

National Quality Assurance Framework to support NSQF implementation

NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW MANUAL

Executive summary

Indian Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and general education is in the process of reform and has undergone a number of changes which has seen the system open up to greater participation from industry through the establishment of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), the development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the introduction of a National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Like the EU, Australia, South Africa, Malaysia, the UAE and others, the introduction of a qualifications framework requires coordinated linkages across educational sectors to ensure that all qualifications in a country are valued and consistent.

This is just as important to the higher education sector as it is to the TVET sector. If the TVET sector is seen as an easier option for school leavers or a drop out then the qualifications will be viewed as sub-standard, therefore eroding the value of all qualifications as employers will not distinguish between qualifications at the same level from different educational sectors. However, with consistent approaches to aligning qualifications and quality requirements for delivery and assessment, parity between national and international qualifications can be achieved. Confidence in the quality assurance of qualifications ensures that learners and employers trust qualifications and that qualifications facilitate mobility and progression within and between education and training systems.

India has more than 62% of the population in the working age group (15-59 years) and more than 54% of its total population below 25 years of age. The government, in the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 has emphasized on the need to undertake skilling in India at scale with speed, standard (quality) and sustainability. The Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has suggested that a significant number of persons from India will need to work overseas. Training people under the new NSQF will require a coordinated effort to ensure parity of awards across different educational sectors, and to guarantee consistency in graduate outcomes nationally and increased remittances internationally.

If the title and level of a qualification in one country does not meet the outcomes of a qualification of a similar title at a similar level in other countries then trust in that nation's qualifications will begin to be eroded. This is where a nationally coordinated quality framework helps to protect the integrity of qualifications.

Parity and consistency are important to ensure that all education sectors are viewed as robust and valid in terms of the qualifications issued. Countries are keen to ensure that qualifications and skills gained are valued in the labour market by employers and students. This is done by aligning national qualifications and training/education needs with comprehensive labour market analyses, and applying outcomes-based quality assurance. This also facilitates smooth pathway progression to higher level qualifications.

To achieve this requires a quality framework to underpin the implementation of the qualifications framework. This will allow India to benchmark performance across Ministries, States and internationally. With more young people predicted to enter the labour market than can be placed in employment, international recognition of qualifications will continue to be important to facilitate international mobility of workers. One common concurrence in all models for international recognition is the emphasis on a unified and internationally referenced quality assurance system for education and skills development.

The proposed National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) places particular emphasis on the evaluation and improvement of the outputs and outcomes of TVET and general education in terms of increasing employability, improving the match between demand and supply, and promoting better access to lifelong learning. The National Policy for Skills Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 provides that Skill India aims at preparing a highly skilled workforce which is completely aligned to the requirements of industry so as to promote growth through improved productivity.

Thus, Quality in the context of NQAF means; processes, procedures and outcomes for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and programme delivery produce graduates who productively meet industry's current and future skill needs.

The National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) is designed to be used across states, sectors and ministries and provides the structure within which all bodies operate.

The vision of the National Quality Assurance Framework is to:

1. Improve the **consistency and industry relevance** of NSQF graduates through closer partnerships with industry and other social partners;
2. **Accommodates diversity and protects learners** from inferior and non-relevant skills development for people from all socio-economic backgrounds and genders;
3. Provide a structure for **continuous improvement** of the TVET and general education systems in India;
4. Improve the quality of all education and training in India, even those delivered by institutions that have limited resources, by an **inclusive quality framework**, which permits such institutions to achieve the quality standards laid down in the NQAF. The objective is not to exclude large number of participants in the TVET and general education process by an exclusive framework that set benchmarks that excludes much of education and training provision existing in the country;
5. Develop a skilled India of **highly valued** productive skilled and multi-skilled workers; and
6. Provide greater **transparency and consistency** across the entire TVET and general education system as it provides a common framework for the system as a whole to improve, monitor and evaluate the management, provision and outcomes of education and training.

The NQAF is to be applied at all levels of the TVET and general education system, and can be used to assess the effectiveness of TVET and general education as a whole. A nationally consistent approach to quality will assist in raising the status of TVET and general education as employers will realise that graduates are exiting training/education programmes with consistent relevant skills and knowledge. Ministries, Government Bodies and Sector Skills Councils all have a role in supporting continuous improvement across the skills development system in India.

Most existing quality arrangements in India focus on up front audits rather than committing to the principle of continuously improving the quality of their training/education outcomes by building on the existing quality requirements. There are major variations in the standard of facilities, access to current equipment and the skills of teachers in the various stakeholders involved in TVET and general education in India across geographies. Large urban based Training/Education Institutions are more likely to have access to skilled staff and good training equipment than in rural and remote areas. This disparity means that the quality framework must offer avenues for all training/education organisations to participate at different levels with the goal of progressing to common higher levels of quality through

incremental improvement. The NQAF involves an incremental approach for training/education providers which will not adversely affect training and education efforts required to meet nationally set training targets.

The NQAF encompasses this Overview Manual and a sub-set of 7 other Manuals of processes, principles and indicators, will provide a set of standards to be followed by each stakeholder in the cycle of NSQF implementation, so that the implementation process across Ministries, sectors, States and Departments is carried out with the same efficacy. Each Manual describes the processes to be undertaken and includes the forms required to be completed as part of the QA processes. The Manuals will be referred by various stakeholders, implementers, regulators and policy makers to ensure that the NSQF is implemented in its full spirit and is able to build and maintain the confidence of all the stakeholders.

The Manuals in the NQAF series cover:

1. National Quality Assurance Framework overview Manual

The attached Manual provides an overview of the entire NQAF and incorporates the NQAF vision, objectives, operating principles and indicators of quality. This Manual is supported by a subset of seven other Manuals. This Overview Manual provides a synopsis of each of the other seven Manuals that, along with the Overview Manual, constitute the complete set of NQAF Manuals. This sub-set of seven Manuals is as follows:

1.1 Registration of NSQF Qualifications Manual

This Manual will provide information on the QA process for registering NSQF qualifications, evidence requirements (industry needs, avoidance of duplication), use of NSQF qualifications, alignment to NSQF levels, pathway information etc.

1.2 Accreditation of Training and Education Institutions Manual

This Manual covers the application and self-evaluation process, site visits, NQAF Compliance and Skill India Accreditation rating levels, quality improvement plans, data collection and dissemination responsibilities, governance requirements, skills of teachers and assessors, equipment requirements, etc.

1.3 Accreditation of Assessment Bodies Manual

Along with the requirements that are similar to those for Training/Education Institutions, this Manual includes processes to ensure consistency in assessment decisions and assessor skills.

1.4 National Quality Assurance Framework Auditor's Manual

This Manual provides the audit processes and procedures and is meant to assist quality auditors with the process of auditing Training/Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies for Skill India Accreditation. The Manual covers the kinds of evidence that auditors should collect from Training/Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies.

