. Between 2008 and 2011, the reforms of the general education and vocational education systems introduced learning outcomes as the primary reference point for education policies. Key changes were introduced in higher education in 2011 (Referencing Report, 2013; Dębowski, and Stęchły, 2015).

6.1.1. Formal general and vocational education system

All schools in the formal general and vocational education have external and internal quality assurance systems in place.

External quality assurance is provided by the system of pedagogical supervision. External pedagogical supervision is conducted by Regional Education Authorities (REA) (*kurator oświaty*),

⁶ *European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), validation – European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (CEDEFOP 2009) and higher education – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).*

which are supervised by the Minister of National Education. Pedagogical supervision covers three aspects: evaluation, an audit of legal compliance and support.⁷

The Head of the Regional Education Authority prepares an annual report on the results of the educational supervision and submits it to the Minister of National Education.

School principals are obliged by law to design and implement an internal quality assurance system, which should be done in cooperation with teachers. School principals are relatively free in how they design and implement these systems, but they are required to include the three aspects of pedagogical supervision mentioned above: evaluation, compliance audit and support. Internal evaluation is carried out annually and its results are taken into consideration in the external evaluation. In order to help school principals develop and implement internal quality assurance procedures, the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education prepared “Quality Standards for VET” (2013), a document covering ten thematic areas relating to quality assurance in VET,⁸ which are in line with the 2009 EQARF/EQAVET Recommendation. This document can be used by schools voluntarily.

The system of external examinations is a key element in ensuring and improving the quality of the education and qualifications attained in school. The Central Examination Board and eight Regional Examination Boards are responsible for organising external examinations. The external examination system is supervised by the Minister of National Education. The external examination system is designed so that all examinees are solving the same problems to verify whether they have achieved the learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum. Trained examiners registered at the Regional Examination Boards assess examination results. The Central Examination Board analyses aggregate test and examination results and initiates research in the field of assessment. Results of external examinations are taken into consideration in both external and internal quality assurance as part of pedagogical supervision.

The collection and dissemination of information on the formal general and vocational education system by the School Information System is an important element in ensuring the quality of qualifications in Poland. The School Information System is maintained in electronic form and uses the Internet to provide information collected under the terms of a legal act.⁹ Each school and

⁷ Schools are evaluated according to uniform requirements set out in the legislation on such aspects as: the concept and organisation of work; educational processes; the implementation of the core curriculum; active participation and support for the development of pupils; shaping social attitudes and respect for social norms; cooperation among teachers and with parents and the local community; and management. The audit of legal compliance verifies whether the activities undertaken by schools comply with the relevant regulations. For more information, see the Eurydice Report for Poland.

⁸ The ten thematic areas of the quality standards are: (1) teaching programmes, (2) school staff, (3) school material resources, (4) organisation of teaching, (5) students with special needs, (6) cooperation with employers: (7) cooperation with domestic and international partners, (8) assessment and validation of learning outcomes, (9) counselling, (10) strategic management of the school.

⁹ Act of 15 April 2011 on the School Information System (Journal of Laws 2011, no. 139, item 814).

educational institution must submit data regarding the number and categories of pupils, teachers, facilities, expenses, etc. Submission of data is done individually by each school through a web application. Information is collected regionally and then exported by Regional Education Authorities to the Ministry of National Education. Each user group (ministries, Central Statistical Office, local authorities, etc.) has access to its relevant part of the data base. Some information is available to the public. The system has been functioning in this manner since 2012.

6.1.2. Higher education

Higher education institutions in Poland are directly responsible for the quality of awarded qualifications and the study programmes leading to them. They are required by law to have an internal quality assurance system in place. The purpose of the external quality assurance system in higher education is primarily to verify the functioning of the internal quality assurance system of higher education institutions. The minister responsible for higher education defines the basic premises of these systems by formulating:

- the requirements for describing qualifications,
- the national qualifications framework for higher education, which includes descriptions of learning outcomes for eight broad areas of study,
- the organisational requirements of higher education institutions, especially with regard to the number and qualifications of staff required to offer studies in specific fields,
- the requirements of the study programme,
- the principles of programme and institutional assessment of higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions are required by law to be assessed by the Polish Accreditation Committee (their programmes or institutions), which submits the results of its assessments to the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

Assessments can also be performed by an institutions established by the academic community or an international accreditation body. The Polish Accreditation Committee (PAC) – an independent entity acting on the basis of the Act on Higher Education – performs external assessments of the quality of education, as well as of the qualifications awarded. PAC is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and is also registered with the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies. It belongs to the European Consortium for Accreditation, the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education and the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. PAC performs its activities in accordance with the “Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area”.

PAC accredits programmes and institutions. Programme accreditation includes an assessment of, among others:

- the congruency of the learning outcomes determined by the higher education institution for a given study programme and the descriptors for the given field in the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education,

- the ability to attain these learning outcomes given the educational process and conditions under which these studies are offered,
- the propriety of validating the learning outcomes.

An institutional accreditation takes into account the following issues, among others:

- the operation and improvement of internal quality assurance systems,
- the accreditation or certification of the faculties of the higher education institution received from international institutions,
- the results of the previously performed programme accreditation.

The assessment procedure conducted by PAC is free of charge, mandatory and cyclical. In the case of a negative assessment, the minister responsible for higher education revokes or suspends the ability of an institution to provide higher education.

6.2. The quality assurance of qualifications awarded outside formal general, vocational and higher education systems

New systemic solutions for ensuring the quality of qualifications came into force with the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System. The Act does not affect the principles or mechanisms of quality assurance in the formal general, vocations and higher education systems.

According to the IQS Act, the quality assurance of qualifications awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems consists of overseeing validation and certification, which is the responsibility of the relevant ministers. Awarding bodies are obliged to submit activity reports to the relevant ministers at least once every two years.

According to the IQS Act, each awarding body functioning outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems must have internal and external quality assurance systems for their validation and certification activities. The main premise of quality assurance is that it is considered from the point of view of the individual who attains the qualification.

The aim of an awarding body's internal quality assurance system is to ensure that validation and certification are performed properly and improved. To accomplish this:

- the education and training process is separated from the validation process,
- validation and certification are continuously monitored and assessed,
- validation and certification are regularly evaluated internally.

External quality assurance consists of:

- monitoring the internal quality assurance system used by the awarding body,
- regularly verifying that the awarding body is complying with the requirements of the IQS Act,

- conducting regular external evaluations of validation and certification of the awarding body and its internal quality assurance system.

The IQS minister coordinator maintains a list of entities authorised to provide external quality assurance and announces a call for institutions to join this list at least once every three years. The list is publicly available at the IQS portal.

An entity interested in providing external quality assurance submits an application to the relevant minister through the IQS portal. The fee for the application is 2000.00 PLN. The application requests information on:

- the applicant,
- the groups of qualifications for which the entity would like to conduct external quality assurance activities,
- the names of the applicant's employees, information on their educational background and professional experience relating to the activities that will be performed.

