

# **Qualifications and NQF in the draft Law on Education**

Olav Aarna

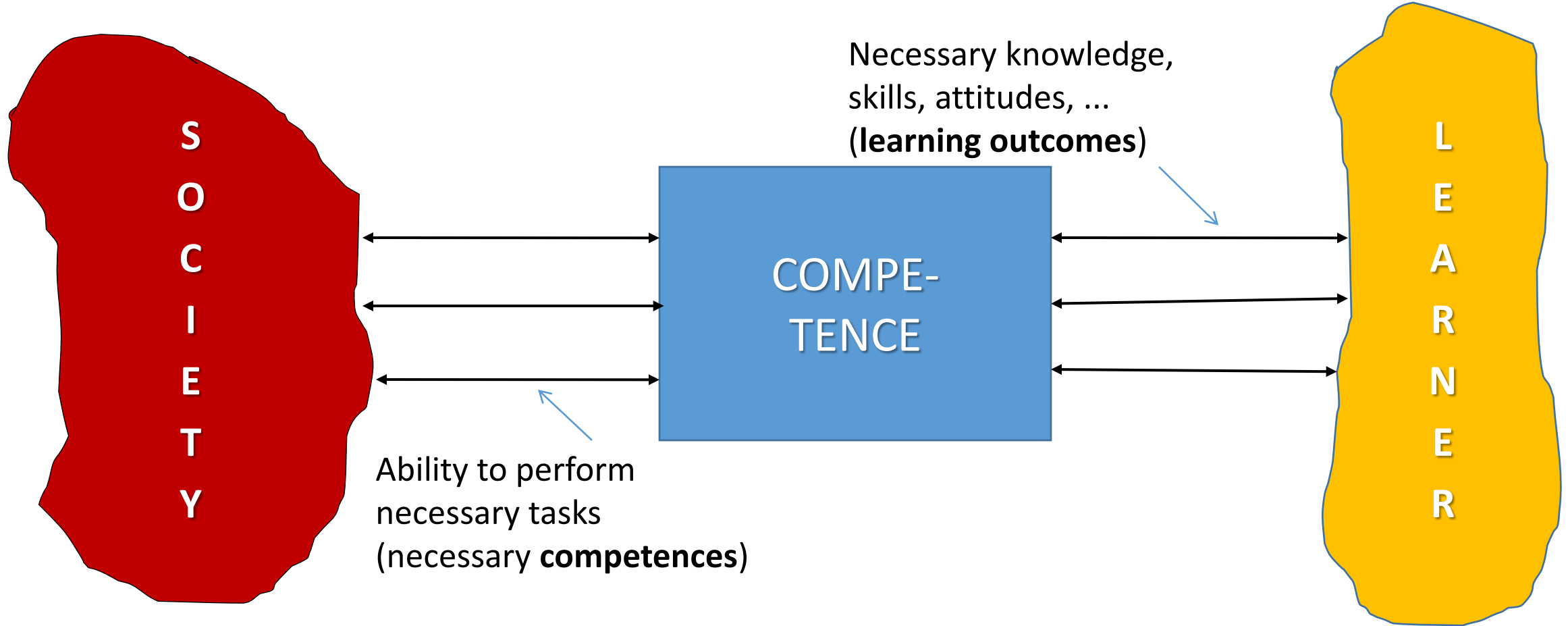
TAIEX expert

Estonian Qualifications Authority

# Context

- **Development of the European area for lifelong learning:**
  - Bologna process (1999)
  - Copenhagen process (2003)
  - European qualifications framework for lifelong learning (2008)
  - ...
- **Learning outcomes (competences) based approach:**
  - **New paradigm**
  - **New terminology**
  - **Learner centered approach**
- The Law on Education declares participation of Ukraine in these developments, incl. compatibility of the NQF with the EQF