1.5 Risk Assessment Framework Manual

This Manual covers using the risk assessment rubric and indicators to identify an organisation's risk profile to determine frequency of audits and risk of non-compliance.

1.6 Quality Assurance of Industry Bodies Manual

This Manual provides QA information on NOS development and industry consultations, qualification evidence and data collection requirements, information on communication about the NSQF and alignment to NSQF levels.

1.7 Quality Assurance for National and State Level Bodies Manual

This Manual specifically covers NSQF implementation and provides information on how the NQAF objectives can be monitored and quality improvements evaluated by appropriate national and state level bodies. It also lays down data collection requirements and interim arrangements for implementation of NQAF.

The National Quality Assurance Framework Manual series

1. National Quality Assurance Framework Overview Manual

- 1.1 Registration of NSQF Qualifications Manual
- 1.2 Accreditation of Training and Education Institutions Manual
- 1.3 Accreditation of Assessment Bodies Manual
- 1.4 National Quality Assurance Framework Auditor's Manual
- 1.5 Risk Assessment Framework Manual
- 1.6 Quality Assurance of Industry Bodies Manual
- 1.7 Quality Assurance for National and State Level Bodies Manual

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Purpose of this Manual

This Manual provides an introductory overview to the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) that underpins the National Skills Qualifications Framework. It contains the NQAF objectives, principles and indicators. It also provides the synopsis of the other seven Manuals that form a sub-set of the NQAF.

National Quality Assurance Framework Vision

The NQAF has been designed in furtherance of the need to set up a TVET and general education Quality Assurance System in India. A Quality Assurance System places particular emphasis on the improvement and evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of education and training in terms of increasing employability, improving the match between demand and supply, and promoting better access to lifelong learning, including for disadvantaged people. Quality, in the context of this NQAF means the processes, procedures and outcomes for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and programme delivery produce graduates who productively meet industry's current and future skill needs. This will support the 2015 National Policy's vision of preparing a highly skilled workforce which is completely aligned to the requirements of industry so as to promote growth through improved productivity.

The NQAF is designed to be used as a common reference across states, sectors and ministries and provides the structure within which all bodies should operate in order to ensure implementation of quality measures within the TVET and general education system.

The vision of the National Quality Assurance Framework is to:

1. Improve the **consistency and industry relevance** of NSQF graduates through closer partnerships with industry and other social partners;
2. **Accommodate diversity and protect learners** from inferior and non-relevant skills development to people from all socio-economic backgrounds and genders;
3. Provide a structure for **continuous improvement** of the overall TVET and general education systems in India;
4. Improve the quality of all education and training in India, even those delivered by institutions that have limited resources, by an **inclusive quality framework**, which permits such institutions to achieve the quality standards laid down in the NQAF. The objective is not to exclude large number of participants in the education and training process by an exclusive framework that set benchmarks that excludes much of education and training provision existing in the country;
5. Develop a skilled India of **highly valued** productive skilled and multi-skilled workers; and
6. Provide greater **transparency and consistency** across the entire TVET and general education system as it provides a common framework for the system as a whole to improve, monitor and evaluate the management, provision and outcomes of education and training.

NQAF Objectives

In line with this vision, the National Quality Assurance Framework has the following objectives:

1. To bring together all sectors of TVET and general education into a common quality assurance framework through a systematic approach to quality assurance across TVET, general education and the NSQF;
2. To improve the match between demand (current and future labour market skills needs) and supply (education and training qualifications) to ensure the system is more responsive to changing, current and future skills needs in industry at state, national, and international levels;
3. To improve and promote access and affordability to and uptake of basic training and education, especially for groups currently not engaged in the formal sector and disadvantaged groups;
4. To increase the transparency, consistency, portability and recognition of qualifications through flexible learning pathways between TVET and general education leading to better levels of employability and mobility for individuals including through the recognition of prior learning;
5. To ensure the Indian skill development system is recognised nationally and internationally as an example of best practice and to build linkages with international bodies;
6. To achieve the highest levels of trust amongst learners, employers, teachers, trainers, training/education institutions and certifying and Industry bodies for qualifications in the NSQF;
7. To ensure all service providers within the system are committed to a process of continuous improvement and that policy makers, administrators, teachers, trainers and assessors are competent and have opportunities for continuing professional and skills development throughout their careers; and
8. To promote education and training for all levels of employment through robust communications and awareness raising to make it an acceptable route for all learners at all ages.

The purpose of the quality objectives is to specify what the quality assurance system aims to achieve. The objectives should serve as the basis for creating policy and evaluating performance at a national, state or organisational level. The quality objectives should act as basic tools that underlie all planning and strategic activities.

NQAF Operating Principles

Operating principles form the framework underpinning the quality assurance system. They are statements, based on the objectives that should be applied to all schemes and strategies that support quality and quality improvement including quality standards and operating processes. The operating principles of the NQAF are as follows:

1. Cover all levels of education and training and all stakeholders in the system;
2. Be coordinated, transparent and systematic across all participants in the vocational education and skills sector nationally and at state level;
3. Require on-going self- evaluation and review processes both internally and externally to ensure high quality and relevant skills outcomes for learners and employers;
4. Include specific indicators relating to access and outcomes for non- traditional and vulnerable groups;
5. Have measurable indicators and objectives linked to employability and progression including the recognition of prior learning, up skilling and reskilling within the formal and informal sector;
6. Support the development of learning/training pathways across all areas of TVET, general education and the NSQF;
7. Facilitate appropriate benchmarking at international, national and sector level;
8. Have systematic mechanisms for the collection and analysis of performance data for Training/Education providers, Trainers, certifying bodies and learners across TVET and general education;
9. Provide national standards and requirements (validation and regulation) for all NSQF qualifications and accredited outcomes to ensure relevance of standards and maintenance of competence based qualifications and certification that is supported by employers and relevant industry bodies;
10. Provide mechanisms to support and report on excellence, continuous improvement and have incentives to recognise both excellence and improvement;
11. To promote and raise awareness of vocational education and training and the NSQF at every possible opportunity through a robust communication strategy that encourages and facilitates engagement from individuals and employers at all levels; and
12. Provide cost effective and sustainable processes and solutions.

