

THE ALBANIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Referencing to the European Qualifications Framework and self-certification
to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area

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List of Abbreviations

AQAHE	Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
AQAPE	Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education
AQF	Albanian Qualifications Framework
BA	Board of Accreditation
CES	Centre for Educational Services
CoE	Council of Europe
DCM	Decision of the Council of the Ministers
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
GDPUE	General Directorate of Pre-University Education
LLL	Life-Long Learning
LO	Learning Outcomes
MES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
NAES	National Agency for Employment and Skills
NAFHE	National Agency for Financing the Higher Education
NASRI	National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation
NCVQ	National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications
NAVETQ	National Agency of Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications
NESS	National Employment and Skills Strategy
NQF	National Qualification Framework
QF - EHEA	Qualification Framework - European Higher Education Area
R&D	Research & Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SC	Sectorial Committee
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VNIFL	Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WBL	Work Based Learning

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Albania (Republika e Shqipërisë) - is part of the Western Balkan countries situated in the Balkan peninsula. The Capital, Tirana is the most important economic centre in the country.

Albania has an area of 28,748 km² and a population of about 2.8 million. A large number of the population live as well in diaspora. They moved after 1990 after the communist regime fell down.

Albania is a parliamentary Republic. The priority economic sectors are water and energy, agriculture and tourism. Albania is a candidate country applied for the EU membership in April 2009 and received the candidate status in June 2014. In April 2018, the Commission issued an unconditional recommendation to open accession negotiations. The Council set out the path towards opening accession negotiations in June 2019, depending on progress made in key areas such as the judiciary, fight against corruption and organised crime, intelligence services and public administration. In March 2020 the members of the European Council endorsed the General Affairs Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Albania and in July 2020 the draft negotiating framework were presented to the Member States.¹

1 - DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ALBANIA

1.1 - Albanian context

Historical background

Formal education in Albania started during in the second half of the 19th century. The first not religious school in Albanian language (“*Mësonjëtorja*”) was opened in *Korçë* (a city in the eastern part of Albania) during the Ottoman period, as an effort for independence and protecting the rights and language.

The vocational education in Albania started their efforts for establishment in early 19th century when the Red Cross of American Youth founded the first Albanian Vocational School named *Tirana Technical School* that was considered successful under the leadership of Mr. Harry Trevlin Fultz, professor at the University of Chicago.

During the communist regime, the economy went through radical changes and a particular attention was given to education. The main reforms of the education system during the communism period till 1990 included the primary education (4 years), unified education (7 years) and secondary education: general and vocational (4 years).

1

<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/candidates.htm#:~:text=Candidate%20Countries%20Albania%2C%20the%20Republic%20of%20North%20Macedonia%2C,and%20examine%20their%20possible%20request%20for%20transition%20periods.>

The first HE schools the *Higher Polytechnic Institute* and the *Higher Agriculture Institute* was established in 1951 and in 1954, all higher institutes and separate faculties merged into the State University of Tirana. The fall of the communist dictatorship had a strong impact even in an important area for Albanian society, such as education. Reforming of the education system in Albania, represented a set of fundamental changes in its form and content.

In September 2003, Albania signed-up its membership to the Bologna Process that is considered as an important milestone for the whole education system of the country. Although the Bologna Process focuses primarily on HE, its “collateral effect has impacted the overarching educational system in the Republic of Albania.

Today the overarching Albanian education system is governed by 4 specific laws as follows:

- (1) Law no. 69/2012 “***On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania***” (as amended)
- (2) Law no. 15/2017 “***On vocational education and training in the Republic of Albania***”
- (3) Law no. 80/2015 “***On higher education and scientific research in higher education institutions in Republic of Albania***”.
- (4) Law no. 10247/2010 “***On the Albanian qualifications framework***”, as amended.

In order to be consistent and in the respect of the entitlement given by the Albanian Parliament to the above-mentioned laws, in this report will be used the following terms:

- a) ***pre-university education system (levels 1 to 5 of the AQF)*** precedes higher education and includes general, oriented and VET programs. VET is offered through VET providers that include, vocational schools, vocational training centres, multifunctional centres, companies and other licensed and / or accredited VET institutions.
- b) ***higher education system (levels 5 to 8 of the AQF)*** comes after pre-university education system. The law foresees four types of HEIs: ***university, university college, academia and higher professional college***².

Individuals look for *qualifications* to gain *knowledge, skills and competences* - called learning outcomes, to integrate in a better shape into the labour market and develop their careers. Good qualifications are trusted, by learners, workers, employees and employers. To increase the quality of qualifications, Albania is reforming its education and training systems. The AQF as part of these reforms, as a classification tool has the goal to define and classify qualifications in a transparent and trustworthy way, that requires a properly functioning qualification system that classifies qualifications from the different education areas and ensures the quality of those qualifications.

The development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework is a process. As such, the AQF have evolved over the time. At the very first stage of defining the AQF, in it were

² Their definition is presented in the paragraph 1.5 of this report

comprised mainly qualifications from the *formal education system*. But as issues progress, the qualifications that were not part of the formal education system had to be included in the AQF. In this respect, the provision of non-formal and informal learning as well as the validation of prior learning are handled by the legal framework governing the VET system in Albania. In the higher education area, there is a legal definition of what is officially recognised as lifelong learning and, consequently, their respective lifelong learning recognised qualifications. So far, the non-formal and informal learning is not recognised in the higher education area in Albania. Considering as above, these issues make the AQF a real framework, in line also with developments in the European Higher Education Area.

Qualifications

The concept of a **qualification** is changing. Until recently a qualification was linked to the successful completion of a given course or study. ISCED³ was widely used to classify education and training by level. Success meant that a student had completed a course and understood the learning content required for the qualification. This is changing. In many parts of the world, it is now considered more important that students show they master a given set of knowledge, skills and competences than how they have acquired them, and over what duration. The focus of qualifications has been put not only on the learning process, but also to the results of learning process, the learning outcomes (LO)⁴. In 1989 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was introduced in the HE system. ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the principle of transparency of the learning, teaching and assessment processes with the objective of facilitating the planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes and student mobility by recognising learning achievements and qualifications and periods of learning. ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload⁵.

A qualifications framework as an instrument for classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified *levels* of learning achieved, aims to integrate, and coordinate qualifications areas and improve transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market. This change is reflected in the European Qualifications Framework which defines a qualification as “*the 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*”⁶. Based on the concept of qualification, the Albanian Education system is prescribed in the following figure:

³ International Standard Classification of Education, developed by UNESCO

⁴ "Learning Outcomes" are a set of knowledge, skills and competencies, based on which it is assessed that an individual has acquired and is able to demonstrate them, after completing the learning process – AQF law

⁵ ECTS users' guide 2015 - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017H0615%2801%29>

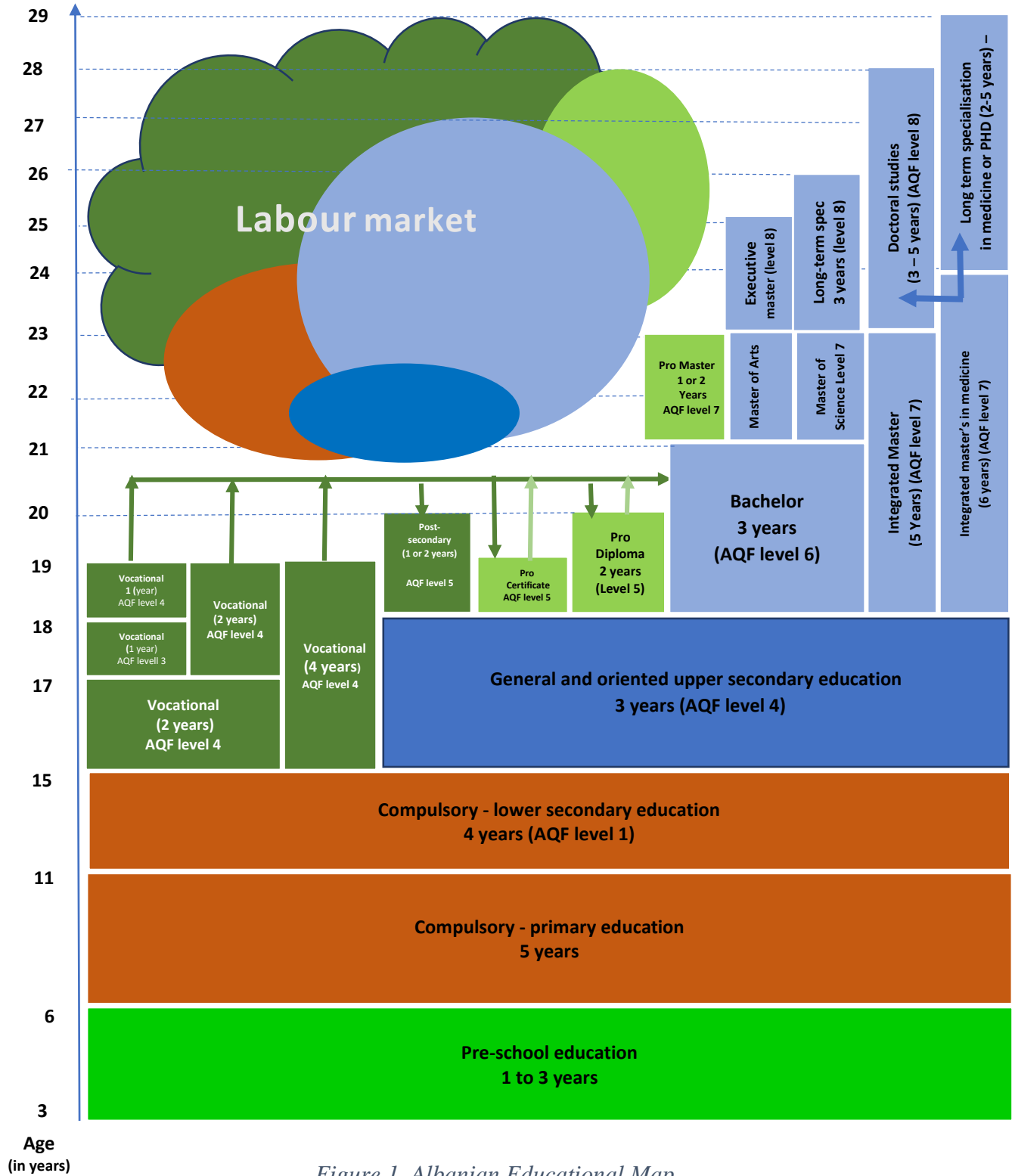







Figure 1. Albanian Educational Map

EDUCATIONAL MAP LEGEND:

Pro Certificate - Professional post-secondary Certificate

Pro Diploma - Professional post-secondary Diploma

Pro Master - Professional Master

-  Compulsory/Basic education (nine years in total, including primary education) giving the right to the corresponding qualification owner to either reach the labour market (schematically of the same colour) or continue further studies in the map always up, meaning general or oriented upper secondary education (blue colour) or professional upper secondary studies (dark green colour).
-  Upper secondary education (oriented or general) that gives the right to corresponding qualification owner to either reach the labour market (schematically in blue colour) or to continue further studies, meaning higher studies.
-  VET education giving the right to qualification owner to reach the labour market, schematically presented with the same colour or continue further education.
-  Professional studies in HE. The one-year certificate or the two years' diploma gives the possibility to reach either the labour market (schematically light green colour) or continue higher education.
-  Academic HE studies, giving the right to either reach the light blue “part” of the labour market or continue further education.

The pre-university education in Albania starts at the age of six and then it goes on progressively to the stages of the education career for anyone. Nevertheless, in Albania, by law, everyone has the obligation to continue the compulsory full-time education up to the age of sixteen. Above that age one can continue the educational process of studies up to the completion of the compulsory lower secondary education, but not under a compulsory full-time schema anymore. The compulsory education is offered by public and non-public (private) institutions.

When it comes to public institutions, they, by law, offer the process of teaching for free of tuition fees. This scenario continues for the post compulsory education up to the stage of higher education. Full-time students are admitted to the tenth grade of upper secondary education not older than eighteen years. The student is allowed to attend three-year upper secondary education up to the age of twenty-one, while up to the age of twenty-two he is allowed to follow four years upper secondary. After the upper secondary education (post compulsory education) everyone has the possibility to continue higher studies under the constraint of HE entry criteria completion. This stage of education is, also, offered by public and non-public institutions. In Albania the higher education at every cycle, so far, is not free of tuition fees.

The Albanian Qualifications Framework follows the EQF definition of a qualification. Qualifications can be allocated to one of the AQF levels based on a match between the learning outcomes of a qualification and the level of the descriptors of the AQF, as schematically is presented in the figure 2.

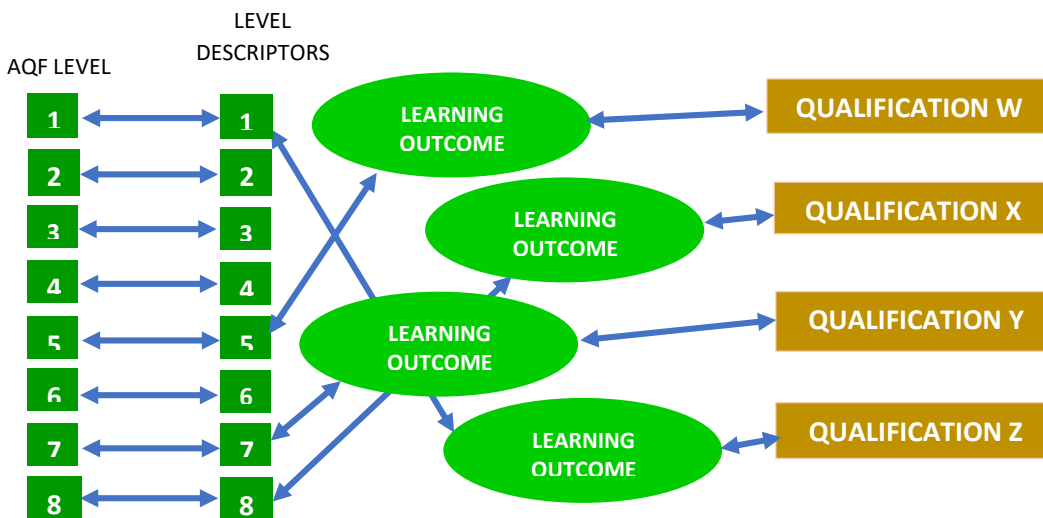


Figure 2. Allocation of qualifications to AQF levels

General principles for the pre-university education

Based on the pre-university Law 69/2012 (as amended) and VET law No. 15/2017, pre-university system concerns lower and upper secondary education which is offered in General, oriented and *Vocational education*

In the pre-university education system, human rights and freedoms and the rights of children are respected, protected and promoted. Students and staff are offered protection from any form of action or inaction that may cause them discrimination, violence, bullying or moral damage.

The principle of inclusion of students is applied in all educational institutions. Every student is provided with the right to quality education, as well as equal opportunities for education. Students under vulnerable conditions are offered special care, according to the Albanian legal framework.

The VET system, in addition to the above mentioned principles, is also based on the principle of autonomy in governing and financing VET providers, the principle of cooperation with various public and non-public entities and in particular with the social partners who are involved at all levels of the VET system, the principle of mobility and continuity, offering opportunities for all students to transfer to other education or training programs and / or to continue acquiring knowledge, competencies and skills, in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, and as well the principle of diversity offering various types and levels of qualifications, adapted for different groups, and recognizing the previously acquired knowledge.

Pre-university education is secular. Religious educational institutions make an exception because they are established by religious communities and approved by the Council of Ministers.

Individuals belonging to national minorities are given the opportunity to be instructed in their mother tongue. They can study in their own language history and culture as provided by the legal framework, national core curricula and subject programs.

The basic competencies for all students (pupils) are:

- a) communication and expression competence;
- b) thinking competence;
- c) learning competence to learn;
- d) competencies for life, enterprise and environment;
- e) personal competence;
- f) civic competences;
- g) digital competences.

1.2 - Pre-primary Education

Pre-primary education aims at the social, intellectual and physical development of every child, the exercise of basic rules of behaviour and hygiene, the cultivation of values, and the preparation for primary education.

Pre-primary education is attended by children aged three up to six years old. Children aged five are enabled to attend the preparatory class at the basic education schools, aiming their integration into the compulsory education system.

The authorities in charge of pre-primary education are the *MES* and the *local government*.

Table 1. Pre-primary education characteristics

Table 1: Pre-primary education characteristics	
Legal framework:	Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania” (as amended);
Requirements to be admitted in:	No younger than 3 years up to the age of 6. Children aged 5 are given the possibility to attend the preparatory class at primary schools, aiming their integration into compulsory education.
Education and training:	Pre-primary programmes are regularly offered to all children without or with disabilities. There is no obligation for children to attend any pre-primary education. Children with disabilities may be integrated into any of the pre-primary programmes. In addition, there are special pre-primary education institutions for children with disabilities, depending on disabilities. Providers of pre-primary programmes are accredited as public and private kindergartens. Pre-primary education starts with the age of three years and last until enrolment in primary school. MES is responsible for the preparation of the standards and learning programmes of pre-school education as well as of teacher qualification for this education area. Subject programs of pre-primary

	education are designed by AQAPE ⁷ and approved by MES.
Financing:	Enrolment of children in public institutions of pre-primary education is free of charge, while private ones are quasi-entirely financed by fees. Local Government is responsible for physical infrastructure of the institutions, as well as teachers' appointment and salaries.
Teachers' qualifications:	Teachers of pre-primary education must have obtained the diploma of the first cycle "Bachelor" in pre-primary education.
Expected learning outcomes:	Learning outcomes, as defined by AQAPE for pre-primary education, incorporate the development of competencies related to both the self-awareness and social awareness of a child. Learning outcomes include the use of basic terms and ideas related to a child's perception of himself, his behaviour and his choices, his understanding of relationships with others and with the world around him; social abilities such as communication with others and adaptation to different environments; acquisition of basic learning to for competence in the development of logical thinking and arguing, drawing conclusions and problem resolution, etc.
Further progression:	Primary education
Quality assurance:	National body in charge for QA is AQAPE that cooperates at regional level with General Directorate for Pre-University Education

According to data of the academic year 2020-2021 about pre-primary educational system, the total number of pre-primary institutions in Albania was **2121**, of which **242** or **11.4 %** were private, while **1879** or **88.6 %** public. There were **71,332** children enrolling pre-primary programmes, of which **61 259** or **85.9%** in the public institutions and **10073** or **14.1%** in the private ones. According to the Education Strategy 2019 – 2023, the development goal is to increase the number of children enrolled in the pre-primary programmes in relation with the evolution of the demographic landscape during this period.

There were also **426** children with disabilities, of which **386** or **90.8%** in the public sector and **39** or **0.092%** in the private.

The total number of pre-primary teachers in Albania was **5143**, of which **4290** or **83.4%** employed in the public institutions and **853** or **16.6%** in the private ones.

1.3 – Pre-university education system

Pre-university education system in Albania consists of *basic education* and *upper secondary education*.

⁷ Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education

Basic education is compulsory and aims at the social, intellectual and physical development of each student, mastery of rules of conduct and cultivation of values, health care education, as well as enough preparation for the continuation of upper secondary education or the labour market.

Basic education includes *primary education* and *lower secondary education*.

In the pre-university education system, apart full-time schools, there are also 15 schools of lower secondary education and 17 upper secondary education schools that offer part-time education. Most of the students who attend these schools are adults, who have not managed to complete the education cycle at the age provided by the law on pre-university education. At the end of their studies, the students completing lower secondary education schools are provided with a leaving certificate and in upper secondary education they are provided with a State Matura diploma.

1.3.1 Basic Education

1.3.1.1 Primary education

Primary education consists of five grades, from the first grade to the fifth, as shown in the table2.

Table 2. Primary education characteristics

Table 2: Primary education characteristics	
Legal framework:	Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania” (as amended).
Requirements to be admitted in:	Not younger than 6 years old.
Education and training:	<p>Primary education by law is obligatory and is offered by public and non-public education institutions.</p> <p>Primary study programmes are offered to all children without or with disabilities. Children with disabilities may be integrated into any of the primary education institutions. In addition, there are special education institutions for children with disabilities, depending on disabilities.</p> <p>AQAPE is the institution responsible for designing primary education programs, which are approved by MES.</p> <p>AQAPE is also the institution responsible for the professional development of teachers, throughout the pre-university education system.</p>
Financing:	Public institutions of primary education offer study programmes for free of charge, while non-public ones are quasi-entirely financed by fees.
Teachers’ qualifications:	The teacher for primary education must be in possession the diploma of the first cycle “Bachelor” and of a second cycle “Professional Master” degree, which forms teacher of primary education, or the diploma for primary education of former higher pedagogical institutes

Expected learning outcomes:	Defined by National Core Curricula and subject programs for Primary Education
Further progression:	Lower secondary education
Quality assurance:	External quality assurance is provided by AQAPE that cooperates at regional level with General Directorate for Pre-University Education

The authority in charge of primary education is the *MES* and the *local government*.

According to the available data in 2020 on primary education, the total number of primary education institutions was **463**, including public and non-public institutions, that enrol **158,528** students⁸.

After successful completion of the V grade of the primary education the student enrolls to lower secondary education.

1.3.1.2. Lower secondary education (level 1 of the AQF)

In Albania the lower secondary education consists of four grades, from the sixth to the ninth grade. Oriented lower secondary⁹ education is offered in certain classes of basic education, ensuring adequate education of students in general culture subjects, besides the specific oriented education.

The authority responsible of lower secondary education is the *MES* and the *local government*.

Full-time basic education is compulsory for all children who are Albanian citizens residing in the Republic of Albania from the age of six to the age of sixteen, except for the cases provided by the law. The student has the right to attend basic education full-time until the age of seventeen. The student, who has reached the age of seventeen and has not completed basic education, can complete the class he is attending. Students who have reached the age of sixteen and have not completed full-time basic education are eligible to enrol only in part-time basic education schools.

The student, who has not attended at least two classes of full-time basic education, has the right to attend basic education with individual curriculum, according to the procedures determined by instruction of the minister in charge of the education system in Albania.

Table 3. Lower secondary education characteristics

Table 3: Lower secondary education characteristics	
Legal framework:	Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania” (as amended);
Entry requirements:	Completion of the primary education.
Education and training:	Lower secondary education by law is obligatory and is offered by public and non-public education

⁸ Information taken at INSTAT: <http://www.instat.gov.al>

⁹ Oriented education is offered in the fields of foreign languages and sports, arts, etc.

	<p>institutions. Lower secondary programmes are offered to all pupils without or with disabilities.</p> <p>Pupils with disabilities may be integrated into any of the lower secondary education institutions. Assistant teachers are assigned to support pupils with disabilities in mainstream education.</p> <p>For those who cannot attend mainstream education there are special education institutions for pupils with disabilities, depending on disabilities.</p> <p>AQAPE is the institution responsible for designing lower secondary education study programmes, which are approved by MES.</p>
Financing:	Public institutions of lower secondary education offer study programmes for free of charge, while private ones are quasi-entirely financed by fees.
Teachers' qualifications:	The teacher for primary education must have obtained the diploma of the first cycle "Bachelor" and the diploma of the second cycle "Professional Master", which forms teacher of lower secondary education, or the diploma for lower secondary education of former higher pedagogical institutes
Expected learning outcomes:	Defined in the National Core Curricula and subject programs for lower secondary education
Further progression:	Upper secondary education or training courses which lead to labour market.
Quality assurance:	National body in charge for QA is AQAPE that cooperates at regional level with General Directorate for Pre-University Education
Qualification awarded	Leaving certificate

According to the available data in 2020 on lower secondary education, the total number of institutions of this sector was **1228**, of which **119** or **10%** were private, while **1109** or **90%** public. There were **127 958** children in lower secondary education programme, of which **117 905** or **92%** in the public institutions and **10 53** or **8%** in the private ones According to the draft Education Strategy 2021 – 2026, the development goal is to increase the number of children enrolled in the lower secondary education programmes in relation with the evolution of the demographic landscape during this period.

In Albania there were also **3745** children with disabilities, **3658** or **98%** in the public institutions and **87** or **2%** in the private ones. The total number of teachers employed in lower secondary education was **24 370**, of which **22 002** or **90.3%** in the public sector and **268** or **9.7%** in the private one.

1.3.2 - Upper secondary education (levels 2 to 4 of the AQF)

The types of upper secondary education in Albania are *general secondary education*, *vocational secondary education* and *oriented secondary education*.

The general and oriented secondary education consists of three classes. Students who have reached the age of 21 and have not completed upper secondary education can attend upper secondary schools part-time or in distance.

Vocational secondary education lasts from two to four years and is structured in three qualification levels, in accordance with the pre-university education levels of the AQF.

1.3.2.1 General and oriented secondary education

Oriented education schools are art schools, sports schools, foreign language schools and schools for other areas of learning. Admission to oriented education schools is done according to the criteria and procedures determined by a bylaw signed by the minister in charge for education.

General and oriented secondary education aims at further developing the competencies acquired from compulsory basic education, consolidating the individuality of each student and the totality of values and attitudes, expanding and deepening in certain areas of knowledge, preparing for tertiary education or the labour market. The Albanian Government develops policies aiming at creating the opportunity for every student who completes basic education to enrol in upper secondary education.

In the tenth grade of full-time *upper secondary education*, students not older than eighteen years of age are admitted. Students up to the age of 21 can attend (not compulsory) the three-year upper secondary education. A student who has reached the age of 21 in the three-year upper secondary education and has not completed the upper secondary education, can continue the class until the end of that academic year. Students older than 21 years can attend part-time schools of upper secondary education.

The state “Matura” (maturity) exam (state “Matura” or “Professional State Matura” for vocational education) at national level concerns all general, oriented and vocational secondary education students¹⁰.

A. Competent authorities’ / Governing bodies

The authorities responsible for general upper secondary education are the MES and its subordinated institutions (AQAPE, GDPUE, CES) and the *local government*.

MES has the following competencies:

- a) policy making to improve the performance of general education;
- b) approves national core curricula and subject programmes;
- c) monitors the implementation of curricula and all policies produced for general education;
- d) approves general culture programs based on key competencies for lifelong learning;

¹⁰ Each kind of upper secondary education terminates with a set of exams, for upper secondary education, called state “Matura” or “Professional State Matura”.

- e) organizes continuous professional training for general culture teachers who are engaged in VET;
- f) determines the general criteria for the qualification of teachers of general education subjects in VET.

CES in the pre-university education has the responsibility to:

- a) develop national examination, carry out the students' assessment process and administer the database of these outcomes;
- b) perform and administer external national and international evaluations and / or sampling for students' achievements in the pre-university education system;
- c) provide contribution to the design of education policies, strategies and their implementation;
- d) process and analyse the results of national examinations, assessments, state exams, as per the contemporary standards and annual reports, which it publishes;
- e) administer the database for pre-university education;
- f) create, archive, update and administer the electronic database of students' achievements in national examinations;
- g) Contribute to the drafting of laws and bylaws, which are part of the object of its activity".

AQAPE has the responsibility to:

- a) organize the work for the evaluation of the performance of the public and non-public pre-university education system;
- b) organize the professional development and qualification of educational staff in the public and non-public education system;
- c) monitor the quality assurance and evaluation of pre-university, public and non-public education institutions and their curricula;
- e) ensure the development of curricula in public and non-public pre-university education.

GDPUE of MES and regional and local educational directorates have the responsibility to:

- a) provide quality services in the pre-university education system through monitoring, evaluation and inspection, in collaboration with AQAPE.
- b) organize the work for the management, monitoring and control of the institutions of the pre-university education system for the compliance of their activity with the laws and bylaws in force, in collaboration with AQAPE.

Local government is responsible for the maintenance and infrastructure of the education institutions. It may participate in common initiatives for the better performance of school as community centres.

According to the available data of the academic year 2020-2021 about general and oriented secondary education, the total number of institutions of this sector was **453**, of which **107** or **24 %** were private, while **346** or **76%** public. There were **88,965** children in general and oriented secondary education programmes, **12 117** or **13.4%** in the private institutions and **76 848** or **86.4%** in the public ones. According to the Education Strategy 2019 – 2023, the development goal is to increase the number of children enrolled in the general upper secondary education programmes, in relation with the evolution of the demographic landscape during this period.

There were also **529** children with disabilities, of which **505** or **95.5%** in the public institutions and **24** or **4.5%** in the private sector. The total number of teachers employed in general secondary education was **7432** of which **5926** or **79.7%** in the public sector and **1505** or **20.3%** in the private one.

Regarding children with special needs, for pre-university qualifications (AQF levels 1-5) they have access to all programmes and they are supported by a teaching assistant. An individual plan is developed to support their learning and obtain the qualifications.

Table 4. General and oriented secondary education characteristics

Table 4: General and oriented secondary education characteristics	
Legal framework:	Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in Republic of Albania” (as amended);
Requirements to be admitted in:	Completion of lower secondary education and possession of Leaving certificate
Education and training:	Upper secondary education by law is not obligatory and is offered by public and non-public education institutions. Upper secondary programmes are offered to all students without or with disabilities. Students with disabilities may be integrated into any of the upper secondary education institutions. For those who cannot attend mainstream education there are special education institutions for students with disabilities, depending on disabilities. AQAPE is responsible for designing upper secondary education programs, which are approved by MES.
Financing:	Public institutions of general and oriented secondary education offer study programmes for free of charge, while private ones are quasi-entirely financed by fees.
Teachers’ qualifications:	The teacher for primary education must have obtained the diploma of the first cycle “Bachelor” and the diploma of the second cycle “Professional Master”, which forms teacher of primary education, or the diploma for primary education of former higher pedagogical institutes
Expected learning outcomes:	Defined in the National Core Curricula and subject programs of upper secondary education.

Further progression:	Higher education or the labour market, for all those who complete the State Matura and obtain a State Matura diploma.
Quality assurance:	National body in charge for QA is AQAPE that cooperates at regional level with General Directorate for Pre-University Education
Qualification awarded	State “Matura” diploma

1.3.2.2. Vocational Education and Training¹¹ (levels 2 to 5 of the AQF)

The mission of the vocational secondary education and training is:

- a) to develop the necessary personal and professional competencies, as well as other diversified attitudes and competencies, which reflect the preferences and special needs of employers to ensure social welfare and economic development;
- b) to provide education and vocational training in accordance with the level of development of science and technology, with the demands of the constantly changing labour market, as well as with the national culture and tradition;
- c) ensure international compatibility of certification documents issued.

The VET area consists of and is administered by public and non-public institutions operating at central and local level, including VET providers. According to the National Strategy of Employment and Skills 2019-2022, adopted in 2019, the vision is to provide quality vocational and lifelong training, for men and women in the same way.

Public authorities work in partnership with the social partners and other key actors, such as representatives of trade unions, employers’ organisations and students’ organisations. The Ministry responsible for VET, the NAES, and the NAVETQ are the main institutions, responsible for the VET area in Albania. Additionally, National VET Council gives advises to the MFE for VET issues. Local government is responsible for the physical infrastructure of VET providers and dormitories.

The governance of VET, i.e. the responsibility of the key stakeholders is defined in the Law on Vocational Education and Training (15/2017) and its sublegal acts. According to the legislative framework, VET governance is mainly in the hands of the Government, the national agencies and the public VET providers. The ministry in charge for VET is the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE). It is responsible for the national policy formulation, the development of the legislative framework and the supervision of its implementation. Besides that, the MFE is in charge for adoption of national catalogue for vocational qualifications, the opening and closing of public VET providers as well as the provision of VET providers’ infrastructure and human resources, determining the procedures for the recognition of learning and professional qualifications of levels 2 to level 5 of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, including those obtained abroad etc. The ministry closely cooperates with other central level institutions such as the Ministry for Education

¹¹ Vocational Education and Training - VET

and Sports (MES) and its subordinated institutions (AQAPE and CES) in VET-related issues such as continuous professional development of teachers of general subjects or the organisation of the Professional State Matura Exams for secondary VET students.

There are two national agencies subordinated to the Ministry of Finance and Economy that play a key role in the development, management, monitoring and quality assurance of VET. The first agency is NAVETQ that was established in 2006. Its mission is to create a unified national system of vocational qualifications based on the Albanian Qualification Framework (AQF) that support the alignment of training programmes to the needs of the labour market. In order to do so, NAVETQ as an AQF implementing institution for VET, is responsible for the development and revision of the National Classification of Occupations (based on ISCO -08), the occupational standards, qualifications and assessment standards and national frame curricula for the levels 2-5 of the AQF, the accreditation of VET providers and organization of continuous professional development measures for VET teachers and instructors. NAVETQ shall also provide the Technical Secretariat for the future Sector Skills Committees (see below). The second agency is NAES which is the former National Employment Service (NES). It has been given a new / extended responsibility with the new VET Law (15/2017) which is to support the management of all public VET providers (VET schools and VTCs¹²) to improve their service provision through regular monitoring and management by results. In addition, NAES has been responsible to conduct the Skills Needs Analysis since 2010 on a two-year basis.

Provision of training takes place mainly at public VET providers (VET schools and VTCs) for which the VET law foresees a higher share of autonomy as regards programme offer cooperation with companies and income generation activities. Vocational education is opened for all students aged from 15 to 19 years old but is also opened for adults as part of the vocational training. In the tenth grade of upper secondary vocational education, students not older than eighteen years of age are admitted. Students up to the age of 22 a four-year vocational secondary education. A student who has reached the age of 22-year-old in the four-year secondary education and has not completed the upper secondary education, can continue the class until the end of that academic year.

WBL plays a fundamental role in developing student vocational competences. WBL adjusts and updates what is learned at the school environment, according to the real occupation requirements. WBL improves students' self-confidence and adaptation to uncertain work situation. WBL improves student employability and brings the VET sector and the business world closer to each other. WBL is provided based on the regulation adopted with the Order of the Minister of Finance and Economy, No. 220, dated on 16.09.2020¹³. This order regulates: (i) the responsibilities of central institutions, social partners, public VET providers and businesses engaged in the implementation of vocational practices in business; (ii) Procedures and instruments for planning,

¹² Vocational Training Centres offer vocational training skills to people who are unemployed or looking for retraining to quickly enter the labour market

¹³ Order of the Minister of Finance and Economy, No. 220, dated on 16.09.2020 on approving the regulation for practical learning of students in the company worksite

developing and implementing vocational practices in business; and (iii) quality assurance aspects to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes of VET qualifications.

