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Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) Strategy Paper

Vocational Qualifications Authority
Turkish Qualifications Framework Department
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Preface

This Strategy Paper has been prepared as Activity 2.8.1 of the TUYEP Project and its contents have been shaped by the Terms of Reference of the Project as well was by discussions with the TQF Department of the VQA and with stakeholders via the TQF Council, which unanimously endorsed this Strategy Paper as a basis for consultation at the Consultation Meeting (TUYEP Activity 2.8.2) with stakeholders, held on 25th March 2021. This version of the document has been revised to reflect discussions at the Consultation Meeting.

Section 1 briefly introduces broad developments relating to Learning Outcomes-based national qualifications frameworks, summarises the main common goals and purposes of NQFs and provides a brief summary or the development of the TQF as well as identifying how the goals of the TQF fit with and complement those of the Responsible Bodies (CoHE, MoNE and VQA).

Section 2 provides an outlines and analysis of the considerable work undertaken in the preparation and further development stages of TQF and is complemented by a situation analysis table which details activities and progress.

Section 3 analyses the common elements of NQFs internationally, analyses the extent to which these are in place in relation to TQF and then refers to the remaining main actions required for full implementation of TQF in Annex C of the document.

Section 4 considers the roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders in TQF, raises some issues for consideration during the implementation phase of TQF and suggests a more layered approach to grouping the main stakeholders and their responsibilities for ensuring full implementation of TQF.

Section 5 provides analysis, some conclusions and recommendations for consideration by stakeholders. It outlines some priorities for TQF which are also closely aligned with priorities of the main stakeholders, the Responsible Bodies, in particular.

Section 6 explains the consultation process of the TQF Strategy Paper. Before the paper was finalised, it was evaluated at a TQF Council meeting and then with a larger group of stakeholders. This section includes the comments and evaluations made during the consultation process in a transparent manner.

This paper was prepared with the endorsement of all main TQF stakeholders and was also designed as a holistic document, providing a general introduction to NQFs and related international developments, summarising the work and achievements of TQF to date and then identifying the main actions required for further development. In this way it is both a contextual and situation analysis as well as a strategy document, with an outline of the main actions identified so far in discussion with TQF Department and TQF Council, for the Implementation Phase of TQF and crucially, in the context of and complementary to, the strategic planning documents of the Responsible Bodies.

This Strategy Paper includes all of these elements in order to provide a holistic picture of developments of TQF and of QFs internationally, including ongoing roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders, against which table of actions outlined in Annex C, of the paper was considered, refined and completed (here in its final version) and will form the basis of a 2nd TQF Action Plan.

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List of Abbreviations

CoHE	**Council of Higher Education**
EQF	**European Qualification Framework**
ECTS	**European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System**
EU	**European Union**
FQ-EHEA	**Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area**
MoNE	**Ministry of National Education**
NQF	**National Qualifications Framework**
NOS	**National Occupational Standards**
QA	**Quality Assurance**
RPL/VNFIL	**Recognition of Prior Learning/Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning**
TQD	**Turkish Qualifications Database**
TQF	**Turkish Qualifications Framework**
TUYEP	**Implementation of Turkish Qualifications System and Framework Operation**
VET	**Vocational Education and Training**
VQA	**Vocational Qualifications Authority**

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Learning Outcomes – based National Qualifications Frameworks

National Qualifications Frameworks based on Learning Outcomes have been in existence since the 1990s. They are broadly defined as instruments for classification, comparison and development of qualifications which are defined by the Learning Outcomes demonstrated by learners in order to be awarded the qualification. NQFs vary significantly in terms of breadth and scope, nature and aims and purposes, but they all share the Learning Outcomes approach, whereby learning accomplished in a range of different contexts and by diverse approaches is described in a language which is context-neutral and therefore allows classification and comparison of different types of learning.

The following extract from the official report to the Bologna Process Seminar on Learning Outcomes in Edinburgh in 2008 provides an excellent summary of the significance of a shift from traditional teaching and learning to the more learner-centred Learning Outcomes approach. This is often referred to as a 'paradigm shift', in recognition of the fundamental change in approach represented by the shift in focus towards learning and the learner. Although the context of the report is higher education (both 'general' and 'vocational'), it applies broadly to the learning outcomes approach across a range of sectors of education and training and in relation to comprehensive NQFs for Lifelong Learning, such as the Turkish Qualfications Framework:

"Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning. They are explicit assertions about the outcomes of learning - the results of learning. Learning outcomes are concerned with the achievements of the learner rather than the intentions of the teacher (expressed in the aims of a module or course). They can take many forms and can be broad or narrow in nature. They are usually defined in terms of a mixture of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and understanding that an individual will attain as a result of his or her successful engagement in a particular set of higher education experiences. In reality, they represent much more than this. They exemplify a particular methodological approach for the expression and description of the curriculum (modules, units and qualifications) and level, cycle and qualifications descriptors associated with the 'new style' Bologna qualifications frameworks."

Learning outcomes are context-neutral and provide a common language to describe what the learner has learned, rather than what they were taught, or what they studied, how or where they learned. They allow a comparison of different types of learning on an equitable basis. The learning outcomes approach:

- requires different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment – it focusses on the learner and what is learned, rather than on the teacher/instructor and what is taught
- requires a precise approach to the description of learning achieved, in comparison to the traditional input-focussed approach
- requires a transparent and appropriate means of assessment and holistically impacts positively on the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment

The level descriptors and qualification type descriptors/specifications in NQFs provide reference points for the design, development and improvement of qualifications and programmes of learning. The infrastructure of TQF, including level descriptors and qualification type specifications, provides a transparent and equitable means for comparison of different types and programmes of learning and therefore enables fairer recognition of learning achieved. It supports mobility between different types and sectors of learning, as well as a fairer valuation and better understanding by employers of different types of learning and qualifications. Alignment of TQF with EQF allows for greater international mobility and recognition of qualifications for Turkey's workers and learners.

The first phase of NQFs included frameworks in Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa and the UK (apart from Scotland), began development in the late 1980s to mid-1990s. Since the early 2000s, NQFs have become more widespread and this trend has accelerated even further since the mid 2000s, at least in part due to European initiatives such as the development of the Bologna Process's Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (from 2001) and of the EQF for Lifelong Learning (from 2005).

Broadly, some of the most common goals and purposes of Learning Outcomes-based NQFs are:

- to improve the understanding and transparency of education, training and qualifications systems;
- to promote access, transfer and progression between different types of qualification;
- to update or improve qualification standards and make them more consistent;
- to improve the quality of learning;
- to make learning more relevant to the needs of the labour market and society;
- and to increase understanding and recognition of qualifications.

In some cases an explicit goal of the NQF is to create a forum for collaboration between organisations and stakeholders involved in education and training and in the large majority of cases, the coordinating mechanisms for NQFs establish a de facto forum for such collaboration.

Despite the diverse nature, history and contexts of NQFs, according to the International Labour Organisation "All qualifications frameworks, however, provide a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages and public or labour market recognition of qualifications within a country and internationally." (An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers, Ron Tuck, ILO, 2007).

NQFs are not generally aimed at rationalising qualifications or at reducing the diversity of learning, they are rather about explaining such diversity, comparing learning, enabling better understanding and valuing of different types of learning.

At European level, individual NQFs have inspired intitiatives to encourage the wider development of qualifications frameworks to support better international understanding of qualifications and a high-level convergence of qualifications by developing European Regional Qualifications Frameworks, including the Framework for Qualifications of the-European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF, or EQF-LLL) These European frameworks are not operational frameworks and are not intended to replace national frameworks but are intended as meta-frameworks which can help to compare qualifications from different national systems by providing a generic reference point.

1.2 'Philosophy' of the Turkish Qualifications Framework

TQF, as Turkey's National Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, is the key instrument to support the implementation of a range of policies and strategies for education and training in Turkey, and is mentioned in key documents such as: 10th Development Plan, the Strategy for Lifelong Learning, the National Employment Strategy, as well as in the Strategic Plans of the Ministry of National Edcation, the Vocational Qualifications Authority, the Council of Higher Education and the Higher Education Quality Council.