An external quality assurance entity (EQAE) must have at least 10 years of experience in conducting organised activities in a field relating to the economy, labour market, education or training. The EQAE can be an entity conducting business activity or an individual. The EQAE cannot be an awarding body for the groups of qualifications that it would like to quality assure. It must have an internal quality assurance system in place to ensure the quality of the processes performed.

The EQAE should have adequately trained personnel, who, as a team, will have knowledge about:

- the integrated qualifications system,
- the principles of validation,
- experience in the validation of learning outcomes acquired through formal and non-formal education and informal learning,
- knowledge of the principles of the internal and external quality assurance of awarding qualifications,
- experience in conducting evaluations or audits.

The IQR operator assesses the formal aspects of the submitted application within 14 days. If the application does not meet the formal requirements, the applicant has 30 days to correct it. If the formal requirements of the application are fulfilled, it is sent to the IQS minister coordinator, who appoints a commission to evaluate the application.

The commission consists of:

- a chairperson representing the IQS minister coordinator,
- one representative of each relevant minister responsible for the specific fields of the groups of qualifications indicated in the application,

- three representatives of the IQS Stakeholders Council.

Entry on the list of EQAE is valid for a period of 6 years. The IQS minister coordinator may extend an institution's inclusion on the list for an additional six years, if the institution has properly performed its assigned functions and after consultation with the relevant ministers responsible for the qualifications, for which the institution performed external quality assurance activities.

The relevant minister for a given qualification appoints an EQAE by signing a contract with the institution that has a three month notice period of cancellation. When choosing an institution, the minister takes into account the effectiveness and rationality of the use of existing resources and the principle of evenly dividing duties among the institutions on the list. Additionally, a maximum of 5 entities from the list can be appointed as the EQAE for one market qualification. These institutions are required to cooperate in order to ensure a consistent standard of quality in the process of awarding a given market qualification.

A market qualification is considered to be functioning in the IQS from the date the contract between the Minister and the external quality assurance entity is signed. Also, from this day, awarding bodies can begin certification activities.

The EQAE is required to submit a report at least once every five years on its external quality assurance activities. The report includes recommendations of changes to improve the quality of the processes associated with awarding a given qualification and the functioning of the internal quality assurance system of the awarding body. The report contains, among others, an analysis of validation and certification, an analysis and evaluation of the internal quality assurance system, a description of eventual irregularities and recommendations for changes to improve the quality of validation, certification and internal procedures.

The EQAE monitors the internal quality assurance system based on the internal evaluation reports submitted to the relevant minister and information provided by the awarding body to the operator of the Integrated Qualifications Register. The EQAE can also observe the validation process being conducted by the awarding body.

The IQS minister coordinator can inspect the EQAE to verify that their external quality assurance activities are being performed properly. The relevant minister also can submit a request to the minister coordinator for such an inspection to be performed. Should irregularities be found, the EQAE is required to correct them or be removed from the list.

Awarding bodies are required to submit activity reports to their relevant ministers at least once every two years. Awarding bodies must also perform an internal evaluation at least once every three years for each market qualification that it has been authorised to award. The report of the internal evaluation includes:

- an analysis of the documentation on how validation and certification is conducted,
- an assessment of the methods used to comply with the requirements and the relevance of the methods and criteria used,

- information on activities undertaken to improve validation and certification methods,
- information on measures to improve the internal quality assurance system.

The awarding body submits its internal evaluation reports to the EQAE and the IQR operator. It also submits quarterly reports to the IQR operator on the number of certificates issued, the fees charged for validation and certification and revenue from these fees.

If there are suspicions that irregularities are occurring in an awarding body, the relevant minister can order the EQAE to conduct a non-scheduled evaluation or can independently perform an audit. The IQS Act provides procedures to ensure the impartiality of the inspection process. The inspection report contains, among others, a description of the established facts, including the irregularities found, their scope, causes and effects, along with the names and functions of those responsible for causing them, and recommendations for corrective actions. In the case of an external evaluation report prepared by the EQAE, the same information is included without providing the names of those responsible for any irregularities.

The relevant minister may rescind the authority to award a qualification when:

- the awarding body issues certificates to persons who have not been positively validated,
- glaring irregularities are found as the result of an inspection or external evaluation,
- the awarding body has not taken corrective action despite the recommendations received,
- the awarding body no longer meets the conditions set out in the IQS Act, e.g. the conditions governing organisational issues or personnel.

6.3. Review of the qualifications functioning in the Integrated Qualifications System

Qualifications shall be reviewed not less than once every ten years. The date of the review is provided in the announcement on including the qualification in the IQS, published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland (*Monitor Polski*).

The relevant minister may review the qualification at another time in cases justified by economic or social need.

The review takes place in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and then the opinions are sought of specialists with the same experiences and the same competences as the experts who were involved in preparing the opinion during the initial IQS inclusion process (see Chapter 6 for more information).

The appointed specialists recommend whether the qualification should continue to function in the IQS, be modified or be discontinued due to the lack of a justification for its continued functioning. The final decision on the outcome of the review is made by the relevant minister.

7. Costs of Including Non-Formal Sector Qualifications in the NQF

7.1. Basic premises of financing the IQS

Implementation of the IQS does not affect the way qualifications are established and awarded in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems, thus it does not affect the way these systems are financed nor the amounts they receive from the state budget.

Implementing systemic solutions for qualifications awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems is supported by funding from the European Social Fund. The process of implementing the IQS through the use of ESF funds does not require national co-financing.

The attainment of new qualifications by different groups of people (workers, people interested or forced by circumstances to change jobs, unemployed persons) is financed by various means. Public funds may be involved (e.g. from the Labour Fund for employment offices, the National Training Fund and the European Social Fund), funds from employers, as well as the personal funds of individuals. These costs did not change as a result of IQS implementation.

There are, however, a number of additional costs for implementing the IQS resulting from the need to finance new elements of the system – the Integrated Qualifications Register, the IQS Stakeholders Council, the work of assigning a PQF level to a qualification or the implementation of external quality assurance activities (see Chapters 5 and 6). In addition, the ministers are incurring costs associated with the processing of applications to register qualifications and authorise awarding bodies.

Once the IQS is fully implemented, these additional costs to the state budget will be offset by revenues from the fees paid by institutions participating in the system. These are one-time charges for applying to have a qualification included in the IQS (see Section 7.2), applying to become an awarding body or to be included in the list of external quality assurance entities. There are also fixed charges on the income received from the process of awarding qualifications. The fees were calculated to allow the IQS to function as a self-financing system after its initial implementation period. It is assumed that if needed, the level of the fees will be adjusted in line with this assumption.

