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Strengthening Vocational Qualifications Authority and National Qualifications System in Turkey Project



# VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY



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## FOREWORD

One of the most important factors supporting the competitive power of Turkey with a growing economy is its working age population. The population has to be transformed into a human capital in order to achieve the national goals of economic and social development and to ensure and sustain competitiveness in the global economy.

Building and operating the National Qualifications System will help Turkey to strengthen the link between education and employment to support individuals for the achievement of knowledge and skills required by the labour market, to improve the quality of education and training and ensure that it is operated against the standard, and to enable the international recognition of knowledge and skills through qualification certificates.

Vocational Qualifications Authority was founded to set the principles for national technical and vocational qualifications based on the national and international occupational standards; to build and operate the National Qualifications System required for undertaking audit, assessment and evaluation and certification activities. VQA is the National Coordination Point for European Qualifications Framework, and the authority has been authorized to build and govern the Turkish Qualifications Framework. VQA has built the foundation for Turkish Qualifications Framework in association and collaboration with all its stakeholders. Relevant activities are undertaken without compromising on the citizen-oriented governance approach and quality assurance.

This booklet on VQA and National Qualifications System is hereby presented to the attention of all relevant parties.

**Bayram AKBAŞ**

President of Vocational Qualifications Authority

# VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

## The Guarantee for Qualified and Certified Human Resources in Turkey

Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) was founded in 2006 with a purpose of building and operating a National Qualifications System to comply with European Union principles regarding qualifications and to ensure international quality assurance.



The process, the end result of which was the foundation of Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), was actually initiated in 1992 under the scope of Education and Employment Project funded by the World Bank and implemented under the coordination of the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR). The draft law on the National Occupational Standards Authority was prepared, when this project was concluded in 2000. The draft text of the law was revised under the scope of Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey Project funded by the European Union and implemented under the coordination of the Ministry of National Education. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security coordinated the process of its submission to the Cabinet, as a result of which a Bill was referred to the Parliament (Turkish Grand National Assembly). Eventually, the Law No. 5544 on Vocational Qualifications Authority was enacted on 21 September 2006.

Vocational Qualifications Authority is an affiliated body of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The Authority is a public body with a private budget and it has administrative and financial autonomy. With its vision to pioneer the process of building qualified human resources by ensuring an uninterrupted link between education and employment, Vocational Qualifications Authority is governed by a tripartite structure involving the main national stakeholders in the education and training system, and it functions in

collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, Council of Higher Education, employers' and workers' organisations, professional organisations as well as other relevant bodies and agencies.

## Our Vision

To be an internationally recognized, efficient and reputable organization pioneering the process of building qualified human resources by ensuring an uninterrupted link between education and employment.

Public Bodies, workers' and employers' organisations and professional organisations are actively involved in VQA governance.

VQA organs are the General Assembly, Executive Board, Presidency and Sector Committees.

The decision-making mechanism is the General Assembly, where professional organisations, workers' and employers' organisations and public bodies and agencies are represented. The executive organ, namely the Executive Board, comprises of six members who are the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of National Education, Council of Higher Education, professional organisations registered as public bodies and Confederations of trade unions for workers and employers. Members of the Executive Board are appointed by the General Assembly for three years. The members of Executive Board elect the Chair. All VQA activities shall be decided by the General Assembly and executed by the Executive Board.

The Chair of the Executive Board is also the President of the Authority.



Organisational structure was built horizontally in VQA departments, namely the department for occupational standards, department for testing and certification, department for international affairs and European Union in addition to the consultancy and auxiliary units, and expertise is the main requirement for seniority.

Sector Committees are responsible for evaluating the draft occupational standards and draft vocational qualifications, providing advice and submitting the standard and qualification documents to the Executive Board so that the draft documents can be endorsed by the Board as national occupational standards and national vocational qualifications. Professional organisations, Confederations of trade unions for workers and employers and public bodies and agencies are represented in Sector Committees.

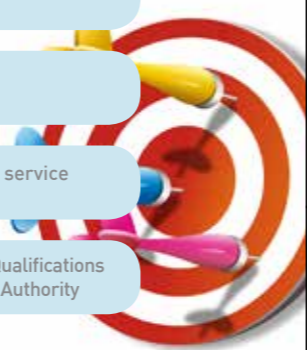
Vocational Qualifications Authority's roles and responsibilities spread a wide area ranging from the development of national occupational standards and national vocational qualifications, building and operating the assessment, evaluation and certification system and the accreditation of education and training providers to the quality assurance of all qualifications concerning vocational and technical education. Development and updating of the Turkish Qualifications Framework, which provides a regulatory framework for the national qualifications system, is also a role assigned to the VQA. The authority complies with the methods indicated in the VQA Strategic Plan with a view to achieve its strategic goals.

## VQA 2011-2015 Strategic Goals

- 1 Build a National Qualifications System
- 2 Facilitate the mobility of people in education and employment
- 3 Build institutional capacity for efficient service provision
- 4 Improve the recognition of the National Qualifications System and the Vocational Qualifications Authority

### Quality Assurance and Transparency

All processes pertaining to the development of national occupational standards and national vocational qualifications, and accreditation of testing, certification and education, which are undertaken by the Vocational Qualifications Authority, as per Law no 5544 on VQA, are documented in line with principles of transparency, accountability and quality assurance while complying with the relevant legislation. VQA monitors these processes. VQA organs responsible for the determination and execution of processes maintain the tripartite structure, which comprises of the state, workers and employers. Such a structure helps to assure the quality of the processes and acceptance by the labour and education and training market.



# TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



Building a national qualifications framework that improves the quality of education and training and strengthens the link between education and employment is one of the key requirements for developing the human resources and increasing the employability of labour force in Turkey. Therefore, VQA has made series of efforts in association with various organisations' representatives, to build the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF), which will be in harmony with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

In this respect, VQA coordinated the development of TQF, which was an outcome of the work undertaken for more than two years in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, Council of Higher Education and other relevant bodies and institutions.

Qualifications awarded in vocational, general and academic education and training programmes including primary, secondary and higher education, as well as those achieved in other learning environments are described in the TQF, the National Qualifications Framework of Turkey, which is designed to be in harmony with the EQF.

TQF is expected to become operational upon approval by the Cabinet and referenced with the European Qualifications Framework by the end of 2013.

Primarily the Vocational Qualifications Authority, Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education and all other relevant bodies should uninterruptedly take part in the cooperation and coordination for the successful implementation of Turkish Qualifications Framework.

Turkish Qualifications Framework objectives are the following:

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





TQF will have several benefits for providers of education and training, learners, workers and employers including the following:

- TQF's integrated overarching structure to accommodate all quality assured qualifications based on learning outcomes will facilitate progression among qualifications, recognition of prior learning and recognition of all individual achievements.
- TQF will provide added value for the labour market achieved through better qualified workers; more employment for learners and individuals and better access to means of learning; quality references for education and training providers and means of national/international referencing.
- Mobility will be supported through international recognition and transparency of qualifications.
- TQF will also provide solid ground for the development of new qualifications to meet the increasingly diversifying needs of the society.

## European Qualifications Framework

European Qualifications Framework for Life-Long Learning

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was adopted by the European Parliament and Council on 23 April 2008 based on the recommendation 2008/C 111/01. It provides a meta-framework to promote transparency, transfer and recognition of qualifications in Europe, and to compare various national qualifications frameworks. The core element of the EQF is a set of eight reference levels describing at each level what the person must know, understand and be able to do.

Each participating country has accepted to reference their national qualifications frameworks with the EQF and comply with the implementation timetable provided in the recommendation. These countries designated a national centre to coordinate the relationship between their national qualifications framework and the EQF. Vocational Qualifications Authority has been assigned with this role in Turkey.



## European Qualifications Framework

- supports life long learning
- facilitates the comparison of various national qualifications frameworks

# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM



## Qualified and Certified Labour Force, Competitive Economy

Various countries' efforts to maintain and improve their competitiveness in a global world are firmly linked with the competence of their labour force. Introduction of reforms not only aimed at formal but also at non-formal vocational and technical education are becoming increasingly significant to help people acquire the skills that are required by current developments in the field of economy and trade.

EU Member States and other developed countries are observed to utilize occupational standards and testing and certification system as significant instruments of establishing a functional link between employment and education; and also to provide vocational qualifications related services through organisations governed by tripartite structures.

**Main role of the VQA is to build and operate a National Qualifications System in line with the European Union.**

Based on such requirements, the National Qualifications System (NQS) was built as a whole set of rules and activities covering authorization, audit, testing and certification required for the preparation and implementation of national occupational standards and vocational qualifications. National Qualifications System is designed to accommodate the development of national occupational standards, preparation of vocational and technical curricula in line with these standards, testing and certification by independent bodies of qualifications achieved by labour force and assurance of national and international recognition for those certificates awarded.

Qualifications based on national or international occupational standards are prepared within the National Qualifications System. Subsequently, testing materials, curricula and certification processes are designed for these qualifications. Qualifications System acts as a fair, transparent and reliable bridge between the labour market and education and training sector.

**National Qualifications System ensures the active involvement of all business representatives in the decision-making process.**

Under the National Qualifications System, audit and verification activities as well as the accreditation process help to assure the quality of assessment and evaluation services provided for national qualifications.







### Successful Partnerships, Sustainable System

The basic rule of success in national qualifications systems is the functional link among workers, employers and the world of education. All roles assigned to the VQA by Law no 5544 are fulfilled with the coordination of relevant social partners, non-governmental organisations and public bodies and organisations. In this context, the following institutions and bodies, which participate in the system design and development, contribute directly to the efforts of harmonizing education and employment. Thus, they enable a sustainable system, which meets the needs of all parties.

- National Occupational Standard Setting Bodies
- National Qualification Developers
- Sector Committees
- Vocational Qualifications Authority
- Authorized Certification Bodies
- Authorized Education Accreditation Bodies
- Accredited Providers of Education
- Providers of Formal and Non-Formal Education and Training
- Workers, Employers, Learners and Trainers

Another important aspect is the recruitment of Vocational Qualifications Certificate holders by the employers. Recruitment of certified labour will not only help to achieve significant improvements in terms of health and safety, but also improve productivity and competitiveness of Turkey.

### Sector Committees

One of the main pillars in the sustainability of National Qualifications System is the Sector Committees, which are authorized to represent the sector since they comprise of representatives from public bodies, workers' and employers' organisations as well as professional organisations. Sector Committees are responsible for checking the validity of the

occupational standards and vocational qualifications for public bodies, workers and employers and prepare advisory notes.

