



Referencing Report of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Cabo Verde to the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)

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Referencing to ACQF Report

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List of abbreviaations

ARES - Higher Education Regulatory Agency
CESP - Higher Professional Education Courses
CNQ - National Qualifications Catalogue
DESP - Professional Higher Education Diploma
DGE - General Directorate of Employment
DGES - General Directorate of Higher Education
DNE - National Directorate of Education
ETF - European Training Foundation
EU - European Union
IES - Higher Education Institution (HEI)
ME - Ministry of Education
MFFE - Ministry of Finance and Business Development
QEQ - European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
QEQ GC - EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG)
QNQ - National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
RVCC - Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences
SNQ - National Qualifications System (NQS)
UC-SNQ - Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System
VNIL - Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning
ACQF - African Continental Qualifications Framework
ACTS - African Academic Credit Transfer System
AfriQAN - African Quality Assurance Network
ASG-QA - African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
CEDEAO - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
CPLP - Community of Portuguese Language Countries
ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
HAQAA3 - Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
RAAQES-PALOP - Network of Quality Assurance and Evaluation Agencies in Higher Education of Portuguese-Speaking African Countries
UA - African Union
ZCLCA - African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
ACP - Professional Complementary Year
CNEP - National Commission for Professional Equivalences
COS - Sectoral Councils
CPQA - Council for Academic Quality
CTIQ - Interministerial Technical Committee for Qualification

CTS - Sectoral Technical Committees

EC - Competence Elements

ECTS - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

EFP - Education and Vocational Training

EQA - External Quality Assurance

MF - Training Modules

PAEF - Accreditation Platform for Training Entities

PD-ARES - ARES Digital Platform

RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning

SIGE - Integrated School Management System

SIGQ - Internal Quality Assurance Systems

SNAQES - National Higher Education Quality Assurance System

UC - Competence Units

UF - Training Units

AGE - Administration and Management (Professional Family)

EHTCV - School of Hospitality and Tourism of Cabo Verde

IDH - Human Development Index (HDI)

IEFP - Institute of Employment and Vocational Training

IMC - Continuous Multi-Objective Survey

ONG - Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

PNUD - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

SETEJA - Technical-Vocational Education and Youth and Adult Education Service

SFP - Vocational Training Service

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

TIC - Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

EUCV - Catholic University School of Cabo Verde

ISCEE - Higher Institute of Economic and Business Sciences

ISCJS - Higher Institute of Legal and Social Sciences

UM - University of Mindelo

Uni-CV - University of Cabo Verde

UniPiaget - Jean Piaget University of Cabo Verde

US - University of Santiago

UTA - Technical University of the Atlantic

UNICA - Intercontinental University of Cabo Verde

Executive Summary

1.1 Referencing qualifications frameworks to strengthen mutual trust

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is an essential mechanism for enhancing the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications at the continental scale. The ACQF is structured as a 10-level meta-framework, serving as a linkage mechanism and a translation tool between different qualifications frameworks or systems. This function is fundamental to supporting fair and effective labour and academic mobility, as it enables students, graduates, and professionals to move, work, and continue their studies transparently and with due recognition across the African continent.

This Referencing Report to the ACQF builds upon and utilizes a substantial part of the analytical work, structure, and text of the Comparison Report between the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Cabo Verde, published in 2023 on the [Europass portal](#). This rigorous comparison exercise served as the methodological foundation for the international transparency of Cabo Verde's NQF, and its robust outcomes significantly facilitated the current referencing process to the African continental meta-framework (ACQF).

1.2 Cabo Verde and Regional and Continental Integration: African Union (AU), African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

At the continental level, the country's policy choices are strongly anchored in the directives of the African Union (AU); for instance, the Strategic Plan¹ for Education 2017–2021 adopts the AU² Agenda 2063 as one of its main reference frameworks.

The AfCFTA is a flagship initiative of the African Union under Agenda 2063, with the primary objective of establishing a single continental market for goods and services, facilitated by the movement of capital and persons. Currently the world's largest free trade area by number of participating countries, projected to encompass a population of over 1.4 billion people, the AfCFTA aims to transform intra-African trade by reducing trade barriers and harmonizing policies. This structural instrument seeks not only to deepen economic integration, but also to promote sustainable socioeconomic development, equality, and the competitiveness of African economies in the global market.

In full alignment with this Pan-African vision of an integrated and prosperous continent, Cabo Verde became the 41st Member State to deposit its instrument of ratification of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, demonstrating unequivocal political will to participate actively in this vast trading ecosystem. Under this agreement, the country committed to the collective effort toward substantial trade liberalization, which includes the goal of eliminating tariffs on 97% of tariff lines over a 13-year transition period. This strategic accession reflects the country's strong commitment to diversifying its partnerships and achieving full integration into the continent's new economic development architecture.

In this regard, Cabo Verde, as the only island State and the least populous member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has been deepening its commitment to regional integration since its accession to the bloc in 1976. Its location privileged geostrategic

¹https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=sites/default/files/plano_estrategico_da_educacao_cv-vfinal.pdf

² https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36204-doc-agenda2063_popular_version_po.pdf

position, combined with its recognized political and institutional stability, positions the archipelago as a strategic intercontinental platform between Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

In the context of strengthening regional integration, a key milestone was the regional workshop³ organized by the ECOWAS Commission in Lomé, Togo, in December 2022, dedicated to raising awareness on the Programme for the Recognition and Equivalence of Certificates in the region. This event, which received strategic support from UNESCO, underscored the need for multilateral qualifications recognition mechanisms to boost the mobility of students, teachers, and researchers. The alignment of the ECOWAS Reference Criteria with the **Addis Ababa Convention**⁴ reinforces the commitment of Cabo Verde and the other Member States to adopting instruments that guarantee the transparency and comparability of qualifications within the African space.

According to the Report⁵ on the Comparison between the European Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework of Cabo Verde, the regional overview of qualifications systems reveals varying paces of development. While ECOWAS has recorded limited progress in implementing its regional framework, Cabo Verde has advanced with the operationalization of a comprehensive and integrated NQF in the region. This reality contrasts with that of other regional partners that still maintain sectoral frameworks (such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal) or have only recently initiated the transition to comprehensive frameworks (such as The Gambia). The progress recorded by Guinea-Bissau in 2022, through cooperation with national projects, reflects a path that Cabo Verde now leads through this referencing process.

Reinforcing this pioneering dynamic, Cabo Verde, through the Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ) and the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES), has actively contributed to the development process of the ACQF by sharing national experiences and participating in training programmes. This commitment was consolidated in September 2022 with its participation in a pilot self-assessment, which constituted a decisive step toward the formalization of this referencing process.

1.3 How are the levels of the Cabo Verde NQF referenced to the ACQF?

This report is the result of a systematic referencing between the NQF of Cabo Verde and the ACQF. Both frameworks share important common features and are comparable.

The referencing methodology and criteria defined for the ACQF follow a streamlined approach based on self-assessment, systematic monitoring, peer review, and the robustness of the evidence presented.

The exercise demonstrates that both qualifications frameworks share important common features and are mutually compatible.

1.4 The main features attesting to the close alignment and comparability between the two frameworks include:

- **Scope of application:** The ACQF and the Cabo Verde NQF are comprehensive and inclusive frameworks.
- They cover all levels and sub-sectors of qualifications within the education and training system.

³ <https://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-holds-a-regional-sensitization-workshop-on-the-equivalence-of-certificates-in-the-region-8th-to-10th-december-2022-lome-republic-of-togo/>

⁴ The **Addis Ababa Convention** (formally known as the Revised Arusha Convention) is a UNESCO treaty adopted in 2014 that facilitates the recognition of academic studies, certificates, diplomas, and degrees in higher education throughout the African region. It promotes student mobility and regional integration.

⁵ <https://europass.europa.eu/system/files/2024/08/FINAL%20Revised%20Comparison%20report%20EQF%20Cabo%20Verde%20EN.pdf>

- They encompass all learning pathways: formal, non-formal, and informal; and support access to qualifications through the validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.
- They demonstrate compatibility across learning domains through the semantic alignment of level descriptors.

The primary distinction between the two reference frameworks lies in their respective roles, the nature of the frameworks, and their level architecture. The NQF is a national qualifications framework organized into **8 (eight)** levels, whereas the ACQF is a comprehensive reference meta-framework that does not contain qualifications itself and adopts a **10 (ten)** level scale

Consequently, the core referencing exercise is grounded in four central criteria:

Criterion 1: Levels descriptor;

Crítério 2: Alignment of learning outcomes, the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC/RPL), and credit systems;

Crítério 3: Transparency in the inclusion of qualifications in the NQF;

Crítério 4: Quality assurance mechanisms. This alignment is underpinned by a governance model that strictly defines the procedures and monitoring stages required to ensure validity and mutual trust between both frameworks.

2. The Central Role of Learning Outcomes in the ACQF and the Cabo Verde NQF

In the ACQF, learning outcomes play a structural role, signaling the shift from an input-focused system (such as the duration of learning) to an output-centered approach—focusing on what the individual actually knows, understands, and is able to do. They are defined as clear statements of a learner's knowledge, skills, and competence (or autonomy and responsibility) upon completion of a learning process. This orientation ensures that competences are recognized regardless of whether learning occurred through formal, non-formal, or informal pathways⁶.

The architecture of the ACQF is based on a 10-level structure, where level descriptors are drafted as a hierarchy of learning complexity strictly based on outcomes. By encouraging Member States to use learning outcomes to describe their qualifications, the ACQF acts as a translation device and a common language that facilitates comparison between national matrices and continental descriptors. This shared approach is crucial for promoting the transparency and comparability of qualifications across diverse education and training systems in Africa.

Beyond comparability, learning outcomes drive educational flexibility and inclusion. In the context of the ACQF, this approach significantly enhances the transparency and credibility of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL/RVCC), enabling the validation of competences acquired through work and life experience to obtain partial or full qualifications.

Within Cabo Verde's [national qualifications system](#), learning outcomes serve a multidimensional function, acting as the link between the technical sphere and social inclusion. On a technical level, they are decisive for the conceptual design of units of competence and professional profiles, as well as for structuring training modules and defining assessment criteria across all learning contexts. Simultaneously, learning outcomes act as a driver for social inclusion by undermining barriers to formal certification for citizens with extensive life and work experience but limited formal schooling. This approach underpins the **Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC)** system, which is specifically designed to convert non-formal and informal competences into qualifications recognized by the NQF.

⁶[ACQF Guideline 3: Referencing to ACQF](#)

According to the "[Qualifications Regime](#)" of the UC-SNQ, the centrality of competences and learning outcomes ensures that professional qualifications hold real value and direct relevance for the labour market. The model prioritizes modularity and responsiveness to technological evolution, ensuring that workers develop transversal capacities applicable to various production scenarios. Additionally, the regime facilitates mobility and inclusion by allowing competences acquired in non-formal or informal contexts to be formally validated and integrated into an individual's qualification pathway.

In the higher education sub-system, Cabo Verde has established a robust legislative and procedural framework to ensure that teaching and learning processes are centered on competence development. Through Legislative [Decree No. 13/2018](#), which introduces the first amendment to the Basic Law of the Education System (Legislative Decree No. 2/2010), the country consolidated the organization of higher education into cycles of study. This reform marked the transition from an educational paradigm focused on the passive transmission of knowledge to a dynamic system oriented toward the acquisition and demonstration of competence by students.

The central importance of this concept is directly reflected in the criteria required for the referencing process to the ACQF. The [Referencing Criterion 2](#) explicitly requires national qualifications frameworks or systems to be based on the principles of learning outcomes and to demonstrate their articulation with RVCC mechanisms and credit systems.

2.1 Validation of non-formal and informal learning / RVCC

The promotion of competence validation in Cabo Verde is regulated by [Decree-Law No. 54/2014](#), which defines the strategy for the recognition of learning that is transversal to all learning contexts. The application of this policy aims to generate significant benefits for employability and the enhancement of human capital, regardless of the pathway through which knowledge was acquired. Strengthening flexibility within training pathways constitutes a core pillar, enabling the qualifications system to respond effectively to the needs of citizens with limited formal schooling but extensive professional experience.

As an integral component of the National Qualifications System (NQS), the RVCC system ensures the recognition of competences across various scopes, although its operationalization in higher education is still in a maturation phase. Based on a four-stage methodology, Cabo Verde's RVCC system is aligned with the 2012 European standard⁷ and the most recent technical guidelines from 2023⁸. The process focuses on the certification of competences for individuals who are at least 25 years old and possess at least five years of proven professional experience, thereby ensuring the validation of human capital and the flexibility of learning pathways.

