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INNOVATIVE SKILLS FOR  
BENEFIT COMPANIES

## Guidelines and transfer package of Curriculum and Vocational Training Course



Mancomunitat  
de la Ribera Alta



Capacity Ireland



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**S4BC Innovative Skills For Benefit Companies**  
**Project n° 2021-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000034806**

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# 1. Guidelines

## 1.1 What is EQF

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. Covering qualifications at all levels and in all sub-systems of education and training, the EQF provides a comprehensive overview over qualifications in the 38 European countries currently involved in its implementation. In close cooperation with the European Commission, Cedefop provides analytical and coordination support for the implementation of the EQF and carries out a number of comparative studies and analysis on issues related to the implementation of the framework at EU, national and sectoral level.

The EQF has 8 levels. The learning outcomes are defined in terms of:

*Knowledge:* in the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

*Skills:* In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

*Responsibility and autonomy:* In the context of the EQF responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility.

Level 1 - learning outcomes

Level 2 - learning outcomes

Level 3 - learning outcome

Level 4 - learning outcomes

Level 5 - learning outcomes

Level 6 - learning outcomes

Level 7 - learning outcomes

Level 8 - learning outcomes

## 1.2 EQF level 4 & 5: Certificate in benefit company operation and management

### Definition of EQF level 4

Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	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

### Definition of EQF level 5

Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others

## 1.3 Compatibility with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for three cycles agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle.

1. The descriptor for the short cycle developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna process, (within or linked to the first cycle), corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 5.

The EQF has been the catalyst for development of comprehensive national qualification frameworks based on learning outcomes. All countries committed to the EQF consider such national frameworks necessary to make their qualifications comparable across sectors and countries.

By September 2021, 35 countries had formally linked ('referenced') their national qualifications frameworks to the EQF: Austria, Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Kosovo, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Luxembourg Norway, Poland, , Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

The project Countries that formally linked their national systems to EQF are Ireland, Italy Lithuania Portugal, Spain.

#### 1.4 Benefit of EQF

The EQF in an instrument to realise mobility at EU level for the European citizen. The added value is learner-centered by valorising flexible, diverse and efficient ways of learning. It stimulates lifelong learning and a durable integration in the labour market and the society. It emphasises the accumulation of acquired competences, rather than to focus on deficits.

The EQF is built on more individual learning paths. For individual learners, the identification of learning needs, the setting up of a learning path and the steering of their own learning process are difficult tasks. The individual will also be responsible for matching his qualifications with the requirement of his job and the labour market. The weight of the personal responsibility is (too) high. Too much emphasis on the individual responsibility could be a danger.

#### 1.5 EQF level 4 & 5 certificate in benefit company operation and management

**Who is this course for?** People interested in working for Benefit Companies or those already working in the wider Third Sector (private businesses interested in becoming BCs and business advisors).

**Course Topics:** 5 Units covering Legal, Business and Technical Aspects of Benefit Companies and considering Strategic and International factors

**Structure and Approach:** ECVET based approach with each Unit comprising a set of Learning Outcomes and Assessment criteria – Learners need to meet all assessment criteria to pass.

**Learning outcomes and assessment criteria:** Learning Outcomes describe what learners will know or be able to do as a result of taking the course Assessment Criteria describe what learners will need to do to demonstrate that they have achieved each Learning Outcome.

Scheme of Work: this course is based on a 'Scheme of Work' that summarises all the 5 Units and their respective Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria.

### 1.6 EQF Level 4 Assessment Criteria 1.1.1 – Short Answer Quiz

The EQF Level 4 Assessment Task for Learning Outcome 1.1 is a short answer quiz comprising 8 questions with a total of 12 marks available. Learners need to achieve 75% (9 marks out of 12) to successfully achieve this Learning Outcome.

*Q1. What are the two main different approaches to defining Benefit Companies?*

(2 marks)

Answer – 1 mark for stating 'Legal Regulation under Benefit Company laws' (or similar); and 1 mark for stating 'Accreditation via an external quality standard' (or similar).

*Q2. Name 1 country in the European Union that currently has specific legislation regulating Benefit Companies (1 mark)*

Answer – Italy (this is correct as of October 2023, Assessors should make sure they have up to date information in case more countries have enacted similar legislation since this date).

