

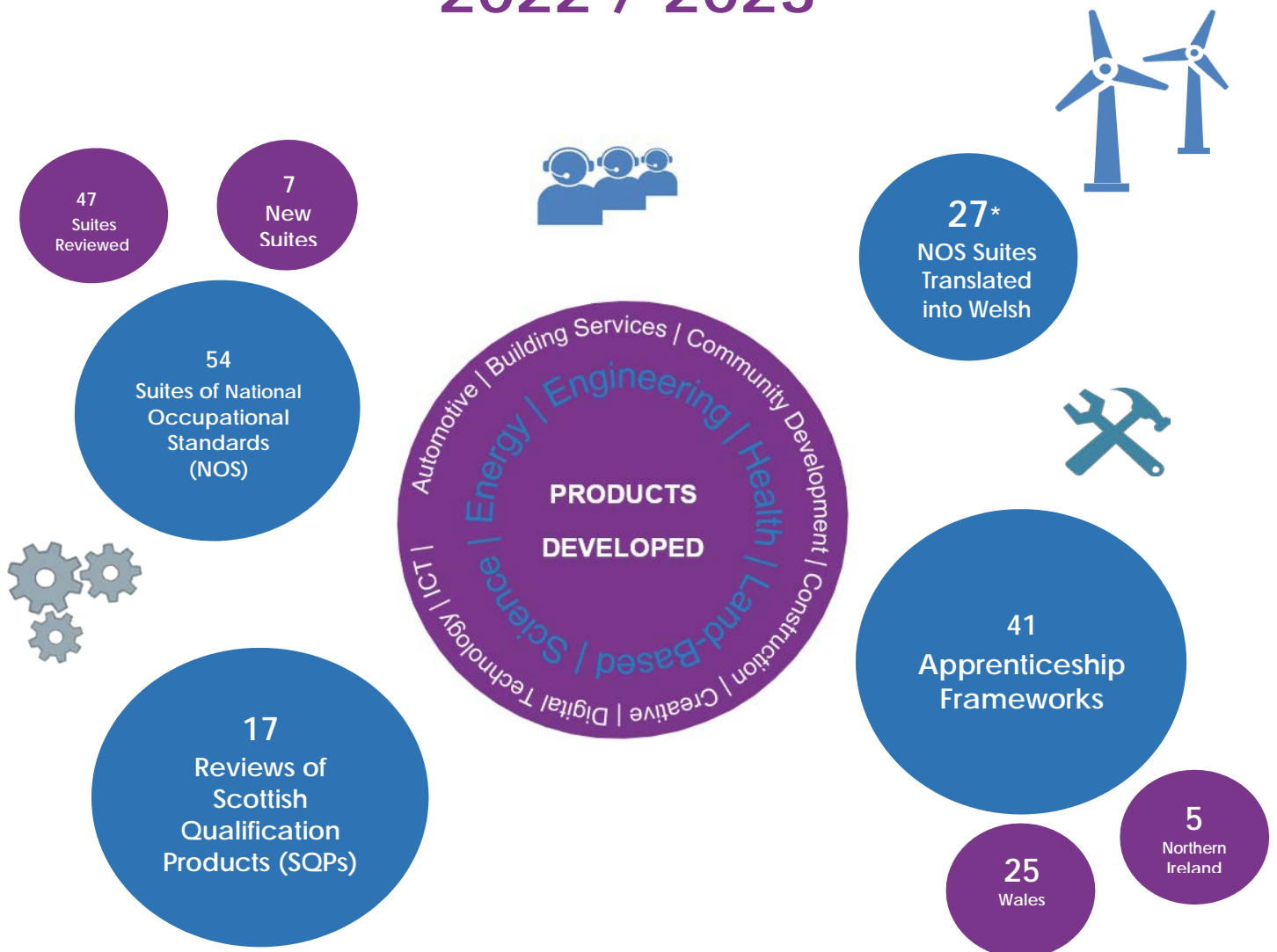


ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023



Standards and Frameworks

2022 / 2023



2.9 million hits | **2,656** unique users
2.1 million individual searches

Top 5 Searched Sectors

Repair Harm | Health and Social Care | Hairdressing
Civil Contingencies | Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO)

* Welsh translation of an additional 5 suites funded by WG outside of the S&F Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Occupational Standards Governance Group (NOSGG) undertook extensive research through various agencies on the current NOS/occupational standards system across the UK to give the most informed view of the new strategy which was published in autumn 2022.