Vocational practice is integral part of curricula and teaching & learning process in VET, through practical modules or theory and practice integrated modules. Vocational education students are able to attend the vocational practice in the workplace since in the 1st grade. The vocational schools are in charge to find businesses that are able and willing to accept students in the worksite, in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Table 5. Vocational secondary education characteristics

Table 5: Vocational secondary education characteristics	
Legal framework:	Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania” (as amended); Law no. 15/2017 “On vocational education and training in the Republic of Albania”. Law no. 10247/2010 on Albanian Qualifications Framework (as amended)
Requirements to be admitted in:	Completion of lower secondary education and possession of leaving certificate.
Education and training:	Vocational secondary education programmes are regularly offered to all students without or with disabilities. There is no obligation for children to attend any vocational secondary education institution being public or private (non-public). Students with disabilities may be integrated into any of the vocational secondary education programmes.
Financing:	Public institutions of vocational secondary education offer study programmes free of charge, while private ones are quasi-entirely financed by fees.
Teachers’ qualifications:	Qualification for vocational secondary education teachers: at least need to possess an AQF (EQF) 7 th level qualification – Professional Master in the occupational field and must go through the “Basics of Didactics in VET” training programme within one year of service. On the other hand, for VET instructors ¹⁴ , at least need to possess a fourth AQF (EQF) level vocational qualification and go through the “Basics of Didactics in VET” Training programme within one year of service
Expected learning outcomes:	LO are defined in the Qualification Standards in terms of Knowledge, Skills and Broader competences (Autonomy and Responsibility) in line with AQF level descriptors to:

¹⁴ Teachers’ trainers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the necessary personal and professional competencies, as well as other diversified attitudes and competencies, which reflect the preferences and special needs of employers to ensure social welfare and economic development. • provide education and vocational training in accordance with the level of development of science and technology, with the demands of the constantly changing labour market, as well as with the national culture and tradition.
Further progression:	Higher education or the labour market, for all those who complete Professional State “Matura”.
Quality assurance:	<p>Self-assessment process is coordinated by NAVETQ¹⁵. External quality assurance includes external monitoring provided by the NAVETQ, near the MFE. Accreditation process is to be implemented based on the dedicated roadmap in place since 2020.</p> <p>AQAPE is responsible for assuring the quality of teaching and learning for general subjects in VET institutions. AQAPE is also the institution responsible for designing general subjects in VET programmes, which are approved by MES</p>
Qualification awarded	Vocational certificate

10 “types” of qualifications belong to VET domain. These types represent VET qualifications and include:

- Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers (2nd AQF Level);
- Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers (3rd AQF Level);
- Professional certificate issued at the end of a three-years program for skilled workers (3rd AQF Level);
- Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme (3rd AQF Level);
- State Professional Matura Diploma issued upon completion of the vocational high school programme (4th AQF level);
- Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the four-year study program for middle technicians / managers (4th AQF level);
- Professional certificate issued at the conclusion of the one-year program for middle technicians /managers (4th AQF level);
- Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for middle technicians / managers (4th AQF level);
- Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme (4th AQF level);

¹⁵ NAVETQ train the internal units of self-assessment.

- Professional Certificate issued at the end of Post-secondary VET (5th AQF level).

Additionally, with the amendment of AQF Law in 2018, Lifelong learning qualifications are to be allocated in VET AQF levels 2-5, respecting the criteria and procedures stipulated in the DCM no. 427 of 26.6.2019 on the inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications into the AQF (see the section 3.6).

These VET qualification types follow the educational structure (respectively, 2+ 1+1 years, 2+2 years and 4 years) adopted in the VET Law No. 15/2017. The duration of the study programmes for the above-mentioned vocational qualifications varies from 1 year, 2 years to 4 years. For example, regarding 2+1+1 educational structure, in Hotel- Tourism field, qualifications in VE are provided, in the following AQF levels: (i) 2nd level of AQF, programs for the broad field of the qualification in an occupational direction (i.e. Hotel tourism, 2nd AQF level) for semi-qualified workers, 2 years duration, giving access to employment or third AQF level; (ii) 3rd level of AQF, programs (specialization in relevant profiles) for qualified workers, 1 year duration (ie, Bar-Restaurant, 3rd AQF level), after the second AQF level, giving access to employment or to the fourth AQF level; (iii) 4th level of AQF, programs for technical-mid managerial, 1 year (i.e. Hotel-Tourism, 4th AQF level) , after the third AQF level, giving access to employment or valid for university education. Instead, in 2+2 educational structure, for example in ICT sector, qualifications in Vocational education are provided, in the following AQF levels: (i) 2nd level of AQF, programs for the broad field of the qualification in an occupational direction (i.e. ICT, 2nd AQF level) for semi-qualified workers, 2 years' duration, giving access to employment or third AQF level; (ii) 4th level of AQF, programs for technical-mid managerial, 2 years (i.e. Programming, 4th AQF level).

In VET, the majority of the training programmes follow the 2+1+1 structure consisting of a two-year basic vocational training, a one-year specialization and a one-year consolidation phase. Upon completion of each level students are awarded with both: a certificate and Europass supplement. Some of the VET programmes (mainly business administration, ICT and forestry) apply the 2+2 structure. Similar to the 2+1+1 structure, they start with a basic two-year training to equip students with fundamental vocational skills in their occupational area (leading to the AQF Level 2 certificate of "Semi-Skilled Worker"). This is followed by a two-year specialization phase leading to Technician / Middle Manager certificate (level 4 AQF). The third option is the 4-year's structure which is only available in three occupational areas: geodesy, veterinary, and elderly care services

AQF levels can accommodate more than one qualification type, for example AQF level 3 Includes three qualification types: "One-year study programs for skilled worker", "Three-years study programs for skilled worker" and " Vocational Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme". The length of the learning path depends on the entry level. The VET law and the AQF Law regulate the allocation of qualification types to AQF 2-5 levels. Progress routes are also regulated in both laws.

According to the available data of 2021, there are 35 public vocational schools and 12 non-public ones. The total number of students enrolled in vocational secondary education programmes, is 19 024.

Data on numbers of students enrolled in VE and the teaching staff at each academic year are as following:

School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Enrolled in vocational education							
Vocational education	22 801	21 424	20 981	20 605	21 289	19 664	19 024
Source of information: Administrative data from Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the Ministry of Finance and Economy, <i>Published by INSTAT</i>							
Teachers/Academic staff							
Vocational education	1 573	1 210	1 277	1 254	1 205	1 305	1 430
<i>Source: Administrative data from Ministry of Education Sport and Youth and the Ministry of Finance and Economy, Published by INSTAT</i>							

Formative and summative students' assessment in VET usually refers to official instructions and guidelines. The frame curricula offer recommendations on how to verify the proficiency of learning outcomes of a qualification. NAVETQ provides also different guidelines for VET teachers and providers with assessment methods and assessment tools (such as tests, projects, control check list, etc.). VET providers are responsible for assessment and certification of vocational qualifications at the AQF levels 2, 3, 4 and 5. Summative assessment of learning outcomes for the purpose of certification is organised at the provider level through exams that assess separately the vocational theory and practice. Teachers are responsible for this assessment based on their observation, tests, homework, projects and other assessment techniques. Providers create a commission for each of the two exams (professional theory and practice), by assuming that for the practical exam one of the members of the commission should be from the businesses. The examination can include evaluation of projects, assessment at the workstations, or a combination of these.

Based on the instruction of the Minister No. 16, dated on 26.04.2019 "On the types, procedures to issue professional certificates, and respective templates in VET"¹⁶, VET provider issues the following certification documents (see appendix A.3 an example of professional certificate and its supplement in VET qualifications) to students that have successfully completed the exams for a vocational qualification:

¹⁶ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/udhezimi-nr-16-date-26.04.2019-lojet-dhe-procedurata-e-certifikimit.pdf>

- i) Professional certificate indicating among others AQF level, qualification title and so on
- ii) Supplement of professional certificate, based in Europass supplement elements

Students, who have achieved a certificate at the AQF level 4, are eligible to take part in the Professional State Matura exams. The summative exams for the Professional State Matura are centrally organised by MES based on annual joint instructions issued by MES and MFE and coordinated and monitored from CES, and after the successful finalisation of the exam the student will be awarded with Professional State Matura Diploma.

1.3.3 - Higher Education system (levels 5 to 8 of the AQF)

Higher education in Albanian is defined as a *good and public responsibility* and has the mission:

- a) to create, develop, transmit and protect knowledge through teaching, research, as well as to promote and develop the arts, physical education and sports;
- b) to train senior specialists and prepare young scientists, in accordance with the development priorities of the country, contributing to the increase of the standards of democracy in the country;
- c) provide equal opportunities to benefit from higher education and lifelong learning;
- d) to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development at national and regional level, as well as to the strengthening of public and national security;
- e) to support the strategic priorities and development interests of the country;
- f) to integrate teaching with scientific research;
- g) to promote international cooperation in the field of higher education.

The role of the state in higher education

1. The state exercises regulatory and creative functions of public HEIs as well as funds higher education and scientific research.
2. The state, through its responsible bodies and structures, has the responsibilities and liabilities as follows:
 - a) guarantees the autonomy and academic freedom of higher education institutions;
 - b) it is responsible for setting and monitoring standards in higher education for licensing and accreditation of institutions and study programs that they offer;
 - c) evaluates the quality and functioning of HEIs, through its agencies, independent or foreign ones, making public the procedures and its results;
 - d) makes available public funds for the support of study programs or certain fields of research, in line with development priorities and strategies country interests;
 - e) makes available public funds to guarantee access to higher education, according to their merit, regardless of the financial capabilities of individuals;
 - f) guarantees the inviolability of HEIs and their territory.

- g) guarantees the secularism of public higher education institutions and the non-use of symbols religious of them.

The authorities/bodies in the higher education system in Republic of Albania are:

- Ministry responsible for the higher education;
- AQAHE and BA;
- NASRI;
- CES;
- NAFHE.

The ministry responsible of the HE area in Albania is the MES. It has the following competencies:

- a) drafts policies in the field of higher education and scientific research, as well as approves the strategic plan in this field;
- b) drafts and proposes the legal basis in the field of higher education and scientific research;
- c) proposes to the Council of Ministers the model of budget financing for higher education and scientific research, according to the provisions of the legal framework in force;
- d) proposes to the Council of Ministers to take a decision on the opening, merging and closure of HEIs;
- e) allows the beginning of the activity of HEIs;
- f) approves the opening of new study programs, reorganization, suspension of academic activity and their closure;
- g) assess the compliance of the activity of HEIs with the legal framework in force;
- h) audits, at least once in three years, the use of public funds by HEIs;
- i) proposes to the Council of Ministers the maximum limit of the tuition fee for the first cycle study programs in public HEIs;
- j) administers the state register of scientific degrees and academic titles;
- k) supports with the necessary infrastructure the scientific-research activities only in public HEIs;
- l) supports innovation and development initiatives in HE;
- m) determines the official date of beginning and end of the academic year for all HEIs;
- n) verifies the legality of the conduct of elections in public HEIs and forwards for appointment the winning candidate of the elections for rector in public HEIs to the President of the Republic;
- o) sets conditions for the HEIs and / or suspends its activity, based on legality control, accreditation or audit reports;
- p) proposes to the Council of Ministers the closure of the activity of the HEIs, based on the reports of legality control, accreditation or audit.

The legal framework of the HE area is based on the following principles:

- I. academic freedom;
- II. HEIs autonomy;
- III. equality of chances;
- IV. same standards for all HEIs;
- V. social inclusion;
- VI. fostering the symbiosis of HE and R&D;
- VII. quality assurance of the higher education offers.

In Albania, there are two types of HEIs, **public and non-public** (private) ones. Their typology is presented here-below:

University is a HEI that represents an integrated structure consisting of main units (faculties), basic units (departments) and other units, as defined in their statute. A university consists of, at least, three main units offering study programmes in the levels 5 to 8 of the AQF.

University college is a HEI that represents an integrated structure consisting of, at least **two main units** offering study programmes in the levels 5 to 7 of the AQF.

Academia is a HEI that represents an integrated structure consisting of, at least, **one main unit** offering study programmes in the levels 5 to 8 of the AQF.

Higher professional college is a HEI that represents an integrated structure consisting of, at least, **two basic units** (departments) offering study programmes in the level 5 of the AQF.

According to the data of the academic year 2020-2021 on HE, the total number of HEIs in Albania is **40**, of which **25** (62.5%) are non-public (private), while **15** (37.5 %) are public. There are **123 797** students enrolling HE study programmes, **97 830 (79%)** in the public HEIs and **26 417 (21%)** in the non-public (private) ones. Hereby the chart of overall number of students' evolution from the academic year 2015-2016 up to 2020-2021.

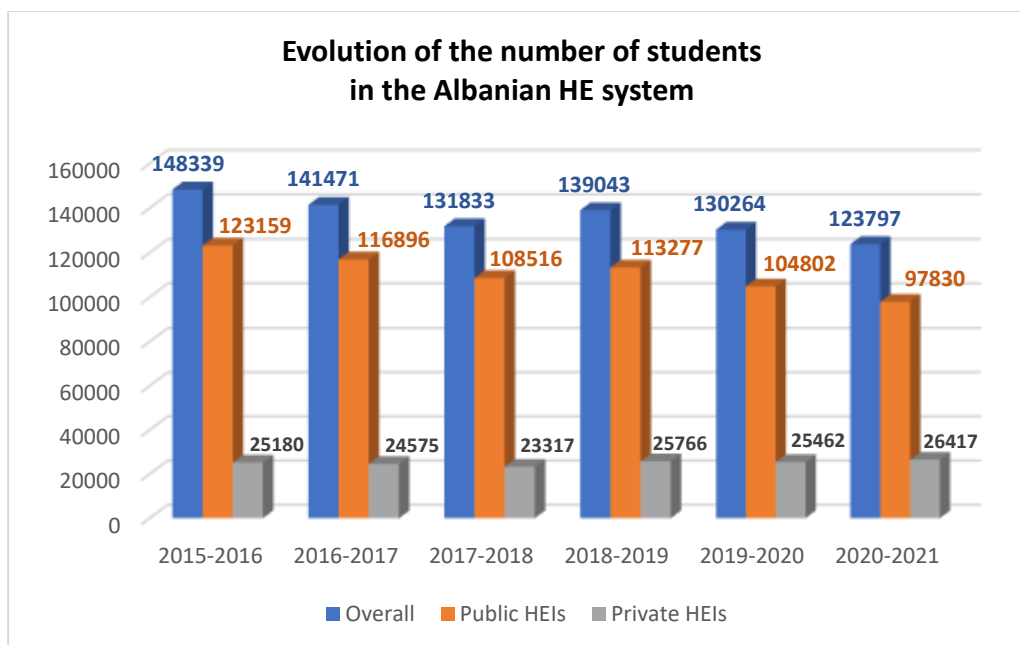


Figure 3. Student series numbers enrolling Albanian HEIs

During the academic year **2020-2021**, the number of students and academic staff employed in both public and non-public HEIs according to the status of full-time or part-time (visiting professors) is presented in the figure 3 and table 6.

The decrease of the number of students in the Albanian HE system is due to the *demographic changes due to lower birth rates* and to the *emigration of the Albanians* abroad.

Table 6. Albanian professorship figures in the HE system

	Public HEIs			Non-public HEIs		
	Professors	Associate Professors	Lector	Professors	Associate Professors	Lector
Full-time	482	661	1371	166	212	693
Part-time	224	195	715	107	163	469
Total	706	856	2086	273	375	1162
Academic staff teaching in public HEIs			6692¹⁷	In the non-public HEIs		3068¹⁸

Qualifications in higher education are defined by the HE law no.80/2015 as “*a series of academic and/or scientific activities, upon successful completion of which to the student is granted the right of a certificate, diploma or scientific grade from the HEI offering it, according to the type of study programme*”. The above law on HE defines the main principles of HE qualifications development, assessment and certification.

¹⁷ In the total number of the academic staff are included the young assistants in possession of a Master of Sciences

¹⁸ The figures of the academic staff are implicit, as the law allows an academic staff to teach in more HEIs

The higher education in Albania, in the respect of study programmes versus AQF levels is organized as follows:

Table 7. Narrative about cycles, qualifications and admitting requirements

<p>“Professional” diploma (two-year degree courses).</p> <p>“Professional” Certificate (one-year degree courses).</p> <p>For getting admitted into the two short cycle study programmes in both public and non-public HEIs, the candidate must be in possession of:</p> <p>1) A final upper secondary school qualification State Matura or Professional State Matura diploma;</p> <p>A “Professional” diploma or certificate gives to the owner the right to access the labour market in both public and private sectors or/and continue any further academic studies on first cycle of HE study programmes under the conditions of:</p> <p>1. complying to the minimal national quality threshold grade stated by a Council of Ministers decision of the year corresponding to</p>	<p>“Bachelor” diploma (at least three-year Bachelor degree courses).</p> <p>For getting admitted into the first cycle study programmes in both public and non-public HEIs, the candidate must be in possession of:</p> <p>1) A final upper secondary school qualification State Matura or Professional State Matura diploma;</p> <p>2) comply to the minimal national quality threshold grade stated by a Council of Ministers decision in anticipation of each academic year¹⁹.</p> <p>3) Comply with HEIs entry criteria.</p> <p>In order to obtain a “Bachelor” diploma, the student must have accumulated as least 180 ECTS.</p> <p>A “Bachelor” diploma gives to the owner the right to access the labour market in both public and private sectors or/and continue any further academic studies on second cycle study programmes.</p>	<p>A) “Master of Sciences”/“Master of Arts” diploma; the admission to “Master of Sciences”/“Master of Arts” study programmes is subject to:</p> <p>1) a Bachelor diploma or another equivalent foreign qualification recognised in the Republic of Albania.</p> <p>2) the specific entry requirements of each single HEI;</p> <p>“Master of Sciences”/“Master of Arts” degrees are issued after the conclusion of a course lasting 2 years (when it comes after a Bachelor degree course) or 5 to 6 years (whenever it is an “Integrated Master of Sciences” programme).</p> <p>A “Master of Science”/“Master of Arts” study programme that lasts 2 years foresee the accumulation of 120 ECTS upon its completion while an “Integrated Master of Science” programme lasting 5 or 6 years foresee the accumulation of 300 or 360 ECTS. A “Master of Science”/“Master of Arts” diploma should be</p>	<p>A) Doctoral degree/scientific grade “Doctor” (Research doctorate, PhD); the admission to a doctoral programme is subject to:</p> <p>1) a “Master of Science”/Master of Arts”/“Integrated master of Science” diploma or another equivalent foreign qualification recognised in the Republic of Albania</p> <p>2) the specific entry requirements of each HEI.</p> <p>Doctoral students are required to elaborate an original research thesis to be presented to the Jury of Experts.</p> <p>B) Long term specialisation diploma is issued after the completion of the respective study programme lasting at least 2 years that foresees the accumulation of at least 120 ECTS.</p> <p>The admission to a long-term specialization is subject to the possession of:</p> <p>is subject to:</p> <p>1) a “Master of Science”/Master of</p>
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¹⁹ Published by the Council of Ministers

<p>the year of finalizing the State Matura diploma; 2. complying with HEIs entry criteria.</p>		<p>obtained after the presentation of a diploma thesis²⁰. A “Master of Sciences”/“Master of Arts” diploma gives to the owner the right to access the labour market in both public and private sectors or/and continue the academic studies on third cycle study programmes.</p> <p>B) “Professional Master” diploma. The admission to “Professional Master” study programmes is subject to:</p> <p>1) a “Bachelor” diploma or another equivalent foreign qualification recognised in the Republic of Albania. 2) the specific entry requirements of each single HEI;</p> <p>“Professional Master” courses last 1 or 2 years and foresee the accumulation of 60 or 120 ECTS upon its completion. A “Professional Master” diploma gives to the owner the right to enter the labour market in both public and private sectors.</p>	<p>Arts”/“Integrated master of Science” diploma or another equivalent foreign qualification recognised in the Republic of Albania 2) the specific entry requirements of each HEI.</p> <p>C) “Executive Master” diploma The admission to Executive Master course is subject to the possession of: is subject to:</p> <p>1) a “Master of Science”/Master of Arts”/“Integrated master of Science” diploma or another equivalent foreign qualification recognised in the Republic of Albania 2) the specific entry requirements of each HEI.</p> <p>“Executive Master” courses last 1 or 2 years. Students must obtain 60 or 120 ECTS after its completion. An “Executive Master” degree gives to the owner the right to access the labour market in both public and private sectors at top levels.</p>
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There are 4 types of assessment: *continuing assessment*, *partial assessment* (course projects, part of courses, etc), *practical learning/Laboratory assessment* and *final exams* for the respective course. HEIs has the autonomy on decide on the type of the assessment but, for each study program

²⁰ Final dissertation micro-thesis

the description of assessment criteria e typology is foreseen as part of necessary documentation for program licencing and evaluation for Accreditation.

Table 8. Summative assessment and title of diploma for HE programs

QF-EHEA	Study programme	Duration in years	ECTS	Learning programme characteristics	Summative assessment	Name of qualification	AQF level
Short Cycle	Professional post-secondary	1	60	Programmes of study with a professional typology		“Professional Certificate” “Certifikatë profesionale”	5
		2	120			“Professional diploma” “Diplomë profesionale”	
First Cycle	Bachelor	3	180	Basic knowledge in each field	General/comprehensive exam or theses	“Bachelor” “Bachelor”	6
Second Cycle	“Master of science”	2	120	Deep theoretical knowledge and scientific research skills in a certain field	Diploma thesis	“Master of Science” “Master i Shkencave”	7
	“Integrated Master of Science”	5/6	300 / 360				
	“Master of Arts”	2	120	Deep theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of art	Diploma thesis	“Master of Arts” “Master i arteve”	
	“Professional Master”	1 / 2	60 / 120	Deep theoretical and practical knowledge in a certain field	General/comprehensive exam or theses	“Professional Master” “Master profesional”	
Third Cycle	“Executive Master”	1 / 2 years	60 / 120	Education of a high scientific and professional level	Diploma thesis	“Executive Master” “Master ekzekutiv”	8
	“Long term specialisation”	2+	120+	Professional training that offers	General/comprehensive exam or	“Specialisation Diploma”	

				knowledge in special occupations	diploma thesis	“Specializim afatgjatë”
	Doctoral studies	3-5		Independent development in scientific research	Doctoral Theses	Scientific grade “Doctor” Gradë Shkencore “Doktor”

As the legal framework in force in Albania all pre-Bologna Process qualifications based on study programmes having lasted at least 4 academic years are equivalent to Master of Science. A complete table of the qualifications pre-Bologna Process and after is presented in the Appendix A.4.

1.3.4 - Lifelong Learning

Adult education is a practice in which adults engage systematic and sustained self-educating activities to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It can mean any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfilment as a lifelong learner.

Adult education reflects a specific philosophy about learning and teaching based on the assumption that adults can and want to learn, that they are able and willing to take responsibility for the learning, and that the learning itself should respond to their needs.

Driven by what one needs or wants to learn, the available opportunities, and the way in which one learns, adult learning is affected by demographics, globalization and technology. The learning happens in many ways and in many contexts just as all adults' lives differ. Adult learning can be in any of the three contexts:

- a) formal structured learning;
- b) non-formal learning;
- c) informal learning.

The 10 public VTCs which are today under the supervision of the NAES²¹, are located in 8 Regions (Tiranë, Shkodër, Elbasan, Korçë, Durrës, Vlorë, Fier and Gjirokastrë). They have been established since 1993 under the Ministry of Labour to offer vocational training skills to people who are unemployed or looking for retraining to quickly enter the labour market. Additionally, there are 833 private training providers licenced to provide short term courses. Continuing Vocational Training (C-VET) is by far less structured than initial VET. It consists of short-term training courses (3 to 9-month duration) offered by public Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) or private training entities. Vocational training is offered as initial preparation for an occupation or

²¹ National Agency for Employment Services

as re-qualification (trainees are mainly referred to the VTCs by the labour offices). The offer of vocational training programmes at the VTCs has been scattered and not organized in terms of structure, content and diversity since Government's reform interventions were mainly focused on the improvement of the secondary VET schools. It was only in 2018 that the MFE adopted an instruction on the templates and duration of nationally unified training courses. The programmes of these courses (national frame curricula) are developed by NAVETQ and adopted by the Minister responsible for VET (MFE). In addition, public VTCs can provide short-term trainings – based on requests from different local actors. For these courses, they do not need a formal approval from a national body. In 2018, 14,794 persons were enrolled in the 10 public VTCs. Most training courses are technical short-term with a duration of 3 to 6 months. Currently, vocational training courses are not included in AQF.

In the pre-university education system, there are 15 (fifteen) 9-year schools and 17 (seventeen) general secondary schools that offer part-time education. Most of the students who attend these schools are adults, who have not managed to complete the education cycle at the age provided by the law on pre-university education. At the end of their studies, the students of Basic Education are provided with a Leaving certificate and in upper secondary education they are provided with a diploma.

The legal framework in force about the types of qualifications in the AQF refers to qualifications for lifelong learning as qualifications that are not part of the formal education subsectors. These can be short courses for adults, special courses for continuous professional development, study programmes for continuous education provided by universities or other public or non-public institutions. The AQF is open for all types of qualifications which are offered with not less than 125 (one hundred and twenty-five) hours or 5 (five) ECTS credits (for higher education qualifications)²².

The formal qualifications can be included in the AQF based on the existing accreditation and quality assurance procedures, meanwhile the inclusion in it of lifelong learning-based qualifications requires the completion of the procedures and criteria of the DCM no.427 of 26.06.2019. The criteria are clearly stipulated and include among other, the rationale on the labour market need, the learning outcome-based qualification, quality assurance of qualification and VET providers, etc. The detailed criteria are described in the section 3.7.

The Ministry responsible for education (MES) and the one responsible for vocational education and training are responsible (MFE) for overseeing the provision of qualifications and quality assurance, according to their respective areas of responsibility. The institutions responsible for following the procedures for determining the level of the AQF for the respective LLL qualification are, as follows:

²² DCM no.427 of 26.06.2019

a) NAVETQ for the subsector of vocational education and training. Currently, to NAVETQ has been given additional human and financial resources do deal with this new function among the others.

b) CES for the sub-sectors of higher education and general education.

These qualifications are assigned the level of the AQF because of comparing the declared learning outcomes for the qualification with the detailed levels descriptors of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, after fulfilling all the above-mentioned criteria and in line with respective procedures stipulated in this decision.

1.3.5 - Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Both basic laws: Law no. 15/2017 “On Education and Vocational Training in the Republic of Albania” as well as Law no. 23/2018 On some changes and additions to Law no. 10 247, dated 4.3.2010, "On the Albanian Qualifications Framework" (amended in 2018), defines the necessity of institutional consolidation to expand the range of functions in response to priorities for the development of the system of vocational qualifications, especially the development and implementation of the Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF) as a lifelong learning instrument and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of education and vocational training providers for better integration into labour market.

Education policies increasingly focus on outcomes and take a lifelong learning perspective. Recognition of competencies that people have acquired through non-formal and informal learning focuses directly on learning outcomes and provides also a steppingstone to further formal education or qualifications that have value in the labour market.

In frame of ILO - IPA 2010, in 2017 has been a pilot process on recognition of prior learning.

What have been done:

- (i) Development of two occupational standards (textile sector);
- (ii) Capacity building of NAVETQ staff;
- (iii) Training of 10 assessors;
- (iv) Preparation of assessment instruments for identified competences;
- (v) Accomplishment of assessment process- practical skills assessment is conducted for 8 candidates in real working situation in the company premises. This piloting has informed the informed the extension of National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) from 2020 to 2022 and as well provided a sound basis to support to start the development of necessary legal framework.

Currently, validation of *non-formal* and *informal* learning is one of the priority measures in the NESS 2022 and as well provided for in both the VET and AQF laws. NESS outlines a national system for validation. Actions that are going to be implemented include:

- The legal framework for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be consolidated;
- RPL implementing institutions will have a clear division of roles in applying RPL;
- Priority sectors for RPL implementation have been identified and RPL has already been implemented in two occupations.

In 2018, with the support of European Training Foundation a joint Kosovo-Albania workshop with a peer learning character was held, to support the development of legal framework in Albania for establishing the system for VNIFL. This system is assessed to address mainly target groups such as: persons who used to work in little family business, returning migrants, redundant workers, people who dropped out the formal education. However, a by-law under the VET law on the system of recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning is ready for adoption by the Council of Ministers.

The initial support for starting the implementation of VNIFL/RPL is expected to come from the Governmental institutions MES, MFE, NAVETQ and NAES. It is essential to have sound outcomes of VNIFL/RPL implementation for rising the interest and confidence of the individuals and of the employers. When individuals will understand and feel the benefits of VNIFL they will become important promoters and other individuals will accept to support financially own assessment and certification. In the Albanian HE system, the non-formal and informal learning is not foreseen.

2 - EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

2.1 - European Qualifications Framework

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework that serves as a translation tool. It helps compare qualifications and qualification systems between countries, making qualifications more readable and understandable for learners, providers and employers across countries and across systems. It has two principal aims:

- to promote mobility of people between countries;
- to facilitate their lifelong learning.

The EQF is a meta framework for National Qualifications Frameworks. The EQF has *eight reference levels* which span the full scale of qualifications, from very basic to highly advanced. The EQF encompasses all levels and types of qualifications, acquired in general, adult, initial and continuing vocational as well as academic education and training, but it does not itself contain any qualifications.

In the figure below is shown the relationship between the EQF, the NQFs and individual qualifications of different countries.

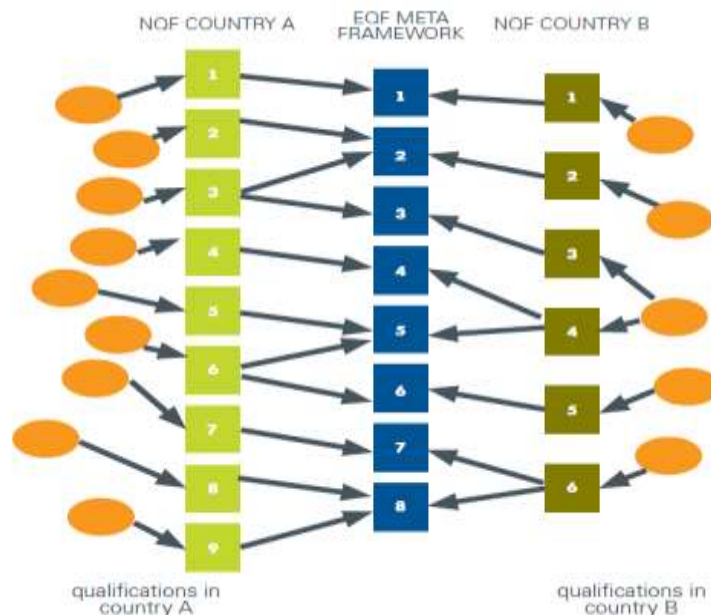


Figure 4. The EQF relationship with NQFs and national qualifications

The eight reference levels of the EQF are described in learning outcomes rather than focusing on inputs such as length of study. The EQF defines learning outcomes as statements of what a learner knows, understands and can do on completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes are specified in three categories – as knowledge, skills and responsibility & autonomy²³.

2.2 - Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) was adopted in 2005 in the framework of the Bologna Process²⁴. The QF-EHEA is an overarching European-wide qualifications framework that organises national higher education qualifications, according to levels of complexity and difficulty. The QF-EHEA has three cycles of higher education qualifications and a short cycle. Higher Education programmes are expressed in European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS or credits). One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS - credits.

The cycles of the QF-EHEA are:

Short Cycle: awarding a Professional Certificate (1 year - 60 ECTS) or a Professional Diploma (2 years - 120 ECTS)

1st cycle: awarding a Bachelor's degree (typically 180 credits)

2nd cycle: awarding a Professional or Scientific Master's degree (respectively 60/120 and 120 ECTS)

²³ 2017 EQF recommendation, Official Journal of the European Union (of 22 May 2017)

²⁴ <https://www.ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks>

3rd cycle: Executive Master degree (60/120 ECTS), Long term specialisation degree (at least 120 ECTS, Doctoral degree (a typical amount of credits is not prescribed for this cycle).

Each cycle of the QF-EHEA is defined by generic descriptors (the “Dublin Descriptors”) in terms of learning outcomes. The Dublin descriptors are broadly applicable in all national contexts and correspond to the upper four levels of the EQF.

European credit systems are key instruments for the accumulation and transfer of knowledge, skills and (wider) competences expressed and measured in terms of credits. ECTS is used in the higher education sector and ECVET in vocational education and training.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)²⁵ is a student-centred system designed to make it easier to recognise periods of study in other countries, increasing and enhancing, this way, the student mobility in Europe. ECTS represent the workload or a quantitative coefficient on which basis are related the respective learning outcomes of a given course or study programme. They are mainly, but not exclusively used in the higher education sector. The learning outcomes achieved in a year of full-time higher education study programme will earn 60 ECTS. All Higher Education programmes in Albania are expressed in ECTS and follow the respective guidelines²⁶.

The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was a framework for the transfer, recognition and (where appropriate) accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes. Its main goals were lifelong learning and transnational mobility for all. It has been developed by the EU Member States and the European Commission to make it easier to give recognition to the knowledge, skills and competences gained by individuals in different learning environments or through periods of vocational education and training abroad and increase the compatibility between the different VET systems in place across Europe, and the qualifications they offer. ECVET aims also to make it more attractive to move between different countries and learning environments and increase the employability of VET graduates and the confidence of employers that each VET qualification requires specific skills and knowledge.

Currently, according to Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020²⁷ on VET, the concept of ECVET points however was generally not applied and ECVET did not lead to the development of a European credit system in vocational education and training. Therefore, this Council Recommendation should include the key principles of ECVET (e.g. units of learning outcomes) related to flexibility. The ECVET tools (e.g. learning agreement and memorandum of understanding) supporting mobility of vocational learners, are to be further developed in the framework of other EU instruments such as those supported under the Erasmus+ programme. For vocational qualifications at post-secondary and tertiary level, the European Credit Transfer and

²⁵ <https://www.ehea.info/page-ects>

²⁶ ECTS user guide

²⁷ Council Recommendation of 24th November 2020 on Vocational Education and Training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience 2020/C 417/01



Accumulation System already in use may be applied. Albania has not yet implemented an ECVET system in VET.

There are not yet European guidelines for the use of credits in pre-university education, although the ECTS are a good basis to extend this instrument into the pre-university education area.

3 - ALBANIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

3.1 - History and development of the AQF

After having signed-up its adhesion to Bologna Process community in 2003, Albania really started to implement the higher education reform on 6th July 2006 during the kick-off meeting organised in Tirana by the Ministry of Education and Science in the presence of European authorities in the area of higher education²⁸ and representatives of HEIs.

By the end of 2006, two Ministers (responsible to Education & Labour) installed a Task Force²⁹, mandated to coordinate, organize and monitor the work on establishing AQF under the kindness of EU CARDS AFP 3 project “Support for Vocational Education and Training Reform”. Since only comprehensive representatives would legitimate its activity, in TF membership have been included experts from the state (ministries & institutions), employers, trade unions, donors’ organizations, universities etc. During 2007 the Task Force worked on preparing of drafts of:

- a) respective AQF law;
- b) explanation report;
- c) draft Decision of Council of Ministers (DCM);
- d) institutional arrangements structure and
- e) financial costs.

During 2008, mostly, it was organised a public awareness campaign, promoting AQF to stakeholders and other beneficiaries. In 2010 was approved by the parliament the AQF Law. On the basis of the in-depth analysis of EQF levels and current Albanian Qualifications Framework levels (and some consideration of possible future qualification development needs), the Task Force concluded there is no point in ‘reinventing the wheel’ if the EQF descriptors prove to be workable in the context of Albania.