The implementation of RVCC in Cabo Verde follows a phased approach, currently focusing on professional qualifications at Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the National Catalogue of Qualifications (CNQ). This pilot phase prioritizes the sectors of **Hospitality and Tourism**⁹, **Installation and Maintenance**, and **Administration and Management**, where the demand for competence validation is particularly significant. The success of this stage is underpinned by a joint effort between the government and private enterprises, which actively cooperate to facilitate workforce qualification and enhance competitiveness within these sectors.

⁷ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222(01))

⁸ Cedefop (2023). *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 124

⁹ <https://expressodasilhas.cv/pais/2022/08/09/trezentos-guias-turisticos-ja-estao-inscritos-no-processo-de-reconhecimento-de-competencias/81473>

The UC-SNQ leads the RVCC ecosystem in Cabo Verde, ensuring strategic coordination between the Directorate-General for Employment, the business sector, and accredited RVCC centres. The Unit is responsible for developing the methodological standards and assessment tools that underpin the CNQ, ensuring the uniformity and reliability of certification processes. The operational sustainability of this system is reinforced by a network of approximately 50 specialized professionals (technicians, advisors, and assessors) who are duly trained for the rigorous implementation of the national competence recognition model¹⁰.

By consolidating these national practices, the country aligns itself with the long-term vision of the ACQF. The ACQF was conceived as a comprehensive and inclusive meta-framework strongly oriented toward lifelong learning, actively supporting the parity of esteem of learning outcomes acquired across formal, non-formal, and informal contexts¹¹. By encompassing and valuing all forms and stages of learning as well as certification pathways, the ACQF acts as a fundamental mechanism to promote equity and social inclusion, ensuring trust in learning outcomes regardless of the context in which they were acquired.

3. Structure of the Education and Training System and Overview of the NQF: Development and Implementation Phase

Cabo Verde's Human Development Index (HDI) has shown a positive trend, reaching a score of 0.668 in the 2025 UNDP report (based on 2023 data), which positions the country 135th globally¹². Analyzing recent progress, Cabo Verde's HDI rose from 0.651 points in 2021 to 0.664 in 2022 and reached 0.668 in 2023.

According to data from the 2024¹³ Continuous Multi-Objective Survey (IMC), the National Statistics Institute estimates the total resident population at 511,534 individuals. The same source confirms that Cabo Verde's population remains young: 27.4% of the population is under 15 years old and 16.1% are between 15 and 24 years old, demonstrating that 43.5% of residents are under 25 years old.

The National Qualifications Framework (**Quadro Nacional de Qualificações – QNQ**) was established in 2010 as a core component of the national qualifications system. It aimed to enhance the country's skills supply, increase the population's adaptability to a more productive and modern economy, and respond to national needs regarding economic growth, productive employment, and social inclusion.

The scope of the NQF extends to qualifications and diplomas awarded by the competent institutions of primary and secondary education, vocational training, and higher education. It likewise includes certification resulting from RVCC processes, ensuring the formal recognition of professional competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning pathways.

3.1 Structure of the Education and Training System

Legislative Decree No. 13/2018, which introduced the first amendment to Legislative Decree No. 2/2010 (defining the Basic Law of the Education System), stipulates the structure of the education system, which is composed of the following sub-systems (Source: Article 12 – Section I, Chapter III of the aforementioned Legislative Decree):

- 1. Pre-school education sub-system:** Focuses on the training and development of children's skills, aiming to provide balanced socialization and the fundamental prerequisites for entering school education.

¹⁰ <https://www.balai.cv/noticias/economia/avaliadores-habilitam-se-em-processo-de-reconhecimento-validacao-e-certificacao-de-competencias-profissionais/>

¹¹ Ver: ACQF Policy Document

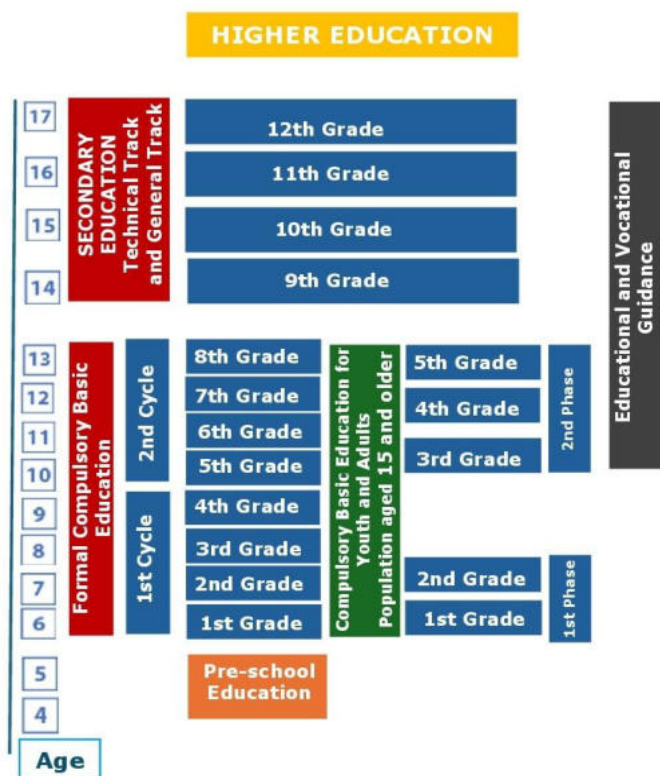
¹² UNDP, HDI 2021. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/CPV>

¹³ National Institute of Statistics, 2025. Condições de vida dos agregados familiares - 2024

2. **School education sub-system:** Encompasses basic education, secondary education, higher education, and special educational modalities; it also includes leisure and extracurricular activities.
3. **Out-of-school education sub-system:** Encompasses literacy activities, basic education for youth and adults, and vocational training within a lifelong learning perspective, articulating directly with school education.

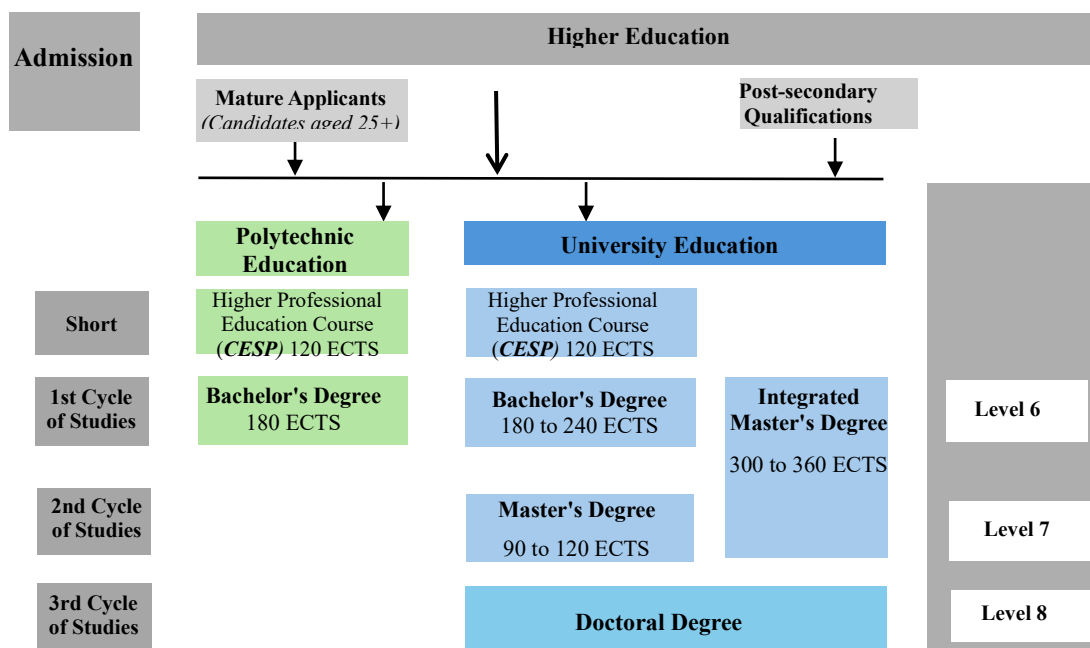
In addition to these sub-systems, the education system integrates a technical-vocational component and articulates closely with the national vocational training and apprenticeship system.

Figure 1: Structure of the Education System of Cabo Verde



Source: Ministry of Education. <https://minedu.gov.cv/sistema>

Figure 1.2: Structure of Higher Education in Cabo Verde



Source: [Ministry of Education and ARES](#).

The information presented in [Table 1](#) summarizes Chapter III ("Organization of the Education System") of Legislative [Decree No. 13/2018](#). This table also establishes the correlation with the qualification levels of the NQF. For the purposes of this report, this table must be read in conjunction with the matrix of qualifications included in the NQF ([Table 6](#)).

Table 1: Structure of the education system, qualifications awarded, and relationship with NQF levels

Chapter III of Legislative Decree No. 13/2018	Sub-system	Cycle	Qualifications Awarded	NQF Levels	Observações: idade, progressão
Section II	Pre-school education			No NQF level	From four years of age
Section III	Basic education – eight years (compulsory schooling)	- First cycle: four years (Grades 1–4) - Second cycle: four years (Grades 5–8)	Diploma of Compulsory Basic Education	Level 1	From six years of age
Section IV	Secondary education – four years	- Grades 9 to 12 - Two optional pathways from Grade 10: general and technical - Permeability between the general and technical pathways is guaranteed - Artistic training: Delivered through technical education or the complementary year of secondary education	Diploma and certificate For the technical pathway: Double certification (academic and professional) For artistic training: Diploma	Level 3: Secondary Education Certificate (Grade 10) Level 4: Secondary Education Diploma (Grade 12)	Progression after completing secondary education: - To higher education - To vocational training (initial and continuous)
Section V	Higher Education - University education - Polytechnic education	<u>Three cycles of study:</u> 1. Bachelor's Degree: Credits corresponding to six to eight semesters. Some fields of study require a higher number of credits 2. Master's Degree: Credits corresponding to three to four semesters. In some cases: Integrated cycle after secondary education lasting ten to twelve semesters. 3. Doctorate <u>Post-secondary education:</u> Courses of a professional nature, without an academic degree (CESP – Higher Professional Studies Courses.	<u>Graus académicos:</u> - Bachelor's Degree - Master's Degree - Doctorate Non-academic post-secondary courses (CESP) – Leads to the award of the Diploma of Higher Professional Studies – DESP)	<u>NQF Levels:</u> • DESP: Level 5 • Bachelor's Degree: Level 6 • Master's Degree: Level 7 • Doctorate: Level 8	Bachelor's Degree: Can be awarded by university and polytechnic education Master's and Doctorate: Only awarded by university education CESP: 2 years of study. Does not confer an academic degree, but the credits obtained are transferable to continue education in a Bachelor's degree course within the same field of study as the CESP.

Section VI	Out-of-school education	<u>Adult Education</u> - Literacy - Continuing education: cultural, scientific, and technological upgrading <u>Basic education for youth and adults</u> coordinates general education and basic vocational training (Age: 15+, with or without formal schooling)	<u>Basic Education for Youth and Adults</u> - <u>First cycle (two years):</u> certificate of achievement - <u>Second cycle (three years):</u> diploma (equivalent to the Compulsory Basic Education diploma)	<u>NQF Levels for Adult Basic Education:</u> • Level 1: Basic Education Diploma (youth and adults) • Level 2: Adult Basic Education Diploma via a double certification pathway • Level 2: Level 2 Professional Qualification Certificate	In both pathways: Learning is organized in units (supporting accumulation and transfer), which are flexible and adaptable to different individual needs and competences
		<u>Technical-Vocational Training Component:</u> - Development of skills for professional practice and integration into the world of work - Continuous training within a lifelong learning framework	<u>Technical-vocational training:</u> is closely articulated with the national vocational training and apprenticeship system.	<u>NQF Levels for Continuous Lifelong Vocational Training</u> • Level 3: Level 3 Professional Qualification Certificate • Level 4: Level 4 Professional Qualification Certificate • Level 5: Level 5 Professional Qualification Certificate	

The education system offers a diverse range of pathways for entry, progression between sub-systems, and exit points, particularly for adults and youth who require pathways adapted to their social situation and background in education and training. Both sub-systems (school education and out-of-school education) award certificates and qualifications linked to the 8 levels of the NQF. The out-of-school education sub-system awards qualifications across a diverse range of levels, specifically spanning from **(Level 1 to Level 5)**.

