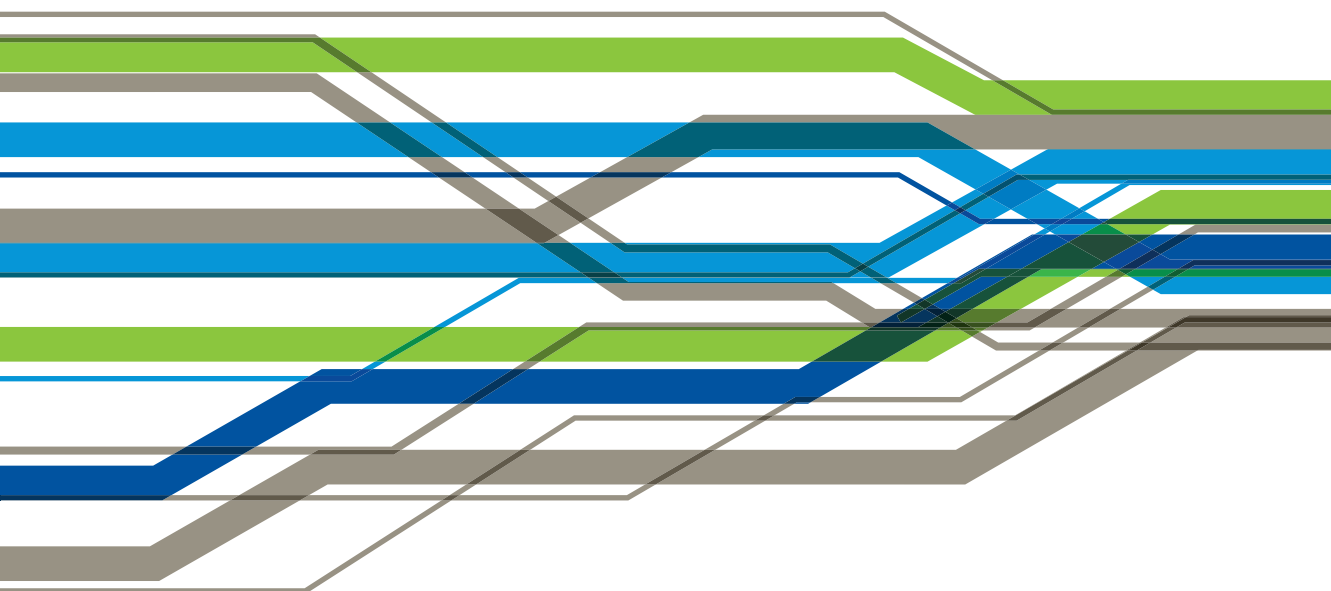


Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding

SETTING STANDARDS FOR TRAINING EXCELLENCE

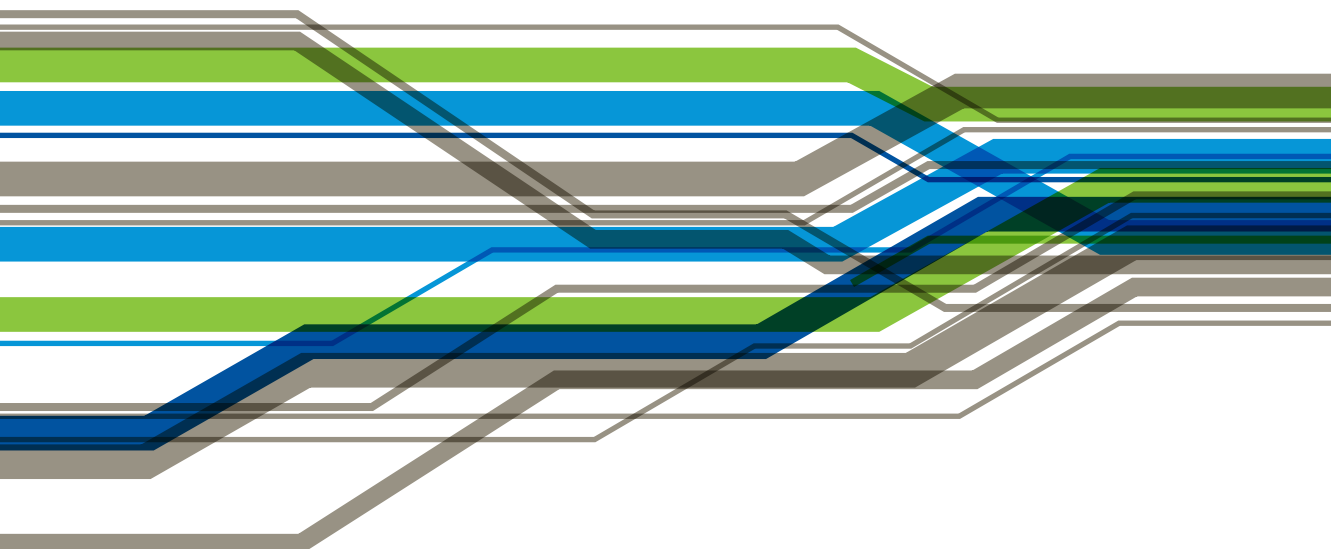


VOL. I



Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding

SETTING STANDARDS FOR TRAINING EXCELLENCE



VOL. I





FRONTEX

European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation
at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union

Rondo ONZ 1
00-124 Warsaw, Poland
T +48 22 205 95 00
F +48 22 205 95 01

frontex@frontex.europa.eu
www.frontex.europa.eu

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**Official signing of the
Sectoral Qualifications Framework
for Border Guarding**

**LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE
SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
FOR BORDER GUARDING**

**23 May, 2013
European Day for Border Guards
Warsaw, Poland**

ON BEHALF OF FRONTEX:



Ilkka Laitinen
Executive Director, Frontex

ON BEHALF OF MANAGEMENT BOARD:



Ralf Göbel
Chairperson of Frontex Management Board

Adopted by the Management Board of Frontex on 28 November 2012, during its 41st meeting held in Nicosia, Cyprus

Foreword

This guide is dedicated to all SQF users, to the border guard trainers and instructors, course developers, human resources and training managers and to the staff of the border guard organisations working in quality management and organisational development areas, as well as to strategy and policy makers. Besides the training centres and academies, the higher education institutions affiliated to the organisations with responsibilities in the border guard sector or the quality assurance/validation authorities may also find this document useful for benchmarking border guard education and training.

This guide aims at actively supporting the integration of the SQF by Member States/Schengen associated countries/partner countries and at promoting the Bologna and Copenhagen principles of learning, European harmonisation, comparability and mobility. Therefore, the document is written with the main purpose of facilitating the understanding of the concept and of its application, not only by the training experts, but also by staff of the border guard organisations who are less familiar with the Bologna/Copenhagen processes and education concepts. It has also been acknowledged that the vast majority of the target readers and users are not native English speakers, and therefore the language of the document is tailored accordingly.

The guide emphasises the various utilisations of the SQF at organisational level and contains practical examples of how different products in the SQF package may be used in the daily work of the different specialists. The authors tried to anticipate and address questions that may arise on the national integration process and to offer explanations, clarifications and useful suggestions for border guard experts and decision-makers within the border guard organisations.

This document also describes the process and the methodology of developing the SQF, including the challenges encountered and lessons learnt, as it is intended to share Frontex experience with any national or international organisation that envisages developing a sectoral framework.

This is not an academic paper and it should be considered accordingly.



1. Executive summary

The concept of the European Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding (SQF) is a result of the Frontex project to develop a common comprehensive training platform that supports the Member States/Schengen associated countries in integrating the common core curricula developed by Frontex, and to promote the alignment of border guard education and training to Bologna and Copenhagen principles, at European Union (EU) and national levels.

The SQF is a framework of high-level learning outcomes that reflects all of the learning, for all border guard activities, across the EU. As an overarching frame of reference, the SQF encompasses all levels of qualifications acquired in vocational and academic education and training in the border guard field. The SQF was developed based on an extensive job mapping (identification of the Competence Profiles/job profiles) for all border guard tasks at all levels) and therefore closes the gap between theory and practice and ensures that all training courses developed based on it (or aligned to it) are operationally relevant. The SQF has at its core the concept of 'professional learning' which describes the knowledge, skills and competences transferable to a workplace, the learning that is relevant for the job (required to perform border guard tasks).

Over 30 organisational entities from 26 countries (24 Member States/Schengen associated countries and two partner countries), and a number of partner organisations have been involved in the validation of the SQF, confirming its relevance for border guard training and conferring its European dimension. A panel of independent Bologna experts reviewed the final product and described it as a 'good practice' at the EU level that should be modelled by other professional sectors in terms of methodology and approach, as it reflects the true spirit of Bologna and serves the purpose of achieving harmonisation and mobility of learning across the EU in the border guard field. The Management Board of Frontex adopted the SQF in November 2012.

As a set of common EU standards, the SQF enables harmonisation and benchmarking of border guard learning regardless of national organisational structures or national training and education systems. It acts as a 'translation tool' for national qualifications, ensuring the comparabil-

ity of qualifications and the compatibility of training programmes. This will facilitate mobility and the development of exchange programmes for border guards, as set out in the Stockholm Programme, with the aim of ensuring a common EU approach to border security, interoperability and the enhancement of a common border guard culture across the EU.

The integration of the SQF at the national level is supported by Frontex through harmonised translation, providing training in course design in line with the SQF and Bologna/Copenhagen principles, and an ongoing quality assurance process that will ensure that the SQF remains operationally relevant and reflective of all border guard learning requirements across the EU.

The SQF does not dictate national training requirements; it includes all national requirements and is, therefore, inclusive and not prescriptive. The SQF will support the reviewing and accreditation of programmes, and will facilitate the formal recognition of other types of learning, such as 'on the job' learning. It will also assist in the development or updating of national occupational standards for border guarding.

As it is designed to embed the fundamental rights principles in all learning, the SQF package will assist in the integration of the fundamental rights principles in all training programmes at EU and national levels.

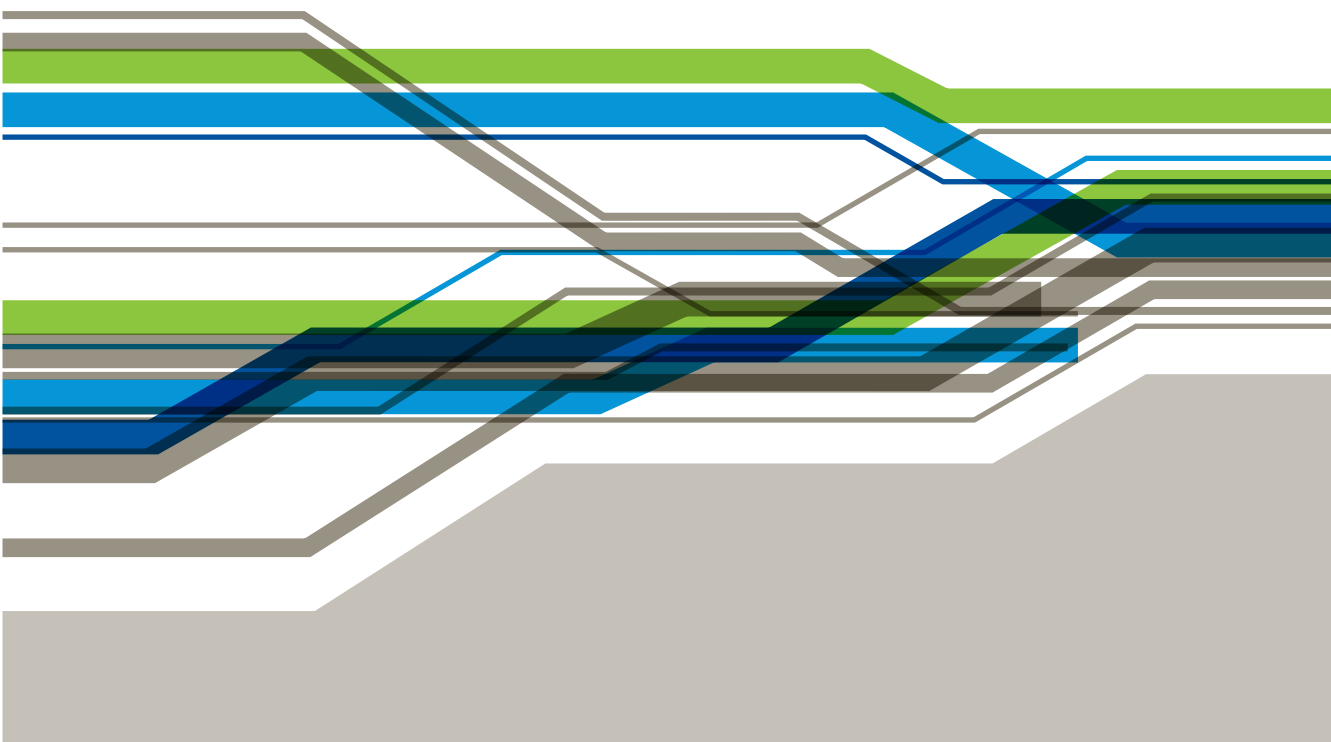
For Frontex, the SQF is an instrument for reviewing training and for quality assurance that will lead to the development of 'accreditable' courses. The SQF is the platform for a coherent strategy that links all training products, from the common standards for basic, mid-level and high-level border guard training, to specialised and further training courses. To give an example, the SQF level 7 (master's) is the basis of the European joint master's developed by Frontex in collaboration with the Member States, and the Competence Profiles are used for defining the learning requirements for the European Border Guard Team profiles.

The SQF promotes the principles of lifelong learning and it may facilitate EU cooperation and a coordinated approach to training in law enforcement. The SQF concept could contribute to the further identification of the scope for the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS), as a premise for achieving coordination and avoiding overlaps, supporting training needs assessments and training development. As it creates synergy amongst the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme actors, the SQF could serve as a good basis for interagency cooperation in the framework of the LETS.



PART ONE:

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR BORDER GUARDING





2. Background

2.1. On Frontex

Frontex is the EU agency that coordinates the operational cooperation of the Member States at the external borders of the European Union. It promotes, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union applying the concept of Integrated Border Management. The Agency supports the Member States in achieving an efficient, high and uniform level of border control. It coordinates operational and EU measures to jointly respond to exceptional situations at the external borders. Frontex develops capacities at the Member State and European levels as combined instruments to tackle challenges of migration flows and organised crime at the external borders and assists Member States in the training of national border guards, including the establishment of common training standards. The Agency carries out risk analysis, follows up on the development of research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders and provides Member States with the necessary support in organising joint return operations. As stipulated in Frontex's founding regulation, the responsibility for the control and surveillance of external borders lies with the Member States. The role of the Agency is to facilitate the implementation of EU measures ensuring the coordination of Member States' actions.

Frontex provides capacity building activities at the Member State and European levels as combined instruments to tackle the challenges of migration flows and organised crime at the external borders. The gradual development of Member States' capabilities, and the achievement of a high and uniform level of control and surveillance of their external borders, includes the harmonisation of training and technical systems.

An important task of Frontex is to support the training and education of national border guards through the establishment of common training standards at the European level. Frontex successfully developed 'common curricula' for border guard training and education that were adopted by the Member States and implemented at the national level, in line with the common training principles and training philosophy of Frontex. The Agency's activities in the field of border guard education and training aim

to promote a common European border guard culture with high standards of fundamental rights, ethics and leadership. Frontex offers specialised training courses on topics within the area of border management, and provides training at the European level for teachers and instructors of national border guards.

The training tools and standards developed by Frontex, in close cooperation with experts from the Member States and Schengen associated countries' border agencies and partner organisations, aim to address the training needs of stakeholders at all levels and in all areas, from the harmonisation of the border guards' career path education to the development and delivery of specialised training courses, covering various border guard lines of work. Frontex training aims to reach as many border guards as possible and all staff categories (from basic to middle- and high-level officers, from operational staff to trainers and border guard instructors and from specialists to border guard managers). Frontex also delivers a wide range of specialised further training (in stolen vehicles detection, false documents detection, service dog handling, air crew training, training for Schengen evaluators, etc.) as well as 'operational' training programmes designed to ensure harmonised performance and a high level of interoperability in joint operations and common border guard missions.

All Frontex training tools and products are specifically tailored to the training and professional development needs of the various categories of border guard officers. Close contact and direct involvement of the stakeholders is ensured through a formal network of nominated national experts — National Training Coordinators (NTCs) — who play a key role and contribute to all phases of training projects (development, implementation, promotion, monitoring, evaluation). This platform of national training experts is essential for two-way direct communication with all states in training matters. Moreover, by organising Frontex meetings and training activities, Frontex Partnership Academies (a network of national border guard academies from Member States) allow for the sharing of experiences and good practices in a most authentic training environment.

2.2. On the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding (SQF)

The development of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding (SQF) is based on Article 5 of the Frontex amended regula-



tion which stipulates that ‘Member States shall integrate the common core curricula in the training of their national border guards’. The Stockholm Programme, as well as the Internal Security Strategy for the European Union, emphasises the importance of creating frameworks for engaging the law enforcement officers in various forms of exchange/mobility programmes, to contribute to the development of a common culture within the law enforcement field, and to adopt a strategic approach to professional training in order to strengthen national capacity, reinforcing the European dimension of training. The development of the SQF is reflected in the Frontex strategy and multiannual plan for 2013–16 (Goal 1, Development) and it is one of the priority objectives of the Frontex training strategy.

The SQF for Border Guarding is the main tool for achieving the key objectives of the aforementioned strategic programme documents, facilitating the process without being prescriptive of any organisational structure or educational system. The SQF creates a link between operational needs and border guard education and training and facilitates a common approach to European border security, in accordance with Frontex’s mandate in the field of border guard training.

Frontex respects that each Member State has its own training solutions that are targeted at national needs. Frontex’s role complements existing training solutions at the national level in order to create a training system whereby the border control personnel of all the Member States can work together effectively. This capacity to work together is achieved through the development of common training standards. An important principle in this respect is direct cooperation and collaboration with Member States. All Frontex common standards in training, from common curricula to specialised courses, are developed with the direct engagement of experts in the field, nominated by the border guard agencies (law enforcement organisations with border guard responsibilities).^{*} This ensures that the EU common training standards meet organisational needs whilst facilitating the harmonisation of border guard learning across the EU.

Frontex is committed to the Bologna and Copenhagen principles of education and learning. The development of the SQF is an important part of the process of realising this commitment and of ensuring that all Frontex’s curricula are based on learning outcomes and that Frontex education and training solutions are specifically targeting the needs of the learner and also the needs of the border guard organisations. Moreover,

^{*} It is acknowledged that there is a wide variety of national organisations performing border guard tasks that are usually not ‘pure’ border guard organisations, but law enforcement organisations that perform the border guard function according to the national mandate; however, for the sake of consistency, in this document the syntagm ‘border guard agencies’ or ‘border guard organisations’ is used as a generic term to indicate the law enforcement organisations with a border guard function, regardless of their structure or other additional tasks.

Frontex goals and objectives in the field of training (providing training that is operationally relevant, developing common standards to achieve interoperability, comparability and mobility of learning, performance and quality standards, harmonisation and inclusiveness of all EU countries, promoting cooperation, collaboration and equal involvement of stakeholders) are equally reflected by the Bologna/Copenhagen processes that have the same aims for the field of education (harmonisation, cooperation, common standards, employability, quality assurance, transferability of competences, professional learning). The Bologna/Copenhagen approach is a necessary choice for Frontex training, as the two European initiatives strive to achieve the same European goals and values.

Just as the Bologna and Copenhagen processes are the European solutions for the harmonisation of education and training across the EU, the qualifications frameworks are the main tools (central pillars) of these processes, designed to achieve harmonisation and mobility of learning, comparability of qualifications and 'interoperability' of national education systems.

The SQF for Border Guarding will be the basis for the further development of all Frontex common core curricula, as it allows for the comparability and harmonisation of training standards, irrespective of particular types of national education/training institutions or systems. In light of the new Frontex Regulation, which emphasises the importance of national integration of the common core curricula by the Member States/Schengen associated countries, the SQF offers a comprehensive and flexible platform for competence-based curricula development that applies to both vocational and academic border guard education and training systems. As an overarching frame of reference, the SQF supports national integration of the common standards, playing the role of a 'translation tool' for the various national qualifications in border guarding, linking different training systems together and ensuring the coherence of needs assessments and training prioritisation.



3. Rationale for the development of the SQF

The objective of this framework is to offer the Member States/Schengen associated countries a tool that facilitates the national integration of the Frontex common standards in the field of training, and to promote European best practice in training design and development. The SQF reflects and supports Frontex's strategic approach to border guard education and training which aims at promoting a common EU approach to integrated border management by developing common training standards that meet border guard organisational needs whilst facilitating the interoperability, harmonisation and mobility of border guard learning across the European Union.

Frontex developed the sectoral framework:

- ♦ to ensure the implementation of the mandate in the field of training in line with the Frontex Regulation, the Stockholm Programme and the Internal Security Strategy of the European Union;
- ♦ to design mobility and exchange programmes for border guards that increase interoperability at the EU borders;
- ♦ to achieve the harmonisation and benchmarking of border guard learning across the EU;
- ♦ to allow for the comparability of border guard qualifications and training programmes across the EU, and to increase the mobility of learning;
- ♦ to facilitate the description of learning in every organisation regardless of organisational structures, training and education systems;
- ♦ to support a common understanding of border guard learning and training standards;
- ♦ to ensure that all courses and training standards are operationally relevant and specifically address the needs of the job;
- ♦ to assist the integration at the national level of the European common core curricula and learning standards;
- ♦ to support course accreditation and validation processes at EU and national levels;
- ♦ to ensure and facilitate the integration of fundamental rights into training and education for border guards;

-
- ♦ to ensure an integrated platform for a coherent training strategy which connects all Frontex training products and provides a robust quality assurance mechanism;
 - ♦ to streamline developments in the field of border guard training and to support stakeholders in prioritisation and training needs assessments (sound resource management);
 - ♦ to create synergies for interagency cooperation and coordination in the field of training and education, in accordance with Frontex's mandate, within the framework of the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme.



4. Ethos and principles of the SQF

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding, as well as all Frontex training standards, aims to contribute to the enhancement of interoperability at the EU borders and harmonisation of learning and professional standards whilst respecting diversity, in line with the Bologna/Copenhagen principles. To meet these aims, the SQF was designed in light of the following principles.

4.1. Operational relevance

The SQF identifies the learning requirements for the border guard job at all levels, requirements which were developed based on an initial extensive job mapping at every level and validated across the EU. This enables the SQF to provide a link between learning and practice and to facilitate the development of training programmes which are operationally relevant. The concept of 'professional learning' (knowledge, skills and competences that are transferable to the workplace) is a core concept of the SQF for Border Guarding. Border guard organisations cannot afford to send their employees to courses that are not specifically designed to meet their job needs, as it impacts upon border security and costs the organisations valuable resources (time, money, staff). All training in the border guard field has to be designed primarily based on these considerations, and therefore the SQF supports and facilitates the operational relevance of training, through its nature and purpose.

4.2. Reflective and specific to border guarding

The SQF comprehensively reflects the entire learning required to perform the border guard job at all levels across the EU. It does not include any other additional task that various law enforcement agencies performing border guard functions may have as part of their national mandate.

4.3. Representativeness

The SQF was developed by a large and representative group of experts from Member States/Schengen associated countries coming from both

training and operational fields and it was furthermore validated across the EU. The European dimension of the SQF is reflected in the development process as well as in the final product, which was accepted as relevant for all border guard organisations, regardless of their structure type or national particularities.

4.4. Cooperative

The development of the SQF was done in the form of a collaborative process and, due to its integrative structure, it facilitates synergy between the various EU agencies dealing with training for law enforcement, by avoiding potential overlaps.

4.5. Inclusive, not prescriptive

The SQF does not dictate learning or training requirements for any individual state or organisation with border guarding responsibilities, but comprehensively reflects the entire scope of learning in the border guard field throughout the EU. The SQF covers the job competences for border guarding activities of each organisation but not the competences required for other organisational tasks. Therefore, it accommodates all types of organisations performing border guard tasks across the EU.

4.6. Integrative

The SQF structure identifies the overarching, generic knowledge, skills and competences that are required for all border guard tasks (i.e. knowledge of law, protection of fundamental rights and communication skills) and the knowledge, skills and competences required for specific border guard activities (i.e. risk analysis, border surveillance and management responsibilities). This structure facilitates the design and description of fully integrated training programmes.

4.7. Fundamental rights principles

The protection of fundamental rights is integral to all border guard activities and training programmes. High-level fundamental rights learning outcomes are part of the core generic learning outcomes. The placement of the fundamental rights outcomes here means that they apply to all other learning outcomes in the SQF. Whilst it could be argued that the fundamental rights outcomes are part of the 'law and procedure' learn-



ing outcomes, the SQF sets a good practice of specifically defining fundamental rights outcomes. This practice, when applied to course design, will ensure that fundamental rights are fully integrated into all border guard training. A guide to integrating fundamental rights and designing course-level fundamental rights learning outcomes can be found as part of the SQF package of products (Volume II).

4.8. Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a mechanism that is part of the Bologna/Copenhagen processes to give 'credit' for existing learning. The SQF facilitates the capture and articulation of the learning that was achieved during operational and organisational activities ('on the job learning') and enables the border guards to use that learning towards certification.

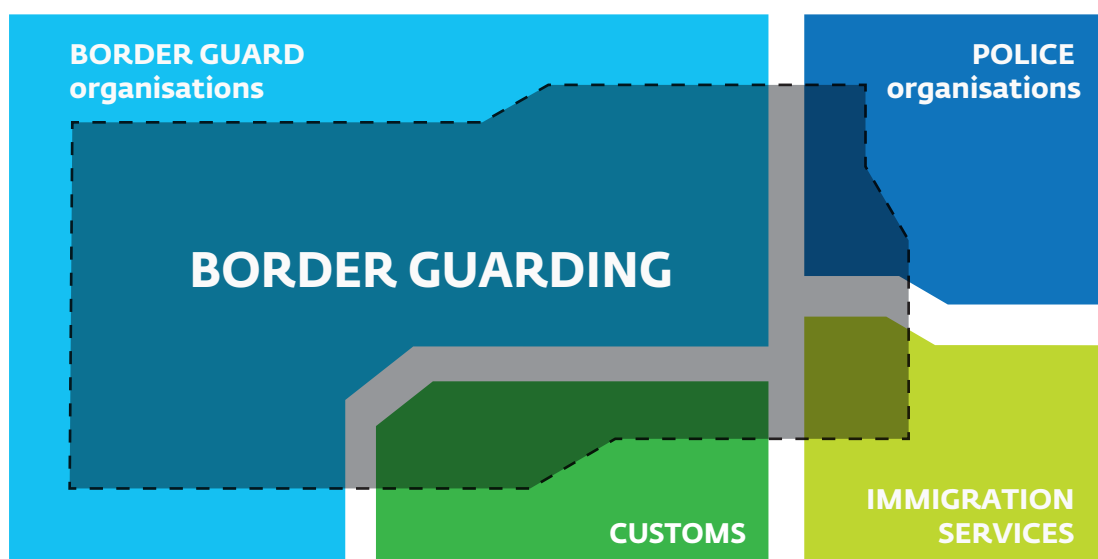
5. The scope of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding

5.1. Border guard specific

EU border guard organisations are diverse in structure and responsibilities (see Figure 1). Consequently, the sectoral framework is inclusive of all organisations with a border guard function but it is only related and specific to border guarding role and tasks.

The SQF has been structured in such a way as to facilitate alignment with other sectoral frameworks within the law enforcement, but it does not include all of the competences required in those sectors, as illustrated below. The SQF does not dictate learning or training requirements for any individual state or organisation with border guarding responsibilities (the principle of diversity), but comprehensively reflects the entire scope of learning in the field of border guarding throughout the EU.

Figure 1. **Scope of the SQF for Border Guarding**





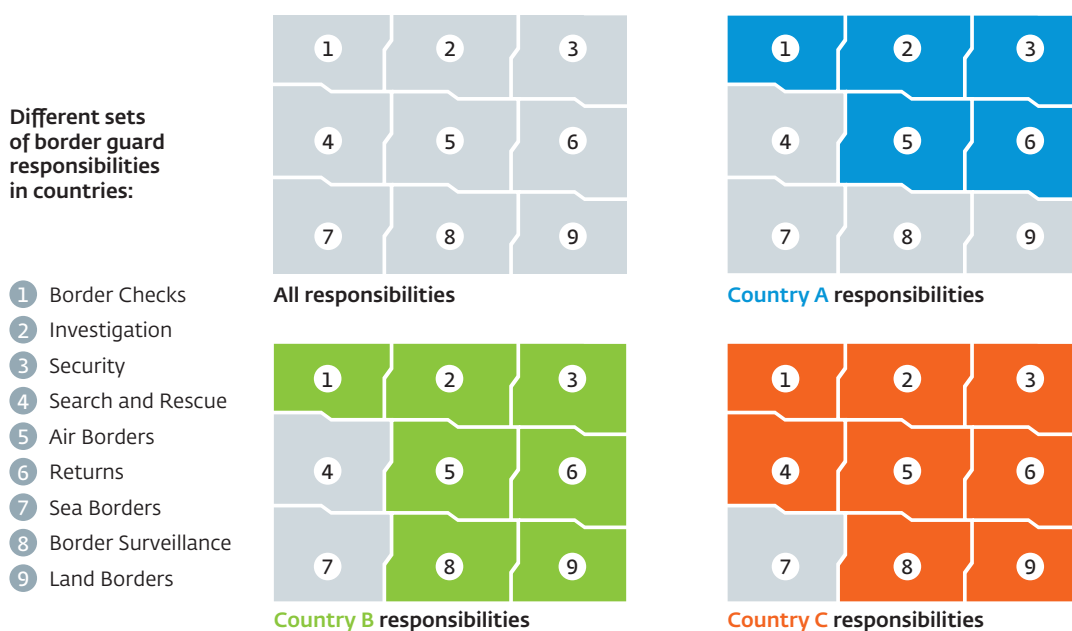
The SQF for Border Guarding covers the competences for the border guarding activities of each organisation but not the competences required for any other organisational tasks that a law enforcement agency may carry out, besides the border guard task.