Drawing on the key documents of TQF as well as these other related and complementary strategies and documents, the broad philosophy underpinning the TQF could be described as being fundamentally about valuing learning. There is a broad policy and social imperative to encourage and

support lifelong learning in Turkey, in order to fulfil the needs of individuals and society and TQF is widely seen as central to encouraging and enabling lifelong learning.

Valuing learning of all individuals, both in terms of recognising the intrinsic value of their learning, wherever and however it takes place, is a central part of the philosophy of TQF. By allocating learning a level within TQF and where possible a credit value, learning can be given real currency and recognition. Assuring and improving the quality of education and training programmes is an important factor in valuing learning and quality assurance is therefore at the heart of arrangements for TQF.

Promoting the relevance of learning for employment and to meet society's wider needs is also an underpinning part of TQF's philosophy. The development of a common language for describing learning independently of context (i.e. the Learning Outcomes Approach) is key to the understanding, classification and comparison of learning achieved in different contexts. It is also central to achieving improved understanding by employers, advisers and learners, of the value and relevance of learning.

The use of level descriptors, qualification type specifications, qualification categories and key competences within TQF, as well as relevant guidance and policies and procedures documents relating to vertical and horizontal progression, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning will all support and encourage transition between different types of learning and the development of flexibly pathways to support the lifelong learning journey of individuals.

The TQF, as Turkey's national framework for learning, places itself firmly in the Turkish context but equally firmly in the international and in particular, European context. Hence, the international dimension is a key part of the philosophy of TQF. The importance of this international dimension is reflected in TQF's deliberate and regular engagement in European developments, including the Copenhagen and Bologna Processes, the referencing of TQF to the EQF and the regular encouragement of international participation in major TQF events such as conferences, webinars, etc.

Inclusiveness is also an important part of the philosophy of TQF. The emphasis on improving access to learning and transition between different types of learning reflects this inclusive philosophy and the intention to ensure that no-one is 'left behind' and that there are no 'dead-ends' in the Turkey's learning landscape. The principle of inclusiveness is also reflected in the engagement of key stakeholders and social partners from the very early days of development right through to the present day and into the Implementation Phase. Not only is the intention that close collaboration between stakeholders and social partners is needed for the development and implementation of TQF but also that TQF itself becomes an instrument to cement collaboration and partnership across all fields of education and training.

These contributing values to the philosophy of TQF have not arisen randomly, rather they are consistent with the direction of travel and development of a range of policies and strategies in Turkey over recent years and are of course also consistent with important international trends and developments. These underpinning values are also reflected in the priorities identified for the Implementation Phase of the TQF, reflected in Annex C of this document.

1.3 Development of the Turkish Qualifications Framework

Against this background of international developments relating to qualifications frameworks, the development of the Turkish Qualifications Framework began in 2010.

The TQF is defined as follows:

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

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

The Turkish Qualifications Framework was developed with input from key stakeholders from the outset, co-ordinated by the Vocational Qualifications Authority, developed by the National Qualifications Framework Preparation Commission, comprising representatives from the Ministry of National Education, the Council of Higher Education and Vocational Qualifications Authority and technical working groups also involving stakeholders and with input from international experts.

The founding legislation for the TQF is the "Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Concerning the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework" (TQF Regulation), 2015. The TQF Paper, published in January 2016, is a comprehensive description of the legal basis, purposes, structure and support and governance arrangements for the TQF.

The principal objectives of TQF, which were determined after a wide consultation, are:

a) to provide a clear and consistent means of describing, classifying and comparing qualifications
b) to provide one integrated framework including all quality assured qualifications, (achieved in general, vocational and academic education and training programmes and in other learning environments).
c) to continuously improve Turkish qualifications system so that it can provide appropriate recognition of qualifications achieved in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.
d) to contribute to the training of individuals who are employable and equipped with defined and measurable qualifications, and thus to the reduction of unemployment.
e) to strengthen institutional cooperation among all parties, which primarily include awarding bodies, the industry and social partners.
f) to provide a benchmark for the recognition in Turkey of foreign qualifications and for the recognition of Turkish qualifications abroad and serve as an instrument of comparison.

In common with most other NQFs, the TQF is much more than the sum of its parts. It is a platform which enables and ensures a wide range of reforms in Turkey, to modernise learning, teaching and assessment and programmes of education and training and to help bring them into line with the best European and international practice. The Quality Assurance Regulation of TQF sets out the parameters and requirements for the quality assurance of all qualifications to be included in the Framework. The level descriptors of TQF and the Qualification Type Specifications of the Responsible Bodies provide reference points for RPL/VNFIL and for credit accumulation and transfer. The Qualifications Database and the information on qualifications which it provides will also play an important role in improving transparency and wider understanding and valuing of qualifications by employers, learners and the general public. Finally, TQF is a platform for the cooperation and collaboration of the main providers and stakeholders of education and training throughout Turkey.

Given the strategic importance of TQF and the key role of the Responsible Bodies both for implementing TQF collectively and for ensuring that their qualifications and/or programmes are consistent with TQF, Responsible Bodies are encouraged to ensure that TQF features more prominently within their strategic planning documents.

The broad policy goals of ALL of the strategies of the Responsible Bodies include:

- systematic improvement of the quality of teaching and learning;
- widening access to and achievement of learning to underrepresented and disadvantaged groups,
- supporting professional development of teachers and providing resources to support them;
- greater collaboration and easier transition between different types of education and training

These policies goals are not only consistent with the objectives of the TQF, they are also goals which the policies, procedures and resources provided by the TQF can help to achieve, in partnership with Responsible Bodies.

Key benefits of TQF implementation include:

- Systematic improvement of the quality of teaching and learning;
- TQF will offer individuals qualifications that are valid and accepted in the labour market
- TQF, being referenced to European Qualifications Framework, ensures that qualifications awarded in Turkey will be quality assured and easily comparable to those in other national frameworks.
- With the qualifications defined by learning outcomes and classified by level descriptors, qualifications have become transparent and more easily comparable;
- This helps to facilitate vertical and horizontal mobility between qualifications.
- With the quality assurance of the qualifications, employers and other stakeholders' confidence in qualifications at the national and international level should increase significantly
- TQF covers qualifications acquired in all learning environments, formal, non-formal and informal, thus supports lifelong learning, allowing for transition between and proper recognition of all types of learning
- National and international mobility of individuals will be facilitated.

1.4 TQF Referencing against EQF

The Turkish Qualifications Framework was referenced against the EQF for Lifelong Learning in December 2016 and the resulting Turkish Referencing Report was accepted by the EQF Working Group in March 2017. This referencing was a major achievement and milestone for TQF. As the report recognises, it was the referencing of an 'empty framework'. This is not of itself a problem – countries are free to, indeed ought to, develop and implement their NQFs in a manner and sequence which fits their unique national context. There is a logic to designing and preparing the infrastructure for your NQF and testing it for compatibility with the EQF before embarking on the considerable work, involving the bodies responsible for qualifications and other key stakeholders, to review, revise and/or develop qualifications and associated programmes of learning which fit with the infrastructure and parameters of the NQF.

EQF Advisory Group has a well-defined process for the referencing of NQFs against EQF. It is recognised that NQFs are not static and are likely to be reviewed and updated in the light of the experience of their implementation. Many countries have (or have plans to) review or update the referencing of their NQF against EQF and a small number of countries have 're-referenced' their NQF, meaning that they have effectively undertaken a second full referencing process and submitted a new referencing report. Four years have passed since the referencing of TQF to EQF and there have

been significant developments in implementation of TQF and there are current plans to review and update the referencing of TQF to EQF. Any such updating/review or re-referencing will likely be contingent on the inclusion of a range of the main qualifications of Turkey's education and training systems into TQF.