3.3 Non-formal education and training

Non-formal training generally refers to learning programmes that do not follow formal structures, involving the acquisition of knowledge and competences through non-traditional methods such as workshops, mentoring, on-the-job training, and practical learning, among others. These programmes are typically tailored to the specific needs of employees or participants and aim to develop practical skills and knowledge relevant to both the labour market and life.

They are developed by institutions such as:

- **Chambers of Commerce and Industry:** Training provision designed to respond directly to the needs of local businesses.
- **Professional Associations:** aiming to enhance skills and knowledge related to a specific profession, these entities offer targeted training programmes and workshops to their members.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Supporting the empowerment of local communities across various community development projects, these entities offer training programmes on topics related to society, the family, local governance, and the management of small-scale economic activities.

- **Enterprises:** Developing and strengthening the skills and competences of their workforce across different operational functions.

The curricula of these courses generally do not have any reference to the National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ). With the advancement of the national accreditation process, all entities, including NGOs, enterprises, associations, or any other training providers, must currently be formally accredited by the Directorate-General for Employment (DGE) to deliver vocational training initiatives.

3.4 Summary of the Cabo Verde NQF

This brief chapter presents an integrated overview of the main features of the National Qualifications Framework (**Quadro Nacional de Qualificações – QNQ**) of Cabo Verde. This information aims to facilitate the understanding of the Cabo Verde NQF, serving as a baseline premise for a clear reading and analysis of the subsequent sections dedicated to the referencing process, which forms the core of this report.

The NQF was established in 2010 within the context of the reform and revitalization of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system, thereby supporting broader reform objectives such as sustainable development and decent work. Furthermore, the implementation of the NQF has contributed to integrating and modernizing all education and training sub-systems, from basic education to higher education and to increasing their responsiveness to labour market needs.

The NQF is a unified reference instrument for classifying all qualifications awarded within the national education and training system. The scope of the NQF is comprehensive and inclusive, covering all levels and learning pathways, from basic education to higher education as well as qualifications acquired through the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

- **For reference:** The chapter "References and Sources" provides a comprehensive list of legal and regulatory texts linked to the education and training system, the NQS, its operational components, and its implementing bodies, including the UC-SNQ and ARES.

3.4.1 Key Milestones in the History of the NQS-NQF in Cabo Verde:

- **2009:** Enactment of the legislation regulating the Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ) via [Decree-Law No. 62/2009](#)
- **2010:** Adoption of the [landmark legislation](#) establishing the National Qualifications System (NQS), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ).
- **2012:** Legal framework for Higher Education Degrees and Diplomas ([Decree-Law N° 22/2012](#)) amended by [Decree-Law N°. 16/2026](#)
- **2013:** Legal framework for the accreditation of training institutions ([Decree-Law N°. 6/2013](#))
- **2014:** Regulation of the system for the recognition, validation and certification of competences ([Decree-Law N°. 54/2014](#))
- **2018:** Adoption of the new legal text on the NQS ([Decree-Law N°. 4/2018](#)); new regulation on the organization of the ([Decree-Law N°7/2018](#))
- **2020:** Adoption of new legislation on the NCQ and the NQF ([Joint Orders N°. 09/2020 and 10/2020](#))
- **2020:** Double certification of professional and school qualifications: [Joint Orders N°. 47/2020](#) of 8 Setembro.
- **2020:** Modular training in Technical Education and Vocational Training: [Joint Orders N°. 48/2020](#) of 8 Setembro.
- **2021:** Revitalization of the policy and practice of the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC): initiation of implementation ([RVCC pilots across 3 occupational families](#))

Cabo Verde's NQF has **16** years of experience and has been operationalized as an instrument of the National Qualifications System (NQS). This is a fundamental characteristic that defines the nature and

functions of the NQF and its interconnection with the other instruments of the NQS.

The NQS comprises the instruments required for the promotion, development, and integration of training provision and qualifications, as well as the assessment and certification of competences that enable the professional, personal, and social development of individuals and respond to the needs of the economic system. The NQS is operationalized through the combined action of the following instruments:

- The NQF
- The National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ)
- The credit system
- The individual register of qualifications and competences
- The system for monitoring, evaluation, and quality improvement of the NQS
- The system for recognition, validation, and certification of competences (RVCC)

3.4.1.2 Main characteristics of the Cabo Verde NQF

The NQF is comprehensive and inclusive; it is based on learning outcomes and adds value to the education and training system.

The **objectives of the NQF** defined in 2010 were reinforced by [Joint Order N°. 10/2020](#), which placed greater emphasis on the readability, transparency, and comparability of qualifications, both within the education and training system and in the labour market.

Other **objectives of the NQF** include:

- the integration and articulation of qualifications from different sub-systems;
- enhancing the transparency of qualifications;
- promoting access to, assessment of, and quality of qualifications;
- Applying the learning outcomes approach to describe qualifications and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning, thereby supporting the integration of low-skilled and unemployed citizens into the labour market and lifelong learning;
- promoting close cooperation and linkages with the EQF and other NQFs, particularly those of ECOWAS countries.

Finally, the NQF ensures that all qualifications and certificates issued by competent entities contain a clear reference to the relevant NQF level.

Structure and descriptors: The NQF is structured into 8 levels. The level descriptors are based on three learning domains: knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy (attitudes).

Scope: The NQF has a broad and inclusive scope. It includes qualifications from all levels and sectors of the educational system: basic, secondary, and higher education qualifications, as well as qualifications resulting from processes for recognition, validation, and certification of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

- The **learning outcomes** approach in the design and description of qualifications is one of the primary objectives of the NQF, as defined in the framework's legislation ([Joint Order N°. 10/2020](#)). Learning outcomes play a significant role, particularly in the conceptual and technical design of the units of competence and training modules that structure qualifications, as well as in providing more inclusive access to qualifications for citizens with limited formal schooling but extensive life and work experience (via the RVCC pathway)
- **Qualifications Registers:** a) [National Catalogue of Qualifications \(NCQ\)](#): Contains all approved qualifications based on learning outcomes from Level 2 to Level 5. The NCQ is a component of the NQS and is inseparable from the NQF. In addition, [ARES registry](#), manages and registers higher education courses and qualifications from **Level 5 to Level 8**
- **Quality Assurance:** The **DGE** and the **UC-SNQ** (for vocational training), the **Ministry of Education** (for basic and secondary education), and **ARES** (for higher education) are the main institutions responsible for implementing quality assurance policies and procedures in their respective sectors.

The **Training Provider Accreditation Platform (PAEF)** is the online digital platform that supports accreditation processes for vocational training providers and disseminates information regarding procedures and accredited training entities.

ARES Digital Management Platform (PD-ARES): This platform comprises several modules addressing different aspects of quality assurance in higher education, including:

- PDIES Module (Faculty and Cycles of Study);
- AVAL Module (Evaluation of Cycles of Study);
- PARCE Module (Accreditation of Cycles of Study);
- AVAI Module (Institutional Evaluation);
- RGDE Module (Recognition of Foreign Degrees and Diplomas).

Integrated School Management System (SIGE): This system integrates the country's network-connected basic and secondary schools into a single, common system, thereby maximizing communication and management capacity while minimizing administrative costs.

- The **coordination of the NQF** within the broader architecture of the NQS is carried out by the **UC-SNQ**, which was established by [Decree-Law N° 62/2009](#) on 14 December 2009. A decade later, the UC-SNQ remains the central governance structure, and its leadership and coordination role has been further reinforced by [Decree-Law N° 7/2018](#). This Decree-Law defines the institutional framework of the **UC-SNQ**, its powers of management and institutional coordination, its mission and responsibilities, and its organizational structure. In carrying out its functions, the **UC-SNQ** coordinates with the government agencies responsible for vocational training, employment, and education.

The **UC-SNQ** is led by the Unit Coordinator and comprises:

- a) The Interministerial Technical Qualification Committee (CTIQ);
- b) The Executive Secretariat;
- c) The National Commission for Professional Equivalences (CNEP), which serves as a specialized organ of the NQS.

Social partners contribute to the coordination of the NQS through institutionalized participation within both CTIQ and the CNEP. Other entities built into the governance and implementation of the NQS include the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS), and higher education institutions.

In the higher education sub-sector, the sole quality assurance body is ARES, established by [Law N° 121/VIII/2016 on 24 March](#). Article 5 states that ARES is independent in the exercise of its functions and is not subject to the superintendence or tutelage of the government regarding its regulatory mandates, without prejudice to the supervisory powers conferred upon the National Assembly. All government bodies and institutions operating within the higher education sector have a statutory duty to collaborate with ARES and supply data related to the quality assurance system.

3.5 Statistical Data: Higher Education - Courses, Qualifications, Students, and Graduates

Table 2 – Total number of students in accredited HEIs in Cabo Verde (2019–2026)

Indicators	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Total Students (Male + Female)	8788	9088	9020	9255	9213	8914	9218
Students (Female)	5125	5504	4542	5687	5717	5668	6098
Total Graduates	2460	1068	1146	770	1406	1043	810

Source: [ARES](#), May 2026. Data provided for this report.

Table 3: Number of courses and graduates by degree / NQF level (2024–2025)

Grau / nível QNQ	Number of Courses	Number of Graduates
Bachelor's Degree – Level 6	242	1019
Master's Degree – Level 7	88	14
Integrated Master's – Level 7	7	1
Doctorate – Level 8	13	
Total	350	1034

Source: ARES.

These data illustrate the strong concentration of higher education in Cabo Verde within Level 6 qualifications (Bachelor's Degree). This level remains highly predominant in the ecosystem, representing **69%** of the total course offering and accounting for **98.5%** of the total number of graduates during the analyzed period.

Table 4: Number of courses and students by scientific field of study (2025)

Fields of study	Number of Courses	Number of Students
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	4	6
Arts and Humanities	8	175
Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	17	111
Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	29	313
Education	53	213
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	21	1175
Management, Administration and Law	79	1878
Health and Social Protection	26	278
Services		
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	6	108
Total	243	4257

Source: ARES.

[Table 4](#) is relevant for understanding the course offerings and the distribution of higher education students by field of study in 2025. These data allow for the analysis of annual trends and can be cross-referenced with information on NQF levels and respective academic degrees.

Based on these indicators, it is evident that approximately one-third (**32.7%**) of students are enrolled in courses within STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), with **2.5%** registered specifically in the ICT field. The highest concentration of students is found in Management, Administration, and Law courses, which together account for **44.1%** of the total student population within the ecosystem. This strong representation reflects a reality common to many higher education systems, where legal and business sciences experience a significantly high demand.

Following the analytical description of the higher education landscape, which highlights the performance of academic qualifications, it is essential to examine the dynamics of the other structural pillar of the National Qualifications System (NQS): the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector and active labour market policies. This dimension of the ecosystem serves

as the central driver for the practical operationalization of [Referencing Criterion 2](#), as it reflects the country's concrete responses regarding lifelong learning, permeability between sub-systems, and socio-professional inclusion through the validation of competences.

To provide an integrated, quantitative, and evolutionary overview of this scenario, [Table 5](#) presents the consolidated statistical data between 2021 and 2025 regarding initial and continuous training modalities, internship flows, and RVCC certification mechanisms.

Table 5: Evolution of support policies in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector between 2021 and 2025

Active Labour Market Policies	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Initial training	5354	4296	3958	5440	3652
Continuous training	2175	1031	1112	3639	2273
Professional internships	2725	2005	2864	2451	2031
Technical Education	1479	3983	6844	3085	2314
Integration of Long-Term Unemployed (DLD)¹⁴	30	46	34	29	21
Hiring Support Programme (PAC)¹⁵		0	1	72	168
Recognition, Validation and Certification (RPL)		34	32	253	824
Entrepreneurship	1750	1292	1012	1781	1971
Total	13513	12687	15857	16750	13254

Source: UC-SNQ

A detailed analysis of the macro-statistical indicators presented in Table 5 reveals a mature, resilient, and comprehensive ecosystem of active labour market policies, as evidenced by the maintenance of a robust volume of interventions exceeding an average of 14,400 beneficiaries annually. Within the specific framework of Criterion 2, the data of highest strategic relevance is the exponential growth of the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RPL) mechanism, whose professional certifications based on prior learning surged from **34** in **2022** to **824** in **2025**. This notable increase, accompanied by the progressive evolution of the Certification Support Programme (*Programa de Apoio à Certificação – PAC*), demonstrates the practical consolidation of the learning outcomes approach. It further proves that the country has structured flexible and inclusive pathways of permeability that effectively value non-formal and informal learning.