5.2. Inclusive, not prescriptive

Each organisation with border guarding responsibilities conducts different activities according to the nature of the organisation, the national mandate, the physical geography of the state, etc. (see Figure 2).

For example, organisations in a state with no sea borders do not require specialised training in sea surveillance techniques. The SQF is inclusive but not prescriptive because it encompasses all training standards and Competence Profiles required in the field of border guarding across the EU, but does not dictate which training or education programmes should be implemented by a border guard organisation. It covers all learning required by border guarding organisations, but does not prescribe what training should be delivered by them. The SQF is NOT a set of obligatory training requirements.

Figure 2. **Border guard responsibilities**



The SQF provides a high-level reference framework of common training standards across the European Union, which the countries will **selectively integrate** depending on the specific organisational responsibilities.

As an illustration: some national organisations have expressed an interest in developing, at the national level, the sectoral framework corresponding to their organisational tasks, such as military policing or policing; the construction of the SQF for Border Guarding facilitates this, as it gives the states the possibility of selecting the relevant border guard job profiles and learning requirements applicable to their organisational tasks and completing the national SQF by mapping the rest of the organisational tasks, as appropriate (i.e. railway police, traffic police etc.).



6. Project context

The development of the SQF for Border Guarding was integral to the project to develop common standards and curricula for mid-level and high-level border guard training in line with Frontex's responsibilities. Consideration of mid-level and high-level learning requirements generated a number of natural and necessary questions to resolve as a foundation for this project.

1. What exactly is mid level and high level given the range of organisational structures within the border authorities across Europe?
2. What learning is required at the national and EU levels for mid-level and high-level border officers?
3. What do such officers already know and how is that defined?
4. How can it be ensured that the learning designed for the mid-level and high-level officers achieves the principles of harmonisation, interoperability and mobility?

These questions motivated the decision to develop an SQF for Border Guarding.

These types of questions, applied generically to learning, underpin the purpose of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, which aim to facilitate the mobility of workers within the EU through mutual recognition of all types of learning, by defining common learning standards for higher and vocational education, and by facilitating harmonisation whilst respecting the diversity in national education systems.

The mandate of Frontex training is aligned with the goals of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and, in order to achieve harmonisation in terms of the broad European approach to learning, it is evident that the method of setting common standards for border guarding should be in alignment with the European approach for standard setting in other fields of learning. This approach ensures the commonality of standards within border guarding and between border guarding and other agencies

and sectors including other law enforcement agencies and the vocational and higher education sectors.

6.1. The Bologna and Copenhagen processes

The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 instigated a series of reforms needed to make European higher education more compatible, comparable, competitive and attractive for Europeans and for students from other continents. In 2010, the Bologna process launched the European higher education area (EHEA), in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high-quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures across Europe.

The three overarching objectives of the Bologna process have been from the start: introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor’s/master’s/doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of qualifications, and periods of study. These objectives are driven by three key priorities — mobility, employability and quality.

The Copenhagen process, launched in 2002, aims to improve the quality of vocational training and to encourage more individuals to make wider use of vocational learning opportunities, whether at school, in higher education, in the workplace or through private courses. The actions and tools developed aim to allow users to link and build on learning acquired at various times, in both formal and non-formal contexts.

FRONTEX	BOLOGNA COPENHAGEN
Interoperability	Harmonisation
Harmonisation	Convergence
Joint Operations	Mobility
Mobility	Employability
Exchange	Common Standards
Capacity Building	Int. Competitiveness
Common Standards	Quality Assurance
Representativeness	
Inclusiveness	
Cooperation	
Performance	

Figure 3. Comparison of goals: Frontex and Bologna/Copenhagen processes



The Copenhagen process covers all learning that it not addressed in the three cycles of the Bologna process. The same principles of quality assurance, recognition of learning and mobility apply equally to the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

6.2. The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)

The central tool of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes for comparing learning standards is the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), which defines a common set of learning standards for all areas and at all levels.

The EQF applies to all types of learning and education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational. This approach shifts the focus from the 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 recognition of non-formal and informal learning (learning that happened outside of formal education and training settings, such as 'on the job learning' (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf_en.htm)).

The core of the EQF concerns eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do as 'learning outcomes'. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the central reference levels, ranging from basic (level 1) to advanced (level 8).

The lower levels of the EQF relate inter alia to vocational education as reflected in the Copenhagen process and the higher levels of the EQF relate to higher education as reflected in the Bologna process. Within the border guarding area, the levels of learning required include both vocational levels and higher education levels and are consequently better viewed as 'professional learning' which spans all the levels of the EQF.

6.3. National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)

The EQF acts as the 'translation' device that allows for comparison between learning in different states. As such the EQF is not directly used by any state, but is a central point of reference to facilitate comparisons. Each state has developed or adopted a National Qualifications Frame-

work (NQF) that best suits its own education system and all national programmes are accredited in accordance with its NQF. In the definition of the national framework, each state explicitly details how its framework relates to the EQF. For example, Ireland has adopted a 10-level framework, in which level 10 is referenced to level 8 of the EQF. As of 2012, the certificates awarded for accredited programmes in each Member State should state the EQF level for the course.

6.4. Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks

Because the EQF reflects all types of learning, the learning outcomes are of necessity very general, as can be seen in the EQF descriptors table (excerpts for levels 4–7 are presented as part of the SQF package of products). A Sectoral Qualifications Framework serves the same function as the EQF but is written to specifically capture learning related to

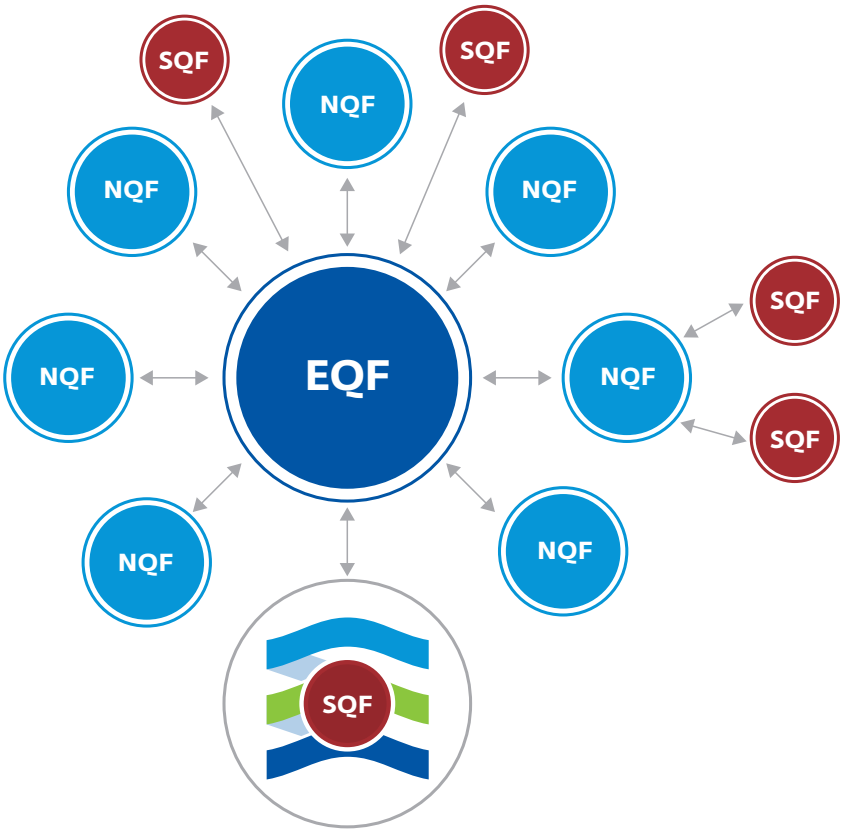


Figure 4. Relation between the EQF and the NQFs and SQFs



a particular sector. A 'sector' is defined as a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology. A sectoral framework can be national or European and provides reference points or standards expressed as learning outcomes that are specific to the sector, in this case border guarding. Several European sectoral frameworks were developed for different professional fields such as law, economics, business, education, European studies, international relations, medicine, architecture, psychology, social sciences and many others. The SQF for Border Guarding is the first one in the law enforcement sector and it is the main tool for harmonising border guard education and training across the EU as it provides a set of high-level reference points and standards for all border guard common curricula.

7. How the SQF for Border Guarding relates to Frontex's 'common curricula'

Common standards require a common language to describe learning, such that it is meaningful to every border guard across Europe. The Bologna and Copenhagen processes provide a structure for common understanding about learning, which is why this approach has been adopted by Frontex.

The SQF sets out levels of learning and the progression of learning for each area of border guarding. The learning outcomes of any course can be referenced against the SQF to determine the level of learning. Thus the SQF for Border Guarding provides a common language to describe learning, without dictating what learning should take place in any state or organisation.

The SQF is designed to align with levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the EQF and it is consistent with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes. It addresses the border guard professional sector and will relate the different countries' qualifications systems and frameworks together around a common European reference.

The SQF for Border Guarding provides a set of learning standards. In essence 'common curricula' are common learning standards for border guarding developed by Frontex in order to achieve harmonisation and interoperability in border guard activities and joint operations. The SQF now provides standards for all border guarding activities and related learning at all levels.

Just as implementation of the Bologna and Copenhagen principles are processes in higher and vocational education, the alignment of existing Frontex programmes will be a process achieved by two initiatives. All new Frontex courses ('common curricula') will follow Bologna/Copenhagen principles in course design and will be aligned to the SQF. As each existing course is reviewed, alignment to the learning outcomes and Competence



Profiles in the SQF will take place. Thus full alignment will be achieved over the natural review process for existing courses and 'curricula'.

The SQF for Border Guarding describes four levels of learning outcomes: levels 4 and 5 (principally reflecting the curriculum level of the Common Core Curriculum (CCC) for basic border guard education), level 6 (common core learning standards for border guard mid-level education/CMC updated, bachelor's level) and level 7 (master's level — the basis for the European joint master's dedicated to high-level border guard officers and for all other courses that Frontex will further develop at level 7). Additionally, the specialised courses currently offered by Frontex are reflected in the set of learning outcomes comprised by the section dedicated to specialised fields in border guarding and span different levels, depending on the complexity of learning.

General levels of EQF

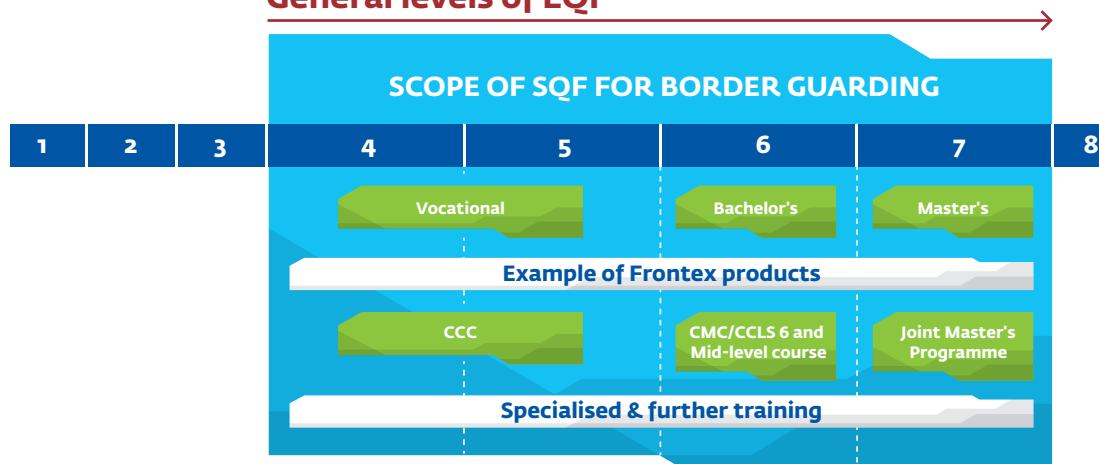


Figure 5. EQF–SQF levels and Frontex training products (examples)

8. Added value at the European level and implications for Frontex training

Development and integration of the SQF for Border Guarding ensures that Frontex is leading best practices in training and education for border guards through the adoption of EU standards. As a set of common EU standards, the SQF enables the harmonisation and benchmarking of border guard training regardless of national organisational structures or national training and education systems. Developing common standards for border guard training is one of the key goals of Frontex and is fundamental to achieving interoperability.

8.1. Benefits of the SQF for Border Guarding at the European level

There are four main benefits of having an SQF for Border Guarding at the EU level:

- ♦ operational relevance of courses (ensures that training is specifically designed to address the needs of the job);
- ♦ flexibility of integration and suitability for all types of organisations performing border guard tasks (does not dictate to national training, but offers all relevant reference points for border guard learning, in a comprehensive manner, to be selectively used and applied);
- ♦ synergies between the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS) actors (as shown previously, particularly as a result of being specific and relevant to the border guard job and training, the SQF facilitates cooperation and creates synergies in the LETS framework, eliminating overlaps and ensuring a coordinated approach to training in law enforcement);
- ♦ support for developing courses that can be accredited/validated.

Furthermore, the SQF will:

- ♦ provide a strategic platform for the development of all Frontex training products and an overarching reference framework — or umbrella — for all Frontex common curricula;



- ♦ provide common training standards for all levels and types of curricula and training courses (basic level, mid-level, high-level, general and specialist training);
- ♦ provide a reference framework of job competences/occupational standards;
- ♦ link and reference the common training standards to operational requirements and job competences to ensure training is operationally relevant (closing the gap between training and operational needs);
- ♦ ensure border guard common training standards are aligned to European training and education standards (Bologna and Copenhagen processes);
- ♦ have a long-term impact on the development and national integration of the common training standards and common core curricula in the border guard field across the EU.

8.2. Accreditation/validation/formal recognition of learning

One of the main benefits of the SQF for Border Guarding is that it will enable Frontex to provide training course descriptors that may be recognised by all European countries and national education systems.

Frontex aims to develop courses that can be accredited at the national level and to provide the highest quality standards for courses that support the career development of the border guard officers and carry the potential for appropriate recognition/validation of learning. The SQF provides the means for this, as it gives an indication of the level of the learning and of the border guard common learning requirements, as a standard. This goal will be achieved when all Frontex courses and curricula are referenced to the SQF and described in a learning outcome-based and not content-based approach.

As of 2012, all certificates must carry the EQF level, which is the same as the SQF level. For Frontex and for national border guard training organisations, the SQF will provide this reference. The level of the courses, the qualifications to be acquired, the list of learning outcomes, the job competences to be addressed, the description of learning and assessment strategies and the indication of learning hours — all part of the supplementary package accompanying the training certificate provided by Frontex for all of its courses once aligned with the SQF — will facil-

itate the recognition and validation at the national level of the respective course certificate for all participants, from any country.

When the Member States consider developing new courses based on the SQF (or reviewing existing ones), Frontex may support the process upon request with advice, consultancy and the provision of training. The actual accreditation of courses is a national process, following national procedures, rules and terms. The SQF is still the main tool for effective course design, aligned with Bologna/Copenhagen principles, and makes the development and accreditation of courses much easier, as it offers substantial relevant information to support the course design and recognition process (job profiles, levels of learning, border guard specific references, etc.).

To ensure that Frontex training courses are 'accreditable' in every Member State, Frontex is:

- ♦ using the SQF for the design of all new training products (e.g. the learning requirements for the European Border Guard Teams training are developed based on the SQF Competence Profiles);
- ♦ aligning all existing training products (common curricula, training tools, courses, etc.) to the SQF as and when each training product comes up for review following a natural review process.

Once all Frontex courses are learning outcomes-based, identifying job competences and indicating the level of the course using the SQF for Border Guarding, and following the good practice of Bologna/Copenhagen principles for course design, Frontex will be in the position to offer the Member States, for national implementation, more than a set of course materials, curricula or manuals. The common training standards developed based on the SQF may be integrated at the national level as accredited/ 'accreditable' courses, in accordance with the national validation and accreditation processes.



9. The SQF in a nutshell

What is SQF?

A strategic approach to Border Guard training development and quality assurance

A high level set of reference points for all Border Guard curricula

A European benchmark for Border Guard occupational profiles

A set of common standards for Border Guard learning

A tool to support course design

A Voluntary Framework

What SQF is NOT!

Is NOT a mandatory framework

Is NOT prescriptive to Border Guard organisations

Is NOT a set of obligatory requirements

Does NOT dictate to national training

Does NOT aim at reforming education

Is NOT a curriculum

The SQF in a nutshell

The SQF for Border Guarding sets standards, in the form of learning outcomes and job competences, for border guard education and training that are aligned with the EQF at levels 4, 5, 6 and 7. The concepts of inclusivity and representativeness underpin the structure of the SQF and the approach to its design.

What is the SQF?

- ♦ A common European reference framework for border guard qualifications which reflects the entire scope of learning in the border guard field, at all levels.
- ♦ A translation tool which links national border guard qualifications, making them readable and understandable across different border guard systems in Europe.
- ♦ A common platform for all border guard common curricula.
- ♦ A high-level framework that encompasses all qualifications acquired in both academic and vocational education.
- ♦ A European qualifications framework for the border guard professional sector.
- ♦ A common European reference framework for border guard learning.
- ♦ A voluntary framework, consistent with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.
- ♦ A strategic approach to training design and certification.





10. Overview of the product

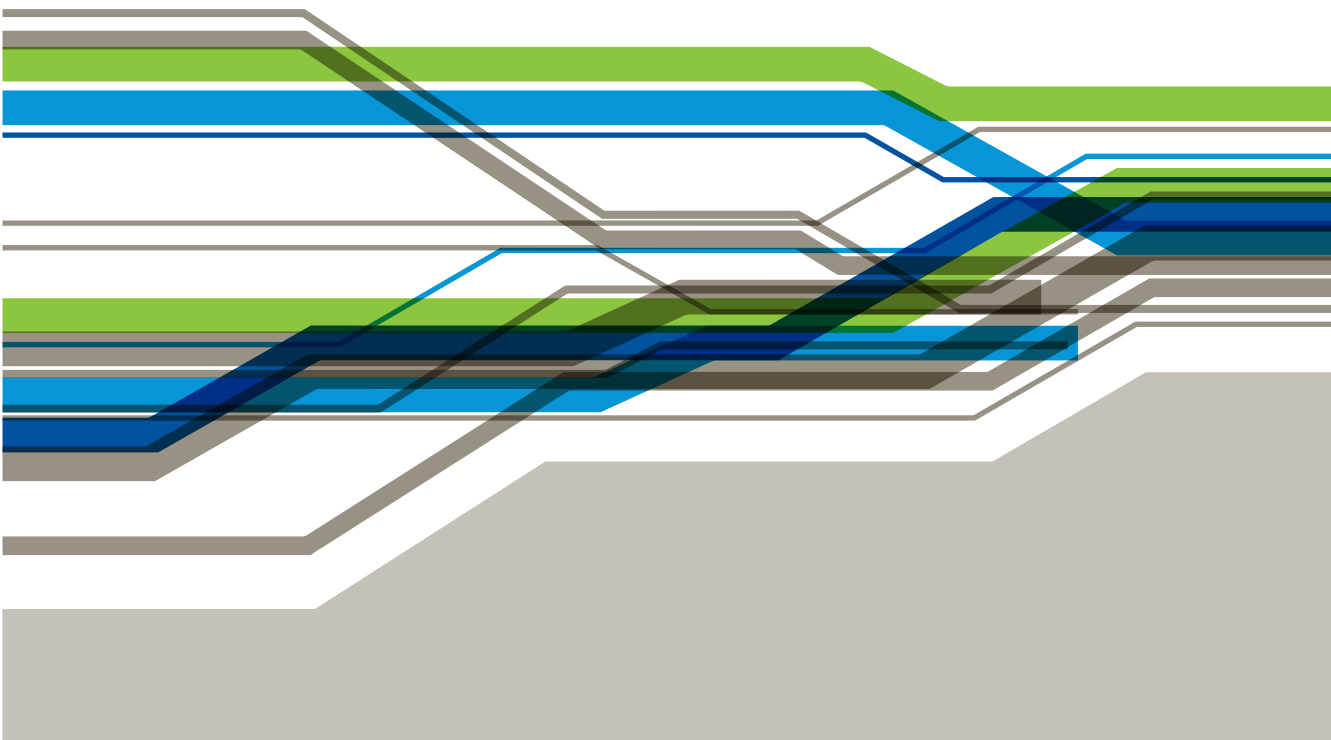
The SQF package is a substantial set of documentation aimed at facilitating the integration of the SQF by Member States/Schengen associated countries/partner countries. It is comprised of practical examples of how different products in the SQF package may be used in the daily work of course developers, human resources managers, quality management departments, organisational development and training management structures and strategy and policymakers, etc.

The package consists of:

- ♦ **A. Volume I. SQF Guide:** an introduction to the SQF: the manual on the SQF (concept, process, background, methodology, etc.) and its usage, including practical examples (current document and its annexes);
- ♦ **B. Volume II. SQF package of products,** covering:
 - the SQF, presented in two different formats to facilitate different purposes of use and different categories of readers (academics and operational experts);
 - Competency Framework or Competence Profiles which identify job competences/occupational standards for border guarding;
 - Cross-Reference Tables that ensure and show the link between training and job competences;
 - a Guide to integrating fundamental rights into border guard training and course design.

PART TWO:

SQF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

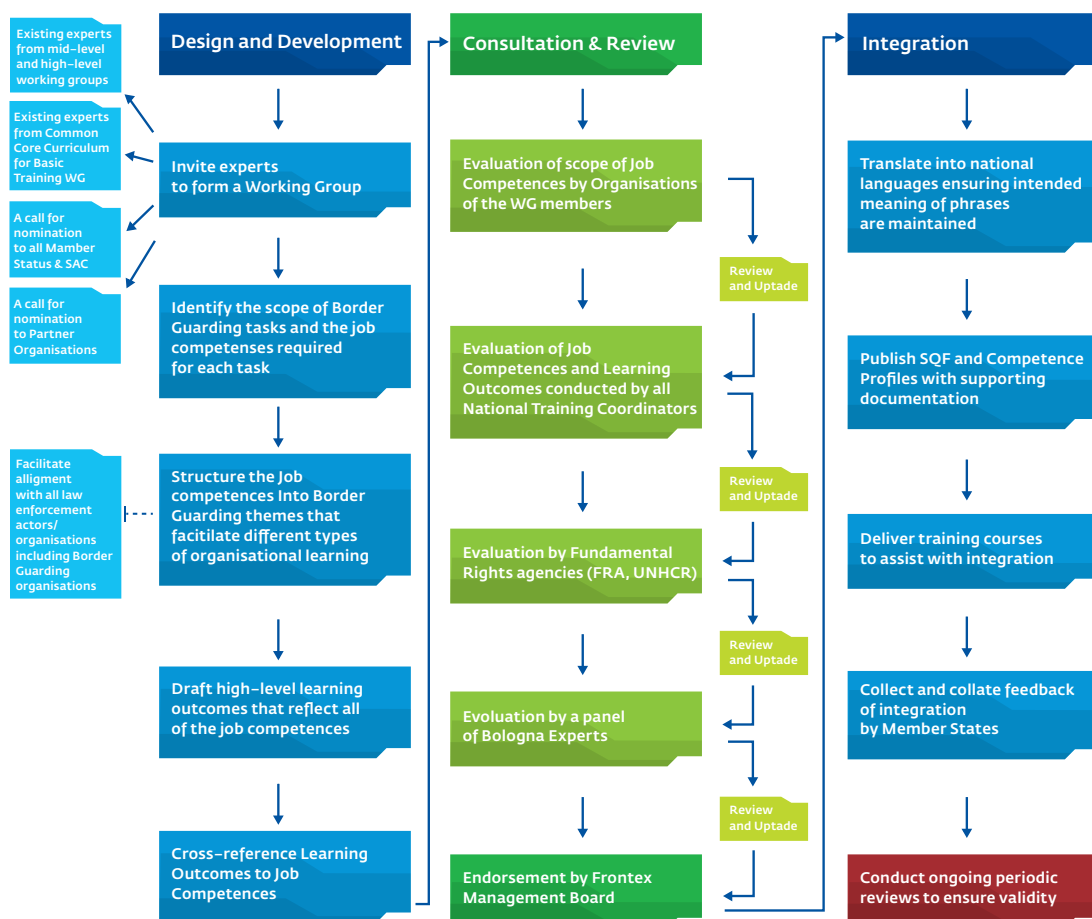




11. Development and validation process

The process of development and validation of the SQF for Border Guarding is illustrated in Figure 6, below.

Figure 6. SQF process map



11.1. Development phase

The SQF for Border Guarding was developed by a working group of 40 operational and training experts from 20 border guard organisations, 19 Member States/Schengen associated countries and the partner organisation, DCAF (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces). In order to ensure consistency with the other 'common curricula' developed by Frontex, the development of the SQF for Border Guarding started with a representative group of experts previously involved in the development of the Common Core Curriculum for border guard basic training (CCC), Common Core Curricula for mid-level border guard management education (CMC), Frontex Mid-Level Course (MLC) and Curricula in Higher Education (CHE). Key experts working on these projects, familiar with Frontex's business processes and philosophy (inclusiveness, cooperation, common standards, direct and equal involvement of the Member States, etc.), were invited to join efforts in order to achieve the ambitious goal of developing the European qualifications framework for the border guard professional sector (in October 2011).

The intention of developing the sectoral framework was introduced to the National Training Coordinators' network, and it was also shared with a larger forum of border guard training experts that gathered together to discuss the future of the common European standards for mid-level and high-level border guard education, during the first conference on 'European curricula for border guard education', held in Malta in November 2011, at the premises of the University of Malta, a Frontex Partnership Academy. The interest generated by the sectoral framework was substantial, as the Member States' representatives understood the potential and the strategic implications of having a European framework for all border guard learning and qualifications. Consequently, a call for nomination of experts with relevant expertise (operational expertise, as well as training and education, at all levels) was sent out in January 2012 to all Member States and Schengen associated countries and the response of the stakeholders was significant, as is well demonstrated in the European representativeness of the project group that was subsequently established.

It is worth mentioning that a pre-development stage can also be identified. This 'precursor' to the SQF development was the elaboration of the 'Competence Profiles' for levels 6 and 7 that started with a small group of experts working on the Curricula in Higher Education (CHE) project. At that stage, the project aimed only to develop the Competence Profiles for levels



6 and 7, which were intended to be the basis for further joint degree study programmes for mid- and high-level border guard education (July 2011).

It soon became obvious that it would be much more beneficial to actually develop a sectoral framework, a learning outcomes-based sectoral framework, consistent with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, that would go far beyond the scope of the level 6 and 7 Competence Profiles (which covered only higher education) and would comprehensively reflect the entire learning within the border guard field. It was acknowledged that the development of the sectoral framework for border guarding would include both vocational and academic qualifications, as a substantial part of border guard learning is vocational. Therefore, the thinking of the project has shifted from a focus on higher education standards to an integrated approach towards the entire border guard learning and qualifications at all levels, aiming at ensuring consistency and coherency between levels, the progression of learning and a cohesive and comprehensive picture of the border guard job and learning requirements at all levels.

Consequently, a new methodological approach was adopted that suited better the new purpose of the project (for more details see Section 12 on development methodology).

In brief, the SQF development and validation consisted of the following steps.

1. Development of Competence Profiles

- (a) job mapping (working group)
- (b) consultation and review of job competences (national consultations)

2. Development of learning outcomes

- (a) designing the learning outcomes (working group)
- (b) cross-referencing the learning outcomes on the job competences and review (internal consistency check, working group)

3. Validation of SQF

- (a) European validation (national consultation with all Member States/Schengen associated countries, collection of feedback)
- (b) consultations with partner organisations (collection of feedback)
- (c) review, fine-tuning and finalisation (working group, integration of feedback)

- (d) establish and agree the SQF quality assurance mechanism (working group)
- (e) develop the 'Guide to integrating fundamental rights into border guard training' (project board and Fundamental Rights Working Group)

4. External Independent assessment

- (a) Bologna Expert Panel report on SQF
- (b) reflection of recommendations in the final documentation (project board)

5. Endorsement by the Management Board of Frontex

- (a) preparations for the introduction of the SQF to the Management Board (collection the needs and issues for the national integration process, discussions with the National Training Coordinators)
- (b) adoption of the SQF by the Management Board

The next steps of the process, after the adoption, are the following.