Taking the above premises into consideration, it is expected that the IQS system should generate revenues in excess of maintenance costs in about 20 years of operation (generated revenues should exceed costs around 2030). During the period when the difference between costs and revenues will be the highest, that is, in the first few years of operation, the costs of implementing the IQS will be financed from the European Social Fund.

7.2. Types of costs in the IQS

Three types of costs associated with the functioning and implementation of the IQS in Poland can be distinguished, which are born by different institutions:

- Implementation costs: costs of developing and implementing the IQS (including designing procedures to establish qualifications, setting up the Integrated Qualifications Register). These are one-time costs borne by the state budget. Most of these costs are and will be financed from the European Social Fund.
- Fixed costs for the functioning of the IQS system: mainly the costs of operating the IQR. These costs are borne by the state budget; most are and will be financed by the European Social Fund during the first years of IQS implementation. After 2022, these costs will be financed by the state budget and paid fees.
- Variable costs: these costs vary with the number of qualifications submitted to be included in the IQS. The more qualifications submitted, the more work will have to be done by the public administration to process the applications (more analyses to be performed, PQF levels to be assigned, additional costs incurred for external quality assurance). Variable costs are mostly financed by the collected fees.

There are several types of fees in the IQS system:

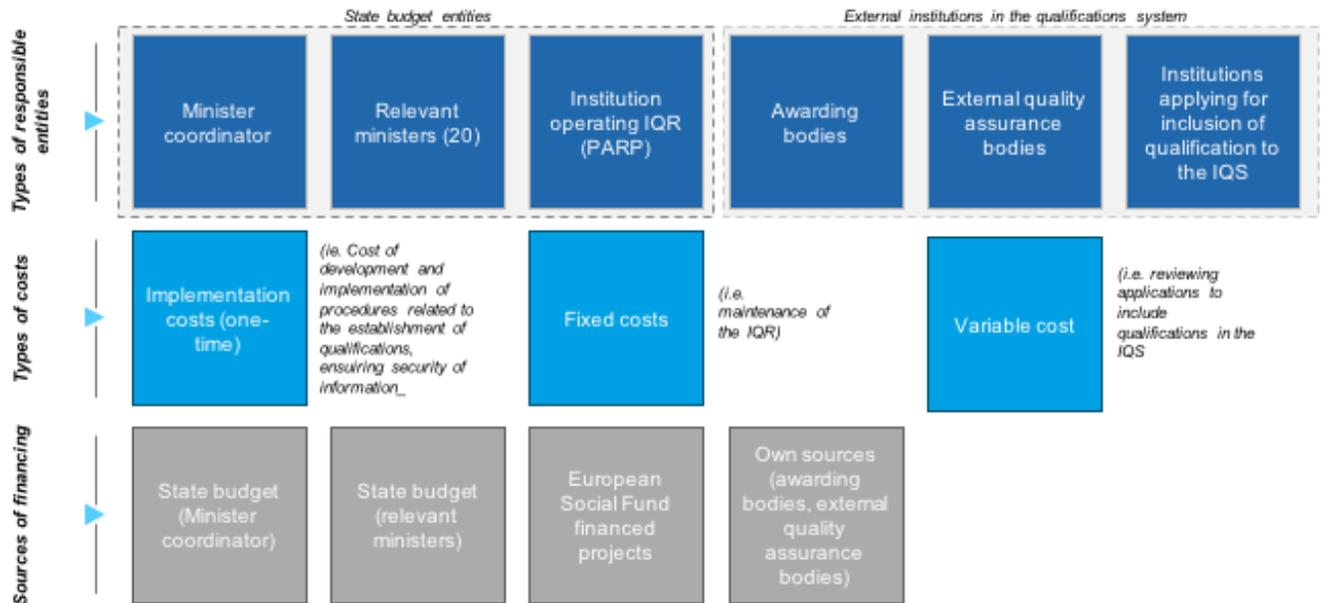
- Application fee for including a qualifications in the IQS (this process is described in Chapter 5). The fee for applying to have a market qualification included in the IQS is 2,000 PLN (approx. 500 EUR).
- Application fee for becoming an awarding body. The fee for applying to become an awarding body is 10,000 PLN (approx. 2,500 EUR).¹⁰
- Quarterly fees paid by awarding bodies. This is an ongoing quarterly charge in the amounts of 3% of revenue from fees charged during the process of awarding qualifications.
- Application fee for becoming an external quality assurance entity. The fee for applying to become an external quality assurance entity is 5,000 PLN (approx. 1,250 EUR).

All fees are paid to an account of the state budget. The state budget finances the costs of state budget entities.

A summary of the different types of costs and sources of financing is presented in Figure 3 below.

¹⁰ If this is the same entity that applied to have a particular qualification included in the IQS (the entity is submitting two applications: one for including a qualification to IQS and a second to become an awarding body for this qualification), the fee is lower: 5000 PLN (approx. 1250 EUR).

Figure 3. Institutions, types of costs and sources of financing in the Polish Integrated Qualifications System



8. Current Debates on Further NQF Developments – Implementation of the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS)

The preceding chapters present the architecture of the Integrated Qualifications System and the procedures described in the IQS Act with particular attention to process of including qualifications in the IQS. This chapter describes the measures that have been taken to ensure that the IQS is successfully implemented.

The implementation of the IQS based on the Polish Qualifications Framework is considered one of the key actions of the Polish government in developing policies aimed at increasing the quality of human capital in Poland. Therefore, after passage of the IQS Act, national authorities wanted to make the system functional as quickly as possible so that qualifications could be included in the IQS, and at the same time, awarding bodies could begin awarding these qualifications. Of particular importance is the inclusion of qualifications awarded outside the formal education system.

This addresses three issues: 1) the development of the legal and organisational infrastructure of the IQS, 2) the activities undertaken to prepare the entities involved in operating the IQS, and 3) the first stage of the functioning of the IQS. The information in this chapter spans the time from January 2016, when the IQS Act implementing the NQF came into force, to September 2017 – the date this report was finalised.