*Q3. Explain 2 ways in which legally regulated Benefit Companies differ from standard private companies (2 marks)*

2 marks can be awarded where the learner is able to explain 2 of the following 3 points:

1. Laws regulating Benefit Companies require them to pursue both financial profit and a general public benefit, such as social or environmental goals, whereas standard private companies are only required by law to pursue financial profit
2. Benefit Companies have a legal obligation to consider the impact of their decisions on various stakeholders, not just shareholders, whereas standard private companies are only required to consider shareholders
3. Laws regulating Benefit Companies require them to report on the company's social and environmental performance, whereas standard private companies are only required to report on financial performance

*Q4. Identify the organisation that accredits Benefit Companies via an external quality standard and state what the quality standard is called (2 marks)*

Answer – 1 mark for identifying B-Lab that accredits Benefit Companies via an external quality standard; and 1 mark for stating that the quality standard offered by B-Lab is 'B-Corp accreditation'.

*Q5. What is (1 mark) What is the sustainability framework that Benefit Companies modelled on called*

Answer – triple bottom line

*Q6. Is B-Corp accreditation a legal requirement for Benefit Companies in any European Union country (1 mark)*

Answer – No, B-Corp accreditation is a voluntary process

*Q7. What is the main purpose of the B-Impact Assessment that companies seeking B-Corp accreditation must undertake (1 mark)*

1 mark for stating that the B-Impact Assessment process help companies assess and measure their social and environmental impact based on a comprehensive set of criteria (or similar)

*Q8. Explain 2 ways in which B-Corp accredited companies differ from standard private companies (2 marks)*

2 marks can be awarded where the learner is able to explain 2 of the following 3 points:

1. B-Corp accredited companies are required to demonstrate their commitment to a balanced approach between profit and positive societal impact, whereas standard private companies can focus solely on profit if that is the approach they wish to take
2. B Corp accredited companies are required to achieve B-Corp accreditation whereas there is no need for standard private companies to do this
3. B Corp accredited companies are required to utilise the B Impact Assessment reporting tools to demonstrate their social and environmental impact, whereas standard private companies do not need to do this.

## Unit 1: Legal Aspects of Benefit Companies

Learning Outcome	1.1 Develop introductory level knowledge of the legal aspects of Benefit Companies
Assessment Criteria	1.1.1 Explain what Benefit Companies are in legal terms and how they differ from standard private companies
Assessment Type	Short Essay (300-400 words)
Conditions	Coursework
Time available	Deadline to be set by Centre
<p>Write a short essay entitled, ‘Defining Benefit Companies in Legal Terms’ that covers each of the following 3 marking points:</p> <p>(1) Brief explanation of the 2 key approaches to defining Benefit Companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Legal regulation under specific Benefit Company laws (only available in certain countries/jurisdictions)</li> <li>ii. Accreditation via an external quality standard (e.g. B-Corp)</li> </ul> <p>(2) Brief explanation of the legal regulation approach (it is recommended that learners focus on Italian “Società Benefit” companies as this is the preeminent example of legal regulation of Benefit Companies within the European Union jurisdiction). As a minimum, the response must explain that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The legal regulation of Benefit Companies in Italy was established via the “Società Benefit” legislation passed in 2016</li> <li>ii. Italian companies can become a “Società Benefit” by their amending articles of association to commit to pursuing ‘common benefits’ (e.g. social or environmental goals)</li> <li>iii. Unlike standard private companies, “Società Benefit” companies have a legal requirement to publish Annual Reports detailing progress made towards achieving common benefits</li> </ul> <p>(3) Brief explanation of the accreditation approach (it is recommended that learners focus on the B-Corp accreditation offered by B-Lab). As a minimum, the response must explain that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The accreditation approach is based on a meeting a specified quality standard, rather than fulfilling specific legal requirements</li> <li>ii. Certified B Corps must use the B Impact Assessment reporting tools to demonstrate social and environmental impact</li> </ul>	



- iii. Any for-profit business can apply to become an accredited B-Corp regardless of legal structure.

Word count to be minimum of 300 words and to not exceed 500 words by an excessive amount. However, students will not be penalised for exceeding the suggested word limit by up to 250 words.

### **Marking Guidance**

The learner should be judged to have passed the assessment if their essay covers the 3 marking points listed above and provides a good quality explanation of each one. Assessors should be aware that the topics covered are broad and the essay format means that learners could provide valid responses in any number of ways. In each instance the assessor should simply consider whether the learner has met the marking point within the context of the topic in general and the specific command verbs in particular, e.g. for this assignment the command verb is **explain**, so assessors should focus on whether learners have provided a good quality **explanation** of each marking point. It is recommended that the assessor provides separate feedback explaining how well the learner has met each marking point stating whether their response can be considered to be a 'Pass', whether it can be considered to be a 'Good' or 'Excellent' quality response, or if the student has 'Not Met' that assessment criteria. In each instance the assessor should explain the reasons for their feedback and, where appropriate, suggest ways in which the learner could have improved their response.

