TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In recent years, each and every country has had to set a national priority to review its own education and employment policies and reform its own qualifications systems having regard to the individual developments, community expectations and international practices associated with "lifelong learning". In this context, "National Qualifications Frameworks", which will provide significant contribution to the formulation and operation of national education and employment systems, are developed with various architectures and contents.

National qualifications frameworks constitute the most up-to-date approach used by the countries first to describe, classify and compare qualifications in a given country; and then to restructure, integrate and coordinate qualifications systems. According to research studies conducted by various international organizations, almost 150 countries around the world have either developed or are in the process of developing their national qualifications frameworks.

In Europe, the Recommendation on "European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning" was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in 2008. 36 participating countries, which are either EU Member States or Candidate Countries, have developed or are in the process of developing their national qualifications frameworks.

Having a national qualifications system that enhances the quality of education and training and strengthens the link between education and employment is among the priority needs for Turkey. Therefore, Turkey is committed to providing the Turkish Qualifications Framework which will be in harmony with the European Qualifications Framework and also will meet the education and training needs of all individuals through lifelong learning support and ensure the development of qualifications required by the labour market.

With the Turkish Qualifications Framework, the goal is to integrate qualifications available in the Turkish system in an overarching framework, to improve the quality of qualifications, to promote and provide systematic support to lifelong learning, maximize national and international transparency as well as recognition and to provide opportunities to all individuals of the community.

In this respect, the Turkish Qualifications Framework will offer a holistic approach under which links among all qualifications achieved either at a school, university, training centre, research centre, other organisations offering education and training such as work places or through informal learning will be enabled and participation rate in lifelong learning will be increased.

Turkish Qualifications Framework has been prepared, under the coordination of the Vocational Qualifications Authority, by the National Qualifications Framework Preparation Commission which comprises of representatives from the Ministry of National Education, the Council of Higher Education and Vocational Qualifications Authority and technical working groups also including social parties. The Framework has been finalised after consulting all relevant bodies and institutions as well as national and international experts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CoHE	: Council of Higher Education
EU	: European Union
ECTS	: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ECVET	: European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training
FQ-EHEA	: Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
EQF	: European Qualifications Framework
FF	: Feedback Forum
HAK-İŞ	: Hak Confederation of Trade Unions
ISCED	: International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	: International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISO	: International Organization for Standardization
İŞKUR	: Turkish Employment Agency
MoNE	: Ministry of National Education
NQF	: National Qualifications Framework
TQF Regulation	: Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Concerning the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework
TESK	: Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen
TİSK	: Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
TOBB	: Turkish Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges
TQF	: Turkish Qualifications Framework
TQFHE	: Turkish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
TÜRK-İŞ	: Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions
UYEP	: Strengthening Vocational Qualifications Authority and National Qualifications System in Turkey Project
VQA	: Vocational Qualifications Authority

TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK PAPER

This paper is composed of five chapters addressing the national qualifications framework (NQF) as a concept, the justification for the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF), its structural features, governance and implementation as well as annexes.

Chapter 1 focuses on the national qualifications framework (NQF) as a concept as well as the aims and overall objectives of NQFs.

Chapter 2 presents the basis for TQF, current status of education-training and qualifications systems, policy documents and legislation on TQF, work in progress, TQF objectives, principles taken into account during the development of TQF and expected benefits of TQF.

Chapter 3 focuses on TQF structure, scope and design.

Chapter 4 explains TQF governance and implementation; inclusion of qualifications in the TQF; use, updating, modification and cancellation of qualifications within the TQF; quality assurance; TQF and learner mobility; recognition of prior learning within the scope of lifelong learning, Qualifications Database and meeting the expenses related to TQF.

Chapter 5 sets out issues related to the introduction of TQF and implementation timetable.

Chapters are followed by annexes setting out level descriptors, qualification types, anticipated levels and responsible bodies.

1. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

The Concept

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a structure of levels that, with associated procedures and conventions, can be used to describe, classify according to given criteria and then compare qualifications and integrates and coordinates the qualifications systems of a country, thus making qualifications more transparent and definable in line with the quality standards and facilitating the horizontal and vertical mobility of learners between qualifications.

The NQF is generally used as:

- a frame of reference for the classification of existing qualifications,

- a source for the design of new qualifications,

- a basis for the development of education and training programs based on learning outcomes,

- an environment in which processes for the recognition of prior learning can be developed,

- an instrument in the mutual recognition of qualifications.

Many countries around the world have already adopted the national qualifications framework approach, and many have developed an NQF while others have already started with the implementation. Many countries in different parts of the world, including all of the UK countries, Ireland, France, Denmark, Portugal, Malta, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, have developed national qualifications frameworks and started the implementation.

Implementation of the NQF by various countries resulted in the possibility to make comparisons and referencing of these NQFs. To this end, "meta-frameworks" have been introduced to facilitate the comparison and referencing of NQFs. There are two meta-frameworks used for international referencing in Europe, namely the "European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)"[1] and "Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)"[2].

- European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning was adopted by the European Parliament and Council of Europe on 23 April 2008 based on the recommendation 2008/C 111/01. EQF provides a meta-framework to ensure the transparency of qualifications, and to promote the transfer and recognition of qualifications among different countries, and to make comparisons among various NQFs. The core element of the EQF is a set of eight reference levels defined at each level in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. 36 countries participating to EQF Recommendation have committed to reference their NQFs to the EQF and comply with the implementation timetable provided in the recommendation. Moreover, each country designates a responsible body as a national coordination point to coordinate the relationship between their national qualifications framework and the EQF. As EQF National Coordination Point, the Vocational Qualifications Authority has been representing Turkey in the EQF Advisory Group since December 2008.

- The so-called Bologna Process seeks to develop continuously improved, dynamic processes based on common understanding with a view to create a comparable, competitive and transparent higher education area in 49 member states. A key initiative in the Bologna

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[1] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF
[2] http://www.ehea.info/

Process has been the development and introduction of QF-EHEA. Work undertaken in the field of Bologna Process is under the responsibility of CoHE in Turkey.

The Turkish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQFHE) has already been developed and introduced, and is now in the process of implementation[3].

The common thread of the two abovementioned meta-frameworks is that they both consist of levels and are based on "learning outcomes".

Aims of Use

National qualifications frameworks developed by various countries influence national education, training and qualifications systems in many ways. Many studies[4] divide NQFs into three main categories based on their purpose, design and implementation processes. The first category involves "*communication frameworks*" which improve the description of existing qualifications systems and, by providing options to learners, education and employment policy makers and implementing bodies, enable increased transparency and better use to be made of what is already there. The second category involves "*reforming frameworks*" which aim to substantially improve the existing system by strengthening it in terms of consistency, compliance and quality, and develop new pathways and programmes to provide an access to qualifications or change the division of roles and responsibilities undertaken by stakeholders. The last category involves transforming frameworks which aim to transform education and training systems and take the lead in the development of new systems.

Objectives

The common objectives that European countries have set for their NQFs are the following:

1) Increasing international transparency of education and training, and aiding the comparison and transfer of qualifications;
2) Increasing the transparency of national qualifications systems;
3) Promoting lifelong learning;
4) Promoting and speeding a shift towards use of a learning outcomes based approach throughout education and training;
5) Improving the permeability of education and training systems to aid transfer and progression;
6) Aiding the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
7) Improving the consistency of qualifications;
8) Providing a reference point for quality assurance.
9) Strengthening cooperation between stakeholders and establishing closer links to the labour market.

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[3] http://tyyc.yok.gov.tr/

[4] Raffe David; "National Qualifications Frameworks in Ireland and Scotland: A Comparative Analysis"
http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk/PDF%20Files/NQF_ECER_2009.pdf

2.   TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

2.1   The Basis for Turkish Qualifications Framework

Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) is the national qualifications framework which is designed to be in harmony with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and describes the qualifications awarded in vocational, general education and academic training programmes including primary, secondary and higher education, as well as those achieved in other learning environments. TQF covers all quality assured qualifications achieved in all learning environments at all levels within Turkey's education and training system.

A qualification is defined in the European Qualifications Framework as;

> "A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards."
>
> (Recommendation 2008/C 111/01, 2008)

According to the TQF Regulation, "qualification" shall refer to;

> "The official document obtained when the responsible body, at the end of a process of assessment and validation, recognizes that an individual has accomplished the learning outcomes according to certain criteria."
>
> *(TQF Regulation, article 3)*

The definition of "qualification" in the Regulation complies with the definition of "qualification" in the EQF, which indicates that qualifications to be included in the TQF must be developed based on learning outcomes and recognized following a process of evaluation and validation and that TQF has been designed based on this structure.

2.2   Current Status of Education Training and Qualifications Systems

TQF design has taken into account the philosophy and structure of the Turkish education and training system as well as its basic features directly associated with the TQF.

As per the Principal Law on National Education no 1739, the national education system has been designed to have an integrated structure to serve for the needs of individuals, and it comprises of "formal education and training" provided by providers of in pre-school, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education; and also "non-formal education and training" provided under the scope of lifelong learning. Most stages in the formal and non-formal education system can be reached by distance learning and open education options.

2.2.1   Formal Education and Training

Formal education encompasses formal programmes of pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education.
The twelve-year compulsory formal education and training[5], which follows optional pre-school education, has been divided into the following stages:

Primary Education

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[5] Primary and Secondary Education Framework is based on laws amended by the Law no 6287 dated 30/3/2012 on the Amendment of Law on Primary Education and Training and of some other laws (of Law no 222 on Primary Education and Training, Principal Law on National Education no 1739, Law no 3308 on Vocational Education), whereas the framework of higher education is based on two articles of the Constitution (articles 130 and 131) and Higher Education Law no 2547.

- Primary School (4 years)
- Lower Secondary School (4 years)

Upper Secondary Education

- High School (4 years)

The following are provided by education and training providers under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and also by private and other providers supervised by MoNE;

- General Upper Secondary Education
- Vocational and Technical Upper Secondary Education
- Upper Secondary Education programmes offering both general and vocational education.

Higher Education

Higher education in Turkey covers all academic and vocational education and training after secondary education coordinated by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and provided by higher education institutions.

Higher education consists of the three main cycles (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate) and the short cycle (Associate Degree) defined in the context of the Bologna Process. Except for Dentistry, Pharmacology, Medicine and Veterinary programmes, in which first and second cycles (Bachelor's and Master's) are integrated, other higher education programs are organized in a three-cycle (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate) structure.

2.2.2 Non-Formal Education and Training

Non-formal Education and training includes education, training, production, counselling and practical activities that are provided at various durations and levels on a lifelong basis by public bodies or private and voluntary institutions and are coordinated by MoNE.[6] Short term courses and further training received to achieve qualifications, to be trained for a new job and for leisure hobbies or individual development are also covered by non-formal education and training.

Apprenticeship System

Apprenticeship system covers training programmes that provide a combination of theoretical education and practical training in workplace to individuals who have completed primary education or compulsory lower secondary school, and lead the learners to certificates of semi-skilled worker, skilled worker and skilled instructor.

Vocational Education and Training

This includes all kinds of work-related or career development trainings including those provided by, or in cooperation with, businesses.

2.2.3 Qualifications in the Education and Training System

Responsible bodies are responsible for the legislation, procedures and coordination required for the determination, description and provision of qualifications to be included in the education and training system. Responsible bodies ensure that qualifications required by the business world and society are described based on a "learning outcomes" approach achieved by the learners according to specific criteria. Responsible bodies primarily comprise of MoNE, Presidency of CoHE, higher education institutions and VQA; however,

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[6] MoNE Regulation on Non-Formal Education and Training Providers, OG. 21.05.2010-27587.

the legislation provides for other responsible bodies as well[7].