6. SQF official launch and further promotion

7. Start-up of national integration process

- (a) establishment of the SQF Expert Board
- (b) translators' workshops
- (c) training the trainers

8. Frontex training review and alignment with the SQF (in parallel with step 7)

11.1.1. Job mapping

The first step in the development process consisted of an extensive exercise of mapping the border guard job and tasks at all levels. That resulted in a comprehensive description of the knowledge, skills and competences required to perform the border guard job. The work started based on the premise that the main purpose of the learning in this professional sector is to develop the knowledge, skills and ability or 'job competence' to effectively conduct border guarding activities. Therefore the learning outcomes in the SQF should relate to all border guarding job competences. This first step aimed at listing the job competences that should reflect and capture all border guarding activities, presenting the full picture of the border guard job, on the basis of which the learning requirements would subsequently be defined.



The job competences were organised around headings that were agreed on by the working group as scoping the border guard professional areas (the same as the SQF learning outcomes areas). They are defined in a more operational language, and they are assimilated to the occupational standards.

This comprehensive set of job competences was used to construct the competency framework, or Competence Profiles document, that is part of the SQF package. It was designed to ensure the operational relevance of the training standards and to directly link the learning with the job tasks and requirements. The Competence Profiles (job profiles) of the SQF were the basis for the definition of the training standards (learning requirements).

11.1.2. Consultation and review of Competence Profiles

During the series of workshops dedicated to the development of job competences, some Member State experts mentioned that their organisations were in the process of reviewing their organisational occupational standards and that the Competence Profiles of the SQF — even though in the stage of a working document — were a useful tool to assist in their review process.

These discussions generated the need for a second step in the development process, which was a structured process of reviewing the Competence Profiles by comparing them with the national organisational/occupational standards. The members of the development group were requested to take back to their organisations the outcome of the group work and to check it against the national occupational standards for the border guard job. Concrete instructions were given to the members of the working group in terms of the review methodology and process, and specific recommendations were provided in order to ensure the inclusion in the review process of the operational experts, to make sure that the people ‘actually doing the job’ had the chance to look at the Competence Profiles as defined by the group.

The main task of the national experts was to assess the list of competences in the job profiles that were developed for levels 4, 5 (basic), 6 (mid level) and 7 (high level) and to identify gaps or missing competences. The questions formulated aimed to identify if the border guard job is well reflected in the Competence Profiles, if they reflect the entire scope of learning within the national organisation and if there is any knowledge, skill or competence needed to perform the border guard job

that is missing from the list. The experts were invited to reflect on their national training as well, identifying if there is learning that is relevant for the border guard job that is not reflected in the competency framework.

The experts were also requested to document the consultation and review process, briefly describing how the consultation work was carried out, the methodology engaged, the level of participation and the organisational representativeness. It was suggested that consideration should be given to setting up small working groups at the national level, engaging in written consultations, conducting interviews with relevant staff from the operational and training sides, and making comparisons with existing job profiles/occupational standards at the national level and with the curricula and programmes currently running.

The complete document is presented in Annex 1.

The input collected from the Member State experts was extensive and the scale of the engagement at the national level was remarkable. The process documentation gives a clear picture of how the review and consultation was organised at the national level. (Excerpts from the results of the two phases of the consultation, review and validation, are presented in Annex 3.)

The results of the review were compiled and presented to the working group, which had the task during the next meeting (in early March 2012) of analysing, discussing and coming to an agreement regarding the changes that needed to be introduced in the working document. Recommendations were provided in terms of introducing specific elements in the Competence Profiles. Each piece of individual feedback was discussed and concluded with a decision to either integrate the suggestion if it was deemed correct and relevant or to reject it, based on the group's agreement, when there were reasonable grounds (such as being outside of the scope of border guarding). The group discussions were conducted on the basis of the underpinning principles of the SQF: inclusiveness, representativeness, integration of diversity and maintenance of the SQF character (border guard-specific, reflective and relevant).

11.1.3. Development of the learning outcomes

During the final stage of the elaboration of the Competence Profiles, the working group initiated the development of the first draft of the learning



outcomes and cross-checked them thoroughly with the Competence Profiles. Based on the new revised version of the Competence Profiles, after national consultations, the group reviewed and completed the list of the learning outcomes, which came very naturally in this sequence of development. The learning outcomes were carefully defined and referenced to the EQF descriptors of learning, for each of the levels, using verification questions such as: Is the level correct? Is this learning relevant and specific to border guarding? Is it well placed in the learning area? The revised Bloom's taxonomy of active verbs was used to assist the definition of the learning outcomes, but further attention was paid to other elements such as: the context of the learning (the scope or the range); the type of learning (knowledge, skill or competence); the topic area (specific or general); and the condition of being assessable (is this assessable?).

If the identification and definition of the job profiles was laborious, but not very challenging, as it was relatively easy for the border guard specialists and training experts to describe the job in occupational terms, it must be said that when it came to the definition of the learning outcomes, it was a very difficult process. The main challenges and issues encountered in the development are described in Sections 12 and 13. However, it is worth mentioning that one of the main challenges in defining the learning outcomes was the assimilation of the concept of 'hierarchy of learning outcomes' and its application. Most of the experts in the group were experienced in curriculum development and in writing curriculum/session learning outcomes (very specific, concrete and detailed), but very few people had experience of defining programme-level learning outcomes or especially sectoral level learning outcomes. The tendency to write lower level learning outcomes (concrete and specific, curriculum level) was very strong at the beginning of the process. Similarly most of the experts found it easier to write knowledge learning outcomes rather than skills or competences. The difficulty in writing competence learning outcomes was particularly noticeable, as the EQF definition of competence and the dimensions of 'responsibility' and 'autonomy' were not familiar to many experts. The old debate on 'attitude' versus 'competence' was also present in the group's discussions and it took a while before everyone grasped the actual meaning and importance of defining 'good' learning outcomes: specific, objective, achievable, useful, relevant, standard-setting, assessable and at the appropriate level (sectoral framework level).

The development of the learning outcomes for the SQF was in itself a learning experience and a learning process for the group, and it can be

said that the Frontex group experienced during the development of the SQF most of the challenges that the countries had experienced when introducing the Bologna principles and developing their National Qualifications Frameworks. Some of the most illustrative questions, comments and concerns brought up during the development of the SQF are presented in Part Six as they were considered relevant and useful for explaining the process and the concept. They also provided an understanding of the perceptions and assumptions about the SQF, on what a sectoral framework is and on its implications for border guard education and training.

11.1.4. Internal consistency check: the cross-referencing exercise

In the course of the development of the learning outcomes there was a constant tendency to look back to the Competence Profiles and check whether there was any competence not covered by the learning, whether the learning naturally followed the same thematic areas as the competences and if there was a consistency between the competence tables and the learning outcomes etc. Based on this experience, Cross-Reference Tables (see product in Volume II) were developed as a matrix for each level of the SQF, giving the possibility to cross-reference the learning outcomes against the Competence Profiles.

This exercise served as an internal validation step which led to a considerable improvement of the learning outcomes. The cross-referencing revealed that some learning outcomes were not specific enough, some included too much learning and also different learning (two learning outcomes in one sentence) and some did not stand alone when taken out of the context of the learning areas. Also, the group identified some job competences that were not well reflected in the learning, which led to the development of additional learning outcomes. Furthermore, some of the Competence Profiles were revisited and refined, as they were looked at from a different perspective.

The Cross-Reference Tables are more than a meaningful internal consistency check exercise, and once developed, they became a very useful tool for course design, as they can be used for the identification of the learning outcomes that address specific job competences selected and tailored for a specific course. During the training in course design in line with the SQF and Bologna/Copenhagen standards organised by Frontex (aimed at enabling the national experts and the Frontex training project managers to use the SQF for course design), it became evident how



useful it was to have a tool that showed, in concrete terms, which learning outcomes contribute to the achievement of a set of job competences. Moreover, the Cross-Reference Tables give a clear indication of the substance of the learning outcomes, as they provide further, in-depth information on what the learning defined in the SQF is supposed to cover.

Frontex development partners

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).



* The term 'validation' should be understood as referring to a consultation process that aimed to confirm relevance and representativeness and to get acceptance of the SQF, etc. It should not be confused with the meaning of 'validation' as part of the quality assurance of training programmes.

11.2. Validation* phase

11.2.1. European validation

The scope and standards of the SQF were ensured through a process of consultation, evaluation and review conducted with all the National Training Coordinators (NTCs), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and finally a panel of Bologna experts. The purpose of the overall consultations and validation at national level across the EU was to ensure the relevance of the draft SQF and Competence Profiles to national border guard job profiles, competences and learning. The validation process aimed to ensure that the SQF would be comprehensive and inclusive of all national training requirements and job profiles, confirming its relevance for border guard training and the European dimension of the final product.

Over 30 organisational entities from 26 states, including two European partner countries, responded to the validation exercise. At a later stage, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and three more international organisations active in the fundamental rights protection field, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the OSCE Office

for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), scrutinised the SQF and contributed to the development of an additional product (more details in Part Four).

11.2.1.1. Validation methodology

A comprehensive introduction to the SQF concept and outcome of the work was presented during the National Training Coordinators' conference in April 2012. The National Training Coordinators are Frontex's key counterparts in the field of training. It is a two-way platform of communication between Frontex and the Member States, Schengen associated countries, partner countries and other partner organisations. The National Training Coordinators play an important role in training needs assessment, supporting the planning of training activities and providing feedback on the quality and impact of training tools and products. Each Member State, Schengen Associated Country and Partner Country, as well as the partner organisations nominated one representative as a National Training Coordinator — the point of contact for all training matters in relation to Frontex. The NTCs are usually decision-makers in the field of training in their organisations, and were therefore in the best position to conduct the overall validation of the SQF, as they could reach all the training institutions, centres and academies, as well as the operational structures within their areas of responsibility.

Similarly to the way in which the national consultations on the Competence Profiles took place, this time the National Training Coordinators received detailed instructions and recommendations on the purpose, nature and methodology of the validation of the whole SQF package (see Annex 2).

The overall validation had three main purposes:

- ♦ **Revalidation of the Competence Profiles**

Extended to all Member States and Schengen associated countries, the final versions of the job profiles were again reviewed and assessed, with the task of identifying any gaps or missing competences. This followed the same instructions as during the first consultation phase, highlighting the request to involve both operational and training experts.



♦ **Reviewing of the learning outcomes**

The task for the National Training Coordinators was to ensure that the learning outcomes in the border guard courses, at each level, are reflected in the SQF and to identify learning outcomes that are not related to the SQF learning outcomes. The NTCs were instructed to identify staff with training expertise within their organisations who are familiar with the learning outcomes of courses for basic, mid-level and high-level officers and to request them to map their courses' high-level learning outcomes onto the SQF outcomes and identify any learning outcomes in their programme that are not reflected in the SQF. A concrete example of how the mapping exercise should be executed was included as part of the instructions (see Annex 2).

These training experts were also requested to check if the level of knowledge, skills and competences (4, 5, 6, 7) was relevant and correct and to provide recommendations.

♦ **Process documentation**

As in the previous consultation phase, the National Training Coordinators were requested to provide a brief description of the methodology used, how the consultation and validation work was carried out and the level of participation and organisational representativeness. They were recommended to consider working group activity, written consultations and interviews with relevant staff from the operational and training sides, and to check and compare the SQF products with the existing job profiles/occupational standards at the national level and with the samples from each level of curricula and programmes in place.

11.2.1.2. Validation results

The extent of the validation exercise was again remarkable. In some organisations, especially the ones for which the border guard function is the main organisational task, the scale of the consultation and validation included the entire organisation, from the operational level (border crossing points, maritime surveillance units, land border sectors) to headquarters and up to the ministry level, as well as the training centres and the academies. Some organisations consulted with their external stakeholders and counterparts — Police and Defence Academies, as well as the national training and education centres of expertise or na-

tional centres for the development of occupational standards or recognition of prior learning. This enriched the substance of the feedback and perspective on the SQF for Border Guarding, in terms of its integrative and facilitative function within the larger law enforcement/internal security and defence area. In other organisations the SQF was reviewed by the National Training Coordinators, the training departments or the staff of the training centres (see process documentation in Annex 3).

Experts from both operational and training structures have reviewed the SQF and provided recommendations. Excerpts of feedback from the national validation processes are contained in Annex 3.

The feedback was collected, integrated and presented to the development working group for review and assessment in order to further improve and fine-tune the SQF package during the final working meeting on the SQF in June 2012. All issues were discussed and agreed upon by the working group in terms of introducing or rejecting the recommendations. Concrete responses to the validation feedback were also prepared, covering the result of the group work, explaining in writing to each feedback provider (each NTC) the group decision on the recommendations provided and the arguments for the decisions and agreements made (presented in Annex 4).

The largest part of the feedback confirmed the relevance of the SQF for the border guard organisations' job profiles and learning programmes, highlighting that the SQF reflects the entire scope of learning within the border guard field. Suggestions were also made for improving some formulations and for consistency and coherency across levels.

The depth of the feedback and the fine-tuning was greater and more refined than in the previous consultations and included a number of subtle remarks and identifications of nuances and concealed meanings. At this point, attention was paid to ensuring consistency across the SQF and competency framework on the use of terminology, final agreement on titles and headings, and a final cross-referencing exercise on the improved learning outcomes and Competence Profiles.

The results of the final validation feedback suggested that significant organisational learning had happened across the EU border guard training organisations, considering the level and complexity of the final recommendations.



Frontex validation partners

Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom plus DCAF, EASO, FRA, ODIHR, OHCHR, OSCE and UNHCR.



11.2.1.3. Finalisation

During the final workshop, the structure of the SQF background documentation was also discussed, highlighting the main issues that needed to be clarified in the introduction to the SQF. In line with the results and the suggestions from the validation exercise, a glossary of terms was elaborated, aimed at clarifying the intended meanings of various concepts for future readers.

Finally, the working group was invited to consider a quality assurance methodology for the SQF and to reflect on the need to maintain the relevance and the validity of the SQF over time (for more details see Section 18.6). The future steps and challenges that the experts anticipate for the national integration of the SQF were discussed, as well as the expectations from the Member States on Frontex's support to the national integration process. The issues were collected with the intention of facilitating the national integration process and the introduction of the SQF to the Management Board of Frontex for final formal endorsement and adoption.

Although it was a complex and extensive process, the development and the validation of the SQF spanned just over six working group meetings within 9 months (October 2011 to June 2012), a total of approximately 500 person-days. Interim review work and preparations were carried out by the project board (project manager and the leading expert). A substantial

part of the work however consisted of the national consultations and review process that was carried out by the national organisations.

11.2.1.4. Additional developments

During the consultation and review process the need to support the capacity of the Member States' experts and partner organisations to write fundamental rights learning outcomes became apparent. Based on the feedback on the SQF received from FRA and UNHCR experts, the project board initiated the development of an additional document, namely the SQF 'Guide to integrating fundamental rights principles into course design'. This product was further reviewed and completed with the support of the Fundamental Rights Working Group (another Frontex project), comprising representatives from EASO, FRA, ODIHR, OHCHR, OSCE, UNHCR and other experts in fundamental rights related to border guarding from the Member States' national organisations (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and United Kingdom), as well as an external consultant.

Using this opportunity, the entire SQF package was additionally subjected to a review by the fundamental rights expert group that validated it in terms of the approach to fundamental rights integration across border guard learning.

11.3. External independent assessment

A panel of independent **Bologna experts** reviewed the final product and described it as a 'good practice' at the EU level that should be modelled by other professional sectors in terms of methodology, process and approach, as it reflects the true spirit of Bologna and serves the purpose of achieving harmonisation and mobility of learning across the EU in the border guard field.

The panel of Bologna experts was requested to assess and review the consistency of the approach used in the process of the development of the SQF and to evaluate the final SQF package of products in the context of the Bologna principles and action lines. The task was to examine the alignment of the SQF learning outcomes with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Specifically, the panel was asked to compare it with the standardised EQF descriptors, to review the coherence of the defined learning outcomes, examining the levels



of construction and clarity, and to review the vertical and horizontal consistency of the model, ensuring coherence with existing EQF levels.

The Bologna experts stated inter alia that ‘the Frontex approach to the process of developing the SQF has been exemplary, and we highlight the following aspects as being particularly effective and commendable: [...] The approach demonstrates a real understanding of, and commitment to Bologna process [...] The approach demonstrates a very sound understanding of the border guarding sector, including: the organisations and agencies involved, the types of work and jobs, existing training, and specific cross-border considerations of legislation, human rights, security and languages. [...] The approach demonstrates extensive and careful stakeholder involvement, and meaningful responses to consultation, as envisaged by the EQF recommendations. The approach considers practical aspects of utilisation considering how the SQF could be used by Frontex itself and national organisations and agencies for both quality assurance and enhancement. [...] We consider that this SQF is of a very high standard and that it has produced a framework which will make a significant contribution to the overall training and practice standards of European border guarding. [...] The structure used in the SQF for Border Guarding could and should be used as an exemplar of good practice for other sectors in the way it has been conceived, developed and presented.’

As a conclusion, the Bologna panel recommends ‘the adoption of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding to Frontex and individual European border guarding organisations and agencies’ (see the full report in Part Five).

11.4. Endorsement of the SQF by the Management Board of Frontex

The Management Board of Frontex* adopted the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding on 28 November 2012, during its 41st meeting held in Nicosia, Cyprus. Out of 26 voting members present, 25 voted in favour and one abstained.

Management Board representatives expressed their appreciation for Frontex’s initiative to develop the SQF for Border Guarding, recognising that the SQF is a useful tool which supports the Member States’ organisations in developing quality training, in line with European best practices and relevant to operational and organisational needs. The representative of

* The Management Board is the highest decision-making forum of the agency and is formed of the heads of all national agencies with responsibilities in the border guard field, as well as two representatives of the European Commission.

the European Commission appreciated the value of the SQF in facilitating EU interagency cooperation in the field of training for law enforcement and its contribution to the implementation of the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme.

During the high-level meeting introducing the framework, the Frontex Executive Director underlined the importance of the SQF for Border Guarding as a strategic approach to border guard training and reaffirmed the commitment of the Agency to leading best practice in training and education for border guards through the adoption of European standards. It was stressed that, as a set of common EU standards, the SQF enables harmonisation and benchmarking of border guard training that suits all national organisational structures, training and education systems, and that the SQF is fundamental to achieving interoperability, which is one of the key common goals of Frontex and the Member States.

It is worth mentioning that, before the introduction to the Management Board, the final product was presented to the National Training Coordinators, during the biannual conference held in Madrid, on 18 October 2012. The main focus of the discussions was the needs and challenges for national integration, including Frontex support, and the preparations for the introduction of the SQF to the Management Board of Frontex. The National Training Coordinators played an important role in the adoption of the SQF by the Management Board.

The endorsement of the SQF by the Management Board was the final and the most important quality assurance step in the process of developing the common training standards. This confirms the operational relevance of the SQF to border guard organisations across the EU and Frontex's strategic approach to border guard training.

Following the endorsement by the Management Board, the SQF was presented to the Consultative Forum* on fundamental rights during its second meeting on 31 January 2013 and was well received.

* The Consultative Forum is formed of members of international organisations and NGOs with responsibility in the area of fundamental rights and has an advisory role to Frontex, aiming to address specific issues in order to contribute to strengthening the Agency's capacity to ensure the respect and promotion of fundamental rights, both in its own work and in the Member States that participate in Frontex's operational or capacity-building activities.



12. Methodology for the development of the SQF structure and content

12.1. Approach to the development of the SQF

Prior to the development of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding, already existing and published SQFs for other subjects/professional learning were evaluated. Research identified that a significant proportion of SQFs that are designed from a European perspective follow the 'tuning' methodology (see <http://www.unideusto.org/tuning-eu>). An evaluation of the frameworks developed using this methodology showed a common approach to initial research that identified (job) competences, commonly defined considerations and the assembly of a working group representing most Member States. However the resultant frameworks differ considerably, depending on the subject area, indicating that there is no standardised structure for a sectoral framework. Equally, as yet, there are no good practice guidelines agreed on as part of the Bologna/Copenhagen processes, although reference is made to the usefulness of sectoral frameworks.

Frontex was in an advantageous position with respect to the development of the SQF for Border Guarding as it is in direct and close contact with all national organisations with responsibility for borders, having a well-established business process for training development that facilitates the inclusion of all stakeholders at all stages of the development process. Given this advantage, the process of development differs from the tuning approach.

12.2. Structure development

The final structure of the SQF emerged after considerable discussions, and based on the following key considerations.

- ♦ The structure should be logical and cohesive.
- ♦ The structure should avoid overlap and repetition of learning outcomes.
- ♦ The structure should be restricted to the scope of border guard activities and not overlap with other functions of law enforcement.

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- ♦ The structure should be compatible with other potential qualifications frameworks from related sectors (policing, customs, immigration and asylum, etc.).

The approach of some existing SQFs, to organise learning outcomes according to themes, was considered to be useful and was consequently adopted. The working group started with an initial structure under the headings of 'border checks', 'border surveillance' and 'border law enforcement', as these were considered to be the natural areas of the border guarding role. The border guard activities in each of these areas were identified and the job competences developed. It quickly emerged that this structure had a number of limitations.

- ♦ There were some competences that related to all of the areas and that were spread throughout the SQF, i.e. fundamental rights, communication skills and law and procedures.
- ♦ The level 6 and 7 learning in each area was similar because a significant proportion of the learning was related to management skills; therefore the defined learning outcomes were not specific enough to the border guarding activities.
- ♦ The learning that the table identified as level 6 was actually not consistent with the EQF level 6, but rather with level 5. A quick cross-check with the Common Core Curriculum (CCC) for basic border guard training, which is a blend of level 4 and 5 learning outcomes, confirmed that there was a significant overlap with the level 5 learning.
- ♦ The border law enforcement area was a mix of border guard and non-border guard activities, including various organisational competences, some not specific to border guarding but to general law enforcement.
- ♦ There was a repetition of learning, because the same learning was sometimes defined as different types of learning (knowledge, skills and competences, all describing the same learning).

These issues were addressed through a change of the methodological approach that led to the development of the sections as they exist in **the current structure of the SQF**.



13. Outline of the final SQF structure

Generic border guarding: This first section of the SQF contains the learning outcomes that are applied to all/a range of border guarding activities. They include the overarching principles of border management in Europe. For example the fundamental rights learning outcomes apply to all other outcomes in the SQF. This generic section prevents outcomes from being repeated throughout the SQF. The learning described here is necessary to perform any border guard job, and it specifically applies to all border guard tasks. Front-line officers, operational managers, investigation officers and risk analysis experts all perform their job whilst respecting and promoting the fundamental rights principles, as specifically applied to their daily duties, in line with professional ethics and standards and using a range of communication skills. All these reflect the generic learning that is required in all border guard activities.

Border control: This section includes both border checks and border surveillance. Outcomes at levels 6 and 7 in this section are specifically applied to border control management (with a distinction being made between operational management, tactical management and strategic management). Joining border checks and surveillance under one heading prevented the repetition of learning at levels 6 and 7, outcomes which apply to both areas in border control.

Cross-border investigation and intelligence: This section clearly defines the border guard role in the investigation process and how border guard activities interface with those of other actors in law enforcement, describing solely and carefully the border guard task.

Management, supervision and leadership: The inclusion of this section serves two purposes. Firstly it prevents repetition of the generic management skills in other sections of the SQF, particularly at levels 6 and 7. The second purpose is to cover learning that is essential for border guard organisations but is not specifically applied to border guarding. This part of the structure ensures compatibility with other potential SQFs in related sectors.

Specialist fields in border guarding: Learning for the core border guard functions is included under the previous headings. However there are a number of people in each border guard organisation who are required to develop advanced or specialist skills in order to support the border guard activities. The learning for these specialist skills may be advanced and complex, or may be different to the standard border guard training programmes. Some examples include false documents experts, service dog handlers and helicopter pilots, which are all border guard functions where specialist learning is required. This section in the SQF defines outcomes that can be applied to any specialist field related to border guarding.

13.1. Levels of the SQF

Understanding the levels of the sectoral qualifications framework can be quite challenging as there is a natural tendency to link 'levels' with 'rank'. In most cases this is true, but not in all cases. **The levels in the SQF relate to the complexity of learning, with more complex learning being at a higher level.** As such, there is no 'level 6 person', only level 6 learning.

It is possible for a low-ranking officer to be required to learn complex information. Equally it may be necessary for a high-ranking officer to learn something that is not complex.

To assist with understanding the level of complexity in each level of the SQF the following guide may be useful.

- ♦ **Level 4:** A complexity of learning similar to end of school examinations at age 18
- ♦ **Level 5:** The complexity of post-school vocational training, or a foundation year of a bachelor's degree
- ♦ **Level 6:** The complexity of the final year of a bachelor's degree
- ♦ **Level 7:** The complexity of the final year of a master's degree

As described in Part 1, the SQF emerged from a project aimed at developing courses for mid-level and high-level officers. As such the initial focus for the SQF was on levels 6 and 7. Given the potential benefit of the SQF, it was recognised that all learning related to border guarding should be included. Initially level 5 was added. However an analysis of the CCC identified that basic border guard training comprised level 5 and level 4 learning. Consequently the final SQF comprises levels 4 to 7, which captures all border guard learning.



13.2. The learning outcomes

Development of the learning outcomes was conducted by applying the following principles:

- ♦ The learning outcomes must be translatable, that is they must have the same meaning in each language of the Member States/Schengen associated countries.
- ♦ They must be high level and broad but also be specific, avoiding terms like 'appropriate' wherever possible.
- ♦ The outcomes must have consistency of language, i.e. the use of words such as 'evaluate' or 'review' or 'assess' should intend the same meaning wherever they are used.
- ♦ The outcomes should not name specific pieces of legislation, protocols or learning tools as these may become outdated.

The necessity for the outcomes to be high level is similar to the EQF. A single table accounts for all border guard learning and sets the standards. The specific learning in a course, defined with specific learning outcomes, can be matched against the SQF to determine the level. For this reason specific learning content, such as the Schengen Borders Code or use of force techniques, is covered in the SQF but not specifically mentioned.

All of the principles were applied to every outcome but there were instances where exceptions were made. For example the word 'intelligence' in Romanian is the same word as 'information', so to 'gather information as potential intelligence' does not translate well; however the specific use of the concept of 'intelligence' in border guarding caused the decision to include it in the SQF.

It should be remembered that the learning outcomes are high level and not repetitive. Therefore only the highest level is presented in the SQF. In the course design process, learning outcomes will be adapted or combined to accurately describe the learning in a course. Learning outcomes for sessions become even more specific but are still related to the SQF, as shown below.

Hierarchy of specificity of learning outcomes

EQF / NQF outcome	Factual and theoretical knowledge within broad contexts within a field of work or study
SQF outcome	Outline a defined range of national, EU and international laws, policies, rules and procedures relevant to border guarding activities
Programme outcome (credit carrying)	Outline a defined range of EU and national policies, rules and procedures relevant to border checks and border surveillance
Module outcome (credit carrying)	Outline a defined range of EU and national policies, rules and procedures relevant to border checks
Unit outcome	Outline the policies and procedures relating to checks of passports
Session outcome	List the security features of a passport

13.3. Specific issues related to the SQF learning outcomes

13.3.1. Specific border guard functions

The high-level nature of the SQF means that specific border guard functions are covered but are not specifically mentioned in the SQF. During the validation of the SQF and Competence Profiles, the most significant feedback focused on the expectation of seeing specific things mentioned, such as the Schengen Borders Code or shooting. If the SQF covered each specific border guarding task there would be thousands of learning outcomes. For example the Schengen *acquis* (borders) is fully covered in the learning outcomes under law, policies and procedures, while all skills relating to 'use of force' are covered in the border-related security and safety learning outcomes.

13.3.2. Foreign language skills

There was considerable agreement that foreign/other languages are essential learning for border guards of all ranks. However language learning and competence does not align to the levels of the SQF in terms of complexity of learning. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) addresses this issue. As the CEFR does not align to the EQF it is not possible to have language learning outcomes in the SQF.

All learning in relation to languages should be described in terms of the level of the CEFR and not the 'communication skills' outcome of the SQF. The language requirements for border guards are reflected in the 'job Competence Profiles' to reflect this essential learning requirement.



13.3.3. Translation of the learning outcomes

The wording of the learning outcomes in the SQF is very precise. The use of terms like 'defined range' and 'broad range' serves to distinguish the level of the learning outcome. It is of crucial importance that when the SQF is translated into other languages the precise meaning of the whole learning outcome is translated. For this reason Frontex will hold translators' workshops that will be attended by members of the SQF working group to ensure the validity of the translation process.

13.3.4. Concepts of supervision, management and leadership

It emerged during the development process that different organisations had different perspectives on the hierarchical relationship between the concepts of supervision, management and leadership. For some, management was the highest level of learning and for others it was leadership.

Essentially, the concepts of management and leadership relate to different topics of learning and different skills and competences. Equally there are different levels of learning for each concept. For example, to lead a team of basic border guards requires leadership skills, but to lead an organisation requires significantly more advanced leadership skills.