8.1. Developing the legal and organisational infrastructure of the IQS

8.1.1. Implementing regulations for the IQS Act

One of the tasks of the Minister of National Education resulting from the IQS Act was to issue implementing regulations to the Act. Since its passage, a total of 13 implementing regulations have been issued, as follows:

- 1) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 April 2016 on the technical requirements to be met in the application for submitting information to the Integrated Qualifications Register (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 498),
- 2) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 April 2016 on the second stage descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework typical for general qualifications – levels 1–4 (Journal of Laws 2016, item 498),

- 3) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 April 2016 on the second stage descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework typical for vocational qualifications – levels 1–8 (Journal of Laws 2016, item 520),
- 4) Regulation of the Minister of National Education and the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 June 2016 on the second stage descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework typical for qualifications attained after having achieved a full qualification at level 4 – level 5 (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 547),
- 5) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 July 2016 on the graphic symbols used to inform about the Polish Qualifications Framework levels assigned to the full and partial qualification included in the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 915),
- 6) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 3 August 2016 on the scope of information collected in the Integrated Qualifications Register on qualifications awarded after having completed postgraduate studies (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1022),
- 7) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 19 August 2016 on the conditions to be met by experts appointed to the team of experts, the procedure of appointing experts and the procedure of comparing the learning outcomes required for a qualification with the level descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1204),
- 8) Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 September 2016 on the second stage descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework typical for qualifications attained in higher education after having achieved a full qualification at level 4 – levels 6–8 (Journal of Laws 2016 r., item 1321),
- 9) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 10 October 2016 on the bylaws of the work of the commission assessing applications for inclusion in the list of entities authorised to perform external quality assurance, a template for the contract with an entity entrusted with the performance of external quality assurance, and the manner of determining the amount of payment for such a contract (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1594),
- 10) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 January 2017 on the Polish Qualifications Framework levels for full qualifications awarded until 15 January 2016 (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 133),
- 11) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 3 April 2017 amending the regulation on the graphic symbol used to inform about the Polish Qualifications Framework levels assigned to full and partial qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 764),
- 12) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 May 2017 on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Tourism Sector (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1155),

13) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 21 June 2017 on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Sport Sector (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1268).

Implementing regulations 1 through 9 enabled Poland to achieve a fully functional Integrated Qualifications System.

8.1.2. IQS Portal and Integrated Qualifications Register

Preparations to establish the Integrated Qualifications System Portal and the Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR) were important activities undertaken to implement the IQS Act. They both were launched on 15 July 2016.

The IQS Portal operates as part of the governmental domain at kwalifikacje.gov.pl. It is fully available to the public. The IQS Portal serves all persons and institutions working together within the IQS or who need information. The portal provides the legal acts on the IQS as well as information on: the activities undertaken by the government on behalf of lifelong learning, the functioning of the IQS and the progress in developing the system. Documents, manuals and publications can be downloaded from the portal. The portal is regularly updated.

The IQS Portal is also an electronic forum for communication and cooperation in the tasks performed within the IQS. Through the portal, all formal applications (for example, to include a market qualification in the IQS, to apply for authorisation to award a qualification) are submitted to the ministers responsible for a given qualification. The portal also includes all announcements and communications about the required procedures of the IQS. The IQS Portal can be accessed through currently used web browsers via computers, tablets, and smartphones.

The Integrated Qualifications Register is a very important part of the IQS Portal, as it contains the most important information about each qualification included in the IQS. The IQR collects information on qualifications, regardless of other existing registers and lists of qualifications in Poland. The IQR operates entirely in an IT system at rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl.

8.1.3. Stakeholders Council of the IQS

On July 13, 2016, the Minister of National Education appointed the Stakeholders Council (see Regulation No. 35 of the Minister of National Education on the appointment of members of the IQS Stakeholders Council¹¹). Pursuant to this regulation, 14 members were appointed to a 2-year term and 15 persons to a 4-year term. These members represent employers, employees, the education community, the scientific and professional communities, the training market, local government, the Central Examination Board (CKE) and the IQS minister coordinator (see section 3.1. for the responsibilities of the Stakeholders Council).

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http://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/download/Prawo_o_ZSK/Zarzadzenie_w_sprawie_powolania_rady_interesariuszy.pdf

As of September 2017, the IQS Stakeholders Council has met four times. Detailed minutes from each meeting are available to the public on the IQS Portal.¹²

8.1.4. Inter-ministerial Taskforce for Lifelong Learning and the Integrated Qualifications System

In May 2016, the *Inter-ministerial Taskforce for Lifelong Learning and the Integrated Qualifications System* was established by a regulation issued by the Prime Minister. The Taskforce is an auxiliary body of the Prime Minister, chaired by the Minister of National Education, who serves as the IQS minister coordinator.

The tasks of the Taskforce include:

- 1) monitoring the implementation and functioning of the Integrated Qualifications System, to be consistent with the European Qualifications Framework,
- 2) monitoring the implementation of solutions for lifelong learning in the Republic of Poland, including the development of knowledge and skills important for an innovative economy, employment and a cohesive society,
- 3) preparing drafts of modifications to the government document on lifelong learning strategies,
- 4) cooperating with partners and institutions relevant to the development of lifelong learning, including the Stakeholders Council of the Integrated Qualifications System,
- 5) monitoring the work conducted in the European Union in the field of lifelong learning, including the European Qualifications Framework.

The Taskforce consists of:

- 1) Minister of National Education – Taskforce Chairperson,
- 2) Minister of Digital Affairs,
- 3) Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation,
- 4) Minister of Culture and National Heritage,
- 5) Minister of Science and Higher Education,
- 6) Minister of National Defence,
- 7) Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy,
- 8) Minister of Development,
- 9) Minister of Sport and Tourism,
- 10) Minister of the Interior and Administration,
- 11) Minister of Health,
- 12) Minister from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

¹² <http://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/rada-interesariuszy>

8.1.5. The Inter-ministerial Cooperating Network for IQS Implementation

At the request of the minister coordinator, a cooperating network was established of staff from various ministries involved in the implementation of the tasks resulting from the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System, as well as the development of the government's integrated skills strategy. Also appointed were members of ministerial departments, who are supervising the implementation of these tasks.

8.1.6. Amendments to the IQS Act

In 2016, the IQS Act was amended twice. In 2017, the entity operating the Integrated Qualifications Register was changed from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) to the Educational Research Institute (IBE).

From the date the IQS Act entered into force, the Ministry of National Education and IBE have been monitoring the solutions being enacted. For this purpose, questions, remarks and proposed amendments have been gathered during meetings, seminars, workshops and consultations, organised for ministry representatives, entities receiving support with the process of describing a qualification, awarding bodies, external quality assurance entities, and IQS stakeholders.

8.1.7. List of external quality assurance entities

Applications began to be accepted for the appointment of external quality assurance entities in 2016. By September 2017, 14 entities were listed as qualified to perform external quality assurance:

Maritime Academy in Szczecin, Butra Consulting Andrzej Butra, Medical Centre for Postgraduate Education in Warsaw, Public Affairs Institute Foundation, Warsaw Institute of Banking, Central Mining Institute, Gomułka Group Euroeducation Company Ltd., Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology, Oil and Gas Institute – National Research Institute, Institute for Sustainable Technologies – National Research Institute, Institute of Tourism in Kraków Ltd., National Chamber of Real Estate, Silesian Medical University, Wielkopolska Academy of Science and Development Jakub Michałowski.