If the individual succeeds in achieving the learning outcomes of the qualifications following assessment and evaluation, education institutions and awarding bodies authorized by the responsible bodies take over responsibility for the certification of the qualification. Training institutions primarily comprise of education and training providers and schools under the MoNE, higher education institutions (universities, higher vocational schools and institutes etc.), while awarding bodies primarily comprise of VQA-authorized awarding bodies according to TS EN ISO/IEC 17024[8] accreditation. However, there are some other education institutions and awarding bodies in Turkey and TQF implementation will include dedicated studies to determine such bodies.

Qualifications of Basic Education, Secondary Education and Non-Formal Education

The qualifications that are awarded at the end of formal and non-formal education by public and private providers of education are divided into three main groups: general, vocational and non-formal qualifications.

Currently the Basic Education reflects different types of provision including non-formal programmes and programmes adapted for individuals with special educational needs. In the scope of Basic Education, diplomas exist that were provided in 2011 and previously[9]. As of 2012, certificate of education replaces diploma upon completing primary school and junior high school; whereas at the end of twelve-year compulsory education pupils qualify for a diploma.

General secondary education diploma is offered to reflect programmes of specialization in various fields of learning[10].

Vocational and technical secondary education diploma is offered to reflect various programmes of education as well as programmes of vocational specialization[11].

Diplomas are also provided upon completing secondary education programmes offering both general and vocational education[12].

Depending on the programme completed, various types of certificates are provided at the end of non-formal education and training[13].

Higher Education Qualifications

The qualifications associated with undergraduate programmes are:

a) vocational associate degree – 2 years (120 ECTS[14]);

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[7] Such as the Ministry of Health, TESK, Turkish Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport, Union of Chambers of Certified Public Accountants And Sworn-In Certified Public Accountants of Turkey, Notaries Union of Turkey etc.

[8] TS EN ISO/IEC 17024 Conformity Assessment – General Requirements for Personnel Certification Bodies

[9] Primary School diploma, Middle School diploma, Primary Education diploma.

[10] High school diploma, Anatolian High School diploma, Science High School diploma, Fine Arts and Sports High School diploma, Social Sciences High School diploma, Anatolian Teacher Training High School diploma.

[11] Vocational High School diploma, Anatolian Vocational High School diploma, Technical High School diploma, Anatolian Technical High School diploma, Vocational High School of Health diploma, Anatolian Vocational High School of Health diploma, Vocational and Technical Education Centre diploma.

[12] Anatolian Imam Hatip Religious High School Diploma.

[13] Semi-skilled worker certificate, skilled worker certificate, skilled instructor certificate, License to start up business, course completion certificate.

[14] Refers to the credit value of the qualification according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for higher education. Course descriptions contain 'learning outcomes' (i.e. what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do) and workload (i.e. the time students typically need to achieve these outcomes). Each learning outcome is expressed in terms of

b) Associate degree – 2 years (120 ECTS);
c) Bachelor degree – 4 years (240 ECTS);
d) Bachelor degree – 5-6 years (300-360 ECTS); Dentistry, Pharmacology, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

The qualifications associated with postgraduate programmes are:

a) Master degree without thesis – 1.5 years (90 ECTS[15]);
b) Master degree with thesis – 2 years (120 ECTS);
c) Doctoral degree – 3-4 years (180-240 ECTS).

2.2.4 Qualifications under the National Vocational Qualifications System

The VQA was established to set principles for both technical and vocational national qualifications based on national occupational standards and international standards; to build and operate national qualifications system required to run activities of supervision, assessment and evaluation, awarding and certification, and to ensure that necessary work is undertaken concerning the national qualifications framework.[16]

The law no 5544 defines national vocational qualifications system as:

> *"set of rules and activities concerning the development and implementation of technical and occupational standards based on which qualifications are developed, and the authorization, supervision, assessment and evaluation, awarding and certification related thereto."*

(Vocational Qualifications Authority Law, Article 2)

Bodies with TS EN ISO/IEC 17024 accreditation, which comply with the required criteria, are assigned by the VQA as "Authorized Awarding Bodies" to undertake assessment, evaluation and certification activities for the national qualifications. Authorized Awarding Bodies assess the individuals who wish to be awarded with a VQA Vocational Qualification Certificate in the relevant qualification and issue certificates for those who become successful.[17]

2.2.5 Qualifications Awarded by Other Bodies

The legislation provides for awarding bodies and institutions other than MoNE, CoHE and VQA for the awarding of qualifications[18].

2.3 The Legal Background and Work Undertaken

The development of TQF has long been on the agenda as a way of restructuring and improving the quality of current education and training system, awarding the qualifications required in the information society and the business world as well as enabling a comparison with the qualifications of other countries. To this end, international developments on this issue have been monitored closely and steps have been taken to develop TQF.

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credits
, with a student workload ranging from 1 500 to 1 800 hours for an academic year, and one credit generally corresponds to 25-30 hours of work.

[15] In limited number of fields, there are a few master's degree programmes without thesis with 60 ECTS.

[16] Vocational Qualifications Authority Law, OG 7/10/2006-26312

[17] http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_yeterlilik_ara&kurulusiceren=1

[18] Specialization in Medicine awarded by the Ministry of Health, skilled worker and semi-skilled worker certificates offered for occupations which are not under law no 3308, semi-skilled and skilled worker certificates provided by chambers affiliated to TESK, Military High School diploma awarded by the Turkish Armed Forces, Police College diploma awarded by the Ministry of Interior, yacht captain certificate given by the Ministry of Transport etc.

In Turkey, the policy context for the development of an NQF may be found among priority objectives in a number of important policy documents including the Tenth Development Plan 2014-2018, National Employment Strategy (2014-2023), the National Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper 2014-2018, the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy Document and Action Plan 2014-2018, the Ninth Development Plan 2007-13, the National Youth Action Plan 2011, 2008 National Programme of Turkey and 2009- 2013 Turkey Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper.

The purpose of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper 2014-2018 is to ensure that the lifelong learning system capable of meeting people's needs and expectations in Turkey initiated under the 2009- 2013 Turkey Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper acquires a more systematic structure in line with national and international approaches in the forthcoming period (2014-2018). 2009-2013 Turkey Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper, on the other hand, indicates that the principles pertaining to qualifications will be clarified once the Turkish Qualifications Framework is collectively built by CoHE, MoNE, VQA and other stakeholders.[19] Priority areas related to the activation of vocational qualifications system indicated in the paper, building of quality assurance system and facilitation of progression among training programmes and from school to work and from work to school, are directly associated with TQF implementation.

The National Employment Strategy (2014-2023) prepared with the aim of resolving structural problems in the labour market, improving the contribution of growth to employment in the medium and long term and offering permanent solutions to the problem of unemployment, was adopted by the Resolution of the Higher Planning Council dated 6/5/2014 and No. 2014/4 and put into effect following its publication in the Official Gazette dated 30/5/2014 and No. 29015. As per Provisional Article 4.1 of the National Employment Strategy (2014-2023), TQF will be prepared under the responsibility of VQA.

NQF development is a part of efforts to harmonise to European Union (EU) acquis and standards on education, training and youth. It is thus an integral part of Turkey's efforts to align itself to the EU.

The Law no 5544 provides the following in respect of VQA roles on TQF;

- *"Works related to the preparation, development and updating of the Turkish Qualifications Framework shall be carried out by the Authority. All quality assured qualifications shall be incorporated into the Turkish Qualifications Framework. Criteria for ensuring the quality assurance of the qualifications shall be determined by the Vocational Qualifications Authority. The consultation, decision making and implementation units such as board, commission and working groups consisting of the Ministry of National Education, the Council of Higher Education, Vocational Qualifications Authority and relevant institutions shall be established for the development and execution of the Turkish Qualifications Framework. Principles and procedures related to the establishment and operation of these units, quality assurance criteria; designation of institutions and bodies responsible for ensuring the quality assurance of qualifications as well as the implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework shall be governed by a regulation to be enforced upon the Cabinet decree."*

(Vocational Qualifications Authority Law, article 23/A)

In line with this mandate given by the relevant law as well as policy documents, in August 2010, the VQA established the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Preparation Commission consisting of representatives of MoNE, CoHE and VQA, tasked with taking the

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[19] http://mesbil.meb.gov.tr/genel/hayat%20boyu%20%C3%B6%C4%9Frenme%20dokuman.pdf

necessary decisions for the establishment of the TQF. TQF planning and development activities were conducted by the TQF Preparation Commission. In October 2010, the Commission established TQF Preparation Working Group to provide assistance and undertake the technical works. In March 2011, it was decided to name the prospective framework as "Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF)".

Feedback Forum (FF) was established in April 2011 to provide information on TQF preparation, and to operate consultation. Annex 1 provides a list of FF member institutions and organisations.

Under the scope of TQF preparation in September 2011, it was decided to prepare TQF Consultation Paper with contributions of international and local experts. The first draft of TQF Consultation Paper was submitted to TQF Preparation Commission in February 2012. TQF Preparation Commission was simultaneously expanded to include high ranking representatives from MoNE and CoHE. TQF Consultation Paper prepared for discussion at the 1st FF Consultation Event was submitted to NQF Preparation Commission in June 2012.

TQF Consultation was kicked off with the 1st Consultation Meeting held on 5 July 2012. TQF Consultation Paper was submitted to the FF members in this meeting for consultation, and members were asked to communicate views of their institutions and organisations to VQA. During the consultation process which lasted to the end of September, 2012; comments and views were communicated by 35 of 77 member institutions of FF and by 10 of 63 non-members of FF. Completed feedback forms were reviewed by the TQF Working Group, and all views and opinions were considered and eligible ones were reflected on TQF Consultation Paper, views on the principles and procedures to be regulated in the secondary legislation were consolidated for consideration during the preparatory work on secondary legislation.

The draft TQF Regulation regulates the principles concerning the inclusion in TQF of qualifications achieved in all education and training programmes including higher education as well as in other types of learning environment; quality assurance of qualifications, designation of bodies and institutions to assure the quality of qualifications; establishment and operation of consultation, decision making and implementation units and determination of duties, tasks and the mandate related to the studies in the scope of the Regulation, was prepared in cooperation with the responsible bodies and submitted to 74 bodies and institutions on 14 June 2013 for formal opinions and recommendations.

The TQF Regulation which is provided by the Article 23/A of the Vocational Qualifications Authority Law no 5544 is directly related to the field of duty of MoNE and CoHE in the scope of Law no 2547 on Higher Education, Principal Law no 1739 on National Education, Vocational Education Law no 3308, Law no 222 on Primary Education and Training, Law no 6287 amending the Law on Primary Education and Training and some other laws and Decree Law no 652 on the Organisation and Duties of MoNE.

As one of the main stakeholders of TQF, MoNE submitted formal opinions to VQA at the beginning of February 2014, and formal consultation process was completed. During the consultation process, totally 42 bodies and institutions submitted opinions and recommendations on the draft TQF Regulation and the TQF Paper. While 24 of 42 bodies/institutions submitted additional opinions and recommendations, 18 of them stated that the current draft was appropriate and did not submit any further opinions. After all the opinions and recommendations submitted by abovementioned 24 bodies were evaluated by the working team established under VQA, they were reviewed by TQF Redaction Committee comprised of those selected among TQF Preparation Commission whose members are

given in Annex 1, and those that were found appropriate were reflected in the draft TQF Regulation and the TQF Paper.

TQF Regulation and the TQF Paper which was approved by VQA Executive Board with the decision dated 02.07.2014 and numbered 2014/46 and submitted to the Prime Ministry by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security on 02.10.2014 in order to be presented to the Cabinet pursuant to the opinion of the Court of Accounts.

