



EUROPEAN
COAST GUARD FUNCTIONS
TRAINING NETWORK

ECGFA NET PROJECT

SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR COAST GUARD FUNCTIONS

A tool for cooperation



co-funded by
the European Union



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TRAINING NETWORK



ECGFA Net Project

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List of acronyms

- CGF:** Coast Guard Functions
- CIMEA:** Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence
- DG MARE:** Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
- EASME:** European Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises
- ECGFF:** European Coast Guard Functions Forum
- ECGFA Net:** European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network
- ECVET:** European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
- EFCA:** European Fisheries Control Agency
- ECTS:** European Credit Transfer System
- EHEA:** European Higher Education Area
- EMSA:** European Maritime Safety Agency
- EMFF:** European Maritime Fisheries Fund
- EQF:** European Qualification Framework
- EU:** European Union
- EUMSS:** European Union Maritime Security Strategy
- FRA:** Fundamental Rights Agency
- FRONTEX:** European Coast Guard and Border Agency
- ILO:** International Labour Organisation
- IMO:** International Maritime Organisation
- NARIC:** National Academic Recognition Information Centres
- NQF:** National Qualifications Framework
- QA:** Quality Assurance
- QF:** Qualifications Framework
- SASEMAR:** Spanish Maritime Safety and Rescue Agency
- SQF:** Sectoral Qualifications Framework
- SQFCGF:** Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions
- VET:** Vocational Education and Training
- WP4:** Work Package 4



Foreword

In recent years we have witnessed an impressive increase in the demand for cooperation between Organisations performing Coast Guard Functions.

Operational cooperation, though, necessarily requires adequate preparation and training based on a shared, common understanding of Coast Guard Functions.

In a process that has lasted four and a half years, the ECGFA Net Project has developed a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions (SQFCGF), strongly supported by the European Coast Guard Functions Forum and by the European Commission that has co-financed the entire project.

The SQFCGF presented here describes, from the perspective of operational personnel, the learning needed in order to perform tasks related to all ten Coast Guard Functions.

The development process of the framework also enabled better definitions of the content of the Coast Guard Functions.

Training is a key for cooperation, training cooperation is the key for interoperability within Coast Guard Functions.



Summary

The development of a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions (SQFCGF) is part of the EU project called "European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network – ECGFA Net", aimed at establishing a network among training centres in the field of Coast Guard Functions.

Launched in 2015 within the European Coast Guard Functions Forum, **ECGFA Net has been co-financed by the European Commission - DG MARE** and has been implemented through three different phases to develop four Work Packages (WP) regarding respectively the creation of a training network (WP1 and WP2); the implementation of staff exchange program and training portal (WP3) and the development of a SQFCGF (WP4).

Project Partners: Finnish Border Guard (Project leader – WP1 and WP2 coordinator); Spanish Maritime Safety and Rescue Agency - SASEMAR (WP3 coordinator – Exchange Programme); Italian Coast Guard (WP4 coordinator – SQF); German Federal Police; Hellenic Coast Guard; Portuguese National Republican Guard; Portuguese National Maritime Authority; Portuguese Navy; Spanish Civil Guard; Spanish Customs; UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency.

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework Working Group (SQFWG), led by the Italian Coast Guard, was composed of members from the Finnish Border Guard; Hellenic Coast Guard; SASEMAR; Spanish Customs; Portuguese National Republican Guard; UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency. The SQF WG has been supported by the three EU Agencies with remits in the maritime domain: European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).



1. Background

1.1 On the EU policies

The '**Blue Paper**' on EU Integrated Maritime Policy adopted by the European Commission in October 2007 promotes enhanced cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation between all actors involved in maritime activities¹.

The **European Maritime Security Strategy** adopted by the Council of Ministers in June 2014 based on a proposal put forward by the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in March 2014, foresees the need for deeper cooperation between the European Coast Guard Functions in many areas, including education and training.

The European Union and its Member States have been developing the future policy on an integrated and cooperative framework including the wide spectrum of Coast Guard Functions. As one single authority cannot handle increasing information flows and manage the needs for multiple actions at sea, sectors need to work closer together in order to make maritime functions and activities more coherent and cost efficient. Such cooperation will improve co-ordination, maritime governance and a wider co-use of distributed, multiple Coast Guard Functions systems.

In this context, the need to develop more aligned actions in the educational and training domain of the different Coast Guard Functions is also apparent, in order to facilitate a shared European Coast Guard approach.

Such a cross-sectoral approach directly involving educational and training fields would increase competence-based capability building and the subsequent effectiveness and efficiency of operations at sea. In other words, the intention is to achieve more with less and to fully exploit the potential of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy.

The current Coast Guard training systems are custom made for national professional purposes and needs, but many do not conform with the principles derived from the **Bologna and Copenhagen processes**, contrary to national and European agreements.

The European Commission adopts the role to support the Bologna process in order to assist Member States in their efforts to modernise their higher education systems in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, which also encompasses reinforced cooperation in vocational education and training agreed within the Copenhagen Process. Central to these processes is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which is a reference framework that enables the comparison of all forms of learning, including vocational training, across the EU. Implementation of Bologna, Copenhagen and EQF principles in training facilitates comparability and mobility, and therefore interoperability across the EU.

¹ COM (2007) 575 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0575&from=EN>

To this purpose, the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (**DG MARE**) of the European Commission launched, in November 2014, a Grant agreement for an action to establish a **European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network** and to develop a **Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions**.

1.2 On the European Coast Guard Functions Forum

In 2009, a **European Coast Guard Functions Forum** (ECGFF), co-funded by the EU, was launched in order to promote dialogue on maritime issues of common interest across borders and sectors, both civilian and military.

ECGFF is a non-binding, voluntary, independent and non-political platform gathering Coast Guard Functions Organisations of the EU maritime Member States and Schengen Associated Countries, the European Commission and the EU Agencies with related mandate in Coast Guard Functions, notably EFCA, EMSA and Frontex.

Following the recommendations set forth in the European Maritime Security Strategy, the ECGFF promotes deeper cooperation between the Coast Guard Functions in many areas, including education and training.

The ECGFF has played a fundamental role in promoting ECGFA Net project, the Training Network and the SQFCGF. Notably the Finnish Chairmanship in 2015 took the leadership of the initiative; the UK Chairmanship 2016, the Portuguese Chairmanship 2017 and the German Chairmanship 2018 supported the project and its dissemination. The Italian Chairmanship 2019 addressed ECGFA Net project and its SQFCGF as core issue of the chairmanship annual program and promoted stakeholder consultation and dissemination activities.

1.3 On the ECGFA NET project

The roots of the ECGFA Net project stem from two important policy documents on EU's maritime policy and development of Coast Guard Functions cooperation: *EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan*² and *the Feasibility Study on Coast Guard Functions Cooperation*³. Both call for the improvement of training cooperation, harmonisation of training and networking of relevant actors. The need for improved coordination originates from a situation identified on the *Feasibility Study* that pointed out that the responsibility for carrying out Coast Guard Functions across Europe is distributed among 316 national public authorities of maritime EU Member States, and arrangements vary widely among the Member States, with a mix of civilian and military authorities often involved.⁴

The proposal to establish a **European Coast Guard Functions Training Network** was encouraged since 2014 by a voluntary association of national Organisations carrying out Coast Guard Functions of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum.

² European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) - Action Plan, 17002/14, Brussels, 16 December 2014

³ Final Report - Study on the feasibility of improved cooperation between bodies carrying out European Coast Guard Functions" by ICF International in association with REGS4SHIPS – undertaken for DG-MOVE, June 2014, <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/modes/maritime/studies/doc/2014-06-icf-coastguard.pdf>

⁴ ibidem

The European Commission welcomed the initiative and, at the end of 2014, the grant “European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network for European Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guarding” was launched by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) on behalf of DG MARE.⁵

The grant was aimed at creating a network of academies and centres delivering training in Coast Guard Functions in the framework of the ECGFF, for strengthening European collaboration in this field and ultimately facilitating the interoperability and effectiveness amongst different organisations carrying out Coast Guard Functions.

The grant was assigned to the Finnish Border Guard as leader of the overall action and other organisations with Coast Guard Functions of the ECGFF volunteered as project partners.⁶

The main goals of the Project were to:

- support the establishment of a **European Coast Guard Functions Training Network** that would strengthen cooperation and mobility among CGF Authorities;
- increase **trainees/experts/staff exchange** between of CGF Authorities;
- create a **Training Portal** to support the ECGF Training Network;
- develop a voluntary **Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions**.

For the achievement of the abovementioned goals, four different Work Packages were identified and the development of the SQFCGF was the object of Work Package 4 (WP4), under the coordination of the Italian Coast Guard.

Together with the progress of the ECGFA Net, the development of the SQFCGF has followed three different phases:

- ECGFA Net phase I (01/2015 - 02/2016), when the document “**Basic Elements, Key Recommendations and Methodology for the development of the SQFCGF**” was issued;⁷
- ECGFA Net phase II (10/2016–12/2017), when a **first draft of the SQFCGF** was developed⁸;
- ECGFA Net phase III (06/2018 – 08-2019), when the **final version of SQFCGF** was finalized and adopted.

The SQFCGF covers all the wide spectrum of recognised Coast Guard Functions, with the exception of Function no. 5 “Maritime Border Control”, which has already been covered by the SQF for Border Guarding developed by Frontex.⁹

This document is intended to describe the process that led, step by step, to the development of the SQFCGF and to present the final outcomes of the WP4.

⁵ EASME/EMFF/2014/1.2.1.1/Sl2.702063

⁶ for further details on the project, see <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu>

⁷ <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu/lang/en/pages/30/page/5>

⁸ <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu/lang/en/pages/30/page/2>

⁹ List of 11 Coast Guard Functions is in para 2



2. The challenge to develop a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions

Education and training systems in the field of Coast Guard Functions of EU maritime Member States are different and reflect national needs and traditions. Differences between them could make it difficult to understand what personnel with a qualification issued by another Country know and are able to do in a working environment.

Moreover, literature and guidelines on qualifications framework focus on learning outcomes, quality assurance and management of the qualifications framework, but there are no standards or benchmarks regarding the drafting of the framework.¹⁰

As a consequence, the definition and development of a SQFCGF has been since the beginning an ambitious challenge which required to overcome a number of difficulties which impacted on the process and on its outputs.

First of all, the field comprising the Coast Guard Functions is larger and more complex than any other sector as it includes a number of different functions swinging from maritime safety to maritime environment protection, from maritime search and rescue to fisheries, including activities which are also regulated by European and international standards.

Furthermore, the list of Coast Guard Functions, as identified by the European Coast Guard Functions Forum, even if widely recognised both at European and international level, didn't include a detailed description of the content and boundaries of such functions.

An additional challenge was due to the fact that there is not a unique agency or authority which is entrusted with all Coast Guard Functions. At EU level there are agencies such as EFCA, EMSA and Frontex, which perform activities related to some Coast Guard Functions in accordance with their respective mandates, while at national level each Coast Guard Function is often performed by different authorities and organisations, with different status (e.g. military vs civilian), scope and degree of responsibility. All the above issues explain the peculiarities of the sector and the complexity to address the development of a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions.

According to the Terms of Reference, as amended in 6th Plenary Conference (Civitavecchia, September 2014) the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) identified the following Coast Guard Functions:

1. maritime safety, including vessel traffic management
2. maritime ship and port security
3. maritime customs activities
4. prevention and suppression of trafficking and smuggling and connected maritime law enforcement
5. maritime border control
6. maritime monitoring and surveillance
7. maritime environmental protection and response
8. maritime search and rescue
9. ship casualty and maritime assistance service
10. maritime accident and disaster response
11. fisheries inspection and control

¹⁰ The most relevant example of SQF was the SQF for border guarding developed by Frontex, which represented a valuable guideline to develop the SQFCGF



3. Shift from teaching to learning approach

A **Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions (SQFCGF)** is intended to be a useful tool to facilitate comprehension and interaction among different training systems and thus to increase the employability, mobility and lifelong learning of personnel related to Coast Guard Functions.

As any other **Qualifications Framework**, the SQFCGF is an instrument for the *“development and classification of qualifications, which relates and compares qualifications using a hierarchy of levels of learning outcomes, usually of increasing complexity as a learner progresses up the levels. A sectoral qualification framework refers to one specific sector”*. (European Training Foundation, 2011).

In accordance with the principles of **Bologna and Copenhagen processes**, the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions follows the **learning outcomes approach**, where contents and levels reflect what qualifications holders are expected to know, understand and be able to do in order to perform tasks related to Coast Guard Functions.

Learning outcomes are statements that describe significant and essential learning that learners have achieved at the end of a training process. They are neutral with regard to academic, professional or vocational training; this means that knowledge, skills and competences of the learner are defined in abstract terms, without referencing to any specific qualification or training pathway.

This approach has the advantage to shift the training paradigm from a teaching to a learning perspective. The focus not on what trainers have to teach, but what trainees need to learn to perform Coast Guard Functions, giving a more useful tool for designing training courses tailored on the operational needs.

'knowledge': means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that are related to a field of work or study

'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)

'Autonomy and Responsibility': 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 responsibly and autonomously (Council Recommendation, 2017)

The SQFCGF is:

- a voluntary tool to facilitate the comparison of qualifications between EU countries in view of cooperative or joint initiatives
- a set of common features that make recognition easier at both European/international levels, as well as at national level
- a tool to inspire and facilitate the assessment and validation of skills acquired through work experience

The SQFCGF is not:

- a framework to harmonise qualifications or qualifications standards between EU Members
- a framework introducing automatic recognition of qualifications between EU member states
- a framework focused on the classification of each individual competence through its learning outcomes



4. Rationale of the SQFCGF

The SQFCGF is a tool to support the process of education and training relevant to Coast Guard Functions at EU and national level and thereby to facilitate **interoperability and cooperation** among relevant national Authorities with the ultimate goal to enhance the **coherence and effectiveness** of Coast Guard activities across Europe.

Interoperability and cooperation between national authorities performing Coast Guard Functions would highly benefit from periods of training abroad involving their staff and the development of **exchange-training programs** would be facilitated by the presence of a **common framework for referencing different qualifications**.

The SQFCGF is, therefore, a precursor to effective actions that foster cross-border training within the EU and with third countries, both for initial and ongoing training.

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions represents an added value for sectoral authorities working towards a safer, cleaner and more secure maritime domain and strongly contributes to promote the principles of Bologna and Copenhagen processes in a new field.

The value of the SQFCGF is that it provides a set of common shared standards that can be applied, on a voluntary basis, to assure quality and comparability of training across the sector and aligns to the European approach to vocational education and training.

In particular, the SQFCGF:

- encompasses all qualification levels acquired in general, vocational and academic education and training in the field of Coast Guard Functions, encompassing and enhancing the current legal framework that sets specific rules;
- does not impose national training requirements; it includes all existing national requirements and is therefore inclusive and descriptive and non-prescriptive;
- supports the review and accreditation of programmes;
- facilitates the recognition of other types of learning, such as 'on the job' learning;

The SQFCGF: a dynamic tool for cooperation and exchange

the main objective of the project is to enhance the cooperation among entities providing education and training relevant to Coast Guard functions throughout the EU and to establish voluntary common educational and training standards without duplicating already existing requirements set by international and EU legislation.



The SQFCGF acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe promoting workers interoperability and facilitating their lifelong learning



- assists in the development or updating of national occupational standards of officials from national authorities performing Coast Guard functions and
- supports the dissemination within Member States (MS) of good training practice and provision key recommendations for training.

Furthermore, the SQFCGF will help to:

- train CGFs personnel under a shared framework of learning outcomes while respecting national training systems and needs;
- describe different qualifications in a common language that makes them easily comprehensible and comparable across EU;
- contribute to quality assurance and certification systems;
- increase mobility and interoperability, cross border training, Erasmus-like training programs and
- create a synergic platform for joint cross sectoral training initiatives.

**SQFCGF
and its added value...**

Describe different qualifications in a common language that makes them easily comprehensible and comparable across EU

Train personnel under a shared framework of learning outcomes while respecting national training systems and needs

Increase mobility, interoperability and Erasmus like Programmes

Create a synergic platform for joint training initiatives

Contribute to quality assurance and certification systems

Support the recognition of different types of learning, such as informal and on the job training



5. Aim and objectives of the SQFCGF

The starting point for the development of the SQFCGF was an analysis of the **aims and objectives** for which the SQFCGF was meant to be created. This analysis was based on:

- a. the general objectives of transnational qualifications frameworks
- b. European policy goals
- c. ECGFA Net mandate

- a. General objectives of transnational qualification framework

From a general point of view, the analysis took into account some major objectives of qualification frameworks:

- comparability of qualifications;
- mutual recognition of qualifications;
- credit transfer and mobility periods;
- development of regional/sectoral standards;
- reviewing and strengthening national assessment and accreditation systems;
- facilitating agreement on entrance requirements to courses and programmes;
- joint courses and programmes.

- b. European policy goals

The Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries highlighted the main goals that the European Commission was expecting to reach with the development of a sectoral framework, that accord with the EU policy in this sector. In particular the European Commission identified how the framework has the potential to increase the levels of interoperability which is needed to face maritime related risks and threats in a more coherent manner.

In addition, the 2015 Non-Paper of the European Commission on Coast Guard Functions in the EU has defined the SQFCGF as an **instrument to provide common training standards** with a view to moving towards a European Coast Guard capacity system³¹.

In this context, in 2016, the approval of the new founding regulation of Frontex and the subsequent amendment of EMSA's and EFCA founding regulations³² paved the way for increased cooperation among the three Agencies operating in the Coast Guard Functions sector, which led in 2017 to the signing of a Tripartite Working Arrangement (TWA). Under this agreement, the three Agencies have

³¹ Non Paper "Towards a European Coastguard Capacity" (17 September 2015) presented during the 7th ECGFF Conference (Helsinki, 22-24 September 2015) - http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=26080

³² Reg. EU 1624/2016, 1625/2016 and 1626/2016

begun to address the practical arrangements for implementing Interagency Cooperation in support of Coast Guard activities, which has been classified into five areas, one of which is specifically dedicated to Capacity Building.

c. ECGFA NET objectives

The objectives contained in the ECGFA Net Project are completely in line with the general objectives of transnational frameworks and those expressed by the EU Commission and they are defined as follows:

- to support the establishment of a European Coast Guard Functions Training Network to improve cooperation channels among the Coast Guard Functions Organisations;
- to promote exchange of trainees and trainers among Coast Guard functions Organisations;
- to develop a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions, consistent with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and the European Qualifications Framework.



6. Nature of the SQFCGF

According to the literature, there are different types of qualifications frameworks. The typology and the related main characteristics of the Qualification Frameworks are identified on the basis of the field of interest and on geographical boundaries.

The typology of reference for the SQFCGF is a Transnational Sectoral Qualifications Framework, acting as a meta-framework referred to a specific field, i.e. the wide spectrum of Coast Guard Functions, and valid for different national training systems across the European Union.

As a *Transnational Sectoral Qualifications Framework*, the SQFCGF is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning agreed between countries.

It is not a legally binding act. It is intended to be an **instrument of transparency and improvement** for the various national education and training systems which, through a mutual dialogue, will benefit from sharing different experiences and good practice developed abroad.

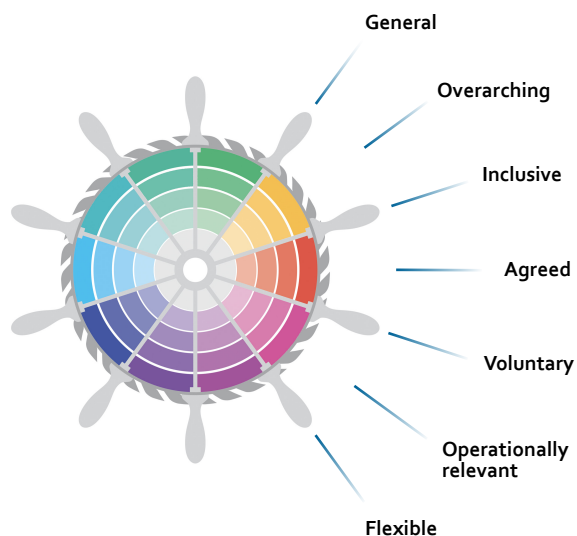
7. Principles of the SQFCGF

The principles of the SQFCGF were defined at the end of Phase I taking into account the international and European standards and guidelines, with specific regard to the EQF, the Lisbon Strategy, the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes and the EU Directive on professional recognition³³, as well as the analysis of the specific features and complexity of the sector.

The main characteristics of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions are:

- it is general (but not generic): it was built to be as general as possible, with a view to allowing the national systems to link up for the creation of their specific sectoral national qualifications frameworks (NQF);
- it is inclusive: it reflects the entire scope of learning in the field of Coast Guard Functions;
- it has less regulatory and more communicative purposes: it is a tool useful for communication between different education and training systems which have specific national features;
- it is based on a voluntary process;
- it is based on real operational needs;
- it is a flexible tool in terms of structure and implementation at national level, because it can be adapted to existing national training systems and specific responsibilities.

The Key words for the SQFCGF:



8. Methodology to develop the SQFCGF

During the first phase of the ECGFA Net project, a strategic plan and methodology for the development of the Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks for Coast Guard Functions was set up (2015/2016).

The implementation was carried out in phase II (2016/2017) and phase III (2018/2019).

The methodology can be schematized as follows:

STAGE	ACTIVITY	PHASE
ECGFA NET project		
1. Define basic elements and key recommendations	1. Identify different functions, tasks, job competencies and profiles 2. Sectoral analysis of needs and study visits 3. Define the goals and the nature of the SQF (basic elements and key recommendations)	1
2. Official bodies involved and work plan	1. Identify the international body / place for the formal discussion on the SQF 2. Identify a working group to define levels and learning outcomes 3. Define a clear working plan and different responsibilities 4. Identify different stakeholders at national and international level	2
3. Development of the SQFCGF structure	1. Define the architecture of the SQF 2. Map different E&T systems and qualifications 3. Identify the number of levels 4. Draft learning outcomes 5. Draft the SQFCGF final structure	2
4. Consultation process	1. Consult different stakeholders on the drafted SQFCGF 2. Receive comments and suggestions by stakeholders 3. Review the SQFCGF after consultation procedure 4. Validate the final version of the SQFCGF	
5. Quality assurance elements	1. Identify Advisory group (AG) to oversee quality assurance guidelines and minimum quality standards 2. Map different national quality assurance systems 3. Draft quality assurance guidelines	3
6. Adoption of the SQFCGF	1. Adopt the SQFCGF by country representatives 2. Draft a formal document among countries (MoU/Protocol) to define management aspects	
7. NQFs structures and recommendations	1. Define the dissemination strategy at national and international level 2. Draft a document with basic elements and key recommendations to develop a sectoral NQF 3. Organise info days and training sessions for national authorities on SQFCGF in the view of NQF development	

8.1 PHASE I

8.1.1 Stage 1 – Define basic elements and key recommendations plan

Step 1.1 - Identify different functions, tasks, job competences and profiles. The first planned activity was the identification of the unique elements of Coast Guard Functions, essential for building the architecture of the framework, i.e. tasks, job competences and job profiles.

This was achieved by two online questionnaires where several national CGFs organisations participating in the project provided information on different tasks, job competences and profiles related to each Coast Guard Function.

Considering the goals and the nature of the SQFCGF, its architecture was created taking into account the specific needs and peculiarities of the relevant sector.

At the beginning of the project, the only available information was a list of the 10 functions stemming from the ECGFF and some very general definitions.

Hence, the project investigated the list of Coast Guard Functions through a survey (i.e. online questionnaire) submitted to the ECGFF members in order to collect descriptions and tasks related to those functions. The questionnaire revealed some interesting conclusions, *inter alia*: some similarities were underlined between function n. 3 (maritime customs activities) and 4 (prevention and suppression of trafficking and smuggling) and between function n. 7 (maritime search and rescue) and 9 (maritime accident and disaster response), while function n. 6 (monitoring and surveillance) is something strictly connected with most of the other functions.