Occupational standards and vocational qualifications are submitted to the Executive Board with accompanying advisory notes by the Sector Committees.

The abovementioned institutions and bodies appoint their own representatives to participate in the Sector Committees. It is essential that representatives in the Sector Committees be appointed from those with the necessary knowledge, experience and competence about the relevant sector and occupations. Sector Committee members are appointed for three years and they may be re-appointed when their term expires. Academics from relevant University departments may be invited to participate in Sector Committees as advisors. Experts or representatives from relevant institutions and organisations other than universities, who are not Sector Committee members but whose expertise is required for the on-going work, may be invited to attend meetings for consultation purposes.

VQA has so far defined 25 sectors. Since the first quarter of 2013, 22 Sector Committees have been actively involved in relevant activities.

For the current list of Sector Committees and representatives see [www.myk.gov.tr](http://www.myk.gov.tr)



**I AM NOT  
LIKE OTHERS  
BECAUSE I AM  
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LABOUR**





# NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS



The first step under the National Qualifications System is the preparation of national occupational standards to meet the needs of labour market. National Occupational Standards are official documents agreed by the business and education, stating what is required in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude and traits in order to perform an occupation successfully. National Occupational Standards provide input to both vocational and technical education and training curricula and to national qualifications. National Occupational Standards:

- are based on job analysis. Active participation, advice and opinion of social partners are essential during the development of national occupational standards.
- clearly state the principal duties and required knowledge, skills and behaviours an individual must have to perform an occupation successfully
- is a reflection of vocational qualification levels and these levels are determined in line with the European Qualifications Framework
- includes the relevant legislation, technical and administrative requirements concerning health, safety and environmental protection
- supports life long learning and self-development and professional progression
- is clear enough to be easily comprehensible by employers, workers, trainees and learners.
- does not contain any implicit or explicit clauses of discrimination.

Occupational standards' template and content are determined by the VQA Executive Board in line with the international practices, and the same template and content shall be employed in the development of all occupational standards. Occupational standards in force are reviewed in line with the demands of the labor market as well as the needs of the business and education world every five years at the latest.

## NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

- ensure the accurate description of occupations
- provide input for vocational and technical curricula
- provide a background for testing and certification
- contribute to the creation of qualified and certified labour force

### Who can prepare Occupational Standards?

Providers of formal and non-formal education and training, public bodies and institutions, professional organisations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and working groups established to formulate occupational standards can prepare occupational standards.

### National Occupational Standard Setting Bodies include the following information:

- Description of the Occupation and its level
- International Classification of the Occupation
- Regulations on Health, Safety and Environment
- Other Legislation concerning the Occupation
- Working Environment and Conditions
- Other Requirements of the Occupation
- Occupational Profile
- Tools, Instruments and Equipment to Use
- Knowledge and Skills
- Attitudes and Behaviour



Authorized bodies prepare National Occupational Standards. To this end, the relevant body must first apply to prepare a national occupational standard. Institutions/organisations or working groups deemed eligible shall be authorized through a protocol for occupational standard preparation. Once they are prepared, it is essential that these occupational standards are made available to relevant parties and the public for consultation. Subsequently, the Sector Committees evaluate these occupational standards and submit eligible ones to the VQA Executive Board. Occupational Standards endorsed by VQA Executive Board shall be published in the Official Gazette and announced as national occupational standards. Once they enter into force, all relevant vocational and technical curricula are adapted to the new national occupational standards within maximum one year.

### Preparation and Entry into Force of National Occupational Standards



There are 416 Occupational Standards in Force\*

There are 676 Occupational Standards Prepared\*

There are 750 Occupational Standards required in Turkey\*

There are 59 Occupational Standard Setting Bodies\*

\*as of June 2013

#### A Standard Setting Bodies

Bodies that are capable of and authorized to represent their respective sectors shall prepare national occupational standards.

#### B Sector Committees

It is responsible for evaluating the draft occupational standards prepared by authorized bodies, providing advice and opinion and submitting the standard to the Executive Board so that they can be endorsed by the Board as national occupational standards.

#### C VQA Executive Board

It authorizes the organisations that wish to prepare occupational standards and endorses occupational standards.



# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



National Qualifications are detailed documents describing the knowledge, skills and competences a person must have together with the required assessment and evaluation criteria. Once the national qualifications are prepared by authorized institutions/organisations from the relevant sector based on national or international standards, they are approved by the Vocational Qualifications Authority and included in the national qualifications framework. While the occupational standards describe the minimum knowledge, skills and competences required for perform the occupation successfully, qualifications define the assessment criteria for such knowledge, skills and competences.

### Who can Prepare National Qualifications?

Providers of formal and non-formal education and training, public bodies and institutions, professional organisations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and working groups established to formulate occupational standards and qualifications can prepare national qualifications.

### Preparation and Entry into Force of National Qualifications

Organisations that wish to prepare national qualifications fill out the "Application Form for National Qualification Preparation" and submit it to the Vocational Qualifications Authority. Eligible organisations sign a protocol, upon which the process is initiated for the preparation of national qualifications.

After developing the draft qualifications, the authorized body shall submit those drafts to the Vocational Qualifications Authority. The draft is reviewed by the Vocational Qualifications Authority and made available to relevant parties and the public for consultation. Draft documents shall be revised based on the outcomes of consultation, and shall, subsequently, be reviewed and evaluated by the

Sector Committees. The Sector Committees shall submit the qualifications to VQA Executive Board. Draft qualifications deemed eligible and endorsed by VQA Executive Board shall be announced as national qualifications and included in the national qualifications framework.

