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GLOBAL INVENTORY ON NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (NQFs)

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WHAT ARE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS?

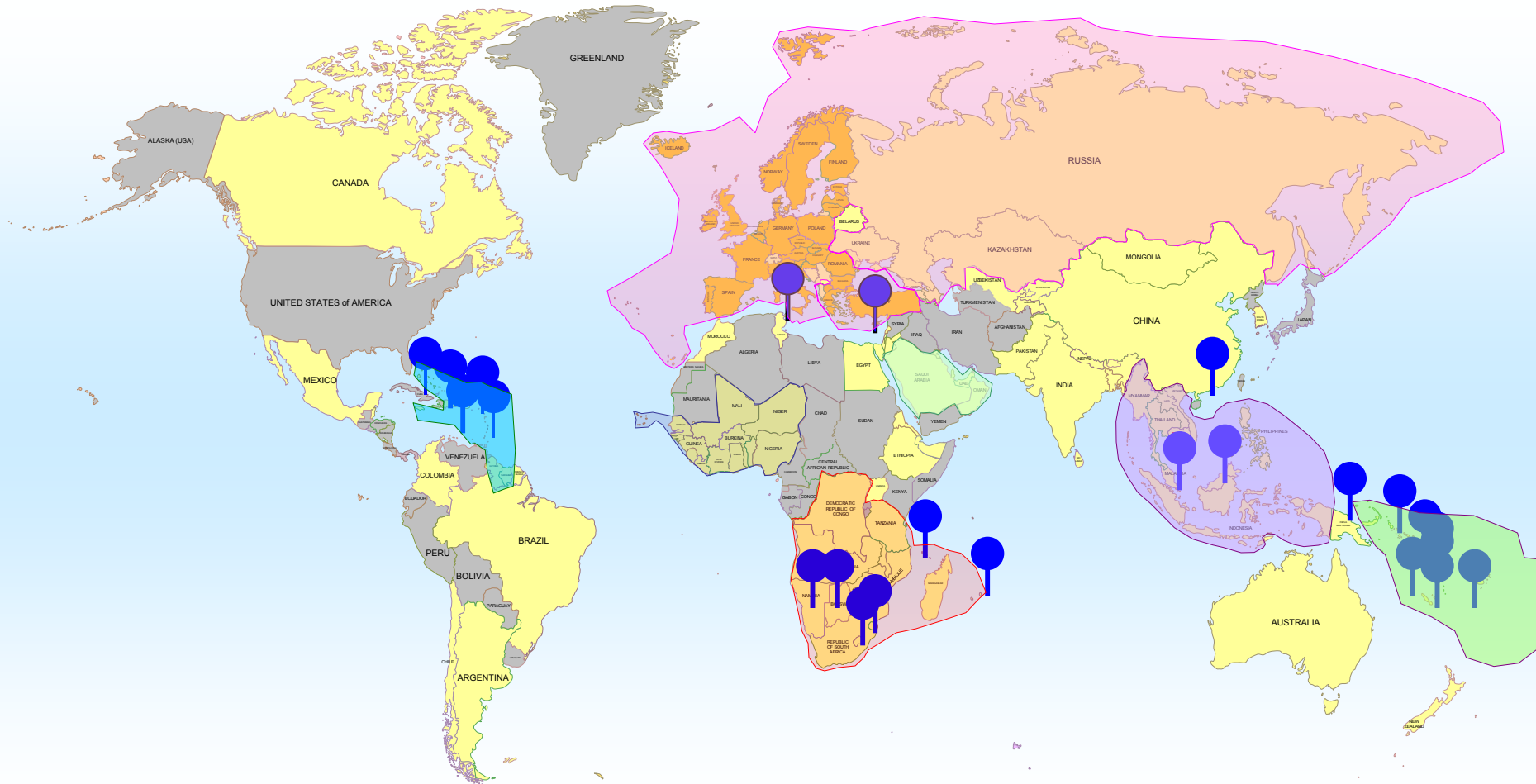
- Classification systems of qualifications
- More coherence in qualifications systems
- Based on levels and learning outcomes
- Changing the understanding of qualifications

TOOLS USED FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES

- Supporting better communication of existing qualifications
- Reforming qualification systems
- Developing systems