1.5 Phases of development of TQF

The three main phases that have been identified in the development and implementation of TQF as follows:

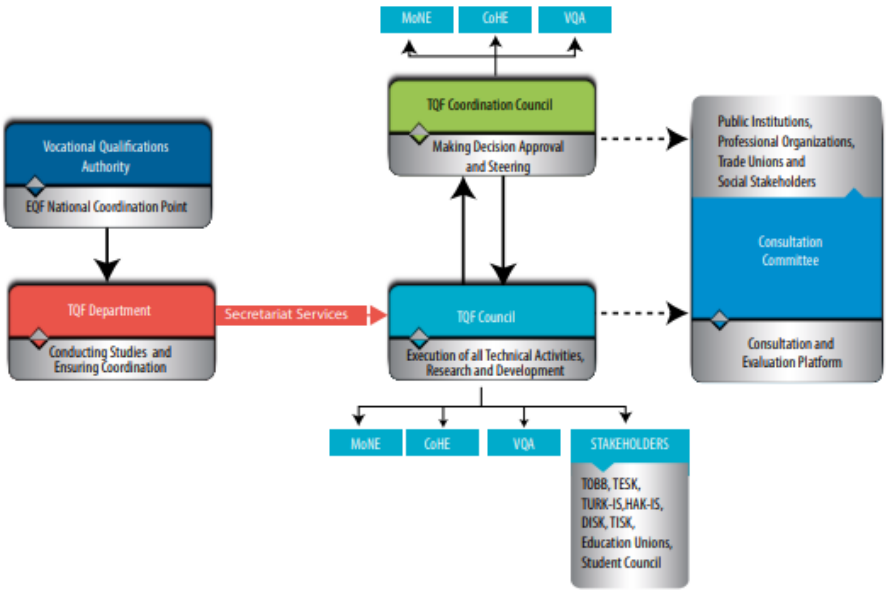
1) Preparation Phase (2010-2015)
2) Improvement/Further Development Phase (2016-2020)
3) Implementation Phase (2021-2024)

With the actions from the TQF Action Plan of 2016-2018 largely completed or in the final stages of completion, and the 'infrastructure' of the TQF largely in place, the Implementation Phase of TQF will focus on putting the framework into place 'on the ground':

- implementing the QA processes for the qualifications of the Responsible Bodies,
- populating TQF with qualifications,
- developing approaches to Credit Accumulation and Transfer/modularisation,
- Recognition of Prior Learning/Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, etc..

Whereas the primary responsibility for undertaking actions and activities during the Improvement/Development Phase rested with the TQF Department and TQF Governance structures, the Implementation Phase will signal a major shift in emphasis and responsibility away from TQF Department and on to the Responsible Bodies, in order to ensure that the TQF is implemented 'on the ground'. Although VQA has the formal responsibility for developing and updating the TQF, the responsible bodies MoNE, CoHE and VQA have a responsibility to implement the TQF as regards the qualifications for which they are responsible.

Figure 2.2. The Management Structure of the TQF



The TQF Regulation describes the context in which the Responsible Bodies are expected to work together to implement TQF. It describes the respective roles of the TQF Coordination Council as the key decision-making body, the TQF Council as the technical working body, and the TQF Consultation Committee for wider consultation with stakeholders. The primary stakeholders of TQF (as currently defined by TQF Dept) are:

1. MoNE
2. CoHE
3. VQA
4. Turkish Higher Education Quality Council
5. The Union of Chambers and Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)
6. Turkey Confederation of Tradesmen and Artisans (TESK)
7. Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TİSK)
8. Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ)
9. HAK-IS Trade Union Confederation (HAK-İŞ)
10. Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK)
11. Confederation of Public Servants Trade Unions (MEMUR-SEN)
12. Public Workers Union Confederation of Turkey (KAMU-SEN)
13. Confederation of Public Employees Trade Unions (KESK)
14. Higher Education Institutions National Student Council

The secondary stakeholders of TQF constitutes a much wider group, including professional associations and trade unions, quality and standards agencies and government ministries. A full list of primary and secondary stakeholders of TQF is included at Annex B.

Section 2: Analysis – TQF Implementation to date

2.1 Progress in implementing the TQF Action Plan 2016-2019

For the purposes of the present Strategy Paper, a desk study and situation analysis of preparation and implementation of the TQF was undertaken. A tabular situation analysis was prepared, outlining progress and outstanding actions regarding the key developments in implementation of TQF to date, during May and June 2010. It focused largely on the 21 main actions (and some key sub-actions) contained in the TQF Action Plan. A revised and updated version of the situation analysis can be found at Annex A.

This section amplifies the initial conclusions from the analysis of the Action plan and provides a broader narrative analysis of implementation to date as well as an initial analysis of the main areas of further implementation and/or development of the TQF over the period of the Second TQF Action Plan.

The situation analysis table reflects considerable progress in implementation of the 21 main actions (and the 76 subsidiary actions). Also, there are a number of major achievements which were not originally foreseen when the Action Plan was prepared, such as guidelines on: quality assurance; learning outcomes; credit-rating of qualifications; TQF level descriptors; as well as validation of non-formal and informal learning, Turkish versions of EU Recommendations and Notes on EQF and Learning Outcomes.

In relation to the 21 main actions of the Action Plan, the situation analysis table indicates that 16 of the actions have been completed or are in the final stages of completion or approval, 3 (Actions 10, 11 and 21) are largely completed with the remaining work to be undertaken by Responsible Bodies and 2 (Actions 15 and 16) are activities to be finalised in 2021. An updated version of the Situation Analysis table, with a slightly revised format, is provided at Annex A of this document.

During the Improvement/Development Phase of TQF (i.e. broadly the phase covered by the first TQF Action Plan), the majority of the main activities and sub-activities were undertaken by the TQF Department. The TQF Council was responsible for around a quarter of these activities and the Responsible Bodies undertook slightly less than a quarter of the activities. During the Implementation Phase of TQF, the emphasis will shift significantly away from the TQF Department and on to the Responsible Bodies and other main stakeholders. There has been significant cooperation to date between the RBs and the TQF Department and TQF Governance structures, which is reflected in the achievement of the large majority of the actions in the TQF Action Plan, albeit within a slightly extended timeframe.

The Turkish Referencing Report identified cooperation between the RBs as the greatest strength of TQF in the development process as well as for the implementation process. The fact that all three current Responsible Bodies constitute the top decision-making body of TQF gives the Framework significant strength and credibility as does their dual role as overseers of the framework and ‘guarantors’ in terms of having a responsibility to ensure that the organisations they represent, implement the framework within their own organisations and spheres of influence.

The achievements outlined in the situation analysis and the ongoing activities due for completion by early 2021 will effectively complete the Improvement and Development Phase of TQF. This means that the broad infrastructure of TQF is in place, most notably the regulations, policies and procedures of TQF, including the Qualification Type Specifications of the Responsible Bodies, the quality assurance requirements of TQF and the Quality Assurance Papers of the Responsible Bodies.The Implementation Phase will need to build on the achievements of the Preparation Phase and the Improvement/Development Phase in order to make the vision and perceived benefits of the TQF a reality for Turkish society, for the Responsible Bodies, learning providers, employers, learners and workers alike.

Section 3: Main Remaining Actions required for full implementation of TQF

3.1 Common elements of NQFs internationally

As a means of comparison of Turkey's readiness for full implementation, it is useful to consider the broadly common elements in national qualifications frameworks around the world. It is important to note that there is a wide range of approaches to NQFs in terms of governance and scope of frameworks. In some countries the NQF itself contains all of the key elements, in others some of these elements are not within the NQF but are related to the framework one way or another but most are present somewhere in the national system.

Broadly, these elements are:

1) Policies/strategies, mission/vision
2) Underpinning legislation and/or guidance (including QA requirements)
3) Levels and level descriptors expressed in terms of learning outcomes, including learning 'domains' (groupings of type/category of learning outcome)
4) Internal QA – institutions & programmes/qualifications
5) External QA – institutions and programmes/qualifications
6) System of credits and/or modules
7) Programme specifications, typical qualifications/qualification types, qualification descriptors,
8) Sector or subject level guidance (NOS, Subject Benchmark statements, etc.)
9) Professional support for those designing and/or delivering programmes/assessing learners

Taking each of these in turn, we will analyse the extent to which they are in place in relation to TQF.

1) Policies/strategies, mission/vision

These are quite comprehensive and are broadly set out in the TQF Paper, the TQF regulation and associated documents. The TQF Paper and Regulation are due to be reviewed and revised during the Implementation Phase.