However, it is important to note that all of the assessment criteria must be met on an individual basis and thus, for example, a learner who is given a 'Pass' mark for all 3 points will have passed the assessment, whereas a learner who is given an 'Excellent' mark for 2 of the points but 'Not Met' for the other one will **not** have passed the assessment and will need to resubmit their assignment.

To maintain the integrity of the assessment process, learners are only able to resubmit the assignment once and thus it is recommended that the learners who have not met one or more of the points arrange to discuss the assignment and the assessor feedback with their tutor before resubmitting.

## 2. Memorandum of understanding for the mutual recognition of the EQF levels 4 and 5 in the EQF LEVEL 4 & 5 CERTIFICATE IN BENEFIT COMPANY OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

### Memorandum of Understanding Learning Agreement

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Learning Agreement are voluntary partnership agreements in which conditions for VET mobility are concluded between ‘competent bodies’, setting the framework for credit transfer and establishing partnership’s procedures for cooperation. In this agreement, produced in the framework of the S4BC Project, the signing Organizations accept each other’s quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures as satisfactory for the purpose of transferring credits at the end of a training period abroad. They agree on the general conditions such as objectives and duration and identify other actors and further institutions that may be involved.

The present MoU contains the following elements:

- General objectives of the MoU
- Basic Shared Concepts and Terminology
- Information about the partners
- Information about the training programme(s) or qualification(s) concerned
- Assessment, Validation and recognition of results
- Signatures

### 1. Objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreement

This MoU sets out the general framework of cooperation and networking between the competent institutions. In this case, the “S4BC” VET partners agree to use the same tools (matrix of competence, test, LOs, assessment criteria) for assessing the competences acquired by the candidates/learners. The MoU defines the general conditions under which credits, in partner systems, can be achieved and recognized. To design specific arrangements for credit transfer for learners for each specific mobility period (training

contents, LOs, placements abroad, mobility projects) partners must prepare specific Learning Agreement (involving two or more partners and the mobile learners).

The corresponding Units of Learning outcomes can be automatically recognised by the training agencies as already acquired, and the training path leading to the qualification could be shortened accordingly.

The MoU formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the procedures for assessing competences coherently within the S4BC model.

In particular the present MoU establishes that each signatory organization:

- Mutually recognises the status of stakeholder
- Agrees on the MoU fields of activity and implementation methods
- Identifies stakeholders and other competent institutions involved in the process.

**Within the S4BC project this document foresees also the attainment of the following operational objectives:**

**- *Stabilizing the ECVET network***

To foster the consolidation of a stable network for promoting the exchange of information and good practices in ECVET in particular in the publishing sector

**- *Continuing ECVET testing promoted with the project***

To continue testing the ECVET system mechanisms produced by the S4BC Project for facilitating: the modularization of qualification; the independent evaluation of units seen as parts of a qualification; designing training and education with a learning-outcome approach capable of placing the individual in the centre of his or her learning pathway.

**- *Continuing the S4BC LO Units testing***

with particular reference to support for the assessment of competences based on experience (non formal) and their identification, validation and certification process.

## 2. Basic Shared Concepts and Terminology

In a framework based on European principles and a common national reference level, the following conceptual definitions and reference points have been adopted for the Memorandum of Understanding from the Recommendation to the European Parliament and Council (18 June 2009) on the creation of a European credit system for education and ECVET vocational training (2009/C 155/02):

- Qualification: the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent institution determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards
- Learning Outcomes: statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence
- Learning Outcome Units: component of a qualification that consists of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be evaluated and validated
- Learning Outcome Credits: a set of learning outcomes of an individual which have been assessed and which can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications
- Competent Authority: a competent authority is responsible for designing and awarding qualifications or recognising units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, under the rules and practices of participating countries
- Assessment of Learning Outcomes: methods and processes used to establish the extent to which a learner has in fact attained particular knowledge, skills and competence
- Validation of Learning Outcomes: process of confirming that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes which may be required for a unit or a qualification
- Recognition of Learning Outcomes: process of attesting officially achieved learning outcomes through the awarding of units or qualifications
- ECVET Points: a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification
- Together with the aforesaid key concepts, the definitions in the national regulations are also adopted.