General Directorate of Laws and Decisions of the Prime Ministry invited relevant ministries and institutions to a meeting on 12.11.2014 in order to assess the TQF Regulation and submit their formal opinions. At this meeting, although previously agreed, some ministries and institutions raised comments and evaluations that the responsibilities of the institutions, structures anticipated related to the management of TQF and "TQF" term were not included in the Law. As a consequence, the necessity to work on these issues emerged.

In order to settle the dispute regarding the draft TQF Regulation and TQF Paper and to eliminate the relevant gaps in the Law, a request for amendment of the TQF-related articles of the Vocational Qualifications Authority Law No. 5544 was prepared and submitted to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The request for amendment was approved by the Assembly and published under the scope of the "Law Amending the Occupational Health and Safety Law and Certain Statutory Decrees" dated 04.04.2015 and No. 6645. With the abovementioned amendments, Article 23/A of Law No. 5544 has been amended, "NQF" terms in various articles of the Law have been amended to read as "TQF" and a new department called the "Turkish Qualifications Framework Department" has been established at VQA. With these amendments, gaps in VQA Law related to the name of the TQF, management structures of TQF, quality assurance criteria and the determination of institutions that will ensure quality assurance have been eliminated.

With the decision dated 06.05.2015 and No. 2015/24, VQA Executive Board decided to have the draft TQF Regulation and TQF Paper amended according to the amendments in the Law No. 5544 and the sustainment of the studies by VQA. In this context, all TQF-related amendments to Law No. 5544 were reflected in the draft Regulation and the TQF paper approved by the Executive Board on 02.07.2014. The amended draft Regulation and TQF Paper were submitted to the Prime Ministry by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security on 26.06.2015 in order to be presented to the Cabinet.

General Directorate of Laws and Decisions of the Prime Ministry made amendments in the draft Regulation in line with the principles regarding the drafting of laws and the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Concerning the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework was enacted with Cabinet Decree No. 2015/8213 pursuant to its publication in the Official Gazette dated 19.11.2015 and No. 29537. The second paragraph of Provisional Article 1 of the Regulation provides for the enactment of the Turkish Qualifications Framework approved by the Vocational Qualifications Authority Executive Board within a month following the date of issuance of the Regulation. To this end, the Turkish Qualifications Framework paper prepared as a result of works undertaken from 2010 to 2014 and approved by the VQA Executive Board was reviewed and updated under the light of the aforementioned Regulation and finalised with the decision of the VQA Executive Board dated 09.12.2015 and No. 2015/62.

Referencing of the Turkish Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework

One of the most significant steps in TQF development is the referencing of TQF to the EQF

and Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) and proving TQF harmonisation with these frameworks. To this end, it is required to conduct TQF-EQF referencing and certify the alignment of higher education levels within TQF with the FQ-EHEA. It is expected to conduct both referencing and self certification for TQF within a single process.

In June 2013, VQA established the TQF-EQF Referencing Committee involving two international experts as well as the representatives of MoNE, CoHE and VQA, for the surveillance of TQF-EQF referencing process. The main duty of the Referencing Committee is to provide surveillance and steering in preparing the Referencing Report in accordance with the guidelines issued by EQF Advisory Group and to include official information obtained from Turkey on each of 10 criteria to be considered by countries in their referencing reports. The referencing criteria of EQF Advisory Group are presented in Annex 6.

With regard to works for TQF-EQF referencing and self certification of higher education levels' alignment with FQ-EHEA, "EQF National Coordination Point 2014 Project" under the "EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sports" called "Erasmus+ Programme", to which National Coordination Points represented in EQF Advisory Group can apply were carried out by VQA between April and December of 2014. Within the scope of this project, draft Turkish Referencing Report has been prepared under the surveillance and steering of the Referencing Committee involving international experts. It was decided to initiate the national consultation process related to the Turkish Referencing Report draft after the publication of TQF.

As per Provisional Article 1 of the TQF Regulation, referencing of TQF to EQF will be completed within a year following the date of issuance of the Regulation. The alignment of the Turkish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area will be documented under the scope of the referencing process. Upon its approval, the Turkish Referencing Report will be submitted to the EQF Advisory Group established by the European Commission.

2.4 Objectives of Turkish Qualifications Framework

The overall goal of TQF is to provide an integrated structure which describes and classifies all qualifications available in Turkey, allowing for links such as transfer and progression among qualifications to be determined.

Principal objectives of TQF have been set as a result of; meetings that were held with stakeholders, consultation processes, series of reviews that are conducted on the various TQF-related policy and strategy papers, characteristics and requirements that are determined pertaining to the education and training system and labour market and undertaken comprehensive work to review international NQF development experiences:

a) to provide a clear and consistent means of describing, classifying and comparing qualifications

b) to provide one integrated framework including all quality assured qualifications, (achieved in general, vocational and academic education and training programmes and in other learning environments).

c) to continuously improve Turkish qualifications system so that it can provide appropriate recognition of qualifications achieved in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

d) to contribute to the training of individuals who are employable and equipped with defined and measurable qualifications, and thus to the reduction of unemployment.

e) to strengthen institutional cooperation among all parties, which primarily include awarding bodies, the industry and social partners.

f) to provide a benchmark for the recognition in Turkey of foreign qualifications and for the recognition of Turkish qualifications abroad, and serve as an instrument of comparison.

NQF Preparation Commission has evaluated national requirements and priorities that the TQF is expected to meet. Institutions involved in TQF preparation agree that the TQF should be a participatory, improvable and flexible framework acting as the change leader to meet relevant requirements and priorities.

2.5 Principles taken into account in Turkish Qualifications Framework Development

From all of the foregoing analysis of the local and international contexts in which TQF is being developed, a range of principles have been identified to be taken into account in TQF design. TQF has been prepared taking into account the following principles:

a) To classify all quality assured qualifications at national level through the levels defined based on learning outcomes.

b) To ensure the transparency and recognition of qualifications.

c) To facilitate access to the processes for acquiring qualifications.

d) To allow for crediting and combining credits as well as transfers between qualifications.

e) To allow for the design of new qualifications.

f) To ensure that qualifications are prepared based on learning outcomes.

g) To ensure the recognition of prior learning.

h) To support lifelong learning.

i) To strengthen the relationship between education and employment.

j) To ensure the participation and contribution of stakeholders and to execute the effective cooperation among responsible bodies.

k) To ensure alignment with the European Qualifications Framework.

l) To introduce common concepts in order to ensure international comparability of qualifications.

m) To ensure the recognition of quality assured qualifications that have been developed by professional organizations as well as other bodies and institutions.

n) To facilitate the mobility of individuals.

o) To provide a basis for the building of quality assurance systems.

p) To serve for the achievement of key competences.

2.6 Expected Benefits of Turkish Qualifications Framework

TQF is a significant driving force to help Turkey achieve its objectives concerning education and training system improvement and reform as well as international comparability and recognition.

TQF is expected to provide the following benefits to education and training providers, learners, workers and employers:

a) TQF is expected to have an integrated overarching structure to accommodate all quality assured qualifications based on learning outcomes; progress among qualifications, recognition of prior learning and recognition of all individual achievements will be facilitated.

b) Added value for the labour market provided through better qualified workers; more employment for learners and individuals and better access to means of learning; quality references for education and training providers and means of national/international referencing will be ensured.

c) Mobility will be supported through international recognition and transparency of qualifications.

d) TQF will provide solid ground for the development of new qualifications to meet the increasingly diversifying needs of the society.

In this context, TQF implementation, stakeholder participation in TQF, changes and developments introduced by TQF to the education and training system will help the dissemination of lifelong learning, introduction of changes in the lives of individuals through the recognition and certification of learning outcomes, satisfaction of the expectations of the community and industry, and facilitation of transition from industrial society to information society.

3. THE STRUCTURE OF TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Scope of the Turkish Qualifications Framework

Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) has been designed as a single integrated structure allowing for the classification of Turkish qualifications to accommodate all quality assured qualifications achieved at all education and training programmes including primary, secondary and higher education, as well as those achieved through other means of learning. TQF primarily includes qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) mandate, qualifications under the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) mandate, higher education qualifications awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE); in time, it will include other qualifications awarded under the mandate of certain responsible bodies. Many vocational qualifications which are available and will be required in the Turkish labour market will be covered by TQF. The TQF consists of the qualifications systems of MoNE and VQA as well as the Turkish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQFHE).

3.2 The Design of Turkish Qualifications Framework

There are various quite distinct qualifications widely acknowledged and utilised by the education and training and business community in Turkey. In addition to that, VQA supervises the development of national qualifications which are in harmony with the international trends and EQF approach. The aim of incorporating qualifications developed with various approaches into the same framework and providing a single structure has led to many challenges concerning TQF design. These challenges have been taken into account in TQF design so as to achieve TQF objectives.

TQF design provides for a single integrated structure to support lifelong learning, in which all quality assured qualifications will be described and classified, and thus links among qualifications will be determined, and transparent and recognized qualifications will be ensured. TQF offers a reference framework for existing qualifications.

TQF implementation will also allow for the following;
  a) Developing new qualifications,
  b) Recognizing prior learning,
  c) Identifying opportunities for lateral and vertical transfer between qualifications,
  d) Ensuring the international comparability of qualifications.

TQF has been designed to encompass all qualifications described at each level and achieved at consecutive phases of school education as well as those achieved through experience based learning and individual learning that takes place at the work place or other non-formal and informal learning environments. TQF allows for the development of qualifications that will enable the appropriate recognition of learning outcomes to be achieved by individuals with special needs.

TQF structure comprises of levels and level descriptors. Levels are described through level descriptors and supported by qualification types. Qualification types are described through qualification type specifications. The abovementioned elements provide an integrated set of instruments whereby a flexible structure is built for describing all kinds of qualifications and for supporting the development of qualifications suitable for all kinds of learning outcome groups.

Main instruments used in TQF structure are illustrated below and described in the following chapters.

Figure 1

Main Instruments of Turkish Qualifications Framework Structure
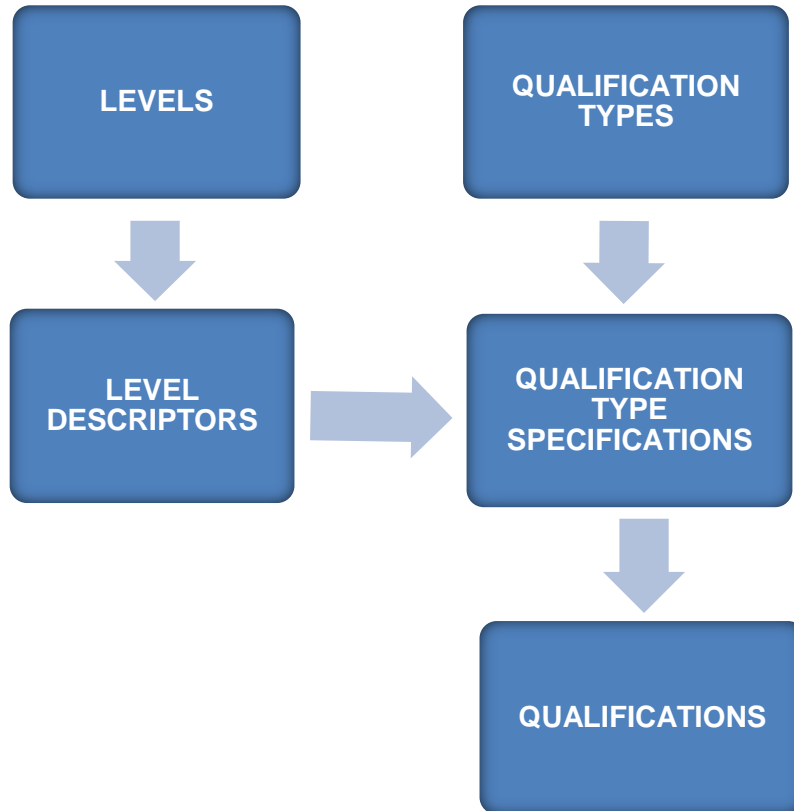
3.2.1 Levels and Level Descriptors

TQF has been designed to consist of eight levels. Each level of TQF has been described based on the common learning outcomes for qualifications at a given level. The set of statements about learning outcomes, defined in terms of knowledge, skill and competence, describing each level is *the level descriptor*. Level descriptors constitute the core of TQF, and they provide the basis for all other structures and instruments within TQF.