2) Underpinning legislation and/or guidance (including QA requirements)

Comprehensive legislation and guidance for TQF is in place, including amongst others:

- Law on VQA;
- TQF Regulation; Working Principles and Procedures of the TQF Council;
- Regulation on the Quality Assurance of Qualifications to Be Included in the Turkish Qualifications Framework
- The Principles and Procedures for the Inclusion of Qualifications into the Turkish Qualifications Framework
- Procedures and Principles for the Identification of the Existing Qualification Types, Determining New Qualification Types and Updating and Cancellation of Qualification Types on Update and Cancellation of the Type of Qualifications
- Principles and Procedures for Appeals Against Decisions Relating to the TQF;
- Procedures and Principles for Use of TQF Logo
- Procedures and Principles for Updating, Modification and Cancellation of the Qualifications in TQF
- TQF Communication Strategy,

Further legislation and guidance are planned as follows:

- Procedures and principles for the establishment, management and updating of the Qualifications Database (drafted);
- Procedures and principles for updating TQF (drafted)

- Procedures and principles for publication of qualifications and use of qualifications by education institutions or awarding bodies (drafted)
- Procedures and principles for the means of horizontal and vertical transfer between qualifications to be included in the framework, and credit accumulation and transfer;
- Procedures and principles for the recognition of prior learning and ensuring quality assurance;

3) Levels and level descriptors expressed in terms of learning outcomes, including learning 'domains'

8 Levels, each with Level Descriptors, described via 3 categories of learning outcome: knowledge, skills and competences

4) Internal QA – institutions & programmes

These are either in place or in the process of finalisation and covered by: legislation; 'Procedures and Principles' documents; TQF QA Handbook; QA Papers of the Responsible Bodies.

5) External QA – institutions and programmes

This is place or in the process of finalisation and covered by: legislation; 'Procedures and Principles' documents; TQF QA Handbook; QA Papers of the Responsible Bodies. It is also worth noting that the TQF Quality Assurance Criteria are also fully compatible with the ESG and EQF Quality Assurance Principles and that the Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey (THEQC) is actively using the ESG in HE and has successfully undergone an external review by ENQA and has been admitted into membership of ENQA, with EQAR registration pending. EQAVET principles are being applied in formal VET qualifications also. TQF Quality Assurance Criteria are also fully compatible with both the ESG, EQF and EQAVET Quality Assurance Principles.

6) System of credits and/or modules

Currently there is no credit system for TQF as such. However, MoNE uses a credit system and many of its qualifications are modular. CoHE/HE institutions use ECTS. There are plans to develop a credit system for vocational qualifications in TQF. The intention is to try to develop broadly common approaches to credit, including for example, adopting the broad parameters of ECTS and ECVET, of 60 credits per learning year, equating to around 1500-1800 hours of learner effort.

7) Typical/qualification/types, qualification descriptors

Qualification type specifications have been prepared by the Responsible Bodies and approved by TQF Council.

8) Sector/subject level guidance (National Occupational Standards, Subject Benchmark statements, etc.)

National Occupational Standards are in place for all vocational qualifications, MoNE prepares curricula for all education programmes under its remit.

9) Professional support for those designing and/or delivering programmes

The TQF Website has a range of documents providing technical support/advice, including:

- Turkish versions of EU Recommendations
- Guideline on TQF Levels and Level Descriptors,
- TQF Qualification Type Descriptors
- Quality Assurance Handbook
- Guideline on Credit-Rating
- Turkish version of EQF Note 4 on learning outcomes

- Guideline on validation of non-formal and informal learning
- TQF Glossary
- TQF Annual Reports
- Turkish version of EQF Brochure and Infographic
- Brochures on TQF, EQF and Level Descriptors

Also, a range of training events are planned for staff of Responsible Bodies, stakeholders, qualifications providers, etc.

In summary, it is clear that for each of the nine common elements of NQFs, TQF either has the element in place or is close to finalising the arrangements for that element. Annex C of this document outlines the more detailed actions required for ensuring the full implementation of TQF, either before, or during the Implementation Phase (2021-2024).

Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities (going forward)

4.1 Outline of current roles and responsibilities

The legal responsibilities in relation to the TQF are set out in detail in the TQF Regulation and can be summarised as follows:

The tasks involved in preparing, developing and updating the TQF are exercised by VQA. However, it will be the joint work of responsible bodies to implement the TQF; MoNE, CoHE and VQA are the main 'responsible bodies' that award qualifications or supervise the award of qualifications throughout the education system. The Regulation sets out a detailed structure through which these bodies are to collaborate to fulfil their responsibility in relation to the TQF, including the establishment of the TQF Coordination Council as the key decision-making body, the TQF Council as the technical working body, and a standing TQF Consultation Committee to provide a platform for on-going broad consultation with stakeholders.

Beyond this general understanding and the detail of the TQF Regulation, there are no other protocols governing the relationships and roles of the Responsible Bodies and 'main stakeholders' of TQF, in taking forward the implementation of the framework.

It is clear that the next, 'implementation' phase of TQF, significantly more work will require to be undertaken by the RBs and other main stakeholders than in the previous phases of TQF. Considering this impending shift, this Strategy Document offers an opportunity to consider how well the current structures able to respond to the existing and ongoing needs of the TQF and its stakeholders.

4.2 Rate of Change

While preceding sections of this paper detail the impressive progress made in putting in place the infrastructure for TQF and in (largely) completing the actions envisaged in the TQF Action Plan 2016-19, it is clear that achieving its ambitious goals was challenging, given the resources available to the TQF Department, the lack of expertise and experience amongst stakeholders in relation to TQF/qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and the extent of the work involved.

Planning and implementation of Learning Outcomes-based NQFs is notoriously difficult and the time taken for implementation invariably exceeds that which was expected or planned. This is evident from the overly ambitious timetables proposed by both European meta-frameworks, the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the European Qualifications Framework. In both cases, the amount of time required for countries to develop NQFs compatible with their Regional counterpart framework hugely exceeded the original timeframe envisaged and the initial 'deadlines' for countries to put their frameworks in place had to be extended considerably.

A study of self-certification reports of NQFs to the FQ-EHEA (many of which were part of a dual self-certification/referencing to both European Frameworks) indicated that there was a lack of evidence of how deeply learning outcomes are implemented or linked to assessment criteria. It also noted that RPL/VNIFL in HE systems remains an area requiring further action. The move to a Learning Outcomes-based approach has been described as a 'paradigm shift'. It requires a radically different approach to education and training, the magnitude of which is often underestimated. It also requires considerable change within institutions which are often quite conservative or resistant to change. There is a danger that compressed timetables lead to corners being cut and implementation is shallower or less full as a result. Cedefop's *Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks* (2019) makes reference to progress in implementing some NQFs as being 'more on paper than real'.

The commitment and the effort involved in putting in place the TQF and all the related policies, procedures and guidelines are testament to the intention for TQF to be very much a real framework. In this context, it is not surprising that the (actions of the TQF Action Plan have in some cases taken

longer than initially planned, nor indeed that some actions had to be postponed in favour of more pressing priorities, for example, Quality Assurance was prioritised over the TQF Communications Strategy and the development of guidance on Credit. International experience indicates that developing and implementing an NQF takes considerable time and effort – indeed in most cases, it takes significantly longer than initially planned. In some respects, delays in agreeing key documents or developments can be seen as emphasising the commitment of parties to implement, as opposed to a reluctance to implement.

4.3 Sharing the responsibility

The difficulty of implementing real reforms, the need to further engage Responsible Bodies and other stakeholders in TQF in order to deepen implementation, as well as the magnitude of the task of including the broad spectrum of qualifications into the TQF are all reasons to seek to share responsibility more evenly during the Implementation Phase than has previously been the case. Whereas previously most of the responsibility for developing and improving TQF lay with the TQF Department and the Responsible Bodies/qualification providers, it might be that a more layered approach is needed for the Implementation Phase, with the following groupings:

TQF Dept/Councils

- Oversight and coordination of implementation activities via the 2nd TQF Action Plan
- Collective responsibility for ensuring the cooperation of the responsible bodies in relation to TQF implementation and quality assurance of qualifications
- To ensure assignment of personnel within their authorities to work for the development and implementation of the TQF
- To take measures necessary for the development and implementation of the TQF
- Responsibility for all procedures and principles relating to the TQF
- Maintenance of the Turkish Qualifications Database

Responsible Bodies

- Responsible for their own implementation of TQF and that of bodies within their purview
- To cooperate with the TQF Council in implementation of the TQF
- Responsible for the Quality Assurance of qualifications under their authority and the compliance of those Quality Assurance procedures with the relevant European QA frameworks
- To submit proposals on the inclusion of qualifications within their remit into the TQF
- To ensure that credit accumulation and transfer systems regarding qualifications within their remit are in compliance with European credit systems
- To provide training, consultancy and guidance about TQF to personnel involved in the development of qualifications
- To ensure assignment of personnel within their authorities to work for the development and implementation of the TQF

Education Institutions and Awarding Bodies

- Complying with quality assurance arrangements of their respective Responsible Bodies
- Developing and/or delivering programmes or consistent with the requirements of the TQF
- Alignment of qualifications/programmes with TQF LDs and Qualification Type Specifications.