As the HE map of Albania was modified in 2015 with the coming in force of the new law of HE, and a better management of the AQF in institutional terms of efficiency was in the daily agenda of the AQF implementation, the modification of the qualification framework was prominent. In 2015 a new Task Force (TF) was established (actually in force after some revisions on the composition and responsibilities including referencing process) by joint order of the minister responsible for general pre-university education and higher education and the minister of finance and economy responsible for VET education. One of the tasks of the TF was to review the law on Qualification framework to further develop and implement EQF and recommendations on this field, drafting the respective bylaws, as well as to coordinate the process of referencing to EQF

²⁸ Mr. Sjur BERGAN - HE Directorate of the CoE and Mr. Stephen ADAMS - UK expert on NQF

²⁹ See the Appendix A.2.1

and QF-EHEA. The proposed amendments of the draft law were approved in in 2018 (law 23/2018) and in 2019 were approved three DCMs in application of it as follows:

1. DCM no. 426, of 26.6.2019 “Organization, functioning and criteria selection for the members of sectoral committees and their reward”³⁰;
2. DCM no. 427, of 26.6.2019 “The approval of criteria and inclusion procedures for long-life learning qualifications, according to the Albanian qualifications framework levels for education and professional training”³¹
3. DCM no. 428, of 26.6.2019 “The approval of table detailed descriptions of the Albanian qualifications framework levels”;³²

During the entire work from the establishment, the TF was assisted and supported by the valuable expertise of the European Training Foundation.

3.2 - General description and objectives

The Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF) identifies and classifies qualifications in accordance with labour market and social demands. The AQF is a comprehensive framework that integrates and coordinates the national qualification areas to improve transparency, access, progress and quality of qualifications. The AQF classifies all qualifications in eight hierarchical levels. Each level is defined by learning outcomes in three domains: knowledge, skills and broader competencies, the so-called level descriptors. All qualifications included in the AQF will be quality assured. The Albanian Qualifications Framework is built on the principles of the European Qualifications Framework.

AQF Principles and objectives

The overall purpose of the AQF is to regulate and improve qualifications in accordance with economic, social and cultural needs of the country by developing, recognising and awarding them in the Republic of Albania, based on standards of knowledge, skills and competencies to be achieved by the pupils / students.

The main principles of the AQF are:

- learning outcomes-based qualifications;
- flexibility;
- taking into consideration lifelong learning in conformity with applicable legal framework;
- recognition and evolution of qualifications;
- quality assurance and identification of institutions which assure quality of acquired qualifications;
- identification of implementing institutions.

The main objectives of the AQF are:

³⁰ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-426.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-427.pdf>

³² <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-428.pdf>

- to guarantee that qualifications that are included in the AQF are quality assured and based on labour market and society requirements;
- to guarantee equal opportunities for qualification holders;
- to ensure comprehensiveness, clarity and transparency of the qualifications and of their inter-linkage;
- to encourage development of learning outcomes-based qualifications, which are comparable with international standards in terms of knowledge, skills and wider competences;
- to encourage and promote lifelong learning, including qualifications for continuous development of skills, and adult learning in AQF;
- to improve access to qualifications and the flexibility of pathways towards qualifications acquisition;
- to improve progress and mobility within and among the systems of formal, informal and non-formal learning in the framework of vocational education and training;
- to improve individuals' employment opportunity to match the obtained qualification;
- to encourage comparability and recognition of qualifications acquired in Albania with qualifications in other countries.

The functions for the establishment and proper functioning of the AQF, as stated by the law in force are:

- a) accreditation of institutions, which offer programmes that lead to framework qualifications and evaluate pupils / students;
- b) development, maintenance and validity of standards and qualifications;
- c) quality assurance and evaluation of pupils / trainees / students;
- d) the validity of the certification of successful pupils / trainees / students;
- e) general management and quality assurance of the framework.

These functions are exercised by the *implementing institutions* of general, vocational and higher education. These institutions operate in accordance with the policies and regulations approved in that respect.

The Albanian Qualifications Framework has a vertical and a horizontal dimension. The vertical axis classifies qualifications according to qualification levels, while the horizontal axis classifies qualifications according to type.

3.3 - Structure of the AQF

The AQF is structured in eight levels at which qualifications can be placed. The lowest level is 1 and the highest level is 8. Each level is defined by level descriptors in three issues: knowledge, skills and broader competences. These are expressed as learning outcomes. The progress from

level to level is defined by increasingly complex learning outcomes; they describe an increasing complexity of knowledge, skills and broader competences³³.



Figure 5. Albanian Qualifications Framework organigram

- LEVEL 1** **First level Pre-university (general):** compulsory education
- LEVEL 2** **Second VET level:** Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers;
- LEVEL 3** **Third VET level:**
-Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers;
-Professional certificate issued at the end of a three-years program for skilled workers;
-Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme;
- LEVEL 4** **Fourth VET level:**
-State Professional Matura Diploma issued upon completion of the vocational high school programme;
-Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the four-year study program for middle technicians / managers;
-Professional certificate issued at the conclusion of the one-year program for middle technicians /managers;
-Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for middle technicians' / managers;
-Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme.
Fourth Pre-university general level:
-State Matura Diploma issued upon completion of the high school programme;

³³ Broader competencies refer to autonomy and responsibility domain as by Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning and repealing the Recommendation of the EU Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning.



			<p>4. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the four-year study program for middle technicians / managers;</p>
2	<p>Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers;</p>	<p>Leaving Certificate (at the completion of the 9th grade compulsory education)</p>	<p>1. Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers;</p> <p>2. Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme;</p> <p>3. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for technician's / middle managers.</p> <p>4. Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme.</p>
3	<p>1. Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers</p>	<p>Professional Certificate (VET) issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers;</p>	<p>1. Professional certificate issued at the conclusion of the one-year program for middle technicians /managers;</p> <p>2. Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme.</p>
	<p>2. Professional certificate issued at the end of a three-years program for skilled workers;</p>		
	<p>3. Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme;</p>	<p>Leaving Certificate (at the completion of the 9th grade compulsory education) (only for apprenticeship programme)</p>	
4	<p>1. Professional State Matura</p>	<p>1. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the four-year study</p>	<p>1. Professional Certificate, Up to two-year post-</p>



		<p>program for middle technicians / managers;</p> <p>2. Professional certificate issued at the conclusion of the one-year program for middle technicians /managers;</p> <p>3. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for middle technicians / managers; Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme.</p>	<p>secondary study programmes (VET)</p> <p>2. Professional certificate (1 year) 60 ECTS,</p> <p>3. Professional diploma (2 years) 120 ECTS</p>
	<p>2. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the four-year study program for middle technicians / managers;</p>	<p>Leaving Certificate of 9th grade</p>	<p>All types of vocational qualification at 4th AQF level with completion of Professional State Matura give access to Bachelor, Up to two-year post-secondary study programmes, Professional certificate (1 year) 60 ECTS, Professional diploma (2 years) 120 ECTS</p>
	<p>3. Professional certificate issued at the conclusion of the one-year program for middle technicians /managers;</p>	<p>Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers;</p>	
	<p>4. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for middle technicians / managers;</p>	<p>Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers;</p>	
	<p>5. Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme.</p>	<p>1. Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers;</p> <p>2. Professional certificate issued at</p>	

		the end of a three-years program for skilled workers; 3. Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme	
	State Matura	Certificate of 9 th grade (compulsory education)	Bachelor, Up to two-year post-secondary study programmes
5	1. Professional Certificate, Up to two-year post-secondary study programmes (VET)	Professional State Matura; State Matura	Bachelor
	2. Professional certificate (1 year) 60 ECTS		
	3. Professional diploma (2 years) 120 ECTS		
6	Bachelor (at least 180 ECTS)		Professional Master, Master of Science, Master of Arts
7	Professional Master (60 ECTS 1 year, or 120 ECTS 2 years)	Bachelor	Executive Master, Long term specialisations, Doctoral Studies
	Master of Arts (120 ECTS – 2 years)		
	Master of Science (120 ECTS – 2 years)	Professional State Matura; State Matura	
	Master of Science integrated program (300 ECTS up to five years, or 360 ECTS up to six years)		
8	Executive master (60 ECTS up to one year, or 120 ECTS up to two years)	Master of Science, Master of Arts	
	Long term specialisations (120 ECTS)		
	Doctoral Studies		

3.4 - AQF: qualification definition, levels and level descriptors

Table 10. AQF detailed level descriptors

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
1	First level of the AQF : Certificate of 9th grade – Dëftesë Lirimi		
	<p>Basic knowledge on the surrounding environment but needs practice and continuous training.</p> <p>Basic knowledge for wellbeing and environment care.</p> <p>General basic knowledge.</p>	<p>Necessary practical skills to accomplish simple everyday tasks.</p> <p>Ability to apply the required knowledge gained during schooling, to perform different assignments.</p> <p>Ability to make superposition based on the information gathered for the world</p>	<p><i>Personal, civic and digital competencies</i></p> <p>-Able to (i) work under supervision, following the given model or instruction; (ii) choose the necessary information resources assisted by the teacher, to do a school assignment individually or in group; (iii) be evaluated and evaluate others with the assistance of the teacher</p> <p><i>Thinking and learning to learn competencies</i></p> <p>- Able to study and work with others to receive and provide information</p> <p><i>Communication and expression competencies</i></p> <p>- Able to: (i) talk with self-confidence and communicate in writing; (ii) understand and express verbally and written form in foreign languages, for needs or simple situations; (iii) protect his/her rights without outraging those of the others.</p>
2	Second level of AQF of Vocational Qualification – Kualifikim Profesional i nivelit të dytë Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers-Certifikatë profesionale për programme 2-vjeçare për punonjës gjysmë të kualifikuar		
	<p>Poses basic factual knowledge in a given field of study and/or work.</p> <p>Knowledge on how to extract, select and use simple information</p> <p>Having basic knowledge of important social spheres (family, school, working environment, small community, etc.).</p>	<p>Having basic cognitive and practical skills required to carry out simple tasks, solve routine problems and do routine activities.</p> <p>Application of a limited number of skills to carry out more complex tasks in familiar contexts.</p> <p>Carrying out simple operations by means of</p>	<p>Work or study under supervision and limited autonomy.</p> <p>Carry out activities in a relative scale of autonomy in known contexts, taking responsibility to accomplish a certain task.</p> <p>Carry out work tasks in unknown contexts following the written or verbal</p>

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
	<p>Knowing the possibilities and risk of using the required technologies independently.</p>	<p>various instruments and easy-to-use machines. Skills on self-orientation and acting properly in a certain context. Skills in expressing activities that he/she can't carry out, and the reason why.</p>	<p>instructions of the supervisor. Carry out routine activities under unchanging circumstances. Demonstration of awareness to continue his/her further qualification. Exchange information verbally and in written. Communicate successfully in a diverse social and cultural environment. Acknowledge the need to acquire some key competences (mother tongue, mathematics, computer literacy, etc.) Working in a group, accepting and expressing an opinion and/or criticism.</p>
3	<p>Third AQF level of Vocational Qualifications – Kualifikime Profesional të nivelit të tretë -Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers - Certifikatë profesionale për programe 1-vjecare për punonjës të kualifikuar -Professional certificate issued at the end of a three-years program for skilled workers- Certifikatë profesionale për programe 3-vjecare për punonjës të kualifikuar -Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme- Certifikatë profesionale për programe të çirakërisë</p>		
	<p>Knowledge of facts, principles and general concepts in a field of study and/or job. Knowledge on ways of searching, extracting, processing and using different types of information. Knowledge on types of material, instruments, working tools, and machineries, and their interrelation in a certain work activity. Knowledge on using the field of study corresponding terminology.</p>	<p>Basic necessary cognitive and practical skills to accomplish tasks and solve problems using methods, materials, working tools and basic information. Skills to independently carry out previously acquired tasks. Skills on taking decisions for a change following rules and instructions in case the work conditions change. Skills on carrying out complex operations by means of various working tools, machines, apparatuses and measurement devices.</p>	<p>Taking responsibility to carry out the tasks assigned at work and/or study. Adjusting personal behaviour to solve problems in certain circumstances. Work independently under changing circumstances, by taking responsibility to carry out the task assigned and to evaluate owns performance according to previously established criteria. Demonstrate ability to take decisions about his/her own education and future career development by self-evaluating his/her own competencies.</p>

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
		Skills to understand instructions, tasks and explanations different from the ones previously studied. Skills to explain the carried-out activities, proposing new solutions.	Demonstrate awareness on the possibility to continue further qualification. Readiness to participate in trainings, recognising the field in which it is necessary to acquire more knowledge, skills and competencies. Communicating effectively with colleagues, clients and direct supervisor.
4	In-depth factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context within a field of study and/or work. Knowledge on ways of processing and using complex information. Expressing ideas verbally and in written, formulating tasks, instructions, explanations, using the corresponding terminology. In-depth knowledge of democracy and civil society.	Wide range of cognitive and practical skills to solve complex problems. Demonstrate creative thinking and employs alternative methods and ways in familiar and/or unfamiliar situations or environment. Skills to consider and view tasks and problems within a field of work and/or study from different angles according to previously established criteria. Skill to transfer knowledge and skills between different fields of study or work in carrying out complex tasks and solving specific problems;	Carry out self-management within the instructions of job and/or study context, which are usually predictable but changing. Demonstration of initiative and being able to set oneself goals to plan, justify own actions and take responsibility for them. Take responsibility while monitoring or supervising the routine work of others. Ability to express critical attitude and take responsibility while applying the acquired technologies. Working independently under changing conditions; Ability to take decisions about further qualification

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
		<p>Skills to carry out complex operations by means of working tools, measurement devices, machines and apparatuses.</p> <p>Skills to organise, control and support staff, giving explanations or instructions to carry out a particular activity.</p> <p>Skill to evaluate the quality of finished product and performance of the team members.</p> <p>Skills to develop an action plan using the available resources.</p>	<p>education and future development based on own competencies.</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness for further education and training opportunities.</p> <p>Able to work constructively in heterogeneous groups.</p> <p>Ability to independently decide on the approach of successful public presentation of different types of information in the field of study and/or work.</p> <p>Carrying out complex tasks under changing conditions and take responsibility for the work of others in solving specific problems.</p>
5	<p>Specialised factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work and/or study and consciousness on the boundaries of these knowledge.</p> <p>Use, process and analyse specific information of the field of work and/or study.</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge, theories, applied methodologies within the field of study.</p> <p>Use principles of planning, organising and control of processes in a particular field of activity.</p> <p>Knowledge to develop assessment criteria.</p>	<p>Wide range of cognitive and practical skills needed to find creative solutions for abstract problems.</p> <p>Carrying out complex operations by means of working tools, machineries, apparatuses, or other devices.</p> <p>Demonstration of skills in planning, organisation and controlling of job activities.</p> <p>Skills to control and support personnel, by providing explanations or instructions to carry out a specific activity.</p>	<p>Apply management and supervision in work or study contexts where is an unforeseen change of circumstances.</p> <p>Review and develop personal and others achievement.</p> <p>Carry out comprehensive tasks in different Carry out comprehensive tasks in different circumstances, take managerial responsibility for the performance of others and allocation of recourses.</p> <p>Working independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks.</p> <p>Bear responsibility for the job performance.</p> <p>Take responsibility for the appropriate use of the equipment.</p>



AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
			<p>Communicating effectively at different levels in national and foreign language. Recognition of gaps in own knowledge, skills and competencies and takes the necessary actions to improve them by self-study and participation in seminars, trainings, etc.</p>
6	<p>Bachelor - Bachelor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their areas of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed; 2. ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context; 3. knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subjects, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study; 4. an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretation based on that knowledge. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making; 2. skills of understanding and applying their acquired knowledge in a professional way in compliance with the field of expertise. Skills of applying the supporting concepts and principles beyond the context of the field of study by introducing, each time when needed, the application of those principles, methods and tools under an employment point of view and to find the solution to the problems in complex and specific fields by conceiving and supporting the arguments for solving the problems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis and concrete works in this context; 2. define administrative goals, manage resources and teams, show responsibility in work and study in an unpredictable context that require problems solving skills in a multi-factorial environment.; show creativity in of the writing projects and initiative in process management that aim at tiers training and by raising the performance of the teams. 3. effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist environment audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively in their field of application; 4. deploy comprehensive views and manifest

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
			solidarity with the others over different issues; gather and interpret important data to give judgements that include reflexion on important social, scientific and ethic issues; 5. undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within employment structures.
7	<p>Professional Master – Master Profesional Master of Sciences – Master i Shkencave</p> <p>1. a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice;</p> <p>1. a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;</p> <p>2. originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;</p> <p>3. conceptual understanding that enables the student:</p>	<p>1. ability to manage self-learning as well as methodical use of acquired knowledge and primary resources;</p> <p>2. transferable skills, required employment, requiring the exercising of personal initiatives and responsibilities, decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts, independent learning skills required to pursue professional progress.</p> <p>3. specific skills in problem-solving and/or innovation in developing knowledge and procedures and knowledge integration from different fields, as well;</p> <p>4. being critical of knowledge issues in a field and the connection between their different fields;</p> <p>skills of integrating knowledge of managing</p>	<p>1. deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences by using the right techniques;</p> <p>2. review and reflect over norms, social and ethical relations and react to change them;</p> <p>3. demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level in a complex environment seeking for a solution by integrating multiple factors;</p> <p>4. application of acquired methods and techniques, updating, extending,</p>

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate to propose new hypotheses. 	complex situations, of formulating judgements over scarce or incomplete data , that includes reflexion on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the knowledge application and their judgements.	their application and the starting project leading that are based on; 5. assessment accomplishment under a critical, argued process and abstract concepts hypothesis on data of a specific problem and the deployment of the judgement and possible solution to it.
8	Executive Master - Master Ekzekutiv Longterm specialisation – Specializim afatgjatë Doctoral studies – Studime të doktoratës		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and interpretation of new knowledge through advanced scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication. Use of specialised knowledge to analyse, assess and summarize new and complex ideas at the most advanced level of a that specific field of study. Systematic understanding mastery of the fundamental body of knowledge, that is the core of an academic discipline or professional field. Understanding mastery as well as the most advanced methods and techniques application. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Skills and highly advanced and specialized and research techniques. Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and autonomous initiative on complex and critical situations, necessary to perform scientific work and innovation. Skills of giving a contribution through original research that tends reach the boundary of knowledge by developing fundamental work, some of which deserve to be published at national or international level. Skills of critical analyses, synthesis and assessment of complex ideas and communication with the scientific and academic community in the field of expertise. Promotion of academic, social, cultural and technological 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Effective application of judgements on specific field issues in a specialist and non-specialist community. High-level communication in the mother tongue or a in a foreign language of the acquired scientific results based on a fundamental or application research performed with homologue colleagues by engaging a critical dialog and leading a complex social process. High-level development of techniques and new methods in the field of expertise and new ideas and process development in the framework of the work, study of scientific research.

AQF level	Knowledge	Skills	Broader Competences (Responsibility and autonomy)
		developments in a society of knowledge.	

3.5 - Types of qualifications in the AQF

The AQF is an enabler of lifelong learning. This means that, in principle, all types of qualifications available in the country can be included in the AQF; if they meet certain quality criteria.

However, the framework will initially include only qualifications that are provided by the formal education subsystems that have a strong focus on initial education for young people: general/pre-university education, vocational education and higher education. These qualifications are regulated in the laws of higher education, general education and vocational education and training.

Provisions are already made³⁵ in view of qualifications for lifelong learning inclusion in the AQF. These can be short courses for adults, special courses for continuous professional development, study programmes for continuous education, provided by higher education institutions. We categorise them as qualifications for lifelong learning. The AQF will in principle be open for all types of qualifications for lifelong learning, encouraging learners to carry on their academic studies, professional training or adult learning activities.

The AQF is in principle open for all types of qualifications for lifelong learning. But while the formal qualifications can be included in the AQF based on existing accreditation and quality assurance procedures, inclusion of qualifications for lifelong learning requires special criteria and procedures that will be regulated in a DCM no 427 of 26.06.2019³⁴. Table 1 presents the types of qualifications that have been identified for inclusion in the AQF in the AQF revised Law³⁶. The column qualifications for lifelong learning shows examples of qualifications that can be included in the AQF in a later stage according to DCM no 427 of 26.06.2019 (see section 3.6.).

Table 11. Types of Qualifications in the AQF³⁷

AQF Level	General/traditional Qualifications 1	Vocational / Professional Qualifications 2	Lifelong learning Qualifications 3
1	Leaving certificate after completion of compulsory 9-year education		Minimum entry requirements to work or social life

³⁵ DCM no 427 of 26.06.2019

³⁶ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/rreth-nesh/baza-ligjore/>

³⁷ Appendix 1 of the Law No. 10247/2010 "On the Albanian qualifications framework", as amended

2		Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for semi-skilled workers;	Bridge courses Vocational training courses Specialisation courses based on professional requirements
3		1. Professional certificate issued at the end of a one-year program for skilled workers; 2. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of a three-year program for skilled workers; 3. Professional Certificate issued upon completion of an apprenticeship programme;	Bridge courses Vocational training courses Specialisation courses based on professional requirements
4	State Matura Diploma issued at the end of the general upper secondary and oriented school programs	1. State Professional Matura Diploma issued upon completion of the vocational high school programme; 2. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the four-year study program for middle technicians / managers; 3. Professional certificate issued at the conclusion of the one-year program for middle technicians /managers; 4. Professional Certificate issued at the conclusion of the two-year program for middle technicians / managers; 5. Professional Certificate issued at the end of an apprenticeship programme.	Bridge courses Vocational training courses Specialisation courses based on professional requirements
5		Post-secondary study programme (Short Cycle in HE) (Professional Certificate or Professional Diploma) Professional non-university study programme post-secondary (Professional certificate)	Study programmes for continuing education
6	Bachelor		
7	Master of Science Master of Arts Integrated Master of Science	Professional Master	Study programmes for continuing education

	Diploma (4-year study programs before the enactment of the Bologna system)		
8	Doctoral studies	Executive Master Long-term specialisation	Study programmes for continuing education

3.6 - Allocating qualifications to AQF levels, legal basis

3.6.1 – General Pre-University Education System

Pre-university education provides two types of qualifications. The certificate after 9-years compulsory education is allocated at level 1 and the State Matura Diploma, issued upon successful completion of (general) upper secondary education is allocated at AQF level 4. Both are completed with a national exam. Allocation to AQF levels 1 and 4 is based on international comparison with similar qualifications from European countries or neighbouring countries and with ISCED. The institution responsible to develop these qualifications is AQAPE.

3.6.2 – Vocational Education and training

The VET law and the AQF Law regulate the allocation of qualification types to AQF 2-5 levels. Progress routes are also regulated in both laws. NAVETQ uses detailed level descriptors for 2-5 AQF levels fully in line with AQF level descriptors, in order to better orient the LO translation process.

All types of vocational qualifications share the same characteristic as they are defined and developed based on a predefined methodology by NAVETQ. All qualifications belonging to these types are described in terms of learning outcomes and have a clear division between knowledge, skills and broader competences rubrics. This makes it easier to compare the LO expressions of the qualifications with the respective AQF generic and detailed level descriptors.

The learning outcomes statements usually contain the following components: a verb that indicates what the learner is expected to know or be able to do at the end of the period of learning; an object that indicates on what or with what the learner is acting, and in some cases indications of the nature of performance which provide links with the assessment criteria.

In VET system, the NAVETQ has developed a coherent policy cycle of internal processes for the development and maintenance of vocational qualifications³⁸ which supports the relevance of the qualifications for the labour market.

The first step to design the vocational qualifications is an *analysis* of labour market, by using different methods and tools in identifying skills/occupations needed in the labour market. Additionally, in 2015 a study on “Building AQF- Demand side analysis”³⁹ had identified 182 most

³⁸ Referring to the Methodical Guide on Developing Vocational Qualifications Descriptors in Albania (2009), accessible online at: <http://www.akafp.gov.al/kualifikimet-profesionale/udhezues/>

³⁹ Gishti. E. Shkreli. A. ETF, 2015

demanded occupations in order to inform the process for populating 2-5 AQF levels with relevant qualifications.



In addition, NAES has been responsible to conduct the Skills Needs Analysis since 2010 on a two-year basis and in the meantime several sector skills need analysis are conducted based on the request of NAVETQ.

Secondly, NAVETQ develops and maintains the list of occupations since 2009. Currently, the revised list has 10 major groups, 43 sub major groups

Figure 6. Diagram of VET validation scheme

133 minor groups, 480-unit groups and 5489 job titles, and a coding system that reflects the hierarchy from the main occupation group to the job title⁴⁰. NAVETQ maintains the list to remain coherent with changes in different sectors of economy. The revised National List of Occupations is adopted in 2017. In terms of standards on which the qualification is based, referring to international definitions of occupational standards (CEDEFOP glossary, UNESCO -UNEVOC glossary)⁴¹ the Occupational Descriptions developed by NAVETQ can be considered as *occupational standards* according to the European Terminology of European education and training policy. Each occupation description includes structured information on: (i) occupation group; (ii) occupation titles included according to the national list of occupations; (iii) occupation code according to the national list of occupations; (iv) competency level; (v) approval date; (vi) general description of the occupations group; (vii) main functions, activities or tasks; (viii) general entry criteria to work in this occupation; and (ix) examples of job titles or similar occupations.

The occupation descriptions are designed in cooperation with social partners and professional experts, following standardised methods, such as DACUM⁴² method. From 2018, an improved model of occupational standard is designed and properly used to better inform the translation of occupational data into qualification standards written in terms of LO. All the updated occupational standards are designed based on the improved model. The current template includes the following elements: (i) occupation titles included according to the national list of occupations; (ii) occupation code according to the national list of occupations and competency level; (iii) validation and approval date; (iv) entry requirements; (v) general description of the occupations; (vi) functions

⁴⁰ <http://listakombetareprofesioneve.al/index.php#services>

⁴¹ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4064>

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=TVETipedia+Glossary+A-Z>

⁴² DACUM is an acronym for Developing a Curriculum. Developing a Curriculum, is a process that incorporates the use of a focus group of incumbent workers in a facilitated storyboarding process to capture the major duties and related tasks included in an occupation, as well as, the necessary knowledge, skills, traits and other related information.

and related tasks, required knowledge and attitudes; (viii) performance criteria; (ix) work context; (x) required consumable materials and tools, equipment and (xi) work conditions (see example in the Appendix A.6)

The occupations classification itself and especially occupational descriptions/standards are a valuable source of information to develop and maintain vocational qualifications. They form the basis for the National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications, compiled by NAVETQ and containing all vocational qualifications at the AQF levels 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Third steps, the standards of occupations are the basis to develop the Vocational qualifications standards. There is a perfect match between the learning outcomes for these qualifications standards and the AQF level descriptors, as the AQF level descriptors have been used as a guide for writing learning outcomes for these qualifications. However, the learning outcomes for the qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competences are much richer compared to the respective AQF generic level descriptors.

Each qualification standard (see Appendix A.7) includes information on:

- (i) qualification title and qualification code;
- (ii) duration (workload to get this qualification);
- (iii) level of the vocational qualification;
- (iv) scope of the qualification;
- (v) admission criteria;
- (vi) further qualification and employment possibilities;
- (vii) approval date;
- (viii) information on previous versions;
- (ix) learning outcomes expressed in knowledge, skills and broader competencies.

The vocational qualifications development process goes through an internal quality assurance system to verify if a qualification fits the respective AQF level and reflects the competencies demanded by the labour market. The external validation is currently taken in consideration in the AQF Law and is addressed accordingly through clear procedures and with external field experts. All the standards need to be revised every 4 years. The *qualification standards* are prepared in collaboration with main stakeholders, including social partners, professionals and qualification experts.

A qualification standard is the basis for the development of national frame curricula for that qualification. NAVETQ is the institution responsible for the development of the national frame curricula for each vocational qualification, which is approved by the Minister in charge for vocational education. A frame curriculum is mostly organized in subjects for theory part and in modules for practical part including compulsory professional practice modules and elective

professional practice modules. The frame curricula serve as a guide for VET to develop the school level curricula leading to vocational qualifications.

NAVETQ issues as well the principles and assessment criteria for summative assessment for certification. Formative and summative students' assessment in VET usually refers to official instructions and guidelines. The frame curricula offer recommendations on how to verify the proficiency of learning outcomes of a qualification. NAVETQ provides also different guidelines for VET teachers and providers with assessment methods and assessment tools (such as tests, projects, control check list, etc.). VET providers are responsible for assessment and certification of vocational qualifications at the AQF levels 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Finally, The National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications developed by NAVETQ is de facto the register of vocational qualifications in Albania and is approved by the Minister in charge of VET⁴³. Currently, the National Catalogue for Vocational qualifications includes 122 vocational qualifications⁴⁴ which are totally based in LO.

The VET provider issues vocational certificate and the supplement to students that have successfully completed the exams for a vocational qualification. Students who have achieved a certificate at the AQF level 4, are eligible to take part in the Professional State Matura exams. The summative exams for the Professional State Matura are centrally organised by MES, and the successful students will be awarded with Professional State Matura Diploma

Establishment of the sector committees (see in the section 3.9 - Management and quality assurance of qualifications) with participation of social partners will set up and revise VET qualifications in selected sectors and thus significantly contribute to the external quality assurance of the vocational qualifications in the AQF.

Regarding old vocational qualifications delivered before the adoption of AQF, NAVETQ is the institution in charge to level them in AQF. The process takes into consideration the comparing table due to legal basis in Albania, as referred in Appendix A.4.

Credit system in pre-university education

Regarding the credit system in pre-university education, including general, oriented and vocational stream, in 2007 certain changes were introduced in the curricula in the general secondary education system including the use of elective subjects following different European models. In this context, it was decided that the students' final assessment was not a simple average, but a weighted average considering also additional learning hours necessary for each subject. On this purpose, a credit system for the students' learning evaluation has been introduced in the Albanian secondary education system, covering both general and vocational learning. Thus, Law No. 69/2012 "On pre university education system in the Republic of Albania", article 48 stipulated that the students of higher secondary education shall be evaluated both in credits and in descriptive words in their final

⁴³ VET Law 2017. Article 17.2 and order of the Minister No 99, dated on 25.5.2021, "On approval of National Catalogue for Vocational Qualifications"

⁴⁴ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/lista-kombetare-profesionale/>

evaluation. The introduced credit system was conceived for the students going to the university, and not for mobility purposes and didn't ease the horizontal transfer of students in the country. In this context, this credit system in general and vocational secondary education continued until 2016. After that, a credit system is not in place anymore because there was any added value based on a study done for introducing credit system in VET in 2020. This study was ordered by NAVETQ with the support of ETF, in order to introduce credit system in VET in Albania. For that an assessment was made with the aim to understand Albanian actual situation in this respect and as well to provide clarifications on what is the added value of ECVET or other credit systems in Albania and what needs to be done to introduce and establish it.

3.6.3 – Higher Education System

The HE and the AQF laws regulate the allocation of qualification types to AQF 5-8 levels. Progress routes are regulated in both laws. HE area uses detailed level descriptors for 5-8 AQF levels fully in line with AQF level descriptors, to better orient the LO translation process and in line with ECTS gained by any study programme leading to any level qualification. Moreover, the LO of all concrete qualifications are part of the diploma supplement⁴⁵ awarded to all the undergraduates or graduates of all Albanian HEIs.

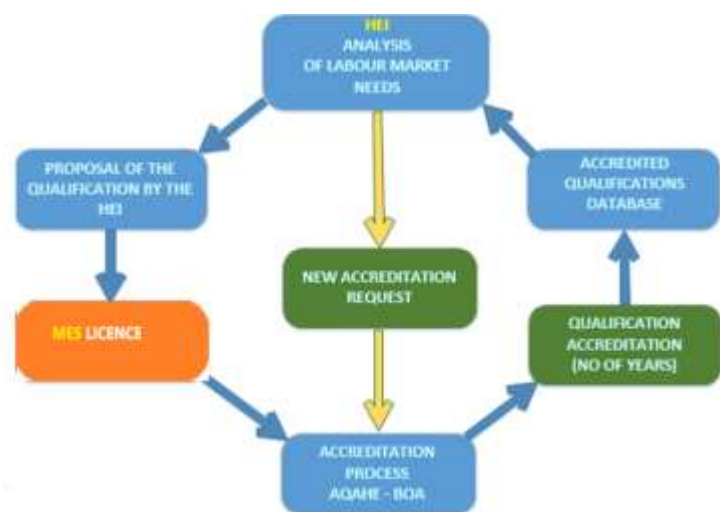


Figure 7. Diagram of HE accreditation scheme

The life cycle of a HE qualification validation is shown in the diagram of the figure 6. **The first step** is made by the qualification offering HEI by identifying the needs of the labour market in terms of the academic area and its LO.

The second step also made by the HEI is to present to the MES (ministry in charge of HE) the proposal about the qualification in line with the HE actual legal framework.

The offering HEI must present its proposal in compliance with the national HE quality code, published by the AQAHE⁴⁶.

The third step is the evaluation process of the proposed qualification, led by the MES through an ad-hoc technical group of area experts, in view of *awarding the due licence* to the proposing HEI about the respective study programme leading to the proposed qualification.

⁴⁵ Based on the Europass model as a tool that enables students to document their skills, qualifications and experience in view of their employment

⁴⁶ <https://www.ascal.al/sq/sigurimi-i-cilesise/kodi-i-cilesise>

The fourth step is the process of accreditation based on the law of HE and the national HE quality code, conducted and coordinated by the AQAHE. Starting from the self-evaluation report of the offering HEI about the study programme, an area external group of experts (selected by the AQAHE from the external experts list approved by the Board of Accreditation⁴⁷) begins the external evaluation process, which ends up with an external evaluation report. This last one is presented to the Board of Accreditation, based on the quality HE code template in which are assessed the accreditation fields, standards per each field and criteria per each standard.

The fifth step consists in the decision-making process of the **BA**, which takes into account the external evaluation report and decides⁴⁸:

1. whether the study programme must be accredited or not;
2. in the affirmative case, the number of accreditation validity years from 1 to 6, with eventual recommendations and the timetable of their fulfilment.

On that basis **the sixth step** is the inclusion of the study programme leading to the proposed qualification into the national database of accredited study programmes with the respective validity duration in years, kept by both AQAHE and CES. The offering HEI is officially noticed by the AQAHE of the BA decision.

At this stage, a **new life cycle** for the study programme leading to the qualification starts at the end of the accreditation validity duration, as it has been set by the BA decision.

3.6.4 - Qualifications for lifelong learning

The legal framework that regulates the inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications into the AQF is based on the DCM no. 427 of 26.6.2019⁴⁹, the main goal of which is to determine the level of qualifications for lifelong learning, in order to include them in the relevant levels of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, for education and vocational training, in accordance with the criteria and the due procedures.

All recognised lifelong learning qualifications are foreseen to be offered with not less than 125 workload hours or 5 ECTS (for higher education qualifications) by providing institutions that are required to determine the respective diploma / certificate and the level of the qualification, according to the AQF law in force. These qualifications are assigned to the level of the AQF as a result of comparing their declared learning outcomes with the detailed descriptors of the corresponding levels of the Albanian Qualifications Framework.