National Qualifications approved by VQA shall be described by the following:

- Title and level of the qualification
- Purpose of and rationale for the qualification
- Related Sector
- Education and experience required by the qualification which must list the format, content and duration
- Occupational standard which was used as the source for qualification development, units/duties of the occupational standard or qualification units
- Learning outcomes required to achieve the qualification
- Assessment and evaluation methods required to test qualification achievement, minimum test materials to be used for assessment and criteria for assessors
- Validity period for the qualification certificate, requirements for renewal, conditions for certificate holder supervision if required.



## ALL SEGMENTS OF THE SOCIETY BENEFIT FROM THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM



**National Qualifications System** contributes to the strengthening of the country's economy and competitiveness by means of reducing unemployment, promoting employment and increasing productivity and competitiveness in the medium and long term. Increasing the employment of the qualified and certified labour force will also assist in improving the quality of life by promoting the delivery of high quality goods and services.

### For employers

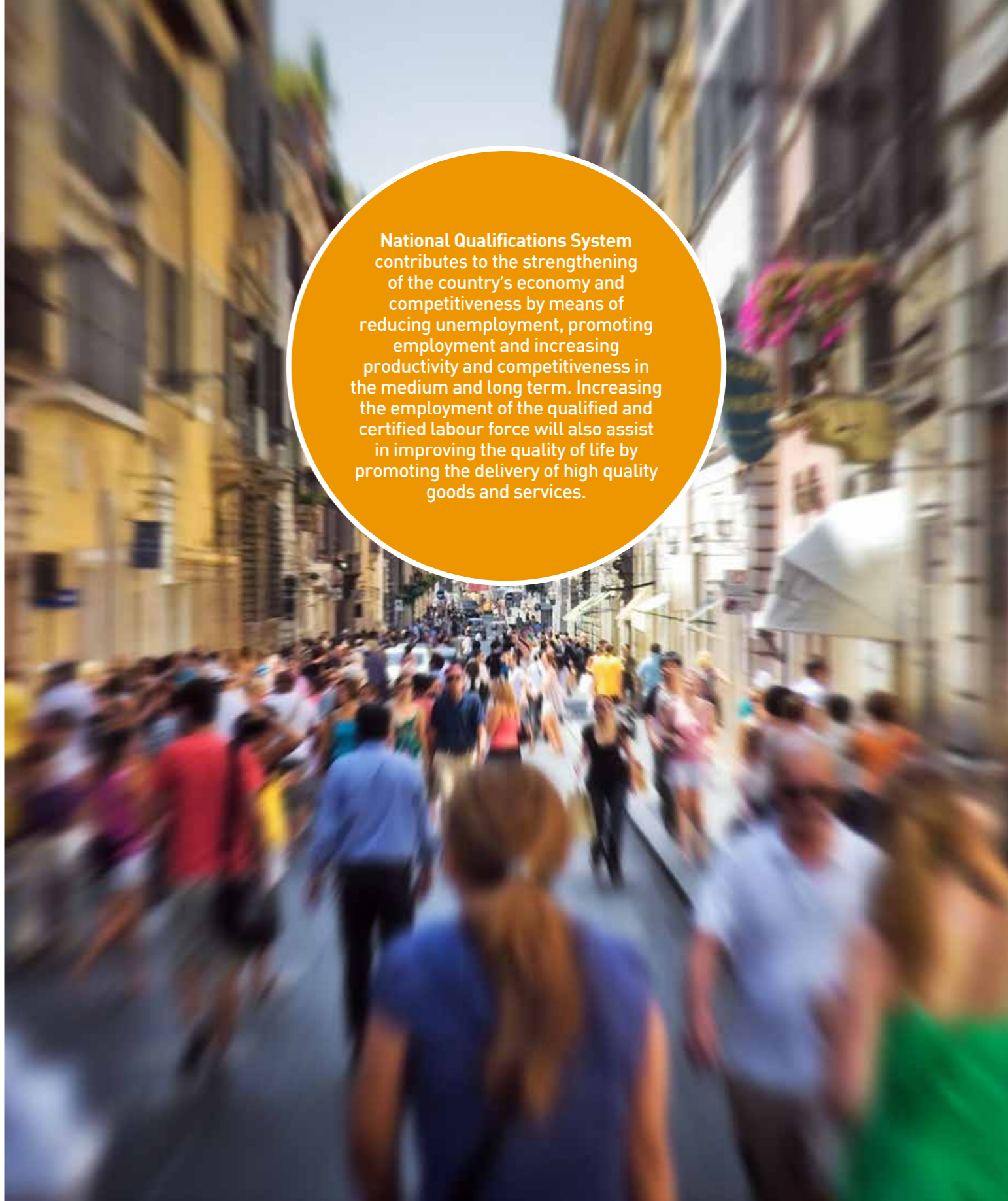
- Individuals can receive reliable and internationally valid vocational education to meet the demands of the labour market and acquire qualification certificates.
- The certificate that is awarded as a result of vocational knowledge and skills tests based on the National Qualifications enables the individual to demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills in applying for a job.
- Since the qualifications enable the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, individuals can use the opportunity to develop their personal experience in various and flexible ways.
- As the vocational progression routes are clear, career mobility is supported.
- Individuals are allowed to learn a new job or change their jobs.