8.1.8. Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks

By September 2017, two sectoral qualification frameworks, one for tourism and one for sport, were included in the IQS under the following regulations:

- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 May 2017 on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the tourism sector. The regulation entered into force on 4 July 2017.¹³

¹³ Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1155. See also: *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Tourism (SQQT)*, IBE 2017, <http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/publikacje/SQF-TOURISM.pdf>

- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 21 June 2017 on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the sport sector. The regulation entered into force on 13 July 2017.¹⁴

8.1.9. Educational Research Institute

As previously stated, the Educational Research Institute has been involved in the development of the IQS since 2010. IBE was the centre, from which the work was conducted on developing the new qualifications system, as well as being the centre for the public debates on this issue.

On 19 January 2016, acting pursuant to the IQS Act, the Minister of National Education, as the coordinator of the IQS, authorised the Educational Research Institute to conduct the following tasks:¹⁵

- 1) prepare the ministers to implement the solutions of the IQS, including the provision of support to the IQS minister coordinator, with activities relating to the functioning of the list of external quality assurance entities, monitoring and evaluation, and developing recommendations to ensure that the applied solutions are coherent,
- 2) prepare awarding bodies and validation institutions to implement the solutions of the IQS,
- 3) prepare solutions and methods for identifying and documenting the competences of persons seeking to attain qualifications, including methods of recognising competences attained outside of organised forms of learning,
- 4) prepare external quality assurance entities to perform external evaluations,
- 5) coordinate the work on producing descriptions of qualification awarded outside of the school and higher education systems in accordance with the standards of the IQS,
- 6) cooperate with representatives of relevant communities to develop sectoral qualifications frameworks referenced to the Polish Qualifications Framework,
- 7) monitor and evaluate the development of the Integrated Qualifications System, including the preparation of reports on the IQS and monitoring solutions from abroad,
- 8) disseminate information on the Integrated Qualifications System in Poland and in the international community and operate the IQS Portal, including cooperation with the IQR operator in modifications to the existing solutions on the procedures and operation of the information system and to update information resulting from developments to the IQS, as well as support the IQR operator in preparing and launching the IQR,

¹⁴ Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1268. See also: *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Sport*, IBE 2016, http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/publikacje/SRKS_ENG_FIN_internet.pdf

¹⁵ Quoted from the document of the Ministry of National Education of 19 January 2016.

- 9) develop systemic tools to monitor the professional careers of school graduates,
- 10) monitor the professional careers of vocational school graduates for the classes of 2015–2022, with the use of the developed solutions.

IBE proceeded to implement these activities within the framework of an ESF-funded systemic project: *Support to central government administration, awarding bodies and quality assurance institutions in implementing stage I of the Integrated Qualifications System*, undertaken in 2016-2018.

There is evidence that the support provided by IBE to stakeholders is useful. There is great interest in regional conferences and thematic seminars. Every week, IBE experts receive questions and requests for consultations. Also, the publications issued by IBE are considered highly supportive. Stakeholders are especially interested in the printed versions, therefore key publications have been reprinted already several times.

By decision of the relevant authorities, IBE will be continuing these activities based on successive projects financed from European sources.

8.2. Preparing the entities involved in the functioning of the IQS

All necessary supportive and instructional materials have been developed to explain the functioning of the IQS. Informational seminars and workshop sessions are also being held for different target groups.

8.2.1. Instructional and supportive materials for various entities

Developing procedures

Procedures have been developed to facilitate cooperation between the IQS minister coordinator and relevant ministers, as well as with other entities involved in the process of including qualifications in the IQS. In total, 12 procedures have been developed, which have a universal character. They are designed in such a way that they can be adapted to the experiences and conditions of individual ministries. The minister coordinator has provided the procedures to the relevant ministers responsible for given qualifications, as proposals for use.

Procedures have been developed on the following activities, based on the IQS Act:

- 1) Including market qualification in the IQS,
- 2) Determining the relevant minister to consider an application for having a market qualification included in the IQS,
- 3) Organising and conducting consultations with relevant communities,
- 4) Securing the opinions of experts on the relevance of including qualifications in the IQS,
- 5) Setting up a panel of experts to determine the PQF level for a qualification,
- 6) Preparing the recommendation of the team of experts on the PQF level assigned to a qualification,

- 7) Granting authorisation to award qualifications,
- 8) Granting authorisation to perform the role of external quality assurance entity (entry in the EQAE list),
- 9) Performing extraordinary external evaluations of an awarding body,
- 10) Performing audits of an awarding body,
- 11) Including regulated (statutory) qualifications in the IQS,
- 12) Reviewing regulated qualifications.

Manuals on particular IQS-related topics and activities

IBE has produced numerous publications on topics relating to IQS implementation. These materials serve as a compendium of knowledge for those involved in its implementation. They are prepared especially with the staffs of government authorities and other institutions in mind, who will be performing specific tasks in developing and awarding qualifications. These publications allow persons to become familiar with the new terminology and the Polish Qualifications Framework, and explain how to include qualifications in the system. They are a primary source of information for interested parties applying to have qualifications included in the system, as well as for those applying to become awarding bodies and external quality assurance entities.

The most relevant publications include:

- 1) The Pocket Encyclopaedia of the Integrated Qualifications System
<http://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/images/Publikacje/mala-encyklopedia-IQS.pdf>
- 2) Glossary of the Integrated Qualifications System
http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/slownik_zsk_2017.pdf
- 3) Polish Qualifications Framework
<http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/en/publications/1259-polish-qualifications-framework>
- 4) Polish Qualifications Framework – User’s Guide
<http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/en/publications/1258-polish-qualifications-framework-user-s-guide>
- 5) How to describe market qualifications for the Polish Qualifications System
<http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/en/publications/1148-how-to-describe-market-qualifications-for-the-polish-qualifications-system>
- 6) Assigning levels of the Polish Qualifications Framework to qualifications (only in Polish)
<http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/publikacje/Przypisywanie-poziomu-PRK-do-kwalifikacji.pdf>
- 7) Including qualifications in the Integrated Qualifications System (only in Polish)
http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/publikacje/Wlaczenie_kwalifikacji_do_zsk.pdf
- 8) Validation – new opportunities for attaining qualifications
http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/images/download/Publikacje/Walidacja_nowe_mozliwosci_z_dobycia_kwalifikacji_na%20www_2212_FIN.pdf (Polish version)

http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/publikacje/Walidacja_EN_Internet5_FIN.pdf

(English version)

- 9) The Review of Regulated Qualifications (only in Polish)
http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/download/PKU_internet_fin_czerwiec%202017.pdf
- 10) Validation systems from abroad – a review of practices (only in Polish)
<http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/images/download/Publikacje/zagraniczne-systemy-walidacji.pdf>

In addition to the publications printed by IBE, the Institute's experts also prepare additional instructional materials, presentations and exercises for seminar participants.