Finally, the effectiveness and relevance of the system are solidly validated by the upward trajectory of the Labour Market Insertion Rate, which progressed from **61.6%** to **74.7%** over the same period, providing incontestable empirical evidence that qualifications designed at the national level respond precisely to real needs of employers, ensuring mutual trust and the international credibility of the Cabo Verde model vis-à-vis the continental reference framework of the ACQF.

¹⁴ [Labor Market Integration of the Long-Term Unemployed \(DLD\)](#)

¹⁵ [Hiring Support Programme \(PAC\)](#)

ACQF Referencing Criterion 1

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF.

Levels

Cabo Verde NQF	ACQF	Remarks
8 Levels Qualifications from Level 1 (Diploma of Compulsory Basic Education) to Level 8 (Doctoral Degree)	10 Levels The ACQF does not contain qualifications, as it is a referencing meta-framework.	

Comparison of Level Descriptor Domains

	Cabo Verde NQF	ACQF
Domains	- Knowledge - Skills - Responsibility and autonomy (attitudes)	- Knowledge - Skills - Autonomy and responsibility
Definitions	Article 5 of the 2020 NQF legal text (Joint Order No. 10/2020) and its Annex II define the structure and level descriptors of the NQF. Qualification levels represent learning outcomes and are defined by descriptors across three core learning domains: - Knowledge - Skills - Responsibility and Autonomy The domains of the level descriptors are defined as follows: - Knowledge: The set of facts, principles, theories, and practices related to a field of study, work, or professional training, resulting from the assimilation of information through learning. - Skills /Aptitudes¹⁶: The ability to apply knowledge and use acquired resources to complete tasks and solve problems is described as cognitive, including the application of logical, intuitive, and creative thinking, and practical, involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools, and instruments. - Responsabilidade e autonomia / attitudes: the proven capacity to apply	Knowledge: Includes various types of knowledge, such as facts, principles, and theories across multiple fields. The knowledge domain comprises two sub-domains or elements: - Type of Knowledge - Scope of Knowledge Skills: Refers to the capacity to use knowledge to respond to information and address issues/problems. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, ecological (green), innovation, practical, and social skills. The skills domain comprises three sub-domains: - Type of skills required - How skills are used to respond to information - How skills are used to solve types of problems Autonomia e Responsabilidade This refers to the context and scope of the application of autonomy and responsibility. The domain of autonomy and responsibility comprises three subdomains: - The context in which autonomy and responsibility are applied

¹⁶ Joint Ordinance N°. 10/2020 uses both terms (Skills and Abilities). Similarly, the same Ordinance uses the terms “Attitudes” and “Responsibility and Autonomy” to designate the third domain of level descriptors.

	knowledge, skills, and personal, social, and methodological competences in professional situations, as well as in study and training contexts for professional and personal development.	- The extent to which autonomy is applied - The extent to which responsibility is applied. Responsibility has three elements: self-responsibility, group outcomes, and resources.
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Semantic Comparison of Descriptors:

a) Alignment of Learning Domains

Regarding the semantic comparison of descriptors, a robust structural alignment exists between the Cabo Verde NQF and the ACQF, grounded in three learning domains that display a direct and unequivocal correspondence. In the **Knowledge** domain, both frameworks converge on the understanding of facts, principles, and theories. Regarding Skills, the semantics of both reference frameworks are based on the cognitive, practical, and communication capacities required to apply knowledge to solve problems. Finally, the **Autonomy and Responsibility** domain, which in the **Cabo Verde NQF** is designated as "Responsibility and autonomy / Attitudes", reflects in both cases the extent of the learner's independence as well as their degree of supervision or leadership, adapted to the complexity of each level.

b) Semantic Progression by Domain

The analysis of semantic progression reveals high convergence between the **Cabo Verde NQF** and the **ACQF**, with learning pathways evolving symmetrically across the three domains:

- **Knowledge Domain:** Progression is highly compatible, moving from basic general knowledge (Levels 1 and 2) to theoretical abstraction and application in broader contexts from **Level 4** upwards. At the top of the hierarchy, a strong conceptual convergence is observed: **Level 8** of the Cabo Verde NQF (frontier knowledge) aligns semantically with the highest tiers of the ACQF (Levels 9 and 10), both requiring the mastery of complex bodies of knowledge and original contributions to the field.
- **Skills Domain:** The alignment of practical skills and know-how is evident, transitioning from the execution of simple and routine tasks (Level 1) to the formulation of creative solutions to abstract problems at intermediate levels (Levels 4 and 5). At the higher levels, both frameworks prioritize mastery, the capacity for critical synthesis, and the redefinition of knowledge through research and innovation.
- **Autonomy and Responsibility Domain:** The trajectory of independence is virtually identical, evolving from direct supervision (Level 1) to self-management and responsibility for outcomes (Level 4). At the highest levels, autonomy takes on the character of strategic leadership and scientific integrity, focusing on the management of new ideas and the transformation of complex and emerging contexts.

c) Structural Articulation (8 Levels vs 10 Levels)

The primary distinction between the two reference frameworks lies in their level architecture: the Cabo Verde NQF is organized into **8 levels**, whereas the ACQF adopts a **10-level scale**. However, the semantic analysis demonstrates that this structural disparity does not compromise the substantive alignment between the two frameworks.

At the basic and intermediate tiers (**Levels 1 to 5**), there is near-absolute parity in vocabulary construction and complexity expectations. At the higher levels, the convergence is maintained through a distinct distribution: while the NQF concentrates the requirements for advanced research, original innovation, and frontier knowledge within its **Levels 7 and 8**, the ACQF distributes this same spectrum of scientific complexity across a more granular and stratified scale corresponding to **Levels 7 to 10**.

Qualifications Map

Table 6: Structure of the NQF (Article 5(4) of [Joint Order No. 10/2020](#)), with reference to the entities responsible for qualifications and explanatory notes.

NQF Level	Qualification	Entities Responsible for the Qualification / Sub-system	Explanatory Notes
1	Diploma of Compulsory Basic Education	Ministry of National Education – National Directorate of Education (DNE)	Includes qualifications obtained in school and out-of-school pathways (basic education for youth and adults)
2	Adult Basic Education Diploma via a double certification pathway corresponding to the Level 2 Professional Qualification Level 2 Professional Qualification Certificate	1. Ministry of National Education - DNE 2. DGE, UC-SNQ	Envisaged within the scope of the curricular review
3	Secondary Education Certificate (Grade 10) Level 3 Professional Qualification Certificate	1. Ministério da Educação Nacional – DNE 2. DGE, UC-SNQ	
4	Secondary Education Diploma (Grade 12 - General Pathway) Secondary Education Diploma (Grade 12 — Technical Pathway corresponding to the Level 4 Professional Qualification) with double certification Level 4 Professional Qualification Certificate with double certification Level 4 Professional Qualification Certificate	1. Ministry of National Education - DNE 2. DNE, UC-SNQ 3. DGE, UC-SNQ	Double certification courses: articulation between the two Ministries: Education (DNE) and Finance (DGE)
5	Diploma of Higher Professional Studies (DESP) linked to Level 5 professional qualifications (CESP — Higher Professional Education Courses) ¹⁷ Level 5 Professional Qualification Certificate	1. DGES and ARES 2. DGE, UC-SNQ	<u>Qualifications not currently offered:</u> Complementary Vocational Year (ACP) Certificate linked to Level 5 professional qualification ¹⁸ Level 5 Professional Qualification Certificate via a double certification pathway
6	Bachelor's Degree (University Education) ¹⁹	DGES, ARES	
7	Master's Degree (University Education)	DGES, ARES	
8	Doctoral Degree (University Education)	DGES, ARES	

Source: [Joint Order No. 10/2020, Annex 1](#). Complementary information in columns 3 and 4 was compiled by the Technical Working Group, based on data shared by UC-SNQ, DNE, and ARES.

Higher education diplomas and credentials—such as the DESP, *Carta de Curso* (Bachelor's degree scroll), *Carta Magistral* (Master's degree scroll), and *Carta Doutoral* (Doctoral degree scroll), are accompanied by a Diploma Supplement, which is regulated by [Order No. 18/2014](#). The Diploma

¹⁷Higher education system qualification, managed by ARES

¹⁸The ACP qualifications and the Level 5 professional qualification certificate via a double certification pathway are not currently active in the training provision.

¹⁹Qualifications for the three cycles (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate) fall under the responsibility of ARES for relevant quality assurance aspects. These diplomas do not contain an explicit indication of the NQF level but state the academic degree/cycle.

Supplement does not replace the main qualification certificate but complements the information regarding the completed curriculum and its specific framework level to enhance transparency and comparability. Its structural design is fully harmonized with international practices.

Comparison and Mapping of the Cabo Verde NQF Levels to the ACQF Levels

This section details the technical analysis of correspondence between the levels of the Cabo Verde National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and those of the ACQF meta-framework. This comparative exercise is grounded in a meticulous cross-analysis of the level descriptors from both frameworks, focusing specifically on learning outcomes as expressed across three fundamental domains: ***Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibility and Autonomy***.

Considering that the **Cabo Verde NQF** is structured into **8 levels** whereas the ACQF integrates a **10-level** structure, the Technical Working Group established equivalence pathways that accurately reflect the depth and complexity of national qualifications against the continental scale. The matrix below illustrates this mapping, highlighting the core areas of convergence as well as instances of multiple correspondence required to ensure the technical integrity of the referencing process.

Table 7: Referencing and Correspondence Matrix between Level Descriptors of the Cabo Verde NQF and the ACQF

QNQ Cabo Verde				ACQF			
Domínios de Aprendizagem				Domínios de Aprendizagem			
Níveis QNQ	Conhecimentos	Aptidões	Responsabilidade e Autonomia	Conhecimentos	Aptidões	Autonomia e Responsabilidade	Níveis ACQF
1	Basic general knowledge applied to a limited and defined set of activities	Basic skills and capacities required to perform simple and routine tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context, with responsibility for one's own performance.	simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy	simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions, and use simple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems	highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self	1
				basic knowledge incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas	basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straight forward problems	structured contexts under limited supervision and guidance taking limited responsibility for self and group outcomes	2
2	Basic operational knowledge in a field of work or study. Expresses ideas and concepts through effective verbal and written communication	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to apply appropriate information to perform tasks and solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision, with a certain degree of autonomy. Demonstrate the capacity to perform some independent tasks in certain structured opportunities with intermediate levels of support, direction, and supervision	factual and operational knowledge incorporating some theoretical aspects in some areas	a range of communication, cognitive, practical and technical skills required to interpret and communicate ideas and detailed information and select and use known solutions to address familiar problems	predictable contexts under routine supervision and guidance, with initiative for selfresponsibility and some responsibility for group outcomes	3