In order to avoid misinterpretation, these concepts are not presented in the order of hierarchy.

13.3.5. Levels of existing learning in Member States

The SQF was subjected to a robust review process where each Member State was invited to comment and identify issues in relation to the outcomes and levels (see Annexes 1 and 2 for the procedures for validation I and II). All feedback was considered by the working group and addressed in the SQF. The vast majority of feedback concerned Member States wishing to see specific learning topics reflected in the SQF; however feedback from one Member State referred to issues relating to the level of its existing learning being different to the level in the SQF.

The Member State commented that its existing basic border guard training is consistent with the learning outcomes in the SQF at level 4 but that its course is accredited at level 3.

This issue was discussed in the SQF development working group and further discussed with the Bologna Expert Panel which reviewed the SQF. Both the working group and the panel found that the learning outcomes in the SQF align to the EQF. It should be pointed out here that both the Bologna and Copenhagen agreements are processes towards the harmonisation of learning standards across Europe. The development of sectoral frameworks, such as the SQF for Border Guarding, will contribute to and enhance this process. However both the Bologna/Copenhagen processes and Frontex respect the diversity in individual Member States. As the SQF is essentially a translation device, the differences that have emerged still enable the state concerned to identify differences and communicate them effectively.

Nonetheless, this will still not affect in any way the usage of the SQF at the national level, as the Member State referred to previously decided to review and develop its occupational standards for a number of profiles, using the SQF Competence Profiles as a reference methodology and standard. This demonstrates and reinforces the idea of the SQF being a supporting tool, developed based on a flexible paradigm that remains inclusive and not prescriptive of the Member States' national specifics.

13.3.6. Integrated Border Management (IBM)

Integrated Border Management (IBM) is the underlying concept and ethos of the European Union approach to border management. Although IBM is not specifically mentioned in any distinct learning area or outcome, the concept of IBM is embedded within the learning outcomes across the SQF. The very existence of the SQF as a set of shared learning standards for border guarding contributes to the goal of IBM and proves its validity and significance for the border guard job. Achieving the learning outcomes articulated throughout the SQF will enhance integrated border management in Europe.



14. The structure of the Competence Profiles

The Competence Profiles are the result of the extensive 'job mapping' exercise that formed the basis of the SQF work and learning outcomes development. They identify, define and describe the border guard job and tasks at all levels and in all areas. The Competence Profiles are the European occupational standards for the border guard job, as they were validated across the EU as being relevant and specific to border guarding, regardless of the national organisational systems and structures.

For ease of comparison the Competence Profiles are presented in the same format and under the same headings as the SQF. It can be seen that the Competence Profiles (job competences) are written in 'operational' language and do not conform to the requirements of the structure of learning outcomes (they are not necessarily assessable).

The learning outcomes in the SQF are based on these Competence Profiles. A number of different learning outcomes may contribute to each competence. For example to 'conduct border checks' requires a range of learning such as knowledge of law and procedures, knowledge of documentation, communication skills, application of fundamental rights and international protection requirements. The interrelationship between the learning outcomes in the SQF and the Competence Profiles is shown in the Cross-Reference Tables.

15. Development of the Cross-Reference Tables

The Cross-Reference Tables were developed as a verification tool for the SQF to ensure that all job competences were covered by the learning outcomes. These tables represent a statement of the operational relevance of any training course developed based on the SQF and are included in the SQF package because they display the link between each job competence and a set of learning outcomes. In other words, they show what is the learning required for each job competence.

The job competences are listed down the left side of the Cross-Reference Tables and the learning outcomes are presented along the top. There is a table for each level of the SQF. By taking any job competence in the table, the row of crosses will indicate the related areas of learning.

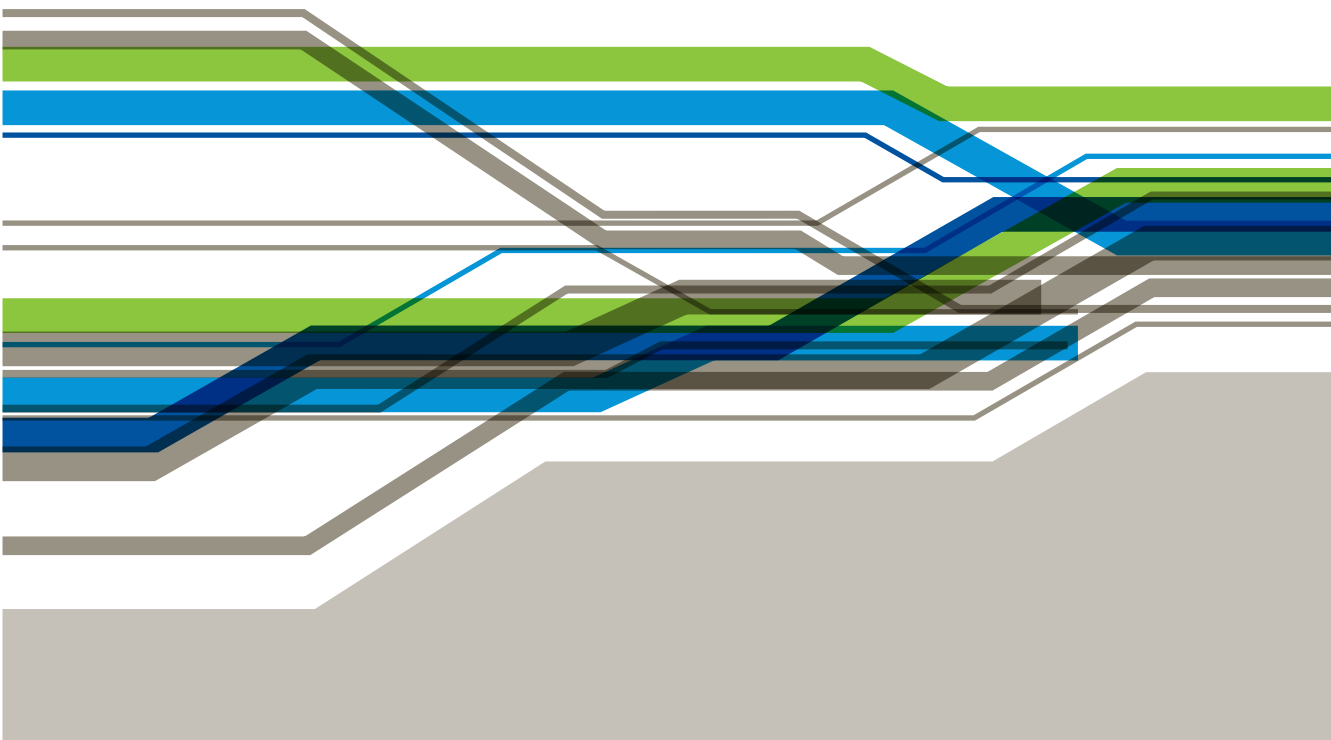


16. Guide to integrating fundamental rights into course design

The SQF package includes a guide to assist with the writing of fundamental rights learning outcomes and the integration of fundamental rights into training programmes for border guards. For ease of reference the guide is presented in the same format as the SQF. See Part Four for guidance on the integration of fundamental rights.

PART THREE:

NATIONAL INTEGRATION





17. National integration of the SQF for Border Guarding

17.1. Integration of the SQF for Border Guarding: What does this mean?

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework is not a 'curriculum' but a high-level reference framework to which all border guard curricula relate, an umbrella for all common curricula and an overarching platform. Thus, the SQF is not to be 'implemented' in the manner that Frontex training products (common curricula) traditionally are. The SQF (like the EQF) provides a benchmark for levels of learning. This means that everyone will be able to compare border guard training programmes and reference them to their National Qualifications Framework, indicating the level of the course.

The integration of the SQF is a process, similar to the Bologna and Copenhagen processes as such, and no individual or country is expected to complete it within a strict timeline. It all depends on the particular stage or phase that each state is currently in as regards the implementation of Bologna/Copenhagen standards to border guard training. Every country shall follow its own pace and every country is expected to have different needs in terms of the integration of the SQF, as part of the adoption of the Bologna/Copenhagen processes.

In concrete terms, the integration of the SQF means **using the SQF** as a tool to assist training design and review, and describing training courses based on the SQF descriptors, by referencing the level of the SQF. Section 20.6 (Figure 7) presents a simple five-step process showing how to use the SQF for course design.

Furthermore, as the SQF is inclusive and not prescriptive and does not dictate learning requirements, the national organisations will selectively use from it only the learning outcomes and Competence Profiles that correspond to their organisational tasks, mandate or needs. Integration is flexible and selective, as the SQF is a voluntary framework.

It is expected that over time the Member States/Schengen associated countries/partner countries will define their border guard training in terms of the SQF standards and levels, acknowledging by practice that the SQF is a useful tool that facilitates and enables quality assurance processes and the accreditation of border guard courses at the national level.

17.2. The process of integration

The integration of the SQF starts with the intention and expression of interest of the Member States and in the first stage aims at building national capacity to actually integrate the SQF. Frontex is committed to initiating and supporting this capacity building in various ways (see Section 18), mainly by training the trainers and enabling the relevant national experts (course designers/developers) to use the SQF in course design and to apply Bologna/Copenhagen principles to training design and development.

The actual integration process has started already, as previously mentioned, as the experts involved in the development are already using the SQF for the design of new courses or the review of existing ones (from level 4 courses to bachelor's and master's programmes). Several organisations have informed Frontex of their intention to develop their national sectoral qualifications framework, using the SQF for Border Guarding as a reference tool. Furthermore, other national organisations from connected professional areas (e.g. defence, military, policing) have expressed their interest in using the SQF for Border Guarding as a benchmark for developing sectoral frameworks in their field (European or national sectoral frameworks). Also, the Competence Profiles have been requested for use as reference tools for developing various national qualifications profiles, as well as reviewing existing ones.

Any organisation intending to use the SQF is expected to submit a formal request to Frontex, informing it of the intention to use the SQF for Border Guarding (see Annex 5 for instructions on requesting its usage) and to commit to providing feedback that may contribute to the ongoing quality assurance of the SQF and future reviews.

17.3. Timeline for integration

It will be possible to say that a Member State has fully integrated the SQF for Border Guarding when each and every training course has a set



of learning outcomes and those learning outcomes have been cross-referenced to the SQF to determine the level of the training course. All new programmes will be developed with learning outcomes aligned to the SQF and based on the Competence Profiles. As existing programmes come up for review (usually every 5 to 7 years), they will follow a natural process of being aligned to the SQF. It is estimated that the SQF will be fully integrated at the national level in 7 to 10 years.

17.4. Why integrate the SQF for Border Guarding?

The integration of the SQF is not a purpose or an objective in itself. The SQF is a tool to support the design of accreditable courses that are operationally relevant and compliant with the Bologna and Copenhagen principles. The reason why the SQF is requested by the Member States for national integration resides in all its benefits.

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning was created to harmonise and compare learning across national systems. The SQF plays the same role, in the border guard education and training field. These processes are the European solutions for harmonising learning across Europe and every Member State has signed up to the Bologna and Copenhagen processes. Education and training in the border guard field is no different to other education and training fields and the EU standards apply. It is an advantage that the SQF for Border Guarding exists, as a European product, validated across the EU and ready to be used.

There are many benefits to the integration of the SQF for Border Guarding. However Frontex, as an EU agency, is just as responsible for adopting and promoting the EU approach to training as it is for promoting the EU approach to border management. Therefore, Frontex is modelling the adoption of the SQF and Bologna/Copenhagen principles by reviewing and aligning all its training products (common curricula, training tools, courses) in a similar way to the national integration process. The alignment of Frontex courses with the SQF follows the natural course of training review and quality assurance and is expected to be a gradual process as well.

Therefore, collaboration with Frontex in the field of training will be intrinsically linked to the process of adoption and integration of the SQF at national level, as the SQF is a common comparison tool, a common platform for training development and a common reference framework.

17.5. Explaining the SQF in border guard terms

The concept of a Sectoral Qualifications Framework is familiar to border guard experts involved in education and training, particularly those involved in accrediting training programmes. However, explaining the purpose of the SQF for Border Guarding to others can be challenging.

In very simple terms, the Bologna and Copenhagen processes aim to create a common approach to training and education in Europe, just as the Schengen *acquis* (borders) provides common standards for border control. The SQF enables a shared understanding of a 'level' of learning. Most people understand the terms 'bachelor's degree' and 'master's degree' and know that a master's is more advanced than a bachelor's. When it comes to other courses, particularly shorter courses, it is not easy to know how advanced/complex they are in one's own state, and it is even more difficult to understand training courses from other states.

The SQF provides a numerical reference that describes how advanced/complex a course is: the higher the number, the more complex is the learning. Learning at master's level complexity is SQF level 7. Nevertheless, there can be courses at level 7 (e.g. air crew training) that are not 'master's degrees' as such, but have a complexity of learning that is high, as high as the learning in a master's course.

The standards set by the SQF for Border Guarding are the same across Europe, enabling a shared understanding of course complexity and comparability of border guard qualifications.

17.6. Is there a need for an EU directive or regulation for integrating the SQF for Border Guarding?

European Union recommendations are essentially good practices and may act as standards or guiding principles for the Member States that are invited to adopt these standards. All European countries have signed up to the Bologna/Copenhagen processes, and equally Frontex is committed to Bologna and Copenhagen processes, as strategic approaches to training and quality assurance. As such, the EU regulations that support the integration of the SQF for Border Guarding already exist (see below).

The grounds for developing the SQF lay in Article 5 of the amended Frontex Regulation, which stipulates that 'Member States shall integrate the



common core curricula in the training of their national border guards', and in the Internal Security Strategy of the European Union and the Stockholm Programme, which emphasise the importance of creating frameworks for engaging law enforcement officers in various forms of exchange/mobility programmes, to contribute to the development of a common culture within the law enforcement field.

The SQF for Border Guarding will be the basis for the further development of all Frontex common core curricula and training products, as it allows for the comparability and harmonisation of training standards, irrespective of a particular type of national education/training institution or system, and supports the national integration process. The SQF is the supporting tool for the national integration of all common training standards and common curricula developed by Frontex in collaboration with the Member States/Schengen associated countries.

The endorsement of the SQF by the Management Board of Frontex gives political support and signals to the Member States training organisations that the provisions of Article 5 are taken seriously into account and that the SQF is an effective tool to support the implementation of the common standards for education and training of border guard officers, in line with the European principles and processes in the field of education and training, the Bologna and Copenhagen declarations, to which all Member States/Schengen associated countries and other countries in Europe have signed up.

The EQF was adopted in 2008 and acts as a recommendation to the European states.* In the same way as the EQF, the SQF for Border Guarding is a voluntary framework and so there are no formal legal obligations on the countries. However, for all countries that have signed up to the Bologna/Copenhagen declarations, the year 2010 was the recommended target date to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF and 2012 was the target for ensuring that individual qualification certificates bear a reference to the appropriate EQF level. The sectoral framework plays the role of a supporting tool to ensure the commitment of the Member States to the Bologna and Copenhagen processes in the field of border guard education and training.

* Recommendation 2008/C/01 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning, Official Journal of the European Union C 101, 6.5.2008, pp. 1–7).

17.7. What is the status of the SQF for Border Guarding?

The SQF was evaluated by Bologna experts and on adoption by the Management Board it became the 'industry standard' for border guard learning and occupational profiles.

Because it is aligned to the EQF, it can be clearly referenced by every Member State to its national qualifications framework, as every national framework is aligned to the EQF. When a Member State wishes to validate/accredit a training programme, it will use its National Qualifications Framework. The SQF provides specific references on border guard learning that no NQF could provide, as they are defined in the same way as the EQF in very broad and generic language, to cover all learning areas in all fields. The SQF is the common platform for all border guard learning and is 'the EQF' of the border guard professional sector.

17.8. Who will use the SQF for Border Guarding?

In other words, who are the relevant users who should participate in the courses provided by Frontex to support the national integration of the SQF? How can the national capacity to adopt the SQF be built? How can it be ensured that the national organisations will get the best benefit out of it?

The SQF will be primarily used by course developers and will be a valuable tool for them and for their managers. It will also be used by human resources personnel, who develop job profiles or occupational standards, or by quality management and organisational development units. The SQF provides a common language to identify the learning required for border guard job profiles.

The language of the SQF in terms of levels will eventually be common across the organisations. Just as every person already knows about and can differentiate between bachelor's, master's and doctorates (Levels 6, 7 and 8 respectively), and recognises that these do not necessarily relate to rank (as a new recruit may enter the service with a master's), the same thinking will apply to courses at levels 4 and 5, as people and organisations become familiar with the SQF for Border Guarding. Eventually, any border guard will be in a position to say 'I need a level 5 course in false documents' and everyone across EU will know what they mean.



The SQF for Border Guarding needs to reach the right people to meet its goals, starting with the National Training Coordinators and continuing with the national experts who will use it.

The SQF should be distributed to all training centres and academies, and also to the human resources, organisational development and quality management structures. It would be useful to inform the national ministries of education of the existence of the SQF for Border Guarding, as some members of the SQF working group suggested.

In the context of the Bologna reform, the training managers and policy-makers of the border guard organisations will also be interested in understanding the strategic implications and benefits of the existence of the European SQF for Border Guarding.

Frontex supports the promotion of the SQF by facilitating communication with the appropriate levels and fora and by producing supporting promotional materials and participating in dissemination events, etc.

18. Frontex support for national integration*

Frontex supports the integration/adoption of the SQF at the national level in the following ways.

18.1. Organisation of translators' workshops for a harmonised approach

Attention and efforts were paid to identifying the right words and to ensuring the consistency of concepts and meanings across all documents in the SQF. It is important to ensure a coordinated translation, so that certain nuances are not lost. Due to the specific requirements of the definition of learning outcomes, the translation is an important milestone in the integration process.

18.2. Provision of training in course design in line with Bologna/Copenhagen principles, using the SQF for Border Guarding

This course is designed to enable participants (course developers) to integrate the Bologna and Copenhagen principles into the design of training courses, utilising the SQF for Border Guarding. The course will develop practical skills that promote a learning outcomes-based, systematic approach to course design in the context of the key overarching principles of fundamental rights integration and harmonisation of learning in the border guarding sector. This approach to course design is suitable for the design of accredited and non-accredited programmes. The course is delivered as a 'train the trainers' programme and aims to gradually build the national capacity to develop learning outcome-based training, using the SQF. The course is also designed to ensure a proper use of the SQF at national level, in line with the Frontex philosophy and approach to learning.

18.3. Creation of a pool of key trainers to support national integration and Frontex's alignment

The experts who demonstrate the necessary skills and competences are offered the opportunity to become Frontex SQF trainers, provided that

* The national organisations may apply for financial support to the Internal Security Fund 2014–20 if specific costs incur as a result of integrating the SQF for Border Guarding. The SQF integration is recommended by Frontex as one of the eligible actions to be funded under the training objective of the Fund, as it contributes to European harmonisation of the border guard education and training and implementation of common standards.



there is a personal interest and motivation, as well as an interest from the national organisation. The selected pool of experts supports the national and European processes of aligning the training products with the Bologna/Copenhagen principles based on the SQF and are trained to co-deliver Frontex training in Course design in line with the Bologna/Copenhagen principles, using the SQF.

18.4. Development of a manual and other training materials to support the delivery of Frontex training in course design in line with the Bologna/Copenhagen principles, using the SQF

The SQF trainers are invited to contribute to the development of course materials. The manual is reviewed by the SQF Expert Board and promoted for further use at the national level.

18.5. Provision of consultancy and advice as necessary

Upon request, Frontex may support national developments and within the limits of its mandate may share experience and good practice with the other interested stakeholders and counterparts. Furthermore, Frontex intends to engage with educational experts with relevant involvement in the promotion of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes at European level in order to support the Member States' endeavours in integrating the SQF.

18.6. Provision of a continuous quality assurance mechanism for the SQF for Border Guarding

As identified in Figure 6 (page 40), the SQF will be subject to periodic review to ensure that it remains comprehensive, valid, operationally relevant and reflective of all border guard training requirements across the EU.

To support the further integration of the SQF at national level, Frontex is committed to creating and maintaining a permanent SQF Expert Board formed of the experts involved in the SQF development and validation or the subsequent integration of the SQF at the national level.

The SQF Expert Board meets once a year to identify issues, discuss latest developments, exchange experiences and good practices and seek advice, etc. The Expert Board is a forum for discussions which aims inter

alia to assess and make recommendations on the need to review and update the SQF and to ensure that it continues to be tuned to operational realities and to the evolution of border guard education and training, as well as to the Bologna/Copenhagen processes. It will also ensure that the integration of the SQF at the national level is conducted in line with the SQF principles and the training philosophy of Frontex.

The SQF will be subject to a continuous and systematic quality enhancement process. As the SQF is used by Member States/Schengen associated countries/partner countries, other organisations and Frontex, feedback will be collected and shared by the SQF members with a view to a future review. In line with accepted quality assurance practices, the SQF will be subject to a full review every 5 years.



19. How will national integration be monitored and by whom?

It will be very evident, over time, whether a Member State can describe its training in terms of the SQF for Border Guarding. Equally, over time, every Member State will be able to describe its training in terms of the SQF (through the Frontex common curricula adopted by the national organisations).

Frontex has adopted the role of assisting Member States/Schengen associated countries to achieve high standards of training and this principle will continue, based on mutual trust, support and collaboration, with mutual benefits.

Where support is needed, the forum of the SQF Expert Board and the National Training Coordinators network will act as communication channels and will contribute to providing solutions that facilitate the national integration process and the exchange of good practices, as well as collecting and providing feedback on the national integration process and the specific use of the SQF.

20. Benefits for the national border guard organisations

How can the SQF be used at national level?

The SQF for Border Guarding will provide a common reference/translation tool to facilitate the description of learning in every organisation, regardless of organisational structure or training system, and will make border guard qualifications more readable and understandable across different border guard systems in Europe. The SQF facilitates the interoperability of border guard education, training systems and qualifications.

There are many benefits that the SQF will facilitate, such as:

- ♦ support for the review of job Competence Profiles and occupational standards;
- ♦ support for the review, validation and/or reaccreditation of training programmes in the field of border guarding;
- ♦ development of compatible training programmes through European partnerships for exchange and mobility;
- ♦ ensuring that training is operationally relevant (designing operationally relevant courses based on the SQF and Competence Profiles);
- ♦ shared understanding and definition of border guard learning and qualifications, and a common language;
- ♦ recognition of prior learning (RPL) for formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- ♦ facilitation of the implementation of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes within border guard education and training;
- ♦ facilitation of the integration at the national level of Frontex common core curricula;
- ♦ integration of fundamental rights principles into the training and education of border guards at all levels;
- ♦ development of national (organisational) sectoral frameworks
- ♦ effective strategic management of training and resources (training needs assessments and prioritisation).



20.1. Review of occupational standards

Occupational standards set out measurable performance outcomes towards which an individual is expected to work in a given occupation. Developed by employers, national occupational standards set out the skills, knowledge and understanding required to perform competently in the workplace.

The definition of occupational standards provides a direct link between training activities and other human resource management activities. The SQF Competence Profiles provide a comprehensive list of all occupational knowledge, skills and competences related to border guarding activities, organised according to the level of learning required to achieve each competence.

Whilst the Competence Profiles are the starting point for the design of training programmes, the comprehensive nature of the profiles will be of great assistance during the process of reviewing existing organisational occupational standards or in some instances the development of new occupational standards.

20.2. Accreditation/validation and review of programmes

There is an increasing trend towards accrediting or validating border guard learning within national accreditation systems. The accreditation of organisational training programmes ensures quality standards and provides externally validated credentials that testify to the knowledge, skills and expertise of personnel.

Validation of learning is built around the central pillars of stating what type of learning happened (learning outcomes), how much learning happened, what was the level of learning and whether mechanisms were in place to ensure the learning actually happened (assessment and quality assurance). It is evident from this that the SQF supports two of the key areas of course accreditation: learning outcomes and level of learning.

Great organisational value can be achieved from accrediting learning as the process validates quality standards, and the employee benefits since learning is formally 'certified' and recognised, which in turn acts as a motivational factor for initial and ongoing development.

The SQF will assist in the development of learning outcomes for accredited courses and may be referenced as common standards for border guarding as part of the validation process. This is bearing in mind that the national standards, as defined in the National Qualifications Framework, provide the national benchmark for accreditation purposes.

All accredited programmes are reviewed every 5 to 7 years and therefore there will be an opportunity to review existing accredited programmes and align them with the SQF (as necessary).

There is great value in defining all courses by learning outcomes referenced to the SQF, even where an organisation decides not to accredit the learning. Specifically:

- ♦ the learner will more easily be able to claim credit for the learning towards another course;
- ♦ courses will not have to be dramatically changed if a decision is made to accredit courses in the future;
- ♦ courses will be operationally and organisationally relevant.

20.3. Developing comparable and compatible courses

Creating comparable and compatible standards requires the definition of all training courses in terms of learning that actually happened on the course, stated as learning outcomes. The SQF will greatly assist in the development and construction of learning outcomes for new courses and also assist in the revision of learning outcomes for existing courses.

Referencing the course learning outcomes to the SQF will enable the establishment of the 'level' of a course. The ability to refer to all courses in terms of their level and SQF-referenced learning outcomes will enable all training courses to be compared, ensuring the progression of learning without overlap. This will ultimately ensure that training resources address specific organisational learning requirements and are cost effective.

The SQF for Border Guarding facilitates the making of comparisons between training courses. Such comparisons ensure that the best value is achieved from training resources by helping to describe courses in such a way as to facilitate operational decisions about training.

This is illustrated by the following example.

**Course selection without an SQF**

You have a staff member working in the area of false documents and you wish to send them on a course to further develop their competence. The Netherlands offers a course called 'Advanced false documents' whilst Belgium offers a course entitled 'Specialist false documents'. Your staff member has completed basic training. Which course do you send them on?

Course selection with an SQF

You have a staff member working in the area of false documents and you wish to send them on a course to further develop their competence. The Netherlands offers a course called 'Advanced false documents course (SQF level 6)' whilst Belgium offers a course entitled 'Specialist false documents course (SQF level 5)'. Your staff member has completed basic training (SQF level 4). Which course do you send them on?

20.4. Recognition of all types of learning

The SQF facilitates the recognition and description of all types of learning.

Formal learning

Formal learning is learning that is recognised and validated/accredited in accordance with national procedures. On successful completion of a formal learning course, the learner will be awarded a certificate/diploma that is recognised across Europe. All formal learning in Member States should be expressed in terms of assessed, quality assured learning outcomes. The extent to which existing courses are encompassed within the SQF is determined by mapping existing learning outcomes on to the SQF and Competency Profiles, just as the learning outcomes in the SQF are mapped onto the Competency Profiles in this document (Cross-Reference Tables, Volume II). This mapping exercise will provide a clear description of the formal learning conducted in the state that is understandable to all other Member States.

Non-formal learning

Most states deliver a number of non-formal learning courses and programmes (structured learning courses that are not accredited or validated). Non-formal learning programmes may or may not be defined in terms of learning outcomes, assessed or subject to quality assurance procedures. It is good practice to define all non-formal learning in terms of learning outcomes. The development of these outcomes facilitates the mapping process as described above for formal learning, describing non-formal learning in the context of the SQF whilst also providing a mechanism for learners to engage with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes in ways such as using non-formal learning as credit towards other formal learning programmes.

Informal learning

Informal learning occurs in every organisation. It is the learning that takes place outside of structured training sessions and includes self-study and on-the-job learning. The learning outcomes in the SQF and the Competence Profiles assist in the capture, definition and assessment of informal learning for the purposes of gaining recognition.

20.5. National sectoral (organisational) frameworks*

The SQF for Border Guarding will be applied and integrated by each organisation selectively, according to its organisational tasks and national responsibilities. However, an organisation may choose to further develop a national sectoral framework (e.g. for policing/law enforcement) which would complete the description of their organisational tasks (mapping out all the other job profiles, e.g. traffic police, military police, customs), using the SQF for Border Guarding methodology as good practice, for benchmarking. An SQF adds organisational value in terms of training development, prioritisation and training needs assessment, as well as better resource management and decision-making when it comes to the training and career development of staff, elimination of overlaps, etc. All the benefits of the European SQF for Border Guarding may be extended at the national level by further developing a national sectoral framework, if there is an interest at national level.

* This may serve towards the national recognition of the profession as such and its introduction within the national register of occupations — if there is a national interest in doing so.

20.6. Course design

Within the border guard sector, courses are designed to enable staff to meet their operational and organisational requirements and responsibilities or to develop job competences. The process of course design begins with identifying the job competences to be developed, followed by defining the minimum standard of learning to be achieved by learners participating in the course, stated as learning outcomes.

The stating of accurate learning outcomes rather than course aims or objectives is in line with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and is more operationally relevant. The stating of course aims and objectives defines what the teacher aims to cover or achieve in a course, whereas the stating of learning outcomes defines what the learner will know, understand or be able to do at the end of a course. Thus a learning outcome approach to course design is learner-centred rather than teacher-



centred and also provides accurate information about what exactly will be learnt from any course. The writing of 'good' learning outcomes for course design is of crucial importance in the design process and is a skill.