The decision, set by the ministry responsible for education (MES) and / or the ministry responsible for vocational education and training (MFE), is taken according to the area of responsibility and it is based on meeting the criteria, as follows:

⁴⁷ BA – Board of Accreditation

⁴⁸ Each offering Albanian HEI must be institutionally accredited in “ex-ante”

⁴⁹ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-427.pdf>

- a) having clearly defined the title of the qualification;
- b) the qualification provider has been licensed in accordance with the legal framework in force by the authority covering the relevant area of responsibility;
- c) the total number of ECTS (for the HE) or workload (in case of non HE) is determined;
- d) the need for the given qualification from the labour market after a market study;
- e) qualification to be based on learning outcomes;
- f) the qualification should have clear goals and objectives, provide opportunities for progress, as well as have support from stakeholders;
- g) the proposed level of the qualification in the AQF is clearly defined according to the detailed descriptors of the levels of the AQF and to be accompanied by the relevant reasoning, which argues the reason for positioning this qualification at the proposed level on the basis of the minimal level requirements to be admitted in;
- h) the requirements for the minimum qualification entry level;
- i) in the case of VET qualifications, the description of any qualification should be based on the descriptors / standards of the respective professions;
- j) presenting clear criteria for evaluating the achievements of the individual at the end of the qualification;
- k) a document issued by the qualification provider that certifies the possession of the relevant qualification is issued only after achieving a positive result in the assessment of the required learning outcomes.

The institutions responsible for following the procedures for determining the level of the AQF for the respective LLL qualification are, as follows:

- a) NAVETQ for the subsector of vocational education and training. Currently, to NAVETQ has been given additional human resources do deal with this new function among the others;
- b) CES for the sub-sectors of higher education and general education.

For the inclusion of a given lifelong learning qualification in the AQF, an “ad-hoc” group of experts should be established by the institutions responsible for each area of the AQF. The group of experts will be assisted by the technical secretariat with members from those responsible institutions.

The application to include a lifelong learning qualification in the AQF will be made through a request of the providing institution to the responsible institutions for this purpose.

The “ad-hoc” group of experts, after reviewing and evaluating the information provided by the applicant, returns a response within 1 month, for the inclusion of the qualification or rejection of the request or completion of documentation. After the request for completion of the documentation, if the documentation is incomplete again, the practice is archived, and the applicant reapplies according to the provisions of the legal framework in force.

These qualifications are assigned the level of the AQF as a result of comparing the declared learning outcomes for the qualification with the detailed levels descriptors of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, after fulfilling the criteria and respecting the procedures as defined in this decision.

Currently, the consolidation of institution in charge to implement the procedures for inclusion of LLL qualification in AQF is taking place. NAVETQ for VET is being optimized in terms of organizational aspects with additional human resources to support as well new roles in the frame of this DCM.

3.7 - Albanian Qualifications Framework Register

Tools and approaches are available to support the reform of the Albanian qualification systems, the implementation of the AQF and redesign of vocational qualifications. However, the AQF is not yet fully operational. The focus is now on its fully implementation and an action plan in that respect is under a process of development.

NCVQ⁵⁰ has been regulated since it became part of the new VET law of 2017. NAVETQ has developed all necessary elements in the catalogue, list of occupations and respective standards, a list of vocational qualifications, titles and descriptions of vocational qualifications with a dedicated coding system for qualifications. The recently adopted NCVQ consist of 122 qualifications populating levels 2-5 of AQF could be offered in public VET providers, as referred in the following table.

Level of AQF	Number of Vocational Qualifications
2	19
3	60
4	38
5	5

NCVQ is published on the dedicated website of the NAVETQ, MFE⁵¹.

The MES is developing a national register (database) of higher education accredited study programmes. This database is kept at the Centre of Educational Services near the above-mentioned ministry. Each programme is going to be coded according to the field of study. The required sub-law framework is under construction.

3.8 - Management and quality assurance of qualifications

According to the revised AQF law of 2018, the management of the AQF is divided between the ministries in charge of the specific educational areas. MES is responsible for elementary, lower and upper secondary, general education and higher education, as well as for the qualifications for

⁵⁰ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/rreth-nesh/baza-ligjore/>

⁵¹ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/lista-kombetare-profesionale/>

lifelong learning for these areas, meanwhile for VET, the ministry in charge is currently MFE. In the figure 8 is presented the organigrams of AQF authorities and implementation institutions.

For drafting, approving policies and regulations of the AQF, for planning and implementing them is created the Task Force⁵² of the AQF, which, in the exercise of its functions and competencies. The way of exercising the functions and competencies of the Task Force are determined by a common decision of the ministries in charge of the AQF.

The functions of the AQF Task Force include:

- a) design proposals for preparation, improving and changing the framework related to the establishment of sectoral frameworks, including the piloting of this organisation in at least one sector of the economy, with the involvement of lifelong learning qualifications in the Albanian Framework of Qualifications. as well as other aspects of the implementation of the AQF;
- b) drafting a manual for the AQF, which will serve as a guide in developing and the sustainably implementing of this instrument, creating the conditions for the reference of AQF with the EQF;
- c) preparation of the draft reference report with the EQF, following the referencing process until the report is approved and then to be published by the Advisory Group of the European Qualifications Framework;
- d) Preparation of an annual action plan with issues to be addressed during the work of the Task Force.

The AQF law defines the following implementing institutions:

- The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications for VET
- Higher education institutions, for higher education
- The ministry responsible for education and its subordinate agencies, in conformity with the respective stipulations in the applicable legal framework, For higher educational and general pre-university education.

- a) **AQAHE** and the **BA**;
- b) **AQAPE**
- c) **CES**

The implementing institutions have the task to:

- a) periodically conduct qualification evaluation reviews and compare them those with international qualifications;
- b) to advise the institutions responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications, for academic or employment purposes, for comparison issues and / or equivalence;

⁵² see appendix A.2.1 of this report

c) periodically conduct labour market assessments.

Implementing institutions ensure that the education and training institutions, which provide programmes, leading to the qualifications of the AQF, to offer these programmes at an acceptable level of quality and to assess pupils / students, according to the standards of any qualification

The AQF Task Force is co-chaired by the representatives appointed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Finance and Economy⁵³ and composed with representatives from NAVETQ, HE institution, VET provider, employer organization and trade union. It is in place to support further development and AQF implementation. Additionally, the establishment of the *sectoral skills committees* is still under development.

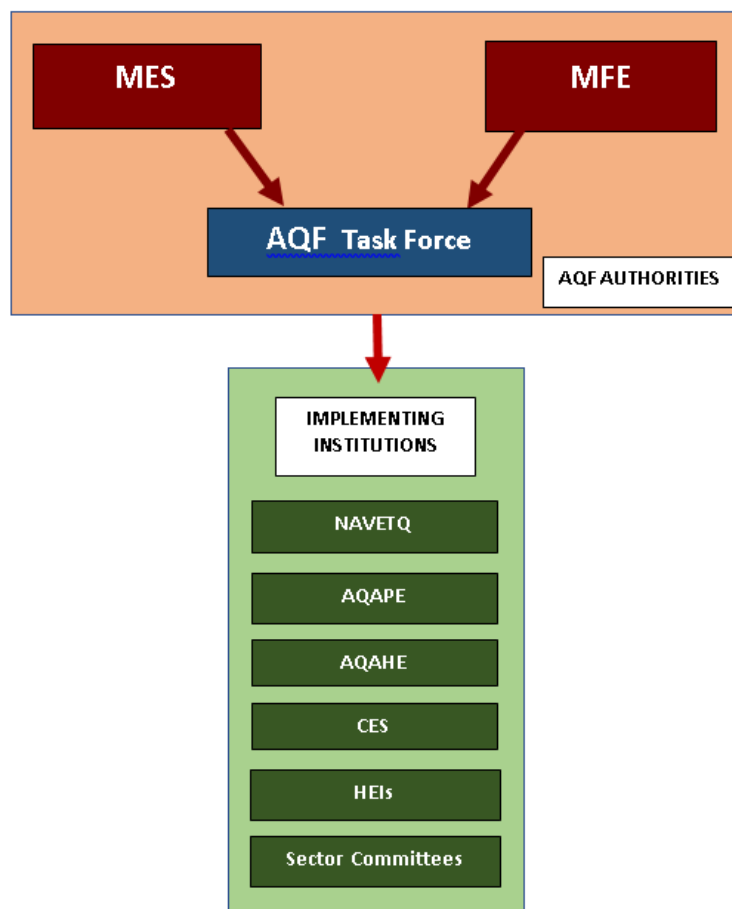


Figure 8. Organigram of the AQF management system

Sectorial Committees

The AQF law stipulates the establishment of a maximum of 10 Sector Committees. Sector Committees shall continuously identify the sector needs for qualifications and cooperate with the relevant AQF implementing institutions for the maintenance of the registry of vocational education

⁵³ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Urdheri-Task-Force.pdf>

and training qualifications. Sector Committees shall support the NAVETQ to develop occupational vocational qualifications standards included in the National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications and shall approve the above-mentioned standards. Sector Committees shall be made up of representatives of ministries responsible for the relevant economic activity sectors, representatives of employers' and employees' associations for the relevant economic sectors, representatives of leader companies in the relevant sectors, representatives of qualification providing institutions, as well as field experts. Composition of these committees shall not exceed the number of 10 members. Sector Committees shall be established upon a joint proposal of the ministry in charge of education and the ministry in charge of vocational education and training. The way of establishment, functioning and funding is regulated through the with a decision of the Council of Ministers No 426, date 26.6.2019. Following up the DCM, the roadmap for the establishment of sectoral committees in Albania has been designed with the support of international experts. In order to propose the establishment of the first sectorial committee, the following necessary methodological steps are taken into account.

Following the roadmap, a methodology for the prioritization and selection of the sector is drafted and validated, as well as the delimitation of the first sector (which is ICT) for which the sector committee will be established is finalized. This study was consulted in the Task Force and stakeholders and served as a basic document to propose the establishment of the first sectoral committee, by joint order. The joint order of the Minister responsible for Education and the Minister responsible for Vocational Education and Training No. 64, dated on 30.03.2021 adopted the establishment of the first sectoral committee in ICT.

Finally, during this period, additional measures are foreseen for capacity development of all actors involved in the organization and functioning of sectoral committees, while NAVETQ itself as an institution responsible for the coordination of sectoral committees is being restructured to address the expanded range of functions, including the role of technical secretariat for sectoral committees. NAVETQ has already established the technical secretariat and several capacity building measures are taking place. Currently, the selection process for ICT Sectorial Committee members is ongoing.

AQAHE manages quality assurance for this area. It requires higher education institutions and their programmes to be accredited before they can issue degrees or other qualifications, meanwhile in VET, quality assurance is mainly internal. There is a national manual of standards, criteria and procedures that guides the Albanian HEIs to go through the process of accreditation. This manual is published by AQAHE⁵⁴, that organises guiding sessions to any higher education institution that applies for any institutional or study programmes accreditation.

Efforts are being made to design and conceptualise the system and procedures for self-evaluation and further independent accreditation of public and non-public education and training providers in order to:

⁵⁴ <https://www.ascal.al/sq/>

1. address the design of study programmes leading to qualifications as well as application of the learning outcomes approach;
2. ensure valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and address the process of certification;
3. provide feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement;
4. involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process;
5. be composed of consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review;
6. be an integral part of the internal management, including activities of education institutions issuing qualifications with an AQF level;
7. be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards and guidelines;
8. be supported by appropriate resources;
9. include a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance;
10. include the electronic accessibility of evaluation results.

Quality assurance in VET

Quality assurance plays a major role in modernizing Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems to improve their performance and attractiveness. As a candidate country for EU accession, Albania follows the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe to establish a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET, “which gives strong emphasis to monitoring and improving quality by combining internal and external evaluation”⁵⁵.

This includes processes of quality assurance such as licensing, self-assessment (internal evaluation), accreditation and inspection (external evaluation) of VET providers.

The new VET Law 15/2017 contains a dedicated chapter (IV, Article. 24, 25, 26, 27) on Quality Assurance and allows for linkages to other relevant legislation, such as the Law on the Albanian Qualifications Framework (Law No.10247 as of 04.03.2010, amended by Law 23/2018 as of 10.05.2018) and the Law on Craftsmanship (Law No.70/2016 as of 30.06.2016). The Law on VET refers broadly to the principles of quality assurance of the “Recommendation of The European Parliament and of The Council” of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training and lessons learnt through exchanging with Member States and other candidate countries. The VET Law stipulates main features of the quality assurance framework. Other laws define certain procedures related to

⁵⁵ Official Journal of the European Union: RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, C155/2, § (11).

the quality assurance in VET, especially the licensing of private VET providers, which is part of their business registration.

The following mechanisms of quality assurance apply to the Albanian VET:

- (1) **Opening and closing of public VET providers** is a responsibility of the Ministry in charge for VET based on criteria and procedures set by the Council of Ministers. A Decision of Council of Ministers is being developed by the VET department at MFE.
- (2) **Licensing of non-public VET providers** is a joint responsibility of the National Business Centre, based on Article 20, paragraph 3 of the Law No. 10 081, “On Licenses, Authorisations and Permits”, private institutions or physical persons can apply to offer vocational education and training. The licensing of these institutions by the National Business Centre is executed only after a first review of the documents submitted and an on-site inspection by the Ministry responsible for VET. Licensing process of private training providers is facilitated by a small unit at the *National Employment Service*, whereas the licensing of private VET schools is carried out by an official working group established by MFE with the participation of the VET Department at MFE, NAVETQ and NES personnel.
- (3) **Monitoring** is a function defined by the Law on VET, as an external QA mechanism. The monitoring of the VET provider includes all aspects of the functioning of the institution and is coordinated with the national framework for monitoring and measuring results in the skills development sector, which describes the indicators, the data collection procedure and responsibilities by levels.
- (4) **Self-assessment.** Public VET providers are obliged to regularly implement self-assessment for the purpose of complying with procedures of any external evaluation, such as accreditation or inspection and, in the meantime, to establish a culture of quality and development within the institution. The respective regulatory framework for the self-assessment includes the Minister’s Instruction No 16 as of 08.05.2018, the Minister’s instruction No.16/1 as of 16.10.2018, the self-assessment instrument with 5 quality areas. 44 public VET providers undertook comprehensive efforts to implement the self-assessment in all the 5 quality areas: 1) management and organisation; 2) relations and cooperation; 3) implemented curriculum; 4) teaching and learning and 5) student’s/learner’s assessment. Based on the results of this process, the VET providers are developing or improving their mid-term and annual plans. The self-assessment instrument is being revised by NAVETQ to reflect feedback and issues raised during the implementation, but also include new aspects of the regulatory framework for the operation of public VET providers. These inputs including the organizational changes introduced in VET Providers in order to better develop their own quality (establishment of development unit headed by quality assurance coordinator) informed improvement of legal framework on QA, already adopted through the Instruction of the Minister of Finance and Economy, no. 18 dated 06.07.2021, "On some additions and changes to the Instruction no. 16,

dated 8.5.2018," On the development of self-assessment in institutions providing vocational education and training ⁵⁶.

(5) **Accreditation** has been part of several efforts of institutions at national level of VET. NAVETQ has the mandate to develop procedures, criteria and standards, as well as to issue the status of accreditation to public and private institutions that offer vocational qualifications of levels 2-5 of the AQF. The Law on VET entitles the Minister responsible for VET to adopt procedures, criteria and standards for the accreditation of VET providers. In 2020, NAVETQ designed the accreditation model for VET providers, which includes roles and responsibilities of institutions for the accreditation, standards and criteria, accreditation procedures, as well as a road map for to support the accreditation process roll-out. The proposed model was thoroughly consulted internally within NAVETQ, as well as with MFE, NAES, pre-university institutions, social partners, and public and non-public VET providers. The model and results from the consultations are supporting the development of the legal framework for the implementation of the accreditation. The accreditation model complements the self-assessment process, already introduced among all public VET providers, in the following aspects:

- ✓ Both quality assurance processes evaluate the same 5 quality areas:
 - 1) Management and organization,
 2. Relationships and cooperation,
 3. Implemented curricula,
 4. Teaching and learning.
 5. Assessment), divided in sub-areas, indicators, and criteria (descriptors).
- ✓ The accreditation model considers the differences in purposes: self-assessment is internal, continuous, less formal, focused on processes and aiming, mostly, improvement; evaluation for accreditation is external, a one-time event, limited in time, more formal, focused on results and accountability.

⁵⁶ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/rreth-nesh/baza-ligjore/>

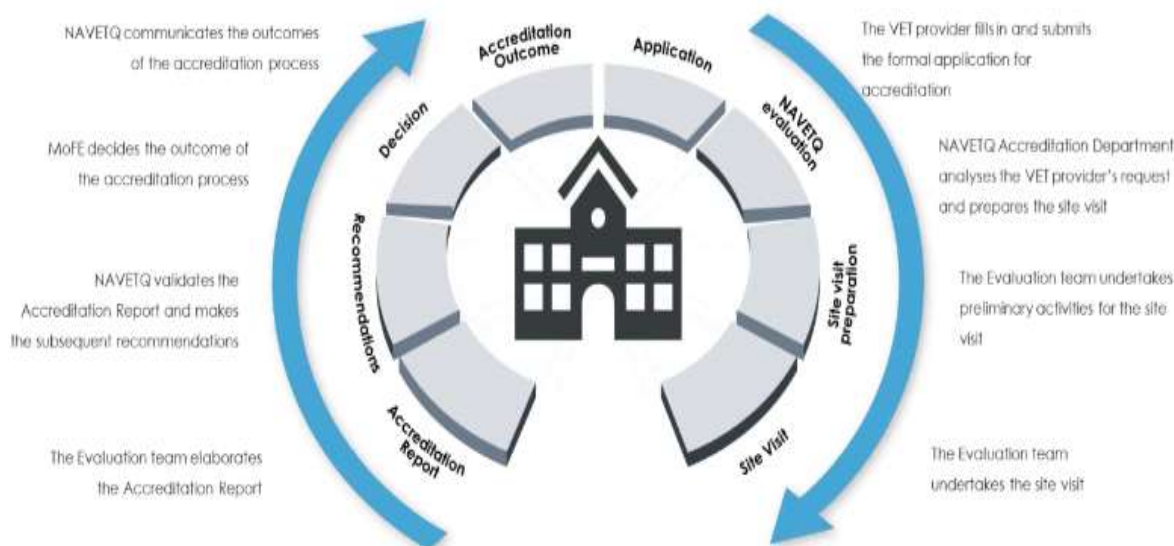


Figure 9. Accreditation model of VET providers

Self-assessment and accreditation processes should support each other: both processes should use the same data and evidence base, self-assessment will need to offer evidence for accreditation and accreditation, in turn, should inform self-assessment to increase its objectivity and relevance for improvement. The proposed accreditation process is undertaken at two levels –national level and VET provider level. Main institutions involved at the national level are NAVETQ and MFE.

In the meantime, the MFE has already approved the regulation on standards, criteria and procedures of vocational education and training providers accreditation through the Order No. 128, date 6.7.2021⁵⁷. NAVETQ has designed a roadmap to support the implementation of the accreditation process. Following up the roadmap, NAVETQ is currently supporting the capacity building of external evaluators in the accreditation process, who have a crucial role in it. The department for the Accreditation of VET providers in NAVETQ is already equipped with additional staff members and capacity building measure are ongoing.

On the other hand, the Agency Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education (AQAPE) has developed the entire instructional documents that are fundamental to the process of school quality assurance system for General Pre-University education system. This was the priority of AQAPE after the new curriculum implementation and other changes in the system.

The school quality assurance package is composed by the below documents approved by MES:

1. “Framework for the school quality assessment⁵⁸;
2. “Guide for the external and internal evaluation of school”;
3. “Methodology for school external evaluation”;

⁵⁷ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/rreth-nesh/baza-ligjore/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.ascap.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/7-Mars-2020-Korniza-e-vleresimit-te-cilesise-se-shkolles-1-1-1.pdf>

4. “Methodology for school internal evaluation”.

AQAPE is training regional inspectors, specialists and school principals to use these documents. Every school executes yearly the process of internal evaluation. This year will be implemented the new “Methodology for school internal evaluation” prepared by AQAPE. AQAPE has also the responsibility to assess the school principles.

The assessment of school principals will be performed based on quality indicators of the area “school leadership and management” part of the “Guide for the external and internal evaluation of school” (these indicators are based on leadership standards approved by MES).

3.9 - Foreign qualifications and mobilities

Information about the procedures of foreign HE qualifications recognition in Albania can be found at the website of Educational Services Centre (Albania ENIC centre)⁵⁹. CES initially investigate the authenticity of the foreign qualification and then determine its level in the EQF to finally convert it in the corresponding level of the AQF.

Albania signed and ratified the Lisbon Convention in 2001 and according to it the Albanian HEIs in the respect of their autonomy recognise the study periods taken in another European country within EHEA.

Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications and pre-university education qualifications are in place and duly published in respective websites in NAVETQ and MES.

Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications in VET is implemented based on the Instruction of the Minister of Finance and Economy no. 24, dated 30.7.2018 "On the procedures for the recognition and unification of learning and professional qualifications of levels 2 to level 5 of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, including those obtained abroad"⁶⁰.

Recognition of the foreign qualifications of the general and oriented pre-university education is based on the law no. 69/2012, as amended⁶¹ and the respective bylaws.⁶²

For the Albanian HE students having followed a study period in a foreign HEI, all courses they succeed are recognised as such in the basis of an “ad-hoc” agreement with the home institution.

Recognition of foreign qualifications is based on the Lisbon Recognition Convention⁶³, law no. 80/2015⁶⁴ foreseeing that the recognition has to be based on the European Qualification

⁵⁹ <https://www.enic-naric.net/albania.aspx>

⁶⁰ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/rreth-nesh/baza-ligjore/>

⁶¹ <http://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Permbledhje-parauniversitari-8-Tetor-2020.pdf>

⁶² http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/udhezim_njesim_diploma.pdf

⁶³ http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/ligj_ratifikim_konvent.pdf

⁶⁴ http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/ligji_802015_arsimi_larte.pdf



Framework, Albanian Qualification Framework and the qualification Framework of the country where the degree is issued, as well as the respective bylaws.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/udhezim_17_03082016.pdf
http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/udhezim_15_16042018.pdf
http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/udhezim_30_30122019.pdf

4 - REFERENCING AND SELF-CERTIFICATION OF THE AQF TO THE EQF AND QF-EHEA

The 2017 EQF Recommendation⁶⁶ recommends Member States to use the EQF to reference national qualifications frameworks or systems and to compare all types and levels of qualifications in the Union that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems, by referencing their qualification levels to levels of the EQF set out in Annex II and by using the criteria set out in Annex III of the Recommendation. The Albanian authorities have decided to follow 2017 EQF Recommendation and referenced its qualifications framework to the EQF. This was not than just a paper exercise. It was an intensive process monitored by the EQF Advisory Group, a community of representatives of the Member States and other participating countries, social partners and other stakeholders which is led by the EU of all the EU member states and candidate countries. Albania has been a member of the EQF Advisory Group since 2015.

Successful referencing is achieved when the EQF Advisory Group expresses trust in the Albanian qualification systems and its qualifications and accepts the AQF-EQF referencing report. After this, the level of all new qualifications and *Europass* supplements bearing a reference to the corresponding EQF level will be understood in all EU member states.

First steps for European Qualification Framework (EQF) referencing have already been taken during 2016-2017. To complete the referencing, process the results of these first stages need to be updated based on the development that took place since then. Workshops have been conducted for criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6. The results of these workshops were updated based on the recent developments and the adoption of the amended law and the respective bylaws concerning sectoral committees, detailed level descriptors and inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications.

The initial roadmap consisted of several milestones: kick-off workshop, organised core group EQF referencing, start of referencing process, second workshop on inclusion of qualifications, third workshop on the actual status of quality assurance, a fourth workshop to discuss the report, presentation state of play for the EQF Action Group (AG), finalising the report and presenting the report to the EQF AG. The road map has been implemented up to the third workshop. The process of writing the report of referencing and self-certification for Albania re-started in the middle of 2020, when the AQF task force approved the roadmap to guide the referencing process (see Appendix A.14) and decided to re-activate the technical working groups composed by experts and stakeholders to provide their experience, expertise, insights and relevant information in writing the report with the aim to accurately describe the facts in response to the criteria of the EQF referencing process, to get the report approved by the EQF advisory group.

4.1 - General approach of referencing to the EQF

The recommendation establishing the EQF invites Bologna Process signatory countries to refer their qualifications levels to the overarching framework EQF. The Referencing and Self-

⁶⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017H0615%2801%29>

Certification Report of the AQF to the EQF and to the QF of the EHEA is written with the concern for being comprehensive by setting out how the qualifications framework in the Republic of Albania is referenced to the EQF. The AQF Task Force and its working groups have managed the process of referencing with transparency looking for being approved by EQF Advisory Group and, so, it can be published at the EQF official platform.

The principal objective of the AQF Task Force was to ensure that the information provided by the Albanian referencing report can be:

- ✓ validated by the Albanian competent authorities;
- ✓ relevant;
- ✓ transparent;
- ✓ capable of being compared;
- ✓ simple;
- ✓ concise.

The referencing process of the AQF to EQF complies with the criteria, set by the EQF Advisory Group, and herewith each criterion is separately considered. The remainder of this section sets out all criteria as well as the Albanian response to each of them.

5 - FULFILMENT OF CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

5.1 – Referencing criteria of the AQF versus the EQF

Criterion 1

The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.

The law on AQF clearly states the governing bodies of the AQF: Ministry responsible for education (general pre-university education and Higher education) and the Ministry responsible for VET, as well as the respective implementing bodies and sectorial committees (as shown further in this section).

In Albania the process of referencing to EQF and self-referencing to QF of EHEA officially started on 2016, when the Minister responsible of Education in coordination with Minister responsible of VET established a new structure, the AQF Task Force⁶⁷, for further development of the Albanian Qualifications Framework to start the above process in view of conceiving and writing the Albanian referencing report. Members of the AQF Task Force are representatives from the: Ministry of Education and Sports (responsible for Education) and from the Ministry of Finance and Economy (responsible for VET). In the process of referencing were also involved:

⁶⁷ See Appendixes A.2.1-A.2.3

- CES
- NAVETQ
- AQAHE
- AQAPE
- Organisation of Employers and
- Trade Unions.

The first steps for EQF referencing during 2016-2017 included kick-off workshop, organised core group EQF referencing, start of referencing process. To complete the referencing process, the results of these first steps needed to be updated based on the development that took place since then. Workshops have been conducted for criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6. The results of these workshops will have an impact over writing detailed level descriptors and inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications.

The Task Force, besides the traditional formal qualifications, focused also on the development of the Albanian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and on the communication and promotion of the Albanian Framework.

The initial roadmap consisted of several milestones: several online workshops were organised to discuss the report for each criterion of both EQF referencing process and self-certification, presentation state of play for the EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG), finalising the report and presenting the report to the EQF AG.

The Albanian referencing report has been widely discussed and drafted by the Working Groups (WG) of the AQF and synergies between the two WG were ensured with common meetings, common group members leading to a final consultation workshop with all the stakeholders, held in collaboration with HERE and Erasmus+ office where has been discussed the referencing report and the best experiences in this process from other countries, in which 4 international experts has been part of. During the workshop the participants was asked to send their comments that was then duly reflected into the final referencing report. It is further approved by the Albanian Task Force and assisted by a team of two international experts.

The Albanian Task force, in charge of managing the process of referencing since 2015. The AQF Task force is co-chaired from Mrs. Ejvis Gishti appointed by ministry responsible of VET) and Mrs. Linda Pustina appointed by the ministry responsible of education) and Membership of the TF represents both ministries: The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, representatives of employers' associations and trade unions, representatives of VET providers and HEIs. AQF Task Force is mandated to further develop and implement the AQF, and to coordinate and monitor the referencing process, as well as to coordinate the reforms related to AQF.

The synergies between 2 technical WGs were ensured through several common meetings organised. Some members were contributing in both groups and the drafts were distributed in all members to get an overall feedback after each meeting. Moreover, The AQF Task Force validated the draft reports and asked for further clarification during all the process.

The Albanian experts involved in the process of referencing of AQF to EQF are part of two technical sub-groups as follows:

SUB-GROUP 1: Pre-university education qualifications

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mrs. Ejvis GISHTI | Co-Chair of the TF for AQF |
| 2. Mrs. Zamira GJINI | MES |
| 3. Mr. Gert JANAQI | AQAPE |
| 4. Mrs. Rezana Vrapì | CES |
| 5. Mrs. Dorina RAFTI | AQAPE |
| 6. Mr. Stavri LAKO | MFE |
| 7. Mr. Alqi MUSTAFAI | NAVETQ |
| 8. Mrs. Flutura VAQARI | Hospitality and Tourism Vocational School of Tirana |
| 9. Mrs. Tatjana VUCANI | MES |
| 10. Mrs. Kozeta
RROKOMANAJ | MES |
| 11. Mrs. Luljeta DAUTI | MFE |
| 12. Mrs. Teuta Cobaj | AQAPE |
| 13. Mr. Agim ALIA | CES |
| 14. Mrs. Matilda Naço | Albanian Tourism Association |
| 15. Mr. Nikoll Doci | Confederation of Trade Unions |

SUB-GROUP 2 : higher education qualifications

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Prof.As. Linda PUSTINA | Co-Chair of the TF for AQF |
| 2. Prof. Aleksandër XHUVANI | Polytechnic University of Tirana – HERE, National Bologna team |
| 3. Mr. Dhimitër BAKO | MES |
| 4. Mrs. Renata QATIPI | AQAHE |
| 5. Mrs. Rezana VRAPI | CES |
| 6. Prof. Anila PAPARISTO | University of Tirana - HERE ⁶⁸ , National Bologna team |
| 7. Prof. Bizena BIJO | Agriculture University of Tirana – HERE, National Bologna team |
| 8. Prof.As. Flamur BIDAJ | Polytechnic University of Tirana – HERE, National Bologna team |
| 9. Dr. Entela HALOCI | Medical University of Tirana, National Bologna team |
| 10. Prof. As. Fatmira SHEHU | Agriculture University of Tirana – HERE, National Bologna team |
| 11. Prof. As. Elvira FETAHU | University of Elbasan – HERE |
| 12. Arben Shkodra | Union of Producers |

Stakeholders (from academic area, students’ organisations, employers’ community, trade unions, donors and international and national experts from the ministries responsible for the AQF) have been involved in the process of development of the AQF and have been continuously consulted at all stages about the Albanian Referencing and Self-Certification Report.

⁶⁸ HERE – Higher Education Reform Experts

The AQF governance is clearly shown in the report, and moreover it is already revised through the amendment of AQF law by properly addressing the main aim of AQF to support transparency and utility. There is a clear division between AQF management, policy making level, and the implementation level with respective QA bodies in all education subsectors including LLL, and as well respective clear and transparent roles. Moreover, AQF TF is a broader partnership organism established by both Ministers to facilitate the coordination and improvements when needed, including proposals for changes on legal framework related to AQF. AQF TF guarantees also a continue involvement of the representatives from the employers' organisations, trade unions, stakeholders from VET and HEIs, in all the initiatives and reforms undertaken.

The Task Force that includes a broad range of stakeholders, it is not a permanent body. The mandate is renewed every 2 years.

The partnership principle is embedded in all the mechanisms to develop and implement AQF. All relevant stakeholders are member of the AQF TF, and as well in all technical WG established for completing the legal framework, referencing process, sectorial committees and all mechanisms in place to include qualifications in AQF. Several stakeholders' consultation workshops are done.

Additionally, a communication strategy will be designed to properly reach the contributors and end users of AQF outputs. Dissemination activities have already started with the aim of reaching both the public and stakeholders. A public consultation and dissemination included a national event with all Albanian stakeholders, in order to explain the importance of the referencing process and its draft report and disseminating the referencing process through social media and on main public TV channel⁶⁹. to guaranty a wider range of public and student' involvement. Students' voice and their involvement in the referencing process is ensured through their participation in different bodies within HEIs and in different processes (including on quality assurance mechanisms) and operational modalities (e.g., national survey of students' opinion).

The current AQF institutional structure was agreed upon all the relevant stakeholders and it is operational. Moreover, while the reforms are ongoing in qualifications framework (NESS 2022) the AQF TF mandate will be properly renewed.

Criterion 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.

The AQF is structured in eight levels at which qualifications can be placed, in line with EQF, beside the level 1 of the EQF that doesn't have any equivalency in the AQF. While regarding the matching of different levels 2-8 in general AQF to EQF ones, it has been a wide consensus during national consultation process, instead there has been indeed discussions on matching of level 1 AQF to the respective EQF level 1 or 2. This discrepancy is due to the legal framework in force in

⁶⁹ <https://youtu.be/nCgdHvM8K-U>

Albania, by which the first qualification awarded by the education institutions in the country is after the completion of the compulsory education, meaning the lower secondary studies. In reply to the wide national consultations, the comments received from international experts part of the EQF AG, considering also the referencing made by other countries that have similar system and curricula to the respective Albanian ones for that level, it was concluded that level 1 AQF fits better with level 2 EQF, as shown in table 12.

The lowest level is 1 and the highest level is 8. Each level is defined by level descriptors in here domains: knowledge, skills and broader competences⁷⁰. These are expressed as learning outcomes. The progress from level to level is defined by increasingly complex learning outcomes; they describe an increasing complexity of knowledge, skills and broader competencies referring to responsibility and autonomy.

Table 12. Link between EQF and AQF levels

EQF levels	AQF Levels
LEVEL 1	No equivalency in the AQF
LEVEL 2	LEVEL 1
LEVEL 2	LEVEL 2
LEVEL 3	LEVEL 3
LEVEL 4	LEVEL 4
LEVEL 5	LEVEL 5
LEVEL 6	LEVEL 6
LEVEL 7	LEVEL 7
LEVEL 8	LEVEL 8

Originally the AQF level descriptors were simply a language translation of the (very basic and short) EQF level descriptors, but the ministerial decree of June 2018, replaced them with more detailed descriptors, meaning that current AQF detailed level descriptors are built upon AQF general ones. The level descriptors are unique for all qualifications of the same level, independently if they are part of VET, general or HE (i.e. level 5 have the same level descriptors for VET and HE). The AQF detailed level descriptors draw on the taxonomy in the EQF descriptors but expand to cover many more elements to reflect the particularity of the Albanian education system and its qualifications and moreover to better support the levelling process of qualifications in AQF levels.

As the starting point for conceiving this report, the technical groups in charge of the drafting it studied closely the level descriptors in the EQF and considered the suitability of eight level

⁷⁰ Broader competencies refer to autonomy and responsibility domain as by Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning and repealing the Recommendation of the EU Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning.

framework in describing the AQF. It was concluded that eight levels correspond well also to the Albanian education map and make it transparent vis-à-vis to other countries.

In this Albanian referencing report, there is a clear link between the qualifications levels and level descriptors in the AQF and the levels and level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework and it is summarised in the table 13 of this report. The highlighted words illustrate the linguistic relations between the two frameworks.