Section 5: Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Importance of Implementation Phase

The Implementation Phase is potentially the most crucial of all the phases for putting the TQF in place. While the progress in preparing, enacting and preparing guidance to support implementation of the framework has been impressive, it will come to nothing if the framework is not put into effect 'on the ground'.

Only when qualifications are finally and firmly placed within the framework can the benefits of TQF begin to be realised. The more qualifications brought into the framework, the greater the credibility of the framework, the greater the credibility of those qualifications and the greater the incentive for other qualifications to be brought into the framework. Early progress putting qualifications into TQF can thus create a virtuous circle of progress, bringing results, leading to further progress and more tangible benefits. This is also true both for the national credibility of TQF and for its international standing

Drawing on all the experience gathered during the preparation and improvement phases of TQF and expanding on some of the issues raised in preceding sections, this section contains some commentaries, conclusions and recommendations for the future.

5.1.1 Uneven pace of implementation

The preponderance of evidence indicates considerable progress in the development and implementation of TQF to date here have been some significant delays in finalising some aspects of the TQF infrastructure, notably those which require the input of individual Responsible Bodies – for example, the Quality Assurance Papers and the Qualification Type Descriptors. It is likely that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has put additional strain and workload on the Responsible Bodies and this may have led to some of the TQF-related work being delayed. It will be important to ensure that the timings of the actions in the 2nd Action Plan are realistic in the current circumstances and that they are discussed and agreed with senior management of the Responsible Bodies, so that they are in a position to complete the actions for which they are responsible.

5.1.2 Stakeholder engagement/'ownership' of TQF

Engagement/ownership is often a challenge for NQFs. The more comprehensive the framework, the greater that challenge, as the NQF needs to be relevant to a very wide range of qualifications, programmes, forms of learning and sectors of education and training and of the labour market. TQF is in some ways at the forefront of international practice in stakeholder engagement – for example, the strong stakeholder engagement through the TQF Council is seen nationally and internationally as a key strength of the TQF.

It is recommended that the TQF Department and Council consider how best to develop a more collegiate approach to their meetings and also consider how best they can work stakeholders in recognition of the reality and needs of the Implementation Phase, including:

- Representation on TQF governance bodies with a view to maximising input from members and efficiency of deliberations;
- Enhancing the role and responsibilities of qualifications providers, both in terms of contributing to decision-making and contributing to implementation actions
- Consider co-opting additional members be co-opted or observers
- Consider whether legislation relating specifically to TQF should be enacted/consolidated in order to demonstrate the legally independent nature of TQF

5.1.3 Experience and expertise in NQFs and Learning Outcomes approach

According to TQF Department colleagues and to the SWOT analysis in the TQF Communications Strategy, there is still a lack of expertise and experience in Turkey generally as well as within the

Responsible Bodies and stakeholders, regarding TQF and NQFs. This was also identified within the TQF referencing report as a challenge going forward. As the Learning Outcomes approach is increasingly in place across sectors of education and training covered by the Responsible Bodies, it would be useful to try to map existing expertise and experience in order to develop a pool of experts who could contribute to the dissemination of relevant expertise during the Implementation Phase of TQF. Such a pool might draw on the experience of the Bologna Process Experts established to promote and support the implementation of the 'Bologna' reforms in HE in Turkey.

5.1.4 Seconding staff to TQF Department from Responsible Bodies

Work-shadowing by members of TQF staff in with relevant staff in Responsible Bodies and other main stakeholders could also be undertaken from time to time in order to facilitate exchange of experience/information and improve mutual understanding between the organisations. TQF legislation provides essential starting points on this issue. These points could be implemented in cooperation with the responsible bodies if there is a need for it when carrying out activities.

5.1.5 Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning/Recognition of Prior Learning

This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Turkey. VNFIL/RPL, although a feature of many NQFs, is not generally a major priority for NQFs and particularly for those in countries with a highly qualified and/or certificated workforce. However, for many countries, particularly those with a high proportion of experienced, but not qualified/certified workers, the development and use of systems of VFNIL/RPL is, or should be, a particular priority. This is an area in which Turkey has expertise and experience and this has been acknowledged in some international reports, including Cedefop's Global and European Inventories of Qualifications Frameworks. If Turkey were to prioritise this during the Implementation Phase, it would not only fulfil an important need and function for TQF but it could help Turkey to become an influencer or possibly a leader in this field.

5.1.6 International Standing of TQF

The TQF Department has pursued an ambitious strategy of international engagement, which, boosted by the TQF's successful referencing to EQF, appears to be bearing fruit. The TQF is increasingly receiving positive mentions in international documents and inventories related to NQFs, for a range of aspects of practice, including: engagement with employers/labour market; the broad range of stakeholders involved in the development and governance of TQF; TQF's 'nimble' decision-making body; as well as references to Turkey's 'sophisticated system for assessing adult learners'.

The generally positive coverage for TQF in the Cedefop series of Global/European Inventories of QFs is very helpful in raising the profile of TQF and could in time lead to greater recognition of the achievements and role of TQF as well as, potentially, greater international recognition of Turkish qualifications.

Cedefop have gradually revised their classifications of NQFs and in the 2020 questionnaire for their European Inventory of NQFs, they have outlined a six-stage classification. The TQF submission, assesses the TQF to be at the 'activation' stage, or stage 4 on a six-stage scale. Given anticipated progress during the Implementation Phase of TQF, there is a good opportunity for TQF to progress in the next Inventory report from the 'activation' stage to the 'operational' stage, which would also increase recognition the TQF's progress and would contribute to TQF's growing international reputation.

TQF has an opportunity use the Implementation Phase to help consolidate and enhance the reputation of TQF and of qualifications in Turkey. TQF should continue to seek to position itself as a player of influence in the field of NQFs in the medium term, by emphasising areas where it has exemplary practice and developing new areas of expertise and good practice.

5.1.7 Engagement with learners

The possibility of ensuring further dedicated places for learners in TQF structures should be considered, particularly for TQF Council but also TQF Consultation Committee. The presence of a student representative at the TQF Council is essential which should always be considered when/if a representative leaves or gets replaced. Also, given the comprehensive nature of TQF as well as the general European norm of learner engagement, the possibility of having other learners in some way represented should be considered.

5.2 Priorities

Priority 1 a): 'Populating' the TQF

With virtually all of the infrastructure of TQF in place or very close to finalisation, the work to include qualifications into TQF has to be the number one priority for the early part of the Implementation Phase and will also need to continue to be a priority throughout the period of the 2nd TQF Action Plan. This is essential for the credibility of the framework both domestically and internationally.

More importantly, the framework needs to be populated as soon as possible in order to begin to enjoy the fruits of the considerable work undertaken to develop and put in place the architecture and supporting documents and resources of TQF.

The finalization, approval and implementation of the Qualification Type Specifications which a prerequisite for including qualifications into the Framework and which was completed by the approval of QTS of CoHE and MoNE in November 2020, is a major step towards the population of TQF with qualifications.

The approval of the remaining Qualification Type Specifications of the Responsible Bodies will allow them to ensure the alignment of programmes of learning/learning outcomes (and the quality-assured assessment of learning outcomes) to the QT Specifications and hence to the Level Descriptors of TQF. A major milestone was reached, when the first qualification – VQA's Steel Welder Vocational Qualification Certificate – was included in the TQF on 19th November 2020.