### For individuals

- Employers can have easier access to the qualified and certified labour force whose qualifications they are confident with, and they can also use the incentives.
- It will increase the competitiveness of the employers when they recruit the individuals who are endowed with the knowledge and skills required by the job and who can catch up with the changing circumstances; furthermore, they can avoid wasting time and money through a right planning of human resources.
- Scaling up the employment of qualified labour force will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the goods and services delivered to the customers, which will in turn increase the competitiveness of the employers.

### For trainers

- It is easier to design the education programs that provide the knowledge and skills which should be acquired by the labour force and which are needed in the labour market.
- The vocational education and training curriculum can be kept up-to-date thanks to the national occupational standards.
- It will be possible to educate the individuals in accordance with the occupational standards which are widely accepted and which can satisfy the current needs of the labour market.
- Strong bridges established between education and labour market will increase the contributions education can provide to the labour market, and its value.





# INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION



There are two possible routes that an individual can take in order to acquire the Vocational Qualification Certificates awarded by the VQA: [1] To pass the tests organized by the awarding bodies authorized by the VQA or [2] To successfully complete an education program accredited by the VQA.

VQA Certificate shall be awarded to an individual who successfully completes and graduates from an education program accredited by the bodies authorized by the VQA in harmony with the regulations to be enforced.

On the other hand, the awarding bodies that are authorized by the VQA shall enable the certification of an individual's vocational knowledge and skills irrespective of her/his education background or work experience. Amongst the applicants for certification, the knowledge and skills of those individuals who are deemed eligible shall be evaluated and assessed according to the criteria described in the relevant national qualification and VQA Certificate shall be awarded to the successful applicants. VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates are reliable and recognized in the national and international labour markets.

**VQA Certificates allow individuals to prove their knowledge and skills regardless of how they acquired their competences.**

### Can an individual be awarded with qualification certificates for several areas?

National Qualifications System allows individuals to acquire qualification certificates for several areas. Career mobility is promoted in countries where life-long learning and continuous education are supported. Individuals may use the possibility to obtain the certificates for various qualifications and levels according to the new qualifications which they want to acquire whenever they are not satisfied with their current jobs they work with their existing certificates.

### For which occupations is the VQA Certificate Awarded?

Except for physicians, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, veterinarians, engineers and architects as well as occupations that require minimum bachelor's degree and entrance conditions of which are regulated in laws; every occupation falls within the scope of the Vocational Qualifications Authority Law. Please visit [www.myk.gov.tr](http://www.myk.gov.tr) for the updated list of the occupations that are awarded with certificates.

### How can the Vocational Qualification Certificates be Compared at International Level?

One of the most important goals of the Vocational Qualifications Authority is to enable the Turkish labour force to have the competitive qualities and mobility. To this end, the national qualifications framework is developed in harmony with the European Qualifications Framework and the quality of the certification processes is assured by the Vocational Qualifications Authority through quality assurance systems implemented in compliance with the international norms and standards.

### APPROVAL PROCESS

Application by the Individual to the Authorized Awarding Body



Approval of the Application



Testing and Assessment



Certification of Successful Candidates



## Testing and Certification System

Competences of individuals are evaluated and assessed by the independent bodies authorized by the Vocational Qualifications Authority in accordance with the national occupational standards and national qualifications. Knowledge, skills and competences of individuals are evaluated and certified irrespective of where and how they have been acquired and thus an opportunity is provided to the individuals who have developed their vocational knowledge by work experience rather than education and training to prove their competences. An individual who is willing to obtain a certificate according to the national qualifications can apply for tests organized by the authorized awarding bodies. The Vocational Qualifications Authority has been undertaking activities in order to scale up the transparent and quality assured certification system and the necessary arrangements are implemented in cooperation with the stakeholders. Recognition of the certificates and especially the competences expressed by the certificates for the employers provide an advantage to the certificate holders to find a job / stay at job.

## Authorization for Testing and Certification

Testing and certification activities are carried out by the awarding bodies that are authorized by the Vocational Qualifications Authority. These bodies shall have to be accredited with the TS EN ISO/ IEC 17024 standard by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) or by the accreditation bodies which have concluded multilateral recognition agreement under the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) in compliance, and satisfy the authorization criteria set by the Vocational Qualifications Authority.

The awarding bodies that are authorized by the Vocational Qualifications Authority shall fulfil testing and certification procedures according to the relevant national qualifications. The bodies shall sign protocols with the VQA for the national qualifications for which they are willing to perform the testing and certification activities and they shall apply for accreditation based on the concerned protocols. The accredited bodies shall be inspected by the VQA and contracts will be signed with the ones who are deemed eligible.



## WHAT IS THE STANDARD TS EN ISO/IEC 17024 ?

The standard ISO/IEC 17024 is the conformity assessment standard which sets the internationally accepted quality assurance principles for a body certifying persons against specific requirements and for its accreditation by the authorized accreditation bodies and organizations. This standard which was developed by the International Standardization Organization is widely used worldwide for the accreditation of the bodies certifying persons. The qualification certificates which are awarded by the awarding bodies accredited according to this standard shall be valid worldwide. The accreditation activities of the conformity assessment bodies in our country are carried out by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK). TURKAK applies the TS EN ISO/IEC 17024 version which was approved by the Turkish Standards Institute as the Turkish Standard corresponding to the ISO/IEC standard.