8.2.2. Informational seminars and workshops

From January 2016 – June 2017, seminars were held for the following groups:

- Ministry staff. Seminars were held on particular areas regulated in the IQS Act, including: procedures of including qualifications, the Polish Qualifications Framework, quality assurance, sectoral qualifications frameworks. Eleven seminars were held for a total of 344 participants. As a result of requests from ministry representatives, further seminars are being prepared.
- Institutions interested in becoming an awarding body. The seminars covered issues on the IQS solutions for validation, certification and quality assurance. 18 two-day seminars were held for a total number of 357 participants.
- Local government unit staff (mainly from the Marshall's offices and Voivodship Labour Offices). Basic information on the IQS was provided during 18 seminars for a total of 465 participants.

8.3. First stage of the functioning of the IQS – launching the system

8.3.1. Entering school qualifications in the Integrated Qualifications Register

Qualifications awarded in the formal education system were included in the IQS by the IQS Act. All these qualifications were included in the Integrated Qualifications Register in 2016. The Register currently has 9518 qualifications awarded in formal education – 9233 full qualifications and 285 partial qualifications that now have assigned PQF levels (from level 1 to 8):

- 1 qualification at level 1,¹⁶
- 10 qualifications at level 2,

¹⁶ Certificate of completion of a 6-year elementary school. In 2017, the school system was changed – primary school now lasts for 8 years, and then pupils go on to a 4-year general upper secondary school or VET school; lower secondary school has been eliminated.

- 191 qualifications at level 3,
- 268 qualifications at level 4,
- 39 qualifications at level 5,
- 5035 qualifications at level 6,
- 2998 qualifications at level 7,
- 976 qualifications at level 8.

8.3.2. The inclusion of qualifications awarded outside the formal education system in the IQS

As of September 2017, 23 applications for the inclusion of qualifications awarded outside formal education, including craft trades qualifications, have been submitted by different entities, e.g. foundations, associations, chambers of crafts, training companies. One qualification, „Carpentry Assembly in Construction”, was already included in the IQS in July 2017.

The following qualifications are currently being processed by the relevant ministries:

- Providing group fitness classes (forwarded to the Ministry of Sport and Tourism)
- Real estate management (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development)
- Tiler – Master’s diploma (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development)
- Tiler – Journeyman’s certificate (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development)
- Beautician – Master’s diploma (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Beautician – Journeyman’s certificate (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Makeup artist / stylist – Master’s diploma (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Makeup artist / stylist – Journeyman’s certificate (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Furniture carpentry – Journeyman’s certificate (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Panel beating and painting – Journeyman’s certificate (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Confectioner – Master’s diploma (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)
- Hairdresser/Barber – Master’s diploma (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Guiding tourism events (Ministry of Sport and Tourism)
- BIM Manager certificate (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development)
- Recovery of data from HDD hard drives (Ministry of Digital Affairs)
- Nail styling (Ministry of Economic Development)
- Organising tourism events and services (Ministry of Sport and Tourism)
- Brokering the trading rights of property (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development)
- Certificate of Computer Skills – basic level (Ministry of National Education)
- Real estate management (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development)

According to the above list of qualifications proposed for inclusion, there are many from craftsmanship education which do not have an equivalent in the formal VET system.¹⁷ These craft qualifications are classified as market qualifications in the IQS.

¹⁷ Craft qualifications that have equivalent qualifications in formal vocational education are included in the IQS according to the IQS Act together with the qualifications awarded in the formal education system.

Most of the qualifications submitted thus far are rather small (in terms of workload needed to achieve the defined learning outcomes) and lower PQF levels were proposed for them. This may be explained by the initial stage of the functioning of IQS. In later stages, it is expected that qualifications with larger workloads and higher PQF levels will be submitted for inclusion.

Based on the experiences from the first 20 months of operation, one could say that the concept of the accumulation and transfer of units of learning outcomes was understood by stakeholders and therefore, has a chance of being developed and used further.

The first months of IQS functioning have allowed the process of including qualifications in the system to be assessed (effectiveness of procedures, methods of work, as well as the role and work of institutions, entities involved in particular stages of this process). Among the others, the duration of the process is now and should be analysed in the future. The IQS Act states that the process of including a market qualification in the system should take from 4 to 8 months. The experience gained so far shows that it takes around 8 months. It could be expected that in time, the duration of the inclusion process will become shorter.

Another issue relates to defining the relevant minister for a given, submitted market qualification. This was an issue with the qualification of “nail styling”. First it was sent to the Minister of Health. One month later, it was sent to the Minister of National Education, and then finally to the Minister of Economic Development, which began the procedure of inclusion.

Moreover, during the consultation process, which is a required part of the inclusion procedure, it was observed that lively discussions were taking place among the sectoral stakeholders. The entities taking part in such consultations may be, in some cases, natural market competitors of the applicant, which could impact the results of the consultations.

8.3.3. Review of regulated qualifications

The IQS Act requires each minister to review all regulated qualifications that he/she has jurisdiction over within five years of the date that the Act enters into force.

Special materials were developed at IBE, including a tool for assessing individual regulated qualifications, to determine if they should be included in the IQS. At the same time, this tool guides the overall qualitative analysis of specific regulated qualifications, and thus facilitates the identification of requirements that have lost their relevance as well as gaps that need to be addressed. The development of this tool and the training support provided by IBE to ministry staff involved in reviewing the qualifications serve to ensure the consistency of the actions undertaken by the various ministries in this regard.

The review of regulated qualifications should be completed in 2020. The intent of the Polish government is to use this review to have all regulated qualifications included in the IQS that are determined to be current and needed by the labour market.

8.3.4. Describing market qualifications in accordance with the requirements of the IQS Act

From mid-2016, IBE has been providing technical and organisational support to institutions and organisations that are describing market qualifications for their inclusion in the system. As of June 2017, IBE has organised:

- 9 informational seminars for entities interested in having a market qualification included in the IQS, with over 280 persons taking part,
- 14 consultative meetings on describing market qualifications, with over 300 persons taking part,
- over 150 working meetings on describing qualifications for over 200 experts representing several dozen entities, including, among others: the Polish Craft Association, The Accountants Association in Poland, French-Polish Chamber of Commerce, Scientific and Research Centre for Fire Protection – National Research Institute, Environmental Protection Institute – National Research Institute, Polish Scouting and Guiding Association and the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association of the Republic, 20 Olympic sport associations and the Polish Oncological Psychology Association.

During this period, IBE provided support in describing 31 market qualifications, including 15 qualifications from the craft trades. Some of these qualifications have already been submitted for inclusion in the IQS, the remaining ones will be submitted in the near future.

8.3.5. Developing sectoral qualifications frameworks

By September 2017, two sectoral qualifications frameworks were included in the IQS, one for tourism and the other for sport (see section 8.1.8).

Work is currently underway on two more sectoral qualifications frameworks, one for the personal development services sector and the second for the construction industry. Work is also underway on the pilot implementation of the sectoral qualifications framework for the telecommunications sector.

In future months, additional sectoral frameworks are planned. IBE has been supporting these activities, among others, by holding 4 seminars on this topic, attended by 90 persons from various sectors.

