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الاجتماعي"



Component 3: Quality Assurance and Qualifications

Amman, Jordan

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Recommendations and first steps of the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework in Jordan

Assist in the development of an operationalisation plan of the established Jordanian
National Qualification Framework in relation to TVET qualifications and in
relationship with the Social Partners, as well as conduct a diagnostic analysis to review
the Education sector pathways to improve the attractiveness of the E-TVET sector

Component 3: Quality Assurance and Qualifications

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Introduction

The development of the National Qualifications Framework in Jordan (NQFJ) is still in its early stages. The legal context is adopted. Based on it, the drafting of the strategy for implementation is in full swing. With the political and financial backing of the government, the unit for the implementation and management of the NQFJ should be established and start its activities still in 2019. In this document, the team of experts presents a set of recommendations that should be considered prior to and in the first steps of implementation/operationalization of the NQFJ. The recommendations mainly address the conceptual and strategic issues regarding the arrangements of the system and the divisions of roles and purposes of various entities, bodies, policy mechanisms and stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of the NQFJ.

Clear policy objectives for establishing the NQFJ

As with every new policy and subsystem, the introduction of the NQFJ is motivated and driven by certain desired outcomes and effects on the development of education, skills, knowledge and employability and other elements concerning public interest. The rationale behind introducing such a far reaching instrument is more successful if its objectives and purpose are clear to policymakers, and part of a consensus between stakeholders.

- The process of developing the NQFJ should recurrently include the acknowledgement of the basic needs and purposes for a policy instrument such as NQFJ in the Jordanian education system.
- The gradualism of constructing the NQFJ should take into account the priority of the policies and mechanisms that lead to the achievement of primary objectives. It is recommended that the policies and elements that are more complex and advanced, are left out of the first phases of the implementation. For example, the development of common assessment policies and recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning should follow the development of standards and procedures for registration and the development of the credit system.

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Outcomes based education

The NQFJ is a systemic tool that brings along some far reaching conceptual shifts. One of them is the transition from input based to outcome based education. This requires a patient and intense work with all stakeholders and the general public, as it represents a major shift of paradigms.

- Very clear and well elaborated strategy of capacity building, trainings and public relations must be established and run parallel to the development of the NQFJ.
- In order to achieve the desired policy goal, the learning outcomes must be properly implemented before they are listed and they need to be periodically verified and evaluated. The NQFJ management should therefore take care of methods and approaches to introduce the concept of learning outcomes and the related procedures to all relevant stakeholders.

Division of roles and responsibilities between central management of the NQFJ and the education sectors

The NQFJ is an overarching policy tool, covering all sectors of education (pre-primary education, general education, TVET, higher education). The complexity of the mechanisms, structures and processes that together form the NQFJ requires inclusion of and cooperation between all education sectors and their representative bodies or respective authorities.

- In order to finalise the implementation, it is necessary to clarify the responsibilities of each of the sectors in relation to the central NQFJ managing structures. Therefore, also the NQFJ Bylaw should be read in conjunction with the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Law.

Relation between NQFJ and the sectorial accreditation/quality assurance processes



In some aspects, the NQFJ is also instrumental for improving the quality of education. In these aspects the NQFJ related processes should be developed so that they are complementary and not repetitive or even contradictory with the quality assurance processes and accreditation.

- A thorough discussion and a policy and structural decision has to be taken about the respective roles and purposes of the quality assurance and the NQFJ. This has to be resolved before the implementation takes place.
- Introduction of a systematic and clear distinction between the purpose of the NQFJ and the purpose of the QA (and accreditation) system. Based on this division of roles, the emerging NQFJ should have a clear role in relation to other processes, transparency tools and regulatory mechanisms within the Jordanian education system.

Staff and capacity

A well-functioning NQFJ can only be the result of a thorough and inclusive process of developing the standards, procedures, structures, mechanisms, guidebooks, trainings, IT platform, etc. Well trained and motivated staff is essential.

- The initial phase of the implementation of the NQFJ requires sufficient staff. The authority in charge of the NQFJ implementation should urgently deploy sufficient staff to work on starting the implementation activities for the NQFJ. This should at this stage at least comprise one project manager who would be in charge of overall coordination, one full-time staff in charge of institutional related questions, one full-time staff in charge of qualifications related questions and one full-time staff in charge of IT requirements. In continuation, the staff should be added in accordance with the staff development plan.
- The volume of work will increase with the registration and re-registration of qualifications and provider institutions. There is a considerable range of technical tasks ahead: developing standards, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, trainings, involving stakeholders, site visits... It is crucial to



establish a team of well trained staff in order to cater for the correct implementation of NQFJ from the very outset and then gradually expand it.

Terminology

All NQFJ related documents, manuals, presentations and communication require consistent use of terminology.

- The terminology used in various documents is in need of review, especially in terms of consistency. In some cases, it is only about the translation, but for example in the case of the definition of *qualification* as a concept, there is a need for further elaboration. This needs to be done, taking into account different terminology used in the different education sectors.

An overview of education providers by type and sector

Once the NQFJ is developed and operational, it becomes the ultimate reference and information tool about education. This includes also an exhaustive map of all official institutions and qualifications in the country.