### 3. Information about the partners

Organisation 1	
Country	
Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	
Telephone	
E-mail	

### 4. Other Organizations covered by this MoU

This Memorandum of Understanding is an open agreement and is open to all other organizations that may be interested in signing it, also at a later date.

### 5. The qualifications covered by this Memorandum of Understanding

This MoU covers the S4BC training programme that is composed of 1 Occupational Profile.

### 3. Occupational Profiles

#### Specialist in BENEFIT COMPANY OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

Each of the 5 occupational profiles is structured as follows:

EQF LEVEL	4
ECVET POINTS OF EACH OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE	60

EQF LEVEL	5
ECVET POINTS OF EACH OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE	60

Here below the description of the training programmes and of the ECVET Units:

<b>Unit 1: Legal aspects of Benefit Companies</b>			
<b>Unit Aim:</b> This unit will enable the learner to understand key legal aspects of benefit companies. The unit will cover the differences between formal legal structures for Benefit Companies and other approaches (e.g. B-Corp), as well as exploring approaches to Benefit Companies in different EU member states. The learner will also gain knowledge of the steps required to establish/accredit a Benefit Company.			
<b>Learning outcomes (the learner will)</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria (the learner can)</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	Develop introductory level knowledge of the legal aspects of Benefit Companies	<b>1.1.1</b>	Explain what Benefit Companies are in legal terms and how they differ from standard private companies
<b>1.2</b>	Understand Benefit	<b>1.2.1</b>	Explain the legal structures available to Benefit Companies in your country

	Company legal structures in (your country)	1.2.2	Describe the requirements for establishing a Benefit Company or converting an existing business or organisation to a Benefit Company in your country
		1.2.3	Compare Benefit Companies to the company legal structures available for socially responsible companies and non-profit organisations in your country
1.3	Understand the legal aspects of Benefit Companies in other EU countries	1.3.1	Compare and contrast the different approaches to Benefit Companies in at least 2 other EU member states
		1.3.2	Critically Evaluate the B-Corp accreditation-based approach in the context of factors relevant to Socially Responsible Companies

<b>Unit 2: Business Aspects of Benefit Companies</b>			
<p><b>Unit Aim:</b> This unit will enable the learner to understand the various business aspects of being a BC and scope of associated business activities. They will learn the characteristics of being a BC in terms of organisation, fiscal and social management and economic/financial benefits. They will understand the new opportunities for companies and how to develop the internationalisation process and how it constrains/limits the activity of companies. They also will learn about the direct and indirect costs of complying with BC requirements.</p>			
<b>Learning outcomes (the learner will)</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria (the learner can)</b>	
2.1	Develop knowledge about the direct and indirect implications of being a BC has on different types of businesses, areas of activity and the scope of business activities.	2.1.1	Identify the main economic sectors in which Benefit Companies are active in your country
		2.1.2	Analyse the scope of Benefit Company business activities in terms of turnover, contribution to GDP, employment levels
		2.1.3	Describe the potential benefits of being a BC. Analyse how they translate into added value for that company
		2.1.4	Describe the potential constraints of being a BC. Critically analyse the necessary adaptations in terms of business activity, internal and external.
2.2	Develop knowledge about the formal requirements and financial aspects of becoming a BC.	2.2.1	Describe the requirements to set up as a BC and the related costs. Explain how the process should be tailored to the characteristics of the company
		2.2.2	Critically analyse the cost/benefit ratio of this process

2.3	Develop knowledge on how the BC concept can or cannot be adapted to different business areas, as well as to the different scales of each company	2.3.1	Describe possible adaptations in the BC process in order to achieve different businesses scale
		2.3.2	Describe possible adaptations in the BC process in order to achieve different business areas
		2.3.3	Analyse case studies in the context of each country as well as in the international context

<b>Unit 3: Technical Aspects of Benefit Companies</b>			
<p><b>Unit Aim:</b> In this unit, the learners will deepen their knowledge regarding the necessary changes to be implemented in each BC candidate company. They will learn about and critically analyse case studies of companies from different business areas. They will gain an understanding of the types of Impact Assessment available to BCs (such as B-Impact Assessment and other voluntary standards) and the differences between the approaches. They will also learn about why and how reporting is conducted as a part of BCs.</p>			
<b>Learning outcomes (the learner will)</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria (the learner can)</b>	
3.1	Understand what changes should be implemented by Benefit Companies in the short, medium and long term in a given company with regard to relational, functional and production aspects	3.1.1	Identify the internal changes a business might undertake in becoming a BC and what challenges and benefits are associated with these.
		3.1.2	Describe the range of necessary external changes BCs will have with all associated stakeholders
		3.1.3	Describe the changes in the activities of BCs using examples and explain the benefits that these can bring.
		3.1.4	Explain how being locally and globally implicated can result in an improved and more efficient business performance
3.2	Understand how and why businesses – including – monitor and report on their activities	3.2.1	Explain why any business might want to carry out additional monitoring and reporting of its business activities that goes beyond statutory financial reporting requirements
		3.2.2	Explain why implementing additional monitoring and reporting might be important for Benefit Companies.
		3.2.3	Identify a range of activities that Benefit Companies might report on and describe suitable monitoring processes.
3.3		3.3.1	Explain why impact evaluation is important for Benefit Companies