The questionnaire enabled the drafting of outline descriptions and tasks for the 10 functions and four levels of learning were identified according to the specific needs of the sector of reference.

Step 1.2 - Sectoral analysis of needs and study visits. A cycle of study visits was conducted by WP4 team across EU in order to investigate the level of awareness of the application of the European Qualification Frameworks and its derivatives (i.e. Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and National Qualification Frameworks).

As a result, it was highlighted that some educational providers and stakeholders at national level were not aware of the nature and purposes of a Qualification Framework or the existence of the EQF and other QFs. This finding reinforced the need to disseminate detailed and focused information about QFs in order to understand the benefit of a SQFCGF.

Step 1.3 - Define the goals and the nature of the SQFCGF. This part of the development was devoted to identify the objectives and the most suitable typology of SQF to be used.

The outcome of this step was the finalization of the document "*Basic Elements, Key Recommendations and Methodology for the development of the SQFCGF*".

8.2 PHASE II

8.2.1 Stage 2 – Official bodies involved and work plan

This part was dedicated to identifying the relevant stakeholders and the working plan to develop the SQFCGF. To reach the goal, the following steps were outlined.

Step 2.1. Identify the international body and place for the formal discussion on the SQF, namely Apex Body: this part was dedicated to identifying a body or at least a venue for dialogue among the various organisations participating in the SQFCGF in order to adopt, manage and maintain the framework. The Apex Body would carry out a set of functions including the adoption of SQF; the overall management; the assessment and review; the stakeholder consultation; the dissemination and promotion and other relevant activities.¹⁴

Step 2.2. Identify a Working Group (WG) to define levels and draft learning outcomes: in order to develop the architecture and contents of the SQFCGF, a specific working group was designated. On a voluntary basis, ECGFA Net partners nominated the members of the working group, taking into account different expertise at national level and considering the geographical balance of the components.

In particular, the Sectoral Qualifications Framework Working Group (SQFWG), led by the Italian Coast Guard as WP4 coordinator, was composed of experts from the Finnish Border Guard; Hellenic Coast Guard; Spanish Maritime Safety and Rescue Agency – SASEMAR; Spanish Customs; Portuguese National Republican Guard; UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency. Each organisation was assigned the task to develop the SQF tables related to one or two functions.

For the three phases of the project, an external expert, “CIMEA”, was also procured by the WP4 coordinator to support the works; meanwhile the EU Agencies EFCA, EMSA, FRA and Frontex participated with the status of active observer, providing useful contribution and supranational advice.

The ECGFA Net Project Partners and the other ECGFF Members were also involved to provide contribution to the whole process.

Step 2.3. Define a clear work plan and different responsibilities: the definition of a work plan of concrete activities to be carried out was needed in order to clarify aspects related to the duration of each action line in relation to resources available.

Step 2.4. Identify different stakeholders at national and international level: the ECGFA Net partners were asked to provide a list of national and international stakeholders, i.e. institutions and bodies operating in the field of CGFs and final users of the SQFCGFs, that would be involved during stakeholder consultation in phase III.

In phase III this list has been further updated, including also all ECGFF Members and the Training Communities of EFCA, EMSA and Frontex.

¹⁴ The identification of the Apex Body was a complex issue that was postponed to phase III. See para 10

8.2.2 Stage 3 - Development of the SQFCGF structure

This part was dedicated to identifying the final architecture and content of the framework by the SQF Working Group.

Step 3.1. Define the architecture of the framework: the members of the SQF WG were in charge of defining the architecture of the SQFCGF, building on the results of ECGFA Net phase I.

Step 3.2. Map different qualifications: in order to have a preliminary idea about the existing national qualifications that would be later referenced to the framework by each country, a questionnaire was submitted to different national organisations operating in the field of CGFs. Its results enabled the mapping of a list of the main qualifications awarded at national level. This activity was the precursor to the definition of number of levels to be considered in the framework.

Step 3.3. Identify the number of levels: the study visits conducted during the phase I provided the basis of the level of existing qualifications within four different educational systems (Finland, Germany, Italy and Spain) and their connections with EQF levels. In all of these cases, qualifications ranging from EQF level 4 to EQF level 7 were identified. Those results were also confirmed by other Member States through the abovementioned questionnaire: as a consequence, the SQFCGF was structured on four main levels.

The identified levels do not correspond to precise job positions currently existing and mapped out during phase I. The SQF levels encompass the increasing complexity of the learning needed to perform job activities.

Step 3.4. Draft learning outcomes: **Job competences and job profiles identified during phase I were the initial starting point to draft operationally relevant learning outcomes for each Coast Guard Function.** Moving from the EQF level descriptors, adapted to the specific needs of the sectoral framework, and in accordance with the good practice on writing learning outcomes, provided by the external expert, the SQF WG drafted general learning outcomes for each level identified above. The learning outcomes were further divided into “knowledge”, “skills” and “competences” on the basis of their statements.

This activity was long and challenging, considering that most of national systems did not have qualifications based on learning outcomes and that the learning outcomes needed to be agreed within the relevant groups.

Step 3.5. Draft the SQFCGF final structure: all the activities described in the abovementioned steps contributed to create the final structure of the SQFCGF for each of the ten functions.



COAST GUARD FUNCTIONS	SQFCGF LEVELS			
	(EQF 4)	(EQF 5)	(EQF 6)	(EQF 7)
	Knowledge, Skills, Competences	Knowledge, Skills, Competences	Knowledge, Skills, Competences	Knowledge, Skills, Competences
1. maritime safety, including vessel traffic management	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles
2. maritime, ship and port security	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles	level descriptors considering job competences and job profiles
3.

8.2.3 Common requirements

In all the Coast Guard Functions, general common requirements were identified for Language Skills and Fundamental Rights.

Foreign languages

During the implementation of ECGFA Net project the inclusion of common requirements about foreign languages was fully investigated. Firstly, answers to the questionnaire that identified the job competences required to carry out occupational tasks, highlighted the need for a capability to communicate using common vehicular technical language, as established by international legislation. Furthermore, the experts involved in the drafting of the tables investigated the requested job competences and confirmed the need for minimum requirements for language skills. Finally, EMSA and EFCA pointed out the different needs in terms of language skills in the different functions.

The different contributions received showed that:

- English is the most common shared language for communications between the Coast Guard Authorities;
- In the implementation of some functions, the application of IMO standard marine communication phrases is used;
- In the implementation of some other tasks, the most spoken language at sea is not English (with reference to Fisheries inspections and controls, for example, there are no specific legal language requirements).

Some national legislation does not allow the Coast guard Authorities to foresee the selection of human resources on the basis of the language competences. Considering that the SQFCGF is finalised to implement the internationalisation of the Coast Guard Functions authorities, through mobility and exchanges, the knowledge of English as an independent user, on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages standard²⁵, is advisable for all the Coast Guard professional positions, in compliance with national and institutional requirements.

²⁵ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

In the implementation of some tasks, the knowledge of other languages would be advisable in specific areas at sea.

Fundamental rights

With the support of the Fundamental Rights Agency, some common requirements for fundamental rights have been investigated in the framework of the CGF. The following four levels were identified:

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS	
1 st level	Respect the fundamental rights of all persons in the context of pertinent Coast Guard activities.
2 nd level	Promote the fundamental rights of all persons in the context of pertinent Coast Guard activities.
3 rd level	Ensure protection and respect for the fundamental rights of all persons.
4 th level	Strategically integrate fundamental rights within all aspects of organizational activities.

Following the proposal suggested by Frontex, the SQFWG agreed that, at least, level 3 “*ensure protection and respect for the fundamental rights of all persons*” should be incorporated in any qualification for all Coast Guard Functions.

In relation to function n. 10 (Fisheries), EFCA proposed to include a specific learning outcome on ethics. Considering the relevance of this issue, in phase III all tables were integrated with the following additional common requirement “*act in accordance with defined ethical and professional standards*”.

8.3 PHASE III

8.3.1 Preliminary revision

Following the results of an additional specific meeting on the SQF arranged by Frontex before the official start of phase III¹⁶, the WP₄ team promoted a preliminary revision of all tables. The revision was suggested because the tables were strictly linked to job competences instead of general learning outcomes. In fact, a qualification framework fulfils its purposes if it is possible to reference qualifications instead of specific tasks or activities. In this latter case, we would be constructing a Competence Framework instead of a Qualification Framework.

The revised tables were shared with the SQFWG experts and their comments were gathered before starting stakeholder consultation process.

8.3.2 Stage 4 - Consultation process

This part was dedicated to presenting the architecture of the SQFCGF drafted by the SQF WG to relevant stakeholders, using the stakeholder list drafted in phase II, but significantly updated at the beginning of phase III.

How to share and validate the Framework?

¹⁶ Frontex proposed and supported an additional meeting, held in Gdynia – Poland, 23-24 April 2018, where the SQF WG members were invited to further reflect and discuss on the SQFCGF tables and the learning outcome approach.

Step 4.1. Consult different stakeholders on the draft SQFCGF: in order to guarantee the transparency of the process and achieve an inclusive, reliable output consistent with a bottom up approach, it was crucial to involve a large number of national and international stakeholders and receive their feedback on the level of awareness currently existing on SQF concepts across EU, as well as verifying their interest in the implementation of a SQFCGF.

The WP₄ team decided to run stakeholder consultations at two different times, by distributing two separate online questionnaires.

The first questionnaire was launched in November 2018 and stayed open for two months. It was a generic survey addressed to a large number of organisations that perform Coast Guard Functions throughout Europe, in order to understand the overall perception and awareness about SQF concept. It was addressed to the abovementioned stakeholder list, ECGFA Net partners, ECGFF members and a further list of organisations stemming from the already mentioned *ICF International Feasibility Study*.

The second questionnaire was launched in January 2019 and stayed open for two months. It was a more technical and specific survey as it concerned the content of the SQF tables. It was addressed to the abovementioned stakeholder list, ECGFA Net partners, ECGFF members and the EU Agencies (EFCA, EMSA, Frontex) agreed to spread it among their respective Communities.

Step 4.2. Receive comments and suggestions by stakeholders: during the consultation procedure, WP₄ collected different comments and suggestions from stakeholders.

In particular, the first questionnaire showed that there was sufficient awareness on the SQF but specific training was still needed and explicitly requested in order to demonstrate what the SQF concretely is and how it works.

The second questionnaire reported a broad agreement on the content of SQF tables. This result confirmed the reliability of the extensive mapping of job competences done in the previous phases and the drafting of the related learning outcomes.

Step 4.3. Review the SQFCGF after consultation procedure: each comment and suggestion received was useful to enhance the architecture of the draft version of the SQFCGF.

While finalising the tables, the WP₄ decided to make a further improvement: the learning outcomes of all SQF tables were categorised according to different overarching learning areas. This step was significant to provide more consistency across the ten tables and with the already existing SQF for border guarding developed by Frontex.¹⁷

Step 4.4. Validation of the final version of the SQFCGF: the final revised version of the SQFCGF was submitted to external assessment of three experts in quality assurance and Bologna and

¹⁷ As recommended by EU Commission in the Terms of Reference – MARE/2014/36 - ECGFA NET, pag. 5



Copenhagen processes. The assessors acknowledged that the whole process was challenging and difficult due to the complexity of Coast Guard Functions sector and the huge number of national authorities and EU organisations involved in it; they recognised the great work done by the project and provided some recommendations and guidelines to make a definitive fine-tuning of the tables before definitive release.

In fact, the assessors stated that *"In the last year the project team has successfully achieved the acceptance of a learner-focused approach, fundamental to a learning outcomes framework. While there may be still room to fine tuning the learning outcomes, the drafting of a complete SQFCGF including the recent development in the sector of the Qualification Framework, represents a corner achievement. More specifically, the SQFCGF learning outcomes in its current form can be used for training provision and comparability, as each learning outcome represents a distinct, teachable and assessable activity."*²⁸

The WP₄ team followed the suggestion from the external assessors and made a final adjustment of the SQF tables before their validation.

8.3.3 Stage 5 - Quality assurance elements

This part was dedicated to explore existing quality assurance systems within the Member States in the field of CGFs.

The mere fact of referencing different national qualifications to one SQF level is not sufficient to create a trustworthy system of comparison among qualifications. It is necessary to build mutual trust in the qualifications conferred by other partners.

How to foster mutual trust among the national authorities?

In this regard, the implementation of a QA system permits the continuous monitoring and checking the quality of training provision and the release of qualifications that can be referenced to the SQF. This is a key element to strengthen transparency and mutual trust among the partners of an SQF and to facilitate reliable comparison and recognition of qualifications.

Considering this, the adoption of the SQFCGF and related implementing guidelines could not disregard an appropriate reference to the QA issue.

Step 5.1. Identify Advisory group (AG) to oversee quality assurance guidelines and minimum quality standards: it was critical to establish a group of international experts, such as the Advisory Group for the EQF, as a technical coordination body to oversee the implementation of the framework and provide coherence to the various processes, with the aim of developing mutual trust. For the specific purpose and timeframe of the project, the Advisory Group was composed of representatives of the EU Agencies (EFCA, EMSA and Frontex), with the task to support WP₄ in this action line by providing supranational and impartial advice on the QA guidelines.

²⁸ M. Marcuccio, J. Norris and B. Redmond, External Assessment Paper on the drafting of the SQFCGF in the framework of the ECGFA Net Project, 36

Step 5.2. Map different national quality assurance systems: a survey was launched in April 2019 in order to map and compare existing national quality assurance systems and to identify the minimum quality requirements. It was addressed to ECGFA Net partners and ECGFF members. The questionnaire results confirmed that although there is a relevant culture on quality assurance of training systems across the EU, the actual mechanisms vary a lot from organisation to organisation, and from country to country. The results of the questionnaire were used to draft Quality Assurance Guidelines.

Step 5.3. Draft Sectoral Quality Assurance Guidelines: A final document indicating minimum requirements and recommendations in relation to QA aspects was drafted and shared with the members of the Advisory Group.

8.3.4 Stage 6 - Adoption of the SQFCGF

This part was dedicated to investigate possible ways to achieve the adoption of the SQFCGF by an Apex Body, entrusted also with the future management of the framework.

Step 6.1. Draft a document among countries to define management aspects: WP4 oversaw the preparation of a working paper providing information and possible options for the concrete management of the SQFCGF. This working paper was distributed among the ECGFA Net partners and the EU Agencies in order to find a shared solution for the future management of the Framework.

Step 6.2. Adopt the SQFCGF by country representatives: the final version of the SQFCGF will be presented for the adoption at the 11th Plenary Conference of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum under the Italian Chairmanship. The adoption will represent the conclusion of the process and acknowledgement of the outcome of the project. Then, the future management of the framework will be linked to the European Coast Guard Functions Training Network.

8.3.5 Stage 7 – National SQFs structures and recommendations

This part was dedicated to the issue of national Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks that willing Member States would develop on a voluntary basis to reference their national qualifications to SQFCGF levels. The concrete development of each single national framework was out of the scope of ECGFA

Net project: the main purpose of this stage was to provide some key recommendations to Member States as a support to develop a national framework for their sector.

**The future impact
of the Framework
in the participating countries**

Step 7.1. Define the dissemination strategy of the SQFCGF at national and international level: the dissemination of the SQFCGF is crucial in order to have a useful instrument to better explain all its elements to different institutions that are not familiar with the SQF. Therefore, a dissemination strategy was outlined to present the framework to enable the development of national approaches. In this regard, the use of existing technological resources is widely recommended to ensure the dissemination of the SQFCGF. Web portal, Visual identity, webinar

and ad hoc seminars are most common methodologies through which the use of the tool can be encouraged among national authorities.

Step 7.2. Draft a document with basic elements and key recommendations to develop a national SQF: This document is intended to provide specific indications on basic elements and key recommendations to national authorities for developing a sectoral qualification framework at national level.

Step 7.3. Organise information days and training sessions for national authorities on SQFCGF in the view of NQF development: information days and training sessions are critically important in order to inform national authorities about the peculiar features and purposes of an SQF and to encourage the development of national frameworks in line with the SQFCGF; however these activities require time and budget availability. In a cost efficiency and effectiveness perspective, WP4 took advantage of any important event in the field of Coast Guard Functions held in 2018 and 2019 to disseminate the project outcomes. To this end, the promotion of the project was ensured while actively participating in a wide number of official events, inter alia: EFCA 13th Working/12th Steering Group meeting on Training and Exchange of Experience (Paris, 6th February 2018); 4th Workshop on multinational and multifunction crews of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum under German Chairmanship (Vigo, 19 June 2018); 7th edition of the Plenary Conference of the Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum under the French Chairmanship (Marseille, 27-28 June 2018); 10th Plenary Conference of the ECGFF under German Chairmanship (Hamburg 12-14 September 2018); EMSA 13th Consultative Network on Technical Assistance (Lisbon, 2nd October 2018); Frontex Annual Training Conference (Warsaw, 10th October 2018); High level working meeting of the Coast Guard Global Summit (Tokio, 28th November 2018); 2nd European Annual Coast Guard Event (Świnoujście, 17 April 2019); European Maritime Day 2019 (Lisbon, 16-17 May 2019); 8th Plenary Conference of the Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum under the Moroccan Chairmanship Casablanca, 11-13 June 2019).

In addition, the Italian chairmanship of the ECGFF has given great prominence to the subject of education and training within the three workshops (Lisbon 26-27 February 2019; Rome, 2-3 April 2019; Catania, 3-5 June 2019) where the SQFCGF was a core issue addressed in ad hoc working groups.

9. Structure and contents of the SQFCGF

The SQFCGF is composed of 10 tables, one for each Coast Guard Function - except for Coast Guard Function n. 5 "Border Control"¹⁹.

Each table is defined by levels. The SQFCGF considers a range of four levels, referenced to levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the European Qualification Framework.

The identification of levels and related Learning Outcomes is the result of the work done during phase II, when WP4 team carried out surveys to: a) identify main tasks related to each function; b) identify main job competences related to tasks; c) map qualifications granted at national levels; d) identify levels; e) draft Learning Outcomes.

Level descriptors show how expectations of knowledge, skills and competences increase as learners progress from level 4 to level 7²⁰. **These levels, along with the descriptors, act as a translation grid and facilitate the comparison of qualifications from different countries and institutions.**

Levels capture how the complexity of the learning outcomes increases along with the qualification levels. In this sense, the level of knowledge expected for a level 4 qualification holder is less than the one expected for a level 7: for example, in the first case we expect that the holder is able to "*outline a limited range of procedures*"; in the second case, we expect that the holder is able to "*critically evaluate a broad range of procedures*". As for EQF, each level builds on and subsumes the levels beneath. In order to keep the table as clear as possible, repetitions are avoided within the same function and the descriptors of the respective previous levels are implicitly included.

Learning Outcomes are expressed in a generic and abstract way in order not to be referenced to any specific organisation, system and qualification or learning pathways.

A list of learning areas, common to all functions, has been identified and learning outcomes have been categorised accordingly.

¹⁹ The decision to keep the ten tables separated, notwithstanding some common learning outcomes, was made because of the wide number of organisations performing Coast Guard Functions in the EU and their specialisation

²⁰ In the SQFCGF Tables, "Knowledge, Skills and Autonomy and Responsibility/Competences" are marked with letters K – S – C

List of Learning Areas

Law, policies, rules and procedures	Learning related to all international, EU, regional, national and organisational guiding documents that relate to and regulate all activities connected with the considered coast guard function
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	Learning related to all activities connected with the referred coast guard function, carried out in conjunction with external stakeholders
Communication	Learning related to the exchange of information (orally and/or in written) between two or more subjects
Reporting and logging	Learning related to the drafting of reports (including also standardised format) and the maintenance of records
Information and data management	Learning related to the management of information and data that is not currently qualified as intelligence
Tools and equipment	Learning related to the practical use of tools, devices and equipment used to support the considered coast guard function
Risk management	Learning related to risk techniques and their use for the identification, assessment and prioritisation of risks that impact on the referred coast guard function
Intelligence	Learning related to gathering information with the potential to become intelligence and acting accordingly within the organizational mandate and in cooperation with the relevant authorities
Investigation	Learning related to gathering information and evidence on possible infringements, according with the organisational mandate and in cooperation with the relevant authorities
Use of force	Learning related to the use of coercive measures, including the use of weapons, during the activities connected to the considered coast guard function
Search and seizure	Learning related to the search and seizure of goods and detention of persons suspected of illegal acts
Health and safety	Learning related to the implementation of principles and procedures to ensure health, safety and security of persons at work
Human resources, supervision and leadership	Learning related to working with individuals and groups, e.g. performance management, influencing and enabling others to contribute to achieve organisational
Operational management	Learning related to the planning, conducting, controlling and evaluation of activities connected to the referred coast guard function
Inspection and survey	Learning related to the verification of compliance with all applicable rules
Security assessment and plans	Learning related to the security assessment and plans for ships, port and port facilities as relevant
Documentary checks	Learning related to checking documents or forms related to specific activities connected with the related coast guard function
Certification and standards	Learning related to the verification of standards and the issuing of certifications connected with the referred coast guard function
Monitoring activities	Learning related to tracking and monitoring the activities occurring in the maritime domain in support to the considered coast guard function
Strategy and planning	Learning related to the development and evaluation of measures taken to achieve organisational goals
Resource management	Learning related to the effective and efficient allocation and management of available resources and assets to achieve organisational goals
Training	Learning related to the training of personnel and maintenance of professional standards, including their certification and qualification



10. SQFCGF Visual Identity

From a graphical point of view, a visual identity tool was newly designed: a ship's wheel, already used as logo for the European Coast Guard Functions Training Network, was divided in ten parts, each of them representing one of the functions and relevant four levels.

The visual tool is available on the European Coast Guard Functions Training Portal <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu>





11. Governance aspects of the SQFCGF and the Apex Body

In order to manage and maintain the SQF, a formal body or at least a formal venue for dialogue among the various organisations and stakeholders participating in the initiatives needs to be established. According to different national and international experiences, such a formal venue should always be identified with a “body” which has the responsibility for coordinating the activities related to the management, ongoing quality and implementation of the framework.

In the case of the EQF the appointed Apex Body is the European Commission, whereas in the case of Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding the governing body is the EU Agency Frontex. Given that a single European body that coordinates all Coast Guard Functions does not exist, this role is distributed among different EU Agencies (e.g. EFCA, EMSA, Frontex).

This situation is also reflected at national level, where Coast Guard functions are often carried out by different national authorities, and even a single Coast Guard Function can be performed by more than one authority.²¹

The European Coast Guard Functions Forum represents a voluntary, independent and apolitical cross-function cooperation framework created “to study, contribute to and promote understanding and development on maritime issues of common interest related to CGF across borders and sectors”.²² This forum initially proposed idea of enhancing cooperation across Europe in the field of Coast Guard Functions. Although the ECGFF does not have the same powers and responsibilities of a formal legal body²³, since 2009 numerous organisations and all Coast Guard Functions have been represented. In addition, the ECGFF also proposed the development of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions in 2014 and the ECGFA Net project was developed by a consortium of ECGFF members. Therefore, the work done by ECGFA Net within the ECGFF should be taken into account when defining the future management of the SQF.

Furthermore, as a result of the work done within the ECGFA Net project (phases I, II and III) a Training Network, namely the European Coast Guard Functions Training Network, has been set up, and is now a unique cross-function training network in the framework of Coast Guard Functions cooperation that encompasses the whole sector. The Training Network has, among others, the task to “contribute to the development of a SQFCGF”.

Finally, since 2016 the roles of the EU Agencies, EFCA, EMSA and Frontex have increased, with reference to European Coast Guard cooperation, and this is reflected in their more active involvement in the development of the SQFCGF.

Hence, a comprehensive and cooperative framework involving the ECGFF, the Training Network and the EU Agencies with Coast Guard Functions seems to be the most appropriate place to locate the governance and the management of the SQFCGF and to act as Apex Body.

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/modes/maritime/studies/doc/2014-06-icf-coastguard.pdf>

²² ECGFF Terms of Reference

²³ Such as the EU Commission with regard to EQF or Frontex with regard to SQF for border guarding

12. Conclusions

The SQFCGF is a framework describing, in terms of learning outcomes, the knowledge, skills and competences that are required to perform tasks related to Coast Guard Functions.