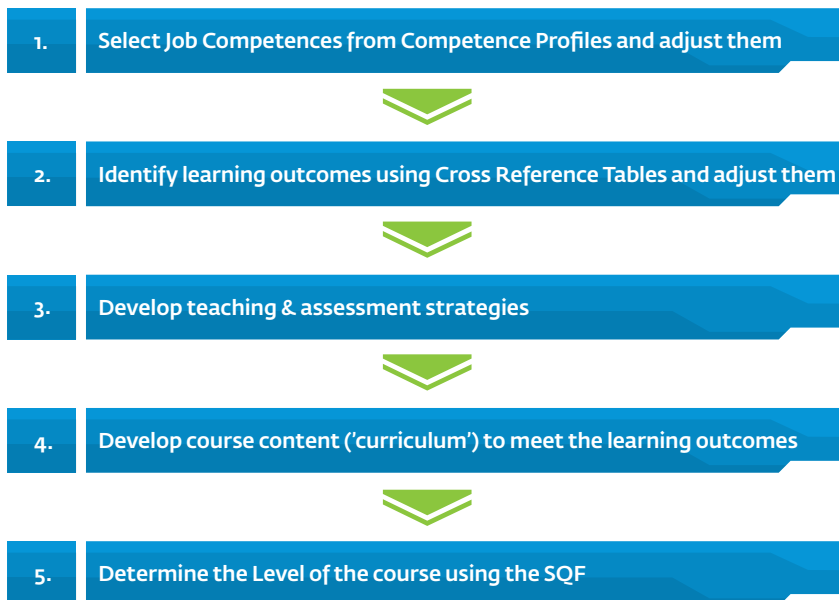


Figure 7. **Course design in five steps using the SQF**

The SQF and the associated documents provide a list of 'job competences' that cover all border guarding operational activities. The job competences are cross-referenced to the SQF, which provides learning outcomes for each border guarding activity.

The learning outcomes in the SQF may be used as they are written or can be adapted and combined within the course development process to reflect the specific learning in the course. The course learning outcomes can then be referenced against the SQF to determine the level of the course.

The SQF will greatly assist in the development of learning outcomes and will also assist in ensuring that courses are designed to be operationally relevant.

The SQF has many uses. However, two of the primary ones are the development of new training courses and the alignment or review of existing courses. The development of any new training course should commence with the job competences to be achieved by the course. The competences then drive the course development process as shown in the example below.

20.7. Example of using the SQF for Border Guarding for course design: A course on covert border surveillance at land borders — level 5

A. Select required job competences from Competence Profiles to be achieved (adjust to specific requirements as highlighted)

1. Conduct covert border surveillance, selecting appropriate methods, tactics and techniques for land borders (Skill — level 5).
2. Select and utilise, in the context of the prevailing situation **and landscape**, border surveillance technology and equipment (Skill — level 5).
3. Recognise the value of information as potential intelligence, gathered through overt or covert activities and share accordingly (Skill — level 5).
4. Act in the context of respect **and relationship building** with for local communities (Competence — Level 5).

B. Select learning outcomes from the SQF: the Cross-Reference Tables will assist in the identification of learning outcomes (adjust to specific requirements of the course as demonstrated)

1. Apply a broad range of national, EU and international laws, rules and procedures relevant to **a range of border guarding activities** to **covert surveillance**.
2. Selectively apply **covert** surveillance tactics and techniques to proactively survey **land** borders and gather information, maximising the prevention and detection of illegal border crossing, cross-border criminality and irregularity.
3. Identify and recognise the potential of information as intelligence and select and disseminate information accordingly.
4. Effectively operate a broad range of equipment and technology available for **covert surveillance** and evaluate results.
5. Respect the fundamental rights of all persons in the context of **covert surveillance** **all border-guarding activities**.

C. Develop learning and assessment strategy and assessments that will ensure learning outcomes can be achieved

Assessment strategy: This course will be assessed using authentic assessments whereby the learner will be required to conduct a covert surveillance exercise, selecting and utilising appropriate tactics and equipment and providing a structured written report of the exercise. Each element of the surveillance exercise will be subject to objective marking criteria.

Assessment: Surveillance exercise 70%, report 30%.

D. Design and develop the course content: how will the learner achieve the outcomes? (Note that this comes last in the design process)

Methodology: Blended learning

Lectures: Law, procedures and tactics

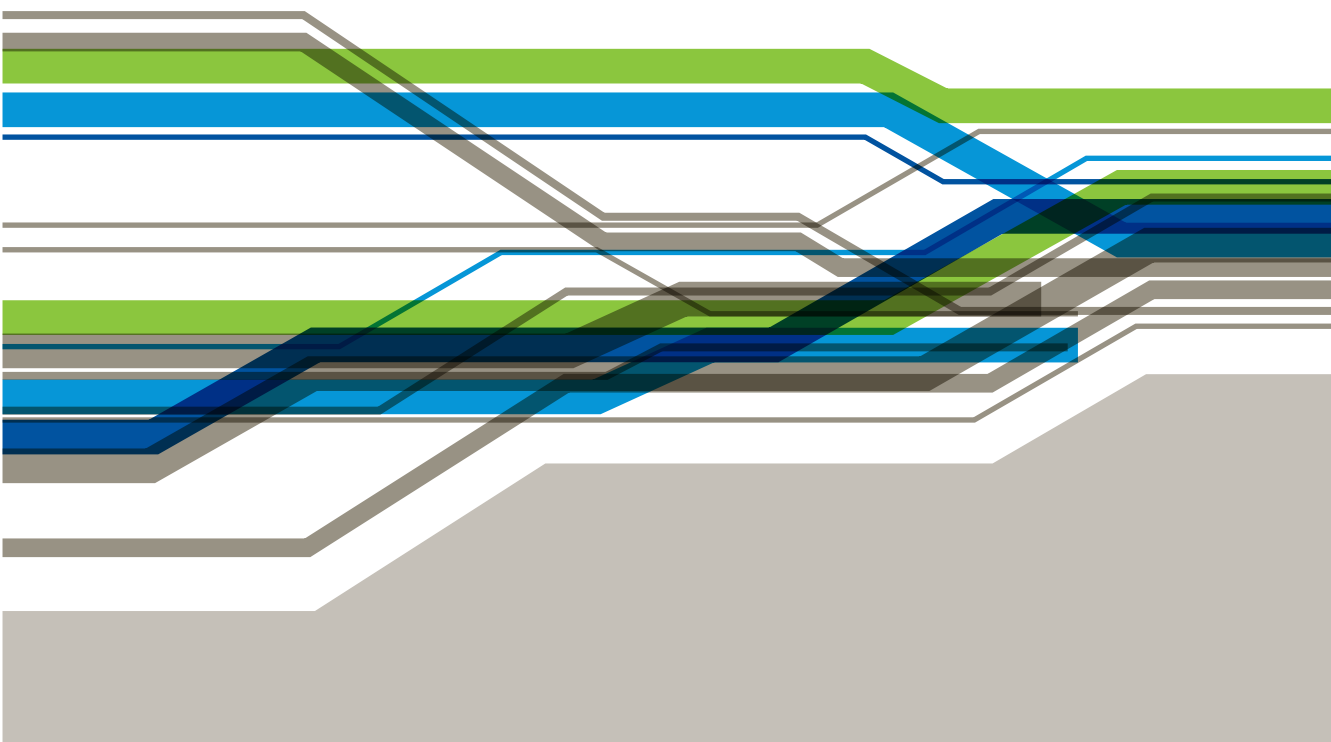
Skills sessions: Equipment, tactics, information evaluation and report writing

Practice: Observation of covert surveillance missions



PART FOUR:

GUIDE TO INTEGRATING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS





21. Guide to integrating fundamental rights into border guard training

Frontex is committed to ensuring that the fundamental rights of all persons are promoted and protected at the borders. Recent initiatives in Frontex have strengthened this commitment. In 2012, the Frontex Management Board appointed a fundamental rights officer to support the Agency in the continuous enhancement of the fundamental rights integration within border guarding activities.

The creation of a Consultative Forum on fundamental rights was foreseen in the 2011 revision to Frontex's founding regulation. The forum has an advisory role to Frontex and aims to address specific issues contributing to strengthening the Agency's capacity to ensure the respect and promotion of fundamental rights, both in its own work and in the Member States that participate in Frontex's operational or capacity-building activities.

Frontex prioritises support for Member States/Schengen associated countries to integrate fundamental rights into all border guard training at all levels.

A Frontex training project was implemented in 2011–12 in order to develop a fundamental rights manual addressing the needs of the first-line and second-line officers. The 'Fundamental rights trainer's manual' was developed with the active participation of a multidisciplinary team comprising experts from EU Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom) as well as experts from international organisations and other EU agencies (EASO, FRA, OHCHR, UNHCR, ODIHR). The overall aim is to raise awareness and to facilitate the harmonised and comprehensive training of all EU border guards in respecting fundamental rights, aspiring to ever higher standards of professionalism as part of an EU border guard culture. The manual has been developed for use by professionals who train border guards. It promotes the implementation of training methodologies focusing on practical and learner-centred approaches. As a next step

Frontex will facilitate the implementation of the training at national level by providing expert support and training for national trainers.

The SQF provides a further opportunity to support the integration of fundamental rights in the training of border guards.

As described previously, the SQF is a table of high-level (very broad) learning outcomes that captures the learning requirements for all border guarding activities. In the design of training courses, curriculum level (specific) learning outcomes are developed and can be matched against the SQF to determine the level of learning and to ensure that the intended learning is related to border guarding activities. Thus the fundamental rights learning outcomes in the SQF are written in very broad terms.

21.1. Level of learning and fundamental rights

The fundamental rights outcomes are written in the SQF at levels 4 to 7. As described in Part One, the higher the level the more complex or advanced the learning. Higher levels do not necessarily mean higher ranks in an organisation. Therefore, whilst most of the learning for a 'basic' border guard is at levels 4 and 5, it is clear that the minimum level of learning in terms of fundamental rights is level 6, as it is incumbent upon all border guards to protect and respect the fundamental rights of all persons.

SQF — level 6

Ensure protection and respect for the fundamental rights of all persons

In order to achieve this outcome a significant amount of learning is required. It is the breadth of learning and the level of individual responsibility and autonomy required to achieve this outcome that determines the level.

21.2. Fundamental rights as knowledge, skills and competence

A range of laws, treaties, case-law and other legal instruments outline the rights of all people at borders. Learning what these legal instruments consist of is the easiest form of fundamental rights learning and teaching. It is easy to prepare a slide presentation listing the various articles



in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and to test that border guards have learnt them.

Knowledge of what the fundamental rights are does not necessarily lead to behaviour that is compliant with fundamental rights. A higher level of learning is to be able to apply skills, make decisions and demonstrate behaviours that serve to protect rights in border guarding activities. Thus, to achieve actions that are compliant with fundamental rights in any specific activity, a border guard must:

- ♦ have a knowledge of and understanding of the relevant rights;
- ♦ know how the specific rights apply to the border guarding activity;
- ♦ possess the skills necessary to vindicate or protect the rights;
- ♦ take responsibility to ensure that each individual's rights are protected.

This final element — 'to take responsibility ...' — is the crucial part of the learning, the competence that is dependent upon the knowledge and skills outlined in the first three points. The development of this competence in the learning process is dependent upon the learning that is determined by the learning outcomes.

21.3. Writing learning outcomes for fundamental rights

It is important that the learning outcomes for each border guard course reflect the fundamental rights learning that is relevant to the topic of the training and do not repeat previous learning in the area of fundamental rights. This can only be achieved by writing very specific learning outcomes, with a particular emphasis on skills and competences rather than knowledge outcomes.

There are two approaches to writing fundamental rights outcomes. The first is to identify the specific learning and to include in the outcome the words 'fundamental rights', e.g. 'Explain the fundamental rights implications of intelligence gathering and analysis'. The second approach, which is particularly effective, is to identify the specific right as part of the learning outcome, e.g. 'Ensure that all profiling techniques adopted are non-discriminatory'.

The precise wording of the learning outcome will inform and dictate the content of the training programme. The two example learning outcomes above ensure that the key fundamental rights challenges in each of the topics are effectively addressed.

21.4. Verbs for fundamental rights learning outcomes

One of the most popular sources for learning outcome verbs is Bloom's taxonomy, which distinguishes between different domains of learning and suggests verbs for each domain. The most frequently used is Bloom's 'knowledge domain', principally because a significant amount of formal learning is college and knowledge based.

The key verb for knowledge outcomes, particularly for basic border guards, is the verb 'explain'. It is essential for border guards to be able to explain actions, decisions and procedures to persons at the border. Most other verbs that apply to fundamental rights can be taken from Bloom's 'affective domain' and relate to skills and competences. A list of verbs that are particularly useful for describing fundamental rights learning is shown in below.

Table 8. **Examples of Bloom verbs for fundamental rights learning outcomes**

Verbs for fundamental rights learning outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain• Protect• Promote• Value• Champion• Respect• Ensure• Apply• Challenge• Defend

Why specify fundamental rights outcomes?

It is important to specify fundamental rights outcomes for two reasons. The first is to ensure that the specific learning required is included in the training course and that all training courses integrate fundamental rights principles. The second reason relates to accredited courses.

When a training course is accredited or validated in accordance with either the Bologna or Copenhagen processes, it must include an assessment that tests each and every part of the learning outcomes. Thus by ensuring that fundamental rights learning outcomes are stated, compliance with fundamental rights will be formally assessed as part of the



course, ensuring that the learner has the necessary skills and competences required for their operational role.

21.5. The SQF 'Guide to integrating fundamental rights into border guard training'

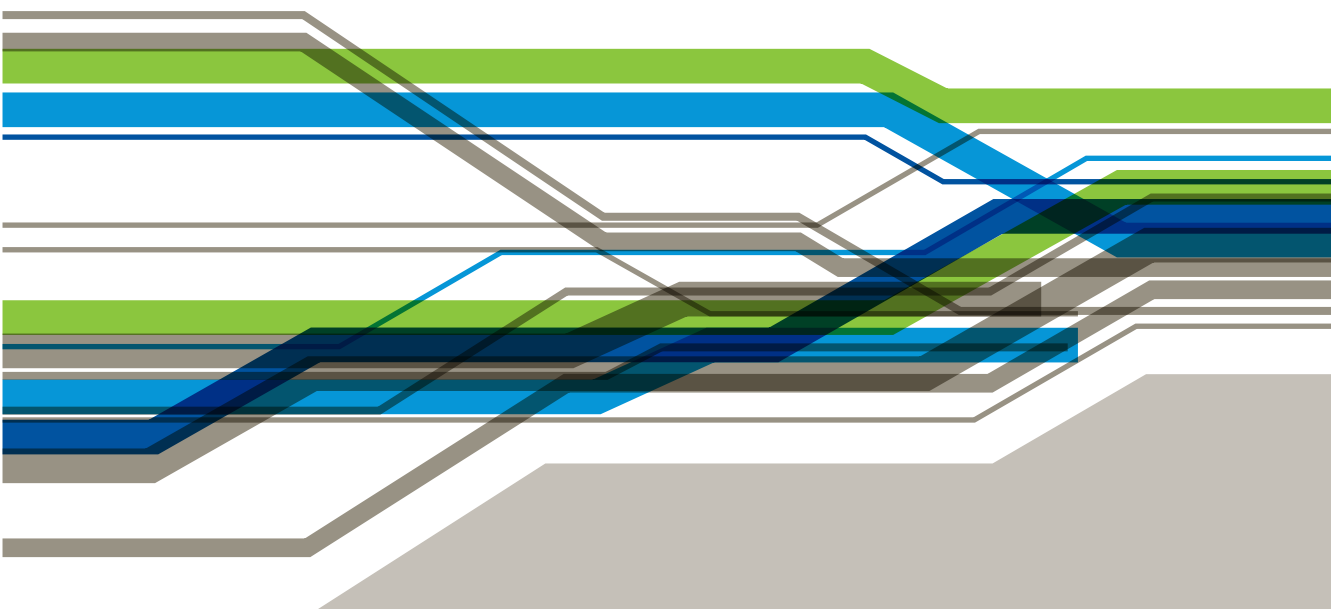
In order to assist Member States/Schengen associated countries and partner countries, as well as any interested partner organisation, in integrating fundamental rights and to determine the level of their fundamental rights learning outcomes, examples of fundamental rights outcomes have been developed for each learning area at each level in the SQF.

It should be noted that these outcomes are **examples of learning** outcomes and **not a comprehensive list of all of the fundamental rights considerations in border guarding**. The examples provided are to assist the course development process and to demonstrate options as a guide for integrating fundamental rights.

PART FIVE:

INDEPENDENT QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS

Bologna review panel final report to Frontex
on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework
for Border Guarding





1. Introduction

This report has been prepared by Prof. Bairbre Redmond, Irish Bologna Expert/Promoter from 2007, and Prof. Alan Davidson, UK Bologna Expert/Promoter 2005–11, in response to a request from Frontex to review the proposed Sector Qualifications Framework (SQF) in Border Guarding. The report consists of our formal review of the structure of the SQF, with specific reference to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and associated Bologna Process principles, action lines and references. It also includes some general comments and recommendations for future users of the SQF, including the various European Border Guarding organisations and other stakeholders.

2. Formal review and assessment of the structure of the Sector Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding

The European Qualifications Framework* (EQF) is a meta-qualifications framework against which qualifications across different European education and training systems can be transparently compared and which has been designed to strengthen cooperation and mutual trust between relevant stakeholders. A key principle of the EQF is that it is based on learning outcomes which set out a combination of knowledge, skills and competences, in turn providing a quantifiable mechanism against which to judge the value of a given award within a European context. Since the establishment of the EQF, one of the key expectations about the framework is that it should become a neutral reference point for the creation of cross-border sectoral qualifications frameworks. Of particular relevance to the way the SQF for Border Guarding has been developed, the EQF specified the importance of allowing those who understand the needs of the sector to build their specific level descriptors, based on the common EQF terminology.

The Bergen Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education on 19 and 20 May 2005 adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, 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. These are set out in the Framework for Qualifications of The European Higher Education Area (FQHEA).**

The next section of the review outlines the formal technical assessment of the proposed SQF in Border Guarding bearing in mind the complex interconnections between the SQF and the EQF. Our report looks particularly for alignment, consistency and compatibility (Sections 3, 4, 5)

* EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2008. Recommendation Of The European Parliament And The Council Of 23 April 2008 On The Establishment Of A European Qualifications Framework For Lifelong Learning. Luxembourg: European Commission. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0001:010:EN:PDF>

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between the approaches used by Frontex in the development of the SQF including the responses by Frontex to the recommendations and suggestions made by us in our interim report (August 2012).

3. Alignment of learning outcomes

We have reviewed the learning outcomes in the SQF and their alignment with the EQF and their compatibility with the FQEHEA.

We reviewed the alignment of level of each of the 95 learning outcomes across the 4 levels (EQF levels 4, 5, 6, 7). For each learning outcome, we checked the statement of the learning outcome, considering the detail wording and alignment to:

- ♦ the 'Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework', under the three headings of 'Knowledge, Skills and Competence';
- ♦ the 'Descriptors of learning outcomes, including competences' in Section 3.3 of the FQEHEA for first and second cycle qualifications relevant to EQF Levels 4, 5, 6, 7.

We confirm the alignment of level of all of the 95 learning outcomes in the SQF with the EQF and with the FQEHEA.



4. Coherence of learning outcomes

We reviewed the coherence of the SQF as an overall framework, and the coherence of each of the 95 learning outcomes across the 4 levels (EQF levels 4, 5, 6, 7). For each learning outcome, we checked the statement of the learning outcome, considering the detail wording and coherence with:

- ♦ the EQF, including specifically the principles and guidance on using learning outcomes,* and the domains of ‘Knowledge, Skills and Competence’;
- ♦ the FQEHEA, including specifically the principles and contextual considerations in Sections 1.2 and 1.3.

We confirm the coherence of the SQF and the individual learning outcomes with the EQF, including guidance on using learning outcomes in the EQF, and with the FQEHEA.

* EUROPEAN
QUALIFICATIONS
FRAMEWORK, 2011.
Using Learning Outcomes
European Qualifications
Framework Series: Note 4.
[http://ec.europa.eu/
education/lifelong-
learning-policy/doc/eqf/
note4_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/note4_en.pdf)

5. Consistency of learning outcomes

We reviewed consistency of the SQF, both internal consistency (i.e. within the SQF) and external consistency (i.e. with reference to official documents).

Internal consistency: For each learning outcome, we checked the statement of the learning outcome, considering the consistency in the statements themselves, in terms of use and clarity of wording, and alignment to areas of learning ('Knowledge, Skills, Competence').

External consistency: our review of alignment of level and coherence (see sections above) considered consistency with external official documents in particular the EQF and FQEHEA.

We confirm that the learning outcomes are consistent with the vertical structure of the EQF, being properly aligned to Levels 4 to 7, and with the horizontal structure of the EQF, properly reflecting the categories of 'Knowledge', 'Skills' and 'Competence'.

We confirm the consistency of the SQF, both internal (i.e. within the SQF) and external consistency (i.e. with reference to official documents).



6. Approach to the process of developing the SQF

We consider that Frontex's approach to the process of developing the SQF has been exemplary, and we highlight the following aspects of the approach as being particularly effective and commendable.

- ♦ The approach demonstrates a very sound understanding of, and commitment to, the EQF, including: the objectives and main intended functions of the framework; the principles and logic; and the requirements to implementation.
- ♦ The approach demonstrates a very clear understanding and view of the concept of a sector qualifications framework, the purposes, what it is, and what it is not. Documentation supporting the SQF includes a very helpful explanation of this.
- ♦ The approach demonstrates a very sound understanding of the border guarding sector, including the organisations and agencies involved, the types of work and jobs, existing training and specific cross-border considerations of legislation, human rights, security and languages.
- ♦ The approach demonstrates a real concern about clarity in use of language, and the implications of translation and interpretation.
- ♦ The approach demonstrates extensive and careful stakeholder involvement, and meaningful responses to consultation, as envisaged by the EQF recommendations.
- ♦ The approach considers practical aspects of utilisation considering how the SQF could be used by Frontex itself and national organisations and agencies for both quality assurance and enhancement.
- ♦ The approach is forward-looking, with awareness that there may be changes in either Bologna guidance on sector qualifications frameworks, and in border processes.
- ♦ The approach demonstrates a real understanding of, and commitment to Bologna process action lines and working* in particular: Qualifications Frameworks / 3 Cycles; Joint degrees; Mobility; Recognition; Quality Assurance; Employability; Student Centred Learning — encouraging a shift from curriculum-led to learning led training in the sector. Development and utilisation of the SQF will be a very meaningful and practical contribution to the Bologna Process.

* BOLOGNA
PROCESS, 2010 [http://
www.ond.vlaanderen.be/
hogeronderwijs/bologna/#](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/#)

7. Comments and Recommendations for Implementation by European Border Guarding Organisations

7.1. Background to the imperative for developing and adopting a SQF in Border Guarding

In 2008 the European Parliament adopted the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common reference framework which has been designed to establish a shared understanding of the standards of education and training across different countries and sectors in Europe and to compare and coordinate these standards. The EQF is set out in eight levels, demonstrating agreed learning outcomes which are the knowledge, skills and competences expected at each level. The EQF has been designed to allow these eight levels of learning outcomes be developed both at national levels and at international sectoral levels. The principal purpose of the EQF, and the referencing of national and international sectoral frameworks to the EQF, is to allow citizens' mobility between countries, to build trust and to ensure the widest cross-national recognition of education and training gained in different countries.

Each European country has a National Qualifications Framework and a co-coordinating 'referencing' process is in place to ensure that all European National Qualifications Framework levels are in line with those set out in the EQF, using a transparent methodology. Within the EQF there is also a need to recognise that a particular profession, discipline, or trade – a 'sector' may need a separate form of recognition framework which appreciates the specific skills, traditions and needs of that sector on a cross-national basis. Through such an international sectoral qualifications framework it is possible to demonstrate what an individual in that sector knows, understands and is able to do, in terms of expected learning outcomes and across European borders.



The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) recommended that international sectors should use the reference levels and principles of the EQF to design coordinated training and qualifications standards in their sectors. This was in order to increase the employability, mobility and social integration of workers and lifelong learners in specific professions and trades. It was specified that such harmonisation should take place through the development of sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQFs). In particular the EQF recommended that SQFs should be developed by 'by facilitating cooperation, exchanging good practice and testing – inter alia through voluntary peer review and pilot projects under Community programmes, by launching information and consultation exercises with social dialogue committees – and developing support and guidance material (C111/03)'. Our review has looked at whether the SQF for Border Guarding fulfils the formal technical requirements of a SQF in relation to the EQF, but equally important, whether it has been developed in line with the important principles of peer review and consultation, set out above.

7.2. Quality and relevance of the SQF for Border Guarding Framework

In the previous sections (3, 4, 5), this report has set out our formal examination and verification of the SQF for Border Guarding, confirming that it meets all the required standards within EU policies and practices. As has already been noted, we consider that this SQF is of a very high standard and that it has produced a framework which will make a significant contribution to the overall training and practice standards of European Border Guarding. In particular, we were impressed by the structure which has been used in its development. This structure sets out the required learning outcomes and their component levels of knowledge, skills and competencies and clearly cross-references them with generic and specific aspects of Border Guarding. This easily understood structure will be of considerable benefit to the different National Organisations and Agencies when they implement and use the framework.

We welcome the fact that consideration has gone into how the framework can be used both by FRONTEX and National Organisations and Agencies for both quality assurance and enhancement purposes. The structure also allows for adaptation and development and it is capable of responding to changes in European policies and in disciplinary changes within the sector. In fact, given that the development of sectoral frame-

works is a relatively new development within European qualifications, we consider that the structure used in the SQF for Border Guarding could and should be used as an exemplar of good practice for other sectors in the way it has been conceived, developed and presented.

7.3. Development through a Robust Consultative Process

The EQF recognizes that a coordinated, cross-European recognition of sectoral qualifications and training will only be achieved where it is developed in full and open dialogue with different stakeholders (pp. 8). The creation of a workable, international sectoral qualifications framework entails layers of consultation, ensuring that all partners' views on key issues are incorporated and expressed in an intelligible manner. In sectoral terms it also requires that the everyday professional practices of individuals in each country are analysed, compared and set out in an agreed framework, using language that can be understood by all stakeholders. Those building the framework also have to de-mystify the often complex language in pan-European policy documents.

We have been very impressed at the in-depth consultation that had taken place around the development of the SQF on Border Guarding. As shown diagrammatically on the SQF Process Map in this report, the Working Group involved all National Border Guarding Organisations, National Training Coordinators and Fundamental Rights agencies at different stages in the development process. It is also evident from the report, that care was taken to ensure that linguistic clarity was reached with all stakeholders and that the translation and interpretation of key terms would be well understood across languages.

The quality of cross-national consultation by the Working Group has also resulted in a very clear understanding of the range and variety of work practices in existence in the European Border Guarding sector. We consider that the detail in the framework demonstrates a sound understanding of the work undertaken by the different organisations and agencies involved. This includes references to the range of skills in the sector and the existing training and qualifications already in place. The SQF has also given consideration to other key factors in Border Guarding such as shared and differing legislation, national security matters and the pivotal issues of human rights.



7.4. Suitability of European Border Guarding as a sector for a SQF

We consider that, as a profession, Border Guarding represents a sector that should benefit particularly from the adoption of a SQF. While most sectors deal with professional cross-national issues, the nature of Border Guarding positions most of its workers, on a daily basis, at particularly close proximity to cross-European junctions in terms of geography, procedures, human rights and national and international security and crime prevention. The need to harmonise the training and qualifications of international Border Guarding colleagues who may work at a very short distance from each other seems especially indicated. This is not only for the clarity and effectiveness of the work practices in different organisations and agencies, but also for the benefit of their own national security standards and to the advantage of those who need to pass through European borders in a safe and efficient manner.

8. Conclusion

Having considered all aspects of the framework, we have pleasure in recommending the adoption of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding to Frontex and individual European Border Guarding Organisations and Agencies.