Inter-relationship between NSQF Objectives, NQAF Objectives and NQAF Operating Principles

The NQAF is meant to underpin the NSQF by providing quality assurance norms for the TVET and general education sector. It is therefore important to ensure that NQAF objectives are able to match the NSQF aims and objectives. The purpose of the quality objectives is to specify what the quality assurance system aims to achieve. The objectives should serve as the basis for creating policy and evaluating performance at a national, state or organisational level. The quality objectives should act as basic tools that underlie all planning and strategic activities. In addition, the NQAF operating principles form the framework underpinning the quality assurance system. They are statements, based on the objectives that should be applied to all schemes and strategies that support quality and quality improvement including quality standards and operating processes. The inter-relationship between the NSQF objectives, NQAF objectives and NQAF operating principles is shown in the table below:

NSQF Objectives ¹	NQAF Objectives	NQAF Operating Principles
<p>Objective (a): Accommodates the diversity of the Indian education and training systems</p>	<p>Objective 1: To bring together all sectors of TVET and general education into a common quality assurance framework through a systematic approach to quality assurance across TVET, general education and the NSQF</p>	<p>Principle 1: Cover all levels of technical vocational education and training and all stakeholders in the system</p> <p>Principle 12: Provide cost effective and sustainable processes and solutions</p>
<p>Objective (b): Allows the development of a set of qualifications for each level, based on outcomes which are accepted across the nation</p>	<p>Objective 2: To improve the match between demand (current and future labour market skills needs) and supply (education and training qualifications) to ensure the system is more responsive to changing, current and future skills needs in industry at state, national, and international levels</p> <p>Objective 3: To improve and promote access and affordability to and uptake of basic training and education, especially for groups currently not engaged in the formal sector and disadvantaged groups</p>	<p>Principle 2: Be coordinated, transparent and systematic across all participants in the vocational education and skills sector nationally and at state level</p> <p>Principle 3: Require on-going self- evaluation and review processes both internally and externally to ensure high quality and relevant skills outcomes for learners and employers</p> <p>Principle 4: Include specific indicators relating to access and outcomes for non-traditional and vulnerable groups</p> <p>Principle 12: Provide cost</p>

¹Refer to NSQF Notification, 27th Dec. 2013, Ministry of Finance, p.19.

		effective and sustainable processes and solutions
Objective (c): Provides structure for development and maintenance of progression pathways which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between different education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labour market	Objective 4: To increase the transparency, consistency, portability and recognition of qualifications through flexible learning pathways between TVET and general education leading to better levels of employability and mobility for individuals including through the recognition of prior learning	Principle 5: Have measurable indicators and objectives linked to employability and progression including the recognition of prior learning, up skilling and reskilling within the formal and informal sectors Principle 6: Support the development of learning/training pathways across all areas of TVET, general education and the NSQF Principle 12: Provide cost effective and sustainable processes and solutions
Objective (d): Gives individuals an option to progress through education and training and gain recognition for their prior learning and experiences	Objective 4: To increase the transparency, consistency, portability and recognition of qualifications through flexible learning pathways between TVET and general education leading to better levels of employability and mobility for individuals including through the recognition of prior learning	Principle 5: Have measurable indicators and objectives linked to employability and progression including the recognition of prior learning, up skilling and reskilling within the formal and informal sectors Principle 6: Support the development of learning/training pathways across all areas of TVET, general education and the NSQF Principle 12: Provide cost effective and sustainable processes and solutions
Objective (e): Underpins national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training	Objective 6: To achieve the highest levels of trust amongst learners, employers, teachers, trainers, training/education institutions and certifying and Industry bodies for qualifications in the NSQF Objective 7: To ensure all service providers within the	Principle 8: Have systematic mechanisms for the collection and analysis of performance data for Training/Education providers, Trainers, certifying bodies and learners across TVET and general education Principle 9: Provide national standards and requirements (validation and regulation) for

	<p>system are committed to a process of continuous improvement and that policy makers, administrators, teachers, trainers and assessors are competent and have opportunities for continuing professional and skills development throughout their careers</p> <p>Objective 8: To promote education and training for all levels of employment through robust communications and awareness raising to make it an acceptable route for all learners at all ages</p>	<p>all NSQF qualifications and accredited outcomes to ensure relevance of standards and maintenance of competence based qualifications and certification that is supported by employers and relevant industry bodies</p> <p>Principle 10: Provide mechanisms to support and report on excellence, continuous improvement and have incentives to recognise both excellence and improvement</p> <p>Principle 11: To promote and raise awareness of vocational education and training and the NSQF at every possible opportunity through a robust communication strategy that encourages and facilitates engagement from individuals and employers at all levels</p> <p>Principle 12: Provide cost effective and sustainable processes and solutions</p>
<p>Objective (f): Supports and enhances the national and international mobility of persons with NSQF-compliant qualifications through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Indian qualifications</p>	<p>Objective 5: To ensure the Indian skill development system is recognised nationally and internationally as an example of best practice and to build linkages with international bodies</p>	<p>Principle 7: Facilitate appropriate benchmarking at international, national and sector level</p> <p>Principle 12: Provide cost effective and sustainable processes and solutions</p>

NQAF Diagram

The National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) can be applied at all levels and can be used to assess the effectiveness of TVET and general education as a whole. The NQAF uses the four stages (planning, implementation, evaluation and review- See diagram in Appendix A) of a quality cycle and identifies short, medium and long-term indicators.

A nationally consistent approach to TVET and general education quality will assist in raising the status of training and education as employers will realise that graduates are exiting training/education programmes with consistent relevant skills and knowledge. Ministries, Government Agencies and Sector Skills Councils all have a role in supporting continuous improvement across the skills development system in India.



The National Skills Quality Assurance Framework Cycle

The NQAF incorporates self-evaluation (audit) as an important aspect of developing a continuous improvement culture in TVET and general education.

The framework also uses a risk assessment approach to determine frequency of audits.

The use of the Skill India Logo is a privilege granted in recognition of the highest quality outcomes in TVET and general education provision.

NQAF Institutions

National Skills Qualifications Authority

The **National Skills Qualifications Authority (NSQA)** is the national Authority for the quality, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NSQF and NQAF. The NSQA

should be underpinned by legislation to facilitate implementation of NSQF and NQAF quality norms across Ministries and sectors. The NSQA subsumes the roles of the NSDA and incorporates the National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC) as an operational committee.

The NSQA will be Chaired by the NSDA Chair with a high level Board of Governors made up of the Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, the Minister for Human Resource Development, the representatives of two States (in rotation), and three leading industry representatives. The Board of Governors will meet twice a year to review the implementation and monitoring of the NSQF and the NQAF.