The intention of the new strategy is to build on the value and positive position of NOS and focus on continuous improvement through strategic and operational changes.

Highlights of the new strategy include:

- Acknowledgment of changes in context, such as an ageing population, growth of job automation, increasing use of technology in workplace, growth and decline in sectors, environmental factors, pandemic, policy divergence, devolution, Brexit.
- An increasing emphasis and value placed on transferable skills and mobility of labour and how NOS can support this.
- Commitment to making NOS processes and systems more agile and accessible including the database.
- Promoting NOS as a multi-purpose product with a strong focus on their role in the skills system.
- Building a strong evidence base using reliable, robust sources of labour market information to inform NOS review and development schedule, evaluate impact, and support compelling communications.

Importantly, the strategy included a new set of principles and priorities which will guide the work of the NOSGG for the coming years. The 7 priorities formed the basis of a new action plan and considerable headway has been made to date and demonstrates the collective commitment of the NOSGG to ensuring NOS remain fit for purpose and reflect the changing nature of work and the economy of the UK.

For the period April 2022 to September 2022 and in addition to developing the new strategy, the focus of the work was to ensure the programme of commissioning the development and review of NOS and improvements to the database continued.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has continued to support NOSGG in their role as managing agent and has managed the existing supplier framework as well as managing the procurement of a new framework, ensuring that the right suppliers are in place to deliver NOS. SDS have also continued to maintain the NOS website

and database as well as improving its functionality.

2. PROGRESS APRIL 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2022

During the first half of the year, the NOSGG approved the procurement schedule for NOS Products for 2022/23 which included commissioning of NOS products for review/development and Welsh translation in 22/23. Contracts for 54 suites of NOS products were awarded to 14 suppliers for the 2022/23 period. (A full list of the products that were commissioned can be found on the [NOS website](#).)

Other highlights and activities for the period include:

- The existing NOS Database was under regular review with data being updated. Part of this work involved allocating SOC2020 codes to existing NOS and undertaking appropriate data cleansing to improve the search functionality.
- A new [resources](#) tab was approved for the front page of the database, to make signposting to key documents easier.
- Additional pieces of work were commissioned to add to the existing NOS evidence base. Work Advance produced two separate LMI reports: one of which explores the availability of reliable LMI across the UK Nations to support the NOS system. The other report explores how the acquisition of sectoral information and NOS consultation activities have had to adjust over time to accommodate political, financial, and societal changes. The NOSGG is currently considering the recommendations from both reports.
- The Welsh Government commissioned two other pieces of work on behalf of the NOSGG – firstly a Professional Standards mapping exercise to understand coverage and use of NOS for professional occupations, versus professional standards. This demonstrated that of the 160 professions that are regulated by legislation, only a small percentage (18.2%) of those who responded to the questionnaire recognise or use NOS. Findings from the research will help inform prioritisation of NOS requiring review/development. Secondly, an Equality and Diversity Audit was carried out on the end-to-end NOS system via consultation with current NOS developers. Strong examples of existing good practice were identified.
- Work commenced on identifying common standards transferrable across multiple sectors with a view to agreeing a full set of pan/multi sector NOS for use across sectors and occupations.
- A pilot reviewing two of the suites identified as being pan/multi-sector - Leadership & Management and Business & Administration was completed.

The findings highlighted high levels of duplication, instances of where new NOS have been created with minimal/no change or contextualisation and out of date NOS. Further work on other occupational areas is ongoing.

3. PROGRESS SEPTEMBER 2022 – APRIL 2023

In the second half of the year, work continued to review, develop, and translate NOS products that were contracted at the beginning of the year.