CAPTURING A GLOBAL TREND

- Cooperation between four partners building on on-going initiatives
 - *CEDEFOP, THESSALONIKI/BRUSSELS*
 - *EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION, TORINO*
 - *UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, HAMBURG*
 - *UNESCO –TVET UNIT, PARIS*
- Thematic and country chapters
- QFs fast growing phenomenon - descriptive & analytical report- but no impact assessment
- Contexts vary greatly – no QFs are identical



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS 2013

Regional, Transnational & National Qualifications Frameworks involving 143 countries



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QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS IN EUROPE

Trends and challenges



EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (EQF)

to help compare qualifications levels throughout Europe

- A translation grid for qualifications across countries

http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/compare_en.htm



- 8-level meta framework, covers all levels of qualifications
- Focus on knowledge, skills and competence – learning outcomes
- Voluntary process and tool
- **It does not** provide automatic European wide-recognition, it is **not** about European standards, it is **not** about a common European education and training system



REFERENCING QUALIFICATION LEVELS TO THE EQF

- more than **just a technical process**
10 commonly agreed criteria
- understanding own national qualifications landscape
- explaining allocation process at national and EU-level
- quality assurance
- involvement of stakeholders

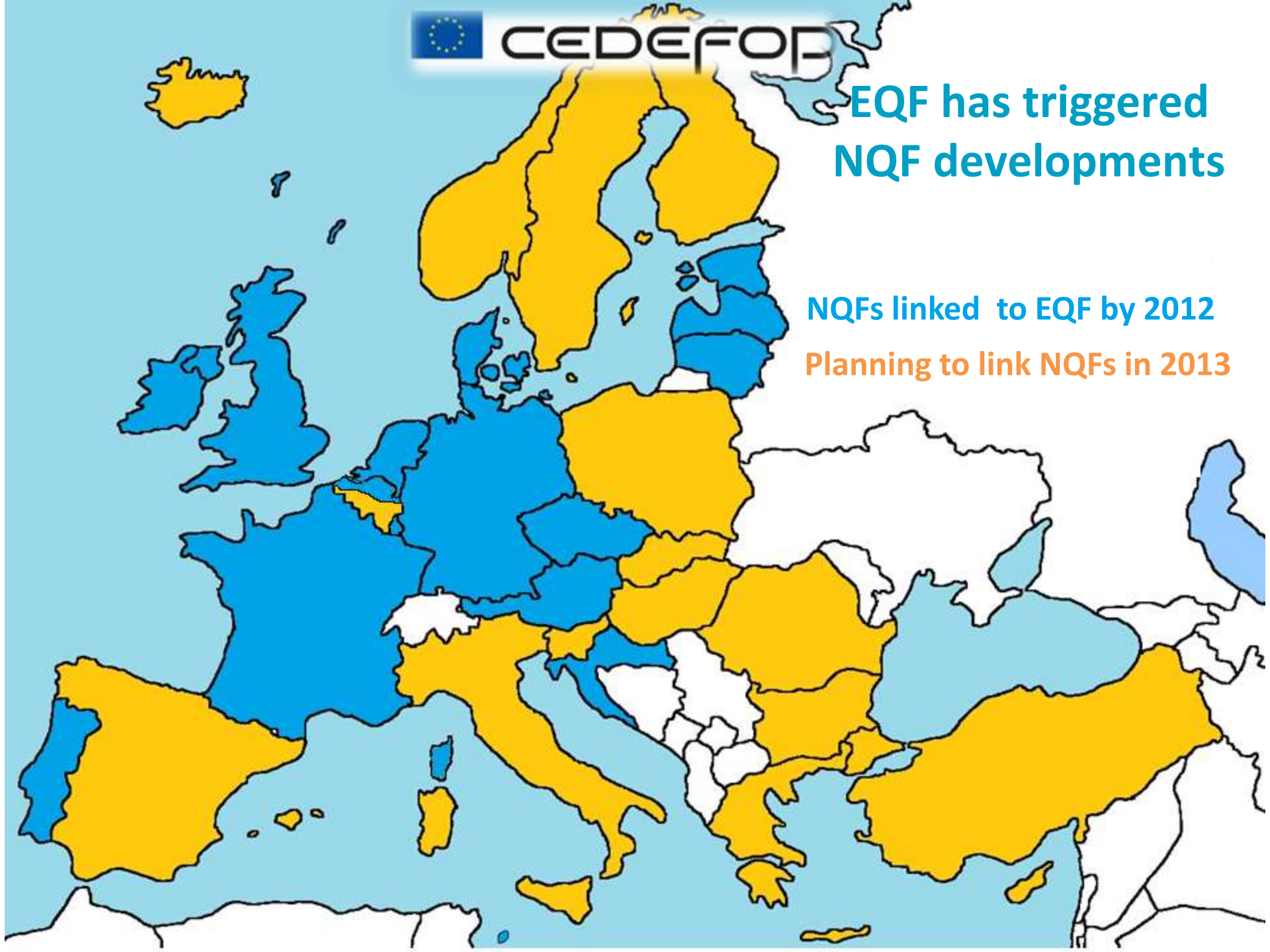
⇒ **creating trust and dialogue**



EQF has triggered NQF developments

NQFs linked to EQF by 2012

Planning to link NQFs in 2013





Denmark

NCP: Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation

- Referencing Report (Sep 2011)
- NQF/NQS

SEE MORE



SELECT ANOTHER COUNTRY



EQF Levels



Ireland

NCP: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

- Referencing Report (Jun 2009)
- NQF/NQS

SEE MORE



SELECT ANOTHER COUNTRY



Danish NQF level 8

- PhD degree

EQF Level 8