Level descriptors are the set of instruments used for describing learning outcomes at a given level, associating the qualifications with the relevant level, and for referencing TQF with international frameworks.

Learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skill and competence; thus, level descriptors are organised based on these three components of learning outcomes. For each of the eight levels, there are descriptors including set of statements for these three components. TQF levels are defined without reference to any particular field of learning. There are common minimum learning outcomes for different qualifications at the same TQF level.

TQF Level 1 qualifications describe qualifications concerning the fulfilment of basic duties, while Level 8 qualifications describe qualifications concerning innovative working and learning, solving emerging complicated problems using methods and approaches under various disciplines. TQF level descriptors are provided below.

Table 1
Turkish Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors

KNOWLEDGE Under the scope of TQF "knowledge" is defined in general as theoretical and/or factual knowledge involving the comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to an area of work or learning. **SKILL** Under the scope of TQF "skill" is defined in general as "utilisation of knowledge" and "problem solving", which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning. **COMPETENCE** Under the scope of TQF "competence" is defined as utilisation of knowledge and skills in an area of work or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination and satisfaction of learning requirements; taking into consideration the social and moral issues and responsibilities.		
LEVEL 1	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have a general knowledge of self and environment
	SKILL	Have basic skills required to carry out simple tasks
	COMPETENCE	Carry out simple tasks under guidance and supervision
LEVEL 2	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have an elementary factual knowledge in a field of work or study
	SKILL	Have basic skills required to use necessary information in order to carry out tasks and to solve potential simple problems
	COMPETENCE	Carry out simple tasks under supervision with limited autonomy Have awareness of own learning needs within the scope of lifelong learning approach
LEVEL 3	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have an elementary theoretical knowledge and moderate factual knowledge in a field of work or study
	SKILL	Have skills required to select and apply data, methods, tools and materials in order to carry out tasks and solve problems
	COMPETENCE	Take responsibility in carrying out tasks Complete tasks in consideration of changing situations Identify and meet own learning needs under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach
LEVEL 4	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have a moderate theoretical and operational knowledge and good factual knowledge in a field of work or study
	SKILL	Have cognitive and practical skills required to perform procedures and generate solutions to problems specific for a field of work or study
	COMPETENCE	Take full responsibility in completing tasks within predictable, but changeable contexts Supervise the ordinary tasks of others, and take limited responsibility in evaluating and improving such tasks Meet own learning needs, and define proactive learning goals under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach Have awareness of the relationship between knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study and social and moral issues and responsibilities

LEVEL 5	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have comprehensive, theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of work or study in aware of the boundaries of that field
	SKILL	Have comprehensive, cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems, whose limits are defined, and concrete problems
	COMPETENCE	Carry out management and supervision tasks in contexts with unpredictable changes Evaluate and improve own and others' performance levels Be in interaction for operations in contexts of work or study including the management of projects Have general awareness of the scope of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of this scope with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Be aware of the relationship between knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study and social and moral issues and responsibilities
LEVEL 6	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have an advanced theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in a field of work or study, including inquiring thinking
	SKILL	Have advanced skills, including the quality of mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study
	COMPETENCE	Make decisions by taking responsibility in unpredictable work or study contexts, and manage complex technical or professional activities or projects in such contexts Take responsibility in managing the professional development of individuals and groups Have experience in the concepts, policies, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Have awareness of social and moral issues in assessing work or study

LEVEL 7	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have advanced specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront in a field of work or study, as the basis for original ideas and/or research Have an inquiring approach for knowledge issues in his/her field and at the interface between different fields related to his/her field
	SKILL	Have advanced problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation activities that are carried out to develop new knowledge and methods in a field of work or study and to integrate knowledge from different fields Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research operations as a team member or partially autonomously
	COMPETENCE	Manage and transform unpredictable and complex work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches Have experience in managing changes within a complex context Take responsibility in contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or evaluating the strategic performance level of teams Show leadership in the concept, policy, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study and the interface between different fields as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Integrate knowledge and make judgements in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities
LEVEL 8	**KNOWLEDGE**	Have the most advanced systematic knowledge and inquiry analysis capacity in the theory, practice, method and techniques of a field of work or study Have the most advanced interface knowledge in different fields of work or study related to a particular field of work or study
	SKILL	Have the most advanced and specialised skills, including synthesis and evaluation, that require the use of knowledge, methods and techniques, required to solve critical problems in the most advanced research and/or innovation within a field of work or study and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research processes autonomously Have problem-solving skills, including the use of methods and approaches from different fields, required to solve new and complex problems in his/her field
	COMPETENCE	Demonstrate competence in the development of new ideas and processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including strong competence, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional consistency and research Show leadership in developing new and original approaches to redefine or extend existing knowledge or professional practice in a field of work or study Develop original policies and practices for the promotion of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study as well as the interface between different fields in unpredictable and complex contexts that require innovation, and for the promotion of this approach through formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Create new knowledge in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities

Annex 3 indicates the evolution of knowledge, skill and competence strands over the levels.

3.2.2 Qualification Types

TQF development has revealed the fact that using only the level structure in the TQF may not be able to provide an effective classification of all qualifications, as required. Thus, it was decided to identify and utilise 'qualification types' in addition to the structure of levels.

Qualification types represent groups of qualifications at the same level of TQF that are similar in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, credit values or general, vocational and academic orientations. Qualification types are not associated with a specific field of learning. Qualification types help to distinguish among qualifications which are at the same level but differ significantly in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, credit values and/or orientations. Examples of qualification types are: *Associate Degree* and *Level 5 Vocational Qualification Certificate*, both at level 5; *Vocational and Technical High School Diploma* and *Skilled Worker Certificate*, both at level 4.

An original title has been attached to each and every qualification type in the TQF qualification type specifications. Existing titles have been considered and attention was paid not to give the same title to several qualification types. Many of these titles are already being used within the education and training system and they are acknowledged by learners and employers (e.g. Vocational and Technical High School Diploma, Master Degree etc.). Moreover, new titles will need to be identified for qualification types that may be required during TQF implementation. Relevant responsible bodies and stakeholders will be consulted to identify the most appropriate titles for any new qualification types.

Table 2 provides a provisional classification and draft levels of qualification types identified for the TQF and widely utilised in the Turkish education, training and qualification systems. Apart from types presented in the table, there are other qualification types in education, training and qualification systems.[20] During implementation process, detailed works will be conducted to identify qualification types, and those that are defined based on learning outcomes and assured in terms of quality will be incorporated into appropriate levels. Qualification types and levels will be finalized in the application of TQF process with cooperation responsible bodies.

As the responsible bodies analyze qualification types, they may find out that some proposed types are not necessary or that there is a need for additional types. Responsible bodies may propose additional types to be included in the TQF provided that they comply with the defined criteria, procedures and requirements.

According to table 2, there is only "Pre-school Participation Certificate" qualification type defined for level 1 at the moment. However, there may be other qualification types for level 1 in the future (e.g. qualifications for individuals with special needs, adult literacy etc.)[21]. Annex 4 provides a graphic illustration of the position of qualification types within TQF levels provisionally.

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[20] Course completion certificate, in-service training certificate etc.

[21] Provided in line with priority 2 and 9 in the 2009-2013 Turkey Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper.

Table 2

Main TQF Qualification Types and Levels[22]

Draft TQF Levels	Qualification Types	Responsible Bodies
1	Pre-School Participation Certificate	MoNE
2	Primary Education Certificate	MoNE
	Level 2 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA
3	Lower Secondary Education Certificate[23]	MoNE
	Semi-Skilled Worker Certificate	MoNE
	Level 3 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA
4	Skilled Worker Certificate	MoNE
	Vocational and Technical High School Diploma	MoNE
	High School Diploma	MoNE
	Level 4 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA
5	Associate Degree (Academic)[24]	CoHE
	Associate Degree (Vocational)[25]	CoHE
	Level 5 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA
6	Bachelor's Degree	CoHE
	Level 6 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA
7	Master Degree (with Thesis)	CoHE
	Master Degree (without Thesis)	CoHE
	Level 7 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA
8	Doctoral Degree (PhD, Proficiency in Arts, Specialty in Medicine)	CoHE
	Level 8 Vocational Qualification Certificate	VQA

"Qualification type specifications" are used to describe qualification types to be included in the TQF. Qualification type specifications define common characteristics of qualifications within a given qualification type. Qualification type specifications will be grounded as minimum requirements for responsible bodies to describe their qualifications based on level descriptors and develop new qualifications. Qualification type specifications include the following information:

a) Qualification Type Title
b) Awarding Body
c) Orientation
d) Level
e) Category
f) Credit Range and Normal Duration of Programme
g) Programme Profile
h) Learning Environment
i) Learning Outcomes
j) Acquired Key Competences

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[22] While the TQF Qualification Types and anticipated levels are provisionally determined, according to Article 20 of TQF Regulation they will be updated by the approval of the TQF Coordination Council upon the proposal of the TQF Council.
[23] Includes primary education degrees granted before 2012.
[24] Associate degree granted following the successful completion of the first two years of a four-year undergraduate programme.
[25] Associate degree granted by Higher Vocational Schools.

k) Methods of Assessment and Evaluation
l) Quality Assurance
m) Entry Requirements
n) Requirements for Obtaining the Qualification
o) Progression Routes
p) Legal Basis for the Qualification

Annex 5 provides a Template of the information required for developing qualification type specifications. Draft qualification type specifications developed by responsible bodies during TQF preparation will be improved and finalised during TQF implementation.

3.2.3 Classification of Qualification Types by Category

TQF design takes into account the fact that there are many qualifications which widely vary in terms of their credit value, learning duration and learning outcomes. While developing their national qualifications frameworks (NQF), many countries did not opt for including qualifications that are as diversified as those in the TQF. Countries that opted for including all qualifications in their NQFs used two different approaches to distinguish between the qualifications and classify them according to their functions:

a) Use of credit systems (credit system based on defining the work load that the individual has to undertake to achieve learning outcomes in a qualification)

b) Use of qualification categories (classification of qualifications according to their functions or purposes).

Countries generally use the credit system in their formal and non-formal education and training programmes. Under the Bologna process European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS) is used for credit formulation for higher education qualifications. Turkey does not have a common method to classify qualifications based on credit values, functions or purposes.

However, since the aim of TQF is to include all quality assured qualifications, there is an emerging need to classify qualification types that vary in terms of credit values, function and purpose. To this end, it was decided to use qualification categories to classify qualification types.