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework acts as a practical voluntary tool, useful to facilitate the comprehension and comparability of different national training programs and qualifications; to promote cross border training within the EU and to develop Erasmus-like training programs for Coast Guard personnel.

The SQFCGF will be a dynamic instrument to be continuously monitored and updated by a cyclic revision process - at least every five years - realised on the basis of the changes in legal framework and of the evolution of employment needs in the sector. However, further steps are still to be accomplished in order to make it effective and usable at national level.

To date, in terms of size, detail, depth, and accuracy the SQFCGF is a unique instrument in the European panorama and its implementation at national level will facilitate mutual understanding of qualifications and will encourage synergies, mobility and interoperability among the organisations with Coast Guard Functions.

As highlighted also by the external assessors, the SQFCGF risks to remain a theoretical exercise if its further management is not sustained by those institutions and organisations that initiated the process.

Therefore, a concrete management plan for the SQFCGF is needed within a cooperative framework involving the Coast Guard Functions Organisations of EU MSs, the European Coast Guard Functions Forum, the ECGF Training Network and the EU Agencies with Coast Guard Functions, as well as the wide spectrum of relevant national and European stakeholders.

The SQFCGF is a tangible result that has contributed to increase knowledge and understanding of Coast Guard Functions. Its development was possible thanks to the commendable efforts and commitment of a voluntary association of colleagues from different countries who shared views, concerns and proposals on issues of common interest by speaking the same language of the Coast Guard Functions.

The Project team for the development of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions sincerely hope that this tool will concretely contribute to strengthening *collaboration, cooperation and coordination* among Coast Guard Functions Organisations.

13. Acknowledgements

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Function 9: Maritime accident and disaster response	UK MARITIME AND COASTGUARD AGENCY	<i>See function 7</i>
Function 10: Fisheries Inspection and Control	PORTUGUESE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN GUARD	<i>See function 4</i>

The list includes the experts that have contributed alternately and at different extent on the SQF throughout the three phases



ORGANISATIONS that have participated in SQF WG meetings during phase II and III as observer

GERMAN FEDERAL POLICE
PORTUGUESE NATIONAL MARITIME AUTHORITY
SPANISH CIVIL GUARD
EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE COLLEGE

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ANNEXES

- I. Main Activities performed during the three phases
- II. Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions - 10 Tables
- III. Working Paper for adoption and management of the SQFCGF
- IV. Guidelines on Quality Assurance
- V. Basic Elements on the adoption of SQFCGF at national level



ANNEX I

Main activities performed during the three phases



This project is co-funded by
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*Work Package Coordinator: Italian Coast Guard
External Expert: CIMEA – Italian ENIC-NARIC centre*

Project Phase	Period	Activities / outputs
ECGFA NET I	01-03/2015	✓ Building up national experts group (with the support of Guardia di Finanza) aimed to gather expertise in each Coast Guard Functional Activity as stated in the ECGFF Terms of Reference;
		✓ Elaboration (with the support of the national experts group) of the WP4 Questionnaire no. I.1 , that is aimed to collect description and main tasks related to Coast Guard Functional Activities;
		✓ Participation in the Kick-Off meeting (Helsinki 24/25 March 2015) and presentation of the WP4 Work Plan and WP4 Questionnaire;
		✓ Delivering of Questionnaire no. I.1 to Project Partners and other ECGFF Members.
	06/2015	✓ Report on Questionnaire no. I.1 (descriptions and main tasks related to Coast Guard Functions Activities) discussed during 2 nd working meeting
		✓ Launch of Questionnaire no. I.2 on job position and job competences
	09/2015	✓ Study Visit in Finland;
	10/2015	✓ Establishment of the SQF WG and definition of « SQF WG experts' method »
		✓ Report on Questionnaire no. I.2 - discussed and approved with WG
		✓ Study Visits in Spain (Spanish Customs and SASEMAR), Italy (Italian Coast Guard) and Germany (German Federal Police);
11/2015	✓ Organization of 3 rd working meeting	
	✓ Draft «Basic Elements and Key Recommendations for SQFCGF»	
01/2016	✓ Approval of « Basic Elements and Key Recommendations for SQFCGF »	
ECGFA NET II	10-12/2016	✓ Identification of the SQF Working Group (SQFWG) for defining levels and Learning Outcomes
		✓ Definition of a work plan and different responsibilities of the SQFWG
	01-03/2017	✓ WG meeting (April 2017)
		✓ Draft "Guidelines on writing L.O.";
		✓ Survey to draft a list of national and European stakeholders
	04-06/2017	✓ 2 nd project working meeting
		✓ 1 st SQFWG meeting
	07/2017	✓ proposal to postpone selection of apex body
		✓ list of stakeholders based
		✓ draft 1 learning outcomes
		✓ 2 nd SQFWG meeting
		✓ 3 rd project working meeting
	08-10/2017	✓ 3 rd SQF Working Group Meeting
		✓ Draft 2 on Learning Outcomes (based on revision made by the SQF Coordinator and the comments by experts and EU Agencies) to be included in the SQFCGF Structure.
		✓ Draft 3 of SQFCGF Final Structure revised and presented at the 3 rd SQFWGM
	11-12/2017	✓ Document "SQFCGF final structure (v.1)" completed and presented at the Closing Seminar;
✓ Visual graphic/wheel containing the SQFCGF completed and uploaded on the training portal		
✓ Closing seminar		

NOT COVERED BY GRANT	01-05/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>EFCA 13th Working/12th Steering Group meeting on Training and Exchange of Experience</i> held in Paris on 6th February 2018 in order to present WP₄ work to EFCA Training Community. ○ <i>1st Annual Coast Guard Event</i> of the three Agencies (EFCA, EMSA, Frontex) - Vigo on 11th – 13th April 2018 ○ <i>SQF Coast Guard Cross Reference Workshop</i> held in Gdynia on 23th – 24th April 2018, following Frontex initiative. During this meeting WP₄ team and the experts of SQF Working Group had the possibility to reflect and discuss on the 10 tables and on an overarching table (developed by Frontex external consultant) containing learning outcomes organised in learning areas in common to the different 10 tables. After this meeting, WP₄ team agreed to carry out a preliminary revision of 10 tables developed during phase II in order to align them to EQF and to provide more consistency and coherence to L.O. among the different functions.
EGFA NET III	06-10/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review of SQF WG composition ✓ Presentation of the SQFCGF and related benefits for developing the concept of multinational and cross functional crews, at the <i>4th Workshop of the ECGFF</i>, under the German Chairmanship - Vigo on 19th June 2018; ✓ Presentation of the SQFCGF at the <i>Plenary Conference of the Mediterranean Coast Guard Function Forum</i>, under the French Chairmanship, in order to present the work to the Organisations with Coast Guard Functions of the Mediterranean Countries, including Third Countries - Marseille on 27th – 28th June 2018; ✓ Presentation of the SQFCGF at the <i>ECGFF Plenary Conference</i>, under the German Chairmanship, in order to present the state of the project to the ECGFF Community - Hamburg on 12th – 14th September 2018; ✓ <i>1st SQF Working Group Meeting, 1st Executive Group Meeting, 1st Governing Board Meeting</i> - Helsinki on 18th – 19th September 2018; ✓ Participation to <i>EMSA 13th Consultative Network on Technical Assistance</i> and presentation of SQFCGF to EMSA's Training Community - Lisbon on 2nd October 2018; ✓ Participation to <i>Frontex Annual Training Conference</i> and presentation of SQFCGF to Frontex's Training Community – Warsaw, 10th October 2018; ✓ Revision of tables and to the wording of the learning outcomes by WP₄ coordinator, WP₄ team/SQFWG, also in cooperation with 3 EU agencies on the tables ✓ Revised draft tables have been presented at the <i>1st SQF Working Group Meeting</i> (Helsinki, 18 September 2018). During October, the SQF experts were asked to go through their respective draft tables and to present feedbacks and suggestions to SQF Unit.



11-12/2018	✓	Launch of Stakeholder consultation - Questionnaire III.1 for understanding the level of awareness currently existing in the EU on the SQF issue.
	✓	Participation at the High Level Working Meeting of the Coast Guard Global Summit (Tokyo, 28 November 2018)
01-02/2019	✓	Launch of Stakeholder consultation - Questionnaire III.2 on SQFCGF structure and tables (v.2) ;
	✓	Participation in the 2 nd SQF Working Group, 2 nd Governing Board, 2 nd Executive Group Meeting (22-24 January 2019)
	✓	Participation in the 1 st ECGFF Workshop and 1 st ECGFF Secretariat (Lisbon, 27-28 February 2019) in order to encourage further stakeholders' consultation and dissemination
	✓	Drafting the final list of Learning Area of the SQFCGF (v.1)
03-06/2019	✓	Participation in the 2 nd ECGFF Workshop and 2 nd ECGFF Secretariat (Rome, 2-3 April 2019) and in the 3 rd ECGFF Workshop and 3 rd ECGFF Secretariat (Catania, 3-5 June 2019) in order to encourage further stakeholders' consultation and dissemination
	✓	Participation in the European Maritime Day 2019 with a promotional stand (Lisbon, 16-17 May 2019)
	✓	Launch of Questionnaire III.3 on quality assurance
	✓	Identification of the Advisory Group
	✓	Working paper on the management of SQFCGF
	✓	Report on Questionnaire III.1 on stakeholders' consultation
	✓	Report on Questionnaire III.2 on SQFCGF structure and tables
	✓	Revision of SQFCGF tables on learning area and learning objectives (v.3)
	✓	External assessment (2 VTC + 1 meeting)
	✓	External assessment – additional activity + proofreading (1 meeting)
	✓	Advisory Group meeting (1)
	✓	Guidelines on Quality Assurance
	✓	Basic elements and key recommendation on NQF
07/2019	✓	Closing seminar (Helsinki, 11 July 2019)
08/2019	✓	Final reporting

ANNEX II

Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions

10 Tables



This project is co-funded by
the European Union



*Work Package Coordinator: Italian Coast Guard
External Expert: CIMEA – Italian ENIC-NARIC centre*





MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT





MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT								
<i>Maritime Safety is concerned with the protection of life at sea, environment and property through regulation, management and technology development of all forms of waterborne transportation.</i>								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL MARITIME SAFETY								
Law, policies, rules and procedures			K	Outline the key features of the maritime trade sector	K	Describe the maritime trade sector in the context of maritime safety	K	Critically evaluate the global and national trends of the maritime trade sector that impact on maritime safety
	K	Outline the key features of the maritime trade sector		Describe a range of national, EU and international laws relevant to maritime safety	K	Define and interpret a broad range of national, EU and international legal frameworks relevant to the different fields of maritime safety	K	Critically evaluate relevant national, EU and international policies related to maritime safety
	K	Describe the structure and responsibilities of national competent authority for the implementation and enforcement of maritime ship and port security	K	Describe a range of relevant international, EU and national procedures, recommendations and guidelines applicable to a broad range of fields related to maritime safety	K	Define and distinguish relevant international, EU and national procedures, recommendations and guidelines applicable to a broad range of fields related to maritime safety		
	K	Outline the structure and responsibilities of national authorities for the implementation and enforcement of maritime safety legislation						
			K	Outline a range of national, EU and international legislation on pollution prevention and control	K	Explain national, EU and international legislation on pollution prevention and control	K	Critically evaluate national, EU and international legislation on pollution prevention and control
			K	Explain national and international regulations and procedures on radio communications	K	Critically evaluate national and international regulations and procedures on radio communications		
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime safety	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to maritime safety and cooperation agreements	C	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements related to a broad range of maritime safety fields	S	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements with national and international stakeholders relevant to the management of maritime safety fields



MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL MARITIME SAFETY								
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	C	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime safety	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime safety activities	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for maritime safety activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	C	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for maritime safety activities
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime safety and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime safety activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	S	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime safety		
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems



MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL MARITIME SAFETY								
Strategy and Planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource Management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	S	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification
Health and safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff	C	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in maritime safety activities	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process

MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
INSPECTIVE ACTIVITIES ON BOARD SHIPS Flag State - Port State control								
Operational management	K	Outline principles of ships organization and working arrangements	K	Describe ships organization and working arrangements				
			K	Outline the maritime safety conditions for ships access into port	S	Evaluate compliance with maritime safety conditions for ships access into port		
Inspections and surveys	K	Outline procedures for maritime safety inspections and surveys	K	Describe procedures for maritime safety inspection and surveys	K	Explain procedures for maritime safety inspection and surveys		
			S	Apply a range of techniques to support maritime safety inspection and survey activities	S	Conduct a broad range of surveys and inspections according to international, EU and national legislation and procedures, ensuring compliance with safety requirements	S	Strategically plan and implement programs of surveys and inspections according to international, EU and national legislation and procedures
					S	Critically evaluate the results of surveys and inspections to identify emerging trends to support relevant planning		
			K	Describe the grounds for conducting detailed inspections or detaining a ship	C	Justify the decision to conduct detailed inspections or detain a ship in the context of relevant procedures and professional judgement		
Certification and standards			K	Outline the standards of documentation and certificates compliance according to a range of maritime safety laws	S	Assess standards and conditions to issue, verify and endorse maritime safety related certification		



MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
MONITORING AND AUDITING ACTIVITIES								
Maritime education and training institutions; recognised organisation; notified bodies								
Laws, policies and rules			K	Define and explain procedures for communication and reporting with relevant external bodies to be audited	S	Implement rules and procedures for monitoring the activity of relevant external bodies to be audited		
Inspection activities			K	Outline a range of auditing techniques for relevant external bodies to be audited	K	Conduct a full audit of the quality of relevant external bodies in accordance with national and international applicable standards and procedures		
VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE								
Law, policies, rules and procedures			K	Define and interpret local bylaws, circulars, guidance, notes and accepted procedures on vessel traffic service	K	Evaluate the organisation, responsibilities and legal implications associated with the vessel traffic service		
	K	Recognise indicators of actual or potential maritime distress situations during vessel monitoring activities	K	Describe a range of maritime search and rescue procedures relevant to vessel traffic monitoring activities				
Communication	S	Follow established procedures to transmit and receive ship-to-shore and shore-to-shore communications in a range of vessel traffic monitoring activities	S	Evaluate and improve formal written and oral communications during vessel traffic monitoring activities				
Information and data management	S	Collect information relevant to VTS activities	S	Analyse all available information relevant to ship type, meteorological and hydrographical conditions that may influence the flow of traffic within a VTS area				
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to vessel traffic service activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in vessel traffic service activities	K	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during vessel traffic service activities, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to vessel traffic service activities as integral part of organisational process



MARITIME SAFETY, INCLUDING VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE								
Operational management	K	Describe the basic elements of navigation and kinematics, nautical charts and other nautical publications	S	Apply basic elements of navigation and kinematics to regular vessel traffic service activities	S	Apply navigation and kinematics principles to complex vessel traffic service activities		
	K	Outline the principles of port operations, port layouts and ship movements	S	Describe a range of nautical and port operations	S	Explain a broad range of nautical and port operations		
	K	Outline specific contingency plans relevant to the vessel traffic service area of responsibility	K	Identify potential involvement for vessel traffic services in the context of contingency plans relevant to the vessel traffic service area of responsibility				
	K	Outline a range of aids to navigation relevant to maritime environments	K	Describe the functions of aids to navigation relevant to maritime environments	K	Evaluate the functioning of a broad range of aids to navigation relevant to maritime environments		
	S	Apply techniques to maintain concentration and attention of details and manage stress	S	Apply procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue	S	Develop plans and procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue		
	K	Outline the services provided in the VTS area	S	Provide the range of vessel traffic services	C	Critically evaluate and improve the provision of vessel traffic services	C	Develop plan and procedures to ensure the provision of vessel traffic services in case of emergency
Monitoring activities	S	Apply techniques to monitor traffic in vessel traffic service area			S	Evaluate the implementation of operational plans for maritime monitoring of vessel traffic service area	S	Establish strategic objectives and priorities for maritime monitoring activities to achieve goals and needs of different relevant domains





MARITIME SHIP AND PORT SECURITY





MARITIME SHIP AND PORT SECURITY

Combination of preventive measures intended to protect shipping, ports and port facilities against threats of intentional unlawful acts.

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Law, policies and rules	K	Outline specific international, EU and national laws, rules and procedures on maritime ship and port security	K	Describe a range of international, EU and national laws, rules and procedures on maritime ship and port security	K	Define and interpret a broad range of international, EU and national maritime ship and port security legal frameworks, and non-mandatory guidelines and recommendations	K	Critically evaluate international, EU and national policies and strategies on maritime ship and port security
					K	Critically evaluate maritime ship and port security rules and procedures	C	Develop new procedures and instructions relevant to maritime ship and port security in compliance with national, EU and international policy and legal frameworks
			K	Describe the structure and responsibilities of national competent authority for the implementation and enforcement of maritime ship and port security	K	Explain the role and responsibilities of government, companies and designated persons in maritime ship and port security		
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime ship and port security	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures and cooperation agreements related to maritime ship and port security	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements related to a broad range of maritime ship and port security activities	S	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements with national and international stakeholders relevant to the management of maritime ship and port security
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	C	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime ship and port security and draft clear and complete reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime ship and port security activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	S	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime ship and port security		



MARITIME SHIP AND PORT SECURITY								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime ship and port security	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime ship and port security	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for maritime ship and port security activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for maritime ship and port security activities
Risk Management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to maritime ship and port security activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in maritime ship and port security activities	S	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during maritime ship and port security activities, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to maritime ship and port security activities as integral part of organisational process
Health and safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff involved in maritime ship and port security activities	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in maritime ship and port security activities	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems



MARITIME SHIP AND PORT SECURITY								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Operational Management			S	Selectively apply security measures and procedures aboard ship and in port environment	S	Critically evaluate ship and port control measures		
			S	Apply a range of procedures to respond to ship security alerts	S	Implement all necessary actions in response to ship security alerts	C	Coordinate the response to ship security alerts in complex situations
			S	Apply a range of techniques to brief, debrief and update operational personnel involved in maritime ship and port security activities	S	Manage a programme of disseminating good practice and lessons learned from maritime ship and port security		
	K	Outline the conditions for preventing a ship from entering the port for maritime ship and port security reasons	S	Implement procedures to grant clearance to a ship for entering a port				
Inspection and survey Reporting and logging	S	Apply procedures to perform non complex inspection activities related to maritime ship and port security	K	Describe and distinguish a range of inspection procedures and guidelines related to maritime ship and port security	S	Conduct complete inspections or surveys related to maritime ship and port security	K	Critically evaluate a broad range of procedures to manage and coordinate maritime ship and port security inspection activities
					S	Plan different types of inspection to ensure maritime ship and port security	S	Coordinate large scale campaigns of inspections to achieve strategic goals relevant to maritime ship and port security
Security Assessment and Plans			K	Describe concept and tools relevant to port/port facility security assessment	S	Conduct security assessment of port/port facilities in accordance with regulatory frameworks		
			K	Describe concepts and tools to develop and evaluate non complex security plans	S	Develop and evaluate port/port facilities security plans in accordance with the regulatory frameworks	K	Critically evaluate complex security plans and security assessment of port facilities/ ports
			K	Describe a broad range of security access control measures relevant to port/port facility	S	Evaluate the measures to control access to all of the areas in a port/port facility		
			K	Describe concept and tools relevant to ship security assessment and ship security plan	S	Evaluate ship security plans against certification standards		



MARITIME SHIP AND PORT SECURITY								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Certification and standards	K	Outline the standards of documentation and certificates' compliance according to a range of maritime ship and port security requirements	S	Check documentation compliance against regulatory standards applicable in the field of maritime ship and port security	K	Describe and distinguish procedures for issuing, renewing, suspending and withdrawing certificates and other authorisation documents relevant maritime ship and port security		
					S	Assess standards and conditions for issuing maritime ship and port security-related certificates and other authorisation documents		
Strategy and Planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource Management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	S	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	C	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification





MARITIME CUSTOM ACTIVITIES





MARITIME CUSTOMS ACTIVITIES

Activity performed to fight against fraud and forms of transnational trafficking in breach of applicable maritime customs provisions, including the prevention and detection of relevant infringements

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline a defined range of national, EU and international laws, rules and procedures relevant to maritime customs activities	K	Describe a range of national, EU and international laws, rules and procedures relevant to maritime customs activities, tax of import/export regulations	K	Define and interpret national, EU and international laws, rules and procedures relevant to maritime customs activities	K	Critically evaluate the existing legal and procedural frameworks relevant to maritime customs activities
					K	Define and interpret maritime laws and rules, including maritime zones and sovereignty spaces		
	K	Outline a defined range of applicable rules and procedures on reporting formalities relevant to maritime customs activities	K	Distinguish a range of applicable rules and procedures on reporting formalities relevant to maritime customs activities				
	K	Outline a defined range of applicable procedures for smuggling of goods at sea	K	Describe a range of applicable procedures for smuggling of goods at sea	K	Evaluate a broad range of applicable procedures for smuggling of goods at sea		
					K	Define and explain the legal framework related to detection procedures and offender prosecution		
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime customs activities	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime customs activities	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime customs activities	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to maritime customs activities
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications, including the use of international standard maritime phraseology	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	C	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
	K	Describe the organisation policy and procedures related to the release of information to the public through any communication channel, including the media			C	Manage relationships with the media and the release of public information, balancing public expectations with organisational responsibilities, data protection and confidentiality requirements		



MARITIME CUSTOMS ACTIVITIES								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	S	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime customs activities	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime customs activities	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for maritime customs activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for maritime customs activities
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime customs activities and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime customs activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	S	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime customs activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to maritime customs activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in maritime customs activities	C	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during maritime customs activities, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to maritime customs activities as integral part of organisational process
Intelligence	S	Apply information gathering and reporting procedures related to maritime customs activities	S	Identify and recognise the potential of information as intelligence	S	Differentiate between levels and quality of information and share it for intelligence purposes	C	Establish priorities for intelligence gathering and dissemination, recognising the strategic implications of maritime customs activities intelligence
Investigation	K	Outline the techniques to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected smuggling of goods by sea	S	Apply established procedures to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected smuggling of goods by sea				
	S	Apply procedures to take statements from witnesses or persons suspected of legal infringements related to smuggling of goods by sea						



MARITIME CUSTOMS ACTIVITIES								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Use of force and coercive measures	S	Demonstrate a range of skills necessary for the use of force and coercive measures that comply with fundamental rights	S	Use force and coercive measures to protect security and safety of persons and property in accordance with fundamental rights	C	Assess individual and tactical responses to threats that endanger the security and safety of persons or property in accordance with fundamental rights		
Search, seizure and detention	S	Conduct an effective search of goods, ships and persons in compliance with regulations, procedures and fundamental rights	S	Detain persons and seize property in compliance with law, procedures and fundamental rights legislation	S	Coordinate search, seizure and detention activities ensuring compliance with procedures and fundamental rights		
Health and Safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff involved in maritime customs activities	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in maritime customs activities	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems
Operational management	K	Describe a range of watch procedures relevant to maritime customs activities	K	Describe and distinguish a comprehensive range of watch procedures relevant to maritime customs activities				
	S	Apply techniques to maintain concentration and attention of details and manage stress	S	Apply procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue	S	Develop plans and procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue		
	S	Apply a range of rules and procedures relevant to specific maritime customs activities	S	Evaluate the implementation of a range of rules and procedures relevant to specific maritime customs activities	S	Develop operational plans relevant to a range of maritime customs activities		

MARITIME CUSTOMS ACTIVITIES								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Inspection activities	K	Identify a range of different vessel types and the organisation of space on board						
	S	Perform specific inspection activities, including rummage, sampling and search of cargo carried by sea	S	Evaluate the implementation of a range of inspection activities, including rummage, sampling and search of cargo carried by sea	S	Develop and coordinate inspection activities including rummage, sampling, search activities and quality checks		
Monitoring activities	S	Apply a range of techniques to monitor cargo vessels and recognise suspicious deviation from usual routes	S	Evaluate the effectiveness of operational monitoring activities	C	Establish operational priorities for monitoring activities	C	Establish strategic tasks and targets for maritime monitoring and surveillance activities
Strategy and Planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tool to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource management			S	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	C	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain personal issue and a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification





**PREVENTION
AND SUPPRESSION OF
TRAFFICKING
AND SMUGGLING AT SEA
AND CONNECTED
MARITIME LAW
ENFORCEMENT**





**PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING AT SEA
AND CONNECTED MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Activity performed to prevent, detect and respond to criminal, fraudulent or suspicious activities related to trafficking and smuggling in the maritime domain, implementing relevant maritime law enforcement

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Laws, policies, rules and procedures Search, seizure and detention	K	Outline the basic principles of laws and procedures relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea	K	Describe a range of national and international of laws and procedures relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea	K	Define and interpret national and international of laws and procedures relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea	K	Critically evaluate international, European and national maritime legal frameworks relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea
	K	Outline the structure and responsibilities of the national authorities in charge of the implementation and enforcement of laws applicable to smuggling and trafficking at sea						
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to tackle trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to tackle trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to tackle trafficking and smuggling at sea	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to tackle trafficking and smuggling at sea
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	S	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
	K	Describe the organisation policy and procedures related to the release of information to the public through any communication channel, including the media			C	Manage relationships with the media and the release of public information, balancing public expectations with organisational responsibilities, data protection and confidentiality requirements		
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection



**PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING AT SEA
AND CONNECTED MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Tools and Equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to prevent, detect and respond to trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to prevent, detect and respond to trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment relevant to prevent, detect and respond to trafficking and smuggling at sea and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies relevant to prevent, detect and respond to trafficking and smuggling at sea
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to counter-trafficking and anti-smuggling and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of counter-trafficking and anti-smuggling activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	C	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for counter-trafficking and anti-smuggling activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to a range of activities to tackle trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Apply a range of tactics and techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks during surveillance, interception and boarding vessels suspected of involvement in trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during surveillance, interception and boarding vessels suspected of involvement in trafficking and smuggling at sea, prioritising the response options	C	Monitor, revise and adjust risk management strategies applicable to surveillance, interception and boarding vessels suspected of involvement in trafficking and smuggling at sea as integral part of organisational process
Intelligence	K	Outline the basics of open source, human and covert intelligence methods relevant to the trafficking and smuggling activities at sea	S	Classify relevant information as intelligence related to trafficking and smuggling activities at sea	S	Conduct intelligence analyses to inform detection and investigation activities related to trafficking and smuggling activities at sea	C	Ensure the intelligence lead strategic management of resources for the investigation of trafficking and smuggling at sea
Investigation	K	Outline the techniques to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected trafficking and smuggling activities at sea	S	Apply established procedures to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected trafficking and smuggling activities at sea				
			S	Collate information, reports and evidence to construct a case file related to suspected trafficking and smuggling at sea for submission to administrative or judicial proceedings	C	Evaluate case files related to suspected trafficking and smuggling at sea against legal and evidential standards		



**PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING AT SEA
AND CONNECTED MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Investigation	S	Apply procedures to take statements from witnesses or persons suspected of legal infringements related to trafficking and smuggling	S	Plan and conduct a structured interview of persons suspected of involvement in non-complex trafficking and smuggling legal infringements, in accordance with policies and procedures	S	Plan and conduct a structured interview of persons suspected of involvement in complex trafficking and smuggling legal infringements in accordance with policies and procedures		
Operational management	K	Outline a range of tactical intervention techniques relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Apply a range of tactical intervention techniques relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Develop and implement operational plans to detect, shadow, intercept and board vessels suspected of trafficking and smuggling at sea	C	Evaluate and adapt the operational plans to address significant unexpected circumstances relevant to trafficking and smuggling at sea
			S	Apply a range of techniques to brief, debrief and update operational personnel	S	Manage a programme of disseminating good practice and lessons learned from counter trafficking and anti-smuggling activities		
Search and seizure			S	Conduct an effective search of vessels, goods and persons on board for evidence of trafficking and smuggling at sea in compliance with law and procedures	S	Coordinate search and seizure activities related to trafficking and smuggling at sea in compliance with law and procedures		
Use of force and coercive measures	S	Demonstrate a range of skills necessary for the use of force and coercive measures that comply with fundamental rights	S	Use force and coercive measures to protect security and safety of persons and property in accordance with fundamental rights	C	Assess individual and tactical responses to threats that endanger the security and safety of persons or property in accordance with fundamental rights		
Monitoring activities	K	Outline monitoring techniques to detect indicators of potential trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Apply a range of monitoring tools and techniques to detect indicators of potential trafficking and smuggling at sea				
	K	Outline procedures and techniques for maritime surveillance of trafficking and smuggling at sea	S	Apply procedures and techniques for maritime surveillance activities based on indicators of trafficking and smuggling at sea				



**PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING AT SEA
AND CONNECTED MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Health and Safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all staff	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	C	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems
Strategy and planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tool to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain personal issue and a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	C	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification





MARITIME MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE





MARITIME MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

Maritime monitoring: activities carried out to enhance the safety and efficiency of maritime traffic, improving the response of authorities to incident, accidents or potentially dangerous situations at sea, including search and rescue operations, and contributing to a better prevention and detection of pollution by ships.

Maritime surveillance: effective understanding of all activities carried out at sea that could have an impact or threat the security, safety, economy or environment of the European Union and its Member States. Maritime surveillance activities may include the support to response and enforcement operations at sea.

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline a limited range of principles of national, EU and international legislation and regulations on the law of the sea	K	Describe a range of national, EU and international legislation and regulations on the law of the sea	K	Define and explain a broad range of national, EU and international legislation and regulations on the law of the sea	K	Critically evaluate national, EU and international legal frameworks and rules on the law of the sea
	K	Outline a limited range of principles of national, EU and international legislation, plans and procedures on maritime traffic and monitoring	K	Describe a range of national, EU and international legislation, plans and procedures on maritime traffic monitoring	K	Define and explain a range of national, EU and international legislation, plans and procedures on maritime traffic monitoring	K	Critically evaluate national, EU and international policies and strategies related to maritime traffic monitoring, surveillance activities and priorities
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime monitoring and surveillance activities	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime monitoring and surveillance	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime monitoring and surveillance	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to maritime monitoring and surveillance
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	C	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection

MARITIME MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant for vessel traffic monitoring	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant for vessel traffic monitoring	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for vessel traffic monitoring activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for vessel traffic monitoring and surveillance activities
	S	Use a wide range of positioning tools to plot and update the position of sensitive targets						
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to vessel monitoring and surveillance activities and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of vessel monitoring and surveillance activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	C	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for vessel monitoring and surveillance activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to vessel monitoring and surveillance activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in vessel monitoring and surveillance activities	S	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during vessel monitoring and surveillance activities, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to vessel monitoring and surveillance activities as integral part of organisational process
Intelligence	S	Apply information gathering and reporting procedures related to vessel monitoring and surveillance	S	Identify and recognise the potential of information as intelligence	S	Differentiate between levels and quality of information and share it for intelligence purposes	C	Establish priorities for intelligence gathering and dissemination, recognising the strategic implications of vessel monitoring and surveillance intelligence
Investigation	S	Identify indicators of a range of infringements of maritime law	S	Detect a range of suspected infringements of maritime law				
Health and Safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all staff	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process



MARITIME MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems
Monitoring activities	K	Recognise a range of vessel types and their related activities	K	Recognise a broad range of vessel types and their related activities				
	S	Apply a range of tools and techniques for maritime monitoring and surveillance activities	S	Implement specific maritime monitoring and surveillance activities in accordance with the operational plan	S	Evaluate the implementation of operational plans for maritime monitoring and surveillance	C	Establish strategic objectives and priorities for maritime monitoring and surveillance activities, balancing goals and needs of different relevant domains
	S	Apply techniques to maintain concentration and attention of details and manage stress	S	Apply procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue	S	Develop plans and procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue		
Resource Management			S	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification



MARITIME ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESPONSE





MARITIME ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESPONSE

Activities related to maritime pollution prevention, preparedness and response, including the control and prevention of ship-source pollution

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL MARITIME ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RESPONSE								
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline a limited range of international, EU and national maritime legislation relevant for maritime pollution prevention and response	K	Describe a range of international, EU and national maritime legislation relevant for maritime pollution prevention and response	K	Define and interpret international, EU and national maritime legislation relevant for maritime pollution prevention and response	K	Critically evaluate international, EU and national maritime environmental policies and strategies
	K	Outline the structure and responsibilities of the national authorities in charge of the implementation and enforcement of laws applicable to maritime pollution prevention and response	K	Describe the structure and responsibilities of the national authorities in charge of the implementation and enforcement of laws applicable to maritime pollution prevention and response	K	Explain the structure and responsibilities of the national authorities in charge of the implementation and enforcement of laws applicable to maritime pollution prevention and response	K	Critically evaluate the structure and procedures of national authorities in charge of the implementation and enforcement of the laws applicable to maritime pollution prevention and response
	K	Outline specific international, EU and national maritime environmental procedures and guidelines	K	Describe a range of international, EU and national maritime environmental procedures, recommendations and guidelines	K	Define and distinguish a broad range of relevant international, EU and national maritime environmental procedures, recommendations and guidelines	K	Critically evaluate international, EU and national maritime environmental legislation, procedures and guidelines
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime pollution prevention and response	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime pollution prevention and response	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to maritime pollution prevention and response	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to maritime pollution prevention and response
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	C	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection

MARITIME ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL MARITIME ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RESPONSE								
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime pollution prevention and response	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime pollution prevention and response activities	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for maritime pollution prevention and response activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for maritime pollution prevention and response activities
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime pollution prevention and response and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime pollution prevention and response activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	S	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime pollution prevention and response activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to maritime pollution prevention and response activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in maritime pollution prevention and response activities	S	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during maritime pollution prevention and response activities, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to maritime pollution prevention and response operations as integral part of organisational process
Health and safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff involved in maritime pollution prevention and response activities	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in maritime pollution prevention and response activities	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process related to maritime pollution prevention and response operations
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems



MARITIME ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL MARITIME ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RESPONSE								
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification
	S	Maintain a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
S				Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Operational management	K	Outline a range of contingency plans related to maritime environment protection and response	S	Apply a range of techniques to brief, debrief and update operational personnel	S	Manage a programme of disseminating good practice and lessons learned from maritime pollution prevention and response operations	C	Critically evaluate and develop contingency plans for major complex maritime pollution response operations
			S	Apply a range of procedures of the contingency plans relevant to maritime protection and response	S	Implement contingency plans related to maritime protection and response and evaluate relevant procedures		
	K	Describe local maritime environment and geographical features	C	Adapt operational procedures to accommodate local maritime environment and geographical features in maritime pollution prevention and response activities	S	Integrate local maritime environment and geographical features into maritime pollution prevention and response operational plans		
	K	Outline specific polluting substances and their classification relevant to maritime environment	K	Recognise and describe a broad range of polluting substances relevant to maritime environment	S	Apply combinations of response techniques and procedures for complex maritime pollution events	C	Coordinate the response to a major maritime environment pollution event
	S	Apply response techniques and procedures for common polluting substances	S	Selectively apply response techniques and procedures for a broad range of polluting substances				

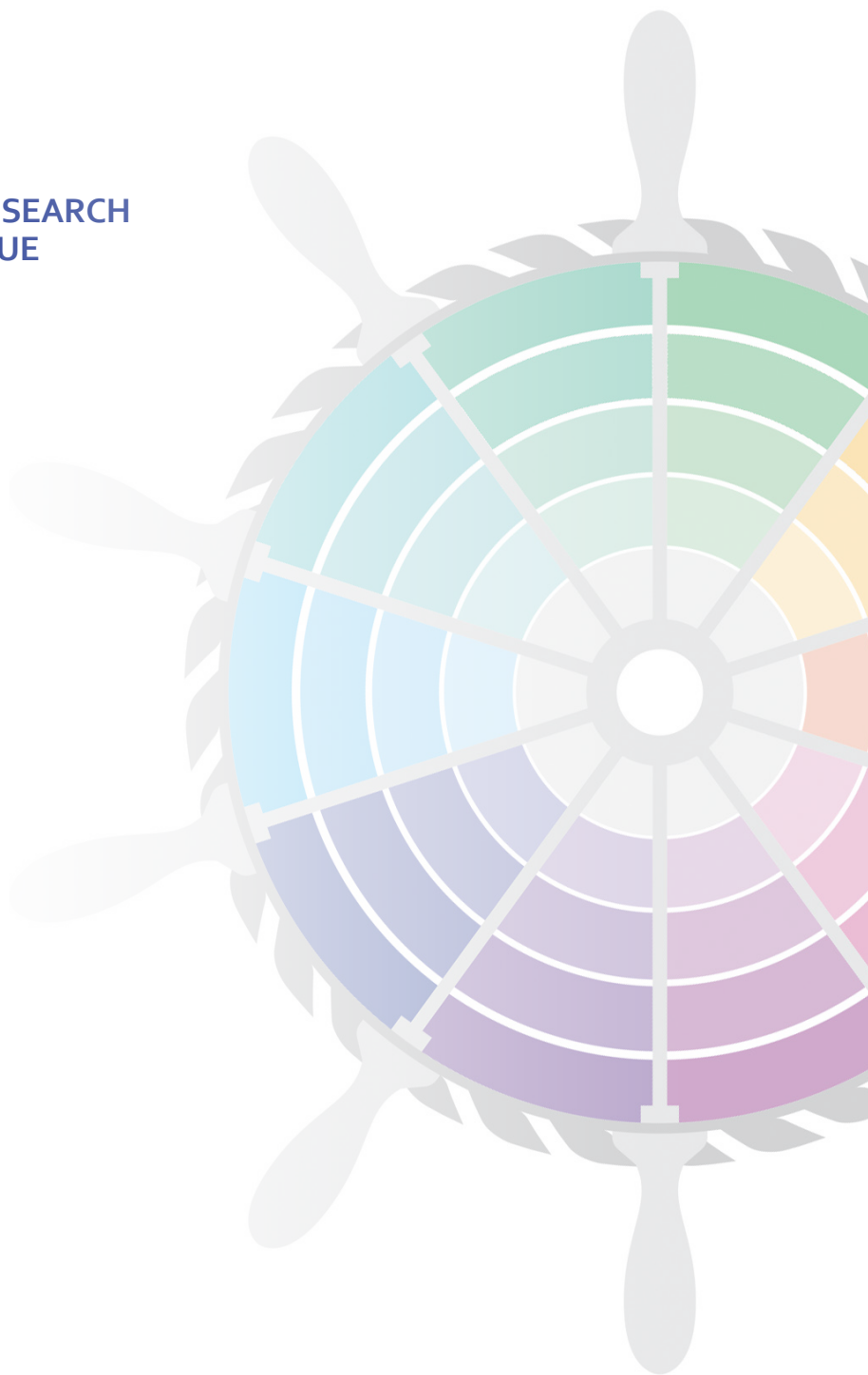


MARITIME ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES								
Operational management	S	Apply a range of sampling techniques relevant to marine environment protection activities	S	Evaluate the collection and selection of samples relevant to marine environment protection activities				
	K	Describe the purposes and methods of monitoring and patrolling in maritime environment protection activities	S	Apply tactics for monitoring and patrolling relevant to maritime environment protection activities	S	Plan and coordinate monitoring and patrol activities of maritime areas to prevent and detect pollution events	C	Critically evaluate the effectiveness of monitoring and patrol activities for the prevention and detection of maritime pollution events
INSPECTIONS AND CONTROLS								
Investigation	S	Identify different waste goods and related waste management practices and procedures aboard ships	K	Describe the marine environment protection elements of the ship safety management system				
	K	Outline marine pollution investigation techniques	S	Apply marine pollution investigation techniques	K	Define and distinguish a broad range of marine pollution investigation techniques		
					S	Conduct marine pollution investigations according to the relevant legislation, procedures and guidelines		
	K	Outline the techniques to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected infringements related to maritime pollution	S	Apply established procedures to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected infringements related to maritime pollution				
Inspection activities	K	Describe a range of techniques and procedures for inspections relevant to maritime environment protection	S	Apply a range of techniques and procedures for inspections relevant to maritime environment	S	Conduct inspections, ensuring that requirements of the EU and national maritime environmental legislation and procedures are complied	K	Critically evaluate inspection processes both on board and ashore for maritime environment protection





MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE





MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE

Activities and duties related to the conduct and coordination of search and rescue of persons in distress at sea, provision of emergency medical services for them and conduct of radio communications related to emergency phases and operations, through the use of public and private resources, including cooperating aircraft, vessel and other assets and facilities

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline specific national and international laws relevant to maritime search and rescue, including national search and rescue organisation and response	K	Describe a range of national and international regulations relevant to the law of the sea, maritime search and rescue, including national search and rescue organisation and response	K	Define and interpret national and international legal frameworks relevant to maritime search and rescue, including national search and rescue organisation and response	K	Critically evaluate national and international legal frameworks relevant to maritime search and rescue, in the wider context of other relevant coast guard functions and services
	K	Outline the procedures relevant for the handling of the different emergency phases during a maritime search and rescue event	K	Describe clearly the procedures, roles and duties relevant to handling a range of maritime search and rescue events	K	Define and explain maritime and aeronautical search criteria, planning and execution, relevant to the coordination of air, maritime and shore based assets		
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements in maritime search and rescue activities	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to maritime search and rescue partnership and cooperation agreements	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements related to maritime search and rescue activities	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to the management of maritime search and rescue operations
Communication	S	Follow established protocols and procedures to transmit and receive ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications during search and rescue activities	S	Evaluate and improve formal written and oral communications during maritime search and rescue activities	S	Develop and implement the communication plan of maritime search and rescue operations	K	Critically evaluate communication strategies, plans and procedures relevant to maritime search and rescue operations
	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	S	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
	K	Describe the organisation policy and procedures related to the release of information to the public through any communication channel, including the media			C	Manage relationships with the media and the release of public information, balancing public expectations with organisational responsibilities, data protection and confidentiality requirements		



MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
	S	Collect real time information on maritime search and rescue activities and related scenarios to facilitate situational awareness	S	Select information on maritime search and rescue activities to inform operational decision making	S	Evaluate available information on maritime search and rescue activities in the context of the operational plan		
Tools and technology	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime search and rescue activities	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime search and rescue activities	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for maritime search and rescue activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for maritime search and rescue operations
	S	Use a wide range of positioning tools to plot and update the position of assets and other involved targets in maritime search and rescue activities						
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime search and rescue activities and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime search and rescue activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	C	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime search and rescue activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to maritime search and rescue activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in maritime search and rescue activities	S	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during maritime search and rescue operations, prioritising the response options	S	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to maritime search and rescue operations as integral part of organisational process
Health and safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in search and rescue operations	S	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process



MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Investigation	K	Apply established procedures to collect, secure and document information and evidence of a range of potential infringements of the law in maritime environments	S	Apply established procedures to collect, secure and document information and evidence of a broad range of potential infringements of the law in maritime environments				
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of tactical management principles to maritime search and rescue activities	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems
Operational management	S	Apply a range of search patterns and rescue techniques for maritime search and rescue activities	S	Evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of search patterns and rescue techniques for maritime search and rescue activities	S	Match search patterns and rescue techniques with operational and environmental circumstances of maritime search and rescue activities		
	S	Describe the basic elements of navigation and kinematics, nautical charts and other nautical publications	S	Apply basic elements of navigation and kinematics to regular maritime environment and situations	S	Apply navigation and kinematics principles to complex maritime environment and situations		
	S	Classify a maritime incident into the appropriate emergency phase and initiate the relevant operational procedures	S	Implement specific activities in accordance with the rescue and recovery plan for a maritime search and rescue operation	S	Develop a rescue and recovery plan for a maritime search and rescue operation, ensuring the effective deployment of resources and expertise	S	Manage complex maritime search and rescue operations involving external assets
			S	Apply a range of techniques to brief, debrief and update operational personnel	S	Manage a programme of disseminating good practice and lessons learned from maritime search and rescue events		
			S	Describe the implications of different weather and sea conditions on operational procedures in maritime search and rescue	C	Adapt operational procedures to minimize potential hazards resulting from severe sea and weather conditions in maritime search and rescue activities	C	Manage a search and rescue operation in extreme sea and weather conditions



MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE									
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7	
Operational management	K	Describe local maritime environment and geographical features	S	Adapt operational procedures to accommodate local maritime environment and geographical features in maritime search and rescue activities	C	Integrate local maritime environment and geographical features into maritime search and rescue operational plans			
	K	Outline the impact of human factors on maritime search and rescue activities	C	Adapt operational procedures to accommodate a range of human factors in maritime search and rescue activities	C	Integrate the effect of human factors in the maritime search and rescue operational plan			
	S	Apply a range of first response procedures to medical emergencies in maritime search and rescue activities							
	S	Apply protocols and procedures for dealing with injured or deceased persons in maritime search and rescue events	S	Evaluate the implementation of protocols and procedures for dealing with injured or deceased persons in maritime search and rescue events	C	Develop protocols and procedures for the management of injured or deceased persons in cooperation with other the national competent authorities for maritime search and rescue events	C	Manage international cooperation protocols for dealing with foreign injured or deceased persons in maritime search and rescue	
				K	Describe a range of salvage and towing techniques useful to complement maritime search and rescue activities	K	Define and distinguish salvage techniques and how to resource national towing and other assets as necessary for maritime search and rescue activities		
				S	Implement procedures to interdict danger areas and exclusion zones involved in maritime search and rescue operations	S	Evaluate the implications of the interdiction of temporary danger areas and/or exclusion zones involved in maritime search and rescue operations		
	K	Recognise major pollution events that may occur during maritime search and rescue operations	S	Identify a broad range of potential pollution events during maritime search and rescue operations					
				K	Implement relevant contingency plans to handle pollution events during maritime search and rescue operations				



MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Operational management	S	Apply techniques to maintain concentration and attention of details and manage stress	S	Apply procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue	S	Develop plans and procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue		
Strategy and Planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tool to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan, evaluate and coordinate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	K	Maintain personal issue and a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	C	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification



SHIP CASUALTY AND MARITIME ASSISTANCE SERVICE





SHIP CASUALTY AND MARITIME ASSISTANCE SERVICE

Activities related to the monitoring of incident signals and to the request of ships in need of assistance

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline principles of specific international, EU and national legislation, plans and procedures on maritime safety relevant to ship casualty and maritime assistance service	K	Describe a range of international, EU and national legislation, plans and procedures on maritime safety relevant to ship casualty and maritime assistance service	K	Explain a broad range of international, EU and national legislation, plans and procedures on maritime safety relevant to ship casualty and maritime assistance service	K	Critically evaluate the political and legal frameworks related to ship casualty and maritime assistance service
			K	Describe a range of procedures relevant to the management of maritime ship casualty and maritime assistance service	K	Define and interpret laws and guidelines on maritime assistance referring to the assignment of a place of refuge		
	K	Outline the structure and responsibilities of national authority in charge of the maritime assistance service	K	Describe the structure and responsibilities of national authority in charge of providing maritime assistance services				
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements to provide a maritime assistance service	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements related to a maritime assistance service	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements related to maritime assistance services	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to the management of maritime assistance services
Communication	S	Follow established protocols and procedures to transmit and receive ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications for the maritime assistance service	S	Evaluate and improve formal written and oral communications in the context of the maritime assistance service	S	Develop and implement the communication plan for the maritime assistance service	K	Critically evaluate communication strategies, plans and procedures relevant to the maritime assistance service
	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	C	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
	K	Describe the organisation policy and procedures related to the release of information to the public through any communication channel, including the media			C	Manage relationships with the media and the release of public information, balancing public expectations with organisational responsibilities, data protection and confidentiality requirements		