# Competence, competences and learning outcomes

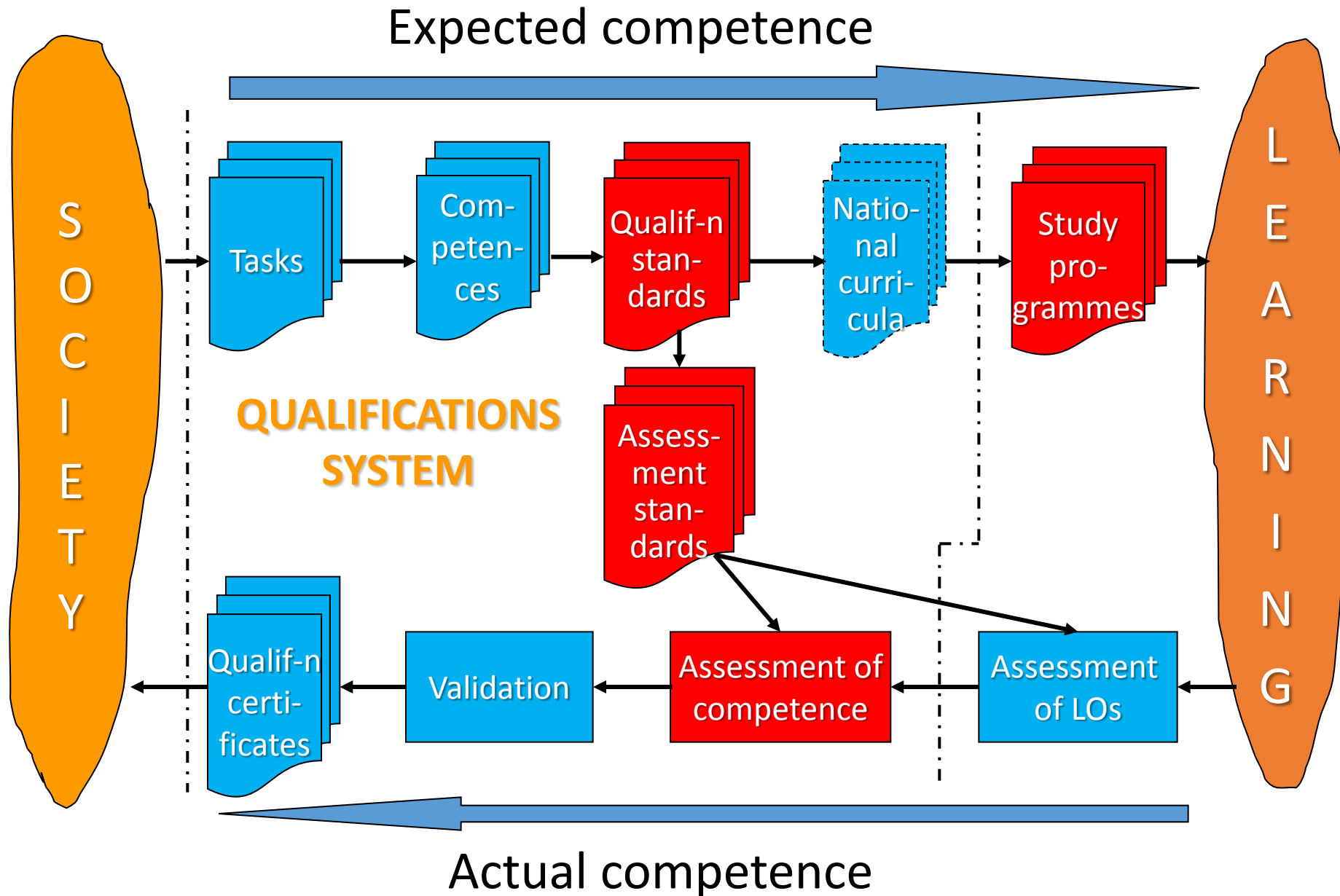


Key competences!