Signed

Prof. Bairbre Redmond

BSocSc, MSocSc, PhD, DASS, CQSW
Irish Bologna Expert/Promoter
from 2007

Signed

Prof. Alan Davidson

BSc Hons, PhD, CEng, MICE,
MIStructE, FHEA
UK Bologna Expert/Promoter 2005–11



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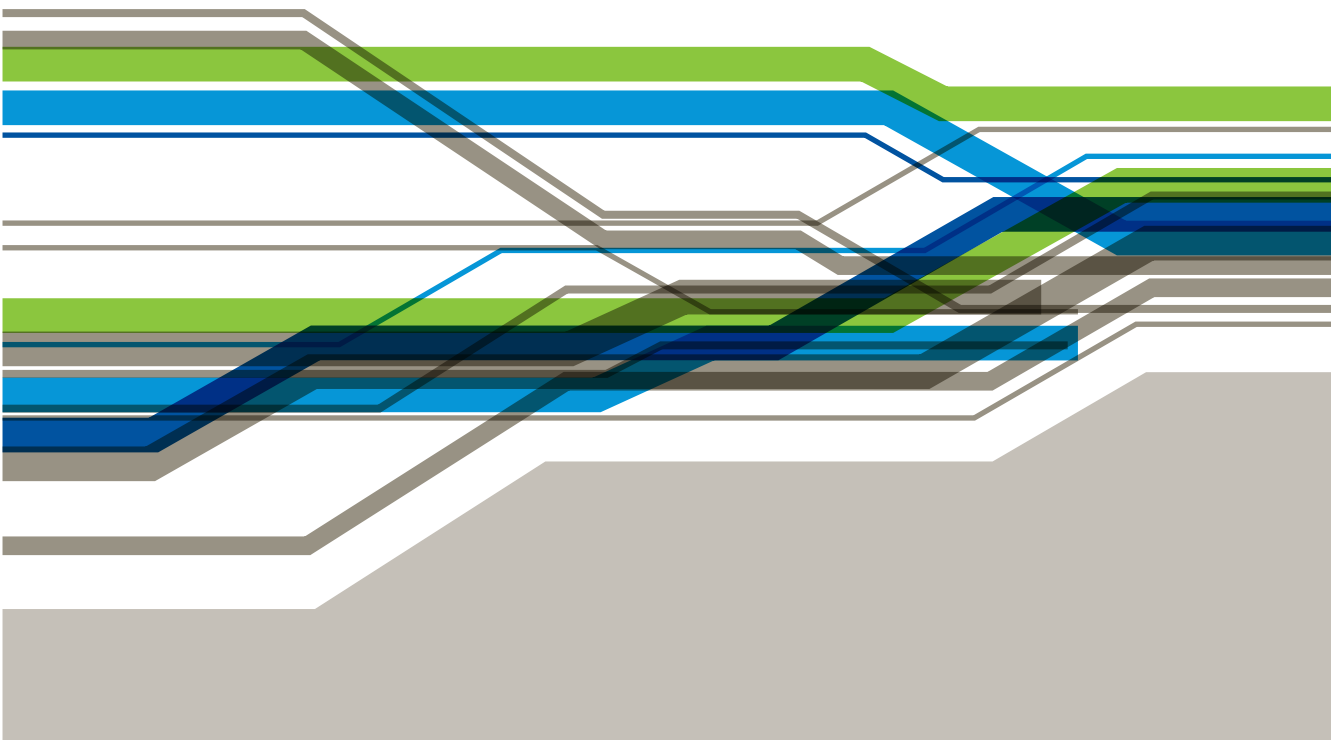
BOLOGNA PROCESS, 2010

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/#>



PART SIX:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS





22. Frequently asked questions

This section is addressed to all users of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding, to the experts involved in the integration process and to decision-makers in the training institutions and border guard organisations and comprises 20 of the most frequent or illustrative questions and issues raised during the development and validation process or the preparations for national integration.

It was inspired by the many discussions that took place during the development or validation process and questions asked during the workshops or during the many more or less informal conversations on the SQF for Border Guarding with different stakeholders and actors, at all levels. There were many challenges in the development process that came from a different understanding and definition of the concepts, or from different perceptions and expectations of what a sectoral framework should be. Examples of the most common remarks and comments are given here, to facilitate understanding of the issues.

Many questions came from the concerns of the members of the working group on how to explain the SQF to their superiors and decision-makers. Other questions come from the other end, from the actual managers of the border guard organisations or other members interested in learning about the SQF and trying to grasp the concept. The questions as such helped the development and promotion of the SQF, as they provided an opportunity to reflect once more on the outcome, to consider the context and the target audience and to clarify issues and expectations; overall, they offered a learning opportunity for all involved.

Questions on the integration process

22.1.

In our country we don't have a bachelor's degree for mid-level officers (level 6). If we endorse and adopt the SQF, does this mean that we have to change our national educational system because of it, to introduce a bachelor's degree for mid-level officers?

A prompt answer comes from the [European Commission](#) website regarding EQF:

'...the EQF does not aim at reforming systems ... and implementing the EQF does not require any reform of the education and training system at any level. The EQF requires that all qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes, but this doesn't mean that the systems awarding these qualifications need to be reformed.' (http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/about_en.htm)

The SQF applies the same principles as the EQF, as it is an EQF for the border guard professional sector.

There are several issues that need to be pointed out here, the so called 'myths' about the SQF/EQF, as follows:

It is inclusive, not prescriptive; it reflects, but does not dictate

Firstly, the SQF is **a voluntary framework** and, in the same way as the EQF, does not impose a change of educational systems; on the contrary, it serves to compare and link (reference) training and learning across borders, regardless of the type of training programmes or education systems. It plays the role of a translation tool, just like the EQF.

The SQF describes the complexity of learning, regardless of the nature of the diploma/certificate, the training and education system or the rank. The SQF describes learning, without dictating any type of studies or degrees. Bologna respects diversity and looks for harmonisation and comparability, **not standardisation**.

There is no 'level 6 person', but rather level 6 learning

Secondly, this question comes from the natural tendency to associate the levels of learning with ranks and organisational levels. It assumes that the mid-level officer is 'the level 6 person' who needs to hold a bachelor's degree (level 6). As explained in the section on levels of learning, there is no 'level 6 person', only level 6 learning. A low-ranking officer may very well need to learn complex information (level 7 learning). For instance, an investigation officer may need to learn very complex investigative techniques (level 7 of learning), but still be a sergeant. Equally, it may be necessary for a high-ranking officer to learn something that is not complex at all (weapon handling — a basic skill). There is no link between the levels of learning and the rank.



Level 6 learning doesn't automatically mean a certain degree

Thirdly, although we speak about complexity of learning (level 6), this is not automatically associated with a certain degree, as there are many other criteria that define a degree (number of ECTS credit points, structure, national specifications on the degrees, etc.). A management course of 5 weeks (for example a Frontex mid-level course) is a level 6 course without being a bachelor's degree. Equally a Frontex air crew training course is a level 7 course without being a master's, but the complexity of learning corresponds to learning 7.

Level of learning is not linked to rank

One added value of the SQF is that it actually helps to overcome the discussions on defining what a mid-level officer is in different Member States, which for long has prevented the development of an actual meaningful set of European common core standards for mid-level officers. The national definition of a mid-level officer makes no difference to the SQF or EQF, as the SQF (through the competency framework) defines the job competences at all levels, as well as the learning required, and allows the states to 'translate' it into their national levels and systems and to reference their courses to the SQF, without implying any structural or functional changes.

In summary:

- ♦ The SQF does not dictate to training or impose reforms.
- ♦ The SQF describes qualifications to make them comparable, to enable the comparison of courses and recognition of learning across the EU.
- ♦ There is no relation between ranks, promotion and the SQF levels.
- ♦ There is no 'level 6 person', but there is level 6 learning, which is not necessarily a bachelor's degree, but a course of predominantly level 6 learning.

22.2.

Few people know about SQF in our organisation. How will we manage to explain what it is and convince them that it is a useful product?

'Bologna is a process'. 'Integration of the SQF is a process, too!' The more that courses are described in terms of their level, the more often people will seek this information, because it is relevant and helpful. Equally, the more that recognition of prior learning becomes available in national ed-

education systems, the more learners will want a clear statement of what they have learned. Frontex facilitates this through translation workshops, product promotion, support to the national integration, programme design courses and, first and foremost, by leading the way and aligning all Frontex training products to the SQF — which is also a process. A reflection of one of the working group members is worth mentioning: ‘the SQF will promote itself through its quality and usefulness’.

22.3.

Some parts of the SQF are the domain of different institutions and do not apply to our organisation. Can we still integrate the SQF?

This is not an issue for the integration of the SQF, and the SQF is actually a solution to this, as it will facilitate a clear description of what specific training is covered by each institution according to their respective tasks, thus eliminating potential overlaps and creating synergies (see Figure 1, page 23). The SQF describes specifically the border guard job and learning, regardless of other organisational responsibilities, therefore avoiding duplications of training or providing irrelevant training. The national authority may use from the SQF only what is relevant to its task and national mandate. An important principle of integration is flexibility. Only the learning that applies should be used for course design at the national level.

22.4.

How will we integrate the SQF? Do we have to take it integrally, as a whole, or we can use just some parts, selectively?

If the SQF fully reflects the organisational tasks of your agency, then yes, you may use it in its entirety. The SQF is inclusive, not prescriptive; this means that states may use from the SQF **only** that which fits the organisational profile. The SQF does not dictate training requirements, but it should reflect all the learning needs of the border guard job across the EU. If a job competence or a certain learning outcome is written in the SQF, it does not mean that all states which commit to SQF integration will be obliged to introduce that learning outcome into their respective training, or to add the job competence into their occupational standards. They may of course choose to introduce new learning outcomes according to the SQF, if it is relevant for their respective training programme and covers a reasonably identified gap.



Questions on the concept

22.5.

Some say that in the SQF the competences (Competence Profiles) are learning outcomes, and that there is no difference between the Competence Profiles and the learning outcomes. There are similar discussions about the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Some even suggested that 'competences' would be the adequate umbrella term for the table, so that the EQF could equally be a competence framework. Is this right and what is meant? Can we use the Competence Profiles as learning outcomes and what is the difference, if any?

The SQF and the EQF are qualifications frameworks and not competences frameworks, because they enable the classification of qualifications levels and systems. It is not intended to be used for the classification of individual competences. It is a learning-outcome orientated framework, in which the descriptors describe all forms of learning outcomes. The misunderstanding of the EQF as a competences framework is due to the fact that learning outcomes are formulated as statements about what the learners can do and so provide a certain 'competence orientation'. The EQF is not a competences framework, as learning outcomes can, for example, also be knowledge without any corresponding competences or skills.

(See also EQF Note 1: 'Explaining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning' (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf, pages 5–6))

In the SQF, the Competence Profiles describe the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to perform the border guard job and they are formulated in occupational terms (as occupational standards); the learning outcomes define the learning requirements (what does the student need to know, be able to apply) and they are assessed (they have to be assessable), whilst the Competence Profiles describe the job. The learning outcomes are therefore more comprehensive than the competences. Therefore the SQF and the EQF are qualifications frameworks based on learning outcomes and not competence frameworks.

22.6.

Is the Sectoral Qualifications Framework related to higher education; is it an academic standard? The border guard job has little to do with higher

education, and is more vocational. How is the SQF relevant for border guard training and what types and levels of education does it cover?

The SQF is aligned and consistent with the European Qualifications Framework levels and definitions of learning and describes border guard learning from levels 4 to 7. As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, the EQF encompasses general and adult education, vocational education and training as well as higher education. The eight levels of the EQF cover 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 educational and career paths. Specifically, the EQF descriptors at levels 5 to 8 refer to the higher education descriptors agreed upon under the Bologna process. However, the formulation of the EQF level descriptors differs from the Bologna level descriptors developed specifically for higher education needs because, as a lifelong learning framework, the EQF also encompasses vocational education and training (VET) and work contexts, including at the highest levels (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf).

The SQF levels 4 and 5 correspond to general and specialised vocational education and training (level 5 makes the transition to higher education). The border guard basic training standards are referenced as levels 4 and 5 (common core curriculum for basic border guard training), whilst levels 6 and 7 correspond to mid- and high-level border guard courses and learning, regardless of their nature — vocational or academic).

22.7.

Attitudes versus competences: Why do we have competences and not attitudes in the EQF/SQF? Attitudes are important in the work of border guards and we should put emphasis on teaching values and influencing behaviours in border guard training.

Without any doubt, the axiological component of learning is very important. Historically, learning was characterised by developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. However, a key characteristic of the learning outcomes is the requirement to be assessable. Learning has to be measurable; a teacher needs to know what the student has learnt, if the learning has happened at the minimum standard defined by the learning outcomes and how much learning has happened. These are crucial questions in



the context of the learner-centred approach of the Bologna/Copenhagen processes, versus the teacher-centred approach traditionally applied.

The EQF defines three different types of learning; knowledge, skills and competence. There is widespread shared understanding on the learning of knowledge and skills; however some would be more familiar with writing learning outcomes that relate to 'attitudes' rather than 'competence'.

In order to share a common understanding of key concepts related to the EQF, the recommendation establishing the EQF defines a list of key terms that are shared by all EU Member States and candidate countries participating in the EQF. One of the key terms is 'competence', which is defined as '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. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.' (European Commission 2008, p. 4).

Therefore each country that has signed up to the EQF, which includes all of the countries that have also committed to the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, has agreed to adopt the use of 'competence' and not 'attitude' as a description of the type of learning and learning outcome. The reason behind the use of the term 'competence' is twofold.

As can be seen from the definition above, the concept of 'competence' is a much broader term and captures a wider scope of learning than the term 'attitude'. Additionally, all learning outcomes must be measurable or assessable with robust, quality-assured assessments. The measurement of attitudes, and particularly the measurement of a change in attitude, can be problematic. It has been recognised that attitudes are difficult to measure. Attitudes are personality features and can only be measured with psychological scales (psycho diagnosis tests) that are specifically designed and validated for this purpose. In reality assessments generally measure 'behaviour' as an indicator of attitude, but they do not directly measure attitudes themselves. This is because an 'attitude' is a psychological concept that is 'unconscious' in nature and that influences behaviour. Designing robust measures of attitudes is challenging whereas measures of competence can more easily be designed to be robust and objective.

The extent to which learning outcomes align with a National Qualifications Framework, and so to the EQF, and the extent to which a course

assessment effectively measures the learning outcomes, are key considerations in the decision to validate/accredit a course under the Bologna/Copenhagen processes. Therefore all courses should follow the good practice of defining learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills or competence. If the courses are not assessable, they cannot be accredited/validated and consequently are not in line with Bologna/Copenhagen standards.

Nevertheless, references to values or ethics are important and should be included as these are reasonably consistent in every organisation. Furthermore, values and 'attitudes' are reflected in behaviours and they may be defined mostly as competences (behaviours can be 'demonstrated', so they are measurable). A person's values and attitudes are the basis for the decisions and behaviours they display, and therefore the competence learning outcome is the most appropriate type of learning to reflect and cover 'attitudes' in a Bologna-compliant and effective way, i.e. to be measurable. It is not enough to 'teach values'; a teacher is interested to know if the learning of the values has happened, if they are internalised within the personal value system of the student and if they are applied — reflected in behaviour, and the basis for making decisions. All these show if the learning has happened and can be objectively measured.

It is acknowledged that we tend to think of the 'attitude of a border guard' as being very important, and indeed it is. However, it is specifically necessary for a border guard to adopt ethical codes and organisational values and to make decisions and demonstrate behaviours that are consistent with these codes and on binding legal instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights.

Values and attitudes are only effective if they are reflected in decisions and behaviour, and measured as competence learning outcomes. **It is actually because of the importance placed on values and behaviours** that they should be assessable and properly defined as learning outcomes.

Fundamental rights integration throughout all learning is an underpinning principle of the SQF. The affective domain of Bloom's taxonomy provides verbs that may be used for the definition of learning outcomes that reflect values, attitudes and behaviours, defined as knowledge, skills and competences.



In summary, if the SQF referred to ‘attitudes’ instead of ‘competences’ it would be in breach of the European Council agreement and would be too narrow in focus to fully capture the learning required for professional practice.

22.8.

Are competence learning outcomes more complex than knowledge and skills learning outcomes, as the competence is formed of knowledge and skills? Are any of these more important than the others?

No, they are just different types of learning that use different intellectual processes. The qualifications may vary in terms of their focus on knowledge, skills or competences. For example, academic qualifications might focus more on knowledge, whereas vocational qualifications might focus more on skills or competences. However they are all equally important and help in differentiating the qualifications; the distinction between the different types of learning supports training design and delivery by identifying the most appropriate learning and assessment methods for each type of learning, so that the learning is authentic and meaningful. The EQF promotes the idea of the equal importance of each of the three descriptors (knowledge, skills and competences) to learning.

Questions and remarks from the development and validation process

22.9.

The Schengen Borders Code should be specified in the knowledge learning outcome. It is a key document for border guard work.

The formulation of learning in the Sectoral Qualifications Framework, as well as in the EQF, has to be generic enough to encompass the learning of all laws, policies, strategies, procedures, etc. Naming some, even the key ones, would exclude many others. Also, there are national laws, regulations and policies that differ from one country to another and they all have to be reflected in the SQF. Therefore, a generic definition of learning is more suitable for the sectoral framework level, as the SQF, like the EQF, provides very high-level (non-specific) learning outcomes, as such allowing it to reflect all training. Furthermore, naming concretely some laws, which might be changed, makes the SQF unnecessarily susceptible to becoming outdated. These types of details belong to the curriculum level learning outcomes (sessions, units).

22.10.

We all know that Integrated Border Management (IBM) serves as a basis for our job. It can be seen as a strategy, a procedure or policy and therefore it is most likely covered in generic border guarding where we speak about strategies. However we consider it is important to mention it by name and not wrapped up in general words.

The SQF description of learning should not mention any specific policies or laws as a change in legislation or policy would immediately cause it to become outdated, and the purpose of the SQF is to encompass all laws and policies and reflect all training. However, the principles of IBM are reflected and integrated throughout the SQF. This was intentional as they are reflective for all border guard learning (see Section 13.3, 'Specific issues on SQF learning outcomes' and 22.9).

22.11.

Border regime and checks within the territory should be included. The border regime exists at the external and internal borders and should be managed at every level. Checks within the territory are an important part of the border guard work.

It is a question of the level of generality: the suggestions apply to curriculum level learning, not to the SQF level.

The concept of 'border regime' is reflected in laws, policies and procedures in the SQF as these learning outcomes reflect all national and international procedures.

Checks within the territory are included within the border control learning area. All laws, policies and procedures specifically mentioned are important for the border guard role, but the SQF should be high level and general and not refer to any specific laws, regulations or policies (see also 22.9 and 22.10).

22.12.

Regional processes, factors, agreements and partnerships etc. should be reflected in the Competence Profiles at all levels, and not only the national and European ones

The working group discussed the concept of 'regional' and concluded that this concept was reflected in the concept of 'national', as each state in



the EU has varying ways of dividing into 'regions' — i.e. counties, *Länder* and divisions — and any regional agreement is actually a national one. To mention some would be exclusive to others and the term 'national' is defined as such in the glossary that supports the SQF approach.

21.13.

Our level 7 officers do not have competences for the 'strategic allocation of the resources', as foreseen in the SQF level 7. This task is performed by high-level officers at the ministry level and not at the level of the border guard organisation.

'Level 7 person' versus level of learning

This was a common issue in the feedback and validation process, as we tend to think of ranks as opposed to learning. The SQF assigns levels of learning according to its complexity and not to the level of the person conducting the task.

The SQF does not refer to **competences within the role**, as these are defined according to the national regulations and the organisational 'powers', which differ from country to country. The SQF specifies the level of complexity for each learning outcome, but does not refer to any organisational or job roles. Therefore, the SQF is inclusive of all organisational structures and systems, as it describes the learning standards and not the organisational hierarchical levels.

21.14.

Use of force needs to be included at all levels. All officers, regardless of their level or rank, have to be able to use force.

There is no doubt that all officers have to be able to use force, but the level of this learning is basic: level 4 learning. The level of complexity of shooting skills is not higher than 4 if we speak about weapons handling (it may be level 5, if decision-making for shooting is included in the learning, in which case this learning outcome is a competence). The SQF defines the levels of learning (how complex the learning is) and not the organisational role, rank or position of the officer who acquires that piece of learning.

21.15.

There are some empty boxes in the SQF in levels 6 and 7. Does this mean that the level 6 or 7 officers do not have responsibilities in those border guard fields? Is this possible?

The SQF does not reflect the organisational responsibilities or the role of the different ranks. There is a very clear rationale for the 'black spaces' in the SQF. This means that there is no learning at that specific level in regards to that subject area. It is important to remember that the level of learning does not relate to the level or rank of the officer. In some cases there is no low-level learning (4–5); the learning starts at a higher level. (For example, for management of border checks and border surveillance the learning is more complex and starts at level 6.) (See also 22.14.)

21.16.

Our organisation doesn't do 'search and rescue'. There are only a few border guard organisations in the EU that perform search and rescue operations and it is not common to all. Therefore it should be taken out of the SQF, as it is not a common relevant task for all.

The SQF is inclusive, not prescriptive. It reflects border guard task across the European Union, but it does not dictate to the national organisations which organisational competences they should include or what training they should develop.

21.17.

We do not have in our master's programme any learning related to the 'development of national policies and strategies'. Do we have to introduce it in our master's curriculum if we integrate the SQF at national level?

This is related to the previous comment.

The fact that a learning outcome from the SQF is not reflected in national training is normal and is not a problem. It would be a problem if a learning outcome existing at national level were not reflected in the SQF. It would mean that the SQF is not reflective and inclusive enough and it should be revised.

If a learning outcome in the SQF is missing from a national programme, it does not have to be introduced, it is not obligatory; this is not how 'SQF



integration' works. However, if a learning outcome from the SQF is considered relevant and useful, it can of course be used as a reference, and that is exactly the purpose of the existence of the SQF.

21.18.

Most of our activity is a policing task, so not much is reflected in the SQF; does this mean that the SQF does not apply to us? There are a few border guard specific tasks that we perform and they are reflected in the SQF; can we still use the SQF?

The fact that a policing task is not reflected in the SQF is of course intentional, and this comment confirms that the SQF design and structure are correct. The SQF aims to cover only the border guard job and not any other organisational responsibilities or other law enforcement functions. As regards the specific border guard tasks, of course anything that is relevant to organisational needs can be adopted from the SQF and used.

21.19.

Specialist training should not be included in the SQF. The border guard academies do not provide training in specialised fields; there are specialised training centres for that, and some do not even belong to the Ministry of Interior.

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding, as a framework of qualifications in a defined sector, should reflect the entire scope of learning within the sector, and all high-level learning requirements for all areas and levels specific to that professional sector. As there is significant learning in border guard specialist fields (including many Frontex courses and specialised training tools), this learning cannot be omitted.

However, the SQF does not dictate to national training or education systems or organisational structures, and therefore all learning is reflected regardless of the specific institution that is delivering that training in one country or another. The SQF only defines the scope of the learning relevant to the professional field of border guarding (see also EQF Note 1: [Explaining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf) http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf, page 9: 'Can the EQF be used for classifying educational programmes and occupations?').

21.20.

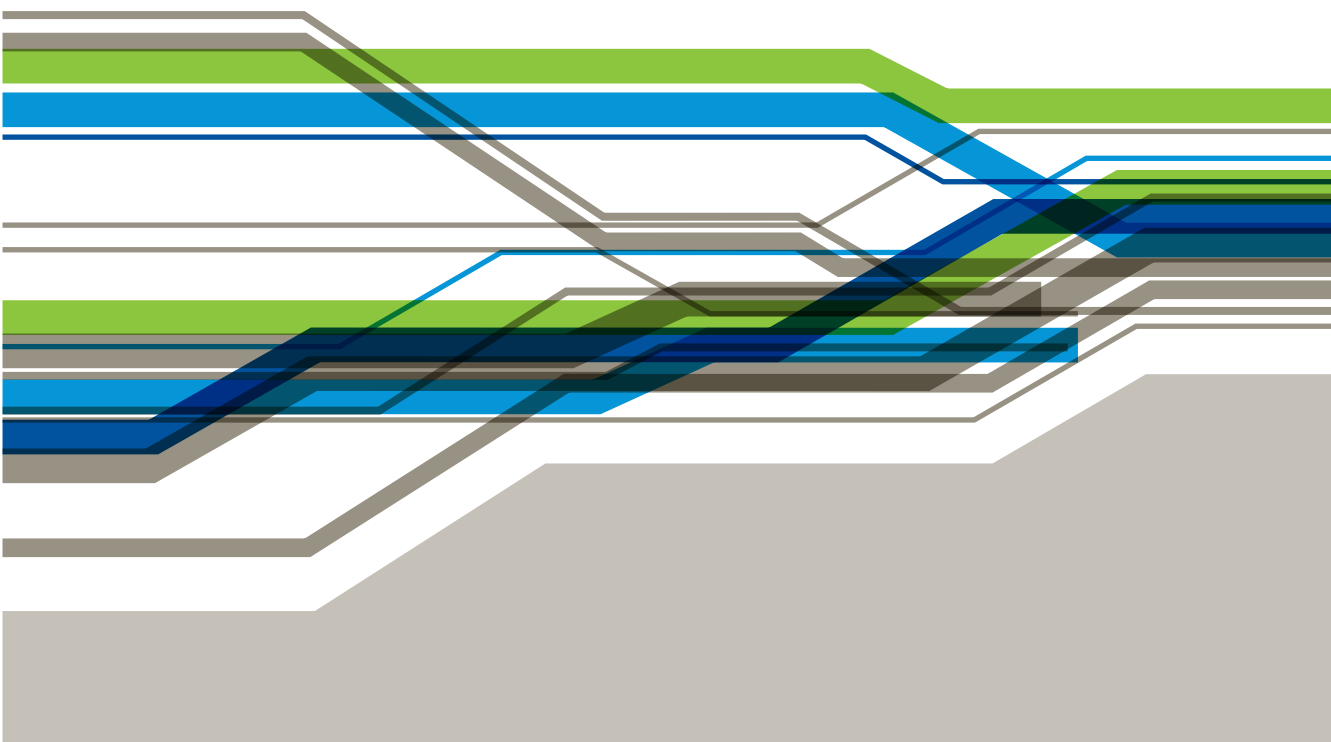
Why is the title SQF for 'border guarding'? 'Border guarding' is not an official term – the terms used at the EU level are 'border security', 'border management', 'border control', etc.

This question was thoroughly discussed at length and eventually it was agreed by the working group members that the most appropriate term which describes accurately the border guard job is 'border guarding'. It seems to be the only syntagm broad enough to reflect specifically the border guard tasks. 'Border control' or 'integrated border management' cover only partial shares of border guard tasks, whilst important tasks are missing, and 'border security' has different nuances and meanings in different countries. Therefore working group members recommended that it should be avoided.



