



**EU Twinning Project “Further support to the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework”
MK IPA 17 SO 01 21**

Newsletter September 2023

September update - Twinning Project “Further support to the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework” funded by the EU MK IPA 17 SO 01 21

As the Twinning project approached its final quarter, the dedication and commitment that marked its initiation continued to drive its implementation in September. During this period, the fourth study visit, conducted under Component 2, aimed at strengthening the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in alignment with the Quality Assurance (QA) framework was performed. The study visit, which unfolded in Lithuania from September 11 to 15, 2023, featured a delegation from North Macedonia. This delegation included four representatives from various stakeholders engaged in the project, such as the Ministry of Education and Science (specifically the Department for International Cooperation and the Department for European Affairs), the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Center.

The primary focus of this study visit was the management and oversight of the NQF, with the goal of sharing practical insights in this area. Consequently, the delegation embarked on a series of visits to notable institutions, including the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (KPMPC), ISM University of Management and Economics, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the National Agency for Education (NSA), Alytus Professional Training Centre, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Vilnius University (VU), and the Lithuanian Parliament.

The study visit's program commenced with discussions related to the development of level 5 qualifications and the progress and challenges associated with dual education, with KPMPC, as a key player in NQF management, serving as an ideal venue for this discourse. Subsequently, the delegation visited ISM University of Management and Economics, where they gained insights into the university's program portfolio and the role of NQF in shaping study programs. The group also expressed interest in matters concerning the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad.

At the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the BC delegation was graciously received by the Vice-Minister and MS project leader, Ms. Agnė Kudarauskiėnė. She presented the latest developments in the vocational and higher education sectors, emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning. A visit to the National Agency for Education (NSA) followed, providing an overview of NSA's structure, functions, and activities, along with insights into the comprehensive computerisation of the education system. Additionally, the participants had the opportunity to explore the training program portfolio of the Alytus Professional Training Centre, gaining valuable insights into the development of dual vocational training schemes in both companies and the school sectorial training centre.

The delegation's visit to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) was particularly enriching, as it fostered discussions on documentation and information management for enhanced quality assurance and qualification recognition. The study visit then shifted its focus to quality assurance practices at Vilnius University (VU), featuring a guided tour of the historic campus and library, which left a positive impression on the delegation. The program concluded with a visit to the Lithuanian Parliament, where



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representatives from the Committee on Education and Science elaborated on their cooperation with stakeholders, including academia, student representatives, government bodies, professional associations, labor market representatives, and trade unions.



Photos: Meetings hosted by the Lithuanian Parliament and the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC)



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Photos: Discussions at the National Agency for Education (NSA) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

In the latter part of September the eighth Steering Committee Meeting within the framework of the Twinning project was conducted. As the project neared its final stages of implementation, this gathering served as a platform for the comprehensive evaluation of the project's advancements during the preceding quarter and a deliberation of any outstanding matters that require support from the project. Ms. Biljana Kazandjiska, the State Secretary, extended a cordial welcome and underscored the project's profound significance in achieving the full operationalization of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), fostering the development of the national educational system, and advancing the country's European Union integration efforts.

During the meeting, Ms. Jolita Butkienė, the Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA), presented the 7th Quarterly report, offering an overview of the activities that were successfully executed and the milestones achieved.



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Throughout the quarter in question, a total of 196 representatives from various institutions and bodies in North Macedonia participated in the project activities, hailing from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), higher education institutions (HEIs), vocational education and training (VET) organizations, and other pertinent entities. Notably, 18 experts from the Member State were enlisted to lead diverse initiatives, which culminated in the successful execution of 18 project events, including workshops, awareness-raising events, and peer-learning activities/training sessions. The Member State experts collectively devoted a total of 85 days to deliver comprehensive analyses and recommendations.

In anticipation of the project's conclusion, the final project planning period outlines 29 missions to be carried out by experts from the Member State, distributed across seven project activities. Additionally, a closing event will be organized to commemorate the successful culmination of the project. The Steering Committee Meeting concluded with the formal approval of the 7th Quarterly Report and the subsequent Rolling Plan.



Photo: 8th Project Steering Committee Meeting held on September, 19

In the final week of September, Mission 4.1.7 was conducted within the framework of Component 4, addressing the enhancement of interconnection and compatibility of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) digital register at both national and European Union levels. This mission was performed in Skopje from September 25 to 29, 2023. Two experts from Slovenia, Urška Marentič and Nejc Jensterle, delivered training sessions aimed at equipping staff members with the requisite knowledge and skills for utilizing and maintaining the NQF digital register, both at a strategic and operational level, in alignment with the relevant approaches employed in European Union Member States.

The workshops organized by the experts included the participation of representatives from the NQF Unit within the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as representatives from the NQF Board and sectorial committees. These initiatives were designed to empower NQF register staff with comprehensive knowledge and practical competencies related to understanding the role of the NQF register in enhancing



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transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications. Participants gained insights into the practical use and maintenance of the NQF register, as well as proficiency in describing qualifications and effectively managing other functionalities of the NQF register.

As a result of this mission, two webinars and guidelines for the utilisation and maintenance of the NQF digital register were developed.



Photo: Workshop on the use and maintaining of NQF digital register

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