3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes, and general concepts in a field of work or study, with an understanding of certain theoretical and technical elements of processes, materials, and basic terminology	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to perform tasks and solve problems through the selection and application of basic methods, tools, materials, and information. Provides technical advice for solving specific problems	Assume responsibility to execute tasks independently in a field of work or study when simple decisions or initiatives are required. Works effectively with others as a member of a group and assumes limited responsibility for others in small teams or workgroups. Requires support, direction, and supervision in unfamiliar situations. Adapts own behaviour to circumstances for problem-solving purposes.	mainly factual, operational or technical knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects in one or more areas	well-developed technical skills required to analyse information and new ideas, make informed judgements, communicate outcomes and apply varied solutions to varied (familiar and unfamiliar) problems	varied (predictable and unpredictable) contexts with adaptability and initiative for self-direction under general guidance, taking full responsibility for self, some planning and responsibility for group outcomes and initiative for responsibility for others	4
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4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of study or work relevant to the role	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study. Manage one's own activity within the framework of established guidelines in study or work contexts that are usually predictable but subject to change	Supervise the routine activities of others, taking specific responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of activities in study and work contexts. Assume responsibility for one's own outputs/results in semi-structured work and learning situations. Work independently when immediate decisions with a degree of initiative are required. Be able to define one's own objectives and goals in accordance with organizational objectives and effectively manage available time.	mainly technical or theoretical knowledge with substantial depth in a discipline/area	a range of well-developed technical skills, with some specialisation, required to analyse information and new ideas, construct and communicate a coherent argument, and apply a range of solutions, often in combination, to address unfamiliar problems	unpredictable contexts with full autonomy and full responsibility for self and group outcomes, and some responsibility for others	5
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5	Comprehensive, specialized, factual, and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of study or work, and awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge, including an abstract technical understanding and the capacity to seek out further information and knowledge to enhance the execution of one's role	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to design creative solutions to abstract problems in routine situations as well as in new environments and activities. Possess the capacity to select and apply equipment and methods, explaining the alternatives, and ensuring technical advisory support to solve specific problems within known routines.	Manage and supervise in study and work contexts subject to unpredictable changes. Review and develop own performance and that of others, in terms of both quantity and quality. Work independently when intermediate-level decisions or initiatives are required. Be able to organize work for oneself and for the team in accordance with organizational goals and objectives, and support others in managing time effectively.	highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with specialisation in a discipline/ area	highly technical and specialised skills required to collate, analyse, synthesise and communicate a range of information and new ideas, and formulate or adapt different solutions to address complex and sometimes abstract problems	highly variable contexts with well-developed autonomy and responsibility for self and group outcomes and responsibility for resources and processes	6
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6	In-depth knowledge of a specific field of study or work, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of study or work. Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable academic or work settings	Take responsibility for managing individual and collective professional development	advanced analytical and/or specialised knowledge of a discipline/area	advanced, specialised skills required to demonstrate advanced analysis and initiative for new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate advanced solutions to address complex and abstract problems	complex and variable contexts with advanced autonomy and responsibility	7
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7	Highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a specific field of study or work, underpinning the capacity for original reflection and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and of the interconnections between different fields	Specialized skills for problem-solving in research and/or innovation, to develop new knowledge and procedures, and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform study or work contexts that are complex, unpredictable, and require new strategic approaches. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practices and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams	highly advanced, complex knowledge of a discipline/area	highly advanced, complex skills required to demonstrate highly advanced analysis, communicate new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate highly advanced solutions to address highly complex and abstract problems	highly complex contexts with some specialisation demonstrating highly advanced autonomy and responsibility	8
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7				mastery of a complex body of knowledge at the forefront of a discipline/ area	skills mastery required to demonstrate originality and new insights in research and/ or innovation and formulate and test theories to show mastery of highly complex, abstract problems	highly specialised contexts demonstrating mastery in autonomy and responsibility	9
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8	Frontier and cutting-edge knowledge in a field of study or work and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation capacities, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practices	Demonstrate a significant level of authority, innovation, autonomy, and scientific or professional integrity, and a strong commitment to the development of new ideas or new processes at the forefront of study or work contexts, including research	substantial and original knowledge contribution that extends the forefront of a discipline/ area and/ or at the interface between disciplines/areas	expert skills and techniques that demonstrate innovation, interpretation and creation of new ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate and test theories to address emergent, new and critical problems	emergent new contexts demonstrating expertise in management of new ideas	10
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Technical Analysis of Level Correspondence

The correspondence presented in [Table 7](#) is the result of a rigorous comparative analysis between the learning outcomes defined by the level descriptors of the Cabo Verde NQF and the ACQF. Given that the Cabo Verde NQF is structured into **8 levels** and the ACQF into **10 levels**, the mapping between the two frameworks is not strictly linear. At the higher levels, the Technical Working Group (TWG) identified instances of **multiple correspondence**, where a single level of the Cabo Verde NQF covers the requirements of more than one ACQF level. This approach is justified because the Cabo Verde framework features more compact and structurally denser levels. By having fewer levels, the national NQF incorporates high demands for autonomy and innovation within each tier, meaning that national higher education qualifications correspond to higher levels within the ACQF level architecture. The justification narrative for each level of correspondence is detailed below, substantiating the alignment pathways established between both frameworks.

Note on the conceptual evolution of the skills:

It is important to highlight a conceptual and evolutionary distinction between the two frameworks within the Skills domain. As a recently developed reference meta-framework, the ACQF explicitly incorporates modern concepts adapted to global shifts in the labour market, namely digital and ecological (green) skills. Conversely, the level descriptors of the Cabo Verde NQF are structured around the classical categorization of cognitive and practical skills, without explicit mention of digital or green components in its baseline legislation.

This conceptual specificity of the ACQF, however, does not compromise the technical correspondence and substantive comparability between the levels of the two frameworks, as the complexity required for problem-solving and responding to information remains equivalent and aligned between both reference systems.

Level 1: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 1 and ACQF Levels 1 and 2

The correspondence of Cabo Verde **NQF Level 1** to **ACQF Levels 1 and 2** is justified because the initial national level exhibits a higher overall demand than Level 1 alone on the continental framework. Due to the more compact nature of the Cabo Verde system, national Level 1 aligns with and simultaneously absorbs the elements of complexity that the African reference framework distributes across its first two levels.

Knowledge: While ACQF Level 1 is heavily centered on simple knowledge, focusing on basic literacy and numeracy, Level 1 of the Cabo Verde NQF already incorporates the requirement to apply basic general knowledge. This national definition extends to and absorbs the concepts of ACQF Level 2, which adds the understanding of basic operational and factual knowledge.

Skills: In the skills domain, ACQF Level 1 focuses on the execution of repetitive tasks through simple instructions. Cabo Verde NQF Level 1 goes further by requiring practical skills to perform simple and routine tasks. This national approach covers the initial continental requirements and aligns with ACQF Level 2, which introduces the selection of known solutions to solve simple and immediate problems.

Responsibility and Autonomy: In terms of autonomy, ACQF Levels 1 and 2 describe acting within highly structured contexts under close supervision and with minimal or limited responsibility for outcomes. Level 1 of the Cabo Verde NQF establishes a direct bridge to this scenario by determining that the individual must be able to act within a structured work or learning context under direct supervision, while already assuming explicit responsibility for their own performance.

Level 2: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 2 and ACQF Level 3

The correspondence of Cabo Verde **NQF Level 2** to **ACQF Level 3** is grounded in the fact that the requirements established in the national framework clearly exceed the demands of the second continental level, aligning instead with the complexity of the subsequent tier.

Knowledge: Level 2 of the Cabo Verde NQF requires basic operational knowledge in a field of work or study, formally introducing the capacity to express ideas and concepts through effective verbal and written communication. This requirement demonstrates significant progress that surpasses ACQF Level 2 and tunes into ACQF Level 3, which requires factual and operational knowledge that already incorporates theoretical aspects. The convergence is based on the capacity to understand the concepts of one's field and share them in a structured manner.

Skills: In the skills domain, the national framework establishes the use of appropriate information and the capacity to respond to challenges through the resolution of routine problems using simple rules and tools. These elements find a direct correspondence with ACQF Level 3, which requires competences to interpret information, demonstrate limited initiative, and select known solutions to solve familiar problems. Both frameworks coincide in the expectation that technical action ceases to be purely automatic and begins to require an informed choice of solution.

Responsibility and Autonomy: It is in the field of professional independence that equivalence is consolidated. While ACQF Level 2 describes structured contexts under supervision and with limited responsibility, Cabo Verde Level 2 introduces some operational autonomy. The national framework explicitly provides for the independent execution of tasks in certain structured opportunities and partial autonomy under supervision. This advancement aligns perfectly with ACQF Level 3, which requires self-responsibility initiative and some responsibility for group outcomes in predictable contexts.

Level 3: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 3 and ACQF Level 4

The correspondence of Cabo Verde **NQF Level 3** to **ACQF Level 4** is based on a major qualitative leap within the national framework, demonstrating that its overall demand level is much more reliably referenced to the fourth continental level than to the third.

Knowledge: In the knowledge domain, Cabo Verde Level 3 requires an understanding of facts, principles, processes, and general concepts, incorporating theoretical and technical aspects of the field. This conceptual depth is in perfect harmony with ACQF Level 4, which focuses on mainly factual, operational, or technical knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects in one or more fields.

Skills: In the field of skills, the national framework introduces important requirements, such as the practical application of methods, tools, and materials, problem-solving, and the provision of support and technical advice. The ACQF complements this vision by specifying that Level 4 requires well-developed competences to analyse information, make informed judgements, and apply varied solutions to varied problems (whether familiar or unfamiliar). The convergence lies in the individual's ability to demonstrate initiative to select the best technical approach when faced with diverse situations.

Responsibility and Autonomy: In terms of autonomy, NQF Level 3 requires a clear evolution in professional attitude, highlighting initiative, teamwork (collaborative work), and the capacity to adapt behaviour to circumstances (contextual adaptation). Furthermore, the national NQF explicitly provides for the individual to assume limited responsibility for others in small teams or workgroups. This profile finds a direct correspondence in ACQF Level 4, which establishes criteria such as autonomy with self-direction under general guidance and some responsibility for the planning and outcomes of others.

Level 4: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 4 and ACQF Level 5

The correspondence of Cabo Verde **NQF Level 4** to **ACQF Level 5** is based on a strong equivalence of functions, demonstrating that the overall demand level of the fourth national level is perfectly compatible with the fifth level of the continental structure.

Knowledge: In the knowledge domain, Cabo Verde Level 4 is characterized by broad factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of study or work. This theoretical breadth responds directly to the logic of ACQF Level 5, which establishes technical and theoretical depth in a specific discipline or field as an essential parameter.

Skills: In the field of skills, the national framework requires well-developed capacities for specific problem-solving, work organization, and immediate decision-making with initiative. The ACQF complements this profile by requiring competences to analyse information and new ideas, formulate solutions, and apply varied responses to diverse problems, demonstrating a clear synergy between the skills expected at both levels.

Responsibility and Autonomy: It is in the domain of autonomy that correspondence becomes most evident. **Cabo Verde NQF Level 4** already demonstrates a solid capacity for the supervision of others, activity organization, definition of objectives and goals, as well as direct responsibility for outputs, outcomes, and the evaluation and improvement of activities. This dimension of planning and coordination intermediate planning and coordination finds a direct correspondence in the criteria for ACQF Level 5, which requires total autonomy in unpredictable contexts and assuming responsibility for one's own outcomes and those of the group.

Level 5: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 5 and ACQF Level 6

The correspondence of Cabo Verde NQF Level 5 to ACQF Level 6 is based on a strong harmony between professional and learning profiles, demonstrating that the national technical-vocational transition level directly aligns with the sixth level of the continental structure.

Knowledge: In the knowledge domain, Cabo Verde Level 5 is characterized by specialized knowledge and a solid abstract technical understanding within a specific field. This profile strongly converges with ACQF Level 6, which requires highly technical knowledge and specialization in a discipline or field of

study. Both frameworks coincide on the need for theoretical mastery that goes beyond mere routine operational execution.

Skills: In the field of skills, the national framework highlights the design of creative solutions to abstract problems in routine or new environments. This practical and formulation competence finds a direct equivalence in ACQF Level 6, which requires developed synthesis and adaptation skills to gather information and formulate responses to solve complex and sometimes abstract problems.

Responsibility and Autonomy: In the domain of autonomy, Cabo Verde Level 5 requires the capacity to manage and supervise in work or study contexts subject to unpredictable changes, assuming the review and development of one's own performance and that of others. The ACQF reflects this high degree of demand by establishing well-developed autonomy and total responsibility over resources, processes, and own and group outcomes as parameters for its Level 6.

Level 6: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 6 and ACQF Level 7

The correspondence of Cabo Verde **NQF Level 6** to **ACQF Level 7** is grounded in a strong structural alignment between both frameworks, driven by the high demand for innovation and technical leadership that characterizes the **bachelor's degree** profile in the national system.

Knowledge: In the knowledge domain, Cabo Verde Level 6 is characterized by a critical understanding of theories and principles within a specific field of study or work. This conceptual and analytical requirement demonstrates a direct equivalence with ACQF Level 7, which requires advanced and specialized analytical knowledge of a discipline or field. Both frameworks share the need for a solid scientific baseline to underpin decision-making in professional environments.

Skills: In the field of skills, the national framework highlights advanced competences focused on innovation and the resolution of complex and unpredictable problems. This practical and creative aspect tunes in perfectly with ACQF Level 7, which requires advanced and specialized skills to formulate complex and abstract solutions, demonstrating initiative for new knowledge in research and innovation.

