

Annual report on Authority Business Plan 2010

Introduction

The Authority adopted a five year Strategic Plan (2008-2012), a two year Business Plan (2008-2009) and a further plan for the period 2010-2011. The Business Plans set out the overall direction for its work and the key actions to be taken in the period 2010-2011.

The Authority executive continues to monitor and report on progress in achieving the Authority's strategic goals and the implementation of the related Business Plans, in line with the overall arrangements agreed in 2008. As part of this process, an annual report on the Business Plan is presented to the Authority at its first meeting of each year. This report is the third annual report on the Business plan within the current strategic planning cycle, and details measures taken in respect of each of the action lines in the Plan and available results concerning performance indicators.

The following sections of this report set out the key achievements of the Business Plan, and factors critical to them, for the period January-December 2010. Section I highlights the major areas of work in 2010 which are expected to have the greatest impact on the achievement of the Authority's goals. This section contains an overview of measures taken in support of the labour market. This is followed by reports on progress and performance indicators for each goal in line with those identified on the Authority's Strategic Plan. Although the indicators refer to performance over the five-year period, achievements in relation to 2010 are reported where possible. Changes in the operational environment of the Authority in 2010 which have impacted on its work are also noted.

Section II reports on the action lines set out for 2010 under each of the Authority's six strategic goals. This section includes new actions taken in response to new developments.

Strategic Goals

The Authority's six strategic goals are that:

1. *The National Framework of Qualifications is widely known, understood, used and valued in society*
2. *The National Framework of Qualifications is more deeply implemented in a way that is open and responsive to the needs of the learner, society and the economy*
3. *Effective and integrated pathways between qualifications operate throughout the National Framework of Qualifications*
4. *All Framework qualifications are quality assured to the highest international standards*
5. *Framework qualifications are fully recognised abroad and qualifications gained outside Ireland are appropriately recognised in Ireland*
6. *The Authority, in tandem with FETAC and HETAC, are high quality, effective and efficient state agencies.*

Section I Highlights

Summary

The continued economic downturn and consequent financial pressures impacted on the Authority, as well as many other organisations in the public and private sector. The Authority successfully implemented all emergency measures required by Government in 2010 including the moratorium on recruitment. It began work towards implementing the new Employment Control Framework for the Public Service, for the period 2011 to 2014, as provided for in the recent National Recovery Plan. Notwithstanding the constraints on funding and the moratorium, which meant that a number of positions in the organisation were unfilled, the Authority maintained operations within these constraints and delivered on the organisation's objectives for the period. The majority of the action lines for 2010, as set out in the Authority's Business Plan (2010- early 2011), were achieved.

The Authority, pending amalgamation of the qualifications and quality assurance bodies took over responsibility for the Accreditation of English Language Schools (ACELS) in January 2010, with a reduced staff complement. In March 2010, it took over responsibility for the Internationalisation Register, without any accompanying staff. The initial focus was to successfully integrate the management and operation of these areas into the Authority's business. The new student visa regime, to be introduced in January 2011, and the government's Internationalisation Strategy have significant implications for both areas of work; the overall management of the quality of provision and of qualifications; and interaction with existing processes such as the alignment of awards with the National Framework of Qualifications and amalgamation. In late 2010, the executive focused on identifying these implications and on responding appropriately within the overall resource constraints.

A key area of work in 2010 was that of contributing to the work to implement the Government's decision to establish a new, amalgamated qualifications and quality assurance body. The new body will assume the existing functions of the Authority and the awards Councils, and the external quality review role of the universities. The Authority participated in, and contributed to the outputs of the Implementation Advisory Group established by the Department of Education and Science to advise it on high level matters pertaining to the functions, board composition, strategic planning, reporting arrangements and the name of the new body. The Chief Executive Officers of the Authority, FETAC, HETAC and the IUQB

continued to consider the issues arising from amalgamation, including planning and the pending draft legislation on amalgamation which had been expected to be published in 2010.

An Interim Board, appointed by the Minister of Education and Science and comprised of the Chairs of FETAC, HETAC, the IUQB and Authority, was set up in early 2010 to co-ordinate and advise on amalgamation. It also put in place arrangements for the recruitment of a CEO Designate for the new agency. Dr. Padraig Walsh was appointed CEO Designate in September 2010.

The extent of achievement of the work plan in 2010, and the positive response to the changing operational environment was due, in large measure, to the continued positive engagement of staff across the organisation, and that of the Authority's stakeholders.

Looking ahead to 2011, it is anticipated that the financial and staffing pressures on the Authority will pose significant challenges to the effective planning and preparation for the amalgamation of the Authority and the awards Councils, the successful operation and integration of existing statutory and other responsibilities. The timetable for amalgamation is uncertain and publication of the draft legislation is awaited in early 2011. The executive will keep its Business Plan for 2011 under review in the light of this.

Part 1 – Report of strategic highlights and indicators

Introduction

Given the integrated nature of actions taken in support of the labour market under Strategic Goals (SG) 1, 2, 3 and 6, the report below combines these under one theme. Highlights in respect of other actions are reported on under each of the strategic goals.

Supporting the labour market

The set of actions under Strategic Goals 1, 2 and 3 marked a significant and long-term response to the unemployment crisis in 2010. This supported the strategic goal of ensuring that the National Framework of Qualifications is more deeply implemented in a way that is open and responsive to the needs of the learner, society and the economy. This also responded to the recommendations of the Framework Implementation and Impact Study (2009) for greater engagement and responsiveness to labour market needs.

The set of actions entailed:

- The publication of information on programmes funded under the Labour Market Activation Fund in Qualifax and of relevant reports on skills and labour market needs (SG1, SG6)
- On-going support and advice on the use of the Framework as a criterion [for quality and] for funding under the Labour Market Activation Fund, the Early Childhood and Childcare Scheme and student grants (SG1).
- Work to encourage and support the use of the Framework as a standard reference point for identifying skills needs and responses and for reporting on levels of educational attainment in the labour force and the population (SG1)
- Supporting the responsiveness of the qualifications system to labour market needs by leading standards development in FETAC in the areas of retail and early childhood education and childcare) and supporting the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs reports in 2010 on wholesale and retail and on the green economy (SG3). A significant feature of this work has been to identify, build on and create progression routes between qualifications, old and new, in each of these sectors.

- Work with the Expert Group on Future Skills to produce a single paper on ‘Developing Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the National Upskilling Objectives’ (SG3)
- The alignment of the awards of international bodies with the Framework (SG2)

This set of actions also had the effect of embedding the use of the NFQ in broader education and training policy, practice and funding. The indicators of achievement in relation to the actions above are reported on under each of the Strategic Goals.

Strategic Goal 1

The National Framework of Qualifications is widely known, understood, used and valued in society

In addition to actions in relation to the labour market, the main achievements in 2010 included the successful organisation of an international conference on qualification frameworks (see SG5), and on-going communication with bodies such as the CSO, the FÁS/EGFSN Skills and Labour Market Unit (on qualifications data and creating deeper understandings of the NFQ), work through Qualifax (see SG5) and EU-supported communication/promotional activities.