The NSQA would be the coordination body responsible to:

- a. Operationalise and implement the National Skills Qualifications Framework;
- b. Establish and operationalise the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) embedded in the NSQF;
- c. Maintain effective liaison with overseas certifying and validating bodies to achieve recognition of NSQF;
- d. Promote the use of Skill India logo on skill certificates by SSCs/Agencies adhering to the NQAF requirements;
- e. Moderate audit decisions across various entities and agencies involved in skill development;
- f. Monitor the use of the Skill India logo;
- g. Monitor and measure quality improvements across the TVET and general education sector;
- h. Provide consistent information about the NSQF and NQAF and the processes leading to nationally consistent qualifications;
- i. Review the National Occupational Standards (NOSs) and Qualification Packs (QPs) framed by the SSCs;
- j. Register NSQF-compliant qualifications into the Qualifications Register; Develop and review the process for the development of cross-sectoral NOSs;
- k. Review the quality of development processes for NOSs, QPs and other NSQF qualifications;
- l. Review development processes to avoid duplication of NOSs and QPs; and
- m. Review consistency of professional, core and generic skills.

The **National Skills Qualifications Committee (NSQC)** operates as a high level operational committee within the NSQA and is a high level Committee that was established to oversee the implementation of the NSQF under the NSQF notification. The NSQA provides the NSQC secretariat. The Chairman of the NSQC is the Chair of the NSDA, and the members are:

- a. Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
- b. Secretary, Dept of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of HRD
- c. Secretary, Dept of Higher Education, Ministry of HRD
- d. Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment
- e. Mission Directors, from three State Skill Development Missions (in rotation)
- f. Director General, National Skill Development Agency
- g. CEO of the National Skill Development Corporation
- h. For each sector that is being discussed, Sectoral Representatives including the SSC Chairperson/CEO; the Secretary, of the Administrative Ministry; Heads of all Regulatory Bodies, including where relevant, University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Central Board of Secondary

Education (CBSE), National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT), State Boards, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Professional Bodies and Licensing Authorities, etc in the Sector; Heads of two Training/Education Institutions (one Govt and one private); any other person/agency relevant for the sector

The functions of NSQC are listed in the NSQF notification, Ministry of Finance, 27th Dec. 2013, pp.26-27.

Sector Skills Councils

The role of **Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)** under the NSQF and NQAF includes the development of quality NOSs, the grouping of the NOSs to form qualifications and the alignment of qualifications to NSQF level. Quality assurance of NOS and QPs developed is currently undertaken by the Qualification Registration Committee (QRC) at the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). QRC comprises of one member each from all approved SSCs and representation from NSDC. They ensure:

- a. Appropriateness of level of QP, as per Level Descriptors . low/high/appropriate
- b. Common NOS with other sectors . if any
- c. Appropriateness of format

After due deliberation, the NOSs and QPs are mutually corrected between QRC and SSC, and the NOS and QP promulgated. These norms will feed into the quality assurance norms and standards that form part of the NQAF.

The role of SSCs is to:

- a. Identify skill development needs including preparing a catalogue of types of skills, range and depth of skills to facilitate individuals to choose from them;
- b. Develop sector skill development plan and maintain skill inventory;
- c. Determine skills/competency standards and qualifications and get them notified as per NSQF;
- d. Participate in the setting up of affiliation, accreditation, examination and certification norms for their respective sectors;
- e. Plan and facilitate the execution of Training of Trainers along with NSDC and States;
- f. Interact with industry and to represent industry's viewpoint;
- g. Develop NOSs and QPs;
- h. Build career guidance initiatives;
- i. Development and conduct of assessment and certification;
- j. Communicate and explain training/education reforms to stakeholders;
- k. Raise employers' commitment to training/education and creating a learning culture within their sectors;
- l. Lay special emphasis on the skilling needs of women, SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, persons with disabilities and transgender persons;
- m. Ensure that the persons trained and skilled in accordance with the norms laid down by them are assured of employment at decent wages;
- n. Promote of academies of excellence; and
- o. Other activities required to progress quality training and education and assessment services in their industry sector.

National and State Level Bodies

National and State level Bodies have specific roles covering NSQF implementation and monitoring the NQAF objectives and quality improvement evaluation. A coordinated effort of all regulatory bodies and stakeholders, including various Ministries and Departments, States/UTs, NSDC, UGC, AICTE, CBSE, NCVT, State Boards, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Directorate General of Training (DGT) and Quality Council of India (QCI) is required in order to ensure an effective and efficient implementation of NSQF and NQAF throughout the country.

The NQAF objectives and the agreed indicators are identified, along with suggested strategies for facilitating NSQF and NQAF implementation in the Body's area of authority or influence. For example, strategies include prioritising NSQF qualifications for funding and disbursing training/education funds to NQAF Compliant and Skill India Accredited Training/Education Institutions as a priority.

An example of NQAF quality improvement monitoring strategy is to require Training/Education Institutions to collect and feedback specific data. The requirement to collect data could form part of the contract between the Body and the NSQF Compliant or Skill India Accredited Training/Education Institutions for the funding of training and education services. On-going funding to the Training/Education Institution would eventually be dependent on the Training/Education Institution providing the required data to the funding Body within an agreed timeframe. For example, a Training/ Education Institution may follow up with graduates three months after the completion of training/education to determine placement outcomes. However, in the meantime the institution would continue to receive funding for training/education services. Data on placement rates may be requested during subsequent negotiations of funding for training/education services with strategies included to improve response rates from graduates.

Improvements in the collection of data and an increase in response rates would be used by the Training/Education Institution as evidence of implementing continuous improvement required as part of their continuous improvement for on-going NQAF Compliance and Skill India accreditation.

Data collected by the National and State level Bodies would be supplied to the NSQA. The information would also be supplied to the National Skill Research Division (NSRD) which will serve as the apex body for providing technical and research support to the National Mission for Skill Development. This information will enable the NSRD to undertake system wide analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of the TVET and general education system and for international comparative research.

The analysis of the system wide data would result in non-agency specific data, except in cases of best practice where numerous organisations would benefit from studying the best practice example. The analysis of the data would help to improve the overall responsiveness and relevance of the NSQF and to inform on-going policy development.

Indicators of Quality

An important aspect of a quality assurance framework is to be able to measure quality improvements. The NQAF provides the quality indicators that will enable the national and state level bodies to monitor the quality improvements taking place across the TVET and general education sector in India. Quality indicators will be used to measure the implementation and impact of system changes and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of skills development reforms. These will serve as the items of a checklist while evaluating/reviewing the Implementation of NSQF and NQAF. Based on the indicators, the data collection requirements from Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies shall also be laid down.