SHIP CASUALTY AND MARITIME ASSISTANCE SERVICE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
	S	Collect real time information on ship casualty and related scenarios to facilitate situational awareness	S	Select information on ship casualty to inform operational decision making	S	Evaluate available information on ship casualty in the context of the operational plan		
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime assistance services	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime assistance services	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for providing a maritime assistance service and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for providing maritime assistance services
	S	Use a wide range of positioning tools to plot and update the position of assets and other involved targets in search and rescue activities						
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of maritime assistance service activities and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime assistance service activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	S	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime assistance activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to ship casualty emergencies	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in ship casualty emergencies	C	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during ship casualty emergencies, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies to handle ship casualty emergencies as integral part of organisational process
Health and safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in maritime assistance service activities	C	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process



SHIP CASUALTY AND MARITIME ASSISTANCE SERVICE									
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7	
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of tactical management principles to maritime search and rescue activities	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques	
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems	
Operational management	K	Describe local maritime environment and geographical features	S	Adapt operational procedures to accommodate local maritime environment and geographical features in maritime assistance service activities	C	Integrate local maritime environment and geographical features into maritime assistance service operational plan			
	K	Outline the national maritime pollution response system	K	Describe a range of procedures and responsibilities of national maritime pollution response system					
	K	Describe the basic elements of navigation and kinematics, nautical charts and other nautical publications	S	Apply basic elements of navigation and kinematics to regular maritime assistance service activities	S	Apply navigation and kinematics principles to complex maritime assistance service activities			
	K	Outline specific contingency plans relevant to ship casualty and maritime assistance service	K	Identify potential involvement for maritime assistance service in the context of contingency plans					
				S	Apply a range of procedures to respond to a ship in need of assistance	C	Assess the request for a place of refuge from a ship in need of assistance for decision making	C	Critically evaluate the procedures to accept or refuse to accommodate a ship in need of assistance in a place of refuge
	S	Recognise the conditions when a ship casualty may require a search and rescue operation	S	Apply a range of procedures to respond to ship casualty events requiring a search and rescue operations					
Inspection activities	K	Outline a range of inspection techniques relevant to ship casualty event	S	Apply a range of techniques and procedures to support inspection activities relevant to ship casualty events					



SHIP CASUALTY AND MARITIME ASSISTANCE SERVICE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Monitoring activities	S	Apply a range of tools and techniques for monitoring specific sea areas	S	Implement a range of maritime monitoring activities to identify potential situations needing maritime assistance service	S	Evaluate the implementation of operational plans for maritime monitoring activities in the area of responsibility		
Strategy and Planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tool to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan, evaluate and coordinate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain personal issue and a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation	C	Design and implement organisational training strategy to ensure the development and maintenance of staff skills, competences and related certification





MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE





MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE

Actions taken to respond to imminent disaster at sea, during or after it, including also mass rescue operations when the capabilities normally available to search and rescue authorities are inadequate

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline specific national and international laws relevant to maritime search and rescue, including national search and rescue organisation and response	K	Describe a range of national and international regulations relevant to the law of the sea, maritime search and rescue, including national search and rescue organisation and response	K	Define and interpret national and international legal frameworks relevant to maritime search and rescue, including national search and rescue organisation and response	K	Critically evaluate national and international legal frameworks relevant to maritime search and rescue, in the wider context of other relevant coast guard functions and services
	K	Outline the national maritime pollution response system	K	Describe the structure and a range of procedures of the national maritime pollution response system	K	Explain the structure and responsibilities of the national authorities in charge of the implementation of maritime pollution responses	K	Critically evaluate the structure and procedures of national authorities in charge of the implementation of maritime pollution responses
			K	Describe principles of international, EU and national legislation on damage assessment and claims analysis relevant to maritime accident and disaster events	K	Define and explain international, EU and national legal framework and procedures for damage assessment and claims analysis relevant to maritime accident and disaster events		
			K	Describe a range of relevant national rules and procedures on waste management related to maritime accident and disaster events	K	Define and explain relevant international, EU and national rules on waste management related to maritime accident and disaster events	K	Critically evaluate the procedures to ensure an effective management of wastes deriving from maritime accident and disaster events
			K	Describe marine safety investigation system, role and responsibilities of relevant investigation bodies				
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements for maritime accident and disaster response	C	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to partnership and cooperation agreements for maritime accident and disaster response	C	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements related to maritime accident and disaster response	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to the management maritime accident and disaster response operations



MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Communication	S	Follow established protocols and procedures to transmit and receive ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications during the activities of maritime accident and disaster response operations	C	Evaluate and improve formal written and oral communications during the activities of maritime accident and disaster response operations	S	Develop and implement the communication plan for maritime accident and disaster response operations	K	Critically evaluate communication strategies, plans and procedures relevant to maritime accident and disaster response operations
	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications including the use of international standard maritime phraseology in routine communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	S	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders
	K	Describe the organisation policy and procedures related to the release of information to the public through any communication channel, including the media	C	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Manage relationships with the media and the release of public information, balancing public expectations with organisational responsibilities, data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
	S	Collect real time information on maritime accident and disaster response activities and related scenarios to facilitate situational awareness	S	Select information on maritime accident and disaster response activities to inform operational decision making	S	Evaluate available information on maritime accident and disaster response activities in the context of the operational plan		



MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to maritime accident and disaster response activities	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to maritime accident and disaster response activities	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for maritime accident and disaster response activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for maritime accident and disaster response operations
	S	Use a wide range of positioning tools to plot and update the position of assets and other involved targets in maritime accident and disaster response activities						
Reporting activities	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime accident and disaster response operations and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of activities related to maritime accident and disaster response operations for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	C	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime accident and disaster response operations		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to activities related to maritime accident and disaster response operations	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in maritime accident and disaster response operations	S	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during maritime accident and disaster response operations, prioritising the response options	S	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to maritime accident and disaster response operations as integral part of organisational process
Health and Safety	S	Apply health and safety rules in individual work activities	K	Outline the health and safety rules applicable for operational staff	S	Evaluate and improve rules and measures to protect the health and safety of all persons involved in a maritime accident and disaster response operation	S	Develop, revise and promote health and safety strategies as integral part of organisational process
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	C	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of tactical management principles to maritime accident and disaster response operations	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques to maritime accident and disaster response operations
					S	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	C	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems



MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Resources management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan, evaluate and coordinate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain personal issue and a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Strategy and planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tool to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Operational management	K	Outline the features of major maritime accident and disaster events at sea	K	Describe a range of maritime accident and disaster events at sea				
	K	Outline a range of hazardous and noxious substances carried at sea	K	Classify a broad range of hazardous and noxious substances carried at sea and related risks				
	K	Recognise major pollution events that may occur at sea	S	Identify a broad range of potential pollution events at sea				
			C	Implement relevant contingency plans to handle pollution events during maritime accident and response activities				
			S	Implement procedures to interdict danger areas and exclusion zones involved in maritime accident and disaster response operations	S	Evaluate the implications of the interdiction of temporary danger areas and exclusion zones involved in maritime accident and disaster response operations		
	S	Describe the implications of different weather and sea conditions on operational procedures in maritime accident and disaster response activities	C	Adapt operational procedures to minimize potential hazards resulting from severe sea and weather conditions in maritime accident and disaster response activities	C	Manage a maritime accident and disaster response operation in extreme sea and weather conditions		



MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE									
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7	
Operational management	K	Describe the basic elements of navigation and kinematics, nautical charts and other nautical publications	K	Apply basic elements of navigation and kinematics to regular maritime environments and situations	S	Apply navigation and kinematics principles to complex maritime environments and situations			
	S	Apply a range of first response procedures to medical emergencies in maritime accident and disaster response operations							
	S	Apply protocols and procedures for dealing with injured or deceased persons in maritime accident and disaster response operations	S	Evaluate the implementation of protocols and procedures for dealing with injured or deceased persons in maritime accident and disaster response operations	C	Develop protocols and procedures for the management of injured or deceased persons in cooperation with other the national competent authorities, for maritime accident and disaster response operations	C	Manage international cooperation protocols for dealing with foreign injured or deceased persons in maritime accident and disaster response operations	
	K	Describe local maritime environment and geographical features	C	Adapt operational procedures to accommodate local maritime environment and geographical features in maritime accident and disaster response activities	S	Integrate local maritime environment and geographical features into maritime accident and disaster response operational plan			
	K	Outline the impact of human factors on maritime accident and disaster response activities	C	Adapt operational procedures to accommodate a range of human factors in maritime accident and disaster response activities	S	Integrate the effect of human factors in the maritime accident and disaster response operational plan	S	Critically evaluate maritime accident and disaster response operational plan in the context of the social impact of major maritime accident and disasters	
				S	Apply a range of techniques to brief, debrief and update operational personnel	S	Manage a programme of disseminating good practice and lessons learned from maritime accident and disaster response operations		
	S	Apply techniques to maintain concentration and attention of details and manage stress	S	Apply procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue	S	Develop plans and procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue			



MARITIME ACCIDENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
Investigation	K	Apply established procedures to collect, secure and document information and evidence of a range of potential infringements of the law in maritime environments	S	Apply established procedures to collect, secure and document information and evidence of a broad range of potential infringements of the law in maritime environments				
Training	C	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	C	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation		





FISHERIES INSPECTION AND CONTROL





FISHERIES INSPECTION AND CONTROL

Actions taken to check and ensure the compliance with fisheries policies and rules, including the monitoring and surveillance of fishing grounds and activities to detect illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL FISHERIES CONTROL AND INSPECTIONS								
Laws, policies, rules and procedures	K	Outline a range of international, EU and national law, policies and procedures relevant to fisheries control and inspection activities	K	Describe a range of international, EU and national law, policies and procedures relevant to fisheries control and inspection activities	K	Define and interpret a broad range of international, EU and national law, policies and procedures relevant to fisheries control and inspection activities	K	Critically evaluate international, EU and national law, policies and procedures relevant to fisheries control and inspection activities
	K	Outline the basics of maritime conservation management and technical measures adopted at international, EU and national levels		Describe a wide range of maritime conservation management and technical measures adopted at international, EU and national levels	K	Ensure compliance with maritime conservation management and technical measures adopted at international, EU and national levels		
	K	Outline the structure and responsibilities of the national authorities in charge of the implementation and enforcement of laws applicable to fisheries control and inspection activities						
				S	Apply a range of international, EU and national laws, rules and procedures relevant to specific fisheries control and inspection activities	S	Apply a broad range of international, EU and national laws, rules and procedures relevant to specific fisheries control and inspection activities	C
Cooperation with national, EU and international actors	S	Implement specific procedures of partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to fisheries inspection and control	S	Evaluate the implementation of procedures related to partnership and cooperation agreements relevant to fisheries inspection and control	S	Ensure the implementation of partnerships and cooperation agreements relevant to fisheries inspection and control	C	Establish, develop and coordinate cooperation networks and agreements relevant to fisheries inspection and control
Communication	S	Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques to enable effective written and oral communications	S	Demonstrate effective communication skills and techniques in a range of complex situations	S	Demonstrate advanced professional communication skills including negotiation, mediation techniques and ensure implementation of communication strategies	S	Develop organisational strategies and tactics to communicate with a broad variety of national, international and public stakeholders



FISHERIES INSPECTION AND CONTROL								
Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL FISHERIES CONTROL AND INSPECTIONS								
Information and data management	S	Gather and store information and data, using a specific range of information handling and communication systems, in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	S	Evaluate and share regular information derived from a range of sources, in accordance with procedures and protocols and in compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements	C	Evaluate the implications of sharing information, not covered by procedures, with internal and external stakeholders	C	Develop and assess information exchange procedures and protocols, ensuring compatibility with other national, EU and international information exchange procedures, while maintaining necessary levels of data protection
Reporting and logging	S	Maintain and update records of activities related to maritime customs activities and draft clear and complete related reports	S	Evaluate records and reports of maritime customs activities for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriate level of detail	S	Critically evaluate and improve reporting and record keeping mechanisms for maritime customs activities		
Risk management	S	Recognise and mitigate a range of hazards common to fisheries inspection and control activities	S	Apply a range of tactical techniques to prevent or mitigate actual and potential risks in fisheries inspection and control activities	C	Evaluate the risks in unpredicted complex situations during fisheries inspection and control activities, prioritising the response options	C	Develop, revise and promote risk management strategies applied to fisheries inspection and control activities as integral part of organisational process
Intelligence	S	Apply information gathering and reporting procedures related to fisheries inspection and control activities	S	Identify and recognise the potential of information as intelligence for fisheries inspection and control	S	Differentiate between levels and quality of information relevant to fisheries inspection and control and share it for intelligence purposes	C	Establish priorities for intelligence gathering and dissemination, recognising the strategic implications of fisheries inspection and control intelligence
Human resources, supervision and leadership	S	Work effectively with individuals and groups to achieve established goals, recognising roles and responsibilities	S	Apply tools and techniques to supervise staff performance and provide constructive feedback	S	Apply a broad range of staff management principles and techniques	S	Selectively apply a broad range of strategic leadership principles and techniques
					C	Review performances of individuals and groups and implement measures to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative work environment	S	Critically evaluate the implementation of staff performance management systems



FISHERIES INSPECTION AND CONTROL

Checks carried out and follow-up actions taken by officials regarding compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. Monitoring and surveillance of fishing grounds and activities to detect illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing.

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
GENERAL FISHERIES CONTROL AND INSPECTIONS								
Operational Management			S	Apply a range of techniques to brief, debrief and update operational personnel	S	Manage a programme of disseminating good practice and lessons learned from fisheries inspection and control activities		
	S	Apply techniques to maintain concentration and attention of details and manage stress	S	Apply procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue	S	Develop plans and procedures to recognise, mitigate and prevent occupational stress and fatigue		
Strategy and Planning			S	Apply basic concepts and tool to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply a range of concepts and tools to develop and evaluate plans	S	Apply concepts and tools to evaluate organisational performance and manage quality and change
Resource Management			K	Recognise the budgetary, logistic and resource implications of operational decisions	S	Plan and evaluate the use of all resources to achieve operational objectives	C	Employ appropriate tools and techniques to strategically manage resources, balancing organisational goals with stakeholders' expectations
	S	Maintain personal issue and a limited range of equipment in accordance with defined guidelines	S	Maintain a range of equipment in accordance with guidelines	S	Ensure organisational equipment and assets are maintained in accordance with guidelines and schedules		
Training	S	Identify learning opportunities to improve personal and professional skills and competences	S	Assess and motivate staff professional development, promoting appropriate training	S	Develop and review training programmes, promoting lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation		



FISHERIES INSPECTION AND CONTROL

Checks carried out and follow-up actions taken by officials regarding compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. Monitoring and surveillance of fishing grounds and activities to detect illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing.

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
MONITORING AND CONTROL OF FISHING ACTIVITIES								
Tools and equipment	S	Use basic tools and equipment relevant to fisheries inspection and control activities	S	Use a broad range of tools and equipment relevant to fisheries inspection and control activities	S	Systematically evaluate existing tools and equipment used for fisheries inspection and control activities and identify potential new tools, equipment and technology	S	Strategically evaluate and integrate new tools, equipment and technologies for fisheries inspection and control activities
Operational management		Describe the purposes and methods of monitoring in fisheries inspection and control activities	S	Apply monitoring tactics to detect suspected non compliance of fisheries activities to legal requirements	C	Plan and coordinate the monitoring of maritime areas and fishing activities		Critically evaluate the effectiveness of monitoring plan for fisheries inspection and control purposes
Certification and standards	S	Apply procedures to verify catch certificates and handle non compliance	S	Evaluate the application of procedures to verify catch certificates and non compliance	K	Evaluate the procedures to verify compliance of catch certificates		



FISHERIES INSPECTION AND CONTROL

Checks carried out and follow-up actions taken by officials regarding compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. Monitoring and surveillance of fishing grounds and activities to detect illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing.

Learning area	K/S/C	Level 4	K/S/C	Level 5	K/S/C	Level 6	K/S/C	Level 7
INSPECTION, VERIFICATIONS AND FOLLOW UP								
Law, policies, rules and procedures	K	Describe a range of fisheries inspection procedures and related reporting activities			K	Explain a broad range of fisheries inspection procedures and related reporting activities		
Inspection activities	S	Apply a range of procedures to conduct inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in port	C	Coordinate routine inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in port	C	Lead and coordinate complex inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in port	C	Strategically plan and manage inspections plans and campaigns on a large scale
	S	Apply a range of procedures to conduct inspections of post landing activities, relevant to transport and markets	C	Coordinate routine inspections of post landing activities, relevant to transport and markets	C	Lead and coordinate complex inspections of post landing activities, relevant to transport and markets		
	S	Distinguish a range of fish species, types of fishing vessels and fishing gear	S	Coordinate Apply a range of techniques and tools to recognise fishing gear and catches and examine their conformity to legal standards				
Investigation	K	Outline the techniques to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected infringements related to fisheries legislation	S	Apply established procedures to collect, classify and secure evidence of suspected infringements related to fisheries legislation				
			S	Collate information, reports and evidence to construct a case file related to suspected infringement of fisheries legislation for submission to administrative or judicial proceedings	S	Evaluate case files related to suspected infringement of fisheries legislation against legal and evidential standards		
Documentary checks	K	Outline a defined range of legal documents and declarations related to fishing vessels and their fishing activities	S	Check the conformity of documents, declarations and certifications of fishing vessels and fishing-related activities				

ANNEX III

Working Paper for adoption and management of the Framework



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Introduction

This working paper has been drafted in the framework of Work Package 4 (WP4) "*Development of a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions*" (SQFCGF), as part of the European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network - ECGFA Net phase III.¹

According to task 5.2 of WP4 Workplan, a formal document defining the management aspects of the SQFCGF will be prepared and presented, as one of the WP4 outcomes, at the end of the project.²

In order to achieve the abovementioned outcome, this working paper intends to provide an overview on the functioning and management of the qualifications framework and some general guidelines for the establishment of a body entrusted with the future management of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions, and quality assurance requirements following the Recommendations of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).³

The content of this working paper is based on lessons learned in the past decade regarding the adoption of National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) and Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (SQFs), both at European and international level, including their referencing to the EQF. The adoption, governance and management of the SQFCGFs should take into account the peculiarities of the sector, as well as the resources available in order to guarantee its concrete implementation in the future. At this regard, the Coast Guard sector has many specificities related to its complexity both in content (11 functions divided into sub-sectors and activities) and in the institutional framework (highly regulated institutional framework and mixed civilian/military status).

Whilst there is significant and consolidated experience in developing NQFs and referencing to the EQF, there is less experience with SQFs, and still very little experience in SQFs at international and/or European level (ISQFs).

Reference to studies and papers published at European and international level is considered in the drafting of this paper.

1. An overview on the actions needed for the adoption of the SQF

Once the content of the SQFCGF, in terms of learning outcomes, has been shared and approved, the formal launch and adoption of the SQFCGF will require two steps:

¹ The Italian Coast Guard, as ECGFA Net partner, was assigned the leadership of Work Package 4.

² For further information on WP4, <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu/pages/38-what-is-cgfsqf-and-its-purpose>.

³ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, *OJ C 111*, 6.5.2008. Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, *OJEU C189/15* del 15.06.2017

1. Drafting a formal document establishing the SQFCGF, its aim and relevant management aspects (hereafter SQFCGF Act, even if this is only a generic and provisional label) in order to ensure a common understanding between the endorsing institutions and to promote further enlargement to other Coast Guard Authorities. This document, e.g. Act, Memorandum of Understanding, Protocol, Statement of Intent or Joint Declaration should address the following aspects:

- setting the main principles and objectives of the SQFCGF;
- identifying the SQFCGF content and its visual identity;
- defining administrative management aspects such as an Apex body, quality assurance mechanisms, dissemination and review process;
- the process for admission of new adhering organisations (e.g. requirements, how to apply, which information should be provided, who decides upon admission etc.);
- the kind of support requested by the adhering organisations, in terms of technical/material input, participation in events and eventual financial resources;
- the timing, mechanism and/or principles for periodic content review (these can be included in the establishing Act or managed operationally at level of Apex body/working groups).

2. Adoption of the SQFCGF by Organisations with Coast Guard Functions.

The adoption of the SQFCGF would require an endorsement of the above-mentioned document by the adhering organisations, along with:

- mentioning the awarding institutes and training centres in the field of the Coast Guard Functions at national level;
- providing an updated list of sectoral stakeholders, in order to maintain a continuous dialogue with all the interested parties;
- identifying the representatives/points of contact of the adhering organisations.

In addition, two further key elements are:

- a quality assurance protocol, outlining quality assurance mechanisms;
- recommendations for facilitating the implementation of sectoral NQF(s) consistent with the SQFCGF.

According to the WP₄ Workplan, these two further key elements are the expected outcomes respectively of task no. 4 "*drafting quality assurance elements/guidelines*" and task no. 6 "*dissemination strategy and NQF recommendations*".⁴

⁴ WP₄, together with the ECGFA Net Project leader, will evaluate if integrating these documents in the SQGCGF Act or keep them separately

2. Focus on the governance and management

One of the main issues related to the implementation of the SQFCGF is to define how the SQFCGF will be governed and managed.

The *governance* involves the setting of the strategic direction and steering policies. A specific body should be identified for the governance, whose arrangements will take into account the peculiarities of the SQFCGF. In addition, governance implies two further actions of: 1) coordinating relevant strategies across countries; 2) ensuring an adequate involvement of stakeholders.⁵

The *management* involves the implementation of agreed policy(ies)/strategy(ies), carried out by executive officers with specific expertise in training and SQFs. The officers will be accountable to the body setting the governance.

Previous experience in the field of SQF management⁶ shows that the formalisation of a qualifications framework is much easier in the presence of already existing agencies or supranational bodies. Different and more structured or empowered bodies can always be established in later stages of the development of the process, when there is more awareness and/or evidence on what the SQF is, or should be.

⁵ An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers, Ron Tuck, International Labour Organization 2007

⁶ Unesco (2017). Global inventory of national and regional qualifications frameworks. Vol. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/2221>

3. Identification of an Apex Body and relevant tasks

A formal body, or at a minimum a formal venue, for dialogue among the various actors that have participated in, or supported the initiative to develop the SQF needs to be identified in order to adopt, manage and maintain the SQF, as well as to support and coordinate relevant activities for preserving an efficient and credible instrument.

The Apex body should conduct the following tasks:

- setting the strategic priorities for implementing and maintaining SQF;
- management of the qualifications framework;
- standards development;
- development and implementation of procedures for the periodical review of the SQF;
- consultation of relevant stakeholders;
- dissemination of public information and outreach activities.

However, considering that sustaining a qualifications framework is a process, as it is not a fixed instrument, and can present peculiarities based on the features of the sector, the set of tasks and the level of commitment assigned to the Apex body may vary and be further agreed upon, particularly in the context of other EU and international initiatives.

The Apex body can be supported by other structures holding administrative, managerial and/or consultative roles, such as the equivalent of the National Points of Contact or the Advisory Group for the EQF, as well as a technical secretariat for more operational issues.

The Apex body should be in contact with all of the involved national authorities (e.g. managing Coast Guard Functions in our specific case) and register every relevant update, in order to ensure the transparency and usefulness of the SQF, as a dynamic and inclusive tool for cooperation.

At the same time, the Apex body does not have any direct responsibility or power in respect of qualifications development, issue of certifications, quality assurance of providers or the assessment of national qualifications.

Given the above, and that a unique European body that is in charge to coordinate all Coast Guard Functions does not exist, this role is distributed among different EU Agencies (e.g. EFCA, EMSA, Frontex). This situation is also reflected at national level, where Coast Guard functions are often carried out by different national authorities, and even a single coast guard function may be performed by more than one authority.⁷ Hence, it would be advisable that EU Agencies (such as FRONTEX, EFCA, EMSA, etc.) and the national organisations with Coast Guard functions responsibilities are all considered as key actors/stakeholders for the CGFSQF.