Communication and interaction with key stakeholders on NFQ

The executive continued to support the use of the framework in the identification of educational attainment levels in the workforce and in the population, skills needs and actions in support of the labour market. This, building on the referencing of the Framework in CSO statistics, increasingly means that the Framework is and can be used as a reference point for both labour market and education and training policy, funding and research. The alignment of international awards in the Framework has also meant that provision related to this, and therefore its contribution to overall levels of educational attainment of the population, can also be recorded in national statistics, such as skills bulletins and reports of the EGFSN. However, additional resources are needed to further develop and operate effective and efficient data collection arrangements in respect of aligned awards. Such work is also creating on-going demand to communicate the different relationships and processes by which awards are included in the Framework and to assess the implications for any linkage between inclusion and, on the one hand, public funding mechanisms, and, on the

other, public policies (e.g., student grants, programme funding and student visa regimes).

The hosting of study visits and participation in conferences, exhibitions, networks and various working groups remains a key channel for communicating the Authority's work (see SG5).

Promotion of the NFQ and overall work of the Authority

Under Department of Finance directives to manage the deteriorating public finances, the Authority was required to reduce or eliminate expenditure on marketing and promotion in 2010. The Authority secured funding under EUROPASS and the EQF in 2010. This was used to support NFQ-related activities and recognition. This was used to update promotional material on Europass tools (the Diploma Supplement etc.), produce and distribute a leaflet through a number of regional newspapers across the country. Additional promotional materials were distributed to 730 post-primary schools. EQF funds were used to fund outputs from the international conference on qualification frameworks (see SG5), namely the publication of the conference statement, report and a 2 DVD set of conference proceedings. The securing of EU funding was therefore important to the capacity of the Authority to undertake direct communications/promotional work, the continued need for which was identified in the Framework Implementation and Impact Study (2009).

It is worth noting that the broader communications activities in relation to the use of the NFQ in public funding and in informing skills reports are contributing to the achievement of Strategic Goal 1.

Technical work continued in 2010 to allow for the disaggregation of and public/user access to data by award-type, Framework level, awarding body etc. on Qualifax. This will support overall communication of the NFQ and the different characteristics of awards in it, as recommended in the Framework Implementation and Impact Study.

SG 1 Performance Indicators

- *Staff training on project management to support Corporate and Communications work*
- *No promotional material was developed for the CAO*

- *The range of statistics for Qualifax activity over the period January-December 2010 is unavailable due to an outage in August 2010 caused by unprecedented levels of demand. Data for the period January-July 2010 indicates that the level of use decreased by 3.9% over the same period in 2009 (344,688 unique visitors in Jan-July 2010 compared to 358 586 in the same period in 2009)*
- *The sole source of coordinated information on programmes funded under Labour Market Activation Fund is provided in Qualifax (linked directly from Department of Education and Skills website)*
- *Disaggregated information from National Skills Bulletin 2010 (EGFSN) is available in accessible format on Qualifax (completed within 24 hours of publication of the Bulletin)*
- *International frameworks conference held April 2010, conference statement, report and record of proceedings published and disseminated*
- *National Skills Bulletin 2010 and Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply 2010 (EGFSN) use NFQ classifications*
- *EGFSN skills reports, 2010, on the wholesale and retail sector and on the green economy use NFQ classifications as a basis for identifying skills needs and recommendations to meet them*
- *On-going support provided in relation to the implementation of Early Childhood and Childcare Education Scheme; advice on student grants and use of NFQ as criterion for Labour Market Activation funding*
- *Subject to having access to decision making process within relevant public funding bodies*
- *Joint response of NQAI, FETAC and HETAC to UNESCO proposals to revise ISCED levels*

Strategic Goal 2

The National Framework of Qualifications is more deeply implemented in a way that is open and responsive to the needs of the learner, society and the economy

The major areas of work included the development of a strategic response to the Framework Implementation and Impact Study; the continuation of the universities Framework Implementation Network; and work on the alignment of the awards of international bodies with the Framework. Core work items in relation to legacy awards and credit and titling conventions could not be progressed in accordance with the deadlines for completion in 2010.

The development of a strategic response to the Framework Implementation and Impact Study (FIIS)

Responses were received from the four bodies which coordinated sectoral reports for the FIIS: HETAC, FETAC, the IUA and the NCCA. These and the Authority executive's considerations formed the basis of the Authority's response, agreed in May 2010. The response detailed the actions already taken in follow up to many of the Study's 19 recommendations and set out additional actions and timelines for completion in relation to those recommendations regarded as being of priority. These were discussed with the relevant stakeholders. The key actions which were progressed in 2010 were: as indicated above, the responsiveness of the qualifications system to labour market needs; the use of the learning outcomes approach, promoting the centrality of the Framework in the draft legislation on the qualifications and quality assurance agency, developing Qualifax, NFQ implementation in the universities and associated colleges and the international recognition of qualifications, the alignment of public funding with the Framework; the development of a strategic option paper on RPL (see SG4 below) and actions to support progression and sustained engagement with European and international developments.

A number of other actions remain contingent on progress towards amalgamation of the qualifications and quality assurance agencies, namely the issues around NFQ level 6 (co-location of further and higher education and training awards; the inclusion of all craft awards at a single level (this would also be implicated in any review of apprenticeship provision) and greater shared understanding of standard setting across FETAC, HETAC and the NQAI.

There were also areas in which limited progress was made. These included the elaboration of the inclusion of the Leaving Certificate in the Framework (where the executives of the Authority and NCCA considered that progress remains dependent on developments in relation to the senior and junior cycles), the elaboration of an issues paper in relation to Level 6 (due to a re-allocation of resources and pushing out of the timeline for amalgamation); the development of a single set of quality assurance principles for the Framework (also due to a re-allocation of resources). The latter two issues are discussed below.

The universities Framework Implementation Network

The continuation of the network in 2010, with a turnover and expanded number of members, was a considerable achievement. Representatives from all the universities and associated colleges engaged in developing case studies, responding to questionnaires and discussions on RPL with a view to publishing a manual on RPL for members in early 2011. The network has proved to be a useful mechanism to share and promote practice including that of national and international projects, e.g., the SIF Employment in Education RPL project and the REAP project as well as projects in Scotland, the UK and European developments.

The alignment of the awards of international bodies with the Framework

A major area of work was the development and publication of new policies and criteria for the alignment of the awards of international sectoral certifying bodies with the Framework. The Authority agreed that this approach, which is of considerable relevance to qualifications frameworks internationally, should be piloted with at most two such certifying bodies. Meetings were held with interested bodies in late 2010 and one application was being processed in late 2010. The approach was discussed with international partners, and with the EQF Advisory Group, and with interested certifying bodies. An additional strand of work emerged in relation to this in late 2010 as its connections to change in the Internationalisation Register emerged.

A related area of work was the evaluation of the pilot project on alignment with OFQUAL and the consideration of measures to mitigate the risk of quality assurance failures amongst providers who offer programmes leading to awards that are aligned with the Framework. An outcome of this work was to focus attention on risk-prevention and to subsume arrangements for this in a revised agreement with OFQUAL. To this end, it was agreed with OFQUAL that the existing agreement will provide for on-going engagement, reporting and dialogue with awarding bodies which

offer awards in Ireland. This work was also relevant to supporting responses to labour market needs and the executive worked with the relevant agencies and Department of Education and Skills to include programmes leading to these awards in any future round of Labour Market Activation funding. Finally, the introduction of a new student visa scheme by the Department of Justice and Law Reform, as of 1 January 2011, led to increased interest in the alignment process and a need to identify and clarify how it would operate in respect of such programmes.