	Gain an understanding of different approaches of impact evaluation and how and why these are implemented by Benefit Companies.	3.3.2	Critically evaluate two methods of impact evaluation used by Benefit Companies
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<b>Unit 4: Strategic aspects (environmental sustainability and social inclusion, etc)</b>			
<p><b>Unit Aim:</b> Unit 4 will be mostly concentrated to explain the Strategic aspects of the Benefit Company through the lens of the ESG model. You will learn about the elements that ESG model contains, gain knowledge about the existing and upcoming EU regulations regarding ESG, understand how to adapt your business model, get to know key steps of building a Sustainability Strategy and how to perform a self-audit, also how to communicate your Company's ESG efforts to the Customers.</p>			
Learning outcomes (the learner will)		Assessment Criteria (the learner can)	
4.1	Develop introductory level knowledge of the strategic aspects of Benefit Companies	4.1.1	Define strategic elements of Benefit Companies according an ESG model
		4.1.2	Understand the EU regulatory initiatives for ESG
4.2	Understand how to align strategic aspects of a Benefit Company to ESG	4.2.1	Understand the purpose and the process of an ESG self-assessment/self audit
		4.2.2	Explain ways to align Business Models with ESG compliance
		4.2.3	Define key steps to designing a Sustainability Strategy
4.3	Understand how to integrate strategic aspects to company's management	4.3.1	Understand the process/requirements of ESG certification
		4.3.2	Explain how company's ESG efforts can be communicated to customers

<b>Unit 5: Benefit Companies at European and International levels</b>			
<b>Unit Aim:</b> This Unit will enable the learners to understand the consistency of the BC situation vs. other approaches (certified B-Corps) across the EU and internationally and the links with the EU policies related to the Benefit Business. Students will understand the evolution, promotion, encouragement, and impulse of this specific Benefit Companies development in the different countries of the European Union and at an international level.			
<b>Learning outcomes (the learner will)</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria (the learner can)</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	Develop knowledge of European and international legislation and policies relevant to Benefit Companies	<b>5.1.1</b>	Identify key EU legislation relevant to Benefit Companies
		<b>5.1.2</b>	Describe key EU policies/initiatives designed to promote Benefit Companies
		<b>5.1.3</b>	Explain how EU funding could be used to support the development of Benefit Companies
		<b>5.1.4</b>	Analyse how Benefit Companies are promoted and supported in other international jurisdictions
<b>5.2</b>	Develop awareness and understanding of European and international networks created for the promoting of Benefit Companies	<b>5.2.1</b>	Identify a range of European and international networks relevant to Benefit Companies and the requirements to be a part of them.
		<b>5.2.2</b>	Analyse the potential advantages (or disadvantages) for Benefit Companies of participating in different types of transnational networks
<b>5.3</b>	Analyse the contribution of Benefit Companies to economic development and sustainable development goals	<b>5.3.1</b>	Identify relevant datasets that provide information on the economic and social contributions made by Benefit Companies and related types of organisations such as social enterprises
		<b>5.3.2</b>	Analyse relevant data sets internationally to estimate the current contribution of Benefit Companies to economic development and sustainable development goals at European and global levels.
		<b>5.3.3</b>	Assess the potential for Benefit Companies to contribute to economic development and sustainable development goals over the medium and long term

## Key Concepts definition

For a proper use of E.Q.F., the definitions which apply are the following:

- a. **“qualification”** means a 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;
- b. **“national qualification framework system”** means all aspects of a Member State’s activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework;
- c. **“national qualification framework”** \_means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society;
- d. **“sector”** \_means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology;
- e. **“international sectoral organizations”** \_means an association of national organisations, including, for example, employers and professional bodies, which represents the interests of national sectors;
- f. **“Learning outcomes”** \_means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;
- g. **“knowledge”** means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;
- h. **“skills”** means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);

- i. **“competence”** means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/ or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.