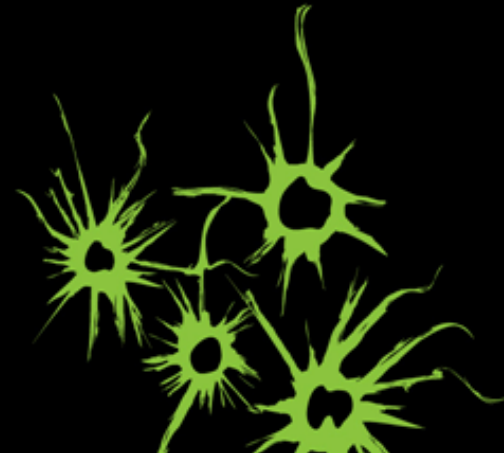


Development and implementation of the Dutch National Qualifications Framework

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Why qualifications frameworks?

Increased need for transparency

- New contexts
 - Life-long learning
 - International mobility
- Increasing complexity of 'learning'
 - Specialisation → more certificates
 - Innovation → new certificates
 - Liberalisation → new providers
- Certification gains importance
- Recognition of informal learning
 - Workplace learning
 - Accreditation of previously-gained competencies in formal education

Qualifications frameworks before Europe adopted them

- National qualifications frameworks developed since late 20th century
 - e.g. in
 - New Zealand
 - South Africa
 - Scotland
 - Ireland
 - USA
- All share the basic assumption of hierarchy:
 - Level 3 > level 2 > level 1
- Is this correct?
 - Multiple learning outcomes
 - Is intellectual complexity the only, defining dimension?
 - Blackmur, D. 2004. A Critique of the Concept of a National Qualifications Framework. *Quality in Higher Education*, 10, 267-284.

Two European qualifications frameworks

■ QF-EHEA

- Higher education only
- Main aim: mobility
- Three-cycle structure
 - First cycle: bachelor
 - Second cycle: Master
 - Third cycle: PhD