## Test Materials

The materials to be used in tests that will be held for certification purpose shall have to be prepared in compliance with the national qualifications. The tests shall be comprised of both theoretical part and performance-based part. The form of the test to be organized is elaborated in the national qualifications. It is essential to develop the tests mainly based on practice depending on the nature of the job.

The following test materials which are indicated in the national vocational qualifications shall be used in the evaluation and assessment tests:

- Theoretical questions and answers
- Performance-based questions and assessment guide
- Oral test questions and answers
- Project preparation questions and assessment key
- Software and hardware practical questions and assessment guide
- Case analysis questions and solutions
- Calculation questions and solutions

The answer-solution forms to be used by the candidates in the tests; assessment forms; check-lists; scoring guides; figures, graphs, charts, pictures, images, voice records; workplace practical assessment forms and guides etc.



## Accredited Education

Accreditation of education providers will ensure and certify that the theoretical and practical education delivered through the education programs of the education and training institutions and organizations can provide the knowledge skills and competence required by the relevant National Qualification. Accreditation indicates that the education programs delivered by the education providers satisfy certain performance standards (quality, efficiency, effectiveness etc) at national and/or international level. In this way, those who request accreditation and the public can be assured about the reliability and recognition of the education program. Accreditation system guarantees that the accredited programs shall satisfy the predetermined standards. Accreditation is instrumental in improving the quality of education, transparency and accountability.

Accreditation is a continuous process based on internal and external assessments. It allows the self-assessment of the education providers against the performance criteria and also external assessment by the authorized accreditation bodies.

### Education Accreditation Process

The education and training providers who are willing to certify the quality of education they provide and award the Vocational Qualification Certificates to their graduates shall have to be deemed eligible for this purpose by the education accreditation bodies authorized by the VQA. The institutions/ organizations that apply to become an authorized education accreditation body shall be authorized as the Authorized Education Accreditation Body (AEAB) to carry out the education accreditation activities on behalf of the VQA if they satisfy the criteria set by the VQA.

### Objectives of Education Accreditation

- To improve the quality of the vocational education and training, and achieve the quality assurance by continuous development based on a systematic approach;
- To assure the students who are served by the education providers as well as all stakeholders that the quality of education delivered satisfies certain standards;
- To enable the graduates to certify their knowledge, skills and competences in a reliable way.

### Advantages of Accredited Education

- Education programs and all process influencing education satisfy the needs of the labour force;
- Those who receive education can be subject to transparent evaluation and assessment and successful candidates are awarded with the recognized and reliable certificates;
- Mobility is supported and transfer between the education providers and occupations is facilitated.
- Accreditation strengthens the sense of trust of the learners, parents, teachers and employers as well as other stakeholders in the education providers;
- Education providers are encouraged to set policies and improve the quality of the services they deliver by developing the management systems.







# MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



The Directive no 2005/36/EC on the mutual recognition of the vocational qualifications was ratified by the European Parliament and the Council on 7th of September 2005 in order to eliminate the barriers before the free movement of persons and services between the EU Member States. In general terms, this Directive enables persons who acquired vocational qualifications in a member state to perform their occupations in another member state, being subject to the same rights exercised by the citizens of that member state.

The Directive makes a distinction between the regulated occupations and unregulated occupations while it allows free service delivery to the European citizens for the unregulated occupations. On the other hand, the vocational qualification of the person shall have to be recognized in order to determine the conformity of the regulated occupations with the occupational criteria set by the host state in the legal documents (such as laws or regulations). Recognition can be performed in three ways:

- **Harmonization of minimum education requirements (Passive automatic recognition):** Provided that the diploma of the person the name of the institution awarding the diploma is indicated in the list annexed to the Directive and the concerned diploma is acquired on the time limits indicated in the same lists for the professions of physicians, nurses, midwives, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists and architects; the vocational qualifications of such person shall be automatically recognized.
- **Recognition of vocational experience (Active automatic recognition):** Provided that particularly craftsmen and artisans prove that they performed an occupation for a certain time indicated in the sector lists annexed to the Directive in their home country or in another EU country; the vocational experience of such persons shall be automatically recognized.
- **General system:** All definitions outside the abovementioned categories shall be covered by the general system category. Persons shall apply and submit their qualifications indicating the vocational knowledge and skills to the body which will recognize them and that body shall take a positive or negative decision on the recognition of the qualifications.

Recognition procedures are usually performed by the institutions like professional chambers identified in the legislation of the concerned country in harmony with its own system or public institutions for certain fields such as healthcare occupations.

As stated in the 3rd Chapter titled "Right of establishment and freedom to provide services" in the National Programme of Turkey for the Adoption of the EU Acquis Communautaire; the law and secondary legislation for the mutual recognition of the vocational qualifications will be drafted jointly by the relevant institutions and organizations under the coordination of the VQA and the required procedures and principles will be regulated.

The 3rd Chapter of the National Programme of Turkey sets forth that legislation be harmonized with the Acquis no 2005/36/EC; an inventory of the occupations regulated at national level be developed; a work plan be prepared for the occupations which are not regulated at national level; and a comprehensive strategy be developed to identify such qualifications of occupations in consultation with all relevant institutions for the purpose of the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications. Within this context, the activities in line with the directive no 2005/36/EC are carried out under the coordination of the Vocational Qualifications Authority with assistance of the Prime Ministry and the Ministry for European Union Affairs.