Priority 1 b): Quality Assurance

Quality assurance and qualifications frameworks go hand in hand. Quality assurance of qualifications in any QF is essential not just for the credibility of the individual qualifications, but for the framework itself and also collectively for all of the qualifications in the framework. Quality assurance is also a priority theme for all of the Responsible Bodies in their own corporate documents. Finalising the Quality Papers of the Responsible Bodies and putting them into practice should also be part of the 1st priority for the Implementation Phase of TQF.

Priority 2: Access and Progression

The potential for increasing access to programmes of learning, for the recognition and certification of learning regardless of its context, as well as for improving retention and completion rates of learners are some of the most important benefits of TQF. Access, progression and recognition of all forms of learning are shared priorities of the Responsible Bodies and are also reflected in national policies and strategies. This consensus and the social and economic importance of this priority is why it is identified as Priority 2 in this strategy paper.

Priority 3: Support, Guidance and Training for TQF Implementation

The implementation of the 'Learning Outcomes Approach' and more generally of a comprehensive National Qualifications Framework such as the Turkish Qualifications Framework is often described as a 'paradigm shift'. Such reforms are comprehensive and fundamental and not only require significant time and effort to implement, they also require significant support in terms of guidance and

training for the individuals and bodies responsible for their implementation. During the Implementation Phase, it will be crucial to nurture build on and seek to generalise the nascent expertise on TQF and its related tools. A range of activities are planned for development and implementation in close collaboration between the TUYEP Project and VQA. The importance of this priority was also emphasised by stakeholders during discussions at the Consultation Meeting.

Priority 4: Internalising the TQF

If TQF is to truly become the Turkey's national framework for Lifelong Learning, it needs to become all-pervasive. Like the most successful NQFs, it needs to be adopted and embraced not just by the Responsible Bodies, but by their stakeholders and ultimately by society more generally, including learners, employers, trades unions, professional associations, etc..

This will require conscious efforts on the part of not only the Responsible Bodies but also other key stakeholders who have significant roles in implementing TQF. This 'internalising TQF ' concept was also supported by participants in the Consultation Meeting and has now been added as Priority 4 for the Implementation Phase, with some specific actions included in Annex C.

5.3 Recommendations for Implementation Phase

TQF Department

- Encourage RBs to focus initially on programmes/qualifications which have 'big win' potential – either in terms of the volume of learners affected or in the readiness of programmes/qualifications for TQF inclusion
- Consider ways of streamlining procedures for the inclusion of individual qualifications into TQF
- Consider how to encourage Responsible Bodies to give greater priority to their individual responsibilities as RBs

CoHE/MoNE/VQA (in their capacity as Responsible Bodies)

- Fit programme review and development work necessary for aligning programmes with TQF (via QTDs) into existing cycles for programme review and development
- Build-in time for review and revisions to draft qualification/programme specifications or descriptors
- Encourage programme developers to make full use of the range of resources and documents available nationally (e.g. on TQF website) and internationally
- Ensure that all key planning documents include plans for implementing TQF within their areas of responsibility

Education and Certification Institutions

- Plan realistically the use of adequate resources and time for the preparation of qualifications and programmes of learning which are consistent with the appropriate QTDs
- Ensure that programme developers make full use of the range of resources and documents available nationally (e.g. on TQF website) and internationally

5.4 Conclusion

The Implementation Phase of TQF offers inherent opportunities and challenges. Successful implementation offers the promise of significant benefits for learners, education providers, employers, the Turkish economy and Turkey as a whole. The Strategy Paper has been revised in the light of the input from stakeholders at the Consultation Meeting and will provide the basis to construct the 2nd TQF Action Plan, which will be used as a detailed road-map to guide the work and activities of the Implementation Phase.

Section 6: Consultation Process

6.1 Consultation with the TQF Council

The first consultation of the TQF Strategy Paper took place during the 31st meeting of the TQF Council on 18 February 2021. The situation analysis, the priorities, and the related suggested activities mentioned in the draft paper were analysed in detail by the Council members. The draft paper was extended with the member's revisions and feedback. The members also agreed on presenting this extended version for review at another consultation event to be carried out with a larger group of stakeholders.

6.2 Consultation with Stakeholders

The Consultation Meeting was held on March 25th with the participations of close to 70 representatives from 14 institutions. The event which was held virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions began with opening speeches from senior representatives of the Responsible Bodies, followed by a presentation of the Draft TQF Strategy Paper and workshops hosted by each of the Responsible Bodies to outline and discuss their plans for implementing TQF within their areas of responsibility and influence. The afternoon session included virtual workshops for discussion of some of the action 'themes', to discuss in particular sub-actions within the Outline Roadmap/Table of Actions followed by a general discussion, including a summary of key points from the workshops and a discussion of the consultation questions from the Strategy Paper. The agenda for the Consultation Meeting can be found at Annex D. .

Main Issues and Broad Conclusions from Consultation Meeting

Participants warmly welcomed the intent and purpose of the Consultation Meeting and expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to contribute to the strategy paper.

The Consultation Draft of the Strategy Paper was broadly welcomed as accurate, comprehensive and appropriate. The only significant element which was regarded as lacking was a section describing the philosophy of the TQF. This current version of the Strategy Paper reflects the feedback provided by stakeholders at the Consultation meeting.

The broad issues of consensus arising from the discussions are outlined below, grouped under the thematic priorities outlined in the Strategy Paper as well as some other aspects raised which do not fit neatly within these priorities. All of the priorities identified as such in the Strategy Paper were endorsed as key priorities and the new priority of 'internalising the TQF', introduced at the suggestion of the TQF Council, was also emphasised by participants.

Priority 1a: Populating the TQF

- The universities should be directed to use the Turkish Qualifications Database and YOK and/or HEQC need to support and coordinate this process. The universities need guidance on the placement process.
- The roadmap for placing qualifications into TQF should be tangible
- To give a momentum to placing the qualifications, the employers should include learning outcomes in the NQF database.
- Some changes in modalities are needed to make the database more functional

Priority 1b: Quality Assurance

- The importance of independent nomination of assessors was emphasized.
- Training for the range of QA activities, including in relation to internal and external evaluation and the purposes and philosophy behind them, is necessary

- The importance of the contribution of stakeholders and social partners in self-evaluations was reinforced.
- Some concern was expressed regarding varying quality between institutions in the same sector – perhaps additional standards, e.g. ISO 9001, would help.

Priority 2: Access and Progression

- The importance of RPL/VNIFL was endorsed by participants, including a suggestion that a more pro-active approach was required to ensure that this is implemented by institutions.

Priority 3: Internationalising the TQF

- The European Diploma/Certificate Supplements are very important in terms of determining the levels- so the transparency is maintained also they should be standardised.
- TQF levels should be included in the diplomas so these levels can be match easily with other countries' levels.
- The importance of updating the Turkish Referencing Report was mentioned

Priority 4: Internalising the TQF

- Some social partners emphasised that they are referencing the TQF in all their projects. One suggested that they would welcome similar enthusiasm from the Responsible Bodies.
- The TQF page under the VQA website should be updated, so that the TQF Department looks like an independent body- as befits an inter-institutional body and its position and role
- It is important for Responsible Bodies to fully assume their responsibilities and to internalise them.
- All the sub-units of RBs, especially the CoHE's and MoNE's, should be united and should be working in a common platform administered by TQF Dept, which could deal with e.g. conflicts in practices
- In terms of the determination and definitions of the qualifications, skills, etc. a policy paper should be prepared so all the definitions would be in line with each other in different documents.

Greater Coherence & Coordination of TQF Implementation

A major theme of the discussions across the various sessions and workshops was the need for greater coordination of implementation of TQF. While many participants thought that the governance structures are broadly appropriate, a range of suggestions were made to enhance these structures and increase the extent of coordination:

- The Education and Training Policies Council of the Presidency was mentioned and there was a suggestion that it would be beneficial to include this body with the TQF Coordination Council
- There was strong support for the introduction of either Working Groups or Standing Committees on thematic issues in order to coordinate and ensure implementation of TQF. These could be organised by the RBs, who could provide secretariat services. Suggestions for thematic WGs/SCs were:
  a) Competences and skills
  b) Verification of non-formal and informal learning
  c) Qualification type descriptors
  d) TQF's governance
  e) TQF database
  f) Quality assurance

Although the question of the adequacy of resources for TQF implementation was raised, including possible rebalancing of roles/responsibilities and of resources for TQF Dept, no need was seen for

re-balancing roles, although greater co-ordination was advised as well as additional resources for TQF Dept. Broadly participants felt that the RBs have the capacity and resources required to carry out their roles and responsibilities for the implementation phase of TQF.