Some of the broad quality indicators include:

- a. the percentage of qualifications in the country aligned to NSQF;
- b. the number of Training/ Education Institutions that have become NQAF Compliant and Skill India Accredited;
- c. the number of Assessment Bodies that have become NQAF Compliant and Skill India Accredited;
- d. numbers of enrolments in courses leading to an NSQF qualification;
- e. numbers of completions, progression and employment outcomes of graduates with NSQF qualifications;
- f. the number of Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies that are involved in conducting RPL assessments and providing bridge training/education in line with the national RPL policy;
- g. the number of individuals accessing RPL and successfully gaining NSQF qualifications or entering into training/education programmes leading to NSQF qualifications;
- h. the number of Government Ministries and Bodies nationally and at the state level who have negotiated qualification pathways into or from their training/education programmes into another level of education or training;
- i. the number of Training/ Education Institutions that publically document completion rates, placement rates and retention rates on their websites and/ or in public spaces in the training/education centre;
- j. the number of Assessment Bodies publically documenting information on number of students assessed versus number of students certified and the average time between students completing training/education and being assessed;
- k. the number of persons from disadvantaged groups (women, SCs, STs, OBCs, persons with disabilities and transgender persons) joining training/education programmes and successfully gaining qualifications;
- l. number of persons from disadvantaged groups gaining employment (wage/self) after completing training/education;
- m. number of students who have successfully established enterprises within one year after completing training/education;
- n. number of training/education institutions that partner with entrepreneurship bodies (finance, incubators, industry hubs) to support students starting enterprises; and
- o. percentage of NSQF qualifications that are mapped to the content of equivalent overseas qualifications.

Approach paper to Manual 1.1: Registration of NSQF Qualifications Manual

The National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) was notified through a Gazette notification dated 27th December 2013. The NSQF has evolved from the NVEQF developed by the Ministry of HRD and the NVQF developed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The NSQF organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels are defined in terms of generic learning outcomes. Qualifications that are compliant with the requirements of the NSQF will be entered in a national Register of Qualifications at one of these levels. The Qualification Register will increase the ability of national and international stakeholders to authenticate and verify the legitimacy of NSQF certificates and the organisations which are authorised to issue them.

Qualifications in the Register will be based on specific learning outcomes regardless of whether they were acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning. NSQF provides a national qualification framework that would bring together TVET and general education. The NSQF notification constituted the National Skills Qualifications Committee (NSQC) to implement the NSQF. The NSDA has the responsibility of anchoring and operationalizing the NSQF to ensure that quality and standards meet national requirements.

In the subsequent official notification of the NSQF (Gazette notification, Ministry of Finance, 27thDec, 2013) a senior committee . the National Skills Qualifications Committee (NSQC) . was established to implement the framework.

The NSQF seeks to help everyone involved in education and training to make comparisons between qualifications offered in the country, and to understand how they relate to each other. The NSQF is composed of ten levels, each representing a different level of complexity of knowledge, skills and aptitude, though not all of these factors are required at all levels. Level one of the framework represents the least complexity while level ten represents the greatest complexity. The levels are defined by descriptors in the form of learning outcomes.

Key elements of the National Skills Qualifications Framework:²

The NSQF provides

- a. National principles for recognizing skill proficiency and competencies at different levels leading to international equivalencyL
- b. Multiple entry and exit points between Technical Vocational Education and Training, general education and job marketsL
- c. Progression pathwaysL
- d. Opportunities to promote lifelong learning and skill developmentL
- e. Partnerships between TVET and general education institutions, industry and employersL
- f. A transparent, accountable and credible mechanism for skills development across industry

²Refer to NSQF Notification, 27th Dec. 2013, Ministry of Finance, p.18

- g. Increased potential for recognition of prior learning.

Objectives of NSQF³

The objectives of the NSQF are to provide a framework that:

- a. Accommodates the diversity of the Indian education and training systems
- b. Allows the development of a set of qualifications for each level, based on outcomes which are accepted across the nation
- c. Provides structure for development and maintenance of progression pathways which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between different education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labour market
- d. Gives individuals an option to progress through education and training and gain recognition for their prior learning and experiences
- e. Underpins national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training
- f. Supports and enhances the national and international mobility of persons with NSQF-compliant qualifications through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Indian qualifications

In the Notification for the NSQF a qualification is defined as ***a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.***

As part of the NSQF registration process, NSQC-approved Qualification File needs to be completed. The Qualification File builds on the different kinds of qualifications available in India, including Qualification Packs built on National Occupational Standards and outcome-based curricula such as those offered in ITIs. The competent body submitting the Qualification File must provide clear information, on issues such as the following:

- a. Is there a demonstrable need for the qualification?
- b. Is the qualification distinctive? Are there similar qualifications, does the qualification duplicate existing NSQF qualifications?
- c. Can the qualification be validly and reliably assessed?
- d. Do the entry requirements and exit pathways offer easy access and agreed qualification progression pathways?
- e. Is the proposed NSQF level based on clear outcomes convincingly matched to the NSQF?

As part of the evidence supporting the Qualifications File the organisation submitting the Qualifications File must provide evidence of:

³Refer to NSQF Notification, 27th Dec. 2013, Ministry of Finance, p.19.

- a. Industry engagement: - What is the industry profile and what steps were taken to ensure that the consultations truly reflect this market and provide robust accounts of the need, both current and future skill needs, for the qualification?
- b. Horizontal and vertical progression: - How does the qualification relate to other qualifications and jobs? What steps have been taken to ensure that the qualification offers reasonable progression steps and opportunities?
- c. International comparisons: - What steps, if any, have been taken to compare the qualification with related qualifications in other countries? How? And with what results?

The Qualification File will form the basis for information to be included in the NSQF Register of Qualifications. This will contain information on:

- a. Qualification Type, Name and Code,
- b. Body which has developed the qualification,
- c. Body/bodies which will award the qualification,
- d. Legal and/or other basis of the qualification,
- e. Occupation(s) to which the qualification gives access,
- f. Proposed level of the qualification in the NSQF,
- g. Structure of the qualification,
- h. Anticipated volume of training/learning required to complete the qualification,
- i. Planned progression from the qualification and entry requirements,
- j. Evidence of need for the qualification,
- k. Assessment regime for the qualification(s) (including RPL),
- l. Identification of any existing qualifications going to be replaced by the proposed qualification,
- m. Any approval procedure(s) to which the qualification has / qualifications have been subject.

The approval processes involves an evaluation and recommendation by NSDA case officers to ensure that the Qualification File meets all formal requirements. The NSDA case officer will work with the body submitting the Qualification File to reach a judgment on the quality of the Qualification being submitted and prepare a report and recommendation for the NSQC. This may involve discussions with the body making the submission. The process is about confirming that the quality assurance criteria have been observed during the development of the qualification and that quality assurance arrangements are in place to support the delivery of the qualification. The possible NSDA recommendations to be forwarded to the NSQC are: approval, approval with conditions to be met, and not to be approved.

NSQC decision and registration processes will involve:

- a. The NSQC will accept, amend or reject NSDA recommendation. An appeals process can be entered into where a submitting organisation is not happy with the NSQC decision.

- b. Where the approval is subject to certain requirements being met, the NSDA case officer monitors conditions and once the Qualification File and qualification are ready resubmits the qualification to the NSQC.
- c. Approved qualifications are added to the NSQF Register. Once the National Skills Qualification Committee has signed off on the Qualification File it will be entered into the Qualification Register.