Responsibility and Autonomy: In the domain of autonomy, Cabo Verde Level 6 assigns to the individual the capacity to manage complex technical or professional projects, assuming responsibility for decision-making and collective professional development. This dimension of team leadership and coordination precisely reflects the parameters of advanced autonomy and responsibility established for Level 7 in the ACQF level structure.

Level 7: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 7 and ACQF Levels 8 and 9

The correspondence of Cabo Verde **NQF Level 7** to **ACQF Levels 8 and 9** is based on the fact that the level representing the **master's degree** constitutes a highly advanced profile within the national system. Due to the more compact and structurally denser nature of the Cabo Verde framework, this level establishes a multiple correspondence, absorbing elements that the ACQF level structure distributes across two consecutive levels.

Knowledge: In the knowledge domain, Cabo Verde Level 7 is characterized by highly specialized knowledge that underpins the capacity for original reflection and research. This depth goes beyond an isolated analysis, aligning directly with the highly advanced and complex knowledge defined for ACQF Level 8, while simultaneously reaching the mastery of frontier knowledge required at ACQF Level 9.

Skills: In the field of skills, the national framework highlights competences focused on research and the integration of knowledge from different areas. These skills are reflected in the capacity to formulate highly complex solutions and operate within advanced research and innovation (ACQF Level 8), while also fulfilling the criteria for originality and the formulation and testing of theories envisaged at ACQF Level 9.

Responsibility and Autonomy: In the domain of autonomy, the Cabo Verde NQF requires the individual to have the capacity to transform complex contexts and conduct strategic reviews of teams. This demand for leadership and strategic transformation clearly tunes into the responsibility

requirements and the mastery of autonomy distributed between Levels 8 and 9 within the ACQF architecture.

The combined technical elements allow for the clear conclusion that **Level 7** of the Cabo Verde NQF sits between **ACQF Levels 8 and 9**, incorporating elements of both by virtue of the greater structural density of the national model.

Level 8: Correspondence Narrative between NQF Level 8 and ACQF Level 10

The correspondence of Cabo Verde NQF Level 8 to ACQF Level 10 concludes the referencing matrix, establishing a direct and legitimate equivalence between the maximum level of the national educational system Doctoral Degree and the top of the continental African structure. This link is grounded in the structural compression of the Cabo Verde model, whose maximum demands absorb the high criteria of rigor required internationally.

Knowledge: In the knowledge domain, Cabo Verde Level 8 requires cutting-edge, frontier knowledge within a field of study or work and at the interface between different fields. This transdisciplinary and advanced approach demonstrates a clear alignment with ACQF Level 10, which requires a substantial and original contribution to knowledge and the expansion of the frontier of knowledge itself. Both frameworks converge on the requirement of an absolute mastery of baseline scientific knowledge.

Skills: In the field of skills, the national framework highlights advanced synthesis and evaluation capacities necessary for the development of new ideas and processes, as well as for the redefinition of existing professional practices. The ACQF reflects this high complexity at its Level 10 by requiring competences focused on the creation of new ideas and transformative innovation. The correspondence is based on the shared capacity to not only apply or produce science, but to restructure and expand the paradigms of practical action and research.

Responsability and Autonomy: In the domain of autonomy, the Cabo Verde NQF advocates an approach guided by scientific leadership, advanced innovation, and maximum scientific or professional integrity when faced with the development of new processes at the forefront. This full autonomy and authority intellectual align robustly with the parameters of ACQF Level 10, focused on the mastery to manage new ideas and demonstrate total authority in the domain of emerging contexts.

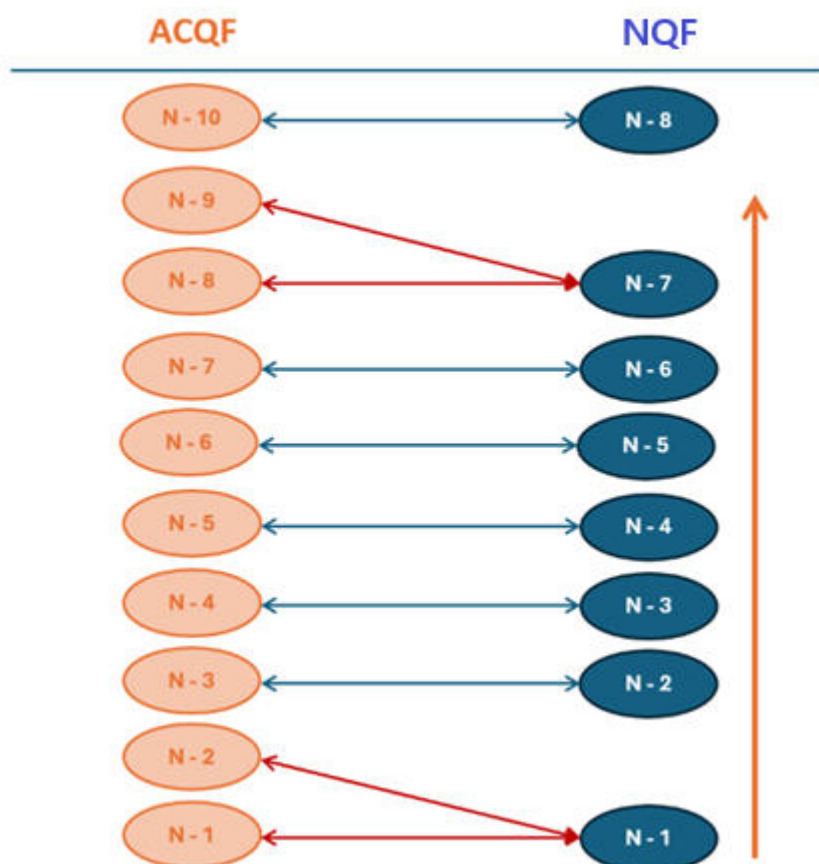
Thus, although **ACQF Level 10** represents an international tier of extreme demand, it is concluded that **NQF Level 8** incorporates and absorbs these same high levels of rigor, presenting an entirely plausible direct correspondence face to the ACQF level structure.

Conclusion of the Technical Analysis of Level Correspondence between the NQF and the ACQF

The proposed correspondence matrix demonstrates a coherent and rigorous methodological logic, based on the density of the descriptors, the progression of autonomy, the complexity of skills, and the depth of knowledge. The exercise highlights that the Cabo Verde NQF possesses more compact and dense levels, incorporating high demands that guarantee the total transparency, clarity, and international comparability of all national qualifications face to the ACQF level structure.

To synthesize and facilitate the reading of this technical analysis, the equivalence matrix has been mapped into a unified graphical scheme. The illustration in [Figure 2](#) below visually presents the progression of these correlations, making clear the direct one-to-one correspondences and, likewise, the multiple correspondence flows adopted to safeguard the integrity of the national levels structured at the base (**NQF Level 1**) and in the higher education segment (**NQF Level 7**).

Figure 2: Correspondence Diagram between the Qualification Levels of the Cabo Verde NQF and the ACQF



Source: Authored by the Technical Working Group (TWG)

The consolidation of this matrix and the visual clarity of its mapping flows demonstrate that the structure of the Cabo Verde NQF is fully prepared for continental integration. However, for this correspondence to come alive in practice within the labour market, the system relies on the engine that gives substance to each level: the learning outcomes-based approach and competence validation mechanisms. These operational pillars, which ensure that what is learned in practice holds the same value as formal schooling pathways, are analysed in detail below under [Criterion 2](#).

Conclusions Regarding Criterion 1:

The technical and legal analysis regarding **Criterion 1** unequivocally demonstrates that the National Qualifications Framework of Cabo Verde (QNQ-CV) fully complies with the transparency and comparability requirements demanded by ACQF Referencing Criterion 1. The mapping exercise proves the existence of a clear, coherent, and formally demonstrable link between the qualifications of the national system and the level descriptors of the continental meta-framework.

Direct harmony exists between the three learning domains adopted by both frameworks. The semantic treatment applied to the domains of Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibility and Autonomy ensures that learning outcomes are interpreted under the same scientific baseline, free of conceptual ambiguities

The progression analysis reveals highly compatible learning pathways, evolving in a continuous and predictable manner from the execution of basic, routine tasks under supervision up to the highest tiers of scientific demand, characterized by innovation, professional integrity, and transdisciplinary leadership.

The architectural difference between the 8 levels of the QNQ-CV and the 10 levels of the ACQF does not compromise the substantive alignment between the two systems. The report clearly demonstrates that the Cabo Verde model features structurally more compact and dense levels, embedding high

demands that justify the application of multiple correspondences at the base (NQF Level 1) and at the top of higher education (NQF Level 7), thus preserving the technical integrity of both frameworks.

This entire ecosystem of equivalence is legally anchored and consolidated within the national legal framework via [Joint Order No. 10/2020](#). Additionally, the utilization of instruments already implemented in the country, such as the Diploma Supplement (regulated by [Order No. 18/2014](#)), acts as a practical mechanism for *ex-post* transparency, facilitating the readability and comparability of Cabo Verdean qualifications within the African and global spaces.

Consequently, the technical validation of this chapter confirms that the QNQ-CV is perfectly suited for continental integration, ensuring the mutual trust necessary to promote the recognition of qualifications and support the academic and professional mobility of Cabo Verdean citizens. This structural equivalence base serves as the foundation for the practical operationalization of the system, whose functionality, rooted in learning outcomes and RPL mechanisms, is substantiated in detail below under Criterion 2.

ACQF Referencing Criterion 2

The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on **learning outcomes** principles and related to arrangements for recognition of prior learning/RPL (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to **credit systems**.

The application of the learning outcomes approach in the design and description of qualifications is one of the primary objectives of the NQF, as defined in Article 4 of the NQF legal text ([Joint Order No. 10/2020](#)). It states: *“To apply a competence-based approach to define and describe qualifications and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning, paying particular attention to citizens who are most vulnerable to unemployment or precarious forms of employment, whose participation in lifelong learning and access to the labour market may increase as a result of this approach”*.

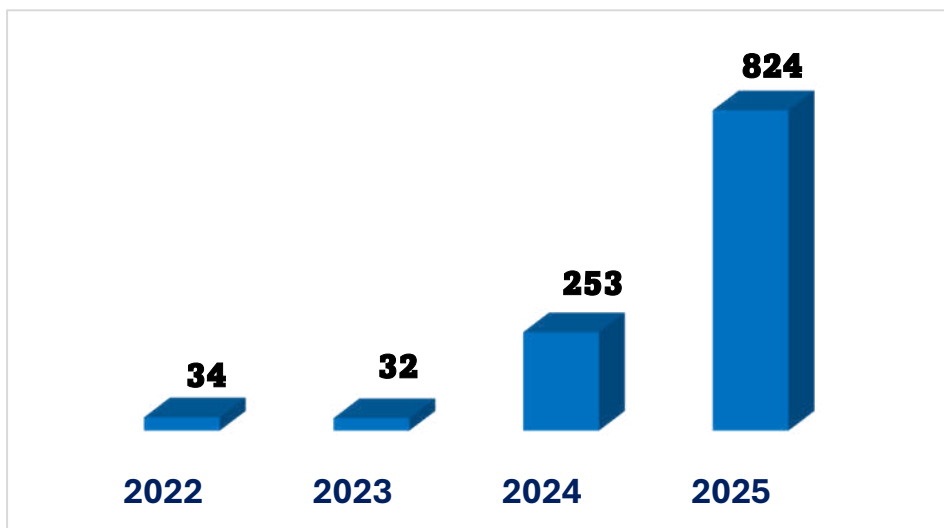
In Cabo Verde, learning outcomes play a multifaceted role:

First, a) a fundamental technical role in the conceptual and technical design of competence units for occupational profiles, and in the development of training modules, which together structure qualifications; **(b)** In defining assessment criteria (formal training, non-formal and informal learning); **(c)** In evaluating formal education and training programs; and; **(d)** Within the RPL system (Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)).

Secondly, learning outcomes play a crucial role in social inclusion, as they facilitate access to qualifications for citizens with a limited formal education background but with tangible life and work experience and proven professional skills. In this context, the RVCC system is specifically designed and implemented to respond to these needs.