8.3.6. Informational activities

In consultation with the IQS minister coordinator, IBE is conducting information campaigns in a variety of settings and through mass media. Ministry representatives and IBE experts are presenting the issues on the functioning of the IQS during various conferences being organised in different regions of Poland, focused on education, employment and socio-economic issues. During these events, information materials and publications on the IQS are also distributed.

An important tool in making information accessible as widely as possible to the public is the IQS Portal (<http://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl>), which is managed by IBE under the supervision of the Minister of National Education. Information about the IQS is also available from IBE's website at <http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/en/>.

Press articles, brochures, animations and videos addressed to various target groups are placed on the Internet.

8.3.7. Ongoing monitoring of the IQS implementation process

IBE is preparing and performing an on-going evaluation of the implementation and operation of the IQS. To this end, information is collected and analysed about ongoing activities and the specific research programmes initiated by IBE. The IQS operations being monitored pertain to the qualifications awarded in formal education as well as the awarding of regulated and market qualifications. Recommendations from the monitoring are submitted to the IQS minister coordinator on a regular basis.

In particular, a research concept was developed for the functioning of qualifications in selected sectors: construction, IT, food service and hospitality, financial services and insurance, i.e. those sectors that have developed a sectoral qualifications framework. There will also be research conducted on the use of the IQS in employment offices, primarily by job counsellors. Projects to monitor the outcomes of formal education have also been prepared.

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Annexes

Annex 1. List of Legal Acts referred to in the Country Report

1. Act of 22 March 1989 on the crafts trades (Journal of Laws 2002, No. 112, item 979 with later amendments).
2. School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (Journal of Laws 2004, No. 256, item 2572 with later amendments).
3. Act of 27 July 2005 on the Law on Higher Education (Journal of Laws 2012, item 572 with later amendments).
4. Resolution of the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2011 on the Classification of Vocational School Occupations (Journal of Laws 2012, item 7).
5. Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016, item 64).

Annex 2. Forms Used in the Procedure of Including Qualifications in the NQF

Integrated Qualifications Register

Application for the inclusion of a qualification in the IQS¹⁸

Type of application

Application to include a qualification in the IQS

Name of the qualification

Abbreviation of the name

Type of qualification

Proposed level of the Polish Qualifications Framework

Short description of the qualification and an approximate cost of issuing the document confirming that the qualification has been attained

Notional workload required to attain the qualification [in hours]

Groups that may be interested in attaining the qualification

Prerequisite qualifications required to attain the proposed qualification

Description

¹⁸ The application is filled out electronically on the website of the Integrated Qualifications Register.

List

If applicable, the conditions to be fulfilled by a person who will be undergoing validation

The need for the qualification

References to similar qualifications and qualification in the IQR with common sets of learning outcomes

Typical ways of using the qualification

Requirements for validation and the entities conducting validation

Proposed level in the sectoral qualifications framework (if applicable)

Synthesis of the learning outcomes

Set number

Set name

Level

Notional workload [in hours]

Type of set

Specific learning outcomes and the verification criteria of their attainment

Skills and their verification criteria

Skills

Verification criteria

Comments on the sets of learning outcomes

Information on the institutions authorised to award the qualification

Applicant

Relevant minister

Period of time the document confirming that the qualification has been awarded is valid and the conditions to be met to extend its validity.

Period of time the entry into the IQR is valid

Name of the document confirming that the qualification has been awarded

Entitlements / powers conferred by having attained the qualification

Educational subject code

Polish Classification of Activities code (PKD)

IQR qualification code

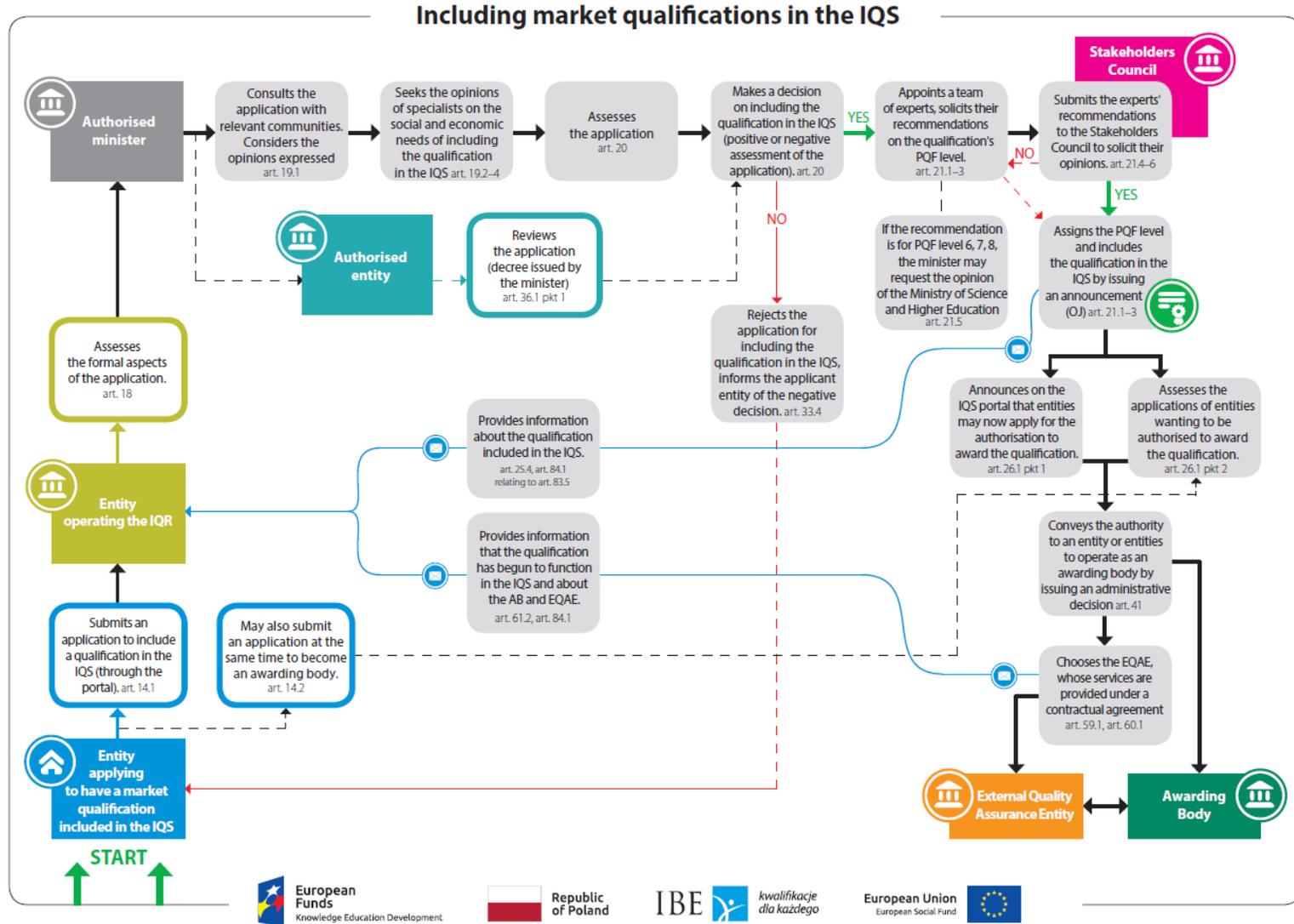
Status

Documents

#	Document title

I hereby certify that the information provided in this application for a market qualification to be included in the Integrated Qualifications System is true. I am aware of the legal consequences of making a false declaration.