# EUROPASS

## A Gate to Education and Employment in Europe

Europass is a folder of documents that provides transparency in the competences and qualifications in order to help understanding clearly and easily the competences and qualifications of the individuals who are willing to work or receive education in the EU countries (EU, EFTA/EEA member states and candidate countries). Enabling the individuals to prove the skills and qualifications they acquired and education programs they completed, Europass was created pursuant to the decision of the European Parliament and of the Council dated 15 December 2004 for the single transparency framework.

National Europass Centre of each country coordinates all activities related to the Europass documents in that country. The Vocational Qualifications Authority was assigned as the National Europass Centre of Turkey on 28th of July 2008. The National Europass Centre is the first contact point for the persons who would like to use or receive further information about Europass. Within this framework, the VQA launched the "Supporting the National Europass Centre and Raising Awareness" project which is co-financed by the European Commission. This project has been renamed as "Evliya Çelebi Europass 2" as of 2013. The main task of the centre is to coordinate the management of the Europass documents, recognize Europass and documents, inform the information and guidance centres, make available the Europass documents in hard copies and electronic copies and represent our country in the European Network of National Europass Centres.



VQA is the National Europass Centre of Turkey

### Five documents to render skills and qualifications more clear and easily understandable in Europe

<b>Europass CV (Resume)</b> Common resume template containing information about skills, experience, educational background, work experience and designed for applications for employment or education.	<b>Europass Diploma Supplement</b> This document describes the knowledge and skills acquired by persons holding higher education degrees.	<b>Europass Mobility</b> This document records the knowledge and skills acquired by persons in a European country through education, working or volunteer service.	<b>Europass Certificate Supplement</b> This document describes knowledge and skills acquired by persons holding vocational education certificates.	<b>Europass Language Passport</b> This is a self-assessment tool for language skills and qualifications.
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EUROPASS CV

EUROPEAN SKILLS PASSPORT

Europass CV and European Skills Passport can also be prepared online on <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>. Access to Europass CV and Language Passport is free and such documents are completed by the person himself/herself. Europass Mobility, Certificate Supplement and Diploma Supplement are issued by relevant authorities.



# UYEP



## Strengthening the Vocational Qualifications Authority and the National Qualifications System in Turkey Project (UYEP)



“Strengthening the Vocational Qualifications Authority and the National Qualifications System in Turkey (UYEP)” Project is financed within the framework of the 2007 program of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Financial Assistance (IPA) of European Union. The Overall Objective of the Project is to ensure the provision of formal and non-formal vocational and technical education and training according to labour market needs, supporting life-long learning, strengthening the relation between education and employment, and facilitate harmonization with European Qualifications Framework.

The specific objective is to support the VQA and Occupational Standards Development, Vocational Knowledge and Skills Testing and Certification Centres (VOC-TEST) to establish and operate an efficient and sustainable National Qualifications System based on agreed occupational standards with an appropriate system for assessment in line with European Qualifications Framework.

The Project has three main outcomes as follows:

- a sustainable and effectively functioning National Qualifications System and ensuring its functioning in selected priority sectors,
- the capacity of the VQA, and VOC-TEST Centres that will offer sustainable and coordinated service to all stakeholders, is increased
- The knowledge and awareness levels of all stakeholders (actors from public and private sectors, employee and employer organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations) in relation to National Qualifications System are increased and their ownership for the system ensured.

### TARGET GROUPS OF THE PROJECT

- VQA personel
- Members of VQA Sector Committees
- Occupational standards setting bodies, bodies preparing/developing qualifications and bodies authorized to undertake testing and certification
- All relevant institutions and organizations related to the development, understanding and taking ownership of the National Qualifications System including the NQF Feedback Forum
- Grant Beneficiaries

3 main components were designed under UYEP in order to achieve the main outcomes focusing on the target groups:

- **Service Component** (Technical Assistance Project)
- **Supply Component**
- **Grant Component** (Grant Scheme for VOC-TEST Centres)

#### Service Component (Technical Assistance)

The main elements of the technical assistance project are categorized under three main result areas:

- National Qualifications Framework
- Capacity Building
- Awareness Raising



The following key areas are supported by the technical assistance project designed under three main components:

- Building the expertise and capacity to develop and implement the NQF;
- Building the institutional capacity of the VQA fulfil its roles and responsibilities effectively;
- Building the capacity of the service providers, occupational standards setting bodies and Sector Committees; develop, verify and approve new occupational standards and qualifications;
- Building the capacity of VQA and relevant authorities/bodies to implement EU Directive 2005/36/EC on mutual recognition of qualifications;
- Building the capacity of grant scheme beneficiaries; and
- Raising the awareness about VQA and National Qualifications System

The Service Component of UYEP Project, which was launched by a kick-off meeting on 4th of October 2010, was completed as of 24th of June 2013. The Technical Assistance Project was implemented by a consortium in the leadership of WYG Turkey. Four key experts and many international and local short-term experts and administrative staff were employed in the project.

### Supply Component

The supply component designed to strengthen the infrastructure of the VQA was launched in September 2009 and hardware needs were satisfied. In parallel to meeting the equipment needs, software development activities were initiated in 2010 and the service delivery capacity of the VQA was built with the assistance of the supply component.