Within the framework of deepening the pathways of flexibility that characterize compliance with Criterion 2, an isolated analysis of the performance of the RPL mechanism assumes particular relevance. The consolidated data in [chart 1](#) demonstrates a remarkable evolution in the number of citizens certified through this pathway:

Chart 1: Number of Beneficiaries with Professional Qualification Certification through the RPL Process (2022–2025)



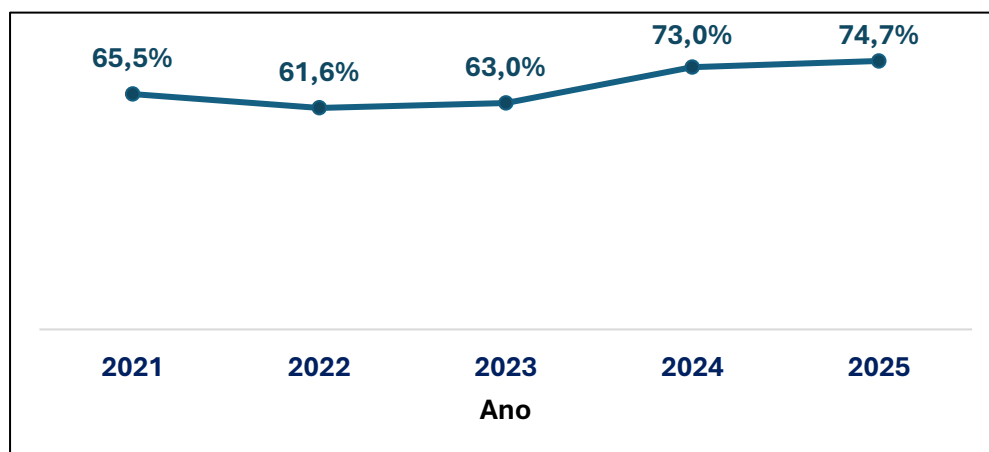
Source: UC-SNQ

The analytical reading of these indicators attests to the consolidation and success of the national strategy for valuing non-formal and informal learning. The quantitative leap from 34 certified beneficiaries in **2022** to **824** in **2025** represents an exponential growth trajectory. Chart 1 demonstrates that the Cabo Verdean system has successfully transitioned from a phase of localized pilot projects to a structured, large-scale dynamic. By centering certification on the learning outcomes effectively demonstrated by adults through their life and work experience, the country consolidates a lifelong education and training ecosystem that is more equitable, inclusive, and perfectly aligned with the integration and mobility goals of the ACQF.

The "[Qualifications Regime](#)" of the UC-SNQ defines the broader principles of professional qualifications, in which learning outcomes/competences are a core element, such as: broad scope and competence-based, with value and meaning for the labour market; modularity of training; adaptability to the evolution of production methods and occupations; grounding in concepts of professional competences that ensure workers' capacities to perform work in different contexts and production situations; and being designed and formulated to allow the validation of individuals' competences, regardless of how they were acquired.

The practical materialization of this principle of "value and meaning for the labour market" is empirically demonstrated by the positive evolution of the graduates' employability. The external efficacy and socioeconomic impact resulting from this competence-based approach are directly reflected in the trend line presented in [chart 2](#) below, which highlights the growing absorption of these professionals by the national productive fabric between 2021 and 2025.

Chart 2: Evolution of the Labour Market Insertion Rate between 2021 and 2025



Source: UC-SNQ

This chart visually illustrates the trajectory of the Labour Market Insertion Rate between 2021 and 2025, providing robust empirical evidence of the external efficacy of the national qualifications system. The trend line behaviour demonstrates sharp and continuous growth from **2022** onwards, the year in which the rate stood at **61.6%**, recording a consolidated progression of **63.0%** in **2023**, **73.0%** in **2024**, and reaching its peak tier of **74.7%** in **2025**.

This upward evolution attests that the strategic investment in curricular review and the design of qualifications firmly anchored in learning outcomes, in close coordination with the demands of productive sectors validated by the Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS), is generating concrete impacts on the employability of the active population.

In higher education, Cabo Verde promulgated legislation and procedures aimed at ensuring that teaching and learning are oriented towards competence development. Legislative [Decree No. 13/2018](#), which introduces the first amendment to Legislative Decree No. 2/2010 defining the Bases of the Education System, adopted the model of organizing higher education into study cycles (whether or not conferring academic degrees) and established the transition from an educational system based on knowledge transmission to a system oriented towards competence development.

Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning / RPL

[Decree-Law No. 54/2014](#), of September 22, on RPL, defines the political and conceptual foundations for promoting the validation of competences acquired across all contexts of learning. Social and labour market inclusion, economic productivity, the valuation of all types of learning, and the reinforcement of flexible lifelong learning pathways for citizens are the expected benefits of the effective implementation of this policy.

The Cabo Verde System for the Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences (RPL) is one of the core components of the National Qualifications System (NQS). In higher education, RPL processes do not currently apply; however, institutional reflections have begun regarding support measures for an RPL approach adapted to the higher education subsystem.

In Cabo Verde, the RVCC is a four-stage process that shares structural similarities with the stages outlined in the 2012 Council of the European Union (EU) Recommendation on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)²⁰ and described in the *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning* (3rd edition, 2023)²¹. The target group for the RPL process consists of individuals aged 25 or older with at least five years of professional experience.

The RVCC is currently in its initial stage of implementation and applies exclusively to professional qualifications integrated into the NQC (Levels 2 to 5). In this active phase, the RVCC is being deployed for qualifications at Levels 3, 4, and 5 within a pilot framework centered on three specific professional families (sectors):

- Hospitality and Tourism;
- Installation and Maintenance;
- Administration and Management.

In [2022](#), the pilot implementation of the RVCC focused on three professional qualifications, resulting in the certification of 48 candidates. User demand for RVCC services is exceptionally high, prompting government institutions and private sector companies to collaborate closely to guarantee access for employed workers within these designated sectors.

To guarantee the technical integrity and quality of the system, the government has invested in the continuous capacity building of technicians and expert trainers. Multiple training initiatives focused on the "[RVCC Pro](#)" process have been conducted to qualify professionals to act as facilitators within

²⁰ Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222(01)&from=EN)

²¹ Cedefop (2023). *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 124. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3093>

specific professional families, such as Administration and Management (AGE), enabling the execution of certifications at Levels 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQS, 2016; NQS, 2021; NQS, 2022). This operational network comprises, accredited public and private training centers and Technical schools.

The UC-SNQ coordinates and supports the overall implementation of the RVCC process, working in direct cooperation with the General Directorate of Employment, private firms seeking to certify their workforce, and various accredited providers. Furthermore, the UC-SNQ developed methodological support tools, RPL standards, and assessment instruments embedded within the NQC. Approximately 50 RVCC specialists, including (guidance technicians, assessors, and evaluators) have been trained to execute these verification processes.

The strategic commitment to the RVCC is viewed as an essential driver for the mass expansion of professional qualifications with an “eye on the labour market”²². Recent data demonstrates a significant acceleration in scaling up the process across the archipelago. On Sal Island, for example, the School of Hospitality and Tourism of Cabo Verde (EHTCV) recently awarded 520 RVCC certificates in key areas such as Cooking, Food and Beverage Services, and Tour Guiding. Este salto quantitativo, que mais do que duplicou os números de 2024, reflete o compromisso do Governo em atingir a meta de certificar milhares de profissionais que atuam no setor sem titulação formal, linking qualifications to improvements in productivity and compensation, including the goal of converging with the national minimum wage²³. This mechanism not only enhances employability and productivity but also ensures that lifelong learning learning is formally valued within the national system, promoting an increase in the qualification levels of the active population.

Figure 3: Evidence of the Operationalization of the *RVCC Pro* Process in Cabo Verde (2016–2025): Capacity Building, Awareness-Raising, and Awarding of Professional Certificates



Source: [Website of UC-SNQ](https://www.uc-sno.cv/)

²² <https://expressodasilhas.cv/economia/2021/02/20/uma-aposta-massificada-com-olhos-no-mercado-de-trabalho/73483>

²³ <https://inforpress.cv/pt/article-8206>

Conclusions Regarding Criterion 2:

The analysis of the implementation of Criterion 2 in Cabo Verde demonstrates a strong alignment with the principles of comparability and transparency, materialized in the structural adoption of the learning outcomes-based approach. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) embraces this matrix not only as a technical imperative for the design of occupational profiles, training modules, and assessment criteria, but above all as a core mechanism for socio-professional inclusion. By centering the system on demonstrable competences, regardless of the context in which they were acquired, the country actively values non-formal and informal learning, responding to the demands for flexibility and labour market relevance advocated by international reference frameworks.

As a primary strength of the system, the maturity achieved in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET/EFTP) sub-sector stands out, driven by the institutionalization and expansion of the Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences (RVCC) system. The country demonstrates a tangible commitment by transitioning from a pilot phase to a formal strategy of accelerated mass expansion, supported by the capacity building of specialists and grounded in methodologically robust European guidelines. The significant certification of workers in critical economic sectors denotes a successful operationalization, featuring strong institutional and private collaboration aimed at directly improving the productivity and employability of the active population.

Notwithstanding these remarkable advancements, a critical synthesis of the data reveals significant sub-sectoral asymmetries that pose pressing challenges for the cohesion of the national system. Higher education finds itself in a transitional stage that lags behind TVET; although legislation exists to promote teaching oriented towards competence development, there is an evident gap in formal referencing, since higher education study cycle diplomas still do not include the indication of their respective NQF level. In parallel, it is noted that RVCC pathways are currently inoperative within higher education, remaining restricted to an embryonic phase of reflection. Additionally, there is a substantive documentary and operational gap regarding the credit accumulation and transfer policy in TVET, whose lack of guidelines limits the assessment of the actual permeability and flexibility of training pathways.

In short, overcoming these challenges will require the full alignment of academic diplomas with the NQF level structure, as well as the methodological expansion of the RPL to encompass the necessary articulation of a transparent credit system. Fulfilling these steps will be decisive to guarantee a truly integrated, equitable, and fully convergent lifelong learning ecosystem in line with the best practices of qualifications frameworks.

ACQF Referencing Criterion 3

There are transparent processes and **procedures for including qualifications in the NQF** or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and information on qualifications is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in a **national register(s) of qualifications**.

Scope of the Cabo Verde NQF

Scope of application: In the context of the legislation and concepts in force in Cabo Verde, the question of the scope of application of the NQF can be analyzed under two aspects:

1. The scope of the SNQ, of which the NQF is a systemic component; the NQF is operationalized together with the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), which is another component of the SNQ.
2. The scope of application of the NQF itself. In this aspect, the scope of the NQF is viewed from two angles:
 - The principles and the qualifications map of the NQF according to relevant legislation;
 - Qualifications registers (the NQC and the ARES register).

The NQF has a comprehensive and inclusive scope of application. The NQF includes qualifications from all levels and sectors of the educational system. It covers primary, secondary, and higher education, vocational training, as well as qualifications resulting from processes for the recognition, validation, and certification of competences obtained in the context of non-formal and informal learning (Article 3 of [Joint Order No. 10/2020](#)).

The NQF systematizes qualifications by levels: from **Level 1** (Diploma of Compulsory Basic Education) to **Level 8**, the Doctoral degree (university education).

The CNQ is part of the scope of the SNQ and is inseparable from the NQF. For this reason, this analysis for Criterion 3 presents basic information about the CNQ and about the ARES register, which are the two management and information instruments on qualifications in Cabo Verde.

Procedures and Criteria for the Development of Qualifications

In its Article 3, [Decree-Law No. 4/2018](#), which establishes the legal regime of the National Qualifications System, defines professional qualification as: *“the formal result of an assessment and validation process proven by a competent body, recognizing that an individual has acquired competences, in accordance with established standards”*.

The [UC-SNQ](#) further clarifies: "A Professional Qualification is the formal result of a process of assessment and validation of competences, proven by a competent body, recognizing in an individual the acquisition of significant professional competences at work, in accordance with the standards established in the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), managed by the Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ)."

Development of Professional Qualifications

The conceptual and methodological foundations supporting the design and management of professional qualifications were adopted through legal texts, explained, and disseminated through manuals. The UC-SNQ ensures the coordination, supervision, and dissemination of this knowledge and methodological baseline.