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/modes/maritime/studies/doc/2014-06-icf-coastguard.pdf>



It is also worth mentioning that:

- the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) represents a voluntary, independent and apolitical cross-function cooperation framework created “to study, contribute to and promote understanding and development on maritime issues of common interest related to CGF across borders and sectors”. Although the ECGFF does not have the same powers and responsibilities of a formal legal body⁸, since 2009 it has involved most of the EU and Schengen maritime countries, it has gathered numerous organisations with coast guard functions and has been a venue where all the Coast Guard Functions have been represented. In addition, the ECGFF is the place where the idea to develop a Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions was initiated in 2014 and the ECGFA Net project was developed by a consortium of ECGFF members. Therefore the work done by ECGFA Net within the ECGFF and the experience gained in this domain should be considered as the basis to define next steps.
- As a result of the work done within the ECGFA Net project (phases I, II and III) a Training Network, namely the European Coast Guard Functions Training Network, has been set up, and is now a unique cross-function and cross-sectoral training network in the framework of Coast Guard functions cooperation. One of the Training Network’s tasks is to “contribute to the development of a SQFCGF”.
- During the last two years, the EU Agencies – EFCA, EMSA and Frontex – have increased their roles in relation to European Coast Guard cooperation, as part of the European Coast Guard and Border package, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2016. Their involvement to support national organizations with coast guard functions has been remarkable. In addition, these 3 agencies have been involved with and consulted by the ECGFA Net project, as part of WP₄, in the development of the SQFCGF.

Hence, a comprehensive and cooperative framework involving the European Coast Guard Functions Forum, the Training Network and the EU Agencies with Coast Guard Functions (namely EFCA, EMSA and Frontex, working together on specific sectors under their Tripartite Working Arrangement) seems to be the most appropriate place to locate the governance and the management of the SQFCGF and to act as Apex Body.

⁸ Such as the EU Commission with regard to EQF or Frontex with regard to SQF for border guarding

4. A reference frame for the Apex Body and major components

Based on published evidence in the field of qualifications frameworks, the management of the SQFCGF is dependent upon on how the following major components are defined:

- tasks of the Apex body(ies);
- composition of the Apex body and other technical/support structures, if any;
- functioning;
- funding;
- activities and outputs.

It is important to take into account that there is not a single regulated way to manage a qualifications framework. As such, there could be different options for each of the above-mentioned dimensions.

According to the final report of Work Package 4 of ECGFA Net I, the identification of an Apex Body and its main features must take into consideration and be consistent with the aim and objectives for which the SQFCGF has been created and also the peculiarities of Coast Guard functions sector, both at national and European level ⁹.

4.1 Tasks of the Apex body

The tasks of the Apex body can range from strategic and political roles to operational management ones.

The strategic and policy tasks should relate to:

- setting needs, aims and priorities related to the SQF, taking into account training policies and systems;
- defining the SQF governance and management structure (e.g. establishment of sectoral commissions, criteria for selecting the members of sectoral commissions, definition of sub-sectors within a sectoral qualification);
- overseeing the implementation of the SQF and checking the consistency with sectoral policies, priorities and needs;
- defining and overseeing quality assurance mechanisms;
- defining and overseeing the recommendations for adopting the SQF;
- promoting cooperation with European, International, National and sectoral agencies on policy and sectoral issues;
- ensuring adequate involvement of stakeholders;
- reviewing the SQF.

The management tasks should encompass:

- ensuring that qualifications referenced to the SQF are subject to a quality-checking process;
- promoting dissemination and stakeholders' involvement initiatives based on priorities set at the strategic level;
- adopting instructions and guidelines for the work of sectoral commissions/working groups;

⁹ <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu/uploads/store/librarydoc/33/file/004a59be47.pdf>

- coordinating the work of sectoral commissions/WGs;
- providing inputs to oversee the implementation of the SQF;
- providing training or advisory support to relevant authorities or other stakeholders.

Tasks can be shared between more than one single Apex body, according to the type of task (political/executive/technical). In this case, there will be a multi-layer governance structure.

The identification of different bodies could be based on sectoral specialization or Coast Guard functions. However, this may give rise to a fragmented governance structure as each body could implement a mix of policy, executive and technical activities but with sectoral/functional specialisation.

When more than one body is entrusted with strategic functions, coordination is needed (e.g. through an Advisory Group or a rotating Presidency) in order to ensure consistency. Lessons learned from EQF show that starting with more basic functions (e.g. coordination and provision of general guidelines) ensures efficiency as it permits the start-up of the process, raises awareness, achieves results and thus increases motivation.

A broader and more ambitious approach permits the setting of far-reaching priorities and long term objectives. This may facilitate the cooperation with other European/international bodies involved in skills development, support to mobility and transparency, development of training and quality assurance.

In order to support the operational management, secretariat structures can be established (e.g. the Bologna Follow Up Group Secretariat).

In addition, management tasks and support to strategic functions can be assigned to working groups.

Analysing the tasks of the Apex body, other categories of responsibilities are offered here in order to enable an approach which is most consistent with the state of the art of the Coast Guard functions.

- **Administrative-oriented apex body.** This refers to the focus on activities which have administrative implications, such as recognition of qualifications, credits, links with EQF and NQF, quality certification, etc.
- **Policy-oriented apex body.** This refers to the focus on more general recommendations and implications.

4.2 Functioning of the Apex Body

Decisions should be made regarding the functioning of the Apex body. These include, *inter alia*:

- how and how often the strategic decisions are taken (ex. adoption of a Work Plan and related time frame);
- the working methods (e.g. meetings, exchange of documents, e-platforms, plenary meetings, restricted meetings);
- the range of instruments to be adopted (e.g. recommendations, guidelines, working papers);
- the frequency of the meetings;



- how decisions are taken (e.g. majority of votes, unanimity, silent consensus);
- if the Apex body should have a fixed/dedicated premises or be hosted by members on a rotating basis;
- if an external body should be appointed to perform quality checks on the functioning of the body;
- relationship with members/national authorities or "national points of contact".

Some of the above-mentioned tasks and activities may be intended as "modular": they can be enriched over time, especially in relation to the maturity in adopting and implementing the qualifications framework. Ideally, all of the above should be included in an internal regulation to be approved by the body or participating authorities.

4.3 Equipment of the Apex Body

Based on the tasks and activities to be implemented, decisions regarding the human and technical resources to be allocated to the Apex body should be quantified. If the Apex body or other technical structures have operational/managerial roles, they might need specific equipment, such as platforms, web portal and data bases.

4.4 Nature and composition of the Apex Body

The composition of the Apex body is strictly related to its tasks and should be as representative as possible. Representation can be based on geographical (countries and regions) or sectoral (Coast Guard functions) factors, or other dimensions (e.g. cultural, professional etc.), or a mix of the above.

Considering the number of representatives/organisations involved in the Apex body, an organizational structure should be defined in order to set its leadership. This can be made following a formal (consultative) appointment process or a rotating appointment between the organizations participating into the Body. A mix of the two can be also adopted by deciding for an appointment from a "shortlist" which can be created in order to assure that all the participating organisations/countries have the opportunity to take the leadership.

The Apex body can be an existing institution/agency or forum or a new ad-hoc appointed organisation. Based on lesson learnt from previous experience, a venue for the adoption, management and maintaining of the SQFCGF can be created and later replaced or enhanced by more formalized structures dealing with specific aspects (i.e. link to the EQF or integration into NQF, quality assurance, etc.).

The Apex body can be also established in the form of a consultative, voluntary forum without a defined structure or implementing regulation.

The responsibility to govern the SQFCGF, once it is drafted, can be also attributed to existing (EU) agencies or bodies or foundations.

4.5 Funding/financial sustainability

The budget for the functioning of the Apex body depends on the defined structure, the management and governance setting and the number of tasks and activities to be implemented.

Co-funding for the future development and management of the SQFCGF could be requested to the EU Commission or other relevant EU Institution, in consideration of the huge added value that this initiative would bring to the European Union and its integration process.

Additional funding can be obtained by charging “fees” for services, e.g. the download of documents, registration to platform(s), participation to training initiatives and events. The analysis of experiences relevant to already existing international sectoral qualifications framework can provide examples to this purpose (see Annex). However, this could also be viewed as a barrier to adoption and thwart the benefits of the SGFCGF.

5. The resources needed to start up the SQFCGF

In order to start up the SQFCGF two major issues can be identified:

- Supporting the establishment of the SQFCGF and its related periodic updating process; this in view of strengthening the transparency of Coast Guard qualifications, as well as facilitating interoperability of dedicated personnel and identify minimum quality standards and good practice in the European Union.
- Supporting the availability of a web platform that allows the collection of information about education and training provision from different sources existing at national and EU levels.

As regards the first issue, the following activities should be considered:

1. Draft the establishing Act, setting: aims, definitions, roles, priorities, activities, resources, budget related to the management of the SQF;
2. Give operational guidelines to be used for describing and referencing qualifications to the SQFCGF;
3. Governance of the process of implementation, maintenance and updating of the SQFCGF, quality assurance checks and periodic reports;
4. Encourage the development of national SQFs.

The Apex body is also asked to strengthen the communication and dissemination activities across EU in order to stimulate a debate on SQFCGF matters (e.g.: referencing, levelling, learning outcomes, competences validation, quality assurance, etc.). The dissemination activities will involve public authorities, social partners, public employment services, education providers, quality assurance and awarding bodies. The dissemination and communication processes will focus on the creation of a learning network with partners/stakeholders involved in skills and qualifications activities both at national and EU levels.

To achieve this goal, the Apex body representatives can participate in the following activities:

1. Working Groups;
2. Framework reviews;
3. Learning meetings;
4. Study visits;
5. Conferences, workshops and meetings;

It is not possible to make a detailed estimation of the resources required to start up the SQFCGF and manage it. The estimation is even harder in consideration on the number of open issues and possibilities indicated in the previous paragraphs. However, a tentative list of costs connected with the management of SQFCGF can include the following:

Table 1 Potential input to start up the SQFCGF

Variables	Inputs required	
Tasks of the Apex body	<p><i><u>In the case of "Policy-oriented Apex body"</u></i></p> <p>This kind of Apex body doesn't require a dedicated structure/ premises and doesn't require dedicated full-time personnel.</p> <p>Considering the more general tasks, the cost for 2/3 meetings per year should be planned.</p>	
Composition of the Apex body and other technical/support structures	<p>The running costs depend on how large and articulated the composition of the Apex body is and the composition of its consultative/advisory/working groups.</p> <p>For example, the Bologna process and the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) the EU provides a small, dedicated budget for the Secretariat of the BFUG, which cover the staff costs and the participation by the adhering organisations to its works. At the same time, the country holding the Presidency of the Secretariat of the BFUG finances the running costs of the BFUG with its own national budget and each organisation covers the expenses for their own participation at event/meeting/activity.</p>	
Functioning and equipment of the Apex body	<p><i><u>In the case that the Apex body is embedded into an (existing) EU Agency.</u></i></p> <p>The larger and more operational functions and the more frequent the meetings, the higher are the cost for maintaining the SQFCGF.</p>	<p><i><u>In the case that the Apex body is a "virtual venue" hosted by countries/agencies/ organisations on a rotating basis</u></i></p> <p>In case of a virtual venue, it is likely that the hosting agency/organisation/country participate with its own budget and the participants contribute in kind with their personnel.</p>

Table 2 Tentative list of direct costs to start up the SQFCGF

Cost heading	Cost category
Staff	Management, administration, secretariat, accounting, other staff
Travel and subsistence	Travel, accommodation, meals, transports, other reimbursements
Services	External expertise, information, dissemination, translations, publications, specific evaluation, other services
Equipment	Web platform, equipped working rooms (computer, printer, scanner, phone system, internet connection, security system, etc...), furniture (desk, chair, lamps, magazines...), supplies (stationery, pens, pencils, etc...) promotional material (leaflets, gadgets, etc)

ANNEX: LESSONS LEARNED, CASE STUDIES, STATE OF THE ART IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EQF, NQFs AND SQFs

1. The functioning and the relevance of the EQF meta-framework

The EQF is the most important overarching framework for qualification frameworks at both European and international level, as it is wide in scope and covers the entire span of qualifications from those achieved at the end of compulsory education to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional or vocational education and training. Each level should in principle be attainable by way of a variety of education and career paths.

The EQF aims to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications¹⁰. The EQF has been a source of inspiration for the development of national and regional qualifications frameworks throughout the world. An increasing number of countries and regions are seeking closer links between their qualifications framework and the EQF.

Based on the Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 23 April 2008, the EQF was set up as a common reference framework of qualifications, expressed as learning outcomes and aimed at increasing levels of proficiency. This approach shifts the focus from the former traditional system which emphasises 'learning inputs', such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The EQF allows qualifications from different countries to be compared easily. This is achieved by supporting the use of learning outcomes for each qualification, in order to make them more transparent and easier to understand. In this way, the EQF supports the cross-border mobility of learners and workers, and promotes lifelong learning and professional development across Europe.

The EQF Recommendation was recently revised¹¹ in order to ensure clarity, continuity as well as a further deepening of the EQF.

Given that the EQF is a meta-framework and a translation tool, qualifications are not directly referenced to the EQF¹². They are referenced to a National Qualification Framework (NQF), where their level and value abroad can be understood through the NQF reference to the eight EQF levels.

¹⁰ The European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross-border mobility, Publications Office of the European Union, 2018

¹¹ Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2017.189.01.0015.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2017:189:FULL

¹² Within the context of the EU, policies and actions in relation to skills and qualifications (except for those giving access to regulated professions) are based on Articles 165 (education) and 166 (vocational training) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. Both articles make it clear that EU action relates to encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting their education and training systems, and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Each country wanting to relate its national qualifications levels to the EQF has to prepare a detailed referencing report that follows the ten EQF referencing criteria agreed in Annex III to the revised EQF Recommendation. The referencing criteria should ensure that NQFs are referenced to the EQF in a coherent and transparent way. The criteria assists the structuring of referencing reports, which should include input and written statements from national quality assurance bodies and international experts³³.

While the EQF has been consistently revised to remain relevant, the instrumentality of the EQF versus the development of human capital and employability has been recently emphasised. A new Skills Agenda for Europe, adopted by the Commission on 10 June 2016³⁴, launched **10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available** to people in the EU. The goals and actions of the Agenda are set out in Communication: A New Skills Agenda for Europe.

This agenda recognizes that current and future skills needs vary across different sectors of the economy. With the pace of technological change, a major challenge for industry is to better anticipate and manage the transformative change with regard to skills requirements.

Many sectoral - and regional - initiatives to promote skills have been launched, involving public and private bodies and organisations. But these projects often remain fragmented and their impact on the education and training system is limited. Therefore, a strategic approach is needed that addresses well-defined markets and sectoral skills needs. Sectoral skills cooperation can usefully be linked to growth strategies for the sectors concerned, and backed-up by political commitment and stakeholder involvement at EU, national and regional levels.

Sectoral skills partnerships, in industry and services, will be set up at EU level and then rolled out at national (or, when relevant, regional) level to:

- translate sectoral strategies for the next 5-10 years into identification of skills needs and development of concrete solutions, such as joint development of higher vocational education and training (VET) opportunities and business-education-research partnerships;
- support, where relevant, agreements on the recognition of sectoral qualifications and certifications.

The blueprint initially focused in 6 sectors: automotive, maritime technology, space, defence, textile and tourism. Additional areas (construction, steel, health, green technologies and renewable energies) were addressed in a second wave of implementation that started in 2017.

³³ As reported by CEDEFOP (www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-efq), by April 2018, 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, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales). The remaining countries are expected to follow in 2018, which means that the first stage of EQF referencing is nearly finished.

³⁴ Communication from The Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions A New Skills Agenda For Europe Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness, COM/2016/0381 final

While the industry sectoral qualification blueprints exercise is more linked to market rather than institutional/public functions needs, the work implemented with regard to sectoral qualifications can be taken as reference for the development of the SQFCGF as it stresses the importance to follow a strategic approach to anticipate the training and qualification needs, as well as to cooperate to implement sectoral policies.

2. The EQF Management and Governance structure

When establishing the EQF, the Recommendations of 2008 also foresaw the establishment of a management body responsible for providing overall coherence and promoting transparency of the process of relating qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework.

The EQF Advisory Group was set up in 2008 to ensure overall coherence and promote transparency and trust in the process of referencing. Its role was confirmed by the 2017 Recommendation.

The group is chaired by the European Commission and composed of national representatives (two per Member State and for each of the other 11 participating countries), labour market actors, education and training and civil society representatives, as well as the Council of Europe.

The Advisory Group meets three or four times per year and has been responsible for the development of guidelines and procedures to be followed by member states when referencing their education levels in various attempts to develop mutual trust between them.

The EQF advisory group is supported by the expertise of two sectoral European agencies; the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

Cedefop is one of the EU decentralised agencies founded to support the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners in the development of European vocational education and training (VET). Cedefop has played a key role in all EQF activities since initial work started in 2004. It has carried out a number of comparative studies and analysis on issues related to the implementation of the framework at EU, national and sectoral level. It cooperates closely with the European Commission and the Member States and provides technical and analytical support to the EQF Advisory Group.

The **ETF** was established to help transition and developing countries harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training, and labour market systems, in the context of EU external relations policies. The ETF collaborates on a country-specific as well as multi-country basis, building frameworks for continuity in policy and promoting the design of evidence-based policy and implementation.

The group discusses each referencing report in detail and provides feedback to the presenting countries. The presentation and discussion of the reports is intended to improve understanding of NQFs and systems between countries participating in the EQF implementation. The aim of this process is to arrive at a realistic understanding of NQFs and their link to the EQF, as well as qualifications included in the NQF and quality assurance mechanisms.

In this peer review process, EQF members play the role of 'critical friends' and help colleagues from other countries to present their systems and qualifications in a transparent way.

A country has referenced to the EQF once the EQF Advisory Group considers its referencing report to be sufficiently transparent and respect all 10 EQF referencing criteria. If the Advisory Group does not find the report and the explanations given satisfactory, the country will be asked to provide clarifications or to submit a revised report during another EQF Advisory Group meeting.

In addition to the Advisory Group, there are other key implementation structures, as follows:

- **National coordination points (NCPs)** are responsible for more practical issues and ensure that country-specific issues are raised, as well as the application of EQF recommendations and principles are properly applied in the NQFs.
- **Support/working groups** focusing on specific themes, such as quality assurance, sector qualifications, etc. The participation to the WG is based on voluntary contributions by partner countries. The WG often constitutes a peer learning forum for exchanging experience on the development of NQFs in the countries that participate in the EQF process.

Both the NCP and the WG represent effective tools to tie the EQF to NQFs and to build trust.

3. The functioning of the framework of qualifications for the EHEA (EHEA-QF)

The overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area³⁵ sets the parameters within which the countries of the European Higher Education Area will develop their national qualifications frameworks. Qualifications frameworks are intended to be an instrument that helps learners as well as those who develop higher education programmes and the competent national authorities³⁶.

The EHEA Framework was adopted by the Bergen Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in May 2005. It covers higher education qualifications and it is defined around the concept of three cycles (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies).

It is an overarching framework comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.

The EHEA-QF has been developed within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), established as a result of the (on-going) Bologna process after the Bologna Declaration of June 1999. The Bologna process is an intergovernmental cooperation of 48 European countries in the field of higher education, and namely the internationalisation of higher education.

³⁵ The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area - May 2005 http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/WG_Frameworks_qualification/85/2/Framework_qualificationsforEHEA-May2005_587852.pdf

³⁶ Bologna Working Group. (2005) A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Bologna Working Group Report on Qualifications Frameworks (Copenhagen, Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation)

In the last two decades, the Bologna process has contributed to structural reforms and promoted the development, adoption and implementation of instruments and tools aiming at facilitating fair recognition of foreign qualifications and/or study periods abroad, such as, the ENIC and NARIC networks, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS).

The EHEA-QFs together with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ESG) are also tools for implementing the Bologna Process.

Compared to EQF, that was adopted 3 years later, the EHEA-QF is valid for all 48 members of the European Higher Education Area, whether these are members of the European Union or not. It provides the framework within which the national qualifications frameworks in these countries will be developed as far as their higher education qualifications are concerned, and it represents the “face” of European higher education qualifications towards the rest of the world.

Notwithstanding the fact that EQF does not use the same wording for the EHEA-QF higher education qualifications in the framework. They are not conflicting, and indeed the last three EQF levels – levels 6, 7 and 8 respectively – have been made compatible to the three cycles – the first, second and third cycles respectively – of the EHEA-QF of the Bologna Process: the qualifications belonging to such cycles/levels are thus compatible between themselves on the basis of common descriptors – the EQF learning results on one side, and the Dublin Descriptors for the Bologna Process.

When developing their NQFs, countries are called to reference their qualifications, whenever relevant, to both the EQF and the EHEA-QF.

The relation between the EQF and the EHEA-QF is the most important and evident example on how different frameworks, including overarching framework can coexist with overlapping areas. It also permits us to understand that while providing common reference framework to make qualifications more comparable, consistent and labour-market oriented at supra-national level, the need to develop sectoral/regional QF also relates to other specific needs and serves specific purposes.

4. The governance, management and functioning of the EHEA

The higher strategic and political engine of the EHEA is the Ministerial Conference which comprises (ministerial) representatives from all the EHEA members and is held every two years. Ministers decide at Ministerial Conferences about the central aspects of the EHEA, including its further developments and commitments by its member countries. The Ministerial Conference also decides on new applications for membership to the EHEA as well as any other main changes to the process.

A communiqué is adopted at each Ministerial Conference that outlines decisions taken by the Ministers.

In order to ensure the implementation of the steps upon which the Ministers have decided, the EHEA makes use of several support structures:

- Bologna Follow-Up Group – BFUG;
- BFUG Board;
- BFUG Secretariat;
- Working Groups and Bologna Seminars.

The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) is the executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences. BFUG membership is based on the membership of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

To become a member of the EHEA, countries have to be party to the European Cultural Convention and to declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education²⁷.

Every two years, the BFUG defines a work plan, which indicates priorities as well as other management or organisational settings. The BFUG meetings play an important role in overseeing the implementation of the ministerial Communiqués as well as in developing the Bologna Process. The BFUG is entrusted with:

- preparing the Ministerial Conferences, policy forums;
- overseeing the Bologna Process between Ministerial Conferences;
- and taking forward matters that do not need to be decided by the Ministers or that have been delegated by the Ministers.

The BFUG has the possibility to set up working groups to deal with specific topics in more detail and, also, receives input from Bologna Seminars. All Groups within the Work Plan are open to participation from BFUG members, experts nominated by national authorities, consultative members and international experts proposed by the group.

The BFUG decides on the Terms of References of different Groups and decides which of the recommendations of those Groups will be proposed to the Ministers. If it deems necessary, the BFUG may also provide an opportunity for all members and consultative members to express their views on the recommendations and reports.

In addition, a Bologna Policy Forum was introduced in 2009 to enlarge the dialogue and include contributions with participants at ministerial level, with stakeholders or civil servants, from EHEA countries and countries that are not party to the European Cultural Convention, policy dialogue on specific topics (such as mobility, quality assurance, recognition, student involvement, governance etc.) or on higher education reforms in general, making full use of existing EU and UNESCO initiatives. The Bologna policy forum is organized together with the Ministerial Conference.

The Ministerial Conference is not considered a governing body for the EHEA, however, the evaluation and updating of the EHEA-QF is promoted during the BFUG meetings and working groups.

The composition of the “leadership board” of the BFUG, Secretariat and working groups is based on a voluntary and rotating basis. The composition changes every two years, when a new communique setting priorities is agreed. Each body includes a Presidency/Chair and one or two co-chairs or deputies.

²⁷ European cultural convention, Treaty open for signature by the member States and for accession by European States which are not member States since Paris, 19/12/1954. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018>

5. Lessons learned from the adoption of the NQFs in Europe

In 2018, Cedefop published research on the latest NQF developments describing how 43 NQFs in 39 countries participating in the EQF implementation, including 28 EU Member States, are structured and how national qualifications have been referenced to NQF levels and linked to EQF¹⁸.