Table 13. Comparison of AQF level descriptor to the EQF corresponding ones

Albanian Qualification Framework LEVEL 1			European Qualification Framework LEVEL 2		
KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
<p>Basic knowledge on the surrounding environment but needs practice and continuous training. Basic knowledge for wellbeing and environment care. General basic knowledge.</p>	<p>Necessary practical skills to accomplish simple everyday tasks. Ability to apply the required knowledge gained during schooling, to perform different assignments. Ability to make superposition based on the information gathered for the world</p>	<p>Personal, civic and digital competencies -Able to: (i) work under supervision, following the given model or instruction; (ii)choose the necessary information resources assisted by the teacher, to do a school assignment individually or in group; (iii) be evaluated and evaluate others with the assistance of the teacher Thinking and learning to learn competencies - Able to study and work with others to receive and provide information Communication and expression competencies - Able to: (i) talk with self-confidence and communicate in writing; (ii) understand and express verbally and written form in foreign languages, for needs or simple situations; (iii) protect</p>	<p>basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study</p>	<p>basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tool</p>	<p>work or study under supervision with some autonomy</p>



		his/her rights without outraging those of the others.			
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Albanian Qualification Framework **LEVEL 2** **European Qualification Framework**

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
Poses basic factual knowledge in a given field of study and/or work. Knowledge on how to extract, select and use simple information. Having basic knowledge of important social spheres (family, school, working environment, small community, etc.). Knowing the possibilities and risk of using the required technologies independently.	Having basic cognitive and practical skills required to carry out simple tasks, solve routine problems and do routine activities. Application of a limited number of skills to carry out more complex tasks in familiar contexts. Carrying out simple operations by means of various instruments and easy-to-use machines. Skills on self-orientation and acting properly in a certain context. Skills in expressing activities	Work or study under supervision and limited autonomy. Carry out activities in a relative scale of autonomy in known contexts, taking responsibility to accomplish a certain task. Carry out work tasks in unknown contexts following the written or verbal instructions of the supervisor. Carry out routine activities under unchanging circumstances. Demonstration of awareness to continue his/her further qualification. Exchange information verbally and in written. Communicate successfully in a diverse social and cultural environment. Acknowledge the need to acquire some key competences (mother tongue, mathematics, computer literacy, etc.) Working in a group, accepting and expressing an opinion and/or criticism.	basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tool	work or study under supervision with some autonomy



	that he/she can't carry out, and the reason why.				
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Albanian Qualification Framework

LEVEL 3

European Qualification Framework

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
<p>Knowledge of facts, principles and general concepts in a field of study and/or job.</p> <p>Knowledge on ways of searching, extracting, processing and using different types of information.</p> <p>Knowledge on types of material, instruments, working tools, and machineries, and their interrelation in a certain work activity.</p> <p>Knowledge on using the field of study corresponding terminology.</p>	<p>Basic necessary cognitive and practical skills to accomplish tasks and solve problems using methods, materials, working tools and basic information.</p> <p>Skills to independently carry out previously acquired tasks.</p> <p>Skills on taking decisions for a change following rules and instructions in case the work conditions change.</p> <p>Skills on carrying out complex operations by means of various working tools, machines, apparatuses and measurement devices.</p>	<p>Taking responsibility to carry out the tasks assigned at work and/or study.</p> <p>Adjusting personal behaviour to solve problems in certain circumstances.</p> <p>Work independently under changing circumstances, by taking responsibility to carry out the task assigned and to evaluate own performance according to previously established criteria.</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to take decisions about his/her own education and future career development by self-evaluating his/her own competencies.</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness on the possibility to continue further qualification.</p> <p>Readiness to participate in trainings, recognising the field in which it is necessary to acquire more knowledge, skills and competencies.</p>	<p>knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study</p>	<p>a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information</p>	<p>take responsibility for the completion of tasks in work or study;</p> <p>adapt one's own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems</p>



	<p>Skills to understand instructions, tasks and explanations different from the ones previously studied.</p> <p>Skills to explain the carried-out activities, proposing new solutions.</p>	<p>Communicating effectively with colleagues, clients and direct supervisor.</p>			
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Albanian Qualification Framework

LEVEL 4

European Qualification Framework

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
<p>In-depth factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context within a field of study and/or work.</p> <p>Knowledge on ways of processing and using complex information. Expressing ideas verbally and in written, formulating tasks, instructions, explanations, using the corresponding terminology. In-depth knowledge of democracy and civil society.</p>	<p>Wide range of cognitive and practical skills to solve complex problems.</p> <p>Demonstrate creative thinking and employs alternative methods and ways in familiar and/or unfamiliar situations or environment. Skills to consider and view tasks and problems within a field of work and/or study from different angles</p>	<p>Carry out self-management within the instructions of job and/or study context, which are usually predictable but changing. Demonstration of initiative and being able to set oneself goals to plan, justify own actions and take responsibility for them. Take responsibility while monitoring or supervising the routine work of others. Ability to express critical attitude and take responsibility while applying the acquired technologies. Working independently under changing conditions;</p>	<p>factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study</p>	<p>a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study</p>	<p>exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities</p>



	<p>according to previously established criteria. Skill to transfer knowledge and skills between different fields of study or work in carrying out complex tasks and solving specific problems; Skills to carry out complex operations by means of working tools, measurement devices, machines and apparatuses. Skills to organise, control and support staff, giving explanations or instructions to carry out a particular activity. Skill to evaluate the quality of finished product and performance of the team members. Skills to develop an action plan using the available resources.</p>	<p>Ability to take decisions about further qualification education and future development based on own competencies. Demonstrate awareness for further education and training opportunities. Able to work constructively in heterogeneous groups. Ability to independently decide on the approach of successful public presentation of different types of information in the field of study and/or work. Carrying out complex tasks under changing conditions and take responsibility for the work of others in solving specific problems.</p>			
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Albanian Qualification Framework			LEVEL 5	European Qualification Framework		
KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY	
<p>Specialised factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work and/or study and consciousness on the boundaries of these knowledge.</p> <p>Use, process and analyse specific information of the field of work and/or study.</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge, theories, applied methodologies within the field of study.</p> <p>Use principles of planning, organising and control of processes in a particular field of activity.</p> <p>Knowledge to develop assessment criteria.</p>	<p>Wide range of cognitive and practical skills needed to find creative solutions for abstract problems.</p> <p>Carrying out complex operations by means of working tools, machineries, apparatuses, or other devices.</p> <p>Demonstration of skills in planning, organisation and controlling of job activities.</p> <p>Skills to control and support personnel, by providing explanations or instructions to carry out a specific activity.</p>	<p>Apply management and supervision in work or study contexts where is an unforeseen change of circumstances.</p> <p>Assess the adoptability of the different methodologies to solve the problems linked to the fields of study or work.</p> <p>Communicate learning outcomes, ideas, skills and activities; formulate answers to concrete, and abstracts problems under structured arguing and in an effective way, at different levels, with colleagues, surveyors and customers in mother tongue or in a foreign language.</p> <p>Carry out comprehensive tasks in different circumstances, take managerial responsibility for the performance of others and allocation of recourses.</p> <p>Working independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks.</p> <p>Bear responsibility for the job performance.</p>	<p>detailed, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study, and awareness of the limits of this knowledge</p>	<p>comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge</p>	<p>exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop one's performance and that of others</p>	



		<p>Take responsibility for the appropriate use of the equipment. Communicating effectively at different levels in national and foreign language.</p> <p>Recognition of gaps in own knowledge, skills and competencies and takes the necessary actions to improve them by self-study and participation in seminars, trainings, etc.</p>			
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Albanian Qualification Framework **LEVEL 6** **European Qualification Framework**

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
<p>knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their areas of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;</p> <p>ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an</p>	<p>qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making;</p> <p>skills of understanding and applying their acquired knowledge in a professional way in compliance with the field of expertise;</p> <p>skills of applying the supporting concepts and principles</p>	<p>use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis and concrete works in this context;</p> <p>define administrative goals, manage resources and teams, show responsibility in work and study in an unpredictable context that require problems solving skills in a multi-factorial environment.; show creativity in of the writing projects and initiative in process</p>	<p>advanced skills in a field of work or study requiring a critical understanding of theories and principles</p>	<p>advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study.</p>	<p>manage complex technical or professional activities or projects by taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts</p> <p>take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</p>



<p>employment context; knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subjects, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study; an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretation based on that knowledge.</p>	<p>beyond the context of the field of study by introducing, each time when needed, the application of those principles, methods and tools under an employment point of view and to find the solution to the problems in complex and specific fields by conceiving and supporting the arguments for solving the problems.</p>	<p>management that aim at tiers training and by raising the performance of the teams. effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist environment audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively in their field of application; deploy comprehensive views and manifest solidarity with the others over different issues; gather and interpret important data to give judgements that include reflexion on important social, scientific and ethical issues; undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within employment structures.</p>			
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Albanian Qualification Framework

LEVEL 7

European Qualification Framework

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
Systematic mastery of critical	Ability to manage self-learning as well	deal with complex issues both systematically and	highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the	specialised problem-solving skills	manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex,



<p>knowledge of the problems of the day and / or new visions, which are or are considered as the foundation of academic disciplines, fields of study or field of professional practice; Use of specialized knowledge in order to analyse access and summarize complex and new ideas at the most advanced field of study; Mastery of full understanding of the techniques applied in scientific research or in the field of advanced knowledge; Originality in the application of knowledge along with practical understanding of how established techniques in research are used to create and interpret knowledge of the discipline; Possession of basic understanding for critical appraisal of the current scientific research and advanced knowledge, evaluation of methodologies and development of its critique as</p>	<p>as methodical use of acquired knowledge and primary resources; transferable skills, required employment, requiring the exercising personal initiatives and responsibilities, decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts, independent learning skills required to pursue professional progress. Independent learning skills required to pursue professional progress; specific skills in problem-solving and/or innovation in developing knowledge and procedures and knowledge integration from different fields, as well; being critical of knowledge issues in a field and the connection between their different fields; skills of integrating knowledge, of managing complex</p>	<p>creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences by using the right techniques; review and reflect over norms, social and ethical relations and react to change them; demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level in a complex environment seeking for a solution by integrating multiple factors; application of acquired methods and techniques, updating, extending, their application and the starting project leading that are based on; assessment accomplishment under a critical, argued process and abstract concepts hypothesis on data of a specific problem and the deployment of the judgement and possible solution to it.</p>	<p>forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields.</p>	<p>required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.</p>	<p>unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility in order to contribute to professional practices and knowledge, and/or to review the strategic results of teams.</p>
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well as conception and proposal of new hypotheses. Knowledge of assessing uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of acquired knowledge	situations, of formulating judgements over scarce or incomplete data, that includes reflexion on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the knowledge application and their judgements.				
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Albanian Qualification Framework

LEVEL 8

European Qualification Framework

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	BROADER COMPETENCIES (RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY)	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
creation and interpretation of new knowledge through advanced scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication; use of specialised knowledge to analyse, assess and summarize new and complex ideas at the most advanced level of that specific field of study; systematic understanding mastery of the fundamental body of knowledge that	skills and highly advanced and specialized and research techniques; qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and autonomous initiative on complex and critical situations, necessary to perform scientific work and innovation; skills of giving a contribution through original research that tends reach the boundary of	effective application of judgements on specific field issues in a specialist and non-specialist community; high-level; communication in the mother tongue or in a foreign language of the acquired scientific results based on a fundamental or application research performed with homologue colleagues by engaging a critical dialog and leading a complex social process; high-level development of techniques and new methods in the field of expertise and new ideas and process development in the framework of the work, study of scientific research.	knowledge at the cutting edge of a field of work or study and at the interface between several fields.	the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research



<p>is the core of an academic discipline or professional field; understanding mastery as well as the most advanced methods and techniques application.</p>	<p>knowledge by developing fundamental work, some of which deserve to be published at national or international level; skills of critical analyses, synthesis and assessment of complex ideas and communication with the scientific and academic community in the field of expertise; promotion of academic, social, cultural and technological developments in a society of knowledge.;</p>				
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By the AQF law there is a clear compliance and link of the AQF to the EQF concerning the level number and level descriptors of AQF, beside the level 1 of the EQF that doesn't have any equivalency in the AQF.

National adaptations have taken into consideration the accommodation of different types of qualifications in the same level based on its respective complexity. Regarding HE, The AQF level descriptors are conceived as synthetizing and summarizing LOs of the same AQF level study programs, but also considering the EQF level descriptors.

For example, in the level 7 there are foreseen two different types of qualifications: Professional Master and Master of Science, that have in common the 7th level descriptors but making use of respective knowledge, skills and broader competencies, which comply to the requirements of the labour market needs or further academic progress, meaning that linguistic similarities between AQF and EQF level descriptors are not diminishing. These types of qualifications have the same legal request for being admitted in, which is the possession of a level 6 qualification. Meanwhile the Professional Master doesn't give the right to attend directly after it at any 8th level qualification, since they are more labour market oriented, but they give the right to its owners to transfer ECTS

and attend a Master of Sciences study programme completing the level 7 and progressing to level 8.

The same provisions are foreseen for the level 8th, where there are three different types of qualifications: Doctoral Studies, Long Term Specialisations and Executive Masters, that have in common also the legal request for being admitted in, which is the possession of a Master of Sciences qualification.

HE qualification and structure are in line with other EU country's structure, as foreseen in the Law on AQF in HE system there are foreseen 3 axes of qualifications:

- academic,
- professional,
- lifelong learning.

These qualifications have different purposes since the professional qualifications are more focused on preparing specialized individuals as by specific needs on specialized workforce and professionals for the labour market. LLL qualifications in the Albanian HE system are more associated to the professional qualifications than to the fundamental ones (Master of Sciences and Doctoral Studies). In this way, the LLL LOs are more focused on skills and broader competencies (autonomy and responsibility) than to knowledge, in relation to the AQF level descriptors.

Considering the similarities these qualifications are positioned in the same level without dividing in sublevels from the beginning of the AQF, based also in other countries examples that have quite similar structure and qualifications (i.e. Italy, etc.).

Also, by comparing definitions of knowledge, skills and broader competencies from the EQF with definitions and explanations of how the descriptors of knowledge, skills and broader competences are adopted for AQF there are clear similarities in the definition of knowledge, skills and competences in both frameworks stressing out the difference between general and vocational knowledge and skills in line to Albanian education tradition and as well the complexity and diversity of jobs and related use of tools and equipment.

Criterion 3

The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

Based on the AQF law, the definition of the term “qualification” is in compliance with the definition provided in the EQF and it is clear statement that AQF is explicitly designed by LO and all qualifications that will populate the AQF should be defined in terms of learning outcomes expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and broader competences. AQF is a structure of levels and qualification types, and the level descriptors are based in LO.

The principle and objectives of LO is being entirely applied in the vocational qualifications developed by NAVETQ for all new qualification starting from 2009. NAVETQ issues guidelines for writing LO in terms of knowledge, skills and broader competences.

More examples are shown in the appendix A.12.

All education programs in pre-university education are currently being reformed. The curricula are structured in key competencies and learning outcomes for each competency and organised in learning fields.

Currently HE qualifications are not yet fully based on learning outcomes but according to the HE Law 80/2015 all study programs in HE should be expressed in learning outcomes based on the respective bylaw specifications. At the time being, HEIs are under reorganisation of study programs based on the requirement of the latest law and bylaws. Based on the latest updates of the Diploma Supplement on 2.4.2020⁷¹, in the Diploma Supplement a specific section foresees the LOs for the respective qualification for which the degree was awarded.

The DCM on elements of the study programs is foreseen to be updated as by specifications in the law of HE, addressing in more detailed way the law provisions on the elements of the study programs and respective learning outcomes that will help HEIs in accelerating the reforming study programs based on LOs.

In terms of AQF policy level, it is clear in both AQF Law and VET law (2017) that the structure of the AQF is designed to enable the award of the qualifications for learning acquired as well in non-formal and informal contexts. Also, validation of non-formal and informal learning is also part of the NESS and Action Plan (2019-2022). Currently, AQF development and implementation in VET is focused initially in analysing and accommodating full qualifications which are awarded within the formal vocational education system. It is very important that all the qualifications in VET to be included in AQF should have the arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and these arrangements are already determined in the draft bylaw for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

To support AQF Task Force in the process of referencing and further improve the implementation of AQF, the analysis of the inventory of vocational qualification was conducted in 2017. NAVETQ has analysed the vocational qualification inventory with the support of ETF (“Inventory and analysis of qualifications in Albania” June 2017-see Appendix A.12). This analysis showed that in vocational education:

- All qualifications in the National Catalogues for Vocational Qualifications populating AQF levels, are described in terms of LOs and have a clear division between knowledge, skills and broader competences rubrics, which makes it easier to compare the LO expressions of the qualifications with the respective AQF generic and detailed level descriptors.
- There is a match between the LOs for these qualifications and the AQF level descriptors. The LOs for qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and broader competences are much richer compared to the respective AQF generic level descriptors.

⁷¹ http://qsha.gov.al/infos/regjistrim_diplome/udhezim_11_02042020.pdf

- The LOs statements usually contain the following components: a verb that indicates what the learner is expected to know or be able to do at the end of the learning period; an object that indicates on what or with what the learner is acting, and in some cases indications of the nature of performance, which provide links with the assessment criteria.
- Legal, ethical and communication considerations in terms of LOs relate to the regulatory and ethical requirements of the function or task in a workplace, overlap and differ depending on the sector, job role and work function, and are contextualized accordingly.
- There is a clearly articulated entry level in the qualification from a lower AQF level qualification and upon the completion of this vocational qualification, the individual may enter directly in the labour market, or may continue studies in the same qualification field at a higher AQF level. In case of successful completion of the qualification in the AQF 4th level the student is able to take the Professional State Matura examinations.
- Compared to the qualification of the same occupational field in the lower AQF levels the progression is characterized by a higher level of the necessary knowledge and much more autonomy and increased learner' responsibility expected in the guidance given and the tasks set.

Drawing up from the inventory and the analyses of the qualifications (see appendix A.12) some examples of LOs statements of knowledge in Hospitality-Tourism qualifications at different AQF levels include as following:

- Describe the types and ways of operation of hotel and gastronomic enterprises (Hospitality-Tourism AQF level 2).
- Explain the ways of calculating and organizing of platters in various events. (Bar-Restaurant AQF level 3).

Vocational qualifications are not expressed in credits since this system is not yet functional for VET. Establishing a Credit system for Vocational Education and Training is one of the priority measures of the NESS 2022. In this respect, in 2020 an assessment study was conducted with the aim to assess the readiness of VET system for establishing a credit system. The findings of this study informed that the establishment of the credit system in VET should be addressed in more structured way as it is used before in the system, but no added value was taken from its implementation, and for that a feasibility study should be introduced to steer the further steps.

Additionally, in order to support the sustainable implementation of LO approach, 90% of all VET teachers and instructors are trained in the “Basics of Didactics in VET”, where among others are equipped with knowledge and skills on how to write LOs and how to make use LOs in teaching and learning process, and in the student assessment.

The AQF and its qualifications comply with international best practices, including compliance with the levels, tools, criteria and processes of the EQF, the European System of Credits regarding VET, and the European System for the Accumulation and Transfer of Credits (ECTS) for the area of HE. The *AQF is not an only credit-based qualifications framework*. Although credits (ECTS)

are allocated for all the HE qualifications included in the framework, learning outcomes rather than credits were chosen as the basis for placement of qualifications in the overarching AQF. Creating a credit-based framework would have required revision of the entire pre-university education existing system of qualifications, as well, as currently there are not using, so far, any credit systems at different levels of education. As explained above, in Albania validation of non-formal and informal learning is under an ongoing process of implementation in the pre-university education area, meanwhile the in the higher education area it is not legally allowed so far.

In conclusion, in the whole education system in Albania each study programme leading to a qualification is foreseen on:

- a) a qualitative tool such as learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy) and,
- b) a quantitative tool such as credits per unit or modules and total credits per study programme (in the higher education area - ECTS, meanwhile in the pre-university education area students' workload is basically used as such).

So, in compliance with the AQF there is a set of information needed for any unit or module of a given study programme leading to a given qualification:

- ✓ profile, indicated by a study title;
- ✓ the corresponding AQF Level, from 1 to 8;
- ✓ set of learning outcomes, clearly described per each unit or module of the study programme;
- ✓ teaching / learning volume, in ECTS (HE area), students' workload (VET) or in academic years;
- ✓ a set of clearly defined assessment criteria for students / pupils for being successful during the exam of the respective unit or module of the study programme.

In VET system VNIFL is assessed to address mainly target groups such as: persons who used to work in little family business, returning migrants, redundant workers, people who dropped out the formal education. However, a by-law under the VET law on the system of recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning is ready for adoption by the Council of Ministers. Although Albania is not asylum seekers final destination country, but mainly transitory country, there are some piloting initiatives on how to approach validation of prior learning to this specific target group.

There are not any plans to validate the non-formal and informal learning in the HE system so far, as the focus is mostly set on the formal education in this area. The same is applicable for LLL qualifications of AQF levels linked to HE.

Criterion 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.

The ministries responsible of the AQF approve the evaluation and certification policies, setting out the main principles, on which the implementing institutions and other bodies to include new qualifications, to renew the existing ones and to remove the obsolete qualifications from the AQF. They propose and publish the regulations for the granting of certificates related to the qualifications of the AQF, in compliance with the Albanian legal framework.

In the law are clearly stated which level of AQF appertained to a certain type of qualification and the HEIs have to present all the needed documents and fulfil the criteria for that type of qualification in order to get licenced for offering it. Before issuing the first diploma/certificate the HEI must undergo the accreditation process by AQAHE (institutional and for the respective program) and only after a positive evaluation by BA it is entitled to issue the respective degree.

General criteria and specific processes, by sectors, for the approval of qualifications for inclusion within the AQF, together with relevant descriptors, for each framework level and general requirements for each type of qualification are approved and are published by the two ministries responsible of the AQF, after consultations with interested parties and stakeholders.

In order to populate AQF level with the relevant qualifications, they need to be quality assured.

NAVETQ has put in place internal quality assurance processes and procedures for the development of vocational qualifications. Conditions for a vocational qualification to be included in the national catalogue of vocational qualifications are formulated as quality assurance principles. Qualifications are based in occupational standards and are developed by developers, which in this case may be representatives from VET providers, Business Associations, companies etc., and always in cooperation with social partners.

Starting with the signals from labour market analyses, both standards of occupations and qualifications (in terms of LOs) are developed and properly validated through groups of external experts (in the future Sectorial Committees will support this processes).

The qualifications standards are developed by external developers, which in this case may be representatives from VET providers, Business Associations, companies etc., and always in cooperation with social partners. This process is developed and managed by NAVETQ.

Vocational qualifications to be included in AQF go through validation and approval process. This mechanism for placing the vocational qualifications in AQF is currently in place in Albania. The external validation of both occupational standards and qualification standards is made by external working groups with representatives from both businesses and qualifications providers, being VET providers, HEIs, etc. this is foreseen in the DCM no. 673, dated 16.10.2019 "On the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications" and in the Instruction no. 26, dated 30.7.2018 "On the national catalogue of vocational qualifications". With the establishment of the sectorial committees this external validation will be performed by this mechanism. According to the abovementioned legal framework, all the qualifications need to be revised every 4 years. The national catalogue is adopted by the minister,

published in NAVETQ website and mainly used by the VET providers, but as well wider public including businesses, parents, students, etc.

The national catalogue for vocational qualifications is published in the NAVETQ website⁷².

Pre-university education provides two types of qualifications. The certificate after 9-years compulsory education is allocated at level 1 and the State Matura Diploma, issued upon successful completion of (general) upper secondary education is allocated at AQF level 4. Both are completed with a national exam. Allocation to AQF levels 1 and 4 is based on international comparison with similar qualifications from European countries or neighbouring countries and with ISCED. The pre-university general qualifications are designed and quality assured by AQAPE.

For HE the level of the qualifications a HEI can offer (5-8 level), it is clearly defined in the respective AQF and HE laws, where for each qualification based on respective level descriptors, it is stated also the respective level of AQF. It means that from the licencing process HEIs need to present all the needed documents that are examined by experts before licencing the respective qualification. QA of the study programs need to be finalized with a positive decision before issuing the first degrees, thus the qualification awarded passed through these processes has the respective level of AQF based on level descriptors and is quality assured. In the certificates/diploma issued it is also obligatory to indicate the level of the qualification. The form and the elements included in the certificates/diplomas issued by HEIs is foreseen in a bylaw and the level of AQF is part of these elements. Thus a HEI can issue a certificate diploma only after being accredited as HEI and for the respective program, otherwise the degree issued is not valid in the Republic of Albania.

Progress routes are regulated in both laws. HE area uses detailed level descriptors for 5-8 AQF levels fully in line with AQF level descriptors, to better orient the LO translation process and in line with ECTS gained by any study programme leading to any level qualification. Moreover, the LOs of all concrete qualifications are part of the diploma supplement⁷³ awarded to all the undergraduates or graduates of all Albanian HEIs.

Although for some qualifications is not foreseen the possibility to pass to the next level (i.e. Professional Master” (7th level), since this type of qualification is designed and foreseen to respond to further specialisations as required by the labour market, there is the possibility that the credits awarded be recognised in the Master of Science qualification (7th level), giving the possibility then to access to the 8th level qualifications. These qualifications are quite similar to “Master di primo livello” in Italy and Executive masters to “Master di secondo livello”. In fact, the type and level of HE qualifications are completely similar to those of Italian ones since when it has been reformed, HE followed the Italian model considering the intensive exchange and number of Albanian students studying in Italy.

⁷² <http://www.akafp.gov.al/lista-kombetare-e-kualifikimeve/>

⁷³ Based on the Europass model as a tool that enables students to document their skills, qualifications and experience in view of their employment

Regarding the HE lifelong learning qualifications e.g., at level 8 does not signify completion of the level. Most of these qualifications are linked to continuing education programmes. Such "smaller" qualifications or those qualifications that do not give access to the next AQF level (e.g., "Professional master" level 7) can be combined or linked with other qualifications at the same level, which in turn may give access to the next AQF level. This is done only on the basis of the ECTS earned with the completion of the qualification.

The law 80/2015 foresees the accreditation of the study programs including those of public HEs. This process is undergoing and the list of already accredited programs can be found at AQAHE website.⁷⁴

Lifelong learning qualifications are assigned individually to a level following comparison of their learning outcomes against the AQF level descriptors. Lifelong Learning qualifications are proposed by accredited or licenced education institutions. Those institutions can start a given LLL study programmes only if they meet the legal requirements of opening a study programme, of which the determination of the corresponding AQF level is one of them. Then the corresponding AQF responsible institution covering the respective education system, takes the decision to assign the proposed LLL qualification to the AQF. The detailed level descriptors are used for both to develop qualifications and better support their levelling. Forecasting of allocation of LLL in HE levels was made based on the current situation and the needs of relevant stakeholders based on their feedback, thus including the levels 5, 7-8. Level 6 LLL are not foreseen since at the time being, but further developments are in process considering also the future introduction of micro-credentials based on the upcoming European Council recommendation.

The recognition of vocational or professional qualifications obtained abroad is made based on detailed procedures prescribed in the legal framework and duly published in respective websites in NAVETQ and MES. The legal framework includes clear criteria and required documents and procedures with clear deadlines for giving the final recognition.

The bodies responsible for the recognition of degrees are:

MFE for VET qualifications, MES (through the ENIC centre near CES) for HE and MES through CES for general pre-university qualifications. These bodies are in charge of maintaining the respective databases.

In conclusion, the procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the Albanian Qualifications Framework are transparent and involve relevant stakeholders in designing and validating qualification in all subsystems of formal education.

⁷⁴ <https://www.ascal.al/sq/akreditimi/programe-te-akredituara>

Criterion 5

The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to the 2017 EQF Recommendation

The Albanian quality system for education and training comply with international best practices, including the respective European principles and guidelines.

Quality assurance symbolises the system and procedures that an institution employs in order to maintain perfect the agreed standards of its services. Quality assurance over AQF could be referred to any qualifications level considering all its complexity. Quality is one of the basic characteristics of a qualification reflecting the reliability and validity in a national prospective. Standards ensure the transparency of relevant qualifications, which signifies the visibility and clarity of qualification content, based on a study (learning) programme leading to. Contents of learning programmes need to be comprehensible and understandable to the wider public, rather than only to experts.

In Albania the education provider institutions have a broad mandate in matters relating to assessment and quality assurance in education. Each education institution should document their quality assurance activities as a manual for quality, but more important than the way the system is presented, is that it functions in practice and encourages systematic activity. The results of the self-assessments and external evaluations are public in both pre-university system and higher education area. They are responsible for implementing national guidelines, practical teaching arrangements and the effectiveness and quality of the qualification provided although there are some differences between the 2 sectors.

The quality assurance related to awarding of qualifications is essential from the qualification's frameworks perspective. The institutions', including higher education institutions, quality assurance systems cover also the processes linked with qualification requirements, curricula development, planning the assessment of learning outcomes, how the process of teaching is provided, and results evaluated. To ensure credibility of the learning outcomes and quality on all levels of education, it has been considered important that the quality assurance links with the way learning outcomes are defined and how the achievement of those learning outcomes is assessed.

All qualifications with an AQF level are quality assured to enhance trust in their quality and level. Moreover, the AQF addresses the principles on quality assurance as specified in the Annex IV to the 2017 Recommendation as follows:

1. clearly addresses the design of any qualifications in terms of learning outcomes as the approach and the curricula development of the study programmes leading to any of them is mainly based on the learning outcomes and, also, on quantitative means (ECTS when it comes to the higher education area or students' workload when it comes to the pre-university area);

2. ensures valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and addresses the process of certification as it is explained in the paragraph, here below, concerning the role of the AQF implementing institutions;
3. consists of feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement set by the ministries responsible of the AQF – for the HE area all public and non-public HEIs have the legal duty to renew and improve all curricula at the beginning of each academic year (for not more than 20% of their contents in the space of the normal duration of the qualification⁷⁵), meanwhile for the pre-university system it is done each four years unless the external assessment led by NATVEQ or QAPE obliges the qualification offering institutions to perform it more often;
4. involves all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process; quality assurance is the focus of the AQF and includes involvement of stakeholders and international and national experts (during the process of quality assurance of the study programmes leading to the corresponding qualifications the involvement of the international and national experts is already a standard⁷⁶);
5. is generally composed of consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review and in a very clear way when it comes to the HE area where the process of licensing and accreditation exactly follows this principle, meanwhile for the pre-university system there is only a four-year periodical accreditation process;
6. is an integral part of the internal management, including activities, of the institutions issuing Albanian qualifications, as by law they programme and run internally those activities yearly (for HEIs supervised by MES) or each four years (for the pre-university institutions supervised by MES and MFE);
7. is based on clear and measurable objectives, standards and guidelines, by fitting to the labour market needs, and other purposes of qualifications, by standards of occupation and qualifications; validation; registration. The feedback from the labour market is the final checkpoint of the quality assurance of qualifications at any level of the AQF. Since the process of proposing a new qualification (its licencing by the ministry responsible of the area is based on a labour market study, stated by the law) and then passing through the process of accreditation which is also based on the labour market answer about the qualification holders;
8. is supported by appropriate resources put at its disposal by the two ministries in charge of it;
9. includes a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance in line with the Albanian administrative legal framework (law of

⁷⁵ Three years for a Bachelor degree or 2 years for a Master of Science degree, for instance

⁷⁶ <https://www.ascal.al/sq/bordi-i-akreditimit/organizimi>

HE, Law of VET and Law of pre-university education) and the assessment criteria and procedures to each qualification accreditation in line with the best European practices. Each qualification is assessed externally by local or international experts that establish the assessment report to the quality assurance agency, responsible of the qualification area;

10. includes the electronic accessibility of evaluation results, published by the accreditation agencies in charge of the qualification area and each time that a qualification is licensed or accredited depending on the periodicity stated by the law.

The AQF implementing institutions⁷⁷ for different educational sectors (higher education, vocational education and training and general education) play a major role for external quality assurance of education and training, including curricula development, assessment and awarding of qualifications, by:

- a) accepting and registering candidates for qualification;
- b) providing assessments of previous learning and achievement;
- c) evaluating pupils and archiving the documentation for their evaluation;
- d) recognizing the credits received from pupils / trainees / students and enabling their transfer;
- e) implementing quality assurance of assessments, leading to the qualifications of approved, to ensure consistency in the implementation of standards;
- f) considering the complaints of pupils / trainees / students for decisions of opposed to ratings;
- g) issuing qualification certificates and diplomas;
- h) maintaining the database and certification documentation, for the approval of qualifications, certificates and diplomas awarded.

The quality assurance of VET provision included the quality assurance procedures in designing VET qualification (as explained in procedures stated in the criterion 4) and the quality assurance of the VET provisions and it is in line with principles, criteria and procedures described in European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) as stipulated in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training⁷⁸.

In order to establish the sectorial committees, an in-depth analysis based on a methodological approach is introduced in order to prioritise economic sectors. Based on the findings the ICT is the first sector for which SC will be established and will be followed by the hospitality and tourism as a second one, and so on based on a dedicated roadmap (see in appendix A-9). Additionally, the

⁷⁷ AQAHE for HE area; AQAPE for the general and oriented pre-university system; NAVETQ for VET

⁷⁸ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009H0708\(01\)&qid=1611571795661](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009H0708(01)&qid=1611571795661)

NAVETQ as a coordinating institution of such mechanism, has already prepared a methodological framework for the delimitation of selected sectors and the methodology for identifying the skills needs in the sector. Meanwhile, sector skill needs analysis methodological approach is to be implemented in the ICT sector. The technical secretariat is already established in NAVETQ, and capacity building measures are properly taken. The establishment of sectorial committees will be guided by the abovementioned roadmap and will be based on the prioritization exercise of the economic sectors especially in the view of their readiness to support human capital developments in Albania. Till the operationalization of all 10 SC, their role will be accomplished by the external experts from the labour markets in line with current legal provisions.

Shifting to LO outcome approach in VET was accompanied with the necessary measure to support teaching professionals on how to make use LO in teaching and learning and as well assessment process. 90% of teachers are trained on these aspects through the “Basics of Didactic” training program. This training is coordinated and monitored by NAVETQ. Starting from 2022, the “Basic of didactics” will be provided by NAVETQ, as an initial training for all new coming teachers and instructor in VET system. Moreover, national orientation programs are developed by NAVETQ in order to support VE providers for final examinations, and as well an inventory of bank of tests is designed from NAVETQ and made available to all teachers and instructors. Business representatives are recommended to be part of examination commission, and where it was possible their role is equal to other commission members in order to assess learners’ achievements. The examination can include evaluation of projects, assessment at the workstations, or a combination of these. The final examination procedures, with clear roles, responsibilities and procedures are stipulated in the legal framework⁷⁹. The VET provider issues the following documents to students that have successfully completed the exams for a vocational qualification: vocational certificate, indicating the AQF level and its supplement (see A-5).

As for non-public VET providers, the licencing process of non-public VET providers is made by National Business Centre (NBC) but in close cooperation with MFE. A commission is established with the order of the Minister to verify the criteria and support decision making for licencing, and as well for follow-up monitoring once their licencing. In this respect, there 833 non-public vocational training providers licenced in order to provide short term vocational courses in Albania the courses they provide are so called non formal qualifications and in order to be included in AQF levels they need to go through the criteria and procedures stipulated in the respective legal framework for inclusion of LLL in AQF levels.