NFQ level 10

- Doctoral Degree

Danish NQF level 7

- Master's degree (Candidatus)
- Master degree (within adult higher education)

EQF Level 7

NFQ level 9

- Masters Degree
- Post-graduate Diploma

Danish NQF level 6

- Professional Bachelor Degree in Nursing (nurse)
- Bachelor degree in fine arts
- Maritime bachelor: Bachelor in mechanical engineering/operations
- Diploma Degree in Management
- Bachelor degree

EQF Level 6

NFQ level 8

- Honours Bachelor Degree
- Higher Diploma

NFQ level 7

- Ordinary Bachelor Degree

Danish NQF level 5

- Agricultural economist certificate
- Academy Profession Degree in Chemical and Biotechnical Science (AP in Chemical and Biotechnical Science)
- Ship's master
- Academy Profession Degree in Financial Management – Further Education for Adults (VVU)

EQF Level 5

NFQ level 6

- Advanced Certificate
- Higher Certificate



NQFs IN EUROPE: COMMON OBJECTIVES – DIFFERENT AMBITIONS

- make qualifications easier to understand;
make similarities and differences between qualifications better visible within and across countries
⇒ **NQFs: a communication tool**
- some countries go a step further:
make qualifications/standards/curricula more relevant
going beyond formal education and training
validate non-formal and informal learning
⇒ **NQFs: a tool to support reform**





COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF NQFs IN EUROPE

- **frameworks for lifelong learning:**
all levels and types of qualifications
- **'loose' frameworks:** common principles but respecting diversity
- **convergence in structure:** most have 8 levels
- **NQF level descriptors:**
reflect EQF and national contexts and objectives
- **bridging role:** cooperation and dialogue of actors across vocational, higher and general education
⇒ social partner involvement



Political support



FOCUS ON LEARNING OUTCOMES – AT THE CORE OF EUROPEAN NQFs

- **broad concept**, not narrow tasks
 - shaped by national context
 - put into broader context of education and training inputs
 - most advanced in vocational education and training
- ⇒ **work in progress towards a 'common language'**
to understand and compare qualifications