The following qualification categories are specified for the TQF:

a) **Principal qualifications** reflect comprehensive sets of learning outcomes achieved as a result of assessment that takes place at a defined stage in a field of learning or study. They convey a sense of 'completion' of a learning process, training programme or vocational training; such as *Vocational and Technical High School Diploma*, marking the end of vocational and technical secondary education, *"Skilled Worker Certificate"* and *"Vocational Qualification Certificate"* marking the lifelong learning or *"Bachelor's Degree"* in Economics, marking the end of undergraduate education.

b) **Supplemental qualifications** are awarded for learning achievement that is additional to a previous principal qualification. They relate to updating and refreshing of knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development and they can only be achieved on condition that a principal qualification is previously achieved – e.g. *Level 6 Vocational Qualification Certificate* in "Job and Occupational Counselling" achieved in addition to any *Bachelor's Degree* or *Skilled Instructor Certificate* achieved in addition to the *Skilled Worker Certificate*.

c) **Unit qualifications** provide recognition for the achievement of a coherent set of learning outcomes that forms part of the combination of the overall requirement for a Principal qualification. Unit qualifications are usually associated with modular learning programmes – e.g. *Vocational and Technical High School Diploma* for a "Chef" awarded at the end of vocational and technical upper secondary education in food and beverages department kitchen field is a principal qualification. Learning outcomes awarded and certified at the end of such programmes as "Demi-Chef for cold kitchen" and "Demi-Chef for hot kitchen" under the scope of this diploma programme are unit qualifications.

d) **Special purpose qualifications** are awarded for sets of learning outcomes that form a distinct, coherent achievement that may be used alone (license to work, license to start up business etc.). These qualifications involve fewer learning outcomes compared to a principal qualification but they can be used as a license to operate. For example, *Level 3 Vocational Qualification Certificate* for "Roller Operation" in the construction sector or *Level 5 Vocational Qualification Certificate* for "Computer Hardware" in the IT sector.

The figure below illustrates the links among qualification categories in TQF.

Figure 2
Relations among Qualification Categories
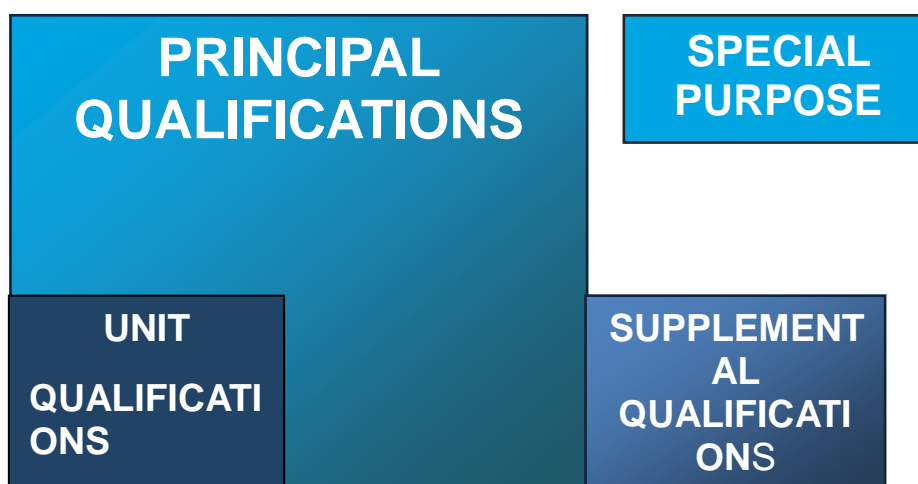
During TQF implementation, responsible bodies will define the categories of qualifications with different purposes and functions in qualification type specifications.

3.2.4 Relation between Levels and Qualification Types

The TQF structure is composed of two main elements. These elements include an 8-level structure and a range of qualification types. The 8-level structure is the basis of the TQF while the level descriptors are the defining elements of the structure. The level descriptors are relatively general, short and concise definitions, being completely context-free.

Qualification types are tools that allow including the significantly different qualifications in the same level. Furthermore, they will provide the necessary ground to develop new qualifications in the future. The level descriptors will be elaborated and enriched in order to develop learning outcomes of the qualification type specifications. Therefore, qualification type specifications are more comprehensive and elaborate than level descriptors.

3.2.5 Key Competences and Turkish Qualifications Framework

Key competences are the defined eight competences that each individual is supposed to achieve within the scope of life-long learning. "Key Competences for Life-Long Learning-European Reference Framework" is annexed to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of Europe of 18 December 2006 on "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning"[26]. This framework identifies eight key competences and describes the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding each qualification.

The key competences are defined in the concerned framework as follows:

1) *Communication in the mother tongue: Ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing); and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts including education and training, workplace, home and leisure.*

2) *Communication in foreign languages: Shares the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue; and is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure) according to one's wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs and/or interests.*

3) *Mathematical competence and key competences in science/technology: Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).*

Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology regarding the explanation of the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

4) *Digital competence: Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technologies (ISTs) for work, daily life and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.*

5) *Learning to learn: 'Learning to learn' is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as*

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[26] "Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning"", 23.08.2008-2006/962/EC http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF

seeking and making use of guidance.

Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

6) *Social and civic competences:* These include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

7) *Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:* Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

8) *Cultural awareness and expression: Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.*

<div align="right">(Recommendation no 2006/962/EC, 2006)</div>

All key competences are interrelated and they focus on critical thinking, creativity, sense of initiative, problem-solving, risk assessment, decision taking and construction management of emotions.

Large-scale achievement of key competences is a priority in the education policies of Turkey. Although some level descriptors are related to one or more key competences, the key competences were not transposed concretely to the level descriptors of TQF as the TQF levels do not refer to a certain education and training program. On the other hand, it is possible to see key competences in the learning outcomes of many qualifications within the TQF albeit not in all. It is essential to include the key competences in the learning outcomes of education and training programs in appropriate ways.

Qualification type specifications of a qualification type in the TQF will include common learning outcomes and key competences to be achieved by an individual. Key competences in the qualification type specifications should be consistent with the qualification type level, purpose, credit range and normal duration of the program. The responsible bodies (MoNE, CoHE etc.) shall be responsible for identifying the key competences; education institutions will be responsible for their achievement while education institutions and awarding bodies shall be responsible for their assessment and certification. The qualification type specifications will cover the information regarding the inclusion of the key competences in the qualifications of the concerned type. In the event of new key competences in the future, the concerned competences shall be transposed to the qualification type specifications following the advice of the responsible bodies

3.2.6 Orientation of the Learning Processes Regarding the Qualifications

Meta-frameworks such as Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and EQF do not make any distinction between qualifications based on "orientation". However, such distinction is made in some NQFs. The education and training system in Turkey has a dual structure including academic and vocational in secondary and higher education. The orientation of the learning processes of the qualifications has been identified by taking account of this structure in the design of the TQF.

Orientation refers to the general, vocational or academic natures of the learning processes of qualifications in the TQF. The orientation of each qualification type will be included in the qualification type specifications.

TQF makes the following distinction:

a) At levels 1 – 4, distinction between "general" and "vocational" orientation,
b) At levels 5 – 8, distinction between "academic" and "vocational" orientation.

3.2.7 Credit Rating of Qualifications

The core function of the TQF is to describe qualifications via the learning outcomes and compare a qualification with another one. One of the systems which can be used in order to compare and classify the qualifications is the workload-based credit system. For that reason, it is important to determine the workload and credit values of the learning outcomes relevant to each qualification type. However, it is extremely difficult to identify an instrument or a method to directly measure the workload required to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualifications, especially the ones acquired through informal learning. Therefore, it is proposed that an evaluation and credit system associated with the workload be used in the TQF. Credit rating of qualifications based on the workload will allow credit accumulation and transfer.

The proposed metric for the qualifications to be included in the TQF is 60 credits as the value ascribed to a learning period of 1500-1800 hours. This approach is compliant with both of the transnational credit systems in use in Europe(ECTS and ECVET).

In the workload-based evaluation and credit system; the workload will be found by calculating the total hours spent by an "average" learner for face-to-face, individual, workplace learning and all other studies in order to achieve a qualification in each qualification type. The credit ranges obtained through the workload calculated will be included in all qualification type specifications.

The credit range of the qualification types and the credit values of the qualifications will be determined by the responsible bodies.

4. TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

The governance and implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) will be regulated by the provisions of the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Concerning the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework.

4.1. Turkish Qualifications Framework Governance

According to Article 23 of the Law No. 5544, the procedures for the preparation, development, updating of the Turkish Qualifications Framework and the determination of criteria for ensuring the quality assurance of the qualifications shall be conducted by VQA. In the scope of this article, establishment and operation of consultation, decision making and implementation units such as board, commission and working groups consisting of MoNE, CoHE, VQA and relevant institutions have been regulated.

The details of the duties and coordination role about development and implementing of the TQF to be fulfilled by the VQA have been elaborated in the TQF Regulation. However, all stakeholders have to internalize the TQF and participate in and provide contributions to the implementation process to a certain degree in order to implement the TQF and realize it as a whole as intended. It is essential to build cooperation between the relevant institutions and bodies in order to have the TQF design accepted, implemented in the education and training system and applied in a sustainable way. The duties and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders including primarily the MoNE and CoHE with respect to the TQF and principles on their relations with the VQA have been set out in detail in the TQF Regulation.

The administrative structures for the implementation and governance of the TQF, the bodies which are responsible for awarding the qualifications and their responsibilities; the roles of bodies which have a responsibility in the implementation of TQF as well as awarding bodies, and their interaction; and the matters related to the management and monitoring mechanisms of the TQF shall be regulated in the TQF Regulation. As per TQF Regulation, TQF Coordination Council, TQF Council, and TQF Consultation Committee will be formed to conduct works for the management and implementation of the TQF.

4.1.1. Turkish Qualifications Framework Coordination Council

The TQF Coordination Council that is the senior decision making body related to TQF shall consist of the MoNE Undersecretary, CoHE President or his authorized deputy and VQA President. TQF Coordination Council shall convene with full participation and take decisions unanimously. The duties of the TQF Coordination Council shall include the following:

a) To assess and approve the decisions of the TQF Council.

b) To ensure that the TQF-related practices are monitored and evaluated.

c) To ensure cooperation among responsible bodies for all matters regarding the implementation of the TQF and quality assurance of qualifications.

d) To ensure the coordination for national and international consultation with regard to the TQF.

e) To take measures in order to ensure the assignment of personnel in the authorities they represent to work for the development and implementation of TQF.

The members of the TQF Coordination Council will be responsible for taking necessary measures for the implementation of the TQF Coordination Council decisions within their

bodies. The implementation of the TQF Coordination Council decisions will be under the overall responsibility of VQA.

4.1.2. Turkish Qualifications Framework Council

TQF Council consisting of twenty-two members as listed below shall be established in order to carry out the technical studies related to TQF and submit them to the TQF Coordination Council:

   a) A total of five members from MoNE, one being the Deputy Undersecretary;

   b) A total of four members from the Council of Higher Education, one being among the Council of Higher Education Executive Board members, one being a dean on duty, two being among the General Council members or faculty members, and one member to be designated by the Higher Education Institutions National Student Council;

   c) A total of three members from VQA, one being the Vice President;

   d) One member from the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey;

   e) One member from the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen;

   f) One member from each of the three confederations of employees' unions which have the highest number of members;

   g) One member, being the representative of education unions, from each of the three confederations of public employees' unions which have the highest number of members.

   h) One member from the confederation of employers' unions that has the highest number of members.

Upon its President's request with agenda, the TQF Council shall meet at least once a month, as often as necessary. Meetings shall be held with at least a simple majority of the total member number, and decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those attending the meeting. In the event of equal votes, decision shall be regarded as made according to that of the President of the TQF Council. With regard to the issues addressed, relevant persons, representatives of bodies and institutions can be invited to attend the meetings without voting rights in cases deemed necessary by the President.

