NATIONAL Skills COUNCIL

Is the NQF Sufficient for Local Skills?

Focus on VNFIL's national occupational standards

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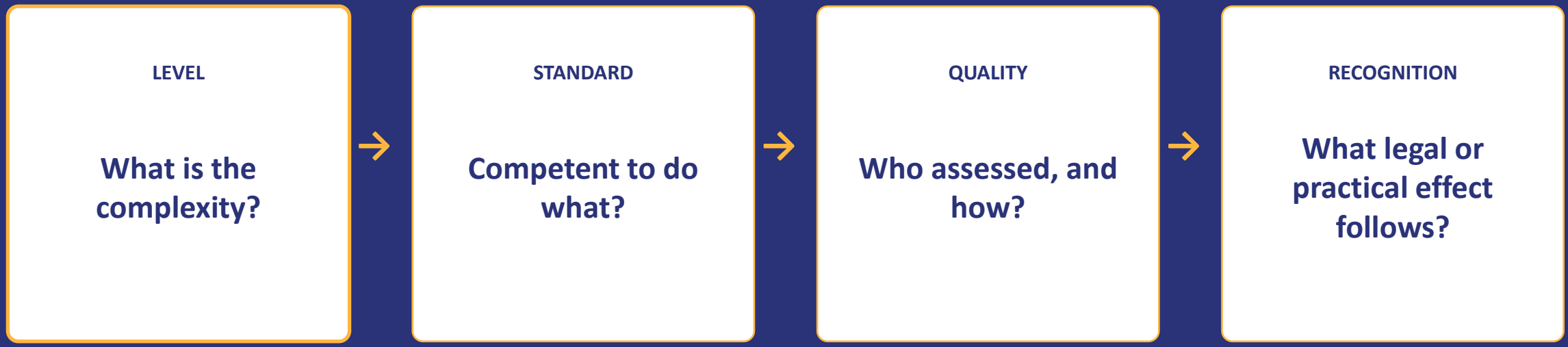
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PROVOCATION

The short answer: necessary, but not sufficient

MQF gives Malta a common language for level and learning outcomes.

But mobility depends on a wider trust architecture.



Thesis: use the EQF as a translation layer, not as a substitute for evidence, quality assurance or recognition decisions.

One certificate can carry three different claims

1. Qualification claim

- Learning outcomes achieved
- Positioned at an MQF level
- Referenced to a corresponding EQF level

2. Occupational claim

- Competence for a defined occupation
- Benchmarked against a National Occupational Standard
- Assessment evidence matters

3. Recognition claim

- Accepted for employment, progression or regulation
- Decision rests with the receiving authority or institution
- Level comparison does not predetermine legal effect

For VNFIL, the credibility of the second claim is what makes the first claim meaningful to employers.



Malta's VNFIL governance: standards and assurance are deliberately separated

1

NSC

Policy direction
Establishes sector structures
Approves and publishes NOS

→

2

SSC

Strategic guidance
Coherence across sectors
Advice to the NSC

→

3

SSUs

Industry-focused expertise
Develop and review NOS
Define occupational reality

→

4

MFHEA

Regulatory oversight
Licensing and quality assurance
MQF architecture

→

5

VACs

Candidate support
Assessment
Certification

Design principle: industry relevance is built into the standard; public trust is built through independent regulation and quality assurance.

From experience to an MQF-referenced validation award



The cross-border weak point is not the first four steps. It is the handover at “USE”: will a receiving authority understand and trust a competence-based award issued through VNFIL?

Why peg occupational standards to the MQF?

A common level language

Places occupational competence within Malta's wider learning-outcomes system.

A basis for assessment

Turns broad job expectations into observable knowledge, skills and competences.

MQF-PEGGED NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

A route to parity of esteem

Makes learning acquired through work visible and certifiable.

A bridge to progression

Supports links to further learning, career pathways and sector requirements.

What stakeholders are telling us: trust can fail at implementation

ASSESSOR CAPACITY

Too few assessors can create waiting lists and limit access.

CONSISTENCY

Different assessment methods for the same skill or level weaken comparability.

SECTOR COVERAGE

Standards must keep pace with changing occupations and sector priorities.

USABILITY

Employers and learners need clear information on what the certificate actually attests.

Implication for passporting: the receiving country needs confidence not only in the framework, but in the reliability of the assessment behind each award.

The “passporting” stress test

MALTA ISSUES

VNFIL award

MQF level
National Occupational Standard
Issuing / assessing body and assessor

RECEIVING AUTHORITY ASKS

- ? Is the issuer competent and verifiable?
- ? Is the award quality-assured?
- ? What exactly was assessed?
- ? Is the occupation regulated here?
- ? Does the award grant access, exemption or eligibility?

EQF answers the level-comparison question. It does not answer all five trust questions.

Would Malta recognise a foreign VNFIL certificate carrying an NQF level?

1	AUTHENTICITY	Can the certificate and issuer be verified?
2	FRAMEWORK	Is the foreign NQF formally referenced to the EQF?
3	QUALITY	Was validation delivered under a trusted national QA system?
4	SUBSTANCE	Are learning outcomes and occupational scope sufficiently clear?
5	PURPOSE	Employment, further learning, regulated occupation, or migration?

EQF can enable a more proportionate decision. It cannot predetermine the decision.



YES, BUT AS INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TRUST

Should the EQF be a solution for VNFIL?

1 Common certificate metadata

NQF and EQF levels, learning outcomes, standard, assessment route and issuer.

2 Verifiable digital credentials

Machine-readable, tamper-evident and linked to authoritative registers.

3 Comparable QA expectations

Clear minimum evidence on assessors, methods, moderation and appeals.

4 Occupational transparency

A readable description of what competence the award certifies.

5 Recognition protocols

Agreed, proportionate handling by receiving authorities, with reasons for refusal.

A European reference level becomes passport-like only when the evidence travelling with it is standardised, verifiable and trusted.

VNFIL works best as part of a wider skills ecosystem

SKILLS INTELLIGENCE

Identifies changing demand and informs priorities for occupational standards.

SECTOR SKILLS ASSESSMENTS

Tests current and future gaps with employers and workers.

SKILL CARDS

Explores where verified sector competence may be useful and proportionate.

CAREER GUIDANCE

Helps people understand pathways from experience to validation and progression.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS

Could finance targeted learning after gaps are identified through validation.

TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

Makes learning from voluntary and community activity more visible.

Together, these initiatives connect intelligence → standards → validation → learning → mobility.

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Thank you.