# Qualification

- Qualification is a **central concept of the system for lifelong learning**
- **Qualification** – official **result of an assessment**, awarded when a **competent body decides** that the **person has the required competence** on the level **determined in the relevant qualification standard**
- **Competence** – ability to perform successfully in a specific field, described through the relevant performance criteria (learning outcomes)
- **Qualifications are expressed in learning outcomes**, i.e. what the person knows, understands and is able to do

# Competence circle



# Law on Education as a framework for system of lifelong learning

- Law guarantees **the right to lifelong learning**
- Acknowledges that the system for lifelong learning **includes formal, non-formal and informal learning**
- Acknowledges the **recognition of non-formal and informal learning**
- Describes the **NQF as a tool for measuring and comparing the obtained educational and professional (occupational) qualifications**
- Acknowledges the right to complete **free full general secondary education for individuals of any age**
- Underlines the **importance of learning outcomes**
- Defines **adult education as an integral part of the system of education**
- Achieving qualifications has been given special attention beyond the completion of study programmes

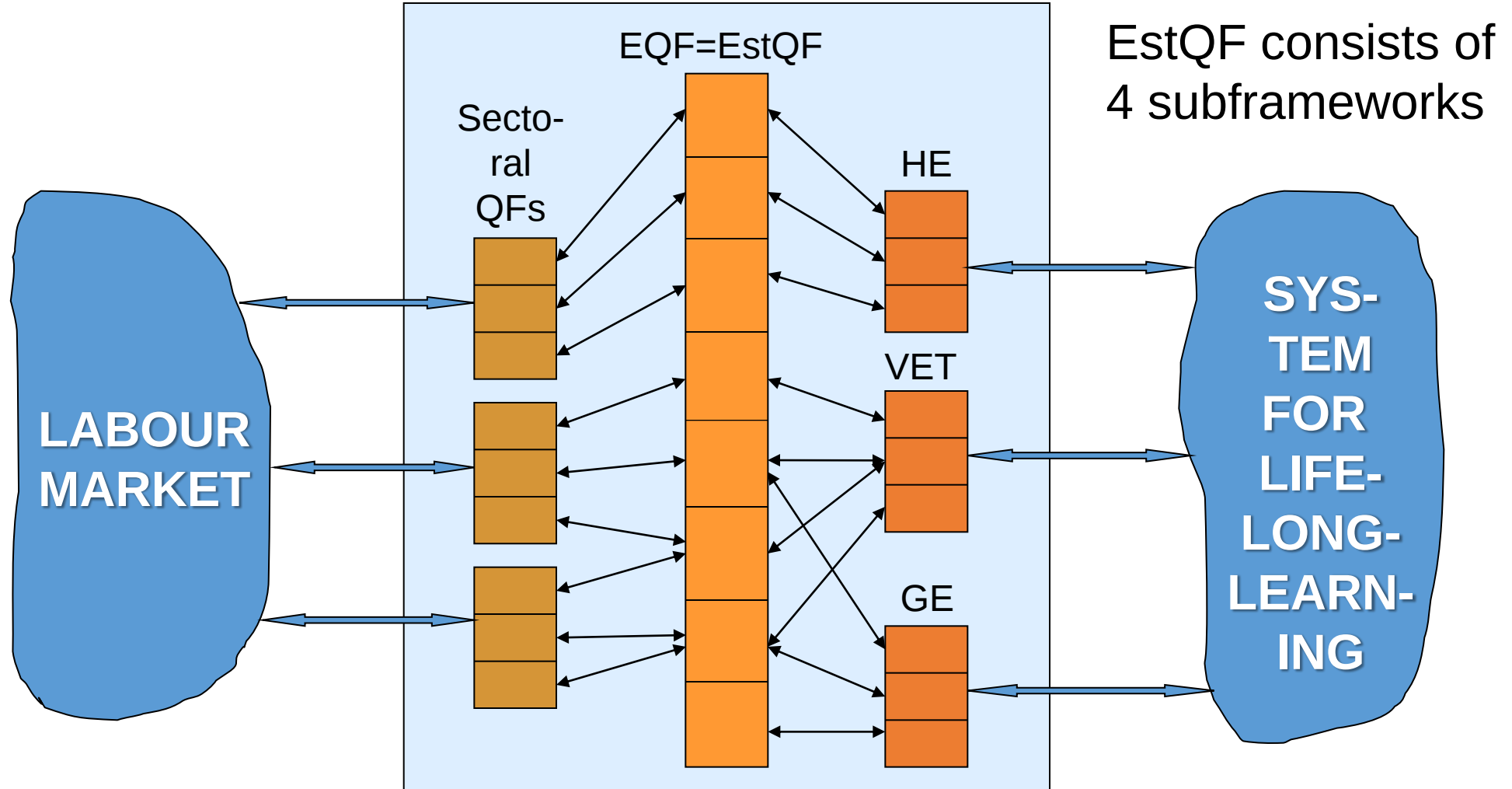
# Problems identified

- Qualification is a secondary concept besides education and study programmes
- The law provides very little about the principles of lifelong learning, other than that it could include non-formal and informal learning and that validation of non-formal and informal learning should be possible
- Adult learning (additional education) covers post-diploma education and upgrading courses and suggests that these should be certified by using (parts) of existing formal qualifications
- Alternative pathways for existing qualifications are not described and the approach is very much based on study programmes of fixed duration with qualifications being a consequence of successfully completing these programmes

# Recommendations

- Identify other qualifications than those existing for formal education
- If these qualifications have a particular added value on the labour market they should become a part of the NQF
- It is important to clarify further what is meant by professional (occupational) qualifications
- Clarify the role of occupational standards that so far have no legal status
- Indicate which qualifications should be based on occupational standards

# Estonian Qualifications Framework (2014)



# Qualification Standards in Estonia

- General trend of development – **towards learning outcomes based (competence based) standards:**