The protection of NSQF qualifications requires that any issuing organisation adheres to any government legislative/ quality assurance arrangements for each qualification and compliance is monitored.

An organisation that awards a qualification is responsible for authentication and verification of the graduate's certification documentation. The organisation issuing a NSQF qualification is responsible for ensuring that it has established mechanisms to reduce fraudulent reproduction and use of NSQF certificates that it issues.

Only qualifications that are NSQF compliant can be entered in the NSQF Register. Qualifications that are not included in the NSQF Register cannot claim to be NSQF compliant. Where a qualification in the NSQF Register is an updated version of a previously existing non-compliant qualifications, the non-compliant qualification should be withdrawn from use. Where a qualification in the Register is replaced by a new, revised or updated qualification, arrangement will be made to withdraw the earlier version of the qualification from use in as short a time as possible, taking account of the need for individuals to complete the qualification. If it is not planned to do this, then the new qualification should be clearly distinguished from the non-compliant qualification by its title and in any marketing material. A review process is provided in order to check the continuing relevance of NSQF qualifications and to retire non-compliant qualifications.

The Table of Contents for this Manual covers the following areas:

1. The Qualifications File
2. The NSQF Register
3. The registration process
4. Evidence requirements
5. Aligning qualifications to NSQF levels
6. Pathway information
7. Authority to issue NSQF qualification
8. Monitoring the NSQF
9. Alignment of NSQF levels to levels of Qualifications Frameworks of other countries and/or regions
10. Transition arrangements
11. Review of qualifications
12. Revision and replacement of qualifications

Approach Paper to Manual 1.2: Accreditation of Training and Education Institutions Manual

This Manual will be developed to assist Training/ Education Institutions with the process of becoming a quality Training/ Education Institution, progressing from NQAF Compliance and eventually to Skill India Centre of Excellence and Innovation Accredited. There are four ratings for recognition and four sections in the Manual to cover each of these ratings. The Manual provides an overview of the Provisional NQAF Compliance, NQAF Compliance, Skill India Accreditation and Skill India Centre of Excellence and Innovation Accredited processes, the detailed requirements for recognition and the process leading to the recognition decision. The rating scale has four levels to encourage all Training/ Education Institutions to participate in improving the quality of their training/education delivery and graduate (student) outcomes. To incentivize quality improvement, Skill India Accredited Training/ Education Institutions and Skill India Centre of Excellence and Innovation Accredited Training/ Education Institutions will be entitled to use the Skill India Logo. The information on the recognition process covers self-evaluation, which forms part of the application process. Self-evaluation is a common feature of many quality processes as it assists organisations to develop skills to identify areas for improvement and makes organisations skilled at improving the quality of their services. The Manual covers the process of collecting the required relevant evidence as part of the self-evaluation process. This evidence will also be made available to the quality auditors/inspectors during any site visits.

Once the Training/ Education Institution submits the application and self-evaluation forms to the competent body, the competent body will review the application to make sure all the information that is required is provided. This includes the competent body reviewing whether, or not, evidence requirements in the application phase have been met. The competent body will follow up with the Training/ Education Institution on missing documentary evidence. Training/ Education Institutions are urged to submit any outstanding evidence as soon as possible, so as to not hold up the process of recognition.

Once the evidence has been confirmed and reviewed the competent body will organise a site visit and schedule a time for the visit to take place. During the site visit the Training/ Education Institution must ensure all evidence and staff are available for the inspection team to authenticate, review and interview, if the staff and/or evidence is not available it will be assumed that it does not exist.

During the site visit, the inspection team will discuss any discrepancies between their rating against key indicators and the Training/ Education Institution's self-evaluation. From these discussions an agreed quality improvement plan will be produced by the organisation. The inspection team will look at the management of learning services, governance, ethical behaviour, customer service, social inclusion, management of facilities, learning resources, professional development strategies for teachers, trainers, management and support staff, student services, subcontracting arrangements and other areas identified in the Quality Standards for NQAF Training/ Education Institutions.

The agreed quality improvement plan will outline what the Training/ Education Institution will need to implement to attain a rating at the next level of recognition. Depending on individual situations the Training/ Education Institution may be given a short timeframe to implement a small change to achieve a particular recognition level, or they may, depending on the

outstanding compliance issues, be given a shorter or longer timeframe for the next inspection.

Failure to implement any of the agreed quality improvement plan will affect the NQAF Compliance or Skill India Accreditation status of the institution.

The Manual contains the quality assurance recognition process for Training/ Education Institutions; the forms required to undertake a self-evaluation, an application form and the quality standards for each of the four levels. In case the Training/ Education Institution does not agree with the recognition decision, an appeals process is documented in the Manual. Complaints are an important way for competent bodies to monitor training/education provision and determine changes in the risk profiles of Training/ Education Institutions. A proposed complaints process is identified in the Manual.

There is also information on the process to add new NSQF qualifications to be delivered by the Training/ Education Institution. This is particularly important where equipment and teacher/ trainer qualifications may change depending on the qualification requirements.

The process for the addition of skill centres and the contracting out of training/education services is also covered in the Manual.

The Manual also includes the process for suspension of the recognition status.

Finally, the Manual contains the qualifications for Trainers, Instructional Designer and Educators.

The Table of Contents for this Manual covers the following areas:

1. Self-evaluation and the accreditation process for Training/ Education Institutions
2. Accreditation stages and documentation requirements
3. The application process including collection of evidence
4. The site visit
5. The quality improvement plan
6. Use of the Skill India logo
7. Appeals and Complaints
8. The improvement and review phases
9. Addition of courses and training/education centres
10. Withdrawal of accreditation and suspension of accreditation
11. Application and self-evaluation forms
12. Minimum qualifications for Trainers, Instructional Designer and Educators
13. Data collection and dissemination responsibilities of Training/ Education Institutions

Approach paper to Manual 1.3: Accreditation of Assessment Bodies Manual

Regardless of the form the assessment takes, or the context in which it is undertaken, assessment which leads to an NSQF qualification needs to be quality assured. Therefore, recognition processes, such as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and on-and off-the-job assessment all need to be monitored and continually improved.

This Manual is for Assessment Bodies seeking accreditation in order to assess the outcomes of training/education and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) leading to a partial or full NSQF qualification or to re-register as an NSQF or Skill India Accredited Assessment Body. The Manual covers what is required to prepare evidence for the application to determine suitability to become a Skill India accredited or NQAF Compliant Assessment Body. The Assessment Bodies meeting higher quality standards shall be Skill India Accredited and be entitled to use the Skill India Logo.