### Grant Component (Grant Scheme for Voc-Test Centres)

Within the scope of the Grant Scheme for Voc-Test Centres, a grant scheme with a budget of approximately 6.6 million Euro was implemented to establish the testing and certification centres. The testing and certification centres are significant elements of the quality system for new qualifications. These centres are assigned with the duty to evaluate, assess and certify the candidates, ask new qualifications from candidates and also develop qualifications and ensure quality assurance.

Grant Scheme for Voc-Test Centres aimed to achieve the project objectives by means of establishing and/or developing and operating VOC-TEST Centres in 11 priority sectors comprised of the automotive, tourism, construction, energy, metal industry, plastic and chemistry industry, information and communication technologies, printing and publication, machinery design and manufacturing and textile, ready wear and leather products in order to establish an effective and sustainable National Qualifications System by creating an appropriate assessment, evaluation and certification system in line with the European Qualifications Framework.



Projects of 26 organizations which were deemed eligible for assistance and located in Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Istanbul and Karabük were implemented under the Grant Scheme for Voc-Test Centres. The duration of the projects ranged from 18 to 24 months.



In the first half of 2013, Construction Industry Employers' Association of Turkey (INTES), Turkish Employers' of Metal Industries (MESS), Union of Natural Gas Distribution Companies (GAZBİR), TÜBİDER Information Industry Association, Association of Heat, Water, Sound and Fire Insulation Industry (İZODER) and Confederation of Hak-İş Unions were accredited and they started operating their testing and certification centres.

In short, VQA and UYEP Grant Scheme supported the establishment and development of the Vocational Standards Development, Vocational Knowledge and Skills Testing and Certification Centres. 26 Grant Beneficiaries operating in 11 priority sectors were financed by the grant scheme.



Grant Beneficiary – Name of the Project
Association of Mediterranean Tourist Hoteliers and Operators' Union (AKTOB) 4 Steps to National Tourism - Accommodation Qualifications Framework (INTAQF)
Sequa GmbH VOC-TEST Centers in Vehicle Repair Subsector Meet International Standards
TÜBİDER Information Sector Association Establishment of VOC-TEST Center in the 8.4 Numbered Sub-Sector of the IT Technology (IT)
Heat, Water, Sound and Fire Insulation Association (Izoder) Qualification Based Certification in Insulation Sector
Employers Union of Turkish Construction Industrialists (INTES) Professional Competence - Examination and Documentation
Turkish Textile Employers' Association (TTSİS) Textile Sector, Vocational Qualifications Examination and Certification Center Establishment
Turkish Petroleum, Chemical and Rubber Workers' Union (KİPLAS) Establishing a VOC-TEST Center for the Chemicals Sector
Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries (MESS) Automotive Industry Vocational Qualification Testing and Certification Center
Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (İTO) ITOTEST Press and Publication Personnel Certification Center Project
Bursa Craftsman and Tradesman Chambers' Union (BESOB) Competency Assures Efficiency
Ankara Sanayi Odası (ASO) / Ankara Chamber of Industry (ASO) Establishment of Ankara Chamber of Industry Vocational Test and Certification Center /METES
Natural Gas Distribution Companies Association of Turkey Establishment Of Examination and Certification Center for Natural Gas Sector Professions (GAZMER)
Employers Association for Private Training Providers (TEKİS) New Vision and Expansion Project for The Private Training
Union of Public Works, Construction, Road, Infrastructure, Title Deed and Land Survey Public Sector Employees (Bayındır Memur-Sen) VOC-Test Center for Architecture Engineering And Technician Activities
Istanbul Leather and Leather Products Exporters' Union (İDMİB) Solution Partnership for the Employment of Qualified and Certified Workforce Project
Istanbul Ready Wear and Apparel Exporters' Union (İHKİB) Value-Added and Employment-Oriented Certified Workforce Campaign - KIBIS PROJECT
Port Operators Association of Turkey (TÜRKLİM) Establishing a Model National Qualifications and Personnel Certifications Center Project
Ankara Chamber of Industry (2nd and 3rd Organized Industrial Zone) (ASO 2. ve 3. OSB) Establishment of Ankara Chamber of Industry 2nd and 3rd Organized Industrial Zone(OIZ) Vocational Test Center
HAK-İŞ Trade Union Confederation (HAK-İŞ) Establishing a VOC-TEST Center for the Metal Sector of Karabük with the Participation of Partners
Ankara Chamber of Industry (1st Organized Industrial Zone) (ASO 1. OSB) Establishment of Ankara Chamber of Industry 1st Organized Industrial Zone (OIZ) Vocational Test Center
Foundation for Development of TSR and TSR Personnel Assistance and Solidarity (TCDD Vakfi) Establishing NQS and VOC-TEST Center in Railway Transportation
Turkish Plastics Industry Association (PAGEV) The Employees with Professional Competences in the Plastic Sector
Union of Radio and Television Broadcasters (RATEM) Project of Establishing Technical Education Assessment Centers in Numerical Broadcasting
Alanya Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ALTSO) ALTSO VOC-Test Centre: Standards at Work, Quality in Business
Machine Tools Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TİAD) Developing and Operating a Machine Tools VOC-TEST Center
Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ATSÖ) Key to Employment: ACCI Vocational Testing and Certification Center