

## **Glossary**

### **Accreditation of institutions**

A process aimed at approving and/or awarding recognition to educational and training institutions which comply with appropriate standards of quality.

### **Competency**

Includes knowledge, professional capabilities and know-how which are mastered and applied within a specific context.

### **Competency assessment**

The process of compiling evidence concerning the professional performance of an individual with the purpose of forming an opinion of his or her competency regarding the standards required in a professional activity.

### **Competency certification**

The public, documented, formal and provisional recognition of the working capacity shown by an individual, awarded on the basis of the assessment of his or her competencies with regard to a standard, without necessarily being subject to the completion of an educational process.

### **Competency identification**

The process through which social actors and stakeholders systematise, determine and arrive at agreements regarding better labour practices, current and/or future, in a specific sector, sub-sector or occupational area.

### **Competency standard**

The standardised expression of a description of previously identified labour competencies. It is important to perceive competency standards in the sense of comparative models, rather than legally binding and compulsory instruments.

### **Comprehensive framework**

A QF which includes all education and training sectors in which qualifications are offered.

### **Descriptor**

A factor which serves to define the characteristics of a competency, qualification or level.

### **Governance**

A system of strategic management, constructed on the basis of balance and multi-actor interaction (governmental, private and social actors, in the widest sense).

**Inclusive framework**

A QF which defines qualifications and includes units of competency or learning outcomes (productive point of reference), as well as the training modules or programmes required to obtain them (training point of reference).

**Level**

A category or reference range which makes it possible to group qualifications deemed to be equivalent on the basis of specified criteria such as autonomy, complexity, variation or responsibility.

**Linked framework**

A QF in which the sub-systems or educational and training stages are clearly differentiated and an attempt is made to identify points in common (for example, competencies, levels, certificates) and equivalences which enable accreditation and transfers between them.

**Loose framework**

A QF based on general principles, with an essentially communicative and enabling role. In a loose framework differences of approach are admitted when deemed necessary (as opposed to a tight framework; see below).

**Management**

A series of actions and decisions which lead to the administration and implementation of policies.

**Meta-framework**

A device which makes it possible to relate a qualifications framework to others and, subsequently, to relate a qualification to others which are normally situated in another framework.

**National Qualifications Framework**

A QF which compiles and organises all of the country's qualifications in one structure.

**Partial framework**

A QF which does not include all education and training sectors in which qualifications are offered.

**Qualifications**

A formal expression of the professional abilities of a worker, recognised at international, national or sectorial level.

**Qualifications framework**

An instrument arrived at by consensus which compiles a set of qualifications and displays them in an orderly manner according to the levels associated with the different types of qualification, and whose scope can be regional, national and sectorial.

**Qualifications system**

A system which includes every aspect of a country's activities connected with the recognition of learning, such as the means to produce and implement national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional organisation, quality assurance processes, assessment and the allocation of financial resources processes, the recognition of capabilities, and other mechanisms which link education and training with the labour market and civil society.

**Quality assurance**

The processes and procedures used in order to ensure that qualifications, training providers and programmes, as well as assessment and certification processes, comply with specified standards.

**Regional Qualifications Framework**

A QF which includes or links the qualifications of several countries within a region, facilitating communication by means of a structure which homogenises the levels and occupational areas concerned.

**Restricted framework**

A QF in which competencies, qualifications and certificates are defined, but not the content or the structure and objectives of the training programmes involved.

**Sectorial Qualifications Framework**

A QF which defines and links qualifications within a productive sector.

**Social actors**

Representative organisations of employers and workers (unions); conceivably, other civil society sectors can also be included.

**Stakeholders**

Groups of persons who are interested and involved in the design and implementation of a QF.

**Tight framework**

A QF which contains detailed standards and which tends to apply common rules and procedures across all qualifications.

**Tracked system**

A system in which vocational and general education are organised in separate and distinct tracks. When links are established between the tracks, the system becomes a framework.

**Training module**

A learning unit which can be certified independently, but which is part of a wider structure; usually, a qualification.

**Training path**

A training route or sequence which individuals can follow, at different stages and in different institutions, and which implies the existence of coherence between the outcomes achieved at the end of one level and the prerequisites of the next.

**Unified framework**

A QF which includes all of the qualifications within a single structure and is based on the identification of problems common to all types of qualifications and learning stages.

**Unit of competency**

A group of productive functions which can be carried out by an individual, which are clearly significant within the work process and which, therefore, are endowed with value in professional practice.