The Manual provides an overview of the accreditation process, the detailed requirements for accreditation and the process leading to the accreditation decision. The information on the accreditation process covers self-evaluation which forms part of the application process. Self-evaluation is a common feature of many quality processes as it assists organisations to develop skills to identify areas for improvement, making organisations skilled at improving the quality of their services. The Manual covers the process of collecting the required relevant evidence as part of the self-evaluation process. This evidence will also be made available to the QA auditors/inspectors during any site visits.

Once the Assessment Body submits the application and self-evaluation forms to the competent body, the competent body will review the application to make sure all the information that is required is provided. This includes the competent body reviewing whether, or not, evidence requirements in the application phase have been met. The competent body will follow up with the Assessment Body on missing documentary evidence.

Once the evidence has been confirmed and reviewed the competent body will organise a site visit and schedule a time for the visit to take place. During the site visit the Assessment Body must ensure all evidence and staff are available for the inspection team to authenticate, review and interview, if the staff, Assessors and/or evidence is not available it will be assumed that it does not exist.

During the site visit, the inspection team will discuss any discrepancies between their rating against key indicators and the Training/ Education Institution's self-evaluation. From these discussions an agreed quality improvement plan will be produced by the organisation. The inspection team will look at the management of assessment services, governance, ethical behaviour, customer service, social inclusion, assessment resources, professional development strategies for Assessors, management and support staff and other areas identified in the Quality Standards for NQAF Assessment Bodies and Assessors. Specific Assessor requirements related to specific qualifications is available from the relevant industry bodies, including the Sector Skills Council.

The agreed quality improvement plan will outline what the Assessment Body will need to implement to attain Skill India accreditation. Depending on individual situations the Assessment Body may be given a short timeframe to implement a small change to achieve Skill India accreditation with proof to be provided of the change. Or the Assessment Body

may, depending on the outstanding compliance issues, be given a shorter timeframe for the next inspection.

Failure to implement any of the agreed quality improvement plan will affect the accreditation status of the Assessment Body.

The Manual contains the quality assurance accreditation process for Assessment Bodies; the forms required to undertake a self-evaluation, an application form and the quality standards for Assessment Body to get NQAF compliant and Skill India accreditation. In case the Assessment Body does not agree with the accreditation decision, an appeals process is documented in this Manual. Complaints are an important way for competent bodies to monitor RPL and assessment services and determine changes in the risk profiles of Assessment Bodies. A proposed complaints process is identified in the Manual.

There is also information on the process to add to the range of NSQF qualifications which can be assessed by the Assessment Body. This is particularly important where equipment and Assessor qualifications and experience may change depending on the relevant industry sector requirements.

The process for the contracting out of assessment services or assessors working without regular supervision in remote areas is also covered in the Manual, along with the process for suspension and withdrawal of NQAF compliant and Skill India accreditation status. Each industry sector may have some additional requirements such as Assessors who have particular industry experience, licenses or professional registration, other than general industry experience. Some industry sectors may allow teachers to be Assessors as long as they only assess students who are not their own and are in other Training/ Education Institutions that are not contracted, owned or overseen by their own Training/ Education Institution.

The Manual provides information on competency based assessment and the principles that underpin competency based assessment and the assessment process. The management of the assessment process and the recording of the assessment results are also included in the Manual. Validation processes are covered in the Manual. Validation means confirming that something is fit for a purpose and assessment validation is documented in the Manual and may occur during the development of assessment tools and assessment strategies and to validate assessment outcomes.

Finally, the Manual contains the qualifications for Lead Assessors and Assessors.

The Table of Contents for the Manual covers the following areas:

1. Self-evaluation and the accreditation process for Assessment Bodies
2. Accreditation stages and documentation requirements
3. The application process including, collection of evidence
4. The site visit
5. The quality improvement plan
6. Use of the Skill India logo
7. Recording the assessment results
8. Principles of assessment
9. The principles of Recognition of Prior Learning, the process for RPL
10. Appeals and Complaints
11. The improvement and review phases
12. Addition of courses and assessment centres
13. Withdrawal of accreditation and suspension of accreditation

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14. The application and self-evaluation forms
15. Data collection and dissemination responsibilities of Assessment Bodies

The Manual will also include a section for Assessors that comprises of the following sections:

1. The process for registration of Assessors
2. The criteria for becoming a registered Assessor
3. Competency based assessment
4. The process for competency based assessment
5. The development of assessment tools
6. Pre-assessment standardisation
7. Post assessment standardisation

Approach Paper to Manual 1.4: National Quality Assurance Framework Auditor's Manual

While audits/inspections will be done in respect of all the training/education institutions and assessment bodies that seek to be NQAF Compliant and Skill India Accredited, it is important to have an audit process in place whereby independent audits happen at schedule times prior to awarding a recognition grading and at randomly selected times to ensure that the prescribed processes are working, and are being followed. This independent audit of entities is an integral part of the NQAF.

This guide has been developed to assist quality auditors and inspectors with the process of auditing Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies for NQAF Compliance and Skill India Accreditation. It is important for auditors and inspectors to understand the complete recognition process so they can answer questions when undertaking audits. The Manual describes each stage of the accreditation process. During the audit, the auditor/s or inspector/s will identify whether the institution collects data about its training/education and assessments from relevant stakeholders and whether it implements changes as required, based on the analysis of data and regularly monitors and reviews improvements in each of the key indicators. The Manual covers the kinds of evidence that auditors can use to inform the recognition decision. The Manual outlines the appeals and complaints processes and how the site visit process should be undertaken. The processes cover the opening meeting briefing to the closing meeting and the discussions around the agreed quality implementation plan.

During the site visit, the auditor/s will discuss any discrepancies between the auditor's rating against key indicators and the organisation's self-rating. From these discussions an agreed quality improvement plan will be produced along with a timeframe.

Finally, the Manual contains the NOS and Qualifications Packs for Quality Assurance Auditors. The Table of Contents for this Manual covers the following areas:

1. Self-evaluation
2. Accreditation stages and documentation
3. Audit principles
4. The audit process
5. Grading the criteria
6. Audit Report
7. Agreed quality improvement plan template

Approach Paper to Manual 1.5: Risk Assessment Framework Manual

A risk assessment approach helps to reduce the audit burden for competent bodies and reward through fewer audits those Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies that are committed to providing high quality services. The risk assessment framework supports an approach where Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies assessed as having a lower risk of non-compliance and those that are delivering high-quality training/education and assessment services, will receive less monitoring by the competent body. Applicants or Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies assessed as having a higher risk in terms of the likelihood of negative impacts on quality outcomes for clients, and a potential negative impact on the TVET and general education system more broadly, will receive more regular monitoring and attention through audit, with the aim of improving their performance outcomes.