Public VET providers are obliged to regularly implement self-assessment for the purpose of complying with procedures of any external evaluation, such as accreditation or inspection and, in the meantime, to establish a culture of quality and development within the institution. The respective regulatory framework for the self-assessment includes the Minister’s Instruction No 16 as of 08.05.2018, the Minister’s instruction No.16/1 as of 16.10.2018, the self-assessment

⁷⁹ <https://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/udhezimi-15-date-26.04.2019-per-organizimin-dhe-zhvillimin-e-provimeve-ne-AFP.pdf>

instrument with 5 quality areas: 1) management and organisation; 2) relations and cooperation; 3) implemented curriculum; 4) teaching and learning and 5) student's/learner's assessment. Based on the results of this process, the VET providers are developing or improving their mid-term and annual plans. The self-assessment is being implemented annually last 3 years in all VET providers, by recently using a digital platform to better support VET providers in the process, but as well to optimise NAVETQ in the coordination and monitoring of the self-assessment process. The implementation of this process, informed improvement of legal framework on QA, already adopted through the Instruction of the Minister of Finance and Economy, no. 18 dated 06.07.2021, "On some additions and changes to the Instruction no. 16, dated 8.5.2018," On the development of self-assessment in institutions providing vocational education and training.

Accreditation model for VET providers, which includes clear roles and responsibilities of institutions for the accreditation, standards and criteria, accreditation procedures, as well as a road map to support the accreditation process roll-out is already agreed through relevant stakeholders and adopted in NAVETQ. The VET providers' accreditation model supported the development and adoption of the order of the Minister of Finance and Economy no. 128 dated 06/07/2021, "On the standards, criteria and accreditation procedures of VET providers". Currently, capacity building measures are taking place in line with the roadmap adopted in NAVETQ (see Appendix A.11) for guiding implementation of the accreditation process. The accreditation model complements the self-assessment process, already introduced among all public VET providers, in the following aspects.:

- ✓ Both quality assurance processes evaluate the same 5 quality areas:
 - 1) Management and organization,
 2. Relationships and cooperation,
 3. Implemented curricula,
 4. Teaching and learning,
 5. Assessment, divided in sub-areas, indicators, and criteria (descriptors).
- ✓ The accreditation model considers the differences in purposes: self-assessment is internal, continuous, less formal, focused on processes and aiming, mostly, improvement; evaluation for accreditation is external, a one-time event, limited in time, more formal, focused on results and accountability.

Self-assessment and accreditation processes should support each other: both processes should use the same data and evidence base, self-assessment will need to offer evidence for accreditation and accreditation, in turn, should inform self-assessment to increase its objectivity and relevance for improvement. The proposed accreditation process is undertaken at two levels –national level and VET provider level. Main institutions involved at the national level are NAVETQ and MFE.

The process in pre-university general and oriented education is described in more detail in Chapter 3.9 of this Report. Additionally, the assessment of the pupils/students at school level in pre university education is based on the following documents:

- a) IED, 2015, Student assessment framework.
<http://izha.edu.al/new/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Korniza-e-vleresimit-2.pdf>
- b) Instruction on the assessment of the basic education pupils
<http://darelbasan.edu.al/index.php/legjislacioni/915-udhezimi-nr-34-date-11-9-2015-per-vleresimin-e-nxenesve-per-kurrikulen-me-kompetenca-ne-arsimin-baze>
- c) Instruction on the assessment of pre-university and higher education students
<https://app.box.com/s/lrassofmiwvexp3im8j53hykclwckqwz>

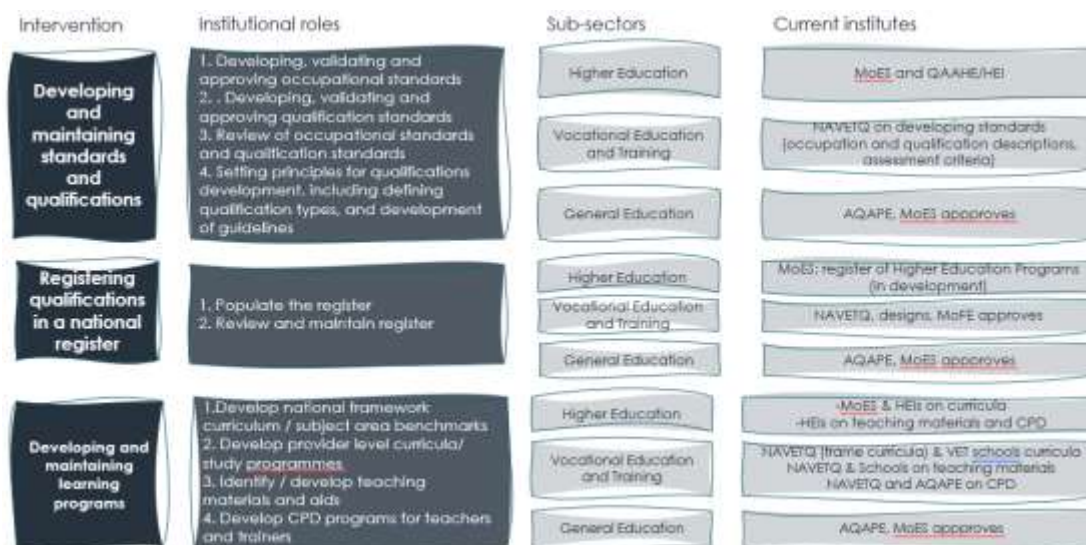
IED, 2016, Achievement levels for all educational cycles:

<http://izha.edu.al/new/2017/03/27/nivelet-e-arritjes/>

Regarding HE, AQAHE is the institution responsible for the accreditation of HEIs study programs. For further details, see Section 3.9.

The National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications developed by NAVETQ is de facto the register of vocational qualifications in Albania and is approved by the Minister in charge of VET. Currently, the National Catalogue for Vocational qualifications includes 122 vocational qualifications (AQF levels 2-5, see Appendix A.10). In the HE area there is a national database of accredited qualifications, kept at the Agency of Quality Assurance for HE. The HE register is going to be better consolidated, and afterwards could be seen the opportunity to conceptualize the interlink of both registers.

In the figure 10 is shown the general schema of the AQF quality assurance:



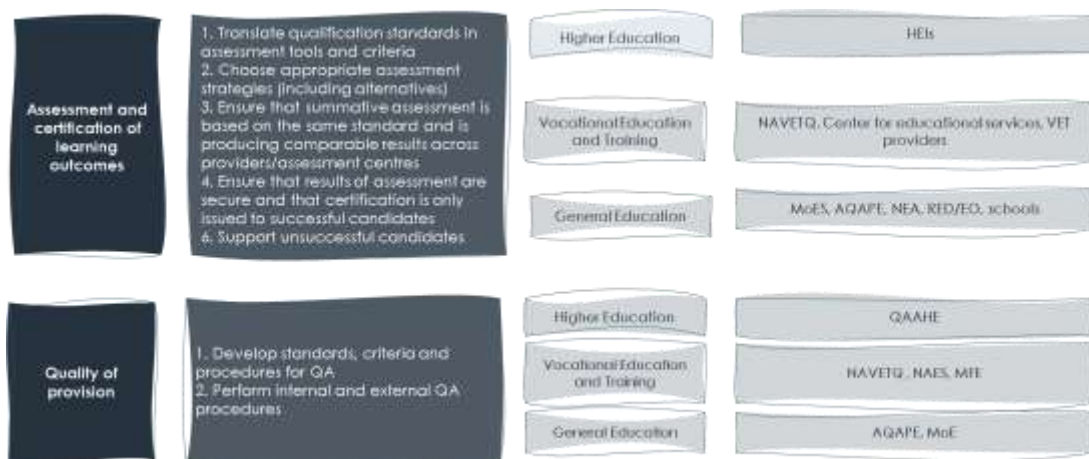


Figure 10. AQF QA scheme

Overall, the national quality assurance for all the subsystems of formal education is generally in line with principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to the 2017 EQF Recommendation. Further measures for improvement are detailed in the section 6.1.

Criterion 6

The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.

In the process of referencing the AQF to the EQF experts of different bodies responsible for QA as follows:

- a) NAVETQ;
- b) CES;
- c) ASCAL with its BA;
- d) AQAPE

have been closely involved in the process of AQF referencing to the EQF and contributed to this referencing and prepared written statement on the referencing process.

Even the Albanian HERE⁸⁰ group has given an important contribution to this important event. The final version of the AQF referencing *report includes the statement by the AQF Task Force.*

All the statements of relevant quality assurance body in Albania are found in Appendixes A.3.1-A.3.5.

⁸⁰ HERE – Higher Education Reform Experts

Criterion 7

The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.

In the referencing process of the AQF to the EQF two international experts have been involved as follows:

International Experts

1. Mrs. Karin van der SANDEN The Netherlands
2. Mrs. Chiara FINOCCHIETTI Italy

The main task of the international experts was to assist the Referencing Working Group in drafting the National Referencing and Self-Certification Report. The role of the international experts was to assure the credibility of the referencing process and to examine the AQF system from the point of view of an outsider and provide an objective review of the referencing process. Additionally, they were engaged in:

- ✓ Providing their inestimable support in the preparation of the draft-report on referencing the AQF to the EQF by applying methodological guidelines for conducting the process of comparing and referencing to EQF and QF-EHEA;
- ✓ Holding working meetings and workshops with national expert, technical groups and Albanian stakeholders;
- ✓ Preparing comments and recommendations on the Draft Report on Referencing the AQF to the EQF and self-referencing to QF – EHEA.

In the meetings organised with the technical groups near the Task Force, the international experts gave suggestions on rather specific details, such as providing information about the credits, the degree and qualification titles, the educational documents received upon graduation and describing how the other administrative sectors' qualifications relate to the ministries responsible of the AQF, to the report. Other comments were more general, relating to for example the progression routes within the Albanian education map and the fact that though the level descriptors in the AQF are general, institutions do prepare specific learning outcomes for the qualifications, study programmes they offer, embodied, so far, in the diploma supplement when it comes to the HE area.

Both international experts have provided written statement for referencing process and related referencing report including self-certification with QF-EHEA (see Appendix A.3.6)

Criterion 8

The competent authority or authorities 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 authorities,

including the EQF National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter

This report, which has been prepared and agreed upon by the competent Albanian bodies that took part in the working groups established to contribute for drafting this report (MES, MFE, AQAHE, CES, NAVETQ, AQF Task Force, its working groups and all other stakeholders), is the unique report placing out the referencing and self-evaluation of the AQF to the EQF and QF-EHEA by supporting evidence, of the AQF to the EQF and the QF-EHEA. It addresses each of the ten criteria and procedures agreed upon by the EQF Advisory as well as the 7 criteria for self-certification with QF-EHEA as well as the 7 criteria for self-certification with QF-EHEA. The referencing report is published on NAVETQ website⁸¹.

Criterion 9

Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.

Upon completion of this report, the EQF National Coordination Point will inform the European Commission that the referencing process has been completed and will provide a link to the published Referencing Report.

Criterion 10

Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

The EU/CoE/UNESCO format of the Diploma Supplement was updated by MES in 2020. It is foreseen that all holders of a HE diplomas receive their Diploma Supplements automatically, free of charge, in Albanian and English language in the format established by a bylaw in line with the respective EUROPASS document. Also in VET, Professional Certificate and respective Supplement in line with Europass document is in place and reflects AQF levels.

After completing the referencing process, the respective bodies responsible for the specific education sectors will proceed with the necessary changes in the legal framework to foresee the

⁸¹ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/eqf-referencing-of-aqf/>

inclusion in the respective certificates/Diplomas and their supplements of the respective level of EQF.

5.3 - Response to the EQF criteria and procedures

Like most countries that have developed and implemented NQFs, the Albanian Qualifications Framework is a comprehensive qualification framework for lifelong learning, covering the full scope of qualifications and compatible with the EQF and the QF-EHEA.

The procedures of writing, debating and approving the Albanian report of referencing and self-referencing have been in line with the EQF procedures and criteria. Thus, all stakeholders at national level and international experts have been consulted and their suggestions have been integrated into the final version of the report.

In a general way, the EQF *procedures of referencing and self-referencing have been respected and the respective criteria fulfilled.*

5.4 - Self-Certification of the AQF versus the QF-EHEA

Criterion 1

The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education.

- MES has the responsibility for decisions concerning the structuring of the higher education area in Albania by proposing:
 - Laws;
 - Council of Ministers Decisions

and by issuing:

- ministry decrees;
- ministry orders;
- ministry guidance.
- Albanian framework for HE qualifications is clearly described in the respective law no. 80/2015 as well as the national bodies in the HE sector with clear responsibilities for each one of them (AQAHE, CES, NAFHE, NASRI). Each body is established by Decision of Council of the Ministers/Ministers' order where is foreseen the specific responsibilities, competencies, structure, etc. AQAHE has autonomy on decision making regarding the accreditation of HEIs/programs.

Criterion 2

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework.

- The aim of each cycle is specified in the law 10247 of AQF as amended and in the law no. 80/2015 about HE;
- in the Albanian HE system each qualification is clearly related to the AQF and its level descriptors since its licencing process, run by the MES, up to its accreditation decision awarded by the BA;
- The law no.80 of 2015 about HE is the second one (after the law of 2007 amended in 2010) which is clearly Bologna Process oriented. The study programs are foreseen by the law and respective bylaws to be expressed by ECTS and LOs. Actually, all the study programs foresee the no. of ECTS and the Certificates/Diplomas and diploma supplement contain the no. of ECTS of each qualification. Part of the study programs are expressed actually in LOs, while the rest are under reorganisation as required by the law in force. Better specifications in the respective bylaw determining the elements of the study programs in HE, as foreseen in the respective law 80/2015 will help this process. In the table 12 is shown the correspondence between AQF and EQF.

Table 14. HE qualifications correspondence between AQF and QF -EHEA

AQF Level	HE Albanian Qualifications definition	HE European Qualifications definition	EQF Level
5	Post-secondary ✓ Certificate (60 ECTS) ✓ Diploma (120 ECTS)	Post-secondary HE degree Short cycles	5
6	Bachelor degree (180 ECTS)	Bachelor degree First HE cycle	6
7	Master degrees ✓ Professional (60 ECTS); ✓ Professional (120 ECTS); ✓ of Science (120 ECTS)	Master degree Second HE cycle	7

8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Executive Master (60 ECTS); ✓ Executive Master (120 ECTS); ✓ Doctoral studies 	Doctoral studies Third HE cycle	8
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The Albanian higher education institutions started using the ECTS at national level in 2007. The change from the former system of measuring students' workload and performance was systematic and involved all higher education providers. Now the ECTS are used in all HE study programmes provided by the Albanian HEIs.

The level descriptors for levels 6-8 in the AQF are compatible with the Bologna level descriptors (Dublin descriptors). The Dublin Descriptors served as a benchmark for developing national descriptors for higher education qualifications during the years 2006-2010. The compatibility between EQF descriptors and QF-EHEA descriptors is presented in the table 13 here below.

Table 15. Comparison between the AQF HE and the Dublin Descriptors

AQF HE level descriptors		DUBLIN descriptors	
Level 5	Specialised factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work and/or study and consciousness on the boundaries of these knowledge. Use, process and analyse specific information of the field of work and/or study. Demonstrate knowledge, theories, applied methodologies within the field of study. Use principles of planning, organising and control of processes in a particular field of activity. Knowledge to develop assessment criteria. Wide range of cognitive and practical skills needed to find creative solutions for abstract problems. Carrying out complex operations by means of working tools, machineries, apparatuses, or other devices. Demonstration of skills in planning, organisation and controlling of job activities. Skills to control and support personnel, by providing explanations or instructions to carry out a specific activity. Apply management and supervision in work or study contexts where is an unforeseen change of circumstances. Review and develop personal and others achievement.	Have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle; Can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts; Have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; Can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy.	Short Cycle



	<p>Carry out comprehensive tasks in different circumstances, take managerial responsibility for the performance of others and allocation of resources.</p> <p>Working independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks.</p> <p>Bear responsibility for the job performance.</p> <p>Take responsibility for the appropriate use of the equipment.</p> <p>Communicating effectively at different levels in national and foreign language.</p> <p>Recognition of gaps in own knowledge, skills and competencies and takes the necessary actions to improve them by self-study and participation in seminars, trainings, etc.</p>		
<p>Level 6</p>	<p>knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their areas of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;</p> <p>ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context;</p> <p>knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subjects, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study;</p> <p>an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretation based on that knowledge</p> <p>qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making; skills of understanding and applying their acquired knowledge in a professional way in compliance with the field of expertise. Skills of applying the supporting concepts and principles beyond the context of the field of study by introducing, each time when needed, the application of those principles, methods and tools under an employment point of view and to find the solution to the problems in complex and specific fields by conceiving and supporting the arguments for solving the problems.</p> <p>use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to</p>	<p>have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; - have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; - can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; - have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy. 	<p>First Cycle</p>



	<p>problems arising from that analysis and concrete works in this context; define administrative goals, manage resources and teams, show responsibility in work and study in an unpredictable context that require problems solving skills in a multi-factorial environment.; show creativity in of the writing projects and initiative in process management that aim at tiers training and by raising the performance of the teams.</p> <p>effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist environment audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively in their field of application; deploy comprehensive views and manifest solidarity with the others over different issues; gather and interpret important data to give judgements that include reflexion on important social, scientific and ethic issues; undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within employment structures.</p>		
<p>Level 7</p>	<p>-a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice;</p> <p>-a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship; originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; conceptual understanding that enables the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; • to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate to propose new hypotheses. 	<p>- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor’s level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;</p> <p>-can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem -solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;</p> <p>- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;</p> <p>- can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;</p>	<p>Second Cycle</p>



	<p>ability to manage self-learning as well as methodical use of acquired knowledge and primary resources; transferable skills, required employment, requiring the exercising of personal initiatives and responsibilities, decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts, independent learning skills required to pursue professional progress. specific skills in problem-solving and/or innovation in developing knowledge and procedures and knowledge integration from different fields, as well; being critical of knowledge issues in a field and the connection between their different fields; skills of integrating knowledge of managing complex situations, of formulating judgements over scarce or incomplete data, that includes reflexion on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the knowledge application and their judgements.</p> <p>deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences by using the right techniques; review and reflect over norms, social and ethical relations and react to change them; demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level in a complex environment seeking for a solution by integrating multiple factors; application of acquired methods and techniques, updating, extending, their application and the starting project leading that are based on; assessment accomplishment under a critical, argued process and abstract concepts hypothesis on data of a specific problem and the deployment of the judgement and possible solution to it.</p>	<p>- have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that maybe largely self-directed or autonomous.</p>	
<p>Level 8</p>	<p>Creation and interpretation of new knowledge through advanced scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review extend the</p>	<p>- have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;</p>	<p>Third cycle</p>



<p>forefront of the discipline and merit publication.</p> <p>Use of specialised knowledge to analyse, assess and summarize new and complex ideas at the most advanced level of a that specific field of study.</p> <p>Systematic understanding mastery of the fundamental body of knowledge, that is the core of an academic discipline or professional field.</p> <p>Understanding mastery as well as the most advanced methods and techniques application.</p> <p>Skills of giving a contribution through original research that tends reach the boundary of knowledge by developing fundamental work, some of which deserve to be published at national or international level.</p> <p>Skills of critical analyses, synthesis and assessment of complex ideas and communication with the scientific and academic community in the field of expertise.</p> <p>Promotion of academic, social, cultural and technological developments in a society of knowledge.</p> <p>Effective application of judgements on specific field issues in a specialist and non-specialist community.</p> <p>High-level communication in the mother tongue or a in a foreign language of the acquired scientific results based on a fundamental or application research performed with homologue colleagues by engaging a critical dialog and leading a complex social process.</p> <p>High-level development of techniques and new methods in the field of expertise and new ideas and process development in the framework of the work, study of scientific research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; - have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication; - are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas; - can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise; - can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society; 	
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Criterion 3

The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS-compatible credits.

- All HE diplomas are registered by law no. 80/2015 in the national database at the CES near the MES, which aligns qualifications in the AQF and requires clear mention of the learning outcomes developed on a very sectoral way and compulsory embodied in the diploma supplement. The form and content of a diploma and the respective diploma supplement for a certain qualification in HE are approved by MESY before their first issue. Description of expected learning outcomes of study programmes is one of the criteria used by the BA to accredit the diploma to which these qualifications lead.
- ECTS have been set out by the law no. 80/2015 as follows:
 - ✓ 60 or 120 ECTS for post-maturity degree-short cycle (respectively professional certificate or Professional diploma),
 - ✓ At least 180 ECTS for bachelor's degree,
 - ✓ 60 or 120 ECTS for professional master's degree,
 - ✓ 120 ECTS for master of sciences/master of arts degree and
 - ✓ 300-360 ECTS for integrated master of science
 - ✓ 60 or 120 ECTS for executive master's degree
- At least 120 ECTS for long term specialisations. Since the previous law of HE of 2007 ECTS use is simply considered as an Albanian well-known standard.
- Each study programme leading to a HE certificate or diploma and every syllabus of each single course, part of the respective study programme curricula, is learning outcomes oriented and ECTS based.

Criterion 4

The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent.

- Qualifications awarded by public and non-public HEIs are officially recognised by the Albanian State after having been licenced and accredited.
- Legal registration of national HE degrees and diplomas are the clear sign of the State recognition and guarantee of them through clearly defined internal and external evaluation and accreditations procedures.
- The level of each type of qualification is set in the law 80/2015 and the HEIs have to licence the study program before offering it. The licencing process foresees the deposit of a set of documents, among others the content of the study program, LOs, type of qualification/level and, form of diploma and Diploma supplement, other requirements set in the legal framework regarding infrastructure academic staff, etc. MES verify that all the criteria and standards foreseen for offering this type of qualifications are met before licencing it.

- HEIs are obliged by law to accredit their institution and the study programs before issuing the first degree. They undergo internal and external QA process sending the required documents to AQAHE that after verifications through external experts prepare a written report. BA examine the report and can ask for further verifications if needed and decide about accreditation or non-accreditation of the respective program.
- Only after a positive accreditation process the HEI can issue the respective degree certifying the successful completion of the respective study program/qualification

Criterion 5

The national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process.

- Prior to Bologna Process: only the public (called state) HEIs were entitled to award HE degrees (qualifications) and the State was the guarantor of their quality assurance in accordance with the legal framework in force.
- Since the adhesion of Albania to the Bologna Process community in 2003 and in particular after the coming to force of the HE law of 2007 - the very first Bologna oriented -
- the establishment of independent evaluation bodies as AQAHE and BA in accordance with European references for the quality of HE within EHEA, took place. Quality assurance system is based on both institutional and program evaluation. The final decision is given by BA, a body independent in its evaluation composed by national and international experts. BA is established near AQAHE. One of the criteria of the evaluation of the study programs is LO of that program and the level of qualification.
- The process of accreditation foresee an internal QA process made by HEIs themselves after which undergoes an external evaluation, both important processes for the decision taken by the BA for the accreditation.
- QA is based on national QA standards set in the Quality code which is based on European Standards Guidelines (ESG). Still some ESG need to be implemented, thus a process of revision of Quality Code is in process. AQAHE is an affiliated member of ENQA and is preparing the documents and revising the procedures and legal framework in order to fully implement ESG and register in EQAR

Criterion 6

The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements.

- In the law 80/2015 for each type of qualification is foreseen the respective AQF level and it is foreseen that a Diploma supplement accompany the diploma. The specifications form

and content of the diploma supplement is foreseen in the respective bylaw that was revised in 2020 with the last version of the diploma supplement approved in 2018 by ministers of education of EHEA

- In the national database, for each qualification the AQF level (and indirectly the EQF one) is mentioned.
- Diploma Supplement is foreseen to be issued in two languages, in Albanian and English, free of charge for all the students. It includes the LOs of the qualification and the respective AQF level as well as a description of the higher education system in Albania, including type of HEIs, of study programs and respective levels in order to present a clear picture for the holder and third parties regarding the qualification awarded and its positioning in the HE system.
- After the completion of the referencing process the diploma and diploma supplement will contain also the EQF level

Criterion 7

The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published.

- All the approval procedures for licensing the study programmes leading to a HE degree, being certificate or diploma and their accreditation process are clearly set in the law no.80 of 2015 and in its application by-laws.
- The responsibilities of different bodies, MES and its agencies are foreseen in the laws (80/2015 and 10247/2010 as amended) and respective bylaws, that are published in the Official Gazette as well as in the respective official websites.
- For each study programme and the respective qualifications awarded to the successful students enrolling them, there is a clear and public legal way that defines the responsibilities of the qualification providing institutions and of those institutions in charge of “checking-up” the quality assurance.
- In terms of *study programmes content* and *students’ maximal quota* to which is offered the possibility to attend them, the Albanian providing HEI are fully responsible. Nevertheless, when the study programme opens for the first time, it needs to get a licence, which is awarded by the ministry in charge of HE (MES) after an evaluation process of the programme curricula and the maximal quota of students as proposed by the providing institution in line with the national standards of quality. This is the very first quality “check-up”.
- Then, when the students enrol the licensed study programme they get officially registered (matriculated) at the beginning of each academic year in the national database kept by the CES. There is the second formal quality “check-up” run by the centre, only based on the compliance of the students’ quota proposed by the providing institution vis-à-vis to the terms of the licence awarded by MES.

- Before that the qualification providing institution awards to the successful students the HE degree (qualification) there is the obligation by law for the providing institution to get accredited as institution firstly and then as study programme. The accreditation procedure goes through the internal and external evaluation process, finalised by the accreditation decision taken by the BA with a duration validity from 1 to six years. This is the third and the final institutional quality “check-up”.
- The fourth “check-up” is the *national students’ survey*, led by the BA and the AQAHE in 2019⁸² and the last “check-up”, but not the least by its importance, is the degree of HE graduates integration in the labour market⁸³.

5.5 - Response to the QF-EHEA Criteria and Procedures

The actual AQF is very EQF oriented in terms not only of qualifications level number, but also when it comes to consider level descriptors. Certainly, AQF has its own particularities, but when one considers the comparison presented in the table 11, differences can be observed, but those differences do not touch the core of level descriptors.

Procedures for verifying the compatibility of AQF with EQ - EHEA

1. *Competent Albanian bodies certifying the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework*

In Albania, the competent national body to certify the compatibility of the AQF and more specifically, of its levels 5-8, with the QF-EHEA are the **MES, BA** and all **Albanian HEIs**. By the law of HE (no.80/2015) in force all Albanian HEIs are *autonomous for proposing 5-8 AQF level degrees and study programmes leading to and referenced to the AQF (to EQF indirectly)*. MES *affirm it by licensing* the study programmes and the BA *certifies their quality assurance*. CES register the diploma awarded checking the legal provision foreseen (the form of the diploma, diploma supplement, if positive accreditation has been given for the institution and study program before issuing the diploma, if matriculation number is given after licencing of the study program, etc.

2. *The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process*

The MES has been the co-initiator and co-coordinator (together with the MFE) in all phases in the development and implementation of the AQF and will continue to be so as far as they will continue to be responsible of it. In that respect, *MES, Albanian HERE⁸⁴ team* and *BA* have been part of the entire process of self-certification and they give their agreement about it. Statements from

⁸² <https://www.ascal.al/sq/sondazhi-kombetar-i-studenteve/rezultatet-e-vleresimit>

⁸³ Each Albanian HEI makes a labour study market in cooperation with their respective alumni association

⁸⁴ Higher Education Reform Experts

AQAHE/BA and CES are in the annex of this report. The report is reviewed and agreed by the experts of the working groups part of the referencing process.

MES by joint order has mandated the TF on AQF to prepare the report and coordinate the referencing process. A written statement of the TF is part of the annexes of this report

Procedure 2 has been explained under the Criterion 8 of AQF referencing to the EQF. Additionally, copies of the letters of the Albanian bodies involved in the process are presented in Appendix A.1 of this report.

3. The self-certification process shall involve international experts

Procedure 3 has been explained under the Criterion 7 of AQF referencing to the EQF of this report. Additionally, copies of the letters of the international experts involved in the process are presented in Appendix A.3 of this report.

4. The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out.

The response to **Procedure 4** has been described under Criterion 9 of AQF referencing to the EQF of this report. In addition, the Self-Certification report will be published on the EHEA website and by the MES and respective bodies, as well as by the NCP for QF.

5. The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process.

The response to **Procedure 5** has been described under Criterion 9 of AQF referencing to the EQF. The combined referencing and self-certification report will be published online on the websites of the MES. For wider national dissemination, the report will also be translated into Albanian language. *CES is also ENIC centre for Albania. CES refers for each procedure of recognition to AQF, EQF and QF- EHEA and reference to EQF for the recognition process is foreseen by law 80/2015.*

6. The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.

The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the AQF and the European frameworks.

References of the accredited HE study programmes

- This reference can be found in: <https://www.ascal.al/sq/akreditimi/programe-te-akredituara>

6 - FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE AQF

6.1 - Referencing Process: Challenges and Specific Issues, Recommendations

Providing the right information to different stakeholders about the use of AQF, EQF and QF-EHEA, requires further work by the responsible bodies in response to overall challenges since the AQF is not considered to be a tool for change, but rather a tool that provides information and supports developing education in Albania, in order to focus on LOs, increased mobility and improved access to further studies.

A better understanding how the national qualifications framework connects with EQF and the QF-EHEA will be a useful tool for all end users.

In order that AQF becomes a comprehensive operational instrument to support the development of a coherent, harmonious and modernized education and training system in Albania the following measures should be taken in the future:

- Communication Strategy for AQF. publication of referencing report and other related aspects need to be developed. AQF Task Force is mandated to design a midterm communication strategy for AQF, including main measures of whom to reach, what to communicate and how to raise awareness, and the required resources for implementation.
- Consolidation of legal framework for:
 - the use EQF level in diploma/certificates and respective supplements.
 - the update the legal framework with the latest recommendations available regarding EQF and QF-EHEA.
- Improve the coordination between the NQF bodies, NCP, AQF TF in order to harmonize efforts on implementation of AQF.
- While NESS 2019-2022 has made clear references to the European Instruments such as EQAVET and ECVET linked with its objective of strengthening the qualification system, as mentioned above, EU has lately decided to repeal ECVET instrument due to evaluations' results showing that ECVET as a credit system was not very successful. This created a good opportunity to NAVETQ with ETF Support, in 2020, to conduct assessment on VET system readiness for establishment of credit system. Results of the study identified the need for an in depth feasibility study on the implementation of a credit system in the VET, and how it would affect the need for an increased flexibility of the VET offer, how it will facilitate the recognition of LLL and partial qualifications and the internal and international mobility. The feasibility study will provide more knowledge; it will help defining a clear way forward.
- Implementation of DCM for inclusion of LLL qualification and its reference to micro-credentials in AQF level will require the further completion of legal framework, awareness raising of LLL qualifications providers on the benefits and as well respective criteria and procedures and the inventory of qualifications designed in 2018 should be updated and serve as good basis in this process., capacity building of institutions in charge for

implementation. Establishing the system for introducing micro credentials and further harmonisation with DCM for inclusion of LLL Qualification in AQF.

- Future developments regarding VNFIL foreseen in NESS include consolidation of legal framework to support the VNFIL implementation process, consolidation of institutional arrangements, development of database on VNFIL, human capacity building on VNFIL, Methodologies and Quality Assurance, involvement of the representatives of employers organizations and trade unions in the design and implementation process, because they will be very important agents of change in the process of shifting from traditional certification of formal learning to the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. The national authorities MES, MFE should act as guarantors of quality process, fair treatment of candidates, and impartial negotiators between all parties (employers, assessment centres).
- Currently, the ICT sectorial committee is to be established. In the meantime, NAVETQ based on the sector prioritization methodology has identified the hospitality and tourism as the second sector for which to establish the second Sectorial committee, and currently the delimitation analysis is taking place, in order to propose to both Ministers of Education and VET the establishment of the second sectorial committee. Setting up and making operating sectorial committees in other sectors will be based on the roadmap designed to support this measure.
- Accreditation of VET providers has already started the implementation. The roadmap designed for this process is guiding the institutional efforts and as well resources for implementation (see Appendix A.11).
- Revision of study programs in HE for full implementation of LO approach. Consolidation of bylaws in HE regarding elements of the study programs reflecting the law provision, in order to better support the efforts of HEIs in reorganisation of the study programs based in LOs.
- Full implementation of ESGs and clear references in the respective bylaws and regulations of QA to AQF/EQF implementation as criteria for accreditation, as well as of inclusion of LOs in study programs to be accredited. The inclusion of representatives from employers in the process of QA will support a better connection to labour market needs and academic offer in HE as well as implementation of AQF and wider use of it.