Annex 3. Diagram of Including a Market Qualification in the Integrated Qualifications System



Annex 4. Templates of selected certificates and diplomas indicating the PQF level of the qualification

Source: Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 26 April 2018 on Certificates, Diplomas and Other School Templates (Journal of Laws 2018, item 939).

- Certificate of Completing Primary School, (MEN-I/8/1) (template no. 8), page 1



The image shows a template for a 'ŚWIADECTWO UKOŃCZENIA SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ' (Certificate of Completion of Primary School). The document features a decorative border with a repeating pattern and a central emblem of the Polish eagle. The title is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title, there are several fields for personal and school information, each with a dotted line for text entry. A large, stylized watermark of the Polish eagle is visible in the background. At the bottom, there is a section for the school's name, location, and date, followed by a box for the director's stamp and signature. The logo 'PRK II' is also present, indicating the qualification level. The reference code 'MEN-I/8/1' is located at the bottom left of the page.

**ŚWIADECTWO UKOŃCZENIA
SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ**

.....
imie (imiona) i nazwisko

.....
data urodzenia

.....
miejsce urodzenia

.....
numer PESEL

ukończył..... w roku szkolnym.....

.....
nazwa szkoły podstawowej

nr im.....

w woj.....

.....
miejscowość

.....
dnia r.

Nr m.p.

PRK II
Kwalifikacja pełna na poziomie
drugim Polskiej Ramy Kwalifikacji.
Świadectwo jest dokumentem potwierdzającym posiadanie wykształcenia podstawowego.

pieczęć i podpis dyrektora

MEN-I/8/1

- Certificate of Completing Primary School, page 2

WYNIKI KLASYFIKACJI KOŃCOWEJ

zachowanie
religia / etyka

Obowiązkowe zajęcia edukacyjne

język polski
język
język
muzyka
plastyka
historia
wiedza o społeczeństwie
przroda
geografia
biologia
chemia
fizyka
matematyka
informatyka
technika
wychowanie fizyczne
edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa

Dodatkowe zajęcia edukacyjne

.....
.....
.....

Inne zajęcia

.....
.....
.....

Indywidualny program lub tok nauki

.....
.....
.....

Szczególne osiągnięcia

.....
.....
.....

.....
podpis wychowawcy/opiekuna klasy

Skala ocen:
1) zachowanie: wzorowe, bardzo dobre, dobre, poprawne,
nieodpowiednie, naganne;
2) zajęcia edukacyjne, religia / etyka: celujący, bardzo dobry,
dobry, dostateczny, dopuszczający, niedostateczny.

- Certificate of passing the *Matura* examination upon the completion of upper secondary school, with the graphic symbol for PQF level 4 (OKE-II/61/3) (template no. 61)

RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA
ŚWIADECTWO DOJRZAŁOŚCI

.....
imię (imiona) i nazwisko

.....
data urodzenia

.....
miejsce urodzenia

.....
numer PESEL

zdał..... egzamin maturalny i uzyskał.....

z przedmiotów obowiązkowych:
w części ustnej egzaminu:

język polski

język

w części pisemnej egzaminu na poziomie podstawowym:

język polski wynik taki sam lub niższy uzyskało% zdających

język wynik taki sam lub niższy uzyskało% zdających

matematyka wynik taki sam lub niższy uzyskało% zdających

.....
miejsceowosc

.....
dnia r.

Nr M/.....

.....
m.p.

.....
pieczęć i podpis dyrektora
okręgowej komisji egzaminacyjnej

PRKIV
Kwalifikacja pełna na poziomie
czwartym Polskiej Ramy Kwalifikacji

Świadectwo jest dokumentem uprawniającym do ubiegania się o przyjęcie na studia w szkołach wyższych.

OKE-II/61/3

- Certificate confirming a vocational qualification issued after having passed the examination confirming the attainment of a vocational qualification, with the graphic symbol of PQF level 5 indicating the Polish Qualifications Framework level of a partial qualification (OKE-II/66/3) (template no. 66)

RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA

ŚWIADECTWO POTWIERDZAJĄCE KWALIFIKACJĘ W ZAWODZIE

.....
imię (imiona) i nazwisko

.....
data urodzenia

.....
miejsce urodzenia

.....
numer PESEL

zdał..... egzamin potwierdzający kwalifikacje w zawodzie w zakresie kwalifikacji

wyodrębnionej w zawod.....

i uzyskał....

z części pisemnej egzaminu: % punktów możliwych do uzyskania

z części praktycznej egzaminu: % punktów możliwych do uzyskania

.....
miejsceowość

.....
dnia r.

Nr

m.p.

.....
pieczęć i podpis dyrektora
okręgowej komisji egzaminacyjnej

P R K 5

Kwalifikacja cząstkowa na poziomie
piątym Polskiej Ramy Kwalifikacji

Podstawą zdania egzaminu jest otrzymanie:

- 1) z części pisemnej – co najmniej 50% punktów możliwych do uzyskania;
- 2) z części praktycznej – co najmniej 75% punktów możliwych do uzyskania.

OKE-II/66/3

- Diploma confirming the attainment of a vocational qualification, with the graphic symbol of PQF level 2 indicating the Polish Qualifications Framework level for a full qualification (OKE-II/67/3) (template no. 67)

RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA

DYPLOM POTWIERDZAJĄCY KWALIFIKACJE ZAWODOWE

.....
imię (imiona) i nazwisko

.....
data urodzenia

.....
miejsce urodzenia

.....
numer PESEL

otrzymał... świadectw... potwierdzające kwalifikację... w zawodzie

.....
i uzyskał...

z części pisemnej egzaminu:
kwalifikacja.....

z części praktycznej egzaminu:
..... % punktów możliwych do uzyskania % punktów możliwych do uzyskania

.....
miejsceowość dnia r.

Nr

PRK II

Kwalifikacja pełna na poziomie
drugim Polskiej Ramy Kwalifikacji

.....
pieczęć i podpis dyrektora
okręgowej komisji egzaminacyjnej

Podstawą zdania egzaminu jest otrzymanie:
1) z części pisemnej – co najmniej 50% punktów możliwych do uzyskania;
2) z części praktycznej – co najmniej 75% punktów możliwych do uzyskania.

OKE-II/67/3