- It is indispensable to have an exact overview of the number of institutions in each sector differentiated by type and sector. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish an overview of official qualifications. This would primarily serve the planning with regard to the amount of institutions and qualifications that are expected to be assessed for their inclusion in the NQFJ and within which timeframe.
- On that basis of the above overview, further plans for the implementation and operationalisation of the NQFJ could be made, with particular attention to the structure, staff and capacity building (including staff trainings).

It will be difficult to proceed with technical assistance on the implementation and operationalisation of the NQFJ if the fundamental questions that are implied in the above recommendations, are not discussed, agreed and decided upon by the



relevant authorities at all levels and the main stakeholders in education (mainly education providers, governmental institutions and agencies, employers, professional organisations, learners...). The Technical Assistance should not take these decisions for the beneficiary but offer its support in moderating the discussions and highlighting the practical consequences or the different options during the discussions.

Upon resolution of the fundamental questions the implementation could proceed according the following path:

First Steps towards the implementation of the NQFJ

The detailed time frame and action plan is given in the *Operationalisation Plan*, which is an integral part of the general report of this project. Below is a snap shot of the first steps towards the implementation of the NQFJ:

Activity	Responsibility
Establishing the "department" in charge of the NQFJ	Prime Ministry and AQACHEI
Initial staffing of the "department" that includes officers endorsed by all education sectors	Prime Ministry and AQACHEI
Clarification of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the roles and responsibilities of authorities in charge of NQFJ difference between NQF and accreditation and establishing complementary roles of NQFJ and quality assurance/accreditation system 	AQACHEI, Steering Committee and stakeholders
Trainings of staff	AQACHEI



Designing a stakeholder engagement plan and organising the process of stakeholder nominations for counterparts responsible for the NQFJ	AQACHEI
Training of stakeholder counterparts	AQACHEI
Revision of and levels and level descriptors (in consultation with stakeholders)	AQACHEI and stakeholders
Developing standards, criteria and procedures for listing and registration (in consultation with stakeholders)	AQACHEI and stakeholders

Benchmarking of the NQFJ against other frameworks

The NQFJ fulfils purposes in the national education system. At the same time, it is also a tool that can facilitate international recognition of qualifications, in combination with a trustworthy quality assurance system. In order to understand where Jordanian qualifications are placed in international comparison, it is worthwhile to benchmark the NQFJ against other national qualifications frameworks. In this way, it would be possible to compare qualification levels on the basis of the underlying level descriptors.

In order to ascertain which other frameworks would be useful for a benchmarking exercise, the purposes of the NQFJ should be taken into account. On the one hand, the framework is supposed to facilitate easier recognition of qualifications abroad. Therefore, suitable frameworks for a benchmarking would be those of countries where larger numbers of Jordanian graduates go in order to seek employment. Therefore, it would be particularly useful to benchmark the NQFJ with the qualifications frameworks in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and to a lesser degree also Oman. Other frameworks in the Gulf region are still under development.

If there is going to be either an overarching framework for the Gulf region or for the Arab region, it would also be useful to reference the NQFJ against

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it. However, it should be noted that the nature of regional, overarching, frameworks is different from national qualifications frameworks. Therefore, also the process would be different and not be considered as “benchmarking” but as “referencing”.

In the same light, it would be useful to “reference” the NQFJ against the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL). In this way, the EQF could be used as a “translation device” to understand which levels of the NQFJ would correspond to which levels of other European national qualifications frameworks (currently 35 countries have referenced their national qualifications frameworks against the EQF). The referencing process against the EQF follows specific criteria that have been developed and adhering to these will be considered indispensable to ensure reliability and acceptance of the outcomes. See further: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetailDoc&id=10973&no=2>

Further recommendations on support by EU SESIP to facilitate the implementation of the NQFJ

The EU SESIP project could support the further steps towards the implementation with a range of activities. Predominantly, the EU SESIP project could provide expertise to assist in the development of policies, standards, criteria and procedures. In addition, the project could also assist through the provision of trainings and capacity building. In particular, the project could support the following activities:

- Designing a visibility and communications strategy
- Initial Training of current and future staff that will be involved in the implementation of the NQFJ
- Assist in the revision of levels and level descriptors through a coordinated stakeholder consultation process
- Assist in the development of classifications of institutions
- Assist in the development of standards, criteria and procedures for institutional listing



- Assist in the development of standards, criteria and procedures for qualification registration
- Assist in the development of criteria and procedures for entry, progression and transfer of qualifications
- Assist in the preparation of manuals for designing regulations of quality assurance systems for learning and training programmes
- Assist in the preparation of manuals for the development and review of qualifications, including assessment, credits and certification.
- Assistance in the development of the pilot scheme
- Training of stakeholders to prepare them for participation in the pilot scheme
- Assist in the analysis of the pilot phase and revision of all NQFJ related documentation
- Assist in the development of a common approach to credits
- Assist in capacity building for stakeholders after adaptations to NQFJ documentation have been made following the pilot phase
- Assist in the development of the NQFJ database
- Assist in the referencing of the NQFJ with other frameworks