REFERENCES

- (1) **Law No 10 247 of 4 March 2010 “On the Albanian qualifications framework”**.
https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LIGJ-10247-2010_korniza_shqiptare_e_kualifikimeve.pdf
- (2) **Law No 23/2018 of 10.5.2018 “On the revised Albanian qualifications framework”**
http://qsha.gov.al/infos/njesim_diplome/ligj_23-2018_10052018.pdf
- (3) **Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in Republic of Albania”** (firstly approved in 2012 and amended in 2015)
https://www.arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Ligji_Parauniversitar.pdf
- (4) **Law no. 15/2017 “On vocational education and training in Republic of Albania”** (2017)
<https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ligj-nr-15-dt-16-2-2017.pdf>
- (5) **Law no. 80/2015 “On higher education and scientific research in higher education institutions in Republic of Albania”** (2015)
<http://arsimi.gov.al/ligji-nr-80-2015-per-arsimin-e-larte-dhe-kerkimin-shkencor-ne-institucionet-e-arsimit-te-larte-ne-republiken-e-shqiperise-dhe-aktet-nenligjore-ne-zbatim-te-tij/>
- (6) **National catalogue of vocational qualifications** (NCVQ)
<http://www.akafp.gov.al/lista-kombetare-profesionale/>

APPENDIX

A.1 – AQF Roadmap

Phases the AQF went through

2006 - The **AQF process started** with the support of **EU CARDS AFP 3** for the implementation of the Bologna Process in HE and VET and first AQF task Force was established by both Ministers of Education and Labour;

2010 - AQF Task Force in cooperation with EU CARDS AFP 3 project proposed the **first AQF Law** approved by the Parliament in 2010, describing the main features of the AQF;

2014 - The NESS 2014-2020 Action plan foresaw a **review and implementation** of the AQF law, to further develop and implement AQF;

2015 - The **new joint ministerial Task Force** with representatives of social partners, VET providers and HEI was established with the mandate to further develop and implement an operational AQF and support referencing process;

2017 - AQF task force proposed the **amendment of the AQF law** of 2010, which has been approved in 2018 by Albanian Parliament;

2017 – drafted the first AQF handbook to support further developments in AQF and improvement in legal framework;

2018 - The AQF Task Force created the **Technical Group of Experts** in view of detailing the **AQF level descriptors, establishing the sectorial committees and defining criteria and procedures for inclusion of LLL qualifications in AQF**;

2019 - NESS is **extended** till 2022, makes several references to the AQF **priority development aspects** like the endorsement of national catalogue for vocational qualifications, establishing first sectorial committees;

2019 – **Bylaw (DCMs)** on detailed AQF level descriptors establishing the sectorial committees and defining criteria and procedures for inclusion of LLL qualifications in AQF, adopted;

2020 – **Bylaws (minister's orders)** on Diploma form and Diploma supplement (foreseeing the level of the AQF in the Diploma and Diploma supplement, as well as updated Diploma supplement with the latest form as adopted by ministers responsible for education of the EHEA countries in 2018) was adopted;

2021 - **National catalogue** for vocational qualifications in VET adopted and joint ministerial order to establish the **sectorial committee in ICT** adopted;

2021 - **Referencing** with EQF and QF EHEA

2022 – foreseen revision of the AQF handbook and communication strategy;

A.2 – Stated agreements of the relevant AQF bodies

A.2.1 – Joint order for the constitution of the AQF Task Force 2015



Nr. 7340/17 Datë 29.09.2015



Nr. 4906 Datë 29.09.2015

URDHËR I PËRBASHKËT

PËR

NGRITJEN E TASK FORCËS PËR ZHVILLIMIN DHE ZBATIMIN E MËTEJSHËM TË KORNIZËS SHQIPTARE TË KUALIFIKIMEVE

Në mbështetje të nenit 102, pika 4 të Kushtetutës së Shqipërisë, Ligjit Nr.10247, datë 04.03.2010 "Për Kornizën Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve në Republikën e Shqipërisë", të Ligjit nr. 9741, datë 21.05.2007 "Për arsimin e lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë", i ndryshuar, të Ligjit nr. 69/2012 "Për sistemin arsimor parauniversitar në Republikën e Shqipërisë", i ndryshuar, të Ligjit nr. 8872, datë 29.03. 2002 "Për arsimin dhe formimin profesional në Republikën e Shqipërisë", i ndryshuar, si dhe të Vendimit nr. 818, datë 26.11.2014 të Këshillit të Ministrave "Për miratimin e Strategjisë Kombëtare për Punësim dhe Afësi 2014-2020 dhe të Planit të Veprimit për Zbatimin e saj",

URDHËROJMË:

1. Ngritjen e Task Forcës, me një mandat 2 (dy) vjeçar të rinovueshëm, për të mundësuar zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e Kornizës Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve (KSHK) në mënyrë që të shërbejë si një instrument bazë në reformimin dhe modernizimin e sistemeve të arsimit dhe formimit, për të ofruar kualifikime më të mira në shërbim të të gjithë përfituesve përfshirë bizneset, individët dhe shoqëria në tërësi.

2. Task forca të përbëhet nga:

- a. Linda Pustina, MAS¹
- b. Sonila Limaj, AKAFPK²
- c. Ejvis Gishiti, AKAFPK

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e. Aleksandër Xhuvani, përfaqësues nga IAL ⁴	Anëtar
f. Luan Hregani, Përfaqësues i shoqërisë së biznesit	Anëtar
g. Kol Nikolla, përfaqësues i sindikatave	Anëtar

3. Task force ka si objekt të punës:

- Rishikimin e Ligjit Nr.10247, datë 04.03.2010 "Për Komizin Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve në Republikën e Shqipërisë" dhe propozimin e ndryshimeve të nevojshme të tij, si dhe përgatitjen e propozimeve për aktet e nevojshme nënligjore për zbatimin me efektivitet të tij, konform praktikave më të mira dhe kërkesave të Hapësirës Europiane të Arsimit të Lartë (HEAL);
- Hartimin e një manuali për Komizin Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve, i cili do të shërbejë si një udhërrëfyes në zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e qëndrueshëm të këtij instrumenti, duke krijuar kushtet për referencimin e KSHK me Komizin Europian të Kualifikimeve;
- Hartimin e propozimeve për përgatitjen e kadrut ligjor e nënligjor: për riorganizimin e skemës institucionale të menaxhimit dhe zbatimit të KSHK-së, për ngritjen e komiteteve sektoriale, duke përfshirë pilotimin e këtij organizmi në të paktën një sektor të ekonomisë, për rishikimin e niveleve dhe përshkruesve përkatës, aspekteve të klasifikimit të kualifikimeve për të mundësuar popullimin e niveleve të KSHK me kualifikimet e duhura, aspekteve të tjera të garantimit të cilësisë, aspekteve të vlerësimit dhe certifikimit, përfshirë ndërlidhjen me Supplementin e Diplomës, sistemit të krediteve, etj.;
- Përgatitjen e një plani veprimi të përvitshëm me çështjet që do të trajtohen në zbatim të objektit të punës së task force.

4. Task force mund të asistohet me grupe ekspertësh nga European Training Foundation dhe organizata të tjera, që operojnë në këtë fushë, në varësi të çështjeve që do të adresohen.

5. Ky urtëbër hyn në fuqi menjëherë.

MINISTRI I ARSIMIT DHE SPORTIT


Lindita NIKOLLA

³ Ministria e Mirëqenies Sociale dhe Rinisë
⁴ Institucioni i Arsimit të Lartë

MINISTRI I MIRËQENIES SOCIALE
DHE RINISË


Bernd KLÖSCH

A.2.2 - Joint order for the new mandate of the AQF Task Force 2017



URDHËR I PËRBASHKËT

PËR NJË NDRYSHIM DHE NJË SHITESË NË URDHRIN E PËRBASHKËT "PËR NGRITJEN E TASK FORCËS PËR ZHVILLIMIN DHE ZBATIMIN E MËTEJSHËM TË KORNIZËS SHQIPTARE TË KUALIFIKIMEVE"

Në mbështetje të nenit 102, pika 4 të Kushtetutës së Shqipërisë, Ligjit Nr. 11247, datë 04.03.2010 "Për Kornizën Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve në Republikën e Shqipërisë", të Ligjit nr. 80/2015, "Për arsimin e lartë dhe kërkimin shkencor në institucionet e arsimit të lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë", të Ligjit nr. 69/2012 "Për sistemin arsimor parauniversitar në Republikën e Shqipërisë", i ndryshuar, të Ligjit nr. 8872, datë 29.03. 2002 "Për arsimin dhe formimin profesional në Republikën e Shqipërisë", i ndryshuar, të Vendimit nr. 818, datë 26.11.2014 të Këshillit të Ministrave "Për miratimin e Strategjisë Kombëtare për Punësin dhe Afërsë 2014-2020 dhe të Planit të Veprimit për Zbatimin e saj", të Vendimit nr. 503, datë 13.09.2017 të Këshillit të Ministrave "Për përcaktimin e fushës së përgjegjësisë shtetërore të Ministrisë së Financave dhe Ekonomisë", si dhe të Vendimit nr. 505, datë 13.09.2017 "Për përcaktimin e fushës së përgjegjësisë shtetërore të Ministrisë së Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë".

URDHËROJMË:

1. Rinovimin e mandatit 2 (dy) vjeçar të Task Forcës për zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e mëtejshëm të Kornizës Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve.
2. Në fund të pikës 3 të urdhrit të përbashkët "Për ngritjen e task forcës për zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e mëtejshëm të Kornizës Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve" të shtohet një paragraf si më poshtë:

"* Përgjatjen e abstraktit të referencimit në Kornizën Evropiane të Kualifikimeve, ndjekjen e procesit të referencimit deri në miratimin e raportit të referencimit nga Bordi Këshillimor i Kornizës Evropiane të Kualifikimeve (EQF Advisory Group)."

3. Ngarkohen për zbatimin e këtij urdhri, Sekretari i Përgjithshëm i Ministrisë së Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë, Sekretari i Përgjithshëm i Ministrisë së Financave dhe Ekonomisë dhe Task Forcë.
4. Ky urdhër hyn në fuqi menjëherë.


MINISTRI I ARSIMIT, SPORTIT DHE RINISË

Lindita NIKOLLA

MINISTRI I FINANCAVE DHE EKONOMISË

Arben TRIVEZI

A.2.3 - Joint order for the new mandate of the AQF Task Force 2020



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË

**MINISTRIA E ARSIMIT,
SPORTIT DHE RINISË
MINISTRI**

Nr. 430/1 Prot. Datë 17.1.2020

**MINISTRIA E FINANCEVE
DHE EKONOMISË
MINISTRI**

Nr. 16258/12 Prot. Datë 28.1.2020

URDHËR I PËRBASHKËT

Nr. 22 Datë 28.1.2020

**“PËR
DISA NDRYSHIME NË URDHRIN E PËRBASHKËT “PËR NGRITJEN E TASK
FORCËS PËR ZHVILLIMIN DHE ZBATIMIN E MËTEJSHËM TË KORNIZËS
SHQIPTARE TË KUALIFIKIMEVE””**

Në mbështetje të pikës 4 të nenit 102 të Kushtetutës, të ligjit nr.10247, datë 4.3.2010 “Për Kornizën Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve në Republikën e Shqipërisë, të ndryshuar, të ligjit nr.80/2015 “Për arsimin e lartë dhe kërkimin shkencor në institucionet e arsimit të lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë”, të ligjit nr.69/2012 “Për sistemin arsimor parauniversitar në Republikën e Shqipërisë”, të ndryshuar, të ligjit nr.8872, datë 29.3.2002 “Për arsimin dhe formimin profesional në Republikën e Shqipërisë”, të ndryshuar, vendimit nr.818, datë 26.11.2014, të Këshillit të Ministrave, “Për miratimin e Strategjisë Kombëtare për Punësim dhe Aftësi 2014-2020 dhe të Planit të Veprimit për Zbatimin e saj”, të vendimit nr.503, datë 13.9.2017 të Këshillit të Ministrave, “Për përcaktimin e fushës së përgjegjësisë shtetërore të Ministrisë së Financave dhe Ekonomisë” dhe të vendimit nr.505, datë 13.9.2017 të Këshillit të Ministrave, “Për përcaktimin e fushës së përgjegjësisë shtetërore të Ministrisë së Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë”.

URDHËROJMË:

1. Rinovimin e mandatit 2 (dy) vjeçar të Task Forcës për zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e mëtejshëm të Kornizës Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve.
2. Pikat 2 dhe 3 të urdhrin të përbashkët “Për ngritjen e Task Forcës për zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e mëtejshëm të Kornizës Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve”, ndryshohen si vijon:
 - “2. Task Forca të përbëhet nga:

a) Linda Pustina, përfaqësues i MASR-së ¹	Bashkëkryetar
b) Ejvis Gishti, përfaqësues i AKAFPK ²	Bashkëkryetar

¹ Ministria e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë
² Agjencia Kombëtare e Arsimit, Formimit Profesional dhe Kualifikimeve

- | | |
|--|--------|
| c) Stavri Lako, përfaqësues i MFE-së ³ | Anëtar |
| d) Flutura Vaqarri, përfaqësues i IOAFP-së ⁴ | Anëtar |
| e) Aleksandër Xhuvani, përfaqësues nga IAL-të ⁵ | Anëtar |
| f) Luan Bregasi, përfaqësues i shoqatës së biznesit | Anëtar |
| g) Kol Nikolla, përfaqësues i sindikatave | Anëtar |

3. Task Forca ka si objekt të punës:

- Hartimin e propozimeve për përgatitjen, përmirësimin dhe ndryshimin e kuadrit ligjor që lidhet me ngritjen e komiteteve sektoriale, duke përfshirë pilotimin e këtij organizimi në të paktën një sektor të ekonomisë, me përfshirjen e kualifikimeve të të nxënit gjatë gjithë jetës në Kornizën Shqiptare të Kualifikimeve, si dhe me aspekte të tjera të zbatimit të KSHK-së.
- Hartimin e një manuali për KSHK-në, i cili do të shërbejë si një udhërrëfyes në zhvillimin dhe zbatimin e qëndrueshëm të këtij instrumenti, duke krijuar kushtet për referencimin e KSHK-së me Kornizën Evropiane të Kualifikimeve.
- Përgatitjen e draft raportit të referencimit me Kornizën Evropiane të Kualifikimeve, ndjekjen e procesit të referencimit deri në miratimin e raportit të referencimit nga Bordi Këshillimor i Kornizës Evropiane të Kualifikimeve (EQF Advisory Group).
- Përgatitjen e një plani veprimi të përvitshëm me çështje që do të trajtohen në zbatim të objektit të punës së Task Forcës.”.

- Ngarkohen për zbatimin e këtij urdhri, Sekretari i Përgjithshëm i Ministrisë së Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë, Sekretari i Përgjithshëm i Ministrisë së Financave dhe Ekonomisë dhe Task Forca.

Ky urdhër hyn në fuqi menjëherë.

**MINISTËR I ARSIMIT,
SPORTIT DHE RINISË**


Besa SHAHINI



**MINISTËR I FINANCEVE
DHE EKONOMISË**


Anila DENAJ




³ Ministria e Financave dhe Ekonomisë

⁴ Institucioni Ofrues i Arsimit dhe Formimit Profesional

⁵ Institucion i Arsimit të Lartë

A.3 - Statements of Quality Assurance Agencies of AQF and AQF TF

A.3.1 - Statement of the Centre of Educational Services



REPUBLIKA E SHqipëRIE
MINISTRIA E ARSIMIT
SPORTIT DHE RINISË
QENDRA E SHËRBIMEVE ARSMORE

№ 1.53 Prot. *Tiranë, 27.08.2021*

Subject: Referencing to the European Qualifications Framework and self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area

To: The European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group


The Centre for Educational Services (CES) is a public entity established pursuant to the laws on Higher Education and Pre-University Education, whose mission is to provide services and offer public access to higher education and pre-university education. CES is the institution responsible for national assessments and examinations as well as the ENIC centre for Albania.

CES provides a range of services including support for national and international testing and assessment in Albania, information for students and third parties/organisations regarding recognition of foreign HE qualifications or other aspects regarding education system in Albania, recognition of foreign qualifications, etc.


CES has been from the beginning part the referencing process with DQT and self-certification with QF-EHEA in Albania giving inputs and comments on the draft documents and draft referencing report and expresses the full agreement for the final document of the Albanian referencing report to EQF and self-certification to QF-EHEA, and states that it is consistent with the national quality standards, provisions, and practice regulations.

With respect,

Rezana VRAPI



GENERAL DIRECTOR




Bulevardi Zhan D'Arë nr. 23, Tiranë
Tel./fax: +355 4 24 0267

Faqe 1 nga 1

Web site: www.qshs.gov.al
E-mail: rezana.vrapit@qshs.gov.al

A.3.2 - Statement of the QAHE



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

No. 232 Prot. Tiranë, 20.09.2021

Subject: Referencing to the European Qualifications Framework and self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area

To: The European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group


The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) is the public legal entity responsible for quality assurance in higher education in Albania. QAAHE, through quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation and other quality processes, monitors and evaluates the quality of the institutions and the programs they offer. QAAHE bases its activity on its guidelines and the Code of Quality for Higher Education, which is updated with European Standards and Quality Guidelines in the European Higher Education Area.

Near QAAHE is established and functions the Accreditation Board (AB), as a collegial decision-making body, independent in its activity. The Accreditation Board is composed of 11 members, out of which a minimum of three and maximum of five must be foreign members. The appointment and dismissal of the Chairman and members of the Accreditation Board is made by the Order of Prime Minister, with the proposal of responsible minister for education.


The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and the Accreditation Board are involved from the beginning of the implementation of the National Qualification Framework in the Republic of Albania and in the process of Referencing to the European Qualifications Framework and self certification to QF-EHEA. One of the AB members has been part of the task force for Albanian Qualification Framework in charge for this process.

QAAHE and AB express their full agreement to the EQF Advisory Group for the Albanian referencing report of the European Qualifications Framework and self-certification to QF-EHEA, that is consistent with the national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.

Acting Director



Xhiliola Bixheku



Adresa: Rruga e Durrësit, Nr. 219, Tiranë; Tel: +355(0)2243423/2266203;
web: www.ascal.al; e-mail: info@ascal.al

Faqe 1 nga 1

A.3.3 - Statement of the AQAPE



REPUBLIKA E SHqipëRIE

MINISTRIA E ARSIMIT, SPORTIT DHE REJDIË

AGJENCIA E NIGURIMIT TË ÇILËNDIË SË ARSIMIT PARAUNIVERSITAR

No. Prot. Ddatë: 09/2021

To: Albanian Qualification Framework, Task Force

Subject: Opinion on the Referencing of the National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong and Self-Certification to the QF-CHCA

As national institution with important role in quality assurance of primary and secondary education the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education (QAAPUE) has been involved in the whole referencing process with a member of the Working Group for Referencing the National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework.

Additionally, a special session to discuss the draft Referencing Report with involvement of respective members of staff of the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education took place in July 2021.

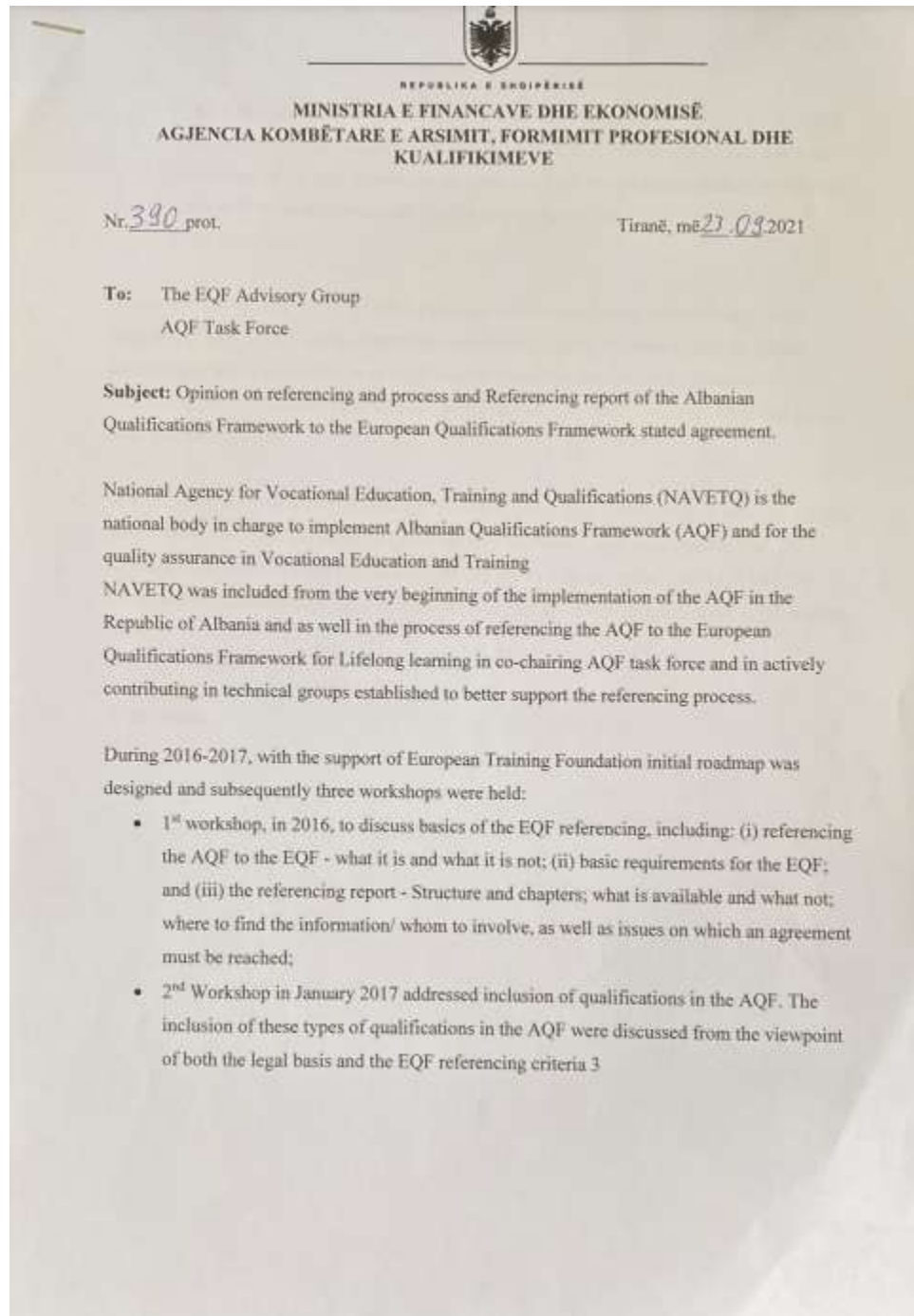
Having been acquainted with the content of the Referencing Report, the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education is using the opportunity to thank the authors for having included the comments and recommendations of the QAAPUE in the Referencing Report. The Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education has had special attention to the quality aspects in the respective chapters and accepts the contents of the Report.

General Director
Of the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education

GERTI JAVOQ



A.3.4 Statement of the NAVETQ



- 3rd Workshop in May 2017 served to reach a common understanding of the actual status of the quality assurance of qualifications in Albania, EQF referencing criteria 5 & 6 and the contents of the AQF bylaws on the approval of vocational qualifications for inclusion in the AQF/ National Vocational Qualifications register and on the Establishment of sector committees;

Meanwhile during 2018-2019, NAVETQ together with a wider group of stakeholders were engaged by AQF Task Force to consolidate the required legal framework to support further development and implementation of AQF. In 2020, based on the revised Roadmap on referencing process, NAVETQ contributed with required data, comments and suggestion for the AQF referencing report.

In conclusion, the referencing process was comprehensive, with wide participation of all relevant actors, in the meantime supported improvements in the further AQF development and implementation in VET, and the final referencing report properly reflects all the NAVETQ inputs and suggestions and is fully in line with practices and mechanisms in place in our country.

With respect,

Ejvis GISHTI



A.3.5 - Statement of the AQF TF



Task Force on Albanian Qualifications Framework

Tirana, on 27th September 2021

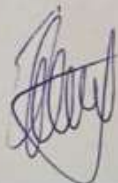
Subject: Meeting for discussion and approval of the referencing report with EQF and self-certification with QF-EHEA

Task Force of the Albanian Qualifications Framework met on 24th September 2021 at 13:00 in a hybrid format, online and in presence in the National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications.

Task Force, discussed on the content of referencing report and the compliance with the criteria of referencing with EQF and self-certification with QF-EHEA. After reflecting all the inputs arrived from all the stakeholders, the Task Force approved the referencing report unanimously on 27th September by online circulation.

For the Task Force of the **Albanian Qualifications Framework**

Ejvis Gishti
Co-chair



Linda Pustina
Co-chair



A.3.6 – Letters of the international experts

Comments on “The Albanian Qualifications Framework: referencing to the European Qualifications Framework and self-certification of compatibility with self-referencing to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area”

Chiara Finocchietti and Karin van der Sanden

Monday 27 September 2021

We thank the Albanian authorities for the invitation to contribute to the referencing of the Albanian Qualification framework to the European Qualification Framework and to the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

General comments

Although this is the first referencing report for the Albanian Qualification Framework, the work on the AQF started in 2006 with an ad hoc task force. This effort led in 2010 to the first law on AQF, that was amended in 2018. The existing legislation on AQF provides the foundations for the implementation and the management of the national framework.

The fact that the AQF is in force since 2010, has three implications among others: the first one, described in the first part of the report, is that the national framework and the relevant procedures and legislation have been designed with a clear awareness and involvement in the processes taking place at European level, also considering that Albania is a member of the European Higher Education Area since 2003.

Second, the referencing is focused on comparison of levels between the AQF and the EQF and the QF-EHEA, rather than on the process of allocating qualifications to a specific level only.

Third, the referencing is a milestone in a process started since more than 10 years. It gives the possibility to portray the current state of affairs focusing on outcomes achieved so far and on areas for further implementation, supporting the outline of next steps in the process.

The first part of the report gives a comprehensive overview of the history, the structure and the qualifications of the Albanian education system. In addition, the role of the different authorities involved in the governance of the framework, the process for allocating qualifications into it, and the management and quality assurance of qualifications are described. This first part provides a solid background to support the information contained in the second part related to the referencing process of the AQF to the EQF and to the QF-EHEA.

In our opinion the report complies with the criteria as it is pointed out below.

EQF Criterion 1 and QF-EHEA Criterion 1 and 7 (Competent Authorities)

EQF Criterion 1 - The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.

QF-EHEA Criterion 1 - The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education.

QF-EHEA Criterion 7 - The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published.

Addressed. The role, the cooperation and different responsibilities of the relevant national bodies are clearly defined and are in place according to the national legislation and its enforcement and implementation.

EQF Criterion 2 and QF-EHEA Criterion 2 (Descriptor Alignments)

EQF Criterion 2 - There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or systems and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

QF-EHEA Criterion 2 - There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework.

Addressed. The correspondence between the AQF levels and the EQF levels is clear and the fact that the AQF levels are more detailed reflects the specificities of the national system.

EQF Criterion 3 and QF-EHEA Criterion 3 (Learning Outcomes, Validation and Credits)

EQF Criterion 3 - The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

QF-EHEA Criterion 3 - The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS-compatible credits.

Addressed. Formal qualifications are based on learning outcomes at all levels, as is documented in the report. Areas for improvement for the use of learning outcomes in higher education are described in chapter 6 “Further development of the AQF”.

EQF Criterion 4 and QF-EHEA Criterion 4 (Labelling of Qualifications)

EQF Criterion 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.

QF-EHEA Criterion 4 - The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent.

Addressed. The procedures for inclusion of formal qualifications are described in the report. The role of stakeholders other than national authorities is described in chapter 6. The report also addresses the implementation of inclusion of non-formal qualifications and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

EQF Criterion 5 and QF-EHEA Criterion 5 (Quality Assurance)

EQF Criterion 5 - The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to the 2017 EQF Recommendation.

QF-EHEA Criterion 5 - The national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process.

Addressed. The quality assurance of the qualifications that are part of the framework is comprehensively addressed.

EQF Criterion 6 and QF-EHEA Procedure 2 (Agreement by QA bodies)

EQF Criterion 6 - The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.

QF-EHEA Procedure 2: The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies of the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process.

Addressed.

EQF Criterion 7 and QF-EHEA Procedure 3 (International Experts)

EQF Criterion 7 - The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.

QF-EHEA Procedure 3: The self-certification process shall involve international experts.

Addressed. As experts we have been involved in all the meetings of the Albanian Task Force and in relevant consultation meetings with Albanian stakeholders, and we were given the possibility to give an appropriate contribution to the referencing exercise.

EQF Criterion 8 and QF-EHEA Procedure 1 (Certification of report)

EQF Criterion 8 - The competent authority or authorities 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 authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.

QF-EHEA Procedure 1: The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework.

Addressed.

EQF Criterion 9 and QF-EHEA Procedure 4 (Publication of report)

EQF Criterion 9 - Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.

QF-EHEA Procedure 4: The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall address separately each of the criteria established and shall be published

Addressed. All the provisions described in the report give evidence that the criteria will be met.

EQF Criterion 10; QF-EHEA Criterion 6 and QF-EHEA Procedure 6 (Level visibility)

EQF Criterion 10 - Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

QF-EHEA Criterion 6: The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements.

QF-EHEA Procedure 6: The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.

Addressed. The inclusion of the level of the qualification is foreseen for all the certificates, diploma's and their respective supplements. The National Catalogue of vocational qualifications from 2021, and the plan for the database of HE accredited study programmes will support transparency of information in this regard.

QF-EHEA Procedure 5 (Update ENIC/NARIC Country Page)

QF-EHEA Procedure 5: The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process.

Addressed. All the provisions described in the report gives evidence that the criteria will be met.

A.4 – Evolution of the qualifications in Albania versus NQF (AQF)

Types of Vocational Qualifications before 2010, positioned in the current in the AQF

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Albania-VET-Qualifications-before-AQF-approval.pdf>

Types of HE qualifications versus AQF evolution

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Albania-HE-before-AQF-approval.pdf>

A.5 - AQF qualification documents

A.5.1 – VET documents

Professional Certificate

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/proffesional-certifikate-VET-English.pdf>

Professional Certificate Supplement

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/supplement-of-profesional-certifikate-VET-English.pdf>

A.5.2 - Higher Education Documents

Bachelor Diploma

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/diploma-converted.pdf>

Diploma supplement about the AQF level

Click on
the Link

http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DS_HE1.pdf

A.6 – Example of occupational standard

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Example-of-Occupational-Standard.pdf>

A.7 – Example of Qualification standard (VET)

Click on
the Link

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Example-of-Qualification-standard-VET.pdf>

A.8 – Sectorial skills roadmap

Click on
the Link

http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/20200614_Roadmap_SSC-setting-up_Albania-1.pdf

A.9 - AQF legal framework

Basic Laws

Law no. 10247 of 4 March 2010 “On the Albanian qualifications framework”, as amended

Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in Republic of Albania”, as amended

Law no. 15/2017 “On vocational education and training in Republic of Albania”

Law no. 80/2015 “On higher education and scientific research in higher education institutions in Republic of Albania”

Bylaws in application of the Law no. 10247 “On the Albanian qualifications framework”, as amended

Decisions of the Council of Ministers

1. DCM no. 426, of 26.6.2019 “Organization, functioning and criteria selection for the members of sectoral committees and their reward”⁸⁵;
2. DCM no. 427, of 26.6.2019 “The approval of criteria and inclusion procedures for long-life learning qualifications, according to the Albanian qualifications framework levels for education and professional training”⁸⁶
3. DCM no. 428, of 26.6.2019 “The approval of table detailed descriptions of the Albanian qualifications framework levels”;⁸⁷

Joint orders

Joint Order No. 64 dated 30.03.2020, "On the establishment and composition of the sectoral committee of information and communication technology"⁸⁸

Bylaws in application of the Law no. 15/2017 "On Vocational Education in the Republic of Albania"

Decisions of the Council of Ministers

1. DCM no. 554, dated 31.07.2019 "On the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Employment and Skills Agency";
2. DCM no. 673, dated 16.10.2019 "On the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications";
3. DCM no. 729, dated 12.12.2018 "On the composition, functions, functioning, field of activity, membership criteria and work modalities of the National Council of Vocational Education and Training";
4. DCM no. 514, dated 20.09.2017 “On the approval of the revised National List of Professions (LKP);

⁸⁵ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-426.pdf>

⁸⁶ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-427.pdf>

⁸⁷ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/vendim-2019-06-26-428.pdf>

⁸⁸ <http://www.akafp.gov.al/rreth-nesh/baza-ligjore/>

5. DCM no. 666, dated 10.10.2019 "On the financial quotas of food in canteens and dormitories and the determination of criteria for obtaining scholarships and payments for students of pre-university education in public educational institutions."

Bylaws in application of the Law no. 80/2015 " On higher education and scientific research in higher education institutions in Republic of Albania"^{89, 90}

Decisions of the Council of Ministers

1. DCM no. 426, dated 15.02.2018 "Organization and functioning of the agency of quality assurance in higher education and of the board of education and fees of quality assurance processes in higher education ", as amended;
2. DCM no. 41, dated 14.01.2017 "Elements of the study programmes offered by higher education institutions", as amended
3. DCM no. 371, dated 26.4.2017 "For some changes in the DCM no. 1013, dated 10.12.2010, "On the creation of national agency of exams".
4. DCM no. 78, dated 8.2.2006 "For the establishment of the State Matura and admissions in the HEIs"
5. DCM no. 109, dated 15.02.2017, "On the organization and functioning of the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education and the Accreditation Board and on the determination of tariffs for quality assurance processes in Higher Education" as amended;
6. DCM no. 424, dated 02.06.2010, "On the approval of the regulation on the accreditation system, organization and activity of external quality assurance institutions", as amended

Orders

1. Order of the Council of Ministers no. 171, dated 27.09.2010, "On the approval of the structure and staff of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency"

Instructions

- No. 18, dated 08/05/2020, "On the organization of teaching, assessment of students, final exams and the closing of the school year 2019-2020 in public and non-public vocational schools, in the conditions of the state of natural disaster caused by the pandemic of Covid- 19"
- No. 11, dated 3.3.2020 "on the manner of organization and activity of public providers of vocational education and training" (repealed) with instruction no. 14
- No. 14, dated 27.5.2021" On the manner of organization and activity of vocational education and training institutions, as well as aspects of human resource management, composition of the development unit of providers of vocational education and training and continuous professional development of staff"
- No. 26, dated 30.7.2018 "On the national catalogue of professional qualifications".
- No. 28, dated 30.7.2018 "On the criteria for participation, organization and functioning of the Board of Directors of public providers of vocational education and training".
- No. 26, dated 30.7.2018 "On the national catalogue of professional qualifications".
- No. 27, dated 30.7.2018 "On the formats and curricular procedures of vocational education and training".
- No. 30, dated 21.11.2018, "On the conditions and procedures for horizontal and vertical transfer within the VET system".

⁸⁹ <http://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/P%C3%ABrmbledhje-e-legjislacionit-p%C3%ABr-arsimin-e-lart%C3%AB-23-shtator-2020.pdf>

⁹⁰ <http://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Permbledhje-parauniversitari-8-Tetor-2020.pdf>



- No. 15, dated 26.04.2019, "On the organization and development of VET exams".
- No. 16, dated 26.4.2019 "On the types, procedures and modalities for issuing certificates and the models used".
- No. 24, dated 30.7.2018 "On the procedures for the recognition and unification of learning and professional qualifications of levels 2 to level 5 of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, including those obtained abroad".
- No. 16 dated 8.5.2018, "On the development of self-assessment in institutions providing vocational education and training"
- No. 18 dated 06.07.2021, "On some additions and changes to the Instruction no. 16, dated 8.5.2018," On the development of self-assessment in institutions providing vocational education and training".