Legacy awards, and credit and titling conventions

It was not possible to determine an approach to the inclusion of the legacy awards of each university and linked college in 2010. Discussions continued with individual higher education institutions but reduced staff in the NQAI and in the NUI, and higher education institutions meant that the work could not be concluded. The intention remains to complete as much of this work as is possible prior to amalgamation and in the meantime to address queries from individuals on legacy awards in conjunction with the relevant institutions.

A second area in which progress was limited concerned the action to prepare an issues paper on the use of NQA award-types, award titles and credit across the 10 levels of the NFQ and to convene a national forum to address these. The executive focused on drafting a paper on the issues and the implications of divergent practices within sectors. It is hoped to progress the paper and discussions in 2011.

The delays in completing the actions on legacy awards and on credit and titling conventions are of concern as they are core to the implementation of the Framework. The re-allocation of staff to the RCSI review and the Internationalisation Register impacted on this work.

The Higher Diploma in Education, currently designated as the Postgraduate Diploma in Education

Following the advice of the Technical Group on the appropriate Framework level for this qualification, the executive was informed in late 2010 that the University Registrars are agreed to the placement of this award at Level 8 in the Framework. It awaits further communication from the Registrars on the appropriate title for this award. The Department of Education and Skills, the Teaching Council, FETAC and HETAC were informed by the executive of the current status of the award.

SG 2 Performance Indicators

- *Finalisation and publication of response and follow-up action to Framework Implementation and Impact Study within projected timelines*
- *Continued participation in university sector Framework Implementation Network of all 8 Irish universities and 12 affiliated colleges – agreement to continue network in 2009-10 academic year*
- *Report on the first phase of the Framework Implementation Network published (programme design and use and assessment of learning outcomes) and disseminated to all institutions in the Network*
- *Inclusion of vast majority of awards of universities and recognised/linked colleges in the NFQ*
- *Policies and criteria for the alignment of awards of international sectoral certifying bodies with the NFQ was agreed (Group D)*
- *1 application under group D rejected (applicant not a certifying body)*
- *Enquiries from interested parties in Group D were processed.*
- *1 Group C alignment agreed – concerning 3 awards*
- *3 Group C applications were being processed*
- *Outcomes of pilot agreement on alignment of certain UK VET awards completed and detailed work on a revised agreement with Ofqual completed*
- *Key elements of a revised agreement with Ofqual on alignment of certain UK VET awards completed – pending the implementation of the new agreement, the processing of applications for alignment of additional awards under the existing agreement ceased*
- *Limited progress in agreeing a process and schedule for inclusion of legacy awards with each university and linked college*
- *Issues paper on credit and titling was not completed and proposed national forum on same was not convened*

Strategic Goal 3

Effective and integrated pathways between qualifications operate throughout the National Framework of Qualifications

The main achievements in this area in 2010 were in relation to the Recognition of Prior Learning, RPL, an area identified for follow-up to the Framework Implementation and Impact Study (FIIS), and standards setting.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In its response to the FIIS, the Authority committed to developing a strategic options paper on RPL. In considering this paper, the Authority took account of the then on-going work of the EGFSN for the Department of Education and Skills on RPL. It agreed that both executives would work to produce a single paper on RPL and the National Skills Strategy. This paper would build on the Authority's work and identify the potential contribution of RPL to the skills strategy, whilst also taking account of the unemployment crisis, assess costs and make recommendations for actions by the relevant government bodies and education and training bodies. Work on this paper was significantly advanced in late 2010. This was expected to inform future policy and funding and would advance the Authority's goal to promote progression and mobility for learners.

Standard Setting

The Authority executive continued to lead a FETAC standards migration project in early childhood care and education. This resulted in the adoption of standards for awards at NFQ levels 4-6 in late 2010. These took account of plans for the development of the workforce and for progression for learners. The Authority executive also led the migration of FETAC awards in the retail sector in 2010. Standards for awards at NFQ levels 4 and 5 were adopted in late 2010. These took account of labour market needs in particular those identified in the EGFSN skills report for the retail and wholesale sector.

SG 3 Performance Indicators

- *4 Framework Executives Group (FEG) meetings in 2010; 2-3 sub-group meetings each held on Standards and Provider Registration (reports completed for FEG)*
- *Standards for awards in Early Childhood care and education set at NFQ levels 4-6, FETAC Council, November 2010*
- *Standards for awards in retail set at NFQ Levels 4 and 5, FETAC Council, November 2010*
- *Strategic Options paper on RPL paper developed in mid-2010, cooperation with EGFSN led to finalisation of a single paper on RPL and the National Skills Strategy for the Department of Education and Skills*
- *Participation in EQF Advisory Group, EUROPASS and UK European VET coordination Group as a means to support developments in relation to credit in the further education and training sector*
- *Continued participation in Higher Education Authority's Advisory Group on Access*
- *Input into meeting of the FETAC Sports Recreation and Leisure Standards Group.*
- *2 meetings of the EGFSN National Skills Database sub-group*
- *Participation in the European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO) Stakeholders Conference,*

Strategic Goal 4

All Framework qualifications are quality assured to the highest international standards

The main achievements in this area relate to the completion of the review of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and follow-up to the review, and preparations for a review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the DIT and a change to the policy for approving the delegation of authority by HETAC to the Institutes of Technology to make Masters degree awards. A significant area of work that remained to be completed was the development of a single set of quality assurance principles for the Framework.

Review of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

The HEA and the NQAI conducted this review at the request of the Department of Education and Skills with a view to advising the Minister on the granting of awarding powers to the RCSI. The report of the review was completed by an expert panel. The panel considered the RCSI's self-evaluation report; conducted a site visit and reviewed the outcomes from a public consultation regarding the RCSI's request to be granted degree-awarding powers. It met with approximately 25 groups of internal and external stakeholders. The report of the external panel recommended that degree-awarding status should be awarded to the RCSI. This recommendation was upheld by the HEA and the NQAI and submitted to the Minister. She subsequently granted degree-awarding powers to the RCSI in October 2010. A condition of this is that the NQAI was also given interim responsibility for the external quality assurance of the RCSI, pending the amalgamation of the qualifications and quality assurance agencies. In follow-up to this, the RCSI agreed to develop and submit an action plan in response to the recommendations in the report of the external panel to the NQAI and subsequently to report annually to the Authority on progress in this regard.

The completion of the RCSI review was a substantial piece of work. It also led to new responsibilities for the NQAI and the need and opportunity to develop, in consultation with FETAC, HETAC and the IUQB, an interim model of quality assurance for the RCSI.

DIT Quality Assurance

Under the Qualifications Act, the Authority is responsible for a) periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the Dublin Institute of Technology (under section 39(3) and (4) of the Act), and b) for considering the findings arising from the application of the quality assurance procedures agreed with the Dublin Institute of Technology (under section 39(2) of the Act).