The duties of the TQF Council shall include the following:

   a) To prepare a three-year action plan related to the implementation of the TQF.

   b) To prepare the procedures and principles for the quality assurance of qualifications to be included in the TQF.

   c) To regulate the procedures and principles to be applied during the process of incorporating the qualifications into the TQF.

   d) To prepare the procedures and principles on the examination of the objections to decisions concerning the implementation of TQF.

   e) To prepare the criteria regarding the qualifications to be included in the TQF.

   f) To prepare the procedures and principles for the establishment, implementation and updating of the Qualifications Database.

   g) To prepare the procedures and principles regarding the horizontal and vertical transition among the qualifications to be included in the TQF as well as credit accumulation and transfer.

   h) To prepare the procedures and principles regarding the recognition of prior learning and ensuring quality assurance.

i) To prepare the procedures and principles for the identification of existing qualification types, determining new qualification types, updating and cancellation of qualification types.

j) To prepare the procedures and principles for updating, modification and cancellation of qualifications.

k) To prepare the procedures and principles for publication of qualifications and use of qualifications by education institutions or awarding bodies.

l) To prepare the procedures and principles for updating TQF.

m) To prepare the procedures and principles for the use of TQF logo.

n) To prepare a communication strategy to raise national and international awareness on TQF.

o) To make suggestions to the TQF Coordination Council regarding the qualifications requested to be included in TQF.

p) To ensure that the monitoring and evaluation reports on the implementation of TQF are prepared and to submit them to the TQF Coordination Council.

q) To make suggestions to the TQF Coordination Council regarding the preparation, development and updating of TQF.

r) To publish reports on the functioning of quality assurance systems regarding qualifications.

s) To establish the working groups required for the implementation and improvement of TQF.

t) To submit annual activity reports to the TQF Coordination Council.

u) To generate suggestions and proposals on issues falling within its field of operation and requested to be discussed by the TQF Coordination Council.

4.1.3. Turkish Qualifications Framework Secretariat Services

In order to carry out secretariat services of TQF efficiently and effectively, a separate department called "Department of Turkish Qualifications Framework" at VQA has been established with the amendments to Law No. 5544 in the scope of the Law No. 6645 and dated 04.04.2015. Secretariat services of the TQF Coordination Council, TQF Council and TQF Consultation Committee shall be carried out by the Department of Turkish Qualifications Framework. MoNE, Presidency of CoHE and VQA will designate personnel, the number and qualifications of whom will be determined by the TQF Coordination Council, at VQA in order to perform the tasks of the Department of the Turkish Qualifications Framework which are assigned with legislation.

4.1.4. Turkish Qualifications Framework Consultation Committee

TQF Consultation Committee is a consultation platform with broad participation, where the relevant stakeholders are represented, in order to evaluate the issues regarding the TQF and provide opinions. TQF Consultation Committee representing the stakeholders to be suggested by the TQF Council shall be established by the TQF Coordination Council. Relevant bodies and institutions shall notify the VQA of their representatives to participate in the Consultation Committee. TQF Consultation Committee shall meet at least once a year.

4.1.5. Duties of Responsible Bodies

MoNE, Presidency of CoHE, higher education institutions, VQA and other bodies and institutions whose responsibilities for qualifications are set forth in their legislation are responsible bodies under the scope of TQF. The Ministry of National Education shall be responsible for the education and training qualifications which are under the authority and responsibility of the MoNE, the Council of Higher Education and higher education institutions shall be responsible for the education and training qualifications which are under

the authority and responsibility of higher education institutions and the VQA shall be responsible for the qualifications which are under the scope of Vocational Qualifications Authority Law No. 5544. Qualifications other than those under the responsibility of the abovementioned bodies and institutions shall become the responsibility of the bodies and institutions set out by various laws and international agreements.

The duties of the responsible bodies shall include the following:

a) To work in cooperation with the TQF Council in the processes regarding the implementation of TQF.

b) To assign representatives at the working groups.

c) To implement the regulations and tasks related to the qualifications within their remit in line with the decisions of the TQF Coordination Council.

d) To prepare qualification type specifications in collaboration with the TQF Council, for existing and new qualification types within their remit.

e) To submit proposals on the inclusion of qualifications within their remit into TQF as well as information regarding these qualifications to the TQF Council.

f) To provide training, consultancy and guidance about TQF to personnel involved in the development of qualifications as well as training, education, assessment and evaluation activities with respect to qualifications.

g) To perform activities within the scope of the responsibilities set out in the communication strategy and support to increase the national and international awareness about TQF.

h) To establish, implement, monitor and take necessary measures to improve the quality assurance system for qualifications within their remit.

i) To prepare reports regarding the qualifications within their remit and quality assurance practices.

j) To ensure that the credit accumulation and transfer systems regarding the qualifications within their remit are in compliance with the European credit and transfer systems.

k) To take necessary measures for the implementation and the achievements of the purposes of TQF.

4.2. Inclusion of the Qualifications in the Turkish Qualifications Framework

All quality-assured qualifications that have been acquired through education and training programmes as well as other ways of learning shall be included in the TQF. Criteria for ensuring the quality assurance of qualifications shall be determined by the responsible bodies under the coordination of VQA and published electronically. Quality assurance criteria shall be identified in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area for higher education qualifications, and European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training for vocational qualifications. Accordingly, procedures and principles for the inclusion of qualifications in TQF shall be developed by the TQF Council.

Criteria on the qualifications to be included in TQF will be determined by the TQF Council and published upon the approval of the TQF Coordination Council. Decisions on the inclusion of requested qualifications in the TQF will be taken by the TQF Coordination Council upon the proposal of the TQF Council. Qualifications decided to be included in TQF shall be incorporated into the TQF level determined by the TQF Coordination Council. In order for the qualifications to be included in TQF, they should fulfil the requirements of the

qualification type specification. All qualifications included in TQF shall be recorded in the Qualifications Database by VQA. Furthermore, responsible bodies shall maintain traceable records of the qualifications within their remit.

The quality assured general, vocational and academic qualifications including those of higher education that are under the responsibility of responsible bodies and are provided upon the consent and under the supervision of these responsible bodies are to be included in the TQF within 4 years as from the publication of TQF Regulation. An action plan will be prepared to ensure the quality assurance of other qualifications and it shall be monitored by the TQF Council.

A standardized process is to be developed to include the qualifications into the TQF during the TQF implementation process. Accordingly, all responsible bodies shall have the obligation to identify the learning outcomes related to their qualifications and create the assessment mechanisms to check whether each qualification is in compliance with its qualification type specifications.

The responsible bodies will ensure that the appropriate key competences are included in the qualifications and determine the procedures and principles on the quality assurance systems of the qualifications. The quality assurance procedures and principles that are set are to be submitted to the TQF Coordination Council for approval and included in the database upon the agreement of the TQF Coordination Council. Qualifications which are fully in compliance with the qualification type specifications with regard to their levels, types, and categories are to be included in the TQF. Those qualifications which are not compliant with any of the qualification type specifications will be included at appropriate levels under new qualification types. The administrative arrangements covering the clear and explicit tasks to shape and standardize that process are to be developed by the TQF Council.

The requirements and processes regarding the inclusion into the TQF of qualifications achieved in other countries or awarded by foreign awarding bodies or the determination of their corresponding place in the TQF, will be set by the TQF Council. Referencing and mutual recognition agreements concluded on the basis of the EQF will be taken into account for the recognition of abovementioned qualifications.

4.3. Use of the Qualifications in the Turkish Qualifications Framework

The procedures and principles applying to the publication of the qualifications in the TQF and their use by the training and awarding bodies will be determined by the TQF Coordination Council upon the proposal of the TQF Council and published on the web page of the TQF.

Persons, institutions or bodies which are not authorized or permitted by the responsible bodies shall not perform education, training, testing and awarding activities by referring to the qualifications in the TQF. As per general provisions; administrative, financial and criminal proceedings will be initiated against persons, institutions and bodies found to be carrying out education, training, testing and awarding activities by referring to the qualifications in TQF although they are not authorized by the responsible bodies.

4.4. Updating, Modification and Cancellation of the Qualifications in the Turkish Qualifications Framework

Proposals for the modification of qualifications in the TQF shall be submitted to the TQF Council with the justifications by the responsible bodies and other real or legal persons affected by the qualifications. The proposals shall be examined according to the procedures and principles on the updating, modification and cancellation of the qualifications by the TQF

Council, which will then submit its opinion to the TQF Coordination Council. Such proposals for modification shall be concluded by the TQF Coordination Council based on the opinion of the TQF Council.

The impact of the modification of a qualification in TQF on the holders of the qualification shall be assessed by the responsible body and if needed regulation related to the status of these individuals shall be done. If a certain obligation is imposed on the relevant parties due to the regulation, this shall be notified to all relevant parties minimum six months prior to the commencement of the concerned practice and published electronically.

In the event of the cancellation of a qualification in the TQF by the responsible body, decisions on the status of the certificates awarded according to the cancelled qualification as well as measures on other related issues shall be taken by the responsible body. The valid qualification units of the holders of the qualification excluded from TQF shall be evaluated during the certification to be performed according to the other qualifications that include the concerned units.

4.5. Quality Assurance

Entry into force of the TQF will also require reliable and comprehensive quality assurance regulations in order to support the validity of the qualifications. The precondition for the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF is that the qualifications should satisfy all criteria including primarily the quality assurance criteria.

Inclusion of qualifications in the TQF at a certain level shows that the qualifications have been defined based on a comparable learning outcomes approach. The "Level" approach that is the basis of the TQF depends on the fact that all stakeholders guarantee the reliability of the qualifications. Transparent quality assurance processes will be employed in order to guarantee the validity of all qualifications included in the TQF.

Quality assurance has been one of the most important matters in the development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks, Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF - EHEA) and EQF. As a result of the intense works performed in close cooperation between the EU Member States and relevant stakeholders for many years, various European quality assurance principles and systems have been developed in order to achieve quality assurance goals:

a) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

b) European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System for Higher Education (ECTS)

c) European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

d) Common Quality Assurance Framework

e) European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

f) European Guidelines on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

g) European Inventory Regarding the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning and Open Coordination Management.

All these principles and systems are associated with the life-long learning policy of which the "European Union Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training - 2020 (ET2020)[27]", and the EQF are integral parts. These principles and systems provide a

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[27] "European Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training– 2020 (ET2020)",

multilayered approach which will enable each country to deal with quality assurance properly. As a result of this approach, a quality assurance structure where all decisions, tasks and practices related to the TQF will be subject to internal and external monitoring is being created.

As per Law no 5544, all quality-assured qualifications shall be included in the TQF while criteria for ensuring the quality assurance of the qualifications shall be determined by responsible bodies under the coordination of VQA. The relevant law does not define the quality assurance criteria but sets forth the following explicit provision.

> *"All quality assured qualifications shall be incorporated into the Turkish Qualifications Framework. Criteria for ensuring the quality assurance of the qualifications shall be determined by the Vocational Qualifications Authority. The consultation, decision making and implementation units such as board, commission and working groups consisting of the Ministry of National Education,* the *Council of Higher Education, Vocational Qualifications Authority and relevant institutions shall be established for the development and execution of the Turkish Qualifications Framework. Principles and procedures related to the establishment and operation of these units, quality assurance criteria; designation of institutions and bodies responsible for ensuring the quality assurance of qualifications as well as the implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework shall be governed by a regulation to be enforced upon the Cabinet decree."*

(Vocational Qualifications Authority Law, Article 23/A)

Pertaining to this provision, criteria for ensuring the quality assurance of all qualifications to be included in the TQF should be performed pursuant to the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area[28]* and *the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training[29]*, as well as the national education quality frameworks that accord with the European principles.