Orders

- No. 128 dated 06/07/2021, "On the standards, criteria and accreditation procedures of providers of vocational education and training"
- No. 5 dated 12.01.2020 "on the approval of the number of instructors and part-time teachers for 2020"
- NoNo.71, dated 25.02.2020 approving the structure of the school year 2020-2021 in the pre-university education system
- No. 22 dated 28.01.2020 "for some changes in the joint order" for the establishment of the task force for the development and further implementation of the Albanian qualifications' framework
- No. 66, dated 09 • 03 • 2020 for the interruption of the teaching process in all providers of public and non-public education and vocational training
- No. 48 dated 18.02.2020 "On the appointment of members of the corporate council of education and vocational training"

In the process of approval:

Draft DCM "On the system of recognition of prior informal and non-formal learning"

A.10 – VET national catalogue (in Albanian language)

NR	Kodi i Kualifikimit Profesional	Emërtimi i kualifikimeve	Lloji i kualifikimit profesional	Profesionet LKP	Lidhja me Kodet e LKP/ISCO	Niveli në KS HK
1	A-II-21	Teknologji ushqimore	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punonjës në industrinë ushqimore	8160	2
2	B-II-20	Ndërtim	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Ndërtues	9313	2
3	C-II-20	Përpunim Druri	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punëtor i përpunimit të drurit	752	2
4	D-II-17	Tekstil-Konfeksione	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punëtor në tekstil dhe produkte lëkure	8153	2
5	E-II-17	Elektroteknikë	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Elektracist në objekte civile/industriale	741	2
6	F-II-17	Mekanikë	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Profesione të inxhinierisë mekanike	722	2
7	G-II-17	Hoteleri-Turizëm	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Profesione të hoteleri turizmit	9112	2
8	H-II-16	Bujqësi	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Fermer	921	2
9	I-II-20	Gjeologji -Miniera	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punëtor ne miniere	811	2
10	J-II-20	Detari	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punonjës peshkimi	9216	2
11	L-II-17	Ekonomi-Biznes	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Arkëtar, Kostoist	411/421	2
12	M-II-17	Shërbime mjeteve transporti	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Mekanik ne automjete	723	2
13	O-II-17	Shërbime Sociale dhe Shëndetësore	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punonjës Social/ndihmës	513	2
14	P-II-16	Poligrafi	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punonjës shtypshkrimi	734	2
15	Q-II-17	Teknologji kimike	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punonjës ne teknologjine kimike (letër..)	813	2
16	S-II-12	Pyje	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Përdorues makinerish pyjore	921	2
17	T-II-19	Teknologji Informacioni dhe Komunikimi	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Mekanik kompjuteri	742	2
18	V-II-20	Termohidraulikë	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Hidraulikë në banesa dhe ujësjellës	7126	2
19	X-II-20	Kërkim, shpim dhe shfrytëzim nafte, gazi dhe ujit	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Punëtorë të shpimeve dhe të tjerë që lidhen me to	8113	2

20	A1-III-16	Teknologji e përpunimit të brumërave	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor i përpunimit të brumërave	7512, 7513, 7514	3
21	A2-III-18	Teknologji e prodhimit të pijeve	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës në industrinë ushqimore	7516, 7517	3
22	A3-III-17	Teknologji e përpunimit të qumështit	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës në përpunimin e qumështit	7515	3
23	A4-III-18	Teknologji e përpunimit të mishit dhe peshkut	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës në përpunimin mishit dhe peshkut/Kasap	7511	3
24	A5-III-18	Teknologji e përpunimit të fruta-perimeve	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës në përpunimin e fruta-perimeve	7516	3
25	B1-III-17	Muratum dhe suvatim	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Murator, suvatues	7112 dhe 7123	3
26	B2-III-21	Shttrim pllakash dhe veshje muresh	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Shtgues pllakash	7122	3
27	B3-III-18	Karpenieri, hekurkthim dhe betonim	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Karpenter	7115	3
28	B4-III-18	Punime dhe riparim rrugësh	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Teknik për ndërtim objektesh civile	7113.22	3
29	B5-III-20	Punime dekorative dhe bojatisje	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Bojaxhinj ndërtesash dhe të tjerë që lidhen me to	7131	3
30	B6-III-16	Mirëmbajtje ndërtesash	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor mirëmbajtjeje për ndërtesa	7119.09	3
31	C1-III-18	Mobilieri/Tapiceri	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Mobilier/tapicier	752	3
32	C2-III-17	Prodhime druri gjysmë të gatshme	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor për prodhimin e produkteve gjysmë të gatshme	752	3
33	D1-III-19	Rrobaqepësi	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Rrobaqepës	753	3
34	D2-III-19	Tekstil	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor në tekstil dhe produkte lëkure	754	3
35	D3-III-19	Modelim	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Modelues	753	3
36	D4-III-16	Prodhime lëkure (Galanteri)	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Prodhues të këpucëve dhe galanteria	7537	3
37	E1-III-18	Instalime elektrike civile dhe industriale	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Elektracist në objekte civile/industriale	741	3
38	E2-III-19	Instalim dhe mirëmbajtje e linjave të tensionit të ulët dhe tensionit të lartë	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Specialist për prodhimin e energjisë elektrike	741	3

39	E3-III-19	Riparime të pajisjeve elektroshtëpiake	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Riparues pajisjesh elektro-shtëpiake	741	3
40	E4-III-19	Elektromekanikë	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Elektromekanik	741	3
41	E5-III-13	Teknologji automatizimi	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Teknik automatizimi	741	3
42	F1-III-19	Makina metalpunuese	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punues metali	722	3
43	F2-III-18	Konstruksione metalike	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punues konstruksionesh metalike/Saldator	722	3
44	F3-III-18	Mirëmbajtje dhe riparime mekanike	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Mekanik ne hidrocentrale	722	3
45	F4-III-18	Metalurgji dhe fonderi	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor për derdhje metali	8122	3
46	F5-III-18	Teknologjia e përpunimit të metaleve	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Farkëtarë, prodhues të veglave dhe punëtorë të tjerë të ngjashëm	722	3
47	G1-III-18	Bar - Restorant	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Banakier, kamarier	512/513	3
48	G2-III-16	Kuzhinë - Pasticëri	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Kuzhinier, pasticier	512/7514	3
49	G3-III-16	Reception	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Receptionist	4222	3
50	G4-III-18	Guidë turistike	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Guidë turistike	5111/5113	3
51	G5-III-18	Shërbime në hotel dhe restorant	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Kuzhinierë/banakierë	512/513	3
52	H1-III-19	Frutikulturë	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor i kualifikuar për pemë frutore	611	3
53	H2-III-19	Ferma Bujqësore dhe Blegtorale	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Mbarështues i kafshëve bujqësore, Fermer	613	3
54	H3-III-19	Mbarështimi i Kafshëve dhe Shpendëve	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Mbarështues i kafshëve bujqësore, prodhues prod shtaz	612	3
55	H5-III-19	Kopshtari	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës I kualifikuar për kopshtet	611	3
56	H6-III-19	Prodhim bimor	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Fermer	611	3
57	H8-III-18	Agroturizëm	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Kultivues i kulturave bujqësore dhe kopshtarë për treg	611	3
58	H9-III-18	Shërbime kujdesi për kafshët	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Rritës të kafshëve dhe shpendëve dhe të ngjashme me to	6122	3
59	I1-III-20	Miniera	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës të minierave dhe në uzina të përpunimit të mineraleve	811	3

60	I2-III-16	Markeshajderi	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës të minierave dhe në uzina të përpunimit të mineraleve	811	3
61	I3-III-16	Gjeologji	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës të minierave dhe në uzina të përpunimit të mineraleve	811	3
62	J1-III-16	Peshkim	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës peshkimi, gjahtarë dhe vendosës kurthesh	622	3
63	J2-III-17	Teknikë peshkimi	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Teknik peshkimi	3144	3
64	M1-III-18	Shërbime motori	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Motorist	723	3
65	M2-III-18	Shërbime xhenerike	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Automekanik	723	3
66	M3-III-18	Shërbime elektro-auto	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor për sisteme elektrike/elektronike ne automjete	723	3
67	M4-III-18	Shërbime karrocierie	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtor për shërbime karrocierie	723	3
68	M5-III-16	Shërbime mjetesh të rënda transporti	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Teknik të shërbimeve të mirëmbajtjes për mjete të rënda	7233.31	3
69	M6-III-16	Mekanikë bujqësore	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Mekanik për makineri bujqësore	7233.03	3
70	O1-III-20	Shërbime kujdesi për të Moshuar	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Asistent i kujdesit për të moshuar	5131	3
71	O2-III-20	Shërbime kujdesi për Fëmijë	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Asistent i kujdesit për fëmijë	531/532	3
72	O3-III-16	Animim social	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar		513	3
73	O4-III-16	Shërbime Sociale	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës Social/ndihmës	531/532	3
74	Q1-III-19	Teknologji e përpunimit të Naftës	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës ne përpunim naftë dhe gazi	813	3
75	Q2-III-15	Teknologji e prodhimit të materialeve të ndërtimit	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtorë të prodhimit të çimentos, gurëve dhe materialeve të tjera	8114	3
76	Q3-III-16	Teknologji e përpunimit të plastikës dhe gomës	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtorë të makinerive për produkte të gomës/të plastikës	8141/8142	3
77	Q4-III-15	Teknologji e përpunimit të bojërave	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punonjës të prodhimeve kimike	813	3
78	X2-III-16	Shpim i puseve të naftës , gazit dhe ujit	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtorë të shpimeve dhe të tjerë që lidhen me to	8113	3
79	X1-III-16	Nxjerrja e naftës, gazit dhe ujit	Program 1 vit për punonjës të kualifikuar	Punëtorë të shpimeve dhe të tjerë që lidhen me to	8113	3

80	A-IV-18	Teknologji ushqimore	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Kontrollor cilësie/Teknolog ushqimor pë mishin	3122	4
81	B-IV-19	Ndërtim	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Teknik, mbikëqyrës, përgjegjës	7119.15	4
82	C-IV-19	Përpunim Druri	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Mobilier/tapicier	752	4
83	D-IV-19	Tekstil-Konfeksione	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Teknik prodhimi	753	4
84	E6-IV-20	Riparime të Pajisjeve Elektronike	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Mekanikë dhe mirëmbajtës i pajisjeve elektronike	742	4
85	E7-IV-20	Telekomunikacion	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik komunikacion	7422.15	4
86	E8-IV-21	Mekatronikë	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik mekatronik	3139.2	4
87	E-IV-21	Elektroteknikë	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Instalues dhe riparues të pajisjeve elektrike dhe elektronike dhe telekomunikacioni	741/742	4
88	F-IV-19	Mekanikë	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Mekanik	722	4
89	G6-IV-18	Shërbime udhëtimit dhe turizmi	Program 2 vite për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Kuzhinierë/banakerë/Punonjës të tjerë të shërbimeve personale	512/ 513/ 515/516	4
90	G-IV-20	Hoteleri-Turizëm	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Specialist eventesh	1411/14 12	4
91	H10-IV-20	Teknologji Bujqësore	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknikë për përdorim dhe riparime mekanike	723	4
92	H-IV-20	Bujqësi	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Fermer	611	4
93	I-IV-16	Gjeologji -Miniera	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Punonjës të minierave dhe në uzina të përpunimit të mineraleve	811	4
94	J-IV-17	Detari	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Punonjës peshkimi në thellësi (det të hapur)	6223	4
95	K-IV-15	Elektronikë	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Teknik telekomunikacioni	352	4
96	L2-IV-19	Sigurime	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Specialit sigurimesh	3321	4
97	L3-IV-19	Shërbime bankare	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Arkëtar	421	4
98	L4-IV-19	Llogari	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Llogaritar	3313	4
99	L5-IV-19	Sipërmarrje e Agjencisë Turistike	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Agjent i shërbimeve të udhëtimit	422	4
100	L6-IV-20	Tregti	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Shitës, Agjent dhe menaxher shitjes	3322/33 23	4

101	L7-IV-21	Administrim zyre	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Nëpunës zyre	4110	4
102	M-IV-15	Shërbime mjetesh transporti	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Automekanik	723/3115	4
103	M7-IV-20	Shërbime mekatronike në automjet	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Teknik automjeti për shërbimet mekatronike	7231.2	4
104	N-IV-17	Veterinari	Program 4 vjeçar për nivelin teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Asistent veteriner	324	4
105	O-IV-16	Shërbime Sociale dhe Shëndetësore	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Punonjës Social	531/532	4
106	Q-IV-16	Teknologji kimike	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Punonjës të prodhimeve kimike	813	4
107	R-IV-17	Gjeodezi	Program 4 vjeçar për nivelin teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Gjeodet i mesëm	3112.17	4
108	S1-IV-16	Silvikulturë	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik silvikulturë (drurët)	3143.03	4
109	S2-IV-18	Shfrytëzim pyjesh	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik pyjesh	621	4
110	S4-IV-17	Mbrojtje mjedisi pyjor	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Punonjës të pyjeve dhe sharrëxhin	6210	4
111	T1-IV-21	Rrjete të Dhënash	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik rrjetesh dhe banke të dhënash	351	4
112	T2-IV-21	Mbështetje e Përdoruesve të TIK	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik për mbështetje të përdoruesve	351	4
113	T3-IV-21	Zhvillim Website	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Teknik Website	351	4
114	T4-IV-21	Programim	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Asistent, programim kompjuteri	3512.02	4
115	T5-IV-21	Multimedia	Programe 2-vjeçare studimi për punonjës ndihmës	Ndihmës në TIK	351	4
116	U-IV-20	Shërbime kujdesi për të moshuar	Program 4 vjeçar për nivelin teknik/menaxher i mesëm	Kujdestar për të moshuarit	5323.02	4
117	X-IV-18	Kërkim, shpim dhe shfrytëzim nafte, gazi dhe uji	Programe 1-vit studimi për teknik/menaxher mesëm	Punëtorë të shpimeve dhe të tjerë që lidhen me to	8113	4
118	A1-V-14	Kontroll laboratorik i ushqimit	Programe pas te mesëm deri 2 vjet	Laborant ushqimor	3119	5
119	D1-V-14	Dizenjim Mode	Programe pas te mesëm deri 2 vjet	Dizenjues mode	2163	5
120	J1-V-14	Shërbime detare në kuvertë	Programe pas të mesëm 1 vit	Marinar	3152	5
121	M1-V-10	Diagnostikim-menaxhim në autoservis	Programe pas të mesëm 1 vjeçar	Specialist për diagnostikim dhe menaxhim autoservisi	3115	5



122	M2-V-20	Mekatronikë automjetesh	Programe pas të mesëm 2 vjet	Specialist i Mekatronikës ne Automjete	3115	5
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Level of AQF	Qualifications
2	19
3	60
4	38
5	5

Total : 122

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A.11 - Consolidated roadmap of Accreditation of VET providers in Albania



Stages	Interventions	Activities	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Funds (estimated) ⁹¹	Results
Pre-piloting stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The legal base for accreditation devised The logistics and finances ensured Adequate and trained human resources. Procedures and communication protocols established. Stakeholders informed. Three to five providers selected for piloting. The monitoring system operational 	Establishing a clear and stable institutional and regulatory framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting the final form of the main regulation (Order of the MFE) 	NAVETQ, MFE	15 June 2021	3 p/d	The final Draft of the Order submitted to the MFE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approving the main regulation (Order of the MFE) approved 	MFE, NAVETQ	15 July 2021 ⁹²	n/a	The Order of the MFE signed and published in the Official Journal
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventorying the relevant regulations needed for accreditation and to issue/initiate the undelaying regulations for the aspects of accreditation not yet regulated. 	NAVETQ, MFE / NAES, with the Consultant's support ⁹³	30 August 2021	5 p/d	The relevant general and specific (VET) regulations needed for accreditation are collected and published
	Assigning clear responsibilities and tasks for the Accreditation Department of NAVETQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory duties for the Accreditation Department of NAVETQ; Updated job descriptions for the personnel involved in accreditation; Internal procedures and communication protocols within NAVETQ and with the other stakeholders Creating templates for the main forms and documents 	NAVETQ, with the Consultant's support	30 August 2021	2 p/d	Elaborated or updated and approved by the NAVETQ Director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Regulation for the Accreditation Department of NAVETQ; Job descriptions; Internal procedures and communication protocols
					3 p/d	
			5 p/d	3 p/d	Templates and forms elaborated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National registers: VET providers accredited and in process of 	

⁹¹ Salary / income level is different from a country to another

⁹² I recommend that the training of the internal experts and of the first lot of external experts to be undertaken after the approval of the Order of MoFE or, at least, after a final shape of the Order was agreed.

⁹³ I did not introduce in the budget the expenditures related with the Consultant's Contract, but only the direct expenditures needed

Stages	Interventions	Activities	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Funds (estimated) ⁹¹	Results
						accreditation; the pool of experts; licensed private VET providers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal of the internal expert for approval / rejection of the request of the VET provider. The NAVETQ decision for initiating the accreditation procedure The Minutes of the site visit
	Ensuring informational and technical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquiring equipment and technical resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four Laptop computers (3 experts and 1 head of department with mobile internet connection and Office software) One all-in-one printer (copy machine + printer + scanner) Four desks with chairs Four storage cabinets⁹⁴ - metallic with locks Office supplies (for 1 year) 	NAVETQ	30 September 2021	6000 USD 800 USD 800 USD 1200 USD 500 USD	Equipment and logistics acquired and operational
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating common data and information base 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	30 September 2021	20000 USD ⁹⁵ 24 p/d ⁹⁶	Database crated and operational: the VET providers may upload data and

⁹⁴ An accreditation file, all on paper, may reach 1000 pages. For 20 VET providers this means 4 meters of shelves – at least. At this, we may add the results of the internal paperwork. If the process is designed, from the beginning, mostly digital, the costs with office supplies and storage / archives will decrease.

⁹⁵ The costs mentioned for the database creation represents a minimum: creating / reshaping a dedicated website with the above-mentioned forms digitized with the possibility, for the VET providers, to create user accounts and upload data and documents and to facilitate online communication with the external evaluators and with the VET providers. There will be other added costs for hosting, administration, maintenance and SSL certificates. We recommend to opt, from the beginning, for a cloud-based application – hosting, storage and security costs may reach 2000 – 3000 USD per year, but there will be no expenditures on servers and hardware replacement and maintenance.

⁹⁶ At least 1 p/d per week, for the IT responsible person from NAVETQ

Stages	Interventions	Activities	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Funds (estimated) ⁹¹	Results
						documents and fill in forms.
	Developing the code of conduct for external evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating, publishing and debating the code of conduct for external evaluators 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	30 September 2021	5 p/d	The code of conduct for external evaluators elaborated, published and revised.
	Human resources development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approving the profiles of internal experts and of external evaluators 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	15 June 2021	2 p/d	The competence profile for internal experts and external evaluators approved
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approving the procedure for recruitment and selection (internal experts and external evaluators) 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	15 June 2021	2 p/d	The procedure for recruitment and selection (internal experts and external evaluators) approved
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting internal experts and external evaluators (first lot) 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	20 June 2021	10 p/d	3 internal experts selected 24 external evaluators selected
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training the internal experts and external evaluators (first lot) 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	30 June – first module; 31 October 2021 – second module	35 p/d ⁹⁷	3 internal experts trained 24 external evaluators trained
	Communication with stakeholders and with the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing, on the NAVETQ website, all the proposed and final documents 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021 When necessary	30 p/d	All proposed and final documents published (on the measure of their approval)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing, under 'News' heading, the progress in implementing the accreditation system 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021		A press release / communication issued weekly
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a 'Q&A on accreditation' section on the NAVETQ website, updated periodically 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021		'Q&A on accreditation' section established and updated weekly
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing and disseminating leaflets with the main features and advantages, for the VET providers, employers and learners, of the accreditation system 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021	5 p/d	At least 500 leaflets disseminated
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting a promotional event: 'Awareness Raising Conference' 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021	10 p/d	Awareness raising conference held Mainstream media coverage
	Building the monitoring system for the accredited VET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devising monitoring procedures and responsibilities for 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021	3 p/d	Monitoring procedure approved

⁹⁷ Only for the internal experts: 3 experts x 10 training days each, plus 5 p/d for organizing the two training events. For this stage, the Consultant will be the trainer.

Stages	Interventions	Activities	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Funds (estimated) ⁹¹	Results
	providers and for evaluators	implementing the monitoring system within NAVETQ				Monitoring responsibilities allocated
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventorying the VET providers 	NAVETQ	31 December 2021	5 p/d	The list of public and private VET providers published
	Selecting 3-5 VET providers for piloting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting 3-5 VET providers to pilot accreditation, on voluntary basis 	NAVETQ with the Consultant's support	31 December 2021	3 p/d	The list of 3-5 VET providers for piloting published
Piloting stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The accreditation system piloted The accreditation system reviewed, if necessary, The pool of experts is complete The procedure for continuing update of the pool of experts is adopted. 	Undertaking piloting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking 3 to 5 evaluations for accreditation 	NAVETQ	30 June 2022	120 – 150 p/d ⁹⁸	3-5 Accreditation processes undertaken 3-5 Accreditation reports published
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing, if necessary, standards and procedures, based on the piloting results 	NAVETQ / MFE	31 December 2022	10 p/d	The revised Order of the MFE approved and published
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing the report on piloting the accreditation system 	NAVETQ	31 December 2022	10 p/d	The report on piloting the accreditation system published
	Human resources further development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting and training external evaluators (second lot) 	NAVETQ	30 September 2022	10 p/d – selection 10 p/d – training ⁹⁹	24 external evaluators selected The complete pool of experts covers all sectors / 'directions'.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devising a procedure for ongoing completion of the pool / register of external evaluators and training / retraining the external evaluators 	NAVETQ	30 September 2022	5 p/d	The procedure for ongoing completion of the pool / register of external evaluators and training / retraining the external evaluators published
	Communication with stakeholders and with the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing already mentioned communication activities 	NAVETQ	31 December 2022	52 p/d ¹⁰⁰	A press release / communication issued weekly 'Q&A on accreditation' section updated weekly At least 500 leaflets disseminated
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating and sharing a database with best practices in accreditation¹⁰¹ (internal and international) 	NAVETQ	31 December 2022	10 p/d	At least 10 'case studies' on best practices in accreditation published on the NAVETQ website

⁹⁸ External evaluators and internal experts. We propose, for each accreditation process, 6 working days for each of the 3 evaluation team members (2 for pre-visit activities; 2 for site visit; 2 for post-visit activities and reporting) and 4 working days for the internal expert = a total of 40 p/d per VET provider

⁹⁹ 1 trainer for 1 group of trainees, for 10 days of training

¹⁰⁰ At least 1p/d per week used for communication with stakeholders and the general public

¹⁰¹ Some of the 'case studies' may issue from the piloting – for instance, exemplary fulfilment of descriptors in a specific area or sub-area.

Stages	Interventions	Activities	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Funds (estimated) ⁹¹	Results
	Complementary capacity building at VET provider level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and delivering training programmes for VET providers representatives in accreditation 	NAVETQ	31 December 2022	5 p/d - design ¹⁰² - 10 p/d delivery ¹⁰³	50 representatives of VET providers trained
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and using the common data and information base 	NAVETQ / NAES, VET providers	30 September 2021	52 p/d ¹⁰⁴	At least 20 VET providers use the database and upload data and documents.
	Implementing the monitoring system for the accredited VET providers and for evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the VET provision 	NAVETQ	31 December 2021	5 p/d	At least 5 monitoring activities (all types) undertaken
Full implementation stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All public and private VET providers offering qualifications from AQF are accredited. The reaccreditation process was initiated. The database of VET providers is completed with all data needed for informed decision-making. 	Undertaking accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accrediting all public and private VET providers offering AQF qualifications 	NAVETQ / MFE	30 June 2027	2000 p/d ¹⁰⁵	The register of accredited VET providers filled in with 50 accredited VET providers
	Improving NAVETQ capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish benchmarks for NAVETQ own activity 	NAVETQ	31 December 2023	n/a	Benchmarks for NAVETQ used for reporting beginning with 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce administrative burden, by implementing online services and e-government 	NAVETQ	31 December 2025	n/a	The entire accreditation process takes place online beginning with 2026
	Communication with stakeholders and with the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing already mentioned communication activities 	NAVETQ	Recurrent	52 p/d ¹⁰⁶ per year	A press release / communication issued weekly 'Q&A on accreditation' section updated weekly At least 500 leaflets disseminated
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating and sharing a database with best practices in accreditation (internal and international) 	NAVETQ	Recurrent	10 p/d per year	At least 10 'case studies' on best practices in accreditation published on the NAVETQ website each year
	Complementary capacity building at VET provider level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and delivering training programmes for VET providers representatives in accreditation 	NAVETQ	31 December 2023	20 p/d ¹⁰⁷	100 representatives of VET providers trained

¹⁰² On the basis of the programme developed for the internal experts and the external evaluators

¹⁰³ 2 groups (of 25 trainees) for a 5 days training for each

¹⁰⁴ 1 p/d per week

¹⁰⁵ For 50 VET providers, 40 p/d for each

¹⁰⁶ At least 1p/d per week used for communication with stakeholders and the general public

¹⁰⁷ 4 groups (of 25 trainees) for a 5 days training for each

Stages	Interventions	Activities	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Funds (estimated) ⁹¹	Results
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and using the common data and information base 	NAVETQ / NAES, VET providers	Recurrent	52 p/d ¹⁰⁸ per year	At least 50 VET providers use the database and upload data and documents.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the self-assessment process and standards 	NAVETQ	31 December 2023	20 p/d ¹⁰⁹	The new regulation on self-assessment approved and published
	Implementing the monitoring system for the accredited VET providers and for evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the VET provision 	NAVETQ	Recurrent	25 p/d	At least 5 monitoring activities (all types) undertaken each year (2023-2027)
Policy evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reports on the state of the VET system are published. An external independent evaluation of the accreditation system The accreditation system is reviewed 	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devising the yearly activity report 	NAVETQ	Yearly	10 p/d	The NAVETQ Yearly Activity Report is published (beginning with 2023).
	External audit of the accreditation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing ToRs and contracting an independent auditor (company or public institution) 	NAVETQ, MFE	31 December 2027	20 p/d	The external auditor is contracted in 2028
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking the external audit of the accreditation system 	The External Auditor	31 December 2028	n/a ¹¹⁰	The external audit report published
	Review of the accreditation system (standards and procedures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the accreditation system 	NAVETQ, MFE	30 June 2029	n/a ¹¹¹	The accreditation system (standards and procedures) is reviewed on the basis of the results of the independent evaluation The new Order of the MFE is published (if needed)

A.12 - The inventory and analysis of existing vocational qualifications in Albania (2017)

Executive Summary

The inventory and analysis of existing vocational qualifications in Albania provides a comprehensive stock of existing qualifications and offers detailed information about qualifications based on a predefined instrument issued by ETF. The inventory and analysis give in-depth information to support decisions about inclusion of qualifications in the AQF and allocating qualifications to AQF levels. Which types of qualifications to include in the AQF and what criteria should qualifications meet to be included in the AQF? The data in the inventory and analysis provides evidence to answer these questions.

The inventory can later be used as a basis for a National Vocational Qualifications Catalogue. For the referencing of the AQF to the EQF, the inventory and analysis will provide evidence-based information for

¹⁰⁸ 1 p/d per week

¹⁰⁹ The self-assessment system (standards and procedure should be reviewed on the basis of the results of external evaluation, in order to become more objective and relevant

¹¹⁰ The costs of an external audit can vary.

¹¹¹ The costs of reviewing the accreditation system will depend on the results of the audit.

a transparent allocation of qualifications to the AQF. This is one of the requirements of a successful EQF referencing.

The scope of this exercise is an inventory and analysis of the existing vocational qualifications in Albania. The methodology included three phases:

- (i) In the first phase, the approach in creating the inventory was quantitative and descriptive to obtain and process as many qualifications and related data as available within the scope of the inventory. The ETF has provided a tool for the inventory in the form of an Excel sheet to collect data in 32 main categories, which have been adapted to the Albanian context. Relevant data were collected through desk research and interviews. The data collection was validated in a consultation with the members of the AQF Taskforce that has been established in November 2015.
- (ii) The second phase of this study includes an analysis of a sample¹¹² of 24 selected qualifications out of the pool of the qualifications in the inventory. The sample covers all levels and types of qualifications. The analysis identifies if / how existing qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes, how learning outcomes are described and the relation between learning outcomes and respective AQF level descriptor. The tool for this analysis and instructions, are prepared by ETF (template, example and instructions), and have been used throughout the analysis.
- (iii) The third phase of this study includes an analysis of a sample of 12 selected qualifications out of the pool of the qualifications in the inventory. The sample covers AQF 2-5 levels and respective types of qualifications in the VET system. During this phase the analysis examines main features related to the quality and relevance of qualifications. The tool for this analysis and instructions, are prepared by ETF (template, example and instructions), and have been used throughout the analysis. Recommendations are formulated to address identified issues.

The inventory encompasses existing, active, qualifications that are currently obtainable in VET and higher education. Academic qualifications in higher and general education are not part of this inventory. For the purpose of the inventory & analyses, the qualifications were allocated to 10 different groups / types of qualifications that are recognisable for Albanian stakeholders. Each type is linked to one of the 8 levels of the AQF. The inventory includes 365 qualifications linked with 19 economic sectors/occupational fields. AQF levels can accommodate more than one qualification type, and the length of the learning path depends on the entry level. Most of the registered qualifications belong to the "Health and Social Sector".

Despite the valuable data included in the inventory, some information (such as the AQF codes, validation procedure, statistical data, etc.) is missing or needs further verification.

Around 30% of the overall qualifications in the inventory are described in terms of LO and 81% out of these are described in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. All of them are part of the VET sector. The comparison of learning outcomes with AQF level descriptors was conducted on individual qualifications that were selected. However, regarding the expression of learning outcomes, groups of qualifications have common features.

The analysis of 11 vocational qualifications in VE shows a perfect match between AQF level descriptors and learning outcomes, because AQF level descriptors have been used as a guide for writing learning

¹¹² "Sample" is used here in the sense of "cases", rather than in the statistical one.

outcomes for these qualifications. However, the learning outcomes, described in terms of knowledge, skills and broader competences, are richer than the AQF level descriptors because the AQF level descriptors stipulated in the AQF law are directly copied from the EQF level descriptors and are too generic for describing outcomes of qualifications. Meanwhile, NAVETQ has developed and used detailed level descriptors for 2-5 AQF levels fully in line with AQF level descriptors, to better orient the LO translation process.

The analysis of the 9 selected vocational training courses shows that diverse approaches are used to develop vocational training courses. Around 80% of them are developed in terms of learning outcomes, but this is not a rule. The LO are not derived from the consideration of level descriptors.

In HE, 3 selected qualifications for AQF 7-8 levels are not based in learning outcomes.

One conclusion of this inventory & analysis is that VTC and HE qualifications should shift towards the learning outcome approach, and moreover, develop mechanisms to better build relationships with different types of qualifications to facilitate educational pathways.

The preliminary outcomes of this report provided the basis for the discussion in the meeting that AQF Task Force supported by ETF organized in November 2015. The outcomes of the Inventory & Analysis report related to the procedures for the inclusion of the qualifications in AQF, were further used in the AQF Task Force meetings, supported by ETF, organized in January and May 2017, on the framework of the ongoing AQF referencing process to EQF in Albania.

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the Link

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A.13-Roadmap EQF referencing process

Albanian Qualification Framework Task Force

Introduction

First steps for European Qualification Framework (EQF) referencing have already been taken during 2016-2017. To complete the referencing, process the results of these first stages need to be updated based on the development that took place since then. Workshops have been conducted for criteria 3,4,5 and 6. The results of these workshops will have to be updated based on the recent developments and the adoption of the bylaws concerning sectoral committees, detailed level descriptors and inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications.

The initial roadmap consisted of several milestones: kick-off workshop, organised core group EQF referencing, start of referencing process, second workshop on inclusion of qualifications, third workshop on the actual status of quality assurance, a fourth workshop to discuss the report, presentation state of play for the EQF Action Group (AG), finalising the report and presenting the report to the EQF AG.

The road map has been implemented up to the third workshop. A summary of the workshops has been given below. The results of the workshop have been used to draft bylaws and to draft the Albanian National Framework (AQF) handbook. Both are important sources to draft the EQF referencing report and finalise the referencing process.

Summary of workshops

Workshop no. 1 was held in September 2016 and discussed basics of the EQF referencing, including:

1. referencing the AQF to the EQF - what it is and what it is not;
2. basic requirements for the EQF referencing;
3. the referencing report - Structure and chapters; what is available and what not; where to find the information/ whom to involve, as well as issues on which an agreement must be reached.

Two open issues at the time included a coherent set of level descriptors, as well as institutional arrangements and the clear functions and the roles of institutions.

The workshop also came up with a practical roadmap with tasks, responsibilities, people to involve, milestones and a time schedule for the EQF referencing process. This roadmap has, however, not been fully implemented, yet. Its contents and deadlines would need to be updated.

The topic of **Workshop no. 2 in January 2017** was the inclusion of qualifications in the AQF. The revised AQF Law (then a draft version) includes a scheme of types and levels of qualifications, divided into three categories:

1. general qualifications;
2. vocational/professional qualifications;
3. qualifications for lifelong learning.

The inclusion of these types of qualifications in the AQF were discussed from the viewpoint of both the legal basis and the EQF referencing criteria 3 and 4.

Workshop no. 3 in May 2017 served to reach a common understanding of the actual status of the quality assurance of qualifications in Albania, EQF referencing criteria 5 & 6 and the contents of the AQF bylaws on the approval of vocational qualifications for inclusion in the AQF/ National Vocational Qualifications register and on the Establishment of sector committees.

Next steps

The paragraph above shows that a lot of the initial steps planned for the referencing process have been undertaken. But the last workshop has been conducted in May 2017 and since then further development of and related to the AQF did not stop. The revised law on the Albanian qualifications framework has been adopted and the secondary legislation concerning sectoral committees, detailed level descriptors and inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications. Self-evaluation for Vocational Education and Training school has been introduced and NAVETQ is working on the accreditation process. All these developments will have to be reflected in the EQF referencing report.

Therefore, the following steps are proposed:

Measures, actions	Relate to EQF Ref criterion	Timeline - milestone
0. Reactivate the core group working on the EQF referencing as mentioned in the initial road map	n/a	22.12.2020
1. Report structure		22.12.2020
2. Make an overview of all changes concerning the AQF that took place since the last workshop in 2017 in general, vocational and higher education.	1-6	26.12.2020
3. Identify any topics where efforts are needed before the EQF referencing takes place (for example, what is the status of VNFIL, sectoral committees, implementing ESGs in HE). Include these activities in this road map.	1-6	26.12.2020
4. Identify the stakeholders in EQF referencing. Update the initial overview of stakeholders in case institutional arrangements changed.	1 and 6	26.12.2020
5. Establish or reactivate Technical Groups to provide more specialized inputs to EQF referencing.	1-6	20.01.2020
6. Fine tune this road map in cooperation with the expert(s) supporting the drafting of the referencing report.		27.01.2021
7. Draft the introductory part of the referencing report explaining the Albanian education system.		20.01.2020



8. Based on data (law, bylaws, draft handbook, etc) draft first replies to criterion 2-6.	2-6	13.02.2020
9. Organise a workshop with relevant stakeholders to update the results of the earlier workshops using the draft handbook and identify any missing points.	2-6	15.02.2021
10. Update first draft of replies to criterion 2-6 based on workshop.	2-6	22.02.2021
11. Organise workshop with relevant stakeholders focusing specifically on the level descriptors (criterion 2) and the inclusion of qualifications (criterion 4) and any other points identified during the previous workshop.	2 and 4,	24.02.2020
12. Finalise draft of the whole referencing report.	1-7	26.02.2021
13. Workshop with all technical groups to brainstorm on the referencing report.	1-8	March 2021
14. Present state of play to the EQF AG.	1-8	June, 2021
15. Consultation with technical groups on the feedback received by the EQF AG	1-10	July, 2021
16. Finalise report based on the last workshop and presentation of state of play	1-10	September, 2021
17. Workshop with AQF Task Force, all Albanian stakeholders and International Experts on Albanian referencing report	1-10	17 th September 2021
18. Meeting of the AQF Task Force for approving the Albanian referencing report	1-10	24 th September 2021
19. Submit referencing report to EQF AG and present it.	1-10	October, 2021
20. Update referencing report based on feedback EQF AG and publish it on all necessary portals.	9	October, 2021

Note. All activities should include general education, VET and higher education.

It would be beneficial for the process to invite the international experts who will comment on the report for all the workshops and to let them comment on earlier drafts.

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