PART SEVEN:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS





The SQF Development Working Group

Name	Country
Robert Gloeckl Heinz Schneider	Austria (NTC)
Tony Mouton	Belgium (NTC)
Floris Nikandrou	Cyprus (NTC)
Josef Guriča	Czech Republic
Maiko Martsik	Estonia
Seppo Turkia Mikko Halinen	Finland
Peggy Jamet	France (NTC)
Oliver Hennings	Germany
Lajos Kiss	Hungary (NTC)
Graziano Patriarca Giuseppe Piccolo	Italy
Sarah Meyler Dr. Julie Norris	Ireland
Daiga Kupcane Iveta Graudina Ruslan Akulovs Antoniina Gajevska Skorodihins Jurijs	Latvia
John Charles Ellul Denise Xerri	Malta
Perry Bakker Ronald Zijlstra	Netherlands
Marek Woszczatynski Marzena Korolko	Poland
Dr. Sergiu Vasile Iulian Valianu	Romania
Jana Simonova Daniela Benedekova	Slovakia
Celeste Garcia Jurado Ivan Velasco Miranda Beatriz Anton Sanchez	Spain, National Police (NTC)
Luis German Aviles Cabrera	Spain, Civil Guard (NTC)
Alison Martin Emma Dunn Charles Pickard Christopher Howell	United Kingdom (NTC)
Nevenka Tomovic	DCAF
Volker Gehmlich	External Consultant

The National Training Coordinators involved in the validation of the SQF (in addition to the working group members)

Name	Country
Nikolay Raychev Miroslava Darakchieva	Bulgaria
Suman Emir	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Julie Zelena	Czech Republic
Stine Bardram Henrik Bay	Denmark
Diana Dubas	Estonia
Petteri Partanen Jari Virtanen (expert)	Finland
Didier Soules	France
Oliver Hass	Germany
Intra Briska	Latvia
Snezana Kadovic Vladimir Stanisic Sasa Babic Igor Kalezic	Montenegro
Dita Nowicka	Poland
Violeta Ungureanu	Romania
Barbora Kacikova	Slovakia
Aleksander Mali	Slovenia
Urs Bartetzko	Switzerland

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Fundamental rights working group on the 'Guide to integrating fundamental rights into border guard training'

Name	Country
Cristina Sganga	Consultant
Dirk Calemyn	Belgium
Dr Boyka Cherneva	Bulgaria
Athena Demetriou	Cyprus
Giuseppe Colasanto	Italy
Dr Christopher Soler	Malta
John Timmerhuis	Netherlands
Ivo Holc	Slovenia
Robert Sumi	
Maria Almudena Contreras Olmo	Spain
Nicky Taylor	United Kingdom
Aydan Iygüngör	FRA
Ann-Sofie Galjaard	EASO
Mariana Katzarova	ODHIR
Elena Ippoliti	OHCHR
John Young	UNHCR
Michele Simone	
Yordanka Minkova	Frontex Project Manager

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- Henrik Warnhjelm: Head of Training Unit
- Rainer Brenner: Deputy Head of Training Unit
- Sakari Vuorensola: Legal Advisor
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- Gheorghe Varban: Training Officer
- Riccardo Proverbio: Training Officer
- Alessandro Santagati, Training Officer
- Nico Van Den Kerkhoff, Training Officer
- Magda Boughnerova: Training Officer
- Malgorzata Balinska: Project Support Officer
- Malgorzata Radko: Project Support Officer
- Denis Schimak: Operational Officer
- Maija Laukka: Aide de Camp to Executive Director

Bologna Expert Panel

- Professor Bairbre Redmond, University College Dublin, Ireland
- Professor Alan Davidson, Robert Gordon University, United Kingdom

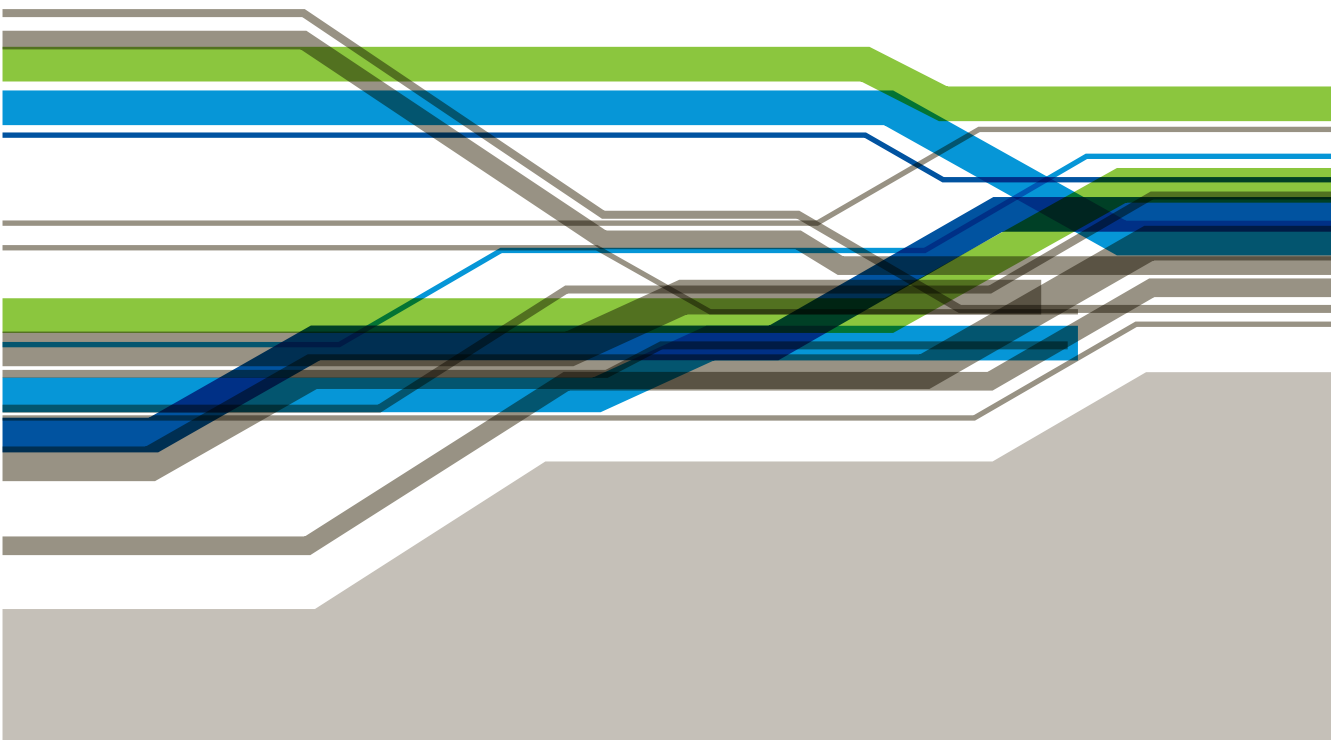
Project Manager: Anemona Peres

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PART EIGHT:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS, REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS





Glossary of terms used in the SQF for Border Guarding

This glossary is not intended to provide a global definition for each term, but rather an explanation of the intended meaning, to facilitate a shared understanding of the concepts as agreed and applied by the expert group.

STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION

Generic border guarding	All generic learning applicable to all border guarding tasks and integrated across the SQF
Border control	Learning related to the regulation and monitoring of all border movements
Cross-border investigation and intelligence	Learning that relates to cross-border crime and information that is potentially related to irregular and illegal activities
Supervision, Management, Leadership	Learning related to the concepts, tools and techniques that enable leadership, management and supervisory tasks
Specialist fields	Learning related to specific/specialist areas of border guarding that may not be part of the general border guard education (that fall under further training)

LEARNING AREAS

Fundamental rights	All fundamental and human rights of all individuals in relation to every element of border guarding activities
Ethics, diversity and professional standards	The highest standard of professional values based on the principles of the rule of law and the respect of ethics for border guarding activities
Law, policies, strategies, rules and procedures	All international, European, regional, national and organisational guiding documents that relate to and regulate all border guarding activities (defined to accommodate national differences and potential changes, and to avoid exclusion by indicating only some)
Cooperation with national, EU and international partners	Learning related to all activities related to border guarding performed in conjunction with external stakeholders
Communication	Learning related to the exchange of information, but excluding learning related to foreign languages
Information and data management	Learning related to all information and data (including data bases) that is not currently considered as intelligence
Context of border guarding	Learning related to all external factors that influence border guarding — at local, national, European, international levels (including migration trends)
Learning to learn	Learning related to the ability to learn both individually and in groups
Facilitation of cross-border movements	Learning related to enabling legitimate cross-border movement, in the context of the responsibilities for border security
Border surveillance	Learning related to all activities carried out in order to detect and prevent the circumvention (bypassing) of border checks
Border check	Learning related to all activities carried out at border crossing points
Border control technology	Learning related to all equipment, devices etc. used to support border control
Management of border surveillance and border checks	Learning related to the strategic planning, conducting, controlling and evaluating of border control activities at operational, tactical and strategic levels

LEARNING AREAS (cont.)

Risk management	Identification, assessment and prioritisation of risks that impact on border security
Crisis management	Learning related to the effective reaction to major emergencies, critical and exceptional situations that affect border security
Border-related security and safety	Learning in respect to the response to accidental or intentional risks and threats to persons and their property (includes the use of force, search and rescue, first aid, officers' safety)
Border-related investigation	Learning related to gathering evidence and acting accordingly within the organisational mandate and in cooperation with the relevant authorities
Border-related intelligence	Learning related to gathering information with the potential to become intelligence and acting accordingly within the organisational mandate and in cooperation with the relevant authorities
Supervision	Learning related to the overseeing and guidance of the performance and tasks of individuals and groups
Leadership	Learning related to influencing, motivating and enabling others to contribute to achieving organisational goals
Strategy and planning	Learning related to the development and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative actions (measures taken) to achieve organisational goals
Resource management	Learning related to accomplishing achievable goals and objectives by planning and allocating available assets efficiently and effectively

OTHER ISSUES

Collaboration	Agencies working together and fundamentally changing their individual approaches and sharing resources to achieve a shared goal
Cooperation	Informal arrangement in which the individual stakeholders maintain their separate mandate and responsibilities but work together to achieve a goal
Intelligence	Information that has been evaluated and considered relevant to decision-making in border security matters (concept of intelligence-driven border security)
National (regional)	The learning related to regional agreements, partnerships or processes and factors is considered as included in the 'national' references. The working group made this decision arguing that all regional matters are primarily and essentially national.
Knowledge	Outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.
Skill	Ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the EQF, 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).
Competence	Proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.
Learning outcomes	Statements defining the minimum level of learning that should be achieved and describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do (descriptors: knowledge, skills and competences). Learners learn (knowledge/skills/competence) to develop competences that are transferable to a workplace.
Border guard organisations	Law enforcement organisations with a border guard function



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List of abbreviations

BG	border guard/border guarding
CCC	Common Core Curricula
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment
CHE	Curricula in Higher Education
CMC	Common Core Curricula for Mid-level Border Guard Education
CP	Competence Profiles
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
EU	European Union
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
IBM	integrated border management
LETS	European Law Enforcement Training Scheme
LO	learning outcomes
MLC	mid-level course
MS	Member States
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTC	National Training Coordinators
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA	Partnership Academies
RPL	recognition of prior learning
SAC	Schengen associated countries
SBC	Schengen Borders Code
SQF	Sectoral Qualifications Framework
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VET	vocational education and training
WG	working group



PART NINE:

ANNEXES

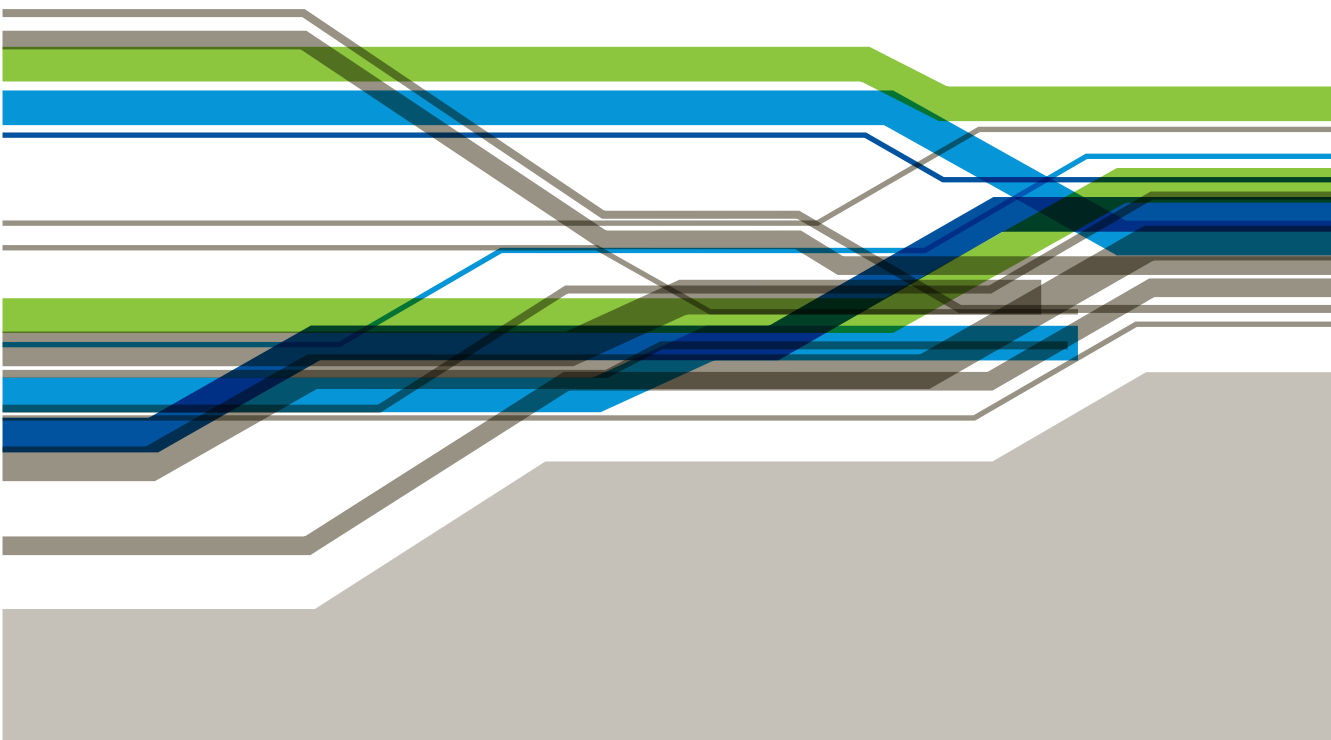
Annex 1. Instructions Validation I

Annex 2. Instructions Validation II

Annex 3. Validation feedback excerpts

Annex 4. Response to national consultations

Annex 5. Request template for SQF integration





Annex 1

9 March 2012, Warsaw

Sectoral Qualifications Framework Validation I

Recommendations for Consultations on Competence Profiles at the national level

Why?

The purpose of the consultations at the national level is to ensure the relevance of the draft SQF and Competence Profiles to the national BG job profiles and competences. The validation process aims to ensure that the entire scope of learning in the border guard field is adequately reflected in the SQF and will ultimately ensure the European dimension of the final product.

What?

The set of Competence Profiles (Competency Framework) is a **supporting document for the SQF** and will be part of the final documentation of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding. The Competence Profiles should present the full picture of the border guard job across the EU by defining the knowledge (K), skills (S) and competences (C) needed to perform the job. The SQF (set of learning outcomes) is built based on the Competence Profiles and indicates the learning requirements for achieving / acquiring the respective knowledge, skills and competences.

At this point, **the task for the national consultations is to check and review the Competence Profiles** only (levels 4, 5, 6 and 7). The Validation of the Competence Profiles is an important intermediate step to finalizing and validating the SQF as such.

How?

The task is to assess the list of competences in the competency profiles that have been developed for levels 4, 5 (basic), 6 (mid level) and 7 (high level) and **to identify gaps or missing competences**.

It is up to you how you would like to conduct the consultations process, however, please find below some **useful questions** to address to your organisation (relevant staff):

- ♦ Is the BG job / task well reflected in the Competence Profiles? Is there anything missing? Any Knowledge, Skill or Competence needed to perform the BG job that is missing from the list?
- ♦ Does this reflect the entire scope of learning within your organisation?
- ♦ Do you teach the border guards anything else that is missing here?
- ♦ Should you teach / train the BG in a certain area that is missing from the Competence Profiles, and also from your training, but is definitely needed and relevant for the job? What else should you teach / train?
- ♦ Is the level of Knowledge, Skill, Competence (4, 5, 6, 7) relevant, right, correct?

What / How not to ...

- ♦ **Do not** focus on the right definition/formulation of the recommendations, on the language, on the type of learning (is it K / S / C?), or level (is this 4, 5, 6 or 7?). What is important is to take note of the missing job competences or learning areas that need to be introduced and we will further define and fine tune it during the Working Group meeting.
- ♦ **Do not** consider the current step of the process as implying any commitment or obligations on the part of the national organisation, **it does not involve any commitment to SQF 'adoption' or usage at the national level at this stage**; this is a reviewing and checking exercise designed to make sure that all relevant information on the EU BG job is comprehensively and correctly included and defined within the Competency Framework and the SQF.

Methodology and Process documentation

The final SQF document will be accompanied by an extensive background paper describing the purpose of the SQF, the implications at the EU and national level, as well as a description of the methodology and of the process of designing the framework. Therefore, documenting the validation phase is another important piece of information to be included.



Please document the process in one–two paragraphs, describing:

- ♦ the methodology engaged
- ♦ how the consultation work was carried out
- ♦ level of participation
- ♦ organisational representativeness

You could consider:

- ♦ Working Group activity
- ♦ Written consultations
- ♦ Interviews with relevant staff from the operational side, as well as the training side
- ♦ Check and compare with the existing Job profiles / occupational standards at national level
- ♦ Check and compare with the curricula and programmes currently running

Background information on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding and Competence Profiles

What is SQF?

The SQF for border guarding is a framework of high-level learning outcomes (LO) that reflect all of the learning, for all border guarding activities, across the EU. As an overarching frame of reference, the SQF will encompass all levels of qualifications acquired in general, vocational and academic education and training for BG.

The SQF is designed to align with levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning and is consistent with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes. It addresses the border guard professional sector and it will relate the qualifications systems and frameworks of different countries together around a common European reference.

The SQF does not dictate learning or training requirements for any individual state or organisation with border guarding responsibilities, but it should reflect comprehensively the entire scope of learning in the border guard field throughout the EU.

Why is Frontex developing an SQF for Border Guarding?

The SQF for BG will be the basis for the further development of common core curricula at the EU level, as it allows the comparability of educational standards, irrespective of the particular type of education/training institution or system. In light of the new Frontex Regulation, which stipulates that 'MS shall integrate the common core curricula in the training of their national border guards', the SQF offers a comprehensive and flexible platform for curricula development, competence-based, facilitating the integration of the common core elements at national levels for both academic and vocational BG education and training systems. It creates the possibility for all MS/SAC to be involved by ensuring the compatibility of qualifications acquired through various types of study programmes existing at national levels (as it acts as a 'translation device' for national qualifications).

What is the added value of the SQF for BG?

On completion, the SQF will provide a common reference/translation tool to facilitate the description of learning in every organisation, regardless of the organisational structure or training system, and will make BG qualifications more readable and understandable across different BG systems in Europe.

There are many other benefits that the SQF will facilitate and these will be documented on the completion of the SQF development process. It is worth mentioning the following benefits, amongst others:

- ♦ the opportunity to develop compatible programmes at the national and EU level by offering reference points* for the description of learning
- ♦ facilitation of lifelong learning in a harmonized approach at the EU level
- ♦ ensure the Recognition of Prior Learning for formal, non-formal and informal learning (by the recognition of qualifications acquired in various ways, including on the job learning and performing daily duties, which could ultimately lead to a fast track entry to higher level programmes)
- ♦ promote the mobility/exchange of BG, as foreseen in the Stockholm Programme, and contribute to increased interoperability of BG activities at the EU external borders.

* The SQF reference points are not mandatory, but could serve as a specialized supporting tool for programme design. The programmes will still be accredited at national level based on the National Qualifications Frameworks, whilst the SQF would bring in the specialized reference from the border guard field (sector).



SQF and Competence Profiles

One of the main purposes of learning in this sector is to develop the knowledge, skills and ability or 'job competence' to effectively conduct border guarding activities. Therefore the learning outcomes in the SQF should relate to all border guarding competences.

Part of the development of the SQF is the development of a list of **border guarding competences** defined in terms of *Knowledge, Skills and Competences*. It is essential that this list of job competences captures all border guarding activities to ensure the comprehensiveness of the learning outcomes.

It is important to reiterate that the competence profiles need to be comprehensive and reflect every organisation, but that they do not dictate what the competences should be for any organisation.

Process and State of play

The development of the SQF for BG has started with a small group of experts previously involved in the development of the Common Core Curriculum for BG Basic training (CCC), Common Core Curricula for Mid Level BG Education (CMC), Frontex Mid Level Course (MLC) and Curricula in Higher Education (CHE) and benefitting from the specialized input from an independent educational expert. The very first draft of the SQF, comprising core elements of the competence profiles and LO for levels 5 (basic/certificate), 6 (middle/bachelor) and 7 (high/master), was designed. Considering that some countries have accredited the programmes developed based on the CCC implementation at national level at NQF* level 4 and 5 (basic: general and specialized vocational education), another step was to describe and introduce the level 4 LO in the SQF and Competence Profiles current draft.

* National Qualifications Framework

The SQF development process is currently in the **Validation phase**. At this stage, the involvement of all MS/SAC is required, in order to ensure a proper reflection of the BG work and the common European dimension, in a comprehensive manner.

The current task for each organisation with border guarding responsibilities is to assess the list of competences in the competency profiles that have been developed and to identify gaps or missing competences.

Next Steps

Working level

Following the revision of the Competence Profiles, the proposals for changes will be introduced and agreed on by the working group; subsequently, the changes will be reflected in the Learning Outcomes (SQF). Next validation phase will focus on the SQF learning outcomes, performing the same reviewing exercise at the national level to ensure that the LOs are accurate, comprehensive, specific enough, and defined at the relevant level of generality (SQF level). The Learning Outcomes will be scrutinized against existing education/training programmes at the national level in order to ensure that the entire scope of BG learning in the MS/SAC is well described in the SQF. **Validation II** phase will consist of mapping the national programmes onto the SQF, fine tuning and completing the LO and finalizing the draft SQF.

Formal process

The formal steps of the process will include introduction to the National Training Coordinators and Educational Strategy Group for a final round of consultations, fine tuning the SQF and presenting it to the Management Board of Frontex for endorsement.

Thank you for your involvement and contribution!



Annex 2

29 April 2012, Warsaw

Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) Validation II

Guidelines for Validation of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework and Competence Profiles at the National level

The Purpose

The purpose of the consultations at the national level is to ensure the relevance of the draft SQF and Competence Profiles to the national BG job profiles, competences and learning. The validation process aims to ensure that the entire scope of learning in the border guard field is adequately reflected in the SQF and will ultimately ensure the European dimension of the final product.

Engagement in the validation **does not** imply any commitment or obligation for the national organisation. **It does not involve any commitment to 'adoption' of the SQF or its usage at the national level at this stage;** this is a reviewing and checking exercise designed to make sure that all relevant information on the EU BG job is comprehensively and correctly included and defined within the Competency Framework and the SQF.

Description of the Frameworks

The SQF is a set of high level learning outcomes. These learning outcomes indicate the learning requirements for achieving / acquiring the respective knowledge, skills and competences required in order to carry out border guarding tasks.

The set of Competence Profiles (Competency Framework) is a **supporting document to the SQF** and will form part of the final documentation on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding. The Competence Profiles should present the full picture of the border guard

job across the EU by defining the knowledge (K), skills (S) and competences (C) needed to perform the job.

a) Validating the Competency Profiles

The task is to assess the list of competences in the competency profiles that have been developed for levels 4, 5 (basic), 6 (mid level) and 7 (high level) and to **identify gaps or missing competences**.

It is up to you how you would like to conduct the consultations process, however, please find below some **useful questions** to address to your organisation (relevant staff):

- ♦ Is the BG job / task well reflected in the Competence Profiles? Is there anything missing?
- ♦ Does this reflect the entire scope of learning within your organisation?
- ♦ Do you teach the border guards anything else that is missing here?
- ♦ Should you teach / train the BG in a certain area that is missing from the Competence Profiles, and also from your training, but is definitely needed and relevant for the job? What else should you teach / train?
- ♦ Is the level of Knowledge, Skills and Competence (4, 5, 6, 7) relevant, right, correct?

If you identify a gap or missing knowledge/skill/competence

- ♦ Make a note of the missing area/recommendation
- ♦ **Do not** focus on the how to define or formulate the recommendations, or whether it is a knowledge, skill or competence; the working group will address these issues at the next meeting.
- ♦ **Do not** be concerned about identifying the correct level (4, 5, 6 or 7) of your recommendations as this will also be addressed by the working group.

b) Validating the SQF (Learning Outcomes)

The task is to ensure that the learning outcomes in your border guarding courses, at each level (levels 4, 5 (basic), 6 (mid level) and 7 (high level)) are reflected in the SQF and to **identify learning outcomes that are not related to the SQF learning outcomes**.

It is up to you how you would like to conduct the validation process, however, please find below some **useful recommendations** for addressing this task to relevant staff in your organisation:

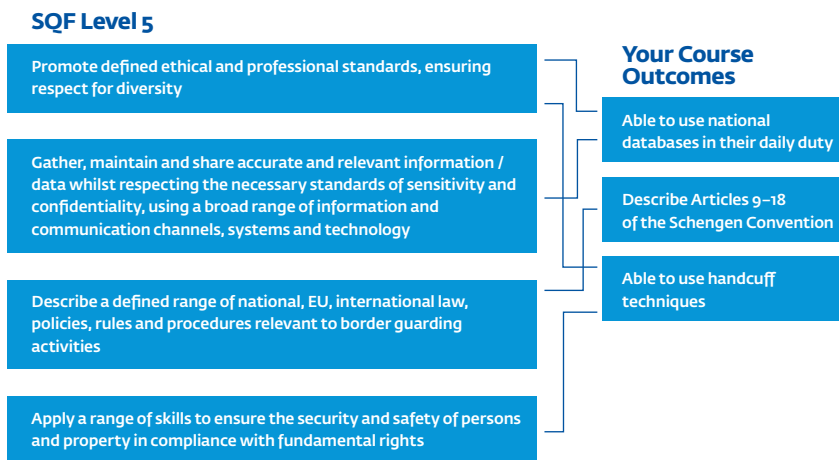


- ♦ Identify staff who are familiar with the learning outcomes of courses for basic, mid-level and high-level officers
- ♦ Take a selection of courses at each level: **4 and 5 (basic level), 6 midlevel (or bachelor), 7 high level (or master)**
- ♦ Take the highest-level outcomes for the course (programme/course/module outcomes not session outcomes)
- ♦ Consider if your course outcomes map onto the learning outcomes in the SQF (See example below).
- ♦ Note that: One of your learning outcomes may map onto two or more SQF outcomes
- ♦ Is the level of Knowledge, Skills and Competence (4, 5, 6, 7) relevant, right, correct?

If you identify a learning outcome that is not reflected in the SQF

- ♦ Make a note of the learning outcome, the course it is from (title) and the target students of the course (level)
- ♦ **Do not** focus on the how to define or formulate the recommendations for the SQF, or whether it is a knowledge, skill or competence; the working group will address these issues at the next meeting.
- ♦ **Do not** be concerned about identifying the correct level (4, 5, 6 or 7) of your learning outcome recommendations as this will also be addressed by the working group.

Example of Mapping



c) Methodology and Process documentation

The final SQF document will be accompanied by an extensive background paper describing the purpose of the SQF, the implications at the EU and national level, as well as a description of the methodology and of the process of designing the framework. Therefore, documenting the validation phase is another important step.

Please document the process in one–two paragraphs, describing:

- ♦ the methodology engaged
- ♦ how the consultation/validation work was carried out
- ♦ level of participation
- ♦ organisational representativeness
- ♦ your recommendations

You could consider:

- ♦ Working Group activities
- ♦ Written consultations
- ♦ Interviews with relevant staff from the operational side, as well as the training side
- ♦ Check and compare with the existing Job profiles / occupational standards at the national level
- ♦ Check and compare with the curricula and programmes currently running

Deadline for submitting the results: **10 June 2012**,
by e-mail: training.office@frontex.europa.eu and
Anemona.peres@frontex.europa.eu



Background information on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding and Competence Profiles

What is SQF?

The SQF for border guarding is a framework of high-level learning outcomes (LO) that reflect all of the learning, for all border guarding activities, across the EU. As an overarching frame of reference, the SQF will encompass all levels of qualifications acquired in general, vocational and academic education and training for BG.

The SQF is designed to align with levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning and is consistent with the Bologna and Copenhagen processes. It addresses the border guard professional sector and it will relate the qualifications systems and frameworks of different countries together around a common European reference.

The SQF does not dictate learning or training requirements for any individual state or organisation with border guarding responsibilities, but it should reflect comprehensively the entire scope of learning in the border guard field throughout the EU.

Why is Frontex developing an SQF for Border Guarding?

The SQF for BG will be the basis for the further development of common core curricula at the EU level, as it allows the comparability of educational standards, irrespective of the particular type of education/training institution or system. In light of the new Frontex Regulation, which stipulates that 'MS shall integrate the common core curricula in the training of their national border guards', the SQF offers a comprehensive and flexible platform for curricula development, competence-based, facilitating the integration of the common core elements at national levels for both academic and vocational BG education and training systems. It creates the possibility for all MS/SAC to be involved by ensuring the compatibility of qualifications acquired through various types of study programmes existing at national levels (as it acts as a 'translation device' for national qualifications).

What is the added value of the SQF for BG for the MS/SAC?

On completion, the SQF will provide a common reference/translation tool to facilitate the description of learning in every organisation, regardless of the organisational structure or training system, and will make BG qualifications more readable and understandable across different BG systems in Europe.

There are many other benefits that the SQF will facilitate and these will be documented on the completion of the SQF development process. It is worth mentioning, amongst others the following benefits:

- ♦ support for the review of the competence profiles / occupational standards at the national level
- ♦ support for the review and re-accreditation of the training programmes in the BG field at the national level
- ♦ the opportunity to develop compatible programmes at the national and EU level by offering reference points* for the description of learning
- ♦ facilitation of life long learning in a harmonized approach at the EU level
- ♦ ensure the Recognition of Prior Learning for formal, non-formal and informal learning (by the recognition of qualifications acquired in various ways, including on the job learning and performing daily duties, which could ultimately lead to a fast track entry to higher level programmes)
- ♦ promote the mobility/exchange of BG, as foreseen in the Stockholm Programme and contribute to increased interoperability of BG activities at the EU external borders

* The SQF reference points are not mandatory, but could serve as a specialized supporting tool for programme design. The programmes will still be accredited at national level based on the National Qualifications Frameworks, whilst the SQF would bring in the specialized reference from the border guard field (sector).

SQF and Competence Profiles

One of the main purposes of learning in this sector is to develop the knowledge, skills and ability or 'job competence' to effectively conduct border guarding activities. Therefore the learning outcomes in the SQF should relate to all border guarding competences.

Part of the development of the SQF is the development of a list of **border guarding competences** defined in terms of *Knowledge, Skills and Competences*. It is essential that this list of job competences captures all border guarding activities to ensure the comprehensiveness of the learning outcomes.



It is important to reiterate that the competence profiles need to be comprehensive and reflect every organisation, but that they do not dictate what the competences should be for any organisation.

Process and State of play

The development of the SQF for BG has started with a small group of experts previously involved in the development of the Common Core Curriculum for BG Basic training (CCC), Common Core Curricula for Mid Level BG Education (CMC), Frontex Mid Level Course (MLC) and Curricula in Higher Education (CHE) and benefitting from the specialized input from an independent educational expert. The very first draft of the SQF, comprising core elements of the competence profiles and LO for levels 5 (basic/certificate), 6 (middle/bachelor) and 7 (high/master), was designed. Considering that some countries have accredited the programmes developed based on the CCC implementation at national level at NQF* level 4 and 5 (basic: general and specialized vocational education), another step was to describe and introduce the level 4 LO in the SQF and Competence Profiles current draft.

* National Qualifications Framework.

The SQF development process is currently in the **second Validation phase**. The first validation test, at the expert level, involved 18 MS/SAC and partner organisations (DCAF, FRA), and focused on the competence profiles and the identification of gaps therein. The proposals for changes were introduced and agreed on by the working group and subsequently reflected in the Learning Outcomes (SQF).