EMPHASIS ON LEARNING OUTCOMES BEYOND NQFs

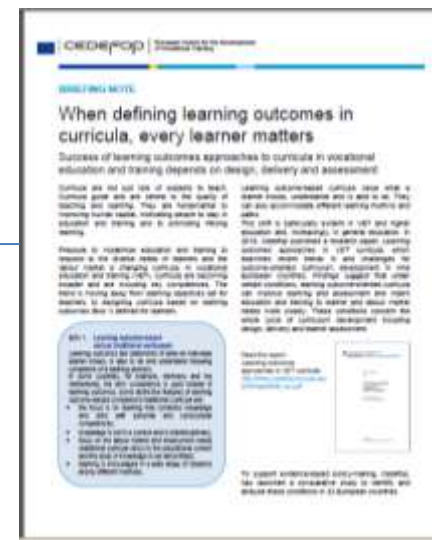
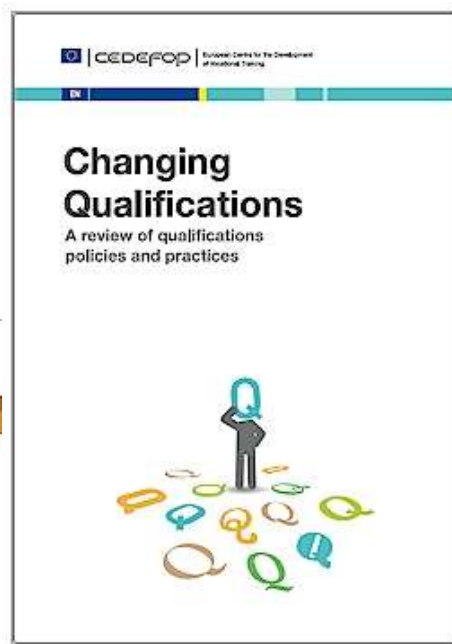
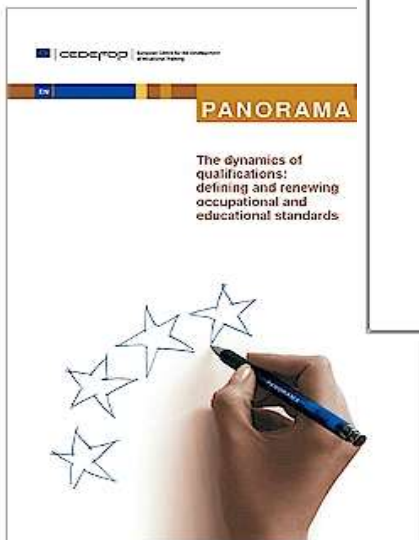
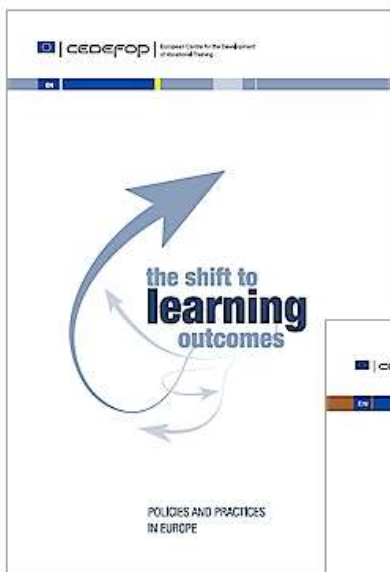
Cedefop's evidence:

- **Revising qualifications, standards and curricula**
- **Introducing policies on validation of non-formal and informal learning**
- **Discussing parity of esteem between general and vocational qualifications**

But: Less evidence of the impact on assessment



COMPARATIVE STUDIES TO EXAMINE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS ON LO APPROACHES IN VET





CHALLENGES IN NQF AND EQF IMPLEMENTATION

- **integrating 2** European qualifications framework processes: higher education (Bologna) and EQF
- linking (secondary) general education qualifications to the NQF
- **integrating qualifications acquired outside formal education and training**
- using NQFs to support recognition of qualifications
- making NQFs/EQF visible to labour market actors and citizens





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RECOGNISING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING



NQFs SUPPORT RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

- **Gaining qualifications is not bound by a place of learning;**
- **incorporating outcomes from non-formal learning and skills ;**
- **Opening up to a broader group of users;**
- **promoting progression within the NQFs on the basis of competences and learning outcomes;**
- **Ensuring parity of esteem through transparent quality assurance processes**

COUNTRIES CALIBRATING RECOGNITION WITH BROADER NQF POLICY OBJECTIVES ...

- **support learner and worker mobility** (Viet Nam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos);
- **Certification of skills in the informal sector** (Bangladesh, India);
- **award educational credit at post-secondary level for occupational education and training based on demonstrated competences** (Republic of Korea, Malaysia).