Under a) the Authority, in September 2010, agreed terms of reference for the review of the effectiveness of the DIT's quality assurance procedures. An international panel of six experts in the areas of quality assurance at institutional and agency levels, student engagement, industry and qualifications frameworks was subsequently appointed. The timeline for the review includes the completion of a self-evaluation report by the DIT in February 2011, a site visit by the external panel in April 2011 followed by the completion by the external panel of its report. The report will be finalised in summer 2011 after the DIT responds to it. In the context of amalgamation, and to facilitate the smooth transfer of responsibility for the final stages of the review to the new body, the Authority convened an Advisory Group of representatives of FETAC, HETAC and the IUQB. This group met once in late 2010 and was scheduled to meet again in 2011.

Under b) the DIT submitted its annual report on the application of its quality assurance/enhancement procedures. In the light of the institutional review above, it was agreed that this report would be limited in scope in 2010 and would include reviews conducted in the period and responses to them, a comprehensive list of programmes (and their locations) which lead to awards of the DIT but which it does not provide directly. The annual report nonetheless contained significant information on the application of its quality assurance procedures, School Reviews, non-academic reviews, schedules of awards, programme validation/reviews and schedules of reviews for 2010. In 2010, despite a challenging environment, there was continued progress in completing reviews (a total of 27 will be completed by the end of 2010/11) and in the consistency of the quality of reports and of responses to them. Steps were taken to streamline quality processes and to synthesise and cross-refer outcomes of reviews at module, programme and school level. In addition. Significant efforts were made to engage industry in programme design.

The delegation by HETAC of authority to the Institutes of Technology to make awards at Masters level

In June 2010, the Authority agreed to HETAC's request for a change of policy. To date, an Institute wishing to offer master's awards by research

through delegated authority followed a uniform process with HETAC, incorporating an intensive review process. The policy change seeks to enable the Institutes to develop an institutional strategy for research. In the event that an Institute has a proven record in the award of research master's qualifications in two fields, it would then be allowed to extend this provision in line with its stated strategy. This means that the Authority will in future be requested by HETAC to agree the delegation of authority of master's degrees in the first two fields of research in a given institution. In the event that this institution then seeks delegation to make master's awards by research in the other fields that are addressed in its institutional research strategy, HETAC would seek agreement from the Authority prior to confirming the widening of the institution's delegation of authority to make awards in these fields.

A single set of quality assurance principles for the Framework

The aim of developing such principles was that it would underpin Framework implementation, transparency and coherence. This was recommended in the FIIS and agreed as a priority area for follow-up by the Authority in its response to the FIIS, May 2010. It remains central to Framework implementation. However, the diversion of resources to the RSCI review and the Internationalisation Register meant that resources could not be given to this area of work. The executive continued in its role as Secretary to the IHEQN in 2010.

SG 4 Performance Indicators

- *Six monthly reports received from FETAC, progress discussed with executive and reported to Authority,*
- *Discussions with HETAC on progress and reported to Authority*
- *Completion of RSCI review with the HEA and agreement with RSCI on follow-up. RSCI to report on follow-up to recommendations to NQAI.*
- *NQAI designated as external quality assurance agency for RCSI pending amalgamation*
- *Agreed terms of reference and completed preparations for a review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the DIT*
- *Completion with FETAC of two standards migration projects*

- *Amendment to policy for approving delegation of authority to Institutes of Technology to award Masters' degrees*
- *No requests from HETAC to approve the delegation of authority to make awards were received in 2010*
- *Completion of review of appeal against HETAC's refusal to validate a programme*
- *Consideration of six monthly report by FETAC on outcomes of review and plans to end 2011*
- *Secretary to 3 IHEQN meetings*
- *Did not develop common principles on the integration of Framework implementation into institutional quality assurance processes*

Strategic Goal 5

Framework qualifications are fully recognised abroad and qualifications gained outside Ireland are appropriately recognised in Ireland

The main achievements in this area concerned continued participation in and promotion of European Qualifications Framework initiatives, the completion of two international recognition agreements and continued work on the recognition of qualifications.

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The Authority is the National Coordination Point for the implementation of the EQF in Ireland, and has been designated by the Department of Education and Skills as Ireland's representative on the EQF Advisory Group, which coordinates EQF implementation at the European level. Three meetings of Advisory Group were held in 2010, during which inter alia the United Kingdom and France became the third and fourth member states respectively (following Ireland and Malta) to present the reports on the referencing of their National Qualification Frameworks to the EQF. The Authority also actively participates in the related National Coordination Point, EQF Web Portal, and Learning Outcomes Group meetings, which along with the Advisory Group, support the development, implementation and communication of NQFs and their relationship with the EQF; the use of Frameworks in supporting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning; the relationship of Qualifications Frameworks to other mobility and recognition instruments; the establishment of relationships between sectoral and international qualifications and NQFs/EQF; and the relationship of NQFs and EQF to qualifications frameworks in the wider world.

Work is now progressing at an accelerated rate on the development of NQFs throughout most EU member and accession states, and many will be in a position to present their referencing reports in 2011. The Authority continues to participate in this Europe-wide process through active engagement with the European Commission, and through bilateral and multilateral engagement with Ireland's European partners, whether through the hosting of study visits, or participation by staff as international experts in framework development and referencing activities in partner states. It is anticipated that this growth in Framework activity in Europe will considerably enhance the portability and recognition of the qualifications of

Irish citizens in Europe, and the qualifications held by citizens from other member states in Ireland.

National qualifications frameworks and the European overarching frameworks: supporting lifelong learning in European Education and Training, April 2010

The international conference on qualifications frameworks attracted an international audience of over 150 delegates from countries across the European Union and beyond. It aimed to contribute to building mutual trust and understanding in order to better achieve the shared goals of supporting individuals' lifelong learning and mobility. The format for the conference – preparation of an issues paper, interactive commentary and discussion by experts and delegates and the dissemination of edited proceedings (DVD), a conference statement and report – increased its impact and reach. The conference provided an opportunity to engage the Bologna experts directly in proceedings and for a timely discussion of issues relevant to both Ireland's NFQ and the European Qualifications Frameworks including sectoral qualifications, support for recognition and mobility, and the European professional directives. [The conference was co-hosted with the Higher Education Authority, supported by the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council and the Irish Universities Quality Board].

International agreements

The report of *The compatibility of degree qualifications in Ireland and New Zealand* which establishes compatibility between the higher education degree qualifications at Levels 7-10 of the NFQ and the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, was published in early 2010. This was followed up by the drafting and conclusion of a co-operation agreement with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) on qualifications development and recognition.

Work on the Ireland-Australia Qualifications Frameworks Project was also advanced in 2010. The objective of this project, which was initiated following an invitation by the Australian Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to the Authority, is to explore the possibility of a formal alignment of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Specifically, the Project has set out to map a range of aspects of each framework, including general features such as their purpose, origins, development and governance, and their architecture and

underpinning quality assurance arrangements, in order to achieve a meaningful comparison between them. A report setting out the outcome of this comparison process was published in July.

A memorandum of understanding was agreed with Bahrain on its Qualifications Framework project, on the occasion of a visit by representatives engaged in the project to the Authority in September 2010. This work supports the broader national education strategy to promote cooperation with the Gulf States.