At this stage, the the assistance **of all MS/SAC** is required, via the **NTC network**, in order to ensure a proper reflection of the BG work and the common European dimension, in a comprehensive manner.

Next Steps

Validation II, involving the NTC, is a complete review exercise performed at the national level across the EU to ensure that the Competence Profiles are comprehensive and relevant, and that the SQF Learning Outcomes are accurate, comprehensive, specific enough, and defined at the relevant level of generality (SQF level). The Learning Outcomes shall be scrutinized against existing education/training programmes at the national level in order to ensure that the entire scope of BG learning in the MS/SAC is well described in the SQF.

Formal process

The recommendations provided by the National Training Coordinators will be considered and introduced into the SQF by the SQF working group. The SQF will then be fine tuned and subjected to an external review by a Bologna Expert/panel of Bologna experts, accredited at the EU level, and then finally presented to the Management Board of Frontex for endorsement.

SQF integration at national level

The integration / adoption of the SQF at the national level will be supported by Frontex through:

- ♦ translators' workshops
- ♦ training the trainers in Programme design in the context of SQF and Bologna/Copenhagen process
- ♦ providing consultancy and advise as necessary

Thank you for your involvement and contribution!



Annex 3

Validation of the SQF and the Competence Profiles

* Extensive substance recommendations for introducing missing areas, competences or learning outcomes were provided by the national reviewers; these recommendations were reviewed and introduced by the working group; they are not reproduced in this document, only the conclusions, overall remarks and the process description.

National feedback excerpts* and process documentation

AUSTRIA

'Is the border guard job well reflected in the competence profiles? Basically yes, as long as you speak about border guards and not police officers' (meeting with stakeholders concerning the SQF and the competence profiles). 'A remark with regard to the articulation: basically the learning outcomes (LOs) have to be formulated in a way that they are readable, coherent and translatable. It has to be clear for everyone what for instance the LO 'knowledge of law, policies, strategies and procedures' is all about (e.g. that the integrated border management is part of it). We know that the LOs have to be written with general words but we should make sure that we all understand the same. We have with the 'competence profiles' file a good document as kind of background information. Maybe an added value would be also to have a kind of subject index or something similar. I hope this will help you a bit for the next validation step. All the other things are from Austrian point of view OK.'

BELGIUM

'Confirms the informal positive feedback received on the SQF document for border guarding and the support from BE on the content and project.' (NTC)

BULGARIA

'All checked, suggested one more competence [introduced].' (Academy of Ministry of Interior)

CZECH REPUBLIC

'Competency profiles developed for levels 4, 5 (basic), 6 and 7 (higher level), were evaluated at national level. Task was to identify gaps or missing competencies. Competency profiles were forwarded to authorised persons for comments. In terms of educational activities, the individual levels of competence are incorporated (included) in the education programmes.'

CYPRUS

'Concerning levels 4 and 5 we are very happy with the work done till now. ... The Cyprus government is on the way to pass a new law concerning the European qualifications framework.' (NTC)

DENMARK

'In Denmark all police personnel have completed the same standard police training which corresponds to level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework.'

ESTONIA

'We would like to express appreciation for the work that has already been done. It's the right approach and a good basis for curriculum design. It will also help to develop border guard professional standards and curriculums at national level. We didn't identify gaps or missing competences. The border guard task is well reflected in the competence profiles and there is no need to add something special. It's mostly reflecting the entire scope of learning within our organisation, also in our training. And finally, in our opinion the described levels of SQF are relevant, right and correct.' (Validated by members of the border guard professional committee or members of the professional examination commission, the Estonian Ministry of Interior, the Police and Border Guard Board, East Prefecture, South Prefecture and the Police and Border Guard College).

Methodology

'We used for this activity mainly feedback collection. The competence profile with instructions was sent out to several border police officers (a total of 11 officers). Consultation and collection of feedback work was



carried out by e-mail. Feedback was sent to the Deputy Director of the Academy. Involved officers are members of the border guard professional committee or members of the professional examination commission. Represented were the Estonian Ministry of Interior (1 participant), the Police and Border Guard Board (4 participants), East Prefecture (2 participants), South Prefecture (1 participant) and the Police and Border Guard College (3 participants). All participants are middle- or senior-level border guard managers.

Also we compared the competence profiles with the existing professional standards and with the curricula currently running at national level. There are differences, but these are not fundamental. The differences are rather in the structure of activity/tasks and formulation of knowledge, skills and competences.

Working group members didn't identify gaps or missing competences. They agreed that border guard tasks are well reflected in the competence profiles and there is no need to add something special. It's mostly reflecting the entire scope of learning within our organisation. We teach some knowledge, skills and competences in addition, but it's according to our national law and regulation (sea search and rescue, sea pollution, etc.). We didn't find anything ... that is missing from the competence profiles, and also from our training. And finally, in our opinion the described levels of SQF are relevant, right and correct. '

FINLAND

'The SQF describes well current programmes and curricula taught at the Border and Coast Guard Academy, as well as the job. It can be used as a basis for border guard education planning in the academy. Levels 6–7 of the training curricula are going through extensive development, and the SQF can be used in this process to map skills, competences and knowledge needed for the border guard officer.' (Consultation work has taken place in the Academic Studies Department (6, 7) and the Education Department (4, 5).'

Methodology

'The consultation and validation process was carried out by the Finnish Border and Coast Guard Academy (Frontex PA) which is responsible for border guard training in Finland. The consultation process was carried

out by hearing the national experts. Experts who took part in the consultation process are responsible for border guard training at different levels as well as training coordinators at the academy and staff from the operational side. The academy took part in the SQF development process carried out in the workshops with two experts. One for levels 4–5 and one for levels 6–7. At national level border guard basic training is defined at level 4 and advanced training is nationally defined at level 5.* The Officer training at the Finnish Border Guard is described at levels 6 (bachelor's) and 7 (master's).** Some of the learning outcomes described at the SQF are not included in the curricula, but the training is given at special courses. Although minor observations the sectoral qualifications for border guarding describes well the education given at different levels at the Border and The Coast Guard Academy.'

* National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning, Reports of the Ministry of Education 2009: 24. 208.2009.

** Finnish government proposal HE 38/2012.

FRANCE

'SQF very complete. Nothing seems to be missing at each level from the list in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The competence profiles and learning outcomes for level 7 were validated by the ENSP, which is the high-level officers' school. They found the SQF very complete.' 'The Human Resources Directorate provided the list of the existing job profiles for border guard mid-level officers in France, in order to compare with the competence profiles. As trainer and member of the central training unit for border guards, I compared the competence profiles with our training programmes. Nothing seems to be missing from the list in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. I'm very impressed by the work already done.' (NTC)

Methodology

'The Central Directorate of the Border Police Training Division was mainly in charge of the validation of the SQF and competence profiles for France. Indeed, this division is the only one in charge of trainings at the national level which develops and implements trainings related to border guarding. So in order to conduct the validation of the list of competences developed for levels 4, 5, and 6, a comparison was first made with the border guard basic and mid-level officers' job and tasks given by the human resources division of the central directorate. Then the Training Division has compared the competence profiles with the training programmes for levels 4, 5 and 6. Nothing seemed to be missing from the list in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The validation of the



learning outcomes of the SQF compared with our course outcomes was also made by the training division of the central directorate for levels 4, 5 and 6. The learning outcomes map with the different course outcomes of all our trainings delivered either during initial trainings or ongoing trainings. For level 7, the validation of the competence profile and the learning outcomes was given to the ENSP (École Nationale Supérieure de Police), which is the high-level police officers' school. The project has been examined with attention by the head of the research department at ENSP who found the SQF very complete without anything to add.'

GERMANY

'Excellent work The EU Member States have an outstanding approach for the further harmonisation of the different educational systems of the border guard organisations. The current draft was designed by a group of national experts. Germany was involved in the development of the SQF. Therefore most of our requirements have already been taken into account. Currently ... no more need of a modification ... I'm looking forward to the finalisation of this product.' (Involved NFPOC, NTC and the central training unit).

Methodology

'It took a lot of time to validate our competence profile files at the national level. I've sent it to our NFPOC and to our central training unit in Lübeck and discussed it with them. So far it has been signed and I just brought the whole process to the notice of our president of the federal police. As a result there are no changes from our side.' '[After translation) it can be distributed to all training departments for levels 4 and 5 and study facilities for levels 6 and 7.' (NTC)

HUNGARY

'According to your request I have checked the competency profiles on the basis of the Hungarian regulations. I have found two missing tasks (introduced).' (NFPoC, NTC, the Police Academy)

IRELAND

'We have reviewed the SQF and associated competence profiles from the perspective of the Irish police learning and development framework.

As a national policing organisation our remit is broad and encompasses, but is not limited to, responsibility for border security. In this context we have found an excellent level of consistency between the outcomes at levels 6 and 7 of the framework and our educational programmes accredited at these levels. The outcomes at level 5 are consistent with our basic training for the learning domains covered by SQF; however these are embedded within a larger programme that encompasses the organisational remit of policing and thus requires broader and some higher levels of knowledge, skill and competence, commensurate with a police officer's level of autonomy in Ireland. As such this programme is accredited at the equivalent of a lower level 6 on the EQF. (The Irish national framework has two levels within Level 6 of the EQF). In summation the SQF is aligned with Irish education standards.' (Garda College)

ITALY

'The EU competence profile mostly corresponds to the Italian job profile. The final consideration is that the list of competences in the competency profiles for EU border guards (levels 4–7) reflects the national organisation's scope of learning and its fundamental characteristics, according to the ... principle of the best fit. ... I can confirm to you that the results of the SQF process you presented are shared by our organisation.' (Comparison between the list of competences in the competency profiles and: (a) the specific organisational knowledge, skills and competences required, to perform the border guard job at national level; and (b) the organisation's training curricula and education programmes adopted at different levels. Respondent: Guardia di Finanza, basic border police training and specialisation and further training courses)

Methodology

(a) Guiding premise

The Italian spectrum of border guarding-related activities is particularly complex and wide as at least the following national police forces contribute to its definition:

- ♦ Polizia di Stato;
- ♦ Guardia di Finanza.



At the present moment, for the abovementioned border management agencies, a common 'national framework' for border guarding competences has still not been designed.

Even within the single agencies the range of sectoral knowledge, skills, and competences needed to perform the BP job are not yet grouped into a unique and structured 'list'.

As well as for the SQF validation meeting part I, the guiding principle of this phase was verifying that the national competences fits into the EU list under the 'principle of the best fit'.

(b) Validation phase

Taking into account the abovementioned premise, the validation process at national level has been conducted through:

- (1) a comparison between the list of competences in the competency profiles and:
 - ♦ the specific organisational knowledge, skills and competences required, to perform the border guard job at national level;
 - ♦ the organisation's training curricula and education programmes adopted at different levels (for basic border police training and specialisation and post training courses);
- (2) selective interviews with relevant staff.

(c) Final considerations and comments

- (1) The final consideration is that the list of competences in the competency profiles for EU border guards (levels 4–7) reflects the national organisation's scope of learning and its fundamental characteristics, according to the abovementioned 'principle of the best fit'.
- (2) Comments

In order to collect the various comments a further column has been added to the competence profile list.

The level of correspondence of the EU competence profiles for border guarding — with respect to the national job profile — is represented by the following colours:

- ♦ Green: Full correspondence;
- ♦ Yellow: Partial correspondence;

- ♦ Red: No correspondence;
- ♦ Light blue: new terms or competences.

As you can see we have no red cells!

(Organisational involvement: Guardia di Finanza — Air Naval Cooperation Centre)

LATVIA

'The border guard task is well reflected in the competence profiles and the level of knowledge, skill, competence (4, 5, 6) is relevant.' (Border Guard State College)

Methodology

'The validation process was organised in such a way: Staff who are familiar with the learning outcomes of courses for basic, mid-level and high-level officers in the State Border Guard (SBG) of the Latvia State Border Guard College and the Headquarters of SBG are responsible for the education, therefore representatives from these two authorities were identified. Due to the fact that representatives from State Border Guard College are experts from the SQF working group the validation was based on the written consultations; in cooperation with representatives from the headquarters (responsible for organisation of trainings in the SBG of Latvia) were checked and compared existing occupational standards and learning outcomes at national level with SQF (by mapping methodology where assessed the list of competences in the competency profiles that have been developed for levels 4–5 (basic) and 6 (mid level): at the moment we don't have 7 (high level).

During validating the competency profiles and the SQF (learning outcomes), officials who were involved in the process didn't identify gaps, missing competences or learning outcomes that are not related to the SQF learning outcomes. What can be described by the fact that in the beginning of the year 2012 such validation process were already made and were identified all gaps which were entered in the SQF. On the basis of the validation it is seen that the border guard task well reflected in the competence profiles and the level of knowledge, skill, competence (4, 5, 6) is relevant.'



MONTENEGRO

'We formed a working group consisting of four members: a border control and aliens teacher at the Police Academy, the Frontex National Coordinator for Education of the Montenegrin Border Police ..., an English teacher at the Police Academy and CCC translator, and a Senior Police Officer in the Border Police Department and Frontex National Coordinator ... The working group read and discussed the SQF and agreed that levels 4 and 5 are applicable in the police education system in Montenegro are compatible with the CCC. Levels 6 and 7 still do not exist in our police education system, but we are sure one day it will be applicable. We do not have any other remarks; we accept the SQF as it is.'

THE NETHERLANDS

'The competence profiles give a complete overview on knowledge, skills and competences as well as in practice as in our training programmes. Compliments on the approach. Great input for the learning outcomes. The way the competence profiles are clustered (border guard, leadership, intelligence) will make recognition of prior learning (RPL) easier.' (Involved entities: Apeldoorn Training and Expertise Centre: trainers, curricula developers of boarder guard training and RPL advisor; from the operational side: guards at border control and border surveillance, team leaders); policy makers from within the Royal NLM; Police Academy; Defence Academy and a civil institute for higher education)

Methodology

'The group that was involved in the consultation consisted of people within our institute (trainers, curricula developers of our border guard training and RPL advisor) as well as from operation (guards at border control and border surveillance, team leaders) and policymakers from within the Royal Marechaussee Nederlands. We also asked advice of our colleagues at the Police Academy and the Defence Academy and a civil institute for higher education. ... We have forwarded the competence profile to all these colleagues and asked for their feedback. Most feedback was in writing and we also formed a small group with whom we have gone through the competence profiles.'

Results

Border guards, trainers, developers: 'The competence profiles give a complete overview on knowledge, skills and competences as well as in practice as in our training programmes. As human rights are an important issue, it would be good to make this more explicit in the profiles.'

Police Academy/Defence Academy: 'Compliments on the approach. Great input for learning outcomes. Use the Dublin descriptors more explicitly to make accreditation easier.'

RPL advisor: 'The way the competence profiles are clustered (border guard, leadership, intelligence/policing) will make RPL easier.'

POLAND

'I am pleased to inform you that the results of the comparison of the Polish border guard training programmes with the learning outcomes and competence profiles show that these correspond to each other. ... Analysis of the training programmes on all levels showed that SQF learning outcomes are reflected in the border guard training programmes.' (Involved training centres in Ketrzyn and Koszalin and the NTC)

Methodology

Keeping in mind that each level number has its equivalent — 4 and 5 (basic level), 6 mid level (or bachelor's), 7 high level (or master's) — it was decided to correspond the level numbers to the appropriate level of training in the Polish border guard depending on the requirements set for each one of them. Therefore the following were accepted:

- ♦ level 4 — basic training programme in Polish border guard;
- ♦ level 5 — training programme for non-commissioned officers;
- ♦ level 6 — training programme for warrant officers;
- ♦ level 7 — training programme for officers and specialised training for commanding personnel.

Additional information

- ♦ Persons with appropriate experience, years of service and university education can apply for the warrant officer's course.



- ♦ Persons with appropriate experience, years of service and university education and foreseen to take up higher executive posts can apply for the officer's course.
- ♦ The appropriate documents (first competence profile and then the learning outcomes) were sent to the training centres in Ketrzyn and Koszalin (the Polish border guard has three training centres but two of them carry out training for all levels – from basic through to officer).
- ♦ The documents were translated into Polish.
- ♦ For the purposes of this task methodology contained in such works as 'Programme autonomy – qualification framework for higher education' by Prof. Dr Ewa Chmielecka and 'How to develop educational programmes in line with NQF for higher education' by Andrzej Kraśniewski was used.
- ♦ The documents were analysed by two working groups (in both training centres) which included all the heads of the didactical units (e.g. law and administration, border traffic control, border surveillance, humanities, management, foreign languages). For example, in the main border guard training centre in Koszalin consultations took place with the heads of the Law Department, Logistic Department, Social Science and Humanistic Department, Intervention Action Department, Border Department, Operational Surveillance Department and Organisation of Didactics Department.
- ♦ Analysis of the training programmes on all levels showed that SQF learning outcomes are reflected in the border guard training programmes (comparison with the existing job profiles done previously). Furthermore the analysis and consequent consultations between the working groups did not identify learning outcomes that are not related to the SQF learning outcomes.
- ♦ This analysis showed that certain learning outcome areas correspond more widely to the skills and competences in competence profiles (on levels 6 and 7 in the sections on supervision, management, leadership).
- ♦ The compiled result of both working groups' work was submitted to the headquarters for final verification.' (National Coordinator for Frontex Trainings within the Border Guard Headquarters)

ROMANIA

'After all consultations, it was appreciated that the SQF, as presented, is comprehensive enough and reflects in a general manner the whole dimension of border guard training needs at the European level.' (Actors involved: relevant border police structures – both training institutions

for initial and further training and operational structures and relevant training staff (from the Ministry, the General Inspectorate of Romanian Border Police, the Police Academy – the Department for Border Police and Border Police Agents Training School from Oradea)

Methodology

‘The whole documentation received from your part related to the SQF content was disseminated to the relevant border police structures – both training institutions for initial and further training and operational structures – with the request to analyse it and identify possible topics that could be included in it. Prior to these consultations relevant training staff (from the Ministry, the General Inspectorate of Romanian Border Police, the Police Academy – the Department for Border Police, Schengen Training and Foreign Languages and Border Police Agents Training School from Oradea) gathered in a working group in order to compare the SQF content with the existing occupational standards at the national level.

(NB: Our colleagues from the coast guard have proposed some competences/skills related to their specific work that should be included in the SQF, but we appreciate that these particular competences/skills can be identified in the SQF within the general framework of border control – border control technology or specialist fields in border guarding – advanced and specialised fields.’

SLOVAKIA

‘The expert group did a great job. The border guard job is well reflected in the competence profiles and I did not recognise anything missing. Nothing else is taught at the national level. I consider it a comprehensive document.’ (NTC)

SLOVENIA

‘In January 2012 our newest programme for the basic police training was accredited by the Ministry for Education and Sports, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Education Directorate, Higher Vocational Division. The basic programme is provided by the Police Academy–Police College and it includes the same competences in the field of border guarding as the CCC, which was fully implemented in the national basic education and further (specialised) police training programmes at the end of 2009. The



basic programme accredited in January 2012 is adequate to EQF level 6 – a short 2 years) version of the bachelor's (first Bologna level) study, accredited with 120 credit points by the ECTS. There are no other education institutions or higher levels of study on the field of police training in Slovenia.' (NTC, Police Academy)

SPAIN, NATIONAL POLICE

'Outstanding work accomplished in the SQF, which has been developed for so many months during this project. Let me confirm to you that the SQF draft can fulfil our competence profile/learning outcomes properly at our national level.' 'The SQF will promote itself due to its quality and usefulness.' (WG member)

Methodology

'After the meeting ..., I took a couple of days to prepare the interviews with several mid- and high-level police officers, from both operational and training areas. The first meeting was held with our National Police Corps training responsible for internal promotion, in our high-level education, dedicated to the teaching of immigration related issues. The second meeting was with two mid-level operational officers enforcing immigration law in border guarding duties at our borders (Melilla and Barajas airport) for over 15 years, who started their tasks as level 4 officers and after being promoted are level 6 officers. Finally I checked the SQF for border guarding with our currently running programmes.'

SPAIN, GUARDIA CIVIL

'Due to the huge range of legal responsibilities assigned to Guardia Civil, it doesn't cover the entire scope. Nevertheless, if we are referring to the officers in Guardia Civil performing border guard activities, it covers more than the tasks assigned to Guardia Civil in this field (except specialisation). ... In Spain a 5-level based qualifications system has been established. It was developed till level 3 for 26 professional areas. This is similar to other Member States where the number of levels is different to the EQF. However, the approach that is being developed in this project could be suitable for us. ... The SQF/CP is being analysed to identify and set up uses, benefits and added value of the product for our institution. There are some initiatives which probably will be carried out (i.e. translation into Spanish, stakeholders meeting and delivering to Guardia Civil

academies — education/training/specialisation fields — possible use at different academies for programme design). No new inputs to be included.'

Methodology

'After the last SQF and CPD meeting in Cesena (ITA) a comprehensive report was sent to key actors in the field within Guardia Civil: 'Jefatura de Enseñanza' (Training Division), 'Jefatura de Fiscal y Fronteras' (Fiscal/ Customs and Borders Division), 'Estado Mayor' (General Staff), 'Secretaría de Cooperación Internacional' (International Cooperation Secretariat). Among other aspects, and as a result of the Frontex-TRU request, there was a proposal for organising a meeting with the aim of the CP's internal validation. Consequently, and to facilitate the process, the NTC provided the mentioned actors with the required documents for a study and analysis period. Meeting with key actors and results has the deadline at the end of April 2012.' (Organisational representativeness: 'Key persons from all related departments')

SWITZERLAND

'In the Frontex SQF the tasks are well reflected in the competence profiles. From our point of view it is a very complete work. It reflects the scope of learning within our organisation. We also teach the border guards other things, because we are also responsible for the customs part in travellers' traffic. For an international standards level the training subjects are sufficient, there are no missing elements. The level of knowledge, skill, competence (4, 5, 6, 7) is from our point of view correct.' (NTC)

UNITED KINGDOM

'This work is a job really well done; the content contained within the outcomes will help shape and support internal programme accreditation for front line officers in the United Kingdom; ... the outcomes at level 6 and level 7 read well.' (NTC, qualifications expert, CCC experts)



Annex 4

Response to national consultations

* This feedback was provided in written to the National Training Coordinators referring to specific recommendations provided by them as part of the consultation process that were rejected by the group, explaining the reasons.

Feedback of the Project Board to the national reviewers*

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the feedback you provided.

You make a very good point about IBM; however a decision was made not to mention any specific policies or laws, as a change in legislation of policy would immediately cause the SQF to become outdated. As you point out, the principles of IBM are all reflected and integrated throughout the SQF. This was intentional as they reflect the learning for BG.

In relation to your second point, the SQF documentation will have a glossary of terms which will define meaning of words for the SQF, and MS will be supported in translating the SQF. Related to your comment is the level of the learning outcomes. The SQF, like the EQF, provides very high level (non-specific) learning outcomes, as such all training is reflected. Frontex will be running a course design training programme next year that will assist MS in designing learning outcomes using the SQF.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the feedback you provided.

The Working Group discussed the concept of 'Regional' and concluded that this concept was reflected sufficiently in the concept 'of national', as each nation in the EU has varying ways dividing into 'regions' i.e. counties, landers, divisions etc. To mention one would be exclusive to others and the term 'national' will be defined as such in the glossary that supports the SQF.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the details feedback you provided.

The Working Group reviewed each of the learning outcomes that you suggested; verifying that they were all reflected in the SQF or Competence profiles. The SQF, like the EQF, provides very high level (non-specific) learning outcomes; as such the training you outline is reflected. Frontex will be running a course next year on designing training programmes that will assist MS in designing learning outcomes using the SQF.



Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your significant feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the feedback you provided.

The Working Group reviewed each of your comments. In respect to the presentation of the SQF, on completion it will be adjusted by graphic designers who will ensure there is consistency in presentation and 'readability'.

Your feedback identifies a number of learning outcomes that are not used in your training programmes. This is to be expected as the SQF does not dictate training requirements, but captures all training requirements for BG for all MS. Of course, the SQF may cause you to include some topics that you don't currently cover, but this is not a requirement of integration. The important issue is that it captures all training that you deliver.

With reference to specialist further training, these courses are reflected in the 'Specialist Fields in Border Guarding' part of the SQF. It is also important to mention here that the SQF refers to the level of learning not the level of the person undertaking the learning, which is sometimes different.

The working group had a discussion in relation to merging the FR and ethics as you suggest. Given the specific importance of integrating FR in all BG training it was decided to keep it separate. This is also in line with recommendations from FR agencies who have reviewed the SQF.

We noted that you prefer Plans for Level 7 and Strategy for Level 8. We discussed this issue in the working group and with the Bologna Experts who reviewed the SQF. There was agreement that learning related to developing strategy and strategic perspectives is well placed at Level 7. This is also consistent with Masters in Business Administration (MBA's) that are taught across Europe.

Your feedback on the differing uses of 'review' and 'assess' was well received and caused the working group to review the use of these terms across the SQF to ensure consistency. A number of changes were made as a result of this. The definitions for the terms will be included in the documentations.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the feedback you provided.

The working group considered the concept of border regime and considered that it is reflected in law, policies and procedures as these learning outcomes reflect all national and international procedures.

The working group agreed that checks within the territory are an important part of IBM. The working groups considered the border check LOs and concluded that they are inclusive of BC within the territory.

A number of States provided feedback about the visibility of certain concepts that they deemed important. The reality is all law, policy and procedures, including the ones you mentioned, are important to the BG role. A decision was made by the working group that the SQF should be high-level and general and not refer to any specific laws, regulations or policies. As such it will not become dated on a change of any of these.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.



I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the feedback you provided.

The working group considered your comments and it is important to point out that the SQF is inclusive rather than prescriptive. Your comment on Supervision, Management and Strategy was well received by the working group and the LOs were amended within this heading.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the feedback you provided. In respect to the coordination for tasks such as surveillance, both surveillance and cooperation are covered in different learning outcomes. The cooperation learning outcome is generic and therefore applied to all other learning. There will be training courses delivered by Frontex to assist with the integration of the SQF and to address issues such as this.

There is a very clear rationale for the 'blank spaces' in the SQF. This is that there is no learning at that specific level in the subject area. It is important to remember that the level of learning does not relate to the level or rank of the officer.

Your point relating to the 'recognition of budgetary implications' was well made and well received by the working group and levels 5 and 6 of the SQF in this area were amended as a result of this feedback. The other recommendations made were considered and appropriate adjustments to the learning outcomes were made where necessary.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise

that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the comments you provided.

We are delighted to hear that the SQF, on translation, will be included in some of your future initiatives. I would like to point out that Frontex will be delivering training courses on programme design that may assist you with the integration of the SQF.

Dear NTC

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for the feedback that you provided for the SQF and Competence Profiles. I recognise that the review of the SQF in the context of your national training was a significant task, but your feedback has really contributed to the quality assurance of the SQF Package.

I will be presenting the SQF to the NTC Meeting in Madrid but in advance of that I wanted to give you a direct response to the comments you provided.

Your comment in respect to resource management was well received and adjustments were made to the learning outcomes for level 5 and level 6.

A couple of the comments focused on the idea of 'officers at level 4'. This has been common in the feedback as we tend to think of ranks as opposed to learning. The SQF places things according to their level of learning, not the level of the person conducting the task.

The other comment that you sought feedback on was L7 and border surveillance. You are right that L7 learning is shaping improvement but the actual learning — strategy, planning, resource management, IT developments — is all there in the learning outcomes. This learning applies to all areas of border security and it was considered that there was nothing specific to surveillance that wasn't already in the SQF that specifically applied to surveillance and was 'different learning'.



Annex 5

Request template for SQF integration

Reference: on SQF usage

Instructions for requesting the usage of the SQF for Border Guarding

- ♦ A written request should be sent **by e-mail by the national training coordinator*** of the Member State/Schengen associated country/partner country requesting the usage of the SQF, covering the following issues:
 - which of the SQF products is intended to be used;
 - the purpose of the use;
 - confirmation of the obligation to make reference to the Frontex product in the final outcome (Frontex copyright).
- ♦ As part of the quality assurance of the SQF, Frontex would like to collect feedback on SQF usage, when the work is finalised, covering the following issues:
 - if it was helpful, and in which way;
 - any needs for review of the learning outcomes or competence profiles;
 - any suggestions or remarks arising during this specific usage.

These types of issues will be collected and discussed by the SQF Expert Board, which is established with the purpose of sharing good practices, providing support for national integration, following up on SQF usage at national and European levels and assessing the need for SQF review.

The written request and any feedback should be provided by the NTC, or by the involved experts, to the following e-mail addresses:

training.office@frontex.europa.eu
anemona.peres@frontex.europa.eu
frontex@frontex.europa.eu

* The same request may be submitted to Frontex by any national or international organisation interested in the SQF for Border Guarding.



European Agency for the Management
of Operational Cooperation
at the External Borders of the Member
States of the European Union

Rondo ONZ 1
00-124 Warsaw, Poland

T +48 22 205 95 00
F +48 22 205 95 01

frontex@frontex.europa.eu
www.frontex.europa.eu

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