  - Higher education standard (2008)
  - Vocational education standard (2008, 2013) + national curricula for VET (over 50)
  - National curriculum for basic school (2010)
  - Simplified national curriculum for basic school (2010)
  - National curriculum for upper secondary school (2010)
  - New generation of occupational qualification standards (2010-...)

| Formal education qualifications in Estonia                                                                           | EstQF levels |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Basic education certificate based on curriculum for students with moderate and severe learning disabilities          | 1            |
| Basic education certificate based on simplified curriculum<br>Basic education certificate<br>VET level 2 certificate | 2            |
| VET level 3 certificate                                                                                              | 3            |
| Upper secondary general education certificate<br>Upper secondary VET certificate<br>VET level 4 certificate          | 4            |
| VET level 5 certificate                                                                                              | 5            |
| Diploma of professional higher education<br>Diploma of Bachelor's degree                                             | 6            |
| Diploma of Master's degree                                                                                           | 7            |
| Diploma of Doctoral degree                                                                                           | 8            |

# Qualifications in the NQF of Ukraine

- Certificate of basic secondary education – level 2
- Certificate of complete secondary education – level 3 (instead of level 4)
- Certificate of specialized secondary education – level 3 (instead of level 4)
- Diploma of qualified (skilled) worker – level 3
- Diploma of junior specialist – level 4
- Diploma of junior bachelor – level 5
- 2 different descriptions for level 4?
- Why sublevels?
- How professional (occupational) qualifications will be placed in the NQF?

# Conclusions

- Law on Education is a long-term framework for developing the system of lifelong learning in Ukraine
- Formal education system and formal education institutions are not any more the only focal point of the system
- Qualification is a central concept of the system
- Different pathways to diverse qualifications are vital
- Quality of assessment is crucial
- Qualification standards need to be agreed among stakeholders
- Key (transversal) competences are increasingly more important

Thank you!

[olav.aarna@kutsekoda.ee](mailto:olav.aarna@kutsekoda.ee)