Recognition Service

A number of changes to the operation of the service came into effect in 2010. Key amongst these were:

- organisational change including closer integration with other areas of work of the Authority (alignment of international awards, legacy awards) and reduced staffing (of 25% over 2009)
- integration of the Service into the on-going policy work of the Authority notably the alignment of UK awards and placement of legacy awards of the universities
- maintenance of the Internationalisation Register¹
- continued efficiencies arising from the use of Sharepoint (data management system) including more streamlined processing of applications and operating the Internationalisation Register

Advice on qualifications was provided to state bodies in relation to study visas, student grants and qualifications requirements for Garda recruitment and entry to primary school teacher training and early childhood care and education. The demand for the recognitions service continued to increase in 2010 as measured by the 18% increase in the number of applications for recognition of qualifications in 2010 compared to 2009 and the demand from state agencies for advice and support in using qualifications in recruitment, award of grants and other schemes. The addition of the Internationalisation Register to the workload of the Recognitions Service placed considerable pressure on staff resources. A comprehensive annual report of the Recognition Service for 2010 is available on <http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie>

¹ The Register lists the education and training programmes approved for the purposes of access to employment by students who are citizens from outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland. Responsibility for the Register was transferred from the Department of Education and Skills to the Authority in 2010.

SG 5 Performance Indicators

- *Successful hosting and publication of outcomes of the International conference on Qualification Frameworks, April 2010*
- *EQF – participation in 3 meetings of the Advisory Group, 2 meetings of the Cluster Group on Learning Outcomes, 1 meeting of the National Coordination Points and 2 meetings of the Web Portal and a number of peer learning activities (including securing participation of stakeholders in these)*
- *Receipt of EQF National Coordination Point funding for May 2010-Feb. 2011*
- *Publication of report on the compatibility of Irish and New Zealand qualifications*
- *Memorandum of Understanding with Bahrain on its Qualifications Framework project, September 2010*
- *Cooperation Agreement with NZQA on qualifications development and recognition, November 2010*
- *Report on mapping the Irish National Framework of Qualifications with the Australian Qualifications Framework completed, July 2010*
- *NQAI hosted or contributed to 17 study visits*
- *Of at least 42 conferences and exhibitions attended in 2010, NQAI participated directly in 32 (presentations, exhibition stands)*
- *Promotional materials developed for Europass including concise leaflet for employers. Leaflet inserted into editions of 7 regional newspapers (96, 000 copies in total)*
- *Participation in meeting of representatives of five jurisdictions on qualifications and quality assurance (North, South, East, West) and observer at two meetings of UK European Coordination Group for Vocational Education and Training*

- *Promotional materials on Europass, NFQ and Qualifax distributed to 730 post-primary schools*
- *Recognition Service – increase of 18% in applications from individuals for recognition in 2010, the total number of applications was 1969.*
- *An increase in turnaround time for processing applications from 12 weeks in early years of the service to an average of 1- 2 weeks*
- *Recognition newsletter produced in 2010 – preparations for further one completed*
- *Election of NQAI to the NARIC Advisory Board*
- *Participation in NARIC project led by France on the use of the European Qualifications Framework and national frameworks in the recognition of foreign qualifications*
- *No further Country Education Profiles completed after mid-2010*

Strategic Goal 6

The Authority, in tandem with FETAC and HETAC, are high-quality, effective and efficient state agencies

The major achievements in 2010 were to implement the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, the achievement of the Excellence Through People Award (for the second successive time), integration of the Internationalisation Register and ACELS and the continued operation and enhancement of Qualifax.

Corporate Governance

The Authority and both HETAC and FETAC complied with measures to reduce overall expenditure in line with Government targets and reforms. All audit, financial and regulatory compliance requirements including those on annual reporting were completed in 2010. The Authority continued to implement best practice in corporate governance and in line with this, implemented the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies in 2010. The Authority's high standards in this regard were once again validated by the unqualified report of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Human Resources

The Authority was awarded the Excellence Through People Award again in 2010. It aimed to maintain the award and was found to have improved its standards. The award is Ireland's national standard for human resource management. Its achievement reflects the on-going emphasis of the Authority to enhance performance and realise its objectives and goals through good management and the development of its staff. The reductions in overall staff in 2010 and the increase in the responsibilities of the Authority required continued flexible responses and re-allocation of work priorities and workloads amongst staff, all of which was facilitated by the continued commitment of staff. The impact of these reductions and further reductions anticipated as a result of the Employment Control Framework will impact on staff and its overall work into 2011.

Qualifax

The key developments in relation to Qualifax were to enhance its responsiveness to the labour market and to enhance the provision of relevant information to its users. Qualifax, at its own instigation, was the

sole source of centrally coordinated information on programmes funded under the Labour Market Activation Fund.

All Framework-related data on Qualifax was audited for accuracy in 2010. This is critical to confidence and reliability. Technical work to develop an enhanced search facility – e.g. by award-type, Framework level, awarding body – was advanced in 2010. This will not only support users but will underpin the Authority’s own work on alignment and Framework implementation.

Internationalisation Register and ACELS

Significant work was undertaken in 2010 to successfully manage the transition and integration of these functions and staff to the Authority. The Internationalisation Register was transferred, without any staffing resource to the Authority in March 2010. The Authority continued to operate the Register and to document, communicate and implement revised arrangements for the management and on-going maintenance of the Internationalisation Register. It was recognised in 2010 that considerable work was needed to integrate the processes and structure of the Register with those of the Authority, including a full assessment of its implications for and impact on the alignment of international awards with the Framework. The use by the Department of Justice and Law Reform of the Register as a regulatory tool in the student visa regime has impacted and continues to impact on its operation (e.g. increased demand for inclusion and monitoring of quality). Consultations with the Department on the implementation of its new regime led to the joint production of details, in December 2010, on eligibility requirements in relation to the Internationalisation Register.

ACELS staff was fully integrated into the Authority in 2010. The full integration of its work, budget and audit with the relevant Authority structures and processes continued in 2010. Significant financial and human resource efficiencies have been gained through the integration of ACELS corporate functions into the Authority.

SG 6 Performance Indicators

- *Qualifax (see also SG 1)*
- *Agreement with Skillnets to share data in relation to Qualifax*

- *Increase in number of programmes included in Qualifax (23, 000 in January 2012 compared to 18, 000 in September 2008)*
- *Promotional materials in relation to adult learners developed for Qualifax and participation by Qualifax staff in 5 key information events for adults in 2010*
- *3 Tripartite meetings of Senior Executives held; communications and framework executives sub-groups met 3 and 4 times respectively*
- *Effective financial management systems confirmed by 2010 internal audits*
- *Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General attested to the sound nature of the Authority's governance systems. No recommendations for action were contained in that report.*
- *Government reform measures (human resource management and budgets) complied with*
- *New code of practice for the governance of state bodies implemented*
- *Annual regulatory compliance statement completed*
- *Continued implementation of PMDS and analysis of training and development needs*
- *Excellence Through People reviewed, finding that the standard in the Authority had improved*
- *Progress on overarching IT development for amalgamated bodies not completed (pending establishment of cross-agency task force)*
- *Collaboration between FETAC, HETAC and Authority on the use of the FETAC Business System pre-amalgamation*
- *Continued development and implementation of Sharepoint across Authority business*
- *Organisational review of energy and waste management regime undertaken and targets for greater efficiency set*