■ EQF

- All levels of education
- Main aim: life-long learning



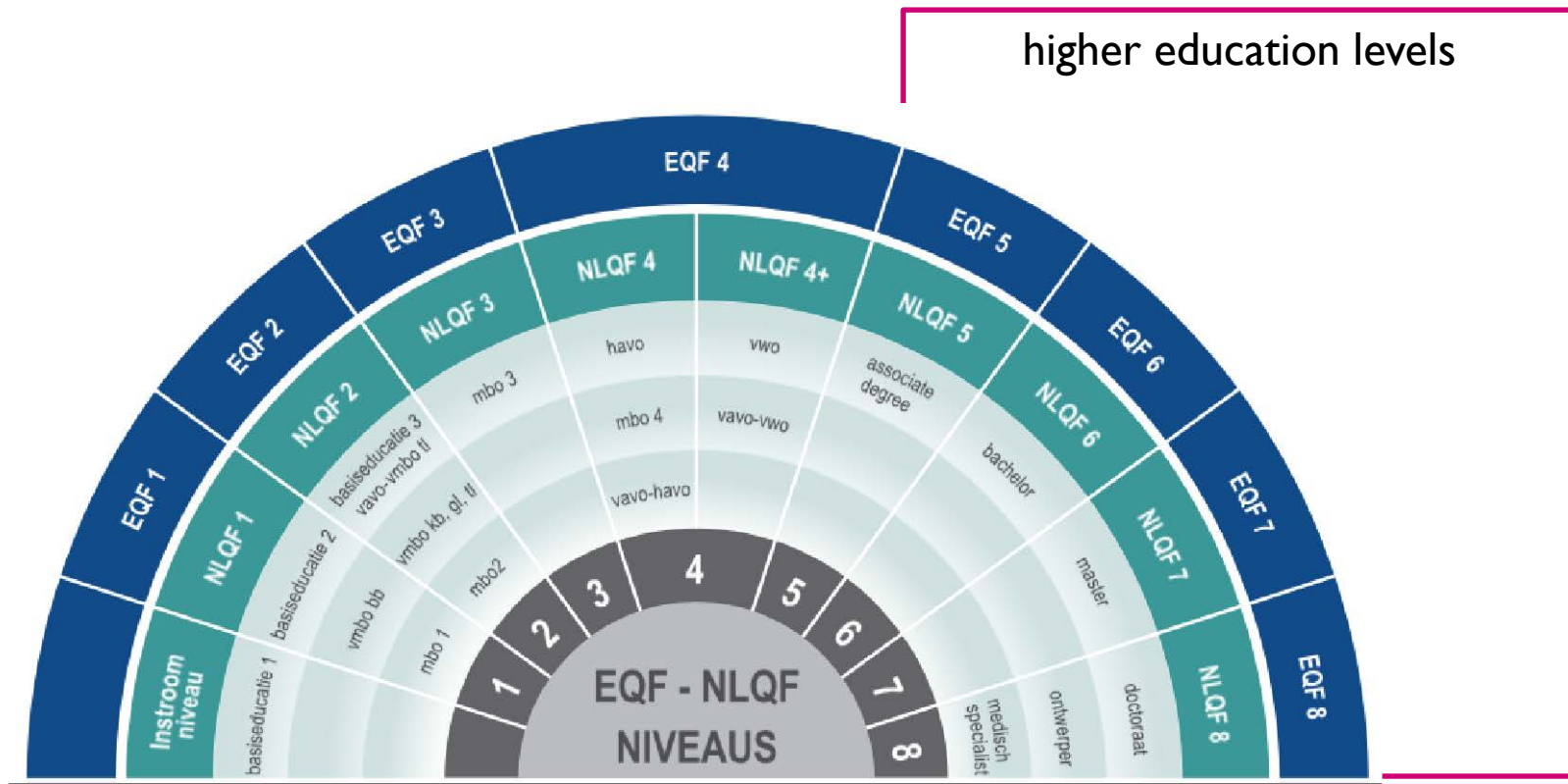
QF-EHEA and EQF compatibility

EQF Level	QF-EHEA Cycle	
1	-	
2	-	
3	-	
4	-	
5	1	<i>(„Short cycle qualification“ within the 1st cycle 120 ECTS credits)</i>
6		180-240 ECTS credits
7	2	60 – 180 ECTS credits, usually 90-180 ECTS, And in parallel 60 ECTS credits should obtained at the 2nd cycle level
8	3	No credits ranges specified; 3-4 standard years (ftll-time delivery mode)

Qualifications framework in the Netherlands: Introduced following Bologna Process (QF-EHEA)

- 2008: 'the national qualifications framework:
 - describes all qualifications (degrees or diplomas) ... in the higher education system and relates these qualifications to one another in a coherent way;
 - defines the relationship between the different education qualifications;
 - clarifies the level of qualifications within the specific national context;
 - is internationally understood.'
 - NVAO 2008. *The Higher Education Qualifications Framework in the Netherlands, ... : Self-certification document* s.l. [The Hague], NVAO.
- 2011: Expanded to full NLQF adapted to EQF