The question about the potential for TQF Department to become a separate entity from VQA was discussed, with a mixed response. Broadly, it was felt that it is still too early for such a change, although this option might be considered in future. However, the importance of the TQF Dept being truly independent operationally from VQA was emphasised by participants

Importance of sub-sectors

- The continuing importance of TYYÇ/HE Qualifications Framework was emphasised in the CoHE workshop
- Field descriptors in higher education are important. The name should be changed to sectoral qualifications since it's resulted as a confusion in definition
- Sub-sectors can and should have their own standards – more detailed and specific, consistent with TQFs more generic standards.

Learner representation

- There needs to be more communication between the responsible bodies and their learners
- Efforts need to be made to involve learner representatives in the TQF structures.
- In European countries, learners play an important role within NQFs.

Certification Issues

- Certification is seen as a burden by the employers. There are no applications when it is not compulsory to have certificate.
- The need for more information/communication activities related to certification was raised
- It was suggested that the goal should be to increase employment with good quality qualifications, not simply to increase the number of certifications.

Communication Issues

- Integration to digital platforms is also significant at this point. VQA and MoNE should give importance to digital transformation since it is important for sustainability of developments

Overall Results

Thematic Working Groups should be established by the Responsible Bodies. Secretariat support should be provided by individual RBs or the TQF Department, as appropriate to theme/available resources. Scope and working methods of these groups should be defined and agreed. Each Working Group should consider the issues raised at the Consultation Meeting in relation to their themes/scope.

TQF Council should establish a Standing Committee or Working Group to promote and coordinate the inclusion of qualifications into the TQF and full implementation of the TQF Database.

Responsible Bodies should report regularly to TQF Council on their implementation of the 4 main priorities identified in the Strategy Paper.

TQF Council should give early consideration to ensuring learner representation within the governance structures of TQF, in line with European practices.

TQF Council should consider how it can more actively coordinate the TQF Implementation activities of the RBs and other main stakeholders, in the light of the substantive feedback from stakeholders on this issue at the Consultation Meeting.

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the Education and Training Policies Council of the Presidency as a member of the TQF Coordination Council

Deliberate steps need to be taken to enhance the independent operation of the TQF Department and in particular top establish its visible independence from VQA, in order to establish its inter-institutional responsibilities. While complete separation/independence of TQF Dept from VQA is not currently warranted, this option might be considered some years in the future.

TQF Council should give consideration to the issues raised at the Consultation Meeting in relation to certification and also communication.

Annex

Annex A: Situation Analysis - timeline of key TQF Developments

	Decision/Action Point	**Level**	**Date**
1	TQF Regulation published in the Official Journal	Decision by the Cabinet	November 2015
2	TQF Paper published in the Official Journal	Decision by the Cabinet	January 2016
3	Establishment of TQF Management System	TQF Regulation	March 2016
4	TYÇ İstişare Meclisinin Oluşturulması	TQF Regulation	27 Aralık 2017
5	**Preparation of Procedures, Principles and Criteria Related to TQF**		
5.1	Approval of TQF Action Plan	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	Semptember 2016
5.2	Determining Criteria For Quality Assurance of Qualifications	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	Eylül 2017
5.3	Procedures And Principles For The Quality Assurance Of Qualifications To Be Included In TQF	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	25 Mart 2018
5.4	Communications Strategy	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	April 2017
5.5	Procedures And Principles To Be Applied During The Process Of Incorporating The Qualifications Into The Framework	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	November 2019
5.6	Procedures And Principles On The Examination Of The Objections To Decisions Concerning The Implementation of TQF	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	September 2019
5.7	Procedures And Principles For The Use of TQF Logo	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	September 2019
5.8	Criteria For The Qualifications To Be Included In The Framework	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	November 2019
5.9	Procedures and Principles For The Identification Of Existing Qualification Types, Determining New Qualification Types, Updating and Cancellation Of Qualification Types	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	June 2020
5.10	Procedures and Principles For Updating, Modification and Cancellation Of Qualifications,	Decision of TQF Counsils as per the Regulation	June 2020

6	**Studies on the Development and Implementation of the TQF**		
6.1	Establishing & Implementing Qualifications Database	TQF Councils Decision	November 2016
6.2	Prepare VQA Qualification Types Specification	TQF Councils Decision	September 2018
6.3	Approval of QA Paper of VQA	TQF Councils Decision	June 2019
6.4	Including The Qualifications To The TQF	TQF Councils Decision	November 2020
6.5	Approval of QA Paper of CoHE	TQF Councils Decision	December 2020
6.6	Approval of QA Paper of MoNE	TQF Councils Decision	December 2020
6.7	Approval of CoHE Qualification Types Specification	TQF Councils Decision	December 2020
6.8	Approval of MoNE Qualification Types Specification	TQF Councils Decision	December 2020
6.9	Updating VQA Qualification Types Specification	TQF Councils Decision	December 2020
7	**Preparation of Introductory and Auxiliary Documents**		
7.1	TQF Glossary	TQF Department Decision	May 2018
7.2	Learning Outcomes Approach	TQF Department Decision	January 2019
7.3	The Guide of Non Formal and Informal Learning	TQF Department Decision	January 2019
7.4	Brochure of EQF Brochure	TQF Department Decision	July 2019
7.5	TQF Introductory Film	TQF Department Decision	October 2019
7.6	Quality Assurance Handbook	TQF Department Decision	April 2020
7.7	The Guide of Learning Outcomes	TQF Department Decision	April 2020
7.8	TQF Legislation Booklet	TQF Department Decision	May 2020
7.9	The Guide of Crediting	TQF Department Decision	December 2020
7.10	TQF Legislation Booklet	TQF Department Decision	December 2020
7.11	Annual Activity Reports and Action Plans	TQF Department Decision	2016-2020
8	**Establishing & Implementing Qualifications Database**		
8.1	Establishing the Turkish Qualifications Database	TQF Councils Decision	November 2016
8.2	Adding Qualifications to the Turkish Qualifications Database	TQF Department Decision	2016-2020
8.3	Establishing the TQF Web Site	TQF Department Decision	November 2019
9	**Referencing to the EQF**		
9.1	Submission of the TQF Referencing Report to the EU Commission	TQF Councils Decision	30 December 2016