Some of the results are summarized below, as they can offer a background of evidence on how the NQFs are perceived and applied at practical, national level: which may be partially different from the intentions driving the adoption of overarching/transnational QFs.

The following characteristics of European NQFs can be identified:

1. The majority of countries are working towards comprehensive frameworks, addressing all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training (vocational education and training (VET), higher education, general education) and, in some cases, opening up to qualifications awarded outside formal education and training.
2. The comprehensive frameworks dominating in Europe can be understood as 'loose' in the sense that they integrate sub-frameworks (and their specific legislation) but refrain from introducing uniform rules for the design and award of qualifications. They have been designed to embrace a multiplicity of education and training institutions and provisions, reflecting a broad range of values, traditions and interests. Loose frameworks introduce a set of comprehensive level descriptors to be applied across subsystems but allow, at the same time, substantial 'differentiation' within and between sub-frameworks.
3. While the learning outcomes approach is broadly accepted across Europe it is being interpreted and applied in many different ways (Cedefop, 2016). Evidence shows, that most countries combine this with inputs and emphasise that they are complementary rather than mutually exclusive.
4. The main objective of the new European frameworks is to improve transparency and enhance lifelong learning. This is a simpler and more immediate objective to achieve rather than structural reform. However, the study highlights that as NQFs move towards operational status, countries increasingly tend to see NQFs as contributing to incremental reform, leading to an expectation that NQFs can and should shape policies and practices in qualifications and skills.
5. While technical and conceptual design is important, creating commitment and ownership of the process, stakeholder buy-in, consensus building and overcoming resistance to change have been identified as critical conditions for effective NQF development and implementation in Europe. Although a broad range of stakeholders participate, NQFs have so far mainly addressed the needs of education and training, and, to a lesser extent, those of the labour market.
6. Sustainability and visibility to end-users are two further important conditions for impact. The stronger the political mandate and its integration into mainstream policy processes, the greater its potential as a policy steering and reform tool.

¹⁸ Cedefop (2018). National qualifications framework developments in Europe 2017. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

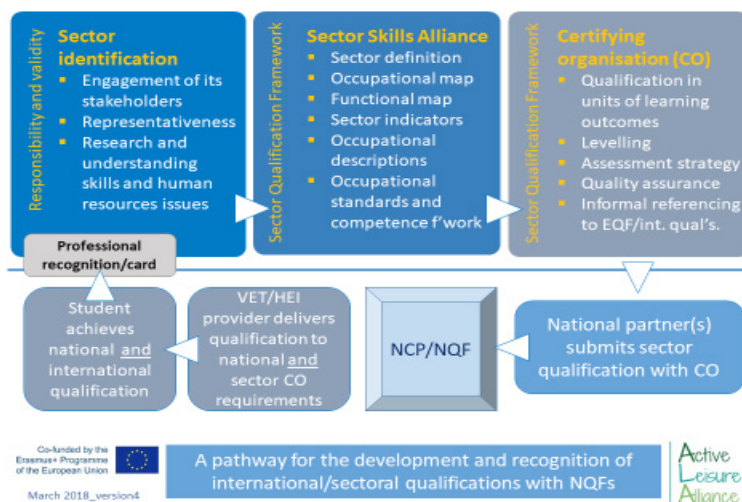
6. Lessons learned from the adoption of the Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks

Even if the bottom-up impulse cannot be ignored, the priority in developing sectoral qualification frameworks in Europe has been given to sectors:

- which represent the drivers of future economic development, and thus the source for future employment
- in which there is a rather low level of professional qualification and a missing "learning" culture in the branch;
- related to the safety and security of European citizens and people, including in the so-called regulated professions.

Indeed, while a number of initiatives and projects focusing on the vocational training schemes and defining a job/qualification profile for this occupation that describes skills, knowledge and competencies (compatible with the EQF) have been implemented, very limited experience is available regarding the adoption of SQFs.

One example of European Sectoral qualification standard is the one developed within the Active Leisure Alliance³⁹. The proposed pathway for the development and recognition of international/sectoral qualifications with NQFs developed under this initiative is represented below:



The pathway shows strict separation of responsibilities between the standards-setting body, the overall quality assurance through the Certification Organisation and the delivery by training companies and higher education institutes. This approach fully respects the national positions of the NQFs and, for example, any applied or required national schemes of quality assurance or licensing of VET bodies.

³⁹ <http://www.active-leisure-alliance.eu/projects/active-leisure-eqf>

7. The experience of the international sectoral qualification frameworks and systems

Amongst the other objectives of the EQF, there is also the objective to integrate International Sectoral Qualifications, frameworks and systems in order to make them intelligible with EQF and thus more transparent and accountable. The 2008 Recommendation on the establishment of the EQF states that 'The European Qualifications Framework should, moreover, enable international sectoral organisations to relate their qualifications systems to a common European reference point and thus show the relationship between international sectoral qualifications and national qualifications systems'.

In order to investigate the state of the art in integrating International Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and Systems with EQF, a study has been supported by the EU²⁰.

The study confirms that recent developments of EU tools, and policies aiming to foster transnational cooperation in education and training, have concretely encouraged sector organisations to develop international sectoral initiatives. However, international sectoral initiatives are often not part of a formal education and training system and not integrated or fostered by NQF developments.

The study is interesting as it reviews the management structure, governance, as well functioning of the International SQF, thus offering examples for the adoption and/or future development of the structure of the SQFCGF.

Management and governance

Many initiatives analysed are led by organisations representing either national professional bodies or directly representing the professionals themselves. Only a small number were governed by private for-profit companies.

The vast majority of initiatives are managed by organisations that are membership-based. They represent either organisations or individual professionals. Only a small part of initiatives discussed through interviews were managed by companies or education institutions.

Most organisations have some form of internal monitoring and updating system in place. Organisations employed a range of approaches for managing initiatives. However, the most common set-up in more formalised arrangements is a **specialised group which meets regularly to discuss developments and ensure relevance**. This group may be a committee, a group of experts, or an advisory board, often comprised of sector experts and/or educational experts.

Processes for updating initiatives to ensure the initiatives' relevance range from unstructured to highly structured arrangements: some organisations hold regular annual or bi-annual meetings while others hold meetings on an ad-hoc basis in order to discuss updates and trends of their sectors. The

²⁰ Study on International Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and Systems with EQF, a Study has been provided by the EU; Publications Office of the European Union, 2016

most common set-up in more formalised arrangements is a specialised group which meets regularly to discuss developments and ensure relevance. This group may be a committee, a group of experts or an advisory board, often comprised of sector experts and/or educational experts.

In membership organisations, these committees are most commonly made up of national representatives or representatives of the different types of members (e.g. training organisations, labour market representatives, members of councils or committees etc.). Examples for these committees or groups of experts are: coordination group, standards committee, training standards committee, monitoring committee, scientific committee, advisory board or scientific council.

In a few initiatives, internal teams are set up in order to develop principles and proposals for revision which are then directly put into practice, but most initiatives also include a variety of internal and external stakeholders, in order to gather extensive feedback from the sector. The frequency of the updating process varies but is often done every 2-3 years.

It is also noted that initiatives developed in the course of EU funded projects, do not (yet) have a system in place for updating the initiative. Updating is only done informally by the former project partners, in the best case through a follow-up project, or in the worst case, not at all.

Nearly all organisations had some **quality assurance processes** in place for developing the initiatives that they manage, the most common were:

- Inviting feedback on standards and qualifications from members.
- Having output peer-reviewed with experts in their organisation (such as the organisation board by an expert sub-group). Sub-groups of experts are sometime established for developing the technical specifications for their initiatives. This approach is common among organisations working in specialist occupations, where a relatively small proportion of individuals have expert knowledge of the occupation or sub-sector.
- Conducting a formal consultation on new or revised standards and qualifications.
- Inviting feedback from training providers and learners.
- Reviewing the training materials of the provider, to ensure the learning outcomes and assessment criteria are appropriate.
- Requiring teachers or examiners to meet certain criteria to deliver or accredit the training.
- Conducting a provider audit, where they reviewed provider training facilities and teaching materials.

The most common funding source for international sectoral initiatives are assessment or certification fees, followed by membership fees and licensing or accreditation fees or charging course tuition fees. Many organisations indicated that they received EU funding for their initiatives, usually at the development stage.

Regarding sustainability of EU funded projects, there seem to be both successful and less successful initiatives. Some organisations, such as the European Confederation of Outdoor Employers, successfully implemented numerous consecutive EU-financed projects and their qualifications are already in use. Other initiatives, such as the European e-Competence Framework (e-cf), were initiated by well-established and recognised European organisations and were able to independently find the financial means to continue the development and implementation. Others, especially initiatives

based on heterogeneous project teams consisting of various small organisations with different focus points (e.g. the certimentu initiative, the AgroFe-project on trainings and certifications in agro-forestry, or DEKRA's Logistics Qualification Framework), often lacked either the financial means to independently advance the initiative or the mutual willingness to continue. Typical for these initiatives is the fact that they were not able to include important stakeholders, who would have enough self-interest to engage in further development.

Regarding national funding, no explicit references were made. However, two international membership organisations stated that they are financed through membership or licence fees which have to be paid by national social partners or national member societies, respectively.

Relationship with NQFs

Nine countries out of 31 currently have a national procedure in place (or under development) for including international sectoral qualifications in their National Qualifications Frameworks.

A total of 26 organisations (from the 74 interviewed) have reported to have linked their initiatives to an NQF. Two types of linkage were identified: a direct link to NQFs (reported by 14 initiatives); and an indirect link (also reported by 14 initiatives)²¹.

The main reason why organisations chose to link their initiatives to NQFs was to improve national recognition. However, several organisations reported negative experiences of linking their initiatives to NQFs. The procedures are perceived as time consuming, slow and burdensome, also considering that NQF authorities in different countries have different regulations and criteria for referencing qualifications to their NQF.

The vast majority of interviewed organisations stated they had explicit quality assurance processes in place. These cover the development of initiatives, the delivery of training and the assessment/certification process.

Nearly all organisations stated they had clear assessment and certification criteria, of which four-fifths were based on learning outcomes. In around half of the initiatives, organisations also specified the length of the examination and the nature of the examination (whether coursework or exam based).

Relationship with EQF and potentialities for linking ISQF to EQF

The most commonly mentioned reason for having or wanting to create a link with the EQF is to improve recognition. The majority of organisations have taken steps to link their initiative to the EQF.

The study examined potential options for linking the international sectoral qualifications and frameworks to the EQF. These options are:

²¹ Ibidem



- Organisations making a direct link to the EQF themselves or eventually including self-declared linkage based on a common set of criteria but no verification process.
- Initiatives link to the EQF through NQFs. However, the linking initiatives through NQFs is only available in a few countries,
- Strengthening indirect linkage to EQF by creating an agreement on requirements for ISOs to be included into a NQF or improve transparency on the national procedures and requirements being used to link ISOs to the NQF. Strengthening indirect linkage to the EQF should improve the process of referencing international sectoral initiatives in the field of qualifications to NQFs, so that in turn these would give coherent access to linkages with the EQF. However, these benefits of this option are only likely to be realised if a large number of countries have processes for linking initiatives to their NQFs.
- Developing a process for direct linkage either at the level of ISQF to the EQF, or at the level of ISQ to the EQF. The latter option covers a wider range of initiatives compared to the ISQF. This option is seen as the easiest method of linkage and less time-consuming and burdensome than to go through the NQFs. It is also expected that the value of ISOs would be strengthened and they would be better recognised at national level once they had a formal relationship to the EQF. Linkage to the EQF would then enable faster and less complicated inclusion in NQFs.

Based on the due analysis of the state of the art and the available options, the recommendations of the study are:

- Recommendation 1: Examine in greater depth the feasibility of creating a direct link between EQF and international sectoral qualifications. This would have implications for the EQF referencing process. However, a comparable set of criteria as the one for referencing national qualifications frameworks/systems to the EQF could be adapted to international sectoral initiatives.
- Recommendation 2: The feasibility assessment should examine in depth the position of Member States and in particular the type of objections put forward by the national authorities and focus of initiatives which have enough "critical mass" in terms of people/organisations involved and priorities for the EQF development.
- Recommendation 3: In case it proves unfeasible to create a procedure for an official direct linkage with EQF, consider the possibility of giving organisations guidance on how to improve the quality of self-declared linkages.
- Recommendation 4: Alongside efforts to create a direct link between EQF and international sectoral qualifications, the European Commission and EQF Advisory Group should also provide common guidance to national authorities for including international sectoral qualifications in NQFs.

In any case, an increased cooperation with EQF advisory board and/or its technical structures is envisaged in order to speed up the process.



ANNEX IV

Guidelines on Quality Assurance



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Work Package Coordinator: Italian Coast Guard
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Introduction

This document is drafted in the framework of phase III of the ECGFA Net project. It is aimed to provide guidelines for the quality assurance mechanisms to be introduced as part of the establishment and management of the Coast Guard Functions Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (SQFCGF). It should be read in combination with the other documents produced by WP4 of ECGFA Net and specifically the *“Working Paper for adoption and management of the Framework”* and *“Basic elements on the adoption of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions at national level”*.

This has been developed by the Italian Coast Guard with the support of CIMEA, the Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence.

This paper provides a strategic overview on the architecture of the quality assurance mechanisms to be adopted as part of the SQF, as well as specific quality assurance requirements extrapolated from the experiences gained in other sectors and following the Recommendations of the European Qualifications Framework¹.

The present guidelines also reference and incorporate the results of a “Quality Assurance Questionnaire” completed on May 2019 by the ECGFA Net members.

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, OJ C 111, 6.5.2008. Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, OJEU C189/15, 15.06.2017



1. Quality assurance: elements

European qualifications frameworks can facilitate the comparison and recognition of qualifications across Europe on the basis of mutual trust. Quality assurance and quality development are crucial to the implementation of qualifications frameworks. Indeed, qualifications frameworks make credible contributions to mutual trust when they are supported by strong quality assurance systems. Only in this way can we have confidence that the qualifications are fit for purpose and that those holding qualifications can perform the tasks that society proposes to them, including participating in lifelong learning and working for others or creating new employment for themselves and others².

The national and the international community are asked have confidence in the SQFCGF. Information and awareness on the national systems of quality assurance and the definition of minimum quality requirements are important issues in order to foster trust among stakeholders involved in the SQFCGF.

Quality assurance comprises administrative and procedural activities implemented in the national quality systems so that requirements and goals for Coast Guard qualifications are fulfilled. It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention. At national level, this can be contrasted with quality control, which is focused on process output. The European Union developed a quality assurance reference framework which comprises a quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review/revision) based on a selection of quality criteria, descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at both VET-system and VET-provider levels. The aim is not to introduce new standards but to support Member States' efforts, whilst preserving the diversity of their approaches. The framework is regarded as a 'toolbox', from which the various users may choose those descriptors and indicators that they consider most relevant to the requirements of their particular quality assurance system³.

The transparency of Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms in training provision at national level is strategic for enhancing mutual trust between Coast Guard Authorities, in view of sectoral and international comparisons. The value and credibility of the SQF at national level and its relevance in education and training activities is at the basis for the credibility of the SQF as a European/international meta-framework.

Consequently, the establishment of the SQFCGF and related guidelines shall also include reference to its QA elements. This does not include prescribed action for participating Coast Guard Authorities as the QA elements are aimed at identifying the existing shared minimum quality standards.

² Conclusions for follow-up from the Irish Presidency Conference on quality assurance in qualifications frameworks, March 2013 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality

³ Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, OJEU C155/1, 08.07.2009



In general terms, a sectoral QA system should enable guaranteeing the respect of minimum QA standards behind the Coast Guard education and training paths, facilitating the referencing process of the national qualifications to the SQFCGF. At the same time, guidelines establish a reference instrument to help European Coast Guard Authorities to promote and monitor continuous improvement of training systems.

QA is composed of principles, standards, management practices, areas of intervention and concrete measures.

2. Quality Assurance: principles and standards

Quality assurance is crucial to improve the relevance of Coast Guard qualifications, facilitating the validation of formal and non-formal learning, and promoting confidence in Europe's Coast Guard qualifications on a global scale.

In the context of National Qualifications Frameworks, quality assurance has been defined as the "Processes and procedures for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and programme delivery meet certain standards"⁴.

The EU Quality Assurance in vocational education and training is a tool based on the 2009 Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council⁵. The Recommendation invites Member States to use a series of indicative descriptors and indicators to support and develop their VET systems. The tool provides guidance on how to develop quality assurance systems and contains examples of different approaches used by Member States.

The quality assurance of the qualifications conferred at national level is a prerequisite for referencing those qualifications to the EQF.

Annex IV of the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) specifically refers to 10 principles for qualifications that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the EQF. It is recommended that all qualifications with an EQF level are quality assured to enhance trust in their quality and level. In accordance with national circumstances and taking into account sectoral differences, quality assurance of qualifications related with an EQF level should⁶:

1. address the design of qualifications as well as application of the learning outcomes approach;
2. ensure valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and address the process of certification;
3. consist of feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement;
4. involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process;
5. be composed of consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review;
6. be an integral part of the internal management, including sub-contracted activities, of bodies issuing qualifications with an EQF level;
7. be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards and guidelines;
8. be supported by appropriate resources;
9. include a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance;
10. include the electronic accessibility of evaluation results.

⁴ An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers. Tuck, R., Skills and Employability Department. International Labour Office (ILO), 2007
http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2007/107B09_57_engl.pdf

⁵ See supra, note 3

⁶ These common principles are fully compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and with European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET).

A further reference is provided by the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework⁷, including quality criteria, indicative descriptors and reference indicators. Its aim is not to introduce new standards, but to support Member States' efforts, whilst preserving the diversity of their approaches. It proposes three common quality criteria to support Member States, as they deem appropriate, when implementing the Framework. The quality criteria are:

- Planning reflects a strategic vision shared by the relevant stakeholders and includes explicit goals/objectives, actions and indicators
- Implementation plans are devised in consultation with stakeholders and include explicit principles
- Evaluation of outcomes and processes is regularly carried out and supported by measurement
- Review

Whilst the SQFCGF is not strictly related to higher education, the European Standard and Guidelines (ESG) for higher education is another relevant source in providing “*a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance [in higher education]. The ESG are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented, but they provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education. The ESG should be considered in a broader context that also includes qualifications frameworks, ECTS and diploma supplement that also contribute to promoting the transparency and mutual trust [in higher education in the EHEA].*”

Drawing on the ESG (2015), further principles can be detailed as follows:

- training providers/institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- quality assurance responds to the diversity of training provision systems, institutions, programmes and trainees;
- quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture;
- quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of trainees, all other stakeholders and society.

When translating quality assurance principles into practices, standards for quality assurance have to be applied at three interlinked levels (EGS, 2015):

- internal quality assurance;
- external quality assurance;
- quality assurance agencies.

With regard to *internal quality assurance*, the following standards apply:

- Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders;
- Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes and the qualifications references to the applicable QF;

⁷ See supra, note 3

- Trainees' engagement and involvement in each phase of training planning, delivery and evaluation;
- Pre-defined and published student admission, progression, recognition and certification;
- Quality assured trainers' recruitment and engagement criteria;
- Appropriate training resources and facilities, including for the management of information;
- Appropriate communication and dissemination of information;
- On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes;
- Cyclical external quality assurance.

With regard to the external quality assurance, the following standards apply:

- It should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes;
- It should be fit for purpose;
- It should follow a process which is reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. It normally includes: a self-assessment or equivalent, an external assessment with site visit, a report and a consistent follow-up;
- It should be performed in a professional way and include a *peer-review*;
- Judgement should be based on findings and pre-agreed criteria and include proper reporting;
- Appeal and complaints criteria shall also be included in the external quality analysis.

With regard to the standard for quality assurance agencies, the following standards apply:

- agencies shall perform quality assurance as their core business and mission, with consistent resources and policy;
- they shall have a recognised official status;
- they shall be independent and have internal codes of conduct;
- they shall publish thematic reports and analysis;
- they also shall be subjected to cyclical external assessment.

Whilst the standards and guidelines above relate to the quality assurance of qualifications, the underlying principles can be considered as equally relevant to the quality assurance of the Qualifications Framework development process. The development of the EQF models this approach, where an advisory group of international experts was established to act as a technical coordination body that oversees the implementation of the framework and provide coherence to the various processes.

The approach of the EQF advisory group is considered here to identify other quality assurance elements including the identification of quality areas and quality assurance measures. The following paragraphs provide suggestions on how to design a quality assurance mechanism for the SQFCGF.

3. Quality assurance management: the Advisory Group

On the basis of the EQF experience, the establishment of an Advisory Group for quality assurance measures, including definitions, of the SQFCGF is strongly recommended. Its main role should be the control of compliance checks on the minimum quality standards, to be identified. At a later stage, this group of experts could support and oversee national stakeholders in developing procedures to be followed when referencing their education levels to SQF minimum quality requirements in order to develop mutual trust between them. The Advisory Group could also support the drafting of Quality Assurance Guidelines and minimum quality standards for Coast Guard educational sectors.

This group of experts could consist of representatives from EU Coast Guard Authorities, different EU agencies, social partners and various other stakeholders, such as representatives of educational/training institutions in this sector.

The Apex body of the SQFCGF is asked to provide a specific mandate to the Advisory Group with clear, defined objectives and deadlines.

It is suggested that the Advisory Group meets periodically. Within the Advisory Group, sub-groups may be established based on technical competences and/or to focus on specific themes, as well as on specific challenges.

4. Suggested areas for quality check for SGFCGF

Quality assurance concerns three main dimensions:

- the SQFCGF itself;
- the adoption of SQF at national level with a referencing to the European SQFCGF;
- and the appropriateness of both the SQFCGF and national SQF to provide a guide for increasing mobility and interoperability of CGF both at international and domestic level.

In addition, the quality of the SQF can be evaluated regarding the following main issues:

- **Alignment of the Learning Outcomes** in the SQF **with EQF and other SQFs** (where relevant), also with regard to policy or regulatory revision at European or International level, including for example to the Council Recommendations of 22 May 2017 on the EQF for lifelong learning. When applied to national SQF, the alignment refers also to the SQFCGF.
- **Coherence of the SQF as an overall framework**, and the **coherence of each learning outcome across the 4 levels** (EQF levels 4, 5, 6, 7). When applied to national SQF, referencing to lower EQF levels could be found.
- **Consistency** of the SQF, both internally (i.e. within the SQF) and externally (i.e. with reference to official documents).
- **Approach to the process** of developing the SQF, including the **representativeness** of the working group and the stakeholders involved, the **timing** and **controls** performed, the **wideness of the consultation process**, etc.

Even if those areas have been already addressed and will be addressed before the approval of the SQFCGF, having in mind that the Qualifications Framework is a living and flexible instrument, and it will influence and will be influenced by the later developments of SQFCGF at national level, the above-mentioned areas of quality check shall be revised regularly including after the adoption of the SQFCGF (at least once per year).

Considering that the SQFCGF is a meta-framework, the concrete quality assurance of the recognition of sectoral qualifications is rooted in the measures adopted at national level, as specified below.

5. Suggested measures for SQFCGF quality assurance

The use of the SQFCGF and its future implementation are strictly tied with SQFCGF capability to ensure a continuous consultation mechanism, both nationally with the operational organisation, and by an international dialogue and knowledge sharing with the Coast Guard authorities. Quality assurance covers the development of qualifications, frameworks and standards, the delivery of training and the assessment/certification process.

The main measures of quality assurance at national level are:

- validation of qualifications and/or standards;
- accreditation and audit of education and training institutions;
- quality assurance of assessment leading to the award of qualifications.

In order to promote mutual trust and applicability, it is necessary to have full transparency on the qualifications released at national level and how they map on to the SQFCGF. To this end, information regarding the qualifications released at national level should be gathered and organised.

The website hosting the SQFCGF shall promote the dissemination of the European meta-framework but in the future, it can also be implemented, including references to the national frameworks and provide tools for comparisons of different countries/organisations/functions⁸.