The risk assessment framework sets out the risk assessment process for the competent body in making decisions about:

- a. assessing and responding to the risk of non-compliance by applicants against the National Quality Assurance Framework;
- b. assessing and responding to the risk of non-compliance by accredited Training/ Education Institutions and accredited Assessment Bodies against the National Quality Assurance Framework; and
- c. monitoring the compliance of Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies against the National Quality Assurance Framework.

This risk assessment framework outlines processes that can be used to determine arrangements for assessing NQAF Compliance and Skill India Accreditation applications, including applications for initial NQAF Compliance and Skill India Accreditation, applications for continuing NQAF Compliance and Skill India Accreditation and applications for extensions to scope of accreditation.

The Table of Contents for this Manual covers the following areas:

1. Operating principles and protocols
2. Risk assessment process
3. Risk indicators
4. Risk assessment, likelihood, impact and overall risk rating
5. Considerations for assessing performance risks
6. Considerations for assessing governance risks

Approach Paper to Manual 1.6: Quality Assurance of Industry Bodies Manual

This Manual covers the quality assurance aspects of industry bodies, including Sectors Skills Councils role in developing NSQF qualifications and the implementation of the NSQF with their particular industry sector. The Manual covers the development of quality NOSs, the grouping of the NOSs to form qualifications and requirement for version control and notification of changes to NOSs and qualifications to stakeholders. In most cases, this role shall be performed by the SSCs. However, where required, other bodies that are representative of their industry sector may perform these roles.

The second part of the Manual covers the information requirements in relation to specific NSQF qualifications in the industry sectors. The industry bodies will identify any specific teacher/ trainer work experience and /or qualifications required to deliver the training/education leading to an NSQF qualification. The industry body will also identify any equipment requirements that a training/education institute needs to deliver training/education leading to specific NSQF qualifications and whether any part of the training/education or assessment must be undertaken in the workplace. Along with this, the industry body will identify the work experience and/ or qualifications required by an Assessor to adequately assess the competency outcomes leading to an NSQF qualification.

The third section of the Manual covers the communication and data requirements associated with the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the NSQF in each of the industry sectors.

The other important area of industry sector-specific work that supports NSQF implementation is the information that industry bodies provide on current and future labour market skill needs. Industry bodies are able to identify changes to existing skills or demand for new skills based on interpreting different data sources and the major features and trends in the industry sectors they cover. Industry bodies can interpret available data with their industry networks to understand new or additional areas of skill and knowledge likely to be required by different sub-sectors in order to meet future demands (e.g. the demands generated by economic trends, changing industrial relations environments or workplace reforms and skilling/multi-skilling requirements).

The Table of Contents for this Manual covers the following areas:

1. NOS development
2. Industry consultation
3. Grouping of NOSs to form qualifications
4. Evidence requirements
5. Version control of documentation
6. Sector-specific information for Training/Education Institutions for delivering training/education programmes and for Assessment Bodies for competency-based assessments leading to NSQF qualifications
7. Information on communications about the NSQF and NQAF
8. Data requirements on NSQF and NQAF implementation in the sector

Approach Paper to Manual 1.7: Quality Assurance for National and State Level Bodies Manual

The Manual for National and State level Bodies specifically covers NSQF implementation and provides information on how the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) objectives can be monitored and quality improvements evaluated.

The NQAF objectives and the agreed indicators are identified, along with suggested strategies for facilitating NSQF implementation in the Body's area of authority or influence. For example, strategies include version control of documents for stakeholders (training/education providers, other Government Bodies, Assessment Bodies, etc.).

An important aspect of a quality assurance framework is to be able to measure quality improvements. One of the quality assurance criteria for Skill India Accreditation of Training/ Education Institutions is the collection and dissemination of non-identifiable data (non-identifiable person-specific information) to the relevant authorities. Some of the broad quality indicators include:

- a. the percentage of qualifications in the country aligned to NSQF;
- b. the number of Training/ Education Institutions that have become NQAF Compliant and Skill India Accredited;
- c. the number of Assessment Bodies that have become NQAF Compliant and Skill India Accredited;
- d. numbers of enrolments in courses leading to an NSQF qualification;
- e. numbers of completions, progression and employment outcomes of graduates with NSQF qualifications;
- f. the number of Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies that are involved in conducting RPL assessments and providing bridge training/education in line with the national RPL policy;
- g. the number of individuals accessing RPL and successfully gaining NSQF qualifications or entering into training/education programmes leading to NSQF qualifications;
- h. the number of Government Ministries and Bodies nationally and at the state level who have negotiated qualification pathways into or from their training/education programmes into another level of education or training;
- i. the number of Training/ Education Institutions that publically document completion rates, placement rates and retention rates on their websites and/ or in public spaces in the training/education centre;
- j. the number of Assessment Bodies publically documenting information on number of students assessed versus number of students certified and the average time between students completing training/education and being assessed;
- k. the number of persons from disadvantaged groups (women, SCs, STs, OBCs, persons with disabilities and transgender persons) joining training/education programmes and successfully gaining qualifications;
- l. number of persons from disadvantaged groups gaining employment (wage/self) after completing training/education;
- m. number of students who have successfully established enterprises within one year after completing training/education;
- n. number of training/education institutions that partner with entrepreneurship bodies (finance, incubators, industry hubs) to support students starting enterprises; and

- o. percentage of NSQF qualifications that are mapped to the content of equivalent overseas qualifications.

Each of these have a sub-set of indicators. An example of a NSQF quality improvement monitoring strategy is to require Training / Education Institutions to collect and feedback specific data. The requirement to collect data in the above areas could form part of the contract between the Body and the NQAF recognized or Skill India Accredited Training/ Education Institutions for the funding of training/education services. On-going funding to the Training/ Education Institution would eventually be dependent on the Training/ Education Institution providing the required data to the funding Body within an agreed timeframe. For example, a Training/ Education Institution may follow up with graduates three months after the completion of training/education to determine placement outcomes, however, in the meantime the institution would continue to receive funding for training/education services. Data on placement rates may be requested during subsequent negotiation of funding for training/education services with strategies included to improve response rates from graduates.

Improvements in the collection of data and an increase in response rates would be used by the Training/Education Institution as evidence of implementing continuous improvement required as part of their continuous improvement for on-going NQAF Compliance and Skill India Accreditation.

Data collected by the National and State level Bodies would be supplied at the central level.

The analysis of the system wide data would result in non-body specific data, except in cases of best practice where numerous organisations would benefit from studying the best practice example. The analysis of the data would help to improve the overall responsiveness and relevance of the NSQF and to provide information on the on-going policy development.

The Table of Contents for this Manual covers the following areas:

1. Objectives of NQAF
2. NSQF and NQAF implementation suggestions
3. Data collection and submission
4. Training/ Education Institution and Assessment Body accreditation levels
5. Quality indicators and monitoring of quality