NATIONAL REFERENCE POINTS FOR RECOGNISING NON-FORMAL LEARNING AND SKILLS

Comprehensive frameworks	NQFs in TVET sector	Labour Competency frameworks	NQFs in Higher Education	No national frameworks as of yet	Equivalency frameworks in basic education
Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Mauritius, Seychelles; Malaysia; Philippines Rwanda Hong Kong SAR, India, Maldives, Republic of Korea (proposed), United Republic of Tanzania, Mexico.	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, and Gambia.	Mexico, Chile, Hong Kong SAR, India, Viet Nam, Republic of Korea, Malaysia	Malaysia, Rwanda, Canada Philippines	USA, Japan,	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Ghana, Gambia, Mexico

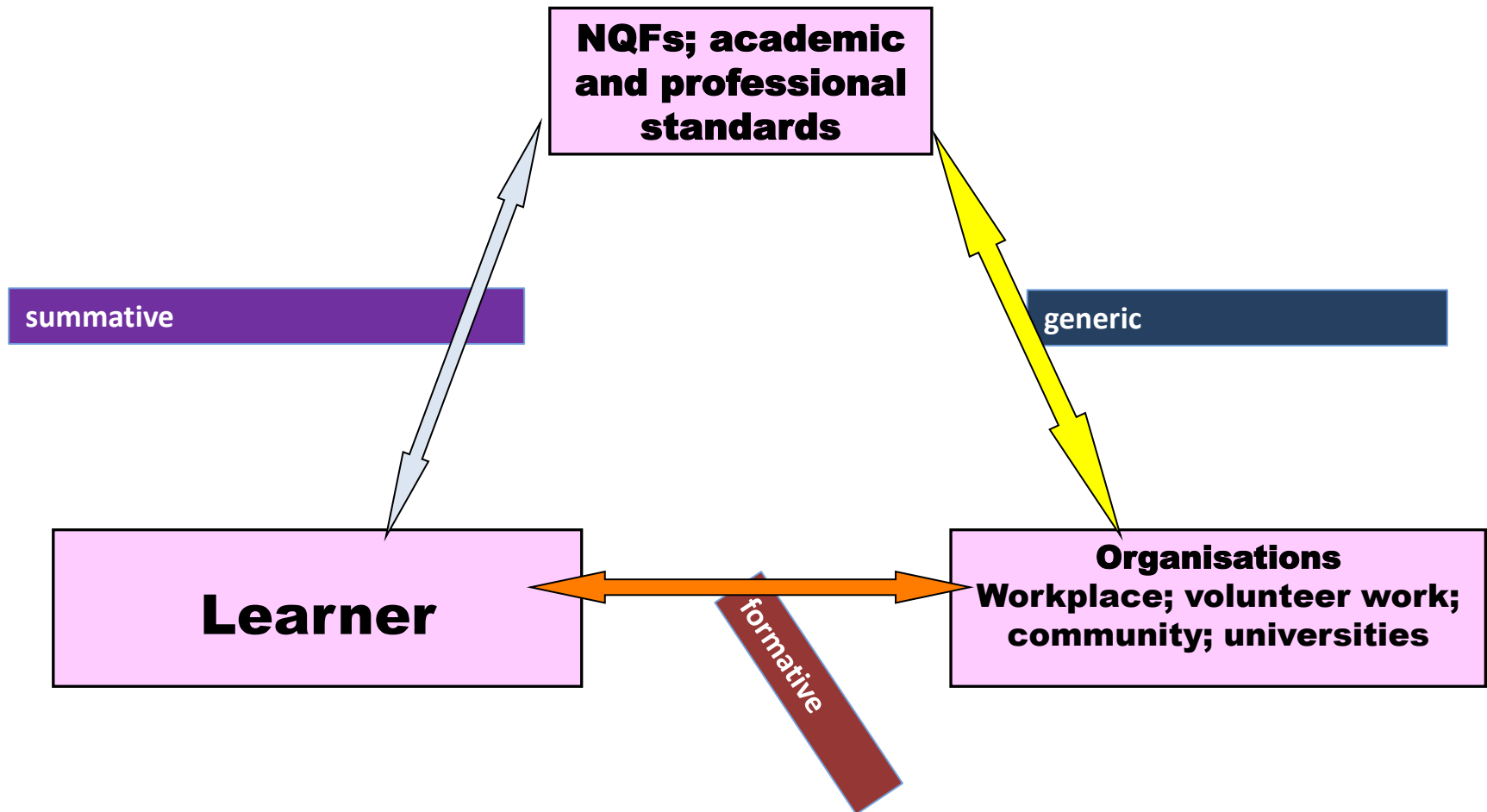
RATIONALE FOR RECOGNISING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

- **Visibility** of skills, competences and knowledge
- **Experience and capabilities count**
- **Not having to start from scratch**
- **Motivator** for resuming formal studies
- **Assessment is a good start before r**



NQFs do not themselves generate recognition of outcomes from formal, non-formal and informal learning

Bottom-up strategies are needed



NQFS ESTABLISH PATHWAYS & BUILD LADDERS



Butthese need to be complemented by
arrangements for

- **access and transfer at the level of institutions, programmes and providers;**
- **parity of esteem between qualifications and between formal, non-formal and informal learning**

THE WEAKEST POINT: ASSESSMENT

The focus of NQFs is not only on **access** to skills, but most importantly on improving the **quality of assessment and certification procedures** for recognising outcomes from all forms of learning and skills.