- *Further development and use of Sharepoint system to support and improve knowledge management and business processes*
- *Internationalisation Register successfully transferred to the Authority*
- *Publication of new eligibility requirements in relation to the Internationalisation Register*
- *Technical work to enhance the Qualifax database not completed*
- *ACELS staff integrated into NQAI*
- *ACELS budget and accounts integrated into those of the Authority*

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

BUSINESS PLAN

Report on performance indicators and on actions achieved in 2010

	Key Deliverables Jan2010- until establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (early 2011)	Key Performance Indicators and actions achieved	Target Date	Target met Y/N	Critical Success factors	If target is not met, actions taken to address this and/or issues affecting this
SG1	<i>NFQ is widely known, understood, used and valued in society</i>					
SG1/1	Develop a tripartite communications plan for the lead up to amalgamation	<p>Agree action plan for effective communication on amalgamation to external stakeholders</p> <p>Initiate action plan</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2010</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>N</p>	<p>Subject to funding levels.</p> <p>Subject to approval by new CEO</p>	<p>Planning for amalgamation overtook work on communications and actions were considered in that context</p>
SG1/2	Develop and implement a project management approach in delivery of Corporate and Communications work	<p>Finalise model to support project delivery</p> <p>Sharepoint team to initiate feasibility study to integrate model with</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2010</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>Additional licensing requirements</p>	

		Sharepoint facility			
SG1/3	Continue to implement approach to ensure all E&T information sources correctly reference the NFQ	See Qualifax SG6/15 & 16	2010		
SG1/4	Continue to promote awareness and use of NFQ in awarding bodies/providers	See Qualifax SG6/15,16 & 19	2010		
SG1/5	Continue to promote awareness and use of the NFQ amongst learners/employer bodies/recruiters/Foreign nationals/E&T Providers (incl. Community & Voluntary sector) and User Guides	See Qualifax SG6/14-19			
SG1/6	Position NFQ as the national classification system for data capture and reporting on education and training attainment.	Provide technical support to CSO on ongoing use of new education question in QNHS	2010/11	Y	
		Provide technical support to CSO in preparation for new education question in Census 2011	2010/11	Y	
		SG2/1 – Continued participation in Steering Group to manage the ESRI post school longitudinal study	2010/11	Y – project is delayed	Primary research phase in study delayed as a consequence of data-sharing restrictions in relation to the sample population used in the original post primary

		Continue to participate in SLMRU data sub group. Maintain NFQ use in key skills and education reports for EGFSN	Ongoing	Y		study.
SG1/7	Continue to work with relevant bodies to ensure that the NFQ and ATP policies are supported by public funding policy in education and training	Advise on policy decisions in relation to public funding of education and training	2010/11	Y		
		Develop approach (objectives/actions) to contribute to policy and funding mechanisms	2010/11	Y		
SG1/9	Position NFQ and related services to support labour market participation (see new work item under SG3/3)	Work with agencies to identify information and service needs of those at risk of /or are experiencing unemployment	2010/11	Y		
		Develop appropriate communications response, in collaboration with other relevant agencies and bodies.	2010/11	Y		

	Key Deliverables Jan2010- until establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (early 2011)	Key Performance Indicators and actions achieved	Target Date	Target met Y/N	Critical Success factors	If target is not met, actions taken to address this and/or issues affecting this
SG2	<i>NFQ is more deeply implemented in a way that is open and responsive to the needs of the learner, society and the economy</i>					
SG2/1	Develop strategic response to the Framework Implementation and Impact Study in the context of establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland	<p>Compile sectoral responses</p> <p>Consideration of responses by authority reference group</p> <p>Develop follow-up action plan with key stakeholders, in context of establishment of QQAI and engagement with FETAC and HETAC</p> <p>Consideration of follow up actions presented to Authority</p> <p>Implement recommendations as appropriate</p>	<p>End March 2010</p> <p>April/May 2010</p> <p>May/June 2010</p> <p>Summer 2010</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	Timing and impact of amalgamation and engagement of stakeholders	

SG2/2	Include remainder of universities' awards including affiliated and NUI colleges.	Follow-up action to be taken, SG 2/11		Y	Effective engagement and cooperation from universities, recognised colleges, and NUI
		Participate in Working Group established by IUA to make recommendation to university registrars on inclusion of award currently designated the Postgraduate Diploma in Education	Dec 09- March 2010	Y	Effective engagement and cooperation from universities and teaching colleges.
		With IUA, complete technical analysis of programme documentation from universities and colleges	March 2010	Y	
		Contribute, including drafting of report, to formulation of a recommendation to Registrars	March 2010	Y	
SG2/3	Support and coordinate the ongoing	Continue to act as	2010/11	Y	Continued engagement of

	development of FIN	joint secretary with IUA	& ongoing See SG 3/2 and 3/3		FIN members to carry out projects identified and impact of amalgamation
		Coordinate activities, where possible, with those of IHEQN and Bologna Experts			
SG2/4	Support and contribute to projects from FIN	Development of projects around overall theme of lifelong learning	2010	Y	Continued engagement of FIN members to carry out projects identified and impact of amalgamation
		Publish and disseminate with IUA outcomes of FIN meetings and activities	2010	Y	
SG2/5	Support HEA in organisation of Bologna Retrospective conference	Conference completed	2010	Y	

SG2/6	Implement agreed approach for a process and schedule for inclusion of legacy awards with each university and linked college	Internal project group to implement agreed approach with each university and linked college	2010/2011	Incomplete	Effective engagement and cooperation with universities and NUI	Discussions continued with NUI and with individual higher education institutions, Resourcing of this work proved difficult in 2010 owing to reduced resources in NQAI, NUI and universities.
		Agreement of levels of undergraduate, masters and doctoral degrees across universities	Summer 2010	N		
		Publish legacy information on NQAI and Qualifax websites	Summer 2010	Y		
SG2/7	Encourage and support development of coordinated initiatives in the context of tripartite structures through the Framework Executive Group (FEG)	Continue to hold FEG meetings and develop sub-groups on particular issues as appropriate.	2010/2011	Y		
		Disseminate outcomes across 3 bodies	2010 and ongoing	Y		
		Implement actions referred to it from tripartite group	2010 and ongoing	Y		

SG2/8	Process applications from professional and international awarding bodies for inclusion and alignment	Effective engagement with international and professional bodies in processing applications as they arise	2010/11	Y	Effective cooperation with Councils	
	Discuss with all awarding bodies with aligned awards arrangements in place to mitigate risks of incidents of QA failures amongst providers	Complete and document series of discussions	2010	Y and change of approach		Following an initial set of discussions, the executive took a different approach to the issue which focuses on regular on-going engagement with awarding organisations (see below)
	Co-operate with UK regulator OFQUAL's review of alignment process pilot project	Effective engagement with OFQUAL	2010	Y		Agreement with OFQUAL to prepare a revised alignment agreement (key elements agreed in late 2010)
	Convene alignment tripartite group to review quality and other issues associated with alignment process, including analysis of statistical returns of awarding bodies	Identify and implement policies arising from reviews	2010 and ongoing	Y		
	Develop and publish new criteria and policies for the alignment of the awards of international sectoral certifying bodies (Group D)	Adoption and publication of policy by Authority	Summer 2010	Y		
	Process applications for alignment of sectoral awards, following adoption of new policy	Effective engagement with sectoral certifying bodies	2010 and ongoing	Y		