Ensuring the quality assurance of the qualifications according to the identified criteria;

a) MoNE shall be responsible for the education and training qualifications which are under the authority and responsibility of the Ministry of National Education,

b) Presidency of the CoHEand higher education institutions shall be responsible for the education and training qualifications which are under the authority and responsibility of the higher education institutions,

c) VQA shall be responsible for the qualifications which are in the scope of Law No. 5544.

d) Bodies and institutions specified in the relevant legislation shall be responsible for other qualifications.

Procedures and principles related to the quality assurance of the qualifications to be included in the TQF will be prepared by the TQF Council and approved by the TQF Coordination Council. The TQF Coordination Council shall monitor the activities for the continuous improvement of all quality assurance processes.

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http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/ef0016_en.htm

[28] European Quality Assurance Standards and Principles in the Higher Education Area, http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20%282%29.pdf, *(29.01.2012)*

[29] European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0001:01:EN:HTML, *(29.01.2012)*

The dynamics and requirements that resulted in the creation of different quality assurance processes in general education, vocational education and higher education have been taken into account in the quality assurance structure created under the TQF. The quality assurance structure that has been identified requires that all responsible bodies fulfil the quality assurance tasks and create the mechanisms necessary to make internal and external evaluation on the quality assurance processes. The concerned structure covers the quality assurance tasks regarding the functioning of TQF's own management mechanism.

An overall TQF policy has been developed regarding the quality assurance to identify the common requirements in line with different approaches in the education and training system. The quality assurance guidelines and applications regarding the qualifications to be included in the TQF will be prepared based on the following main principles:

a) All qualifications in TQF should be quality assured.

b) Quality assurance should include internal and external quality assurance processes; quality assurance criteria; input, process and output regarding the achievement of learning outcomes; and assessment, evaluation and certification activities.

c) Principles and procedures on the recognition and monitoring of external evaluation institutions shall be developed by, according to relevance, the MoNE, Presidency of CoHE, VQA or bodies and institutions set out by their relevant legislation; and they shall be submitted to the TQF Coordination Council.

d) Procedures and principles for the quality assurance of qualifications shall be published in the Official Gazette by VQA upon the approval of TQF Coordination Council. The responsible bodies shall establish and operate the quality assurance system with the following features in compliance with the procedures and principles in question:

1) To identify explicit and measurable objectives and learning outcomes related to the qualifications,
2) To plan the processes for internal and external quality assurance,
3) To contain practical guidelines which will also cover stakeholder involvement,
4) To allocate appropriate resources,
5) To describe internal and external evaluation methods,
6) To develop procedures on feedback mechanisms and improvement,
7) To draft accessible evaluation results.

Within two years following the publication of the principles and procedures regarding the quality assurance of qualifications in the Official Gazette; MoNE, Presidency of CoHE, VQA and other responsible bodies shall be obliged to establish the system for the quality assurance of qualifications within their remit.

4.6. Turkish Qualifications Framework and Mobility of Learners

One of the benefits of the TQF is the development and improvement of the mobility conditions of learners. The TQF will include the policies to encourage the responsible bodies to make the necessary arrangements for the introduction of systems of credit accumulation and transfer, and for the recognition of prior learning. TQF is based on an approach in which learners can achieve a qualification through various ways. According to this approach, it should be possible to achieve and accumulate the learning outcomes of a certain qualification in different learning environments and at different times. The arrangements which will enable the accumulation and evaluation of different learning outcomes will be enabled in the TQF and the tasks of recognizing prior learning and accumulating credits shall be identified.

The procedures and principles on horizontal and vertical transfer between the qualifications in the TQF as well as credit accumulation and transfer will be prepared by the TQF Council. The responsible bodies will be responsible for ensuring that qualification type specifications for the qualifications they award include information on relevant routes of horizontal and vertical transfer, and will ensure that learners are provided with guidance regarding the opportunities for horizontal and vertical transfer between their qualifications in the TQF.

The TQF Council will work with the responsible bodies in order to prepare a plan for the implementation of credit accumulation and transfer systems, and this plan will be implemented. The TQF Council will also cooperate with the responsible bodies in order to ensure that credit accumulation and transfer systems developed for the vocational and higher education qualifications in the TQF are designed in compliance with the relevant European Credit and Transfer Systems.

4.7. Recognition of Prior Learning within the Scope of Life-Long Learning

Processes regarding the recognition of prior learning are complementary to every qualification system that aims to promote the life-long learning approach. Within the scope of lifelong learning, "learning" is considered as a process, which continues, in the formal, non-formal and informal learning environments at every level of education including higher education without limitation to a predetermined learning environment and time.

Processes regarding the recognition of prior learning within the scope of life-long learning aim to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning at all levels of the TQF are described and recognized.

Learners are provided with the following possibilities through the recognition of prior learning:
    a) Access to programmes,
    b) Access to exams,
    c) Exemptions,
    d) Certification of units,
    e) Credit accumulation and transfer,
    f) Recognition of qualifications.

TQF supports processes for the recognition of prior learning. These processes help to clarify the meaning of the qualifications and make it visible which learning outcomes are necessary to achieve qualifications. Based on that, the purpose of the policies supporting the recognition of prior learning is to prepare an environment in which all qualifications in the TQF have facilities enabling the recognition of prior learning.

The procedures and principles on the recognition of prior learning and quality assurance shall be prepared by the TQF Council and approved by the TQF Coordination Council. These procedures and principles shall cover the achievement of a qualification, right to enter a test or education program which would lead to the achievement of a qualification or exemption from credits or some program requisites for a qualification. Following the publication of the procedures and principles in question, responsible bodies shall be responsible for publishing the procedures on how these will be applied to the qualifications within their remit.

4.8. Qualifications Database

With the qualifications being included in the framework, the Department of Turkish Qualifications Framework will create and regularly update the Qualifications Database where all the qualifications agreed to be included in the TQF are officially recorded and where

information regarding the qualifications is stored.

Procedures and principles for the development, management, updating and use of the Qualifications Database shall be determined by the approval of the TQF Coordination Council upon the proposal of the TQF Council. The responsible bodies shall be responsible for the accuracy of the information they provided for inclusion in the database.

4.9. Covering the TQF-Related Expenses

All expenses arising from activities regarding the preparation, updating, promotion and dissemination of the TQF shall be covered from the VQA budget. The service procurement, stationary, printing, distribution, catering and meeting expenses of the TQF Coordination Council, TQF Council, TQF Consultation Committee, and working groups shall be covered by VQA as per Article 27 of Law no 5544. In the event that the TQF Coordination Council and TQF Council members attend meetings related to their duties identified in TQF Regulation outside their place of official duty, per diem allowance to be paid to them shall be covered by the responsible bodies as per Travel Expense Law dated 10/ 2/1954 and No. 6245.

5. UPDATING OF TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

Any updates deemed necessary in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF), TQF shall come into force through publication in the Official Gazette by the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) upon the proposal of the TQF Council and the approval of the TQF Coordination Council. Upon the proposal of the TQF Council, the TQF Coordination Council is entitled to update TQF levels, level descriptors, qualification types, qualification type specifications, qualification categories, Qualifications Database and all TQF-related procedures and principles.

TQF has been developed in line with the significant changes in the different parts of the education and training system. There must be effective collaboration among responsible bodies to ensure consistency and successful implementation of TQF.

Current policies and criteria aiming at a functional TQF will be further improved to achieve progress. To this end, a TQF Action Plan will be prepared to explain the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF as well as the development and implementation of procedures for the quality assurance of qualifications included in the framework. Structures will be introduced to support governance systems for TQF implementation and effective maintenance.

One of the most significant steps in TQF development process is to relate TQF with European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and to demonstrate its alignment with these frameworks.

National consultation process has been initiated for the draft Turkish Referencing Report prepared under the supervision and guidance of the Referencing Committee involving international experts.

As per paragraph three of Provisional Article 1 of the TQF Regulation, TQF must be referenced to EQF within a year following the date of issuance of the Regulation. Upon its approval, the Turkish Referencing Report will be published and submitted to the EQF Advisory Group established by the European Commission and involving authorized country representatives.

TQF implementation and TQF-EQF referencing processes will be supported by projects financed through EU financial aid and sources of co-financing, and implemented by VQA.

Steps to be followed in TQF implementation are provided in the table below.

Table 3

Table 3
Turkish Qualifications Framework Implementation Timetable

Steps of TQF Implementation	Estimated Date of Realization
Establishment of TQF Management System • Establishment of TQF Coordination Council and TQF Council	December 2015
Preparation of 3-Year Action Plan for TQF • Preparation of 3-year TQF Action Plan by the TQF Council	June 2016
TQF-EQF Referencing Process • Evaluation of the draft Turkish Referencing Report through workshops and consultation meetings with the participation of stakeholders • Finalisation of the Turkish Referencing Report • Publication of the Turkish Referencing Report and its submission to the EQF Advisory Group	December 2016
Preparation of Procedures, Principles and Criteria Related to TQF • Procedures and principles for the quality assurance of qualifications to be included in TQF, • Procedures and principles to be applied during the process of incorporating the qualifications into the framework, • Procedures and principles on the examination of the objections to decisions concerning the implementation of TQF, • Criteria for the qualifications to be included in the framework, • Procedures and principles for the establishment, management and updating of the Qualifications Database, • Procedures and principles for the means of horizontal and vertical transfer between qualifications to be included in the framework, and credit accumulation and transfer, • Procedures and principles for the recognition of prior learning and ensuring quality assurance, • Procedures and principles for the identification of existing qualification types, determining new qualification types, updating and cancellation of qualification types, • Procedures and principles for updating, modification and cancellation of qualifications, • Procedures and principles for publication of qualifications and use of qualifications by education institutions or awarding bodies, • Procedures and principles for updating TQF, • Procedures and principles for the use of TQF logo, • Communication strategy to raise national and international awareness on TQF	June 2018
Placement of Qualifications to Respective TQF Levels • Incorporation into TQF of the quality assured general, vocational and academic qualifications including those of higher education, that are under the responsibility of responsible bodies and are provided upon the consent and under the supervision of these responsible bodies	December 2019

6. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Members of Turkish Qualifications Framework Feedback Forum

Annex 2: Definitions

Annex 3: Table of Level Descriptors Indicating the Progression Among Levels

Annex 4: Turkish Qualifications Framework Qualification Types, Provisional Levels and Responsible Bodies

Annex 5: Qualification Type Specifications Template

Annex 6: Criteria and Procedures for Referencing the National Qualification Levels with EQF

Annex 1: Members of Turkish Qualifications Framework Feedback Forum

	Represented Bodies and Institutions
1	Prime Ministry
2	Ministry of National Education
3	Ministry of National Defence
4	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
5	Ministry of Finance
6	Ministry of Environment and Urbanization
7	Ministry of Health
8	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
9	Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology
10	Ministry of Justice
11	Ministry of Internal Affairs
12	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
13	Ministry of Transportation, Maritime Affairs and Communications
14	Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
15	Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs
16	Ministry of the Culture and Tourism
17	Prime Ministry Undersecretariat of Treasury
18	Ministry of Customs and Trade
19	Ministry of Economy
20	Ministry of Development
21	Ministry of Family and Social Policies
22	Council of Higher Education
23	Ministry of European Union
24	Centre of EU Education and Youth Programmes
25	Turkish Employment Agency
26	Turkish Standards Institution
27	Turkish Statistics Authority
28	Turkish Accreditation Authority
29	Sciences Academy of Turkey
30	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
31	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
32	Turkish Radio and Television Institution
33	Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency
34	Information Technology and Communication Agency
35	Energy Market Regulatory Authority
36	State Personnel Presidency
37	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization
38	Intercollegiate Council
39	Capital Markets Board
40	Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
41	Confederation of Turkish Craftsmen and Artisans
42	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
43	Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions
44	Hak-İş Confederation of Trade Unions
45	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey

46	The Confederation of Industry and Businessmen of Turkey
47	Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation
48	Union of Educators' Association (Eğitim-Bir-Sen)
49	Turkish Union of Public Employees in Education, Teaching and Science Professions (Türk Eğitim Sen)
50	Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen)
51	Turkish Union of Chambers of Engineers and Architects
52	Turkish Union of Chambers of Certified Public Accountants and Sworn-in Certified Public Accountants
53	Union of Turkish Bar Associations
54	Turkish Union of Banks
55	Turkish Medical Association
56	Turkish Union of Dentists
57	Turkish Union of Veterinarians
58	Turkish Pharmacists' Association
59	Turkish Union of Public Notaries
60	The Association of Capital Market Intermediary Institutions of Turkey
61	The Association of Insurance and Reinsurance Companies
62	The Union of Turkish Chambers Of Agriculture
63	The Association of Turkish Travel Agencies
64	Turkish Exporters' Assembly
65	Turkish Union of Nurses
66	Turkish Union of Midwives
67	Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
68	Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
69	Association of Anatolian Businessmen
70	The Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Turkey
71	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs
72	Turkish Union of Social Sciences
73	Turkish Quality Association
74	Turkish Journalists' Association
75	Turkish Education Foundation
76	Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey
77	The Higher Education Institutions National Student Council

Annex 2: Definitions

The terms and concepts that have been used in the Turkish Qualification Framework are defined below.

Awarding Body: A body authorised by a responsible body to conduct the relevant tasks for assessing an individual's learning outcomes and, if the individual is successful, certifying the requested qualification.

Competence: Defined as utilisation of knowledge and skills in an area of work or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination and satisfaction of learning needs; taking into consideration the social and moral issues and responsibilities.

Credit: The numeric description of the learner workload based on learning outcomes.

Diploma: Official document describing the degree which is prepared by the responsible body for those who graduate from education and training programmes including higher education with respect to the school and programme type.

Education Institution: Secondary education and higher education institutions awarding diplomas in the fields of general, vocational and technical education as well as all types and degrees of formal and non-formal education and training institutions offering certification programs.

Formal (Structured) Education: Defined and sequential education delivered in schools including education at pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools and universities as defined within the national education system designed from a learner's perspective with structured learning objectives, learning time and learning support.

Informal (Non-Structured) Learning: All kind of learning based on experience that cannot be acquired in formal and non-formal education institutions ranging from learning obtained without any purpose or intention to conscious and intentional learning.

Key Competences: Basic competences required by the information society that all the individuals should possess and that support the personal development, the social participation in society as efficient and responsible individuals and the employability in the scope of lifelong learning.

Knowledge: Defined as theoretical and/or factual knowledge involving the comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a working or learning area.

Learner: An individual who continues to develop his/her knowledge, skills and competences on his/her own or accompanied by a trainer, within the scope of formal and non-formal education, on the job or in informal learning contexts.

Learning Outcome: Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual after the completion of any learning process.

Level: Each of the eight levels defining knowledge, skills and competences in the TQF.

Level Descriptors: Knowledge, skills and competences required by the levels in the Turkish Qualifications Framework.

Lifelong Learning: This covers all the activities to certify the outcomes that are obtained through and as a result of formal, non-formal and informal learning events voluntarily or consciously participated by an individual throughout his/her life for personal and/or vocational reasons in order to decrease social exclusion and increase active citizenship by improving knowledge, skills and competences as well as increasing personal development, competitiveness and employability.

National Occupational Standard: The minimum norms for the required knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes as have been adopted by the VQA for the successful practice of a vocation.

National Qualifications System: All the activities in a country related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that links education and training to the internal market and civil society.

Non-formal (Semi-Structured) Education: Education that actually functions to fill the gaps in the system of formal education and supports the development of personal skills, that is structured in terms of its objective, timing and support, is designed according to the learner, can take place either within or outside educational institutions and can target every age group, results with obtaining a certificate, is qualified as an organized and continuous learning event, can be obtained at school or outside school and that does not take place within defined and sequential education.

Orientation: Description of general, vocational or academic features of learning processes relevant to qualifications.

Programme: Certification-based education and training unit developed the scope of lifelong learning in education institutions or institutions where education-training and scientific research and practice is done; which is comprised of similar branches of science or art, and constitutes a whole and contemplates each other in terms of aim, scope and quality.

Qualification: An official document obtained when a responsiblebody, at the end of a process of assessment and validation, recognizes that an individual has accomplished the learning outcomes according to certain criteria.

Qualification Type: Qualification groups in which qualifications at the same level of TQF that are similar in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, value and/or orientations are classified.

Qualification Type Specifications: Documents that describe the common features specific to qualifications under each qualification type.,**Quality Assurance:** Activities related to planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting and quality improvement that ensures qualifications to meet defined quality standards and criteria.

Recognition of Prior Learning: The process of evaluating the credits and learning outcomes acquired previously by an individual through formal education, non-formal and informal learning in order to achieve a qualification or to be exempt from a part of an education programme.

Responsible Body: The institutions that are responsible for the legal arrangements, tasks and coordination related to the identification, definition and presentation of the qualifications in the education and training system.

Skill: Defined in general as "utilisation of knowledge", "problem solving" and "transferring knowledge and skills to others" which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive, and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning.

Turkish Qualifications Framework: The national qualifications framework, which has been designed in line with the European Qualifications Framework and indicates all qualification principles acquired through general, academic and vocational education and training programs including primary, secondary and higher education as well as other ways of learning.

Workload: Time spent for all education activities required for the achievement of learning outcomes.

Annex 3: Level Descriptors Table Indicating the Progression among Levels

	Knowledge	**Skill**	**Competence**
Level 1	Have a general knowledge of self and environment	Have basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Carry out simple tasks under guidance and supervision
Level 2	Have an elementary factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have basic skills required to use necessary information in order to carry out tasks and to solve potential simple problems	Carry out simple tasks under supervision with limited autonomy Have awareness of own learning needs within the scope of lifelong learning approach
Level 3	Have an elementary theoretical knowledge and moderate factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have skills required to select and apply data, methods, tools and materials in order to carry out tasks and solve problems	Take responsibility in carrying out tasks Complete tasks in consideration of changing situations Identify and meet own learning needs under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach
Level 4	Have a moderate theoretical and operational knowledge and good factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have cognitive and practical skills required to perform procedures and generate solutions to problems specific for a field of work or study	Take full responsibility in completing tasks within predictable, but changeable contexts Supervise the ordinary tasks of others, and take limited responsibility in evaluating and improving such tasks Meet own learning needs, and define proactive learning goals under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach Have awareness of the relationship between knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study and social and moral issues and responsibilities

	Knowledge	Skill	Competence
Level 5	Have comprehensive, theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of work or study in aware of the boundaries of that field	Have comprehensive, cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems, whose limits are defined, and concrete problems	Carry out management and supervision tasks in contexts with unpredictable changes Evaluate and improve own and others' performance level Be in interaction for operations in contexts of work or study including the management of projects Have general awareness of the scope of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of this scope with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Be aware of the relationship between knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study and social and moral issues and responsibilities
Level 6	Have an advanced theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in a field of work or study, including inquiring thinking	Have advanced skills, including the quality of mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Make decisions by taking responsibility in unpredictable work or study contexts, and manage complex technical or professional activities or projects Take responsibility in managing the professional development of individuals and groups Have experience in the concepts, policies, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Have awareness of social and moral issues in assessing work or study

	Knowledge	**Skill**	**Competence**
Level 7	Have advanced specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront in a field of work or study, as the basis for original ideas and/or research Have an inquiring approach for knowledge issues in his/her field and at the interface between different fields related to his/her field	Have advanced problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation activities that are carried out to develop new knowledge and methods in a field of work or study and to integrate knowledge from different fields Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research operations as a team member or partially autonomously	Manage and transform unpredictable and complex work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches Have experience in managing changes within a complex context Take responsibility in contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or evaluating the strategic performance level of teams Show leadership in the concept, policy, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study and the interface between different fields as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Integrate knowledge and make judgements in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities
Level 8	Have the most advanced systematic knowledge and inquiry analysis capacity in the theory, practice, method and techniques of a field of work or study Have the most advanced interface knowledge in different fields of work or study related to a particular field of work or study	Have the most advanced and specialised skills, including synthesis and evaluation, that require the use of knowledge, methods and techniques, required to solve critical problems in the most advanced research and/or innovation within a field of work or study and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research processes autonomously Have problem-solving skills, including the use of methods and approaches from different fields, required to solve new and complex problems in his/her field	Demonstrate competence in the development of new ideas and processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including strong competence, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional consistency and research Show leadership in developing new and original approaches to redefine or extend existing knowledge or professional practice in a field of work or study Develop original policies and practices for the promotion of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study as well as the interface between different fields in unpredictable and complex contexts that require innovation, and for the promotion of this approach through formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Create new knowledge in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities

Annex 4: Turkish Qualifications Framework Qualification Types, Provisional Levels and Responsible Bodies[30]

8	Higher Education Institutions	**Doctoral Diploma (PhD, Proficiency in Arts and Specialty in Medicine)**			Vocational Qualifications Authority	**Level 8 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
7		**Master Degree (with Thesis)** **Master Degree (without Thesis)**				**Level 7 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
6		**Bachelor's Degree**				**Level 6 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
5		**Associate Degree (Academic)** **Associate Degree (Vocational)**				**Level 5 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
4	Ministry of National Education	**High School Diploma**	**Vocational and Technical High School Diploma**	**Skilled Worker Certificate**		**Level 4 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
3				**Semi-Skilled Worker Certificate[31]**		**Level 3 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
		Lower Secondary Education Certificate				
2		**Primary Education Certificate**				**Level 2 Vocational Qualification Certificate**
1		**Pre-School Participation Certificate**				

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[30] TQF Qualification Types and anticipated levels are determined on temporary basis and will be updated by the approval of the TQF Coordination Council upon the proposal of the TQF Council as per Article 20 of the TQF Regulation.
[31] To obtain the Semi-Skilled Worker Certificate, Lower Secondary Education Certificate is a precondition.

Annex 5: Qualification Type Specification Table

Qualification Type Title					
Awarding Body					
Orientation	**General:**		**Academic**		**Vocational:**
Level	**TQF:**	**EQF:**		**ISCO:**	**ISCED (2013):**
Category	**Principal:**	**Supplemental:**		**Unit:**	**Special Purpose:**
Credit Range and Normal Duration of Programme					
Programme Profile					
Learning Environment					
Learning Outcomes					
Key Competences					
Assessment and Evaluation Methods					
Quality Assurance					
Entry Requirements					
Requirements for Obtaining the Qualification					
Progression Paths					
Legal Basis for the Qualification					

Annex 6: Criteria and Procedures for Referencing the National Qualification Levels to EQF

The aim of these criteria and procedures is to ensure that as approved by the relevant authorized bodies, the referencing process is appropriate, transparent, comparable and reliable.

1) The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities.

2) There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

3) The national qualifications framework or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.

4) The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.

5) The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer (s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the Recommendation).

6) The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.

7) The referencing process shall involve international experts.

8) The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.

9) The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.

10) Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate EQF level.