9.2	Acceptance of Reference Report	EQF Advisory Group Decision	29 March 2017

Annex B: TQF Stakeholders

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS	SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS
1. MONE 2. COHE 3. VQA 4. TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COUNCIL 5. THE UNION OF CHAMBERS AND EXCHANGES OF TURKEY (TOBB) 6. TURKEY CONFEDERATION OF TRADESMEN AND ARTISANS (TESK) 7. TURKISH CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS (TİSK) 8. CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADE UNIONS (TÜRK-İŞ) 9. HAK-IS TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (HAK-İŞ) 10. CONFEDERATION OF PROGRESSIVE TRADE UNIONS OF TURKEY (DİSK) 11. CONFEDERATION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS TRADE UNIONS (MEMUR-SEN) 12. PUBLIC WORKERS UNION CONFEDERATION OF TURKEY (KAMU-SEN) 13. CONFEDERATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TRADE UNIONS (KESK) 14. HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS NATIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL	1. PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND BUDGET 2. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE 3. MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES 4. MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL SECURITY 5. MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION 6. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS 7. MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES 8. MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS 9. MINISTRY OF TREASURY AND FINANCE 10. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR 11. MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM 12. MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE 13. MINISTRY OF HEALTH 14. MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY 15. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY 16. MINISTRY OF COMMERCE 17. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE 18. PRESIDENCY OF THE INTER-UNIVERSITY BOARD 19. DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE 20. EUROPEAN UNION EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS CENTER 21. SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION 22. MEASUREMENT, SELECTION AND PLACEMENT CENTER 23. TURKISH ACCREDITATION INSTITUTION 24. TURKISH STANDARDS INSTITUTE 25. TURKISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES 26. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTION OF TURKEY 27. TURKISH STATISTICS INSTITUTION 28. TURKISH BUSINESS AGENCY 29. TURKISH DENTAL ASSOCIATION 30. TURKISH PHARMACIES' ASSOCIATION 31. UNION OF TURKISH CHAMBERS OF ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS 32. TURKISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION 33. TURKISH ASSOCIATION of VETERINARIANS 34. BANKS ASSOCIATION OF TURKEY 35. TURKISH BAR ASSOCIATION 36. UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF TURKEY 37. TURKISH ASSESSMENT EXPERTS ASSOCIATION 38. TURKISH EXPORTERS' ASSEMBLY 39. PARTICIPATION BANKS ASSOCIATION OF TURKEY 40. NOTARIES UNION OF TURKEY 41. ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANTS AND CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS OF TURKEY (TURMOB) 42. ASSOCIATION OF CAPITAL MARKETS INTERMEDIATE ORGANIZATIONS OF TURKEY 43. TURKISH TRAVEL AGENCIES ASSOCIATION (TURSAB) 44. ASSOCIATION OF INSURANCE AND REINSURANCE COMPANIES OF TURKEY

	45. SEEDS' ASSOCIATION OF TURKEY 46. UNION OF CHAMBERS OF AGRICULTURE OF TURKEY 47. TURKISH INDUSTRIALISTS AND BUSINESSMEN ASSOCIATION (TUSIAD) 48. DETACHED INDUSTRIALISTS AND BUSINESSMEN ASSOCIATION (MUSIAD) 49. TURKISH UNIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTERS (TÜSEM) COUNCIL 50. UNIVERSITIES CONTINUOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION 51. EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE (ERG) 52. EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM ASSOCIATION (TEGEP) 53. EDUCATION AND SMALL INDUSTRY SUPPORT FOUNDATION (MEKSA) 54. MESS EDUCATION FOUNDATION 55. TEACHER ACADEMY FOUNDATION (ÖRAV) 56. TURKISH ECONOMIC POLICIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION (TEPAV)

Annex C: Table of main actions required for full implementation of TQF

Area of work/main actions	Start date	End date	Body responsible	Explanation and output
PRIORITY 1(a): Finalising/Populating the Framework				
Various remaining policies and procedures for TQF (TQF Action Plan actions 17, 18, 19, & 20)	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	TQF Dept	17 & 19 completed & approved 18 & 20 approval pending
Finalise Remaining Qualification Type Specifications (QTS)	Q2 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	The main QTS have been completed and approved. Further QTS will be developed and existing QTS revised
Principles, procedures etc. for Turkish Qualifications Database	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	TQF Dept	Due for completion during 2nd quarter of 2021
AnnualTQF Implementation Plans	Q4 2021	o/g	TQF Dept	
Align programmes/Qualifications with Qualification Type Specifications	Q1 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	This is a pre-requisite for inclusion of qualifications and represents a significant amount of work for RBs
Piloting of inclusion of Qualifications into TQF	Q1 2021	Q3 2021	Responsible Bodies /TQF Dept/TUYEP	Range of qualifications included into TQF
Roadmap for the inclusion of Qualifications into TQF	Q2 2021	Q4 2021	Responsible Bodies	Each RB to prepare roadmap for their qualifications
Handbook on the inclusion of Qualifications into TQF	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	TQF Dept/TUYEP	
Completion of the Inclusion of Qualifications into TQF	Q1 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies/TQF Dept/TUYEP	Refers to main qualifications of CoHE, MoNE & VQA
PRIORITY 1 (b): Quality Assurance/Enhancement				
Implement provisions of QA Paper	Q1 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
PRIORITY 2: Access & Progression				
Procedures, Principles for lateral & vertical transition among Qs in TQF and Credit Accumulation &Transfer	Q1 2022	o/g	TQF Dept/TUYEP	
Access to qualifications through recognition of prior learning	Q1 2022	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
Procedures & Principles for Recognition Prior Learning & ensuring Quality Assurance	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	TQF Dept/ TUYEP	

Credit-rating of qualifications	Q1 2022	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
PRIORITY 3: Support/Guidance/Training for TQF implementation				
Capacity Building: Training for TQF Council Members & Stakeholders; qualifications providers;	Q1 2021	o/g	TUYEP	
TQF Toolkit	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	TUYEP/TQF Dept	
Mutual work shadowing between staff of TQF Dept/RBs	Q2 2021	o/g	TQF Dept/ Responsible Bodies	
Mutual staff exchange/secondment between RBs/TQF Dept	Q3 2021	o/g	TQF Dept/ Responsible Bodies	
PRIORITY 4: 'Internalising' the TQF				
RBs to establish Implementation of TQF as standing item in meetings of governance and policy/strategy bodies	Q2 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
RBs to establish and operate internal standing committees on TQF implementation	Q2 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
RBs to establish and coordinate collaborative thematic Working Groups on TQF Implementation	Q2 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
Pool of TQF Implementation Experts to be established	Q2 2021	Q4 2021	TQF Council	
Consideration should be given as to how to ensure more effective use and operation of TQ Database	Q1 2021	o/g	TQF Dept/VQA/ Responsible Bodies	
GENERAL: International dimension				
TQF-EQF Referencing: Review/update	Q3 2021	Q2 2022	TQF Dept/TUYEP	
Develop concerted approach to improve Turkey's performance in various international indicators	Q2 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies /TUYEP	This could include: European/Global Inventories of QFs, Bologna Process Implementation Reports; PISA, etc.
Linking of Turkish Qualifications Database to Europass Portal	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	TQF Dept/ Responsible Bodies	
GENERAL: Communication/public information				

Implementation of TQF Communication Strategy	Q1 2021	o/g	TQF Dept	
Implementation of TUYEP Communication Strategy	Q1 2021	Q4 2022	TUYEP	
Inclusion of TQF levels/credits in qualification diplomas and certificates	Q1 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
Public information on qualifications	Q1 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies	
Improve modalities of including qualifications in TQD	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	TQF Dept/RBs	
GENERAL: Cooperation				
Include 'Presidential Council' on TQCC?	Q1 2021	o/g	TQF Councils/Dept	
Might slip into Q2	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	TUYEP/TQF Dept/ Responsible Bodies	
Suggestions from CM include:	Q2 2021	o/g	Responsible Bodies /TQF Council	
GENERAL: Revising/updating/ broadening TQF				
Review/revision of range of TQF documents, including: TQF Paper; TQF Regulations; QA Handbook; Communications Strategy	Q4 2021	Q2 2022	TUYEP/TQF Dept	

NB this table outlines the Main Actions required for full Implementation of TQF, including those likely to/may be completed before the period covered by the 2nd TQF Action Plan (2021-2024). o/g means 'ongoing'

This table is intended to form the basis for the development of a more detailed Action Plan, including sub-actions, similar to the 1st TQF AP.

'body responsible' indicates the main responsibility for preparing the action. In many cases the formal responsibility lies with the TQF Council or TQF Coordination Council

Annex D: TQF Strategy Paper Consultation Activity Agenda

25 March 2021 Thursday

10.00 – 16.15

	Testing Login and User Settings
10.00-10.10	Opening and Introduction of the Event
10.10-10.30	Opening Speeches
10.30-11.00	Introdaction of TQF Strategy Paper
11.00-11.15	Break
11.15-12.30	Workshop 1: Responsibilities and Roadmap Duties and Responsibilities for TQF, Application Examples and Presentation of the Roadmap (The main stakeholders of TQF are MoNE, CoHE, VQA and THEQC representatives)
12.30-13.30	Lunch Break
13.30-14.45	Workshop 2: Priorities 1) Priority 1 (a) Finalising/Populating the Framework 2) Priority 1 (b) Quality Assurance/Enhancement 3) Priority 2: Access & Progression 4) General: International dimension
14.45-15.00	Break
15.00-15.45	Plenary Session – Consultation Questions: Evaluation
15.45-16.15	Summary and Draft Results