SG2/9	Through Framework implementation projects promote use of learning outcomes throughout system	See SG2/4 (FIN)				
SG2/10	Continue international engagement on learning outcomes, in particular through European Commission's Cluster Group on recognition of learning outcomes	Participate in cluster group meetings and contribute to outputs	2010 and ongoing	Y		
SG2/11	<p>In the context of deepening implementation of the Framework, promote cross- sectoral consistency in its use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare issues paper on use of NFQ award- types, award titles, credit ranges across 10 Levels of NFQ • Circulate and discuss issues paper with stakeholders • Convene national forum 	<p>SG3/4 (FE) Linked to issues emerging from SG 2/1 (FIIS) and 2/2 (uni awards) Greater consistency in higher education naming conventions</p>	End April 2010	N	Cooperation from a range of stakeholders across further and higher education and training	Executive continued work to draft the issues paper setting out current practice and divergences across sectors. The precise manner in which this will be progressed is being re-considered
			May/June 2010	N		
			Autumn 2010	N		

	Key Deliverables Jan2010- until establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (early 2011)	Key Performance Indicators and actions achieved	Target Date	Target met Y/N	Critical Success factors	If target is not met, actions taken to address this and/or issues affecting this
SG3	<i>Effective and integrated pathways between qualifications operate throughout the NFQ</i>					
SG3/1	Support existing work on progression for holders of different forms of major awards at levels 4,5 and 6	FETAC publishing updated craft progression brochure NQAI leading a standards migration project in childcare and retail sectors	2010 2010/11	Y Y		
SG3/2	Develop and commence implementation of action lines on ATP arising out of FIIS, through tripartite structures in the context of establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland	See SG2/1 (FIIS)	2010/11	Y		
SG3/3	Prepare revised strategic options paper, in the light of current economic circumstances, on RPL for consideration by both Departments	Options paper devised and submitted to Departments for discussion	2010	Y	Availability of staff resource	Strategic options paper considered by Authority in July 2010. Led to preparation of a joint paper with EGFSN secretariat on RPL and the national skills strategy which was finalised in late 2010/January 2011 for the Department of Education and Skills

SG3/4	<p>Promote use of credit as transfer and accumulation tool – national forum</p> <p>Organise seminar to disseminate information on FETAC Common Awards and credit systems to HE institutions admission officers</p> <p>Support development of credit in FETAC and its links to ECVET</p>	<p>See SG2/4 (FIN) See SG2/11 (Forum)</p> <p>Visibility of credit system operating in FET</p>	<p>2010 & ongoing</p> <p>Autumn 2010</p> <p>2010 and ongoing</p>	<p>N</p> <p>N</p> <p>Y</p>		<p>See SG2/11</p> <p>Meting was postponed in December 2010 to early 2011</p> <p>Executive focuses on using EQF-related groups and networks to inform itself of ECVET developments and respond appropriately</p>
SG3/5	<p>Participate in and contribute to HEA's advisory group on Access</p>	<p>Participation in and contributing to HEA access advisory group and national approach to access</p>	<p>2010/11 & ongoing</p>	<p>Y</p>		

	Key Deliverables Jan2010- until establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (early 2011)	Key Performance Indicators and actions achieved	Target Date	Target met Y/N	Critical Success factors	If target is not met, actions taken to address this and/or issues affecting this
SG4	<i>All Framework qualifications are quality assured to the highest standards</i>					
SG4/1	<p>Monitor follow through on FETAC review outcomes</p> <p><i>Priority areas include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Internal review of organisational and staffing arrangements</i> ○ <i>Testing of a range of standard setting approaches – setting new standards and bringing together existing standards – implementing agreed approaches</i> ○ <i>Establishment of Industry Forum</i> 	<p>Conduct ongoing discussions with Council on 6 monthly reports provided and report back to Authority</p>	<p>2010 and until amalgamation</p>	Y		
SG4/2	<p>Monitor follow through on HETAC review outcomes</p> <p><i>Priority areas include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Development of a policy and approach to improved training for reviewers</i> ○ <i>Development of a strategic approach to selection and deployment of reviewers</i> ○ <i>Review of system of support for providers</i> ○ <i>Review of operational processes for programme accreditation and development of a policy on periodic review of programmes</i> ○ <i>Implementation of actions agreed with</i> 	<p>Conduct discussions with Council and report back to Authority as per agreed approach</p>	<p>2010 and until amalgamation</p>	Y		

	<i>regard to the publication of reports</i>					
SG4/3	Perform statutory functions in relation to the delegation by Councils to providers of authority to make awards	Perform these functions in a timely manner as and when required.	2010 and until amalgamation	Y		
SG4/4	Monitor follow through on DIT review outcomes and develop a plan with Institute for next institutional review	Assess and respond to DIT annual reporting mechanisms to Authority which include monitoring of follow-through on review outcomes and consideration of findings arising from QA procedures	2010 and until amalgamation	Y		
		Devise and agree plan with Institute for undertaking of next institutional review in consultation with Councils and IUQB	Spring 2010	Y		
SG4/5	Consider annually the findings arising from the application by DIT of its quality assurance procedures	See SG4/4	2010 and until amalgamation	Y	DIT resourcing this process	

	<p>Ensure completion by Institute of categorisation of DIT non-major awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment of class of award and level to all non-major awards • Publication of outcomes 		2010	On-going	
SG4/6	Complete review of RCSI re commencement of RCSI awarding powers	Agree plan for review and complete review process, in conjunction with the HEA and in consultation with Councils and IUQB, within agreed timetable	2010	Y	
SG4/7	Executive to inform itself and share information with HETAC and IUQB on international developments in QA (existing objective re-cast)	Ongoing appropriate engagement	Ongoing	Y	
SG4/8	Executive to inform itself of developments in EQARF and ECVET in conjunction with FETAC (re-cast existing objective; see SG3/4)	Ongoing appropriate engagement	2010 & ongoing	Y	
SG4/9	Monitor integration of Framework in QA arrangements of awarding bodies and providers	Promotion of integration of Framework in QA arrangements with QA agencies in context of IHEQN discussions on amalgamation & EQF implementation.	2010 and until amalgamation	Y	