An initiative has been promoted by European Security and Defence College (ESDC) in the framework of the project aimed at drafting an SQF for Military Officer Profession (MILOF). They suggest the development of a database providing the following information on the military qualifications:

- Member State
- Name of the qualification (e.g. professional bachelor's degree in Land Force Military Leadership; Staff Officer Course)
- Name of the education/training institution awarding the qualification (including the webpage)
- Prerequisites/previous education/training required to study for this qualification (e.g. certificate of general secondary education or diploma of vocational secondary education)
- How the qualification is acquired (e.g. formal education; vocational training; participation in operations)
- Number of credits awarded under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- Number of credits awarded under the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
- The duration of the programme leading to the above-mentioned qualification (in weeks)
- Level of National Qualification Framework
- Level of European Qualification Framework
- Level of operations at which the programme is primarily designed: low tactical, high tactical, operational, military strategic, or political strategic)
- Other information, as required (i.e. url of the training institutions/programmes...).

⁸The Training Portal of the European Coast Guard Functions Training Network is the current most suitable platform to host and promote the SQFCGF <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu/>



6. Current measures for quality assurance at national level

A questionnaire on quality assurance mechanism has been promoted by the Italian Coast Guard (Work Package 4 Coordinator) within the planned activities of the ECGFA Net III project. The questionnaire concerning QA was launched by the Coordinator of WP4 on the 2nd of May 2019 and answers received by 10th June 2019 (see Annex 1).

The questionnaire was aimed at investigating the quality assurance mechanisms employed to confer qualifications related to Coast Guard Functions at national level.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather findings on the QA mechanism adopted by EGFA NET members and partners in order to identify the common minimum standards and procedures adopted at national level and provide guidelines for comparison with the SQFCGF.

To this end, the questionnaire investigated the following:

- the institutions charged with quality assurance, including accreditation system;
- the quality assurance tools used by each institution and at national / sectoral level;
- the frequency of the controls / revision concerning the quality assurance;
- the transparency and publicity of the QA adopted at national level.

An additional optional session at the end of the questionnaire concerned the general architecture of the national training system for Coast Guard functions and would help the WP4 team to better analyse the questions and identify differences between the different coast guard functions (if any).

Based on the answers received to the questionnaire, the following general conclusions can be shared:

- The national education and training system in the field of Coast Guard Functions is not organised in the same way in all the respondent countries;
- All the respondents are well aware of the existence of a NQF/SQF in their country,
- In the majority of cases, qualifications in CGF are assessed against learning outcomes, while the use of credit systems, including the ECTS, is still not used as standard. A certain concern on comparability exists, but it is mainly for internal comparison and based on statistical information (hours of training).
- With regard the overall regulation of national quality assurance mechanisms, the situation is even less homogeneous: while in general terms there are national and internal regulations, the roles, functions and mechanisms for quality assurance vary a lot from organization to organization and from country to country.
- In relation to quality assurance of the specific training programmes, evaluation is conducted regularly and involves many stakeholders. However, reviews are not published and/or made available for accountability, transparency or international comparability purposes.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- In terms of the adoption of the SQFCGF, there is awareness and implementation of quality assurance and evaluation measures amongst the organisations involved in Coast Guard functions training and qualifications.
- All of the Coast Guard authorities involved in the project value the QA in their training systems.
- There is little consistency in approach to QA between different organisations and countries. In addition, a more international (European) approach is encouraged.
- The use of the SQFCGF and its future implementation are strictly tied with SQFCGF capability to encompass a continuous consultation and cooperation mechanism, both nationally with the operational organisations, and internationally by promoting dialogue and knowledge sharing with the Coast Guard authorities.
- QA is a key tool to increase mutual trust and qualitatively appreciable developments of the SQFCGF.
- QA for SQFCGF does not have a prescriptive value in the training systems of the European Coast Guard Authorities.
- In order to promote mutual trust and applicability, it is necessary to have full transparency on the qualifications conferred at national level including how they map on to the SQFCGF.

Recommendations

Recommendation n. 1: The establishment of an Advisory group for quality assurance of the measures, is strongly recommended, both for the establishment and the management of the SQFCGF.

Recommendation n. 2: Considering that the SQFCGF is a meta-framework, the concrete quality assurance of the recognition of sectoral qualification is rooted in the measures adopted at national level.

Recommendation n. 3: The Advisory group is recommended to update and deepen information from the survey on the national quality assurance systems, in order to facilitate the cooperation and exchange of good practice, as well as establish reliable minimum quality standards for the SQFCGF.

Recommendation n. 4: Amid other communication and dissemination initiatives related to the adoption of the SQFCGF by the Apex Body, transparency and information related to quality assurance mechanisms should be addressed.



Key references

The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in VET (EQAVET), 2009

Standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015
Brussels, Belgium.

An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for
Policy Makers. Tuck, R., Skills and Employability Department. International Labour Office (ILO), 2007

Council recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong
learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23
April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

ANNEX V

Basic elements on the adoption of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions at national level



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Introduction

This document is drafted in the framework of the European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network - ECGFA Net and relates to the outputs and working papers provided in the previous steps of the Project, and specifically to the recommendations on the adoption of the Sectorial Qualifications Framework for Coast Guard Functions (SQFCGF) developed in the framework of Work Package 4 of EGFA NET III. The aim of this paper is to provide guidance to managing authorities and the apex body at national level on how to develop or reference to a National Qualification Framework in accordance with the SQFCGF established in this project.

This working paper is based on the lessons learned in the past decade from the adoption of National Qualifications Frameworks and Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (SQFs) both at European and international level, including their referencing to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). To this end, the report starts with a brief review on the available studies and literature developed by Cedefop and the [ETF](#).

The present report is drafted in continuity and combination with the paper on "[Basic elements, key recommendations and methodology](#)" (February 2016), the "Working Paper for adoption and management of the Framework" (draft February, 2019), as well as to the SQFCGF itself. Reference is made to those documents which provide a complete overview on how the SQFCGF is intended to function in the next years.



1. The implication of the functioning of the SQFCGF as meta-framework

The SQFCGF is a meta-framework. It is intended to allow qualifications and learning for skills useful for performing specific coast guard functions and activities in different countries to be compared easily, and support enhanced mobility and a better cooperation. This is achieved by propagating the use of learning outcomes for each function, in order to make them more transparent and easier to understand and compare.

Before analysing the links between the international SQFs and the NQF, it is important to affirm the meaning of the terms 'qualification' and 'recognition'.

For the purpose of developing the SQFCGF, **qualifications** have been defined as "a package of standards or units judged to be worthy of formal recognition in a certificate"¹, where the 'formal' acknowledgment implies a proper decision by a competent body/authority. The Council Recommendation on the EQF ² accordingly defines qualifications as "the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process by a competent authority and typically take the form of documents such as certificates or diplomas".

At national level the 'recognition' or acknowledgment finds reference in a body of regulation; similarly, at international level the 'recognition' is related to the transparency or currency (e.g. real value /application) and portability of qualifications (Leney, 2009³) issued by another country and has to find reference in national regulation as well.

However, given that the SQFCGF is a meta-framework and a translation tool, qualifications are currently not directly referenced to the SQFCGF. They are instead referenced to the national qualification systems, where their level and value abroad can be understood by reference to the four levels of the SQFCGF, which at the same time also refers to the four upper levels of the EQF.

Whilst this implies that SQFCGF is not directly applicable at national level, referencing to the NQF serves to make the SQFCGF a more concrete and valid tool. The more qualifications that are conferred at national level and align at the same level in the NQF and the SQFCGF, it further assures the validity of the SQF across Coast Guard Function (CGF) training.

Moreover, as pointed out in an ETF study in 2011⁴, it is noted that "qualifications frameworks in practice are usually more than a grid of qualifications levels, instead they typically have wider 'political' and social aims and dimensions, such as seeking to integrate existing systems of education and training more closely."

¹ EGFA NET II, WP4 "Basic elements, key recommendations and methodology", February 2016, <http://ecgff-trainingportal.eu/uploads/store/librarydoc/33/file/004a59be47.pdf>

² Council recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03)

³ Leney, T., Qualifications that Count: strengthening the recognition of qualifications in the Mediterranean region – MEDA-ETE Thematic Studies, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2009

⁴ ETF, Transnational Qualifications Frameworks, J. Keevy, B. Chakroun, A. Deij, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2011



This has been confirmed more recently by Cedefop pointing out that the political dimension of qualification framework is determinant for the success of the qualification framework itself *"the stronger its [framework] political mandate and its integration into mainstream policy processes, the greater its potential as a policy steering and reform tool"*⁵.

Hence, the importance of the SQFCGF has to be recognized in the broader scope of the benefits to CGSs even if it will not achieve a formal link at the national qualification framework in the short term.

The aim of this report is to provide some recommendations on how to establish this process, drawing on lessons learned and guidelines developed at European and international level, starting with the referencing of the SQF/NQF to the EQF.

⁵ CEDEFOP, Briefing Note, Qualifications Frameworks in Europe 2017 Developments, February 2018 ISSN 1831-2411

2. The referencing of the SQF/NQF to the EQF

The EQF was adopted in 2008⁶ as non-binding tool, consistent with the principle of subsidiarity. It is an example of 'soft' acquis of European law. The EQF consists of four core elements:

- vision and objectives;
- a set of common descriptors, defined in terms of learning outcomes, and located in a structure of eight levels;
- definitions of key concepts;
- a set of common principles and procedures on quality assurance.

Member states are asked to reference the levels of their qualifications systems or frameworks in a transparent way to the EQF, as well as to use learning outcomes in describing qualifications and to designate national coordination points to oversee the relationship between their respective national systems and the EQF, in particular to ensure the referencing of the national system or framework to the EQF.

The EQF is defined by eight learning outcomes-based levels. Accompanying level descriptors show how expectations of knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility increase as learners progress from level 1 to level 8. These levels, along with the descriptors, function as a translation grid and make it possible to compare qualifications from different countries and institutions.

Qualifications are not directly referenced to the EQF. They are instead referenced to NQFs and SQFs that have been validated at the national level. The reference to the EQF levels in national certificates and diplomas and their inclusion in NQFs⁷ strongly increases the transparency and mutual trust among EU countries.

Each country wanting to relate its national qualifications levels to the EQF has to prepare a detailed referencing report that follows the 10 EQF referencing (shown below) of the revised 2017 EQF Recommendation⁸. These criteria also help with the structuring of referencing reports, which should include input and written statements from national quality assurance bodies and international experts⁹.

⁶ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 23 April 2008 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2008/C 111)

⁷ EU, The European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross-border mobility, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2018

⁸ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03)

⁹ As reported by CEDEFOP (www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-efq), by April 2018, 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, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales). The remaining countries are expected to follow in 2018, which means that the first stage of EQF referencing is nearly finished.

EQF REFERENCING CRITERIA

1. The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.
2. There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the NQF or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.
3. The NQFs or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and are related to arrangements for the validation of non- formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.
4. The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF, or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system, are transparent.
5. The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the NQFs or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to the EQF Recommendation.
6. The referencing process shall include a stated agreement from the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.
7. The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statements of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.
8. The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the NQFs or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address each of the criteria separately. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.
9. Within six months of having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.
10. Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the NQF or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate/diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of NQFs or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

The referencing criteria aim to ensure that NQFs are referenced to the EQF in a coherent and transparent way.

According to a review conducted by Cedefop in 2017, a total of 39 European countries are currently developing and implementing NQFs, including 35 countries that have formally adopted their NQFs. By the end of 2017, 34 countries had referenced their NQFs to the EQF; the remaining countries are expected to follow in the near future. Further, 29 countries have linked their NQFs to the framework for qualifications in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA).

A total of 35 countries are working towards comprehensive frameworks covering all types and levels of qualifications awarded through formal education and training. In some cases³⁰, qualifications awarded outside formal education and training are also included.

The majority of the existing NQFs reached operational status as they are integrated into the national education and training systems and are fully based on learning outcomes. The NQFs in Europe are primarily being designed and used as descriptive tools in order to make national qualifications systems more transparent, rather than being used to regulate the design and award of qualifications. At the same time, as the NQF evolves in practice, they are increasingly triggering reform on education, training, including recognition of non-formal education and work developed competences.

The adoption of a Sectoral, National, or International Qualifications Framework implies the existence of a governance and management structure³¹ which assures the proper functioning of the QF at national level.

The management of the EQF is ensured at European Union level by the EQF Advisory Group: a group chaired by the European Commission and composed of national representatives (two per Member State and for each of the other 11 participating countries), labour market actors, education and training and civil society representatives, as well as the Council of Europe.

The Advisory Group discusses each referencing report in detail and provides feedback to the presenting countries following a peer review process. In addition to the Advisory Group, there are other two key implementation structures: i) the National Coordination Points (NCPs), responsible for more practical issues and ensure that country-specific issues are raised, as well as the application of EQF recommendations and principles are properly applied in the NQF; ii) the Support/Working Groups providing suggestions on specific themes, such as quality assurance, sector qualifications.

Finally, two sectoral European Agencies (Cedefop and ETF) support the implementation of the EQF and comparison at both European and international level.

³⁰ Belgium (fl), Estonia, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK

³¹ For more info on this issue, please refer to the "Working paper on adoption and management of SQFCGF for further reference"

3. Referencing criteria

Reports available since 2010²² show that there is no single recipe for successful development of transnational qualification frameworks and indeed diverse translational qualification frameworks prove to be effective. Also different NQFs models coexist with transnational qualification frameworks, including the EQF. In addition, evidence²³ suggests that the development of a transnational framework does not depend on the complete implementation of the NQFs in countries that are part of the transnational sector, although the presence of functioning NQFs may have a significant positive impact.

Indeed, the link between the transnational SQF and the NQF is described as a two-way learning process, where the interplay between them is valuable in both directions as it helps fill in the gaps, clarify level descriptors and increase transparency and mobility.

One of the most important dimensions of the relationship between different qualifications frameworks is referencing, which concretely shows the correlation between the two frameworks in terms of levels, credits and (whenever applicable) qualifications types. Without the referencing, the risk of the SQF is to remain a theoretical (though still useful) exercise. It is by means of the referencing that the strengths and weaknesses of the frameworks become more obvious and trust between countries and authorities is reinforced.

ETF²⁴ identified the following broad categories of referencing:

- *upward referencing*: between an NQF and a transnational qualifications framework, and also between a sectoral qualifications framework and an NQF or wider transnational qualifications framework;
- *peer referencing*: between two NQFs, and potentially also between two transnational qualifications frameworks, or even between different sectoral qualifications frameworks;
- *downward referencing*: referencing from transnational qualifications frameworks to NQFs and even from NQFs to sectoral frameworks – this is possible but will in all likelihood remain limited.

So far, the (almost) only referencing adopted is the **upward referencing**, which is also the one proposed for the link between the EQF and the SQF. This implies that the SQFCGF remains a separate framework compared to the EQF, as it is the case of the EHEA-QF, while national authorities shall find the interlink between their NQF or national SQF (or more in general their qualification systems even if not –yet- embedded into a NQF / national SQF) and the SQFCGF.

One example of proposed upward approach in adopting European Sectoral qualification standard, not linked to EQF, is the one developed within the Active Leisure Alliance²⁵.

²² ETF publications: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/reports>

²³ National qualifications framework developments in Europe 2017, Cedefop

²⁴ Transnational Qualifications Frameworks, ETF, 2011

²⁵ <http://www.active-leisure-alliance.eu/projects/active-leisure-efq> (See page 129)

The pathway shows strict separation of responsibilities between the standards-setting body, the overall quality assurance through the Certification Organisation and the delivery by training companies and higher education institutes. This approach fully respects the national positions of the NQFs and, for example, any applied or required national schemes of quality assurance or licensing of VET bodies.

Even if the upward option is the most used and proposed, when considering the adoption at national level of the SQFCGF, the peer referencing can also be considered, and more specifically the direct referencing between the SQFCGF and the EQF.

Potential options for linking the transnational sectoral qualifications frameworks to the EQF are also explored for the case of International Sectoral Qualifications framework, as already presented in the Annexes of the Working Paper of the adoption and management of the SQFCGF³⁶. However, these options can also be seen as a learning process, starting with more informal link to achieve a full referencing once the SQFCGF reaches a more mature development stage.

These additional options are:

- Organisations issuing qualification at national level making a direct link to the EQF themselves or eventually including self-declared linkage based on a common set of criteria but no verification process.
- Strengthening indirect linkage to EQF by creating an agreement on requirements for SQFCGF to be included into a NQF or improve transparency on the national procedures and requirements being used to link SQFCGF to the NQF. Strengthening indirect linkage to the EQF should improve the process of referencing the European sectoral initiatives in the field of qualifications to NQFs, so that in turn these would give coherent access to linkages with the EQF. However, the benefits of this option are only likely to be realised if a large number of countries have processes for linking initiatives to their NQFs.
- Developing a process for direct linkage at level of SQFCGF to the EQF. This option is seen as the easiest method of linkage and less time-consuming and burdensome than to go through the NQFs. It is also expected that the value of SQFCGF would be strengthened and they would be better recognised at national level once they had a formal relationship to the EQF. Linkage to the EQF would then enable faster and less complicated inclusion in the NQFs.

The European Union study on international sectoral qualifications frameworks³⁷, in order to create links with EQF/NQF/SQF, recommend the following:

- Examine in greater depth the feasibility of creating a direct link between EQF and the SQF. This would have implications for the EQF referencing process.
- Examine in depth the position of Member States and in particular the type of objections put forward by the national authorities and focus on initiatives which have enough “critical mass” in terms of people/organisations involved and priorities for the EQF development.
- In case it proves unfeasible to create a procedure for an official direct linkage with EQF, consider the possibility of giving organisations guidance on how to improve the quality of self-declared linkages.
- Search for cooperation with EQF advisory board and/or its technical structures in order to speed up the process or finding more viable options.

³⁶ Study on International Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and Systems with EQF, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016

³⁷ Study on International Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and Systems, European Union 2016.



4. Recommendations and lessons learned on promoting the adoption of SQFCGF at national level

Regardless of the model or option chosen to link the SQFCGF to the NQFs, including not linking the SQFCGF to the NQFs at all, a number of other recommendations for the adoption, functioning and management of the SQFCGF at national level can be provided and are summarised below¹⁸.

4.1 The role of the apex body

Amongst the main functions of the apex body of the SQFCGF, one relates to the support provided to national authorities to implement the SQFCGF at national level. As commented above, this can swing from a concrete revision / approval of the referencing system or to a more general and loose support concerning the level descriptors and their significance for performing coast guard functions and being recognized at international/European level.

Hence, when adopting the SQFCGF, the role of its apex body (if any) concerning the support to national authorities shall be identified, as well as the related tools to perform such a role.

In addition, the apex body has a fundamental role in building and maintaining mutual trust between institutions and systems, mainly based on the control over quality, as precondition for cooperation across subsystems and borders.

Finally, the apex body can support the monitoring and evaluation of SQFCGF /NQF added value and impact: this should be planned from the beginning to inform policy developments and allow stakeholders to revisit, revise and change.

4.2 Political commitment / deadline for adoption

Political commitment is indicated as a key factor in all qualification frameworks/contexts. SQFs/NQFs need to be backed by politicians at national and regional levels who can secure institutional stability, appropriate funding and the necessary human resources.

While there is no a concrete need for a formal adoption/reaction, being the SQFCGF a voluntary meta-framework limited to a 'soft law' dimension, agreeing a feasible timing for the translation of

¹⁸Reference is also made to the recommendations included in Unesco (2017). Global inventory of national and regional qualifications frameworks. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/sl/publications-and-resources/publications/2222>



the SQFCGF at national level can proxy the robustness of the political commitment and serve for a better governance of the SQFCGF itself. For example, only countries / authorities formally showing interest in applying the SQFCGF might be involved with the functioning of the SQFCGF, while other countries / authorities can remain with a more general stakeholder role.

4.3 Communication and stakeholders' engagement

A clear vision of the SQFCGF' usefulness for different beneficiaries is fundamental. Communication efforts need to be vigorous and supported organisational and at European level, where a type of 'branding strategy' can be used to raise end-user awareness.

Communication is a goal itself and is also the tool for continuous stakeholder engagement and cooperation, bridging education and employment and including clear attribution of roles.

The stakeholders' engagement can take the form of partnerships of experts, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to obtain a better picture of the SQFCGF implications, the relationship between SQFCGF and NQFs, implication of NQFs on access, mobility, pathways, and skills formation as well as changes in the policy and labour market in coast guard functions.

4.4 Peer learning

Structured peer learning, knowledge-sharing and capacity development has been noted as an important dimension when adopting the NQF/SQF. Indeed, the peer review (through the Advisory Body) in the EQF is the pillar of the referencing process. It includes the national coordination points, working groups, as well as the Cedefop virtual communities¹⁹.

4.5 Credit transfer

Credit transfer mechanisms, such as ECVET within the EU, are recognised as playing an important role in supporting the development of transnational qualifications frameworks. Credit transfer mechanisms form an integral part of qualifications frameworks. NQFs developed without credit accumulation and transfer mechanisms are increasingly taking note of this point²⁰. Hence the credit transfer mechanism can be considered as a part of developing the SQFCGF.

4.6 Inclusion of non-formal and informal learning

Given the specific objectives of the SQFCGF, a systematic effort to include reference points for non-formal and informal learning is fundamental to the sector, regardless of national decisions to reflect all types of learning in NQFs.

4.7 The avoidance of unnecessary bureaucracy

The avoidance of unnecessary additional bureaucracy that may arise with the adding a further meta-

¹⁹ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/european-community-learning-providers>

²⁰ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/6108>



framework is well recognised. Having in mind the state of development of the NQFs, the EQF, as well as other sectoral QFs, the set of rules and guidelines related to the adoption of SQFCGF and the link to the NQFs should be as streamlined as possible. At the same time, the (common) mistake to see the SQFCGF as a purely technical exercise should also be avoided. Hence, while permitting a loose adoption and modular approach, the practical implications of the SQFCGF should be achieved and stressed from the beginning.

5. What to do next for implementing the SQFCGF at national level

Drawing on the experience, guidelines and lessons learned presented in the previous paragraphs, the procedure of developing (sectoral) national qualifications frameworks linked to the SQFCGF may be summarized in the following 10 main steps:

1. **Decision to start** taken by a national body. The national body competent for the coast guard function or the national body competent for the NQF (if any) shall take a formal decision to initiate the adoption of the sectoral qualification framework and identify the main institution in charge of the development process.
2. **Setting the agenda.** A concrete set of objectives, both in the short and in the long run should be defined. They shall mention, at least, the purpose of the SQF/NQF, the institutions involved, the legal implications, the tentative timing, etc.
3. **Organising the process.** A more operational description on how the development process will work, including, *inter alia*, the main stakeholders involved in the process and their role; the establishment of ad hoc committee(s)/working group(s) or the formal engagement of existing committee(s) / organisations; the consultation process (if any).
4. **Design Profile.** For each qualification released at national level, it should be identified: level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), credit ranges. While it is not compulsory, it is highly recommended to refer to level structures and descriptors of the SQFCGF in order to have a better comparability. Alternatively, if different level structures and descriptors are used, translating tables should be provided in order to create links to the SQFCGF.
5. **Consultation.** National discussion and a formal venue for engagement of national relevant stakeholders should be found in order to agree on the SQF/NQF design/ architecture.
6. **Formal approval** (adoption) of the SQF/NQF according to national legislative framework by relevant Minister/Government.
7. **Administrative set-up in accordance with the SQF/NQF approved architecture. This includes the division of tasks of implementation between national authorities, quality assurance agency and other relevant bodies.**
8. **Implementation at institutional/programme level.** Provide guidelines / support for the reformulation of individual training programmes by the training providers consistently with the learning outcomes based approach.
9. **Inclusion of qualifications in the NQF.** Link the accreditation system to the qualifications included in the SQF/NQF.



- 10. Self-certification of compatibility or any other linking/referencing system** with the SQFCGF, following the guidelines provided by the SQFCGF apex body (if any)

Almost all of the above-mentioned steps shall be considered as iterative, i.e. regular revisions and updating of the process - SQF/NQF content shall be performed in order to make the SQF/NQF a living and useful tool.



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