If neglected, certificates become **non-credible** .

- Quality assessment in non-formal learning can have a **knock-on effect** in the formal system.
- Building capacities of personnel (assessors and counselors);
- Improving accessibility to support services (like counseling services, employment services, voluntary sector).



WORK IN PROGRESS

REFORMING FRAMEWORKS IN TRANSITION AND
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AROUND EUROPE

CHANGING CONTEXTS

The shadow of the past – planned and regulated qualifications systems with public employment security

Surviving uncertainties

- *challenging demographics*
- *dealing with generation gaps*
- *no more job security*
- *migration*
- *post conflict countries*
- *Arab spring*



Rediscovery of LM relevance ➡ towards competing economies?

WHAT PARTNER COUNTRIES WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Emphasis on reforming systems beyond NQFs



- More relevant qualifications and qualified individuals



DEVELOPING SYSTEMS FOR LLL

- Focus on IVET & adult learning more than on general secondary and HE

	secondary education	initial VET	higher education	adult learning
develop	MoE*	varies	HEIs*	varies
assess	schools/ MoE*	varies	HEIs*	varies
certify	MoE*	varies	HEIs*	varies, often not certified

- Legislating new structures, then building them
- Influence of QF EHEA and EQF
- Empty NQFs or Frameworks of Qualifications

HOW ARE QUALIFICATIONS DESIGNED AND USED?

- A new understanding of qualifications
- A preoccupation with occupational standards?
- Emphasis on competences and learning outcomes
- Translating occupational standards into qualifications
- Identifying different types of qualifications



- Affecting current provision -implications for assessment, certification and learning
- Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- Mobilising the private sector – sectoral approaches
- Strengthening and restoring trust, the importance of QA
- Incremental processes starting from growth sectors
- Capacity and institution building
- Learning by doing – not everything at once
- Role of donor agencies



- Ensuring sufficient resources and time
- Benefits for individuals





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INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS



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WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

- **Number of international migrants rising:**
 - 150 million in 2000;
 - 214 million in 2010;
 - there could be 405 million in 2050 (IOC).
- **Currently, no global system of qualifications recognition allowing a learner or worker to take his/her qualifications to other countries and have them recognised.**
- **ButGrowing momentum of cooperation in the use of Qualifications Framework (QF) for cross-border recognition**
- **Qualifications are a form of currency that signal both national and international value**



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RECOGNITION MEANS A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT THINGS

- **Legal meaning of recognition, (e.g. European Commission (EC) Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications. Support free movement of labor within the EU labor markets;**
- **The EQF, for example, does not address recognition in the legal meaning of the word. Instead it is about:**
 - *TRANSPARENCY,*
 - *COMPARABILITY*
 - *PORTABILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS.*



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REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS

...are important mechanisms through which cross-border transparency, currency and portability of qualifications can be facilitated.

- The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN);
- Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC) Qualifications Frameworks;
- The South Pacific Register;
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC);
- ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA);
- Economic Cooperation Work Programme (EWCP).

...But there are barriers too in referencing to regional frameworks



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FINAL REMARKS

- We must facilitate the recognition and transparency of all qualifications, including those gained outside formal education.
- This will make it easier for individuals to explain their skills; increase mobility in the labour market and across countries. We should also talk to employer and workers' organisations.

UNESCO has developed conventions and recommendations:

In higher education

In the field of TVET

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Truly global phenomenon – qualifications that have both national & international value

Transnational qualifications frameworks influence NQFs

Enormous diversities in contexts, approaches and purposes

Changing mind-sets: recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Implementation challenges (time, resources, capacities, finding consensus, a common language, supporting policies)

Effects not yet clear

Monitoring implementation and learning from each other