SG4/10	Develop principles on integration of NFQ implementation in institutional QA processes in the context of National Forum on consistent use of NFQ and implementation of FIIS recommendations	Principles developed	2010	N		Insufficient resources
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	Key Deliverables Jan2010- until establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (early 2011)	Key Performance Indicators and actions achieved	Target Date	Target met Y/N	Critical Success factors	If target is not met, actions taken to address this and/or issues affecting this
SG5	<i>Framework qualifications are fully recognised abroad and qualifications gained outside Ireland are appropriately recognised in Ireland</i>					
SG5/1	Participate on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o EQF Advisory Group o Web platform Group o NCP (National Coordination Point) Group 	Participate in EQF Advisory Group and on steering committee for EQF platform. Carry out role as NCP for EQF	2010 and until amalgamation Ongoing	Y (& ongoing) Y	Receipt of NCP funding from EU Commission	
SG5/2	Develop and implement communication on EQF Communications	EQF communication plan implemented See SG 5/14	2010 and until amalgamation	Y		
SG5/3	Engagement as experts with European member states and EU commission on EQF matters and NFQ development and implementation issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • Hosting study visits • Provision of information to EU and other member states 		2010 and until amalgamation	Y		
SG5/4	Engagement in ENIC-NARIC network	Engagement with Network on ongoing basis.	2010 and until amalgamation	Y		
		Participate in NARIC funded project in 2010-2011 re using frameworks as part of the recognition process.	2010/11	Y		

	Key Deliverables Jan2010- until establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (early 2011)	Key Performance Indicators and actions achieved	Target Date	Target met Y/N	Critical Success factors	If target is not met, actions taken to address this and/or issues affecting this
SG6	<i>The Authority, in tandem with FETAC and HETAC, are high-quality, effective and efficient State agencies.</i>					
SG6/1	<p><i>Corporate Governance</i></p> <p>Through tripartite structures ensure effective use of grants and VFM</p>	<p>Tripartite with Councils working effectively in achieving effective use of grants and VFM</p> <p>Budgets have been developed and agreed in line with available funding</p> <p>Budget/expenditure reporting is timely, transparent and consistent with enhanced framework of accountability across the 3 bodies</p> <p>Budgets have been achieved in line with agreed</p>	<p>Annual and ongoing</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2010</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>Impact of amalgamation & Government Reform measures</p> <p>Funding levels are not reduced</p> <p>Cooperation of all bodies</p> <p>Effective budget management of 3 bodies</p>	<p>Expenditure in 2010 was impacted by the Government Reform measures and each of the bodies complied with the measures as appropriate to the business of each body.</p> <p>Having regard to Government</p>

		allocations				reform measures
SG6/2	Tripartite – continue to consider ongoing resourcing needs for 3 bodies	Tripartite with Councils continuing to consider resourcing needs	Annual and ongoing	Y	Budget constraints, moratorium and amalgamation plans	
SG6/3	Tripartite- common organisational objectives	Tripartite with Councils effectively developed common organisational objectives through a joint strategic planning approach	2010	Y	Effectiveness of Joint communications group & FEG	
SG6/4	Tripartite approach to effective development and implementation of amalgamation of the 3 bodies and quality assurance functions	Tripartite with Councils effectively implements organisational change in qualifications and quality assurance	2010/11	On-going		
		Continued collaboration with DES	2010	Y	Tripartite supports full collaboration on amalgamation	
		Tripartite responded to draft legislation	2010	Y		
		Collaboration with universities	2010	Y and ongoing		

		encouraged on amalgamation issues			
SG6/5	Ensure internal audit function continues effectively	Internal audit function managed effectively	Annual	Y	
		New Code of Practice for the Governance of State bodies effectively implemented	2010	Y	
		Internal audit performance and assessment of internal audit effectiveness undertaken	2010	Y	
		Annual regulatory compliance statement approved	2010	Y	
		Annual Financial Statements approved	2010	Y	
SG6/6	Ensure compliance with data protection	Full compliance with data	2010/11 & ongoing	Y	

		protection legislation			
SG6/7	Continue PMDS against strategic plans	Effective implementation of PMDS	Annual	Y	
		PMDS training and development needs analysis in place and being implemented and in cooperation with amalgamating bodies	2010	N	
		Strategic approach to staff development established and implemented	2010	Y	
SG6/8	Excellence Through People Award	ETP review completed and ETP standard maintained	2010	Y	
SG6/9	Amalgamation HR				
	PMDS models and use of PMDS compared across three bodies	Models and use compared	2010	Y	
	General policies and procedures across three bodies mapped and approach developed for amalgamated body	Mapping and agreed approach in place	2010	Y	

	Information on contracts of employment for three bodies known and compiled	Information compiled	2010	Y	
SG6/10	Continue to monitor internal structures to ensure knowledge exchange and communications	Internal structures in place to ensure knowledge exchange and communications	ongoing	Y	
SG6/11	Develop strategies for utilisation of IT to enhance performance	Systems are maintained and enhanced to support the organisations objectives	ongoing	Y	
		Support development of FBS and joint managed solution	2010	Y	
SG6/12	Amalgamation IT - Overarching IT development for amalgamation	IT development and implementation group established	2010	N	Pending the establishment of a cross body task force for the amalgamation
SG6/13	Shared services in education	Continuing developments with 9 education agencies in identifying and exploiting shared services opportunities	on-going	N	Efforts were concentrated on amalgamation

	<i>Qualifax</i>					
SG6/14	Enhance Qualifax user experience, encouraging them to investigate independently	Website developed to meet the needs of specific audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults • Guidance profession • Parents/families 	2010	Y		
SG6/15	Promote accurate referencing of the NFQ on Qualifax to inform learner choice	Data on Qualifax is accurate, NFQ compliant and complete	Ongoing	Y		
		Data on Qualifax enhanced to include NFQ data items eg Award title, Award type, NFQ level, Awarding body	2010	N		Technical work underway and to be completed, subject to funding by Mar 2011
SG6/16	Qualifax to support access, transfer and progression	Effective engagement with EQF web tool	2010/11	Y	Contingent on developments on EQF web tool	
		Qualifax makes specific contribution to ATP	2010/11	Y	ATP agenda and amalgamation	
		Advanced	2010	Y	FBS	

		inclusion of full range of FETAC awards in Qualifax				
SG6/17	Enhance information contained in Qualifax relating to employment, to inform individual choice	Links established with career and labour market information sources	2010	Y	EGFSN, FÁS	
SG6/18	Qualifax to address national socio-economic priorities	Links established and resources developed to raise awareness among users	Continuing 2010/11	N		Objective amended during 2010 and focus shifted to develop external partnerships. This has been achieved (& is ongoing)
SG6/19	Qualifax to provide increased learner access to high quality information	Marketing plan developed for target audiences	2010	Y		
		Links to labour market projections	2010	Y		
		Advanced data sharing arrangements	2010/11	Y		
SG6/20	Qualifax operations are efficiently maintained	Management and operations of Qualifax reviewed	2010	Y		
SG6/21	ACELS Integration	Legacy staff fully integrated	2010	Y		

		All staff have achieved appropriate level of learning in relation to ACELS and its services	2010/11	Y and ongoing	
		ACELS appropriately budgeted within Authority's 2010 budget	2010	Y	
		ACELS properly accounted in NQAI accounts 2010	2010	Y	
		General and financial administration fully integrated into Authority processes and procedures	2010	Y	
SG6/22	Internationalisation Register	Internationalisation register has successfully transferred to the Authority and integrated into the work systems	2010	Y and ongoing	

		Plans for full review of register underway	2010	Y and ongoing		
SG6/23	Organisational 'green environment' strategy	'Green environment' strategy developed and implemented in alignment with the Governments agenda to reduce energy and save on waste	2010	Y		
SG6/24	Sharepoint	Successful development and implementation of plan for full organisational use of Sharepoint	2010	Y		