The process for identifying demand for NOS during 2023/24 also took place in this period with labour market intelligence used from a range of sources to assist decision making. Key drivers for commissioning include occupational changes brought about by new legislation, technological developments, transferable skills, and economic recovery.

The current multi-supplier framework expired at the end of March 2023. The tender process to establish a new multi lot, multi-supplier framework on behalf of the Devolved Governments commenced in the second half of 2022/23.

Once the new NOS Strategy was published in September 2022, work started on the action plan.

Priority 1 - Refresh the NOS Database/website to improve accessibility and appropriate presentation of NOS products.

Work has been ongoing during this period to upgrade the NOS database and website to a new up to date content management system. The new website and database will look familiar to users but will feature new and improved functionality to improve both the navigability for NOS users, as well as the admin functions for suppliers and approvers. Data migration was completed and work is ongoing to ensure all aspects of the system are functioning by Autumn 2023.

These improvements complete the first stage of development with a further stage to follow in 23/24 which will continue to enhance functionality and support the wider priorities of the NOS Strategy.

Priority 2 - Enable transferability of skills across sectors through the definition of pan/multi sector NOS.

As the NOS Strategy highlights, transferable skills are critical in a changing economy allowing people to transfer into new roles within, and across, sectors.

The NOSGG have identified and mapped those transferable skills which are most important to the economy and will support social mobility now and in the future. As a follow on to this, work was then carried out to identify the current pan/multi

sector NOS which support the demonstration of these skills in the workplace. The process started with Leadership & Management and Business and Administration NOS suites.

Priority 3- Make better and more consistent use of LMI and other data sources in NOS development to support economic recovery and growth.

Having an up-to-date evidence base is critical in ensuring NOS are in the right place, at the right time to serve the needs of the economy and stakeholders. NOSGG commissioned research to identify the optimum LMI sources to support NOS GG with their decision-making and commissioning process for NOS. The report is being considered by the NOSGG with a view to incorporating the recommendations into the annual NOS commissioning process.

Priority 4 - Ensure the continuous improvement of the end-to-end NOS process.

NOSGG is committed to reviewing the NOS process to ensure that NOS can be developed and reviewed as efficiently and effectively as possible.

A case study was developed to demonstrate the potential value of developing or reviewing NOS and related products concurrently. The case study focuses on the work of IMI, the Institute for the Motor Industry and demonstrates how careful planning, stakeholder management and effective use of technologies can expedite the work to develop or review NOS and develop/review products such as qualifications at the same time.

Lessons learned from this case study will be considered as part of the ongoing review of the NOS system.

Priority 5 - Develop and implement a robust evaluation and monitoring process.

One of the key challenges for the NOSGG is having access to high quality, impact data to help promote the value of NOS. NOS can be used for various purposes including qualification development, learning and development, recruitment etc. Having quantitative and qualitative information will ensure that improvements to NOS can support these activities and continue to add value.

An evaluation framework is being developed to reinforce a culture of continuous improvement which is advocated by the NOSGG, to continually monitor industry needs and ensure that NOS processes can respond appropriately.

Priority 6 - Develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy to support the delivery of the NOS strategy and action plan.

The NOSGG is keen to embed a strategic approach to communications to ensure deeper more meaningful messages reach the right audience at the right time.

The NOSGG has developed a communications strategy which uses the principles and priorities of the NOS strategy on which to build key messages. It clearly identifies the priority audiences for NOS through the creation of a stakeholder map helping deliver targeted messages.

Additionally, a range of communication resources have been developed using the principles outlined in the strategy which are available on the [NOS website](#), for a variety of stakeholders to use.

Priority 7 - Continue to pursue clearer alignment with respective four nation and international occupational standards policy.

Skills policies across the UK are undergoing significant change and the NOSGG are committed to exploring opportunities for alignment across the UK to ensure common understanding and reduce any potential confusion or burden on stakeholders where possible. This involves proactive engagement across the Nations and a regular policy review to track policy across the UK nations as well as policy in key European and international countries. This not only helps identify areas of commonality but also best practice which can be used by the Devolved Governments to inform future NOS work.