NLQF has 8 (9) levels

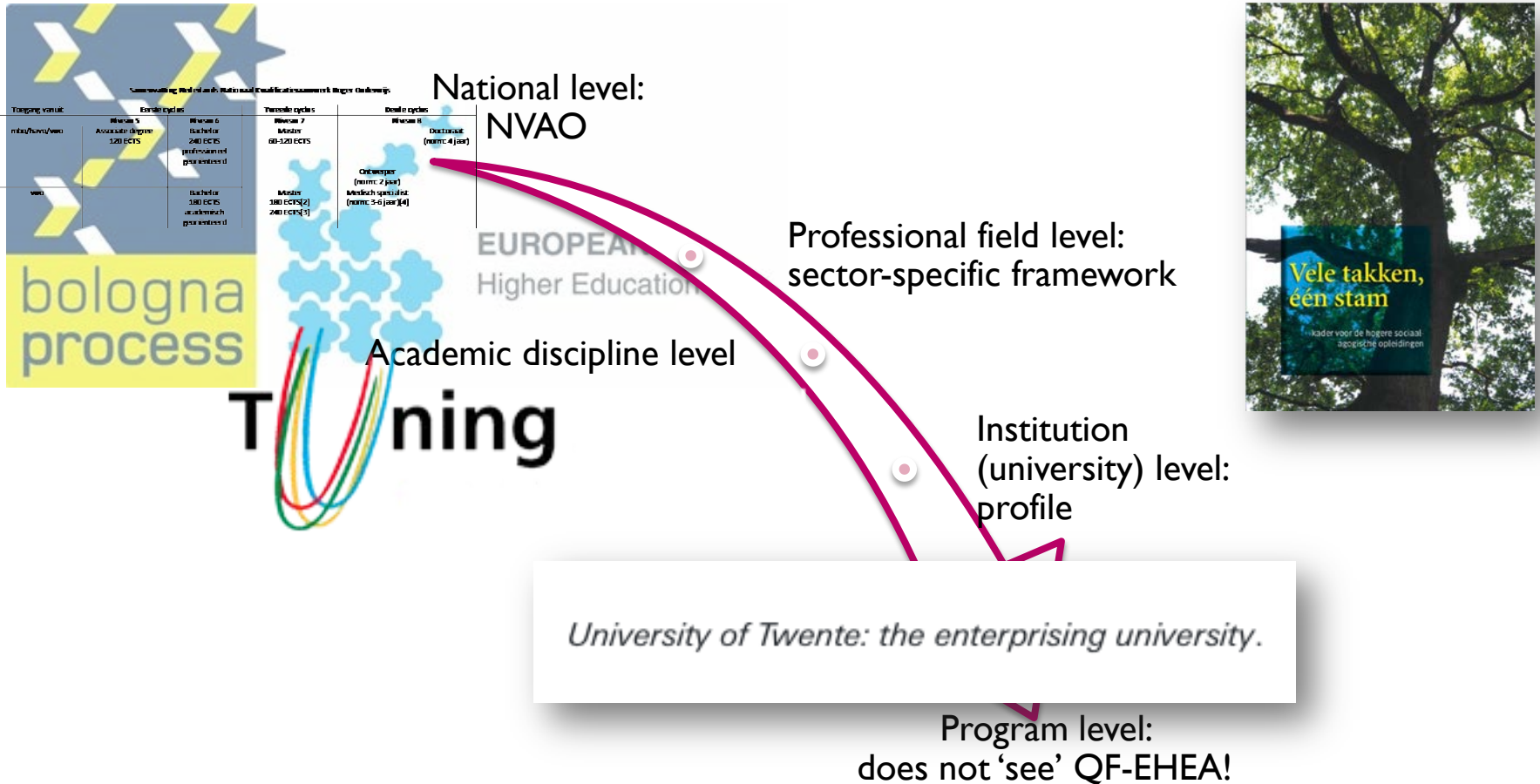


National Coordination Point NLQF

- The National Coordination Point NLQF is a 'qango'
 - Independent operation
 - Paid mainly from public funds
 - Minister of Education
 - EU
 - Fees for assessment
 - www.nlqf.nl/english
- Aim
 - To assign certificates that are not government-controlled to the NLQF levels
 - Through independent assessment
 - Maintain a public register of certificates
 - Monitor and evaluate the NLQF and its implementation



Top-down implementation of NLQF in higher education



From teacher-centred to student-centred: Competencies at the heart

- The major effect of the NLQF in higher education!
- Affected accreditation
 - Focus on assessment of achieved learning outcomes
 - Much less on inputs to the teaching process
- Visiting committee (re-)checks students' final works
 - Contentious because visiting committee's criteria are not explicit and may diverge from those in the study program
 - While programs have increasingly explicit and detailed standards for final works
 - Final written theses do not provide the full picture
 - Process of writing the thesis: independence, handling critique
 - Other products, e.g. in performing arts, health care

Questions?