Conceptual Baseline

The "[Qualifications Regime](#)" of the UC-SNQ defines the broader principles of professional qualifications:

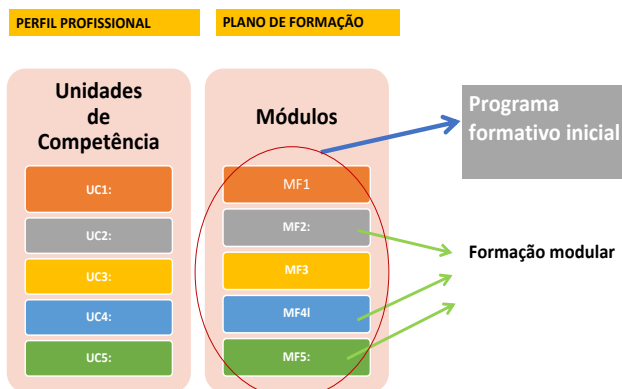
- Broader and competence-based scope, with value and meaning for the labour market;
- Adaptable to the evolution of production methods and occupations;
- Based on concepts of professional skills, ensuring workers' capacity to work in different production contexts and situations;
- Compliance with the requirements and formats of professional profiles structured into competence units and training programs organized into modules associated with competence units;
- Supported by learning programs that form the basis of the training offer in the technical education and vocational training system, enabling the implementation of the modular training system; and
- Designed and formulated to support the validation of outcomes in different learning contexts, including non-formal and informal.

Structure of Professional Qualifications

The structure of the professional qualification included in the NQC (CNQ) is described in figures 4, [5](#), and [6](#). The structural model of professional profiles and training programs (which together define professional qualifications) diagrammed in figures 4 and 5 illustrates the close conceptual and technical link inherent to both components.

Figure 4: Professional Qualifications Structure (Joint Ordinance No. 9/2020)

QP - Estrutura



Source: *Cabo Verde ACQF Country Report, July 2020*

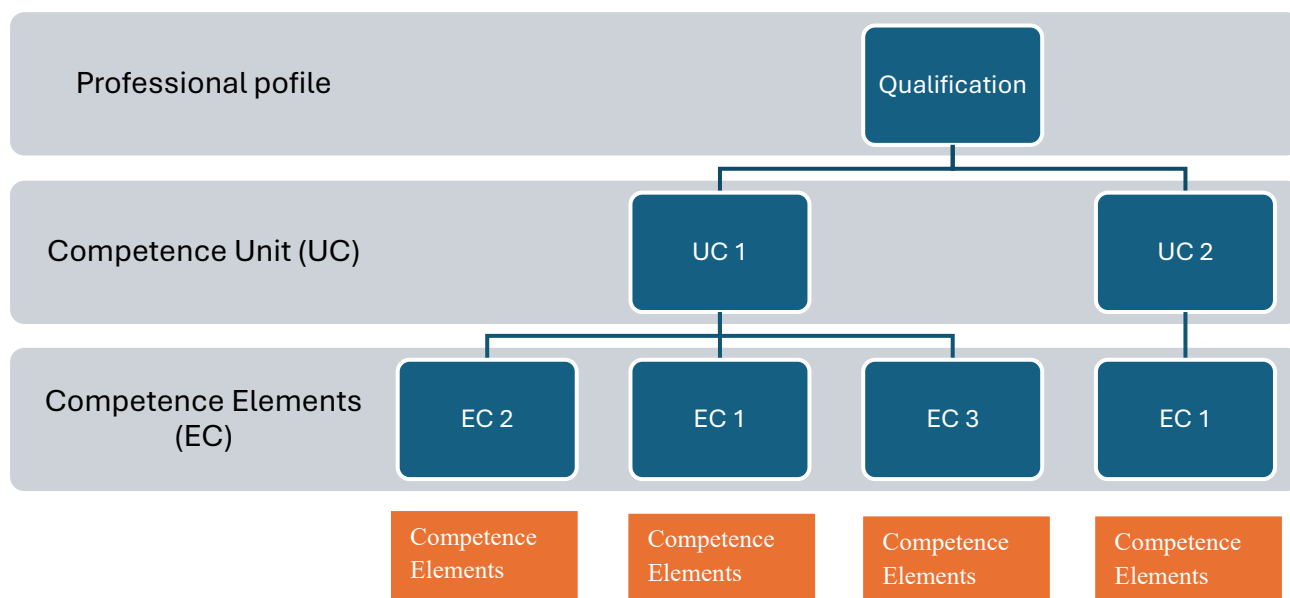
Figures 4 and 5 explain the concept and structure of the two interconnected components of professional qualifications (the professional profile and the training program) and the place of **competences (learning outcomes)** across the structural tiers.

The **content of the professional profile** is structured into a "cascade" of three levels:

- **Competence Units (UC)**
 - o Composed of **Competence Elements**
 - o **Performance criteria**

The structure of the professional profile ([figure 4](#)) mirrors the structure of the training program ([figure 6](#)). Learning outcomes are the common element of the model

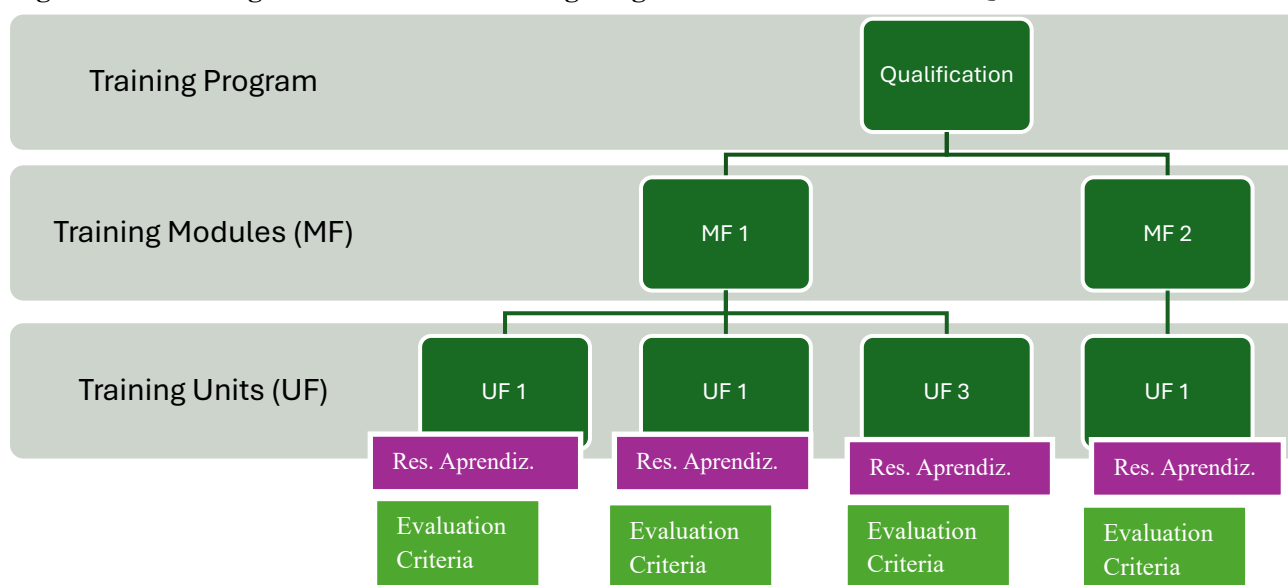
Figure 5: Cascading Structure of the Professional Profile within a Professional Qualification



Source: *Authored by the Technical Working Group (TWG)*

The content of the training program is structured into a three-level "cascade": Training modules, composed of Training units; each supported by Learning outcomes (*Res. Aprendiz*) - specified by Assessment criteria ([Fig. 6](#)).

Figure 6: Cascading Elements of the Training Program within a Professional Qualification



Source: Authored by the Technical Working Group (TWG)

Process for developing Professional Qualifications

The NQC (CNQ) is one of the most prominent instruments of the NQS (SNQ) and has been regulated by specific legislation since its inception: [Decree-Law N°. 66/2010](#), the new NQS legal act ([Decree-Law N°. 4/2018](#)) and the recently adopted NQC legal act of February 2020 ([Joint Order No. 9/2020](#)).

The main elements of the qualification development process regulated in the aforementioned legal texts include:

1. **Structure of professional qualifications - composed of:**
 - Professional profile and training program (general scheme in Figure 4)
2. **Classification of professional qualifications:** a) by professional families and b) by qualification level, according to the NQF.
3. **Components of professional qualification:**
 - Name of the professional profile, reference to the professional family, NQF level, and alphanumeric code.
 - General competence of professional profile.
 - Competence statement: Describing the actions/behaviours to be demonstrated in work situations.
 - Performance criteria.
 - Training reference associated with a qualification and structured into training modules.
4. **Competence Units**
 - Identification data: name, level, and code
 - Competence statement: Describing the actions/behaviours to be demonstrated in work situation
 - Performance criteria
 - Professional context
5. **Training Modules**
 - The professional qualification training program is composed of the relevant modules from the modular catalogue of technical-vocational training.
 - Training modules are the smallest units of training for executing learning pathways leading to professional qualification diplomas and/or certificates.
 - Each training module follows a standardized model, comprising the following elements: module identification (name, qualification level, professional family,

associated competence unit); learning outcomes and related performance criteria; conceptual, procedural, and behavioural content; and methodological guidelines for different training modalities (including distance learning).

- The training program is based on a learning credit system, referencing the principle of recognizing the value of acquired competences.
- The training program includes a training module to be implemented under real working conditions (company, work-based context), which is essential for completing professional competences. Access to the module in a real work context is permitted upon the successful evaluation of the prerequisite modules by the training provider.

Methodological Baseline

The methodology for developing professional qualifications is defined in the [UC-SNQ Procedures Manual](#) and is structured into the following processes:

- **Process A:** Characterization of the professional family
- **Process B:** Establishment and organization of the Sectoral Council (COS) and the Sectoral Technical Committee (CTS)
- **Process C:** Elaboration of the professional profile (functional map, competence units, performance criteria, general competence of the qualification)
- **Process D:** Validation of the professional profile
- **Process E:** Design of the training plan (training modules)
- **Process F:** Validation of the training program and professional qualification

Source: [UC-SNQ Procedures Manual, page 4](#)

Referencing Learning Outcomes to Level Descriptors

Level descriptors are used during the process of developing the professional profile — specifically within process "PC5", designated as "Assigning the Level to the Competence Unit". Source: [SNQ Procedures Manual, pages 60-64](#)

The assignment of a level to a competence unit takes into account the complexity of the work activities defined in the Functional Map, which results from the functional analysis. The Sectoral Technical Committee (CTS), supported by the Professional Family Coordinator and the UC-SNQ Technician, analyzes the level of functions within the Functional Map and identifies the associated work activities. It then drafts a matrix of work activities and, applying the QNQ level descriptors, assigns the most pertinent level to each of them.

Higher Education Qualifications

The structure of cycles and degrees is compatible with the architecture of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the reforms linked to the Bologna Process.

The principles and structure of higher education courses to be applied by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were stipulated in [Order N°. 10/2014](#) of May 28, which approves the organizational standards for processes regarding the registration of study cycle adaptations. This Order supported the alignment/adaptation of courses and degrees to the new structural organization derived from [Decree-Law No. 22/2012](#) of August 7. The Order stipulates (page 758):

- “The adaptation process aims to reorganize each active study cycle and is implemented through:*
- a) The transition from an education based on the transmission of knowledge to an education based on the development of competences;*
 - b) The orientation of the provided training toward the specific objectives that must be ensured by the study cycles of the university or polytechnic subsystem in which it is integrated;*

- c) *The determination of the workload that the student must develop in each course unit (unidade curricular), including, notably and where applicable, collective teaching sessions, tutorial-type personal guidance sessions, internships, projects, field work, autonomous study, and assessment;*
- d) *The setting of the total number of semesters, and consequent duration of the study cycle, in accordance with the criteria established by this decree regulating the legal regime of academic degrees and higher education diplomas.”*

The annexes of this Order provide detailed supporting information for the application of these new provisions and structural arrangements by HEIs. Annex II details the description of the curricular structure of the study plan.

From the example of the [Study Plan for the Architecture course](#) (Bachelor's degree) at the Jean Piaget University of Cabo Verde, which was shared by ARES for this report, it is noted that learning outcomes were described summarily under the section "2. Objectives", presented belows:

“2.2. Specific objectives:

- *Possess the foundations for the comprehension and understanding of architectural space.*
- *Understand the importance of the form and nature of the system of collective spaces*
- *Know, analyze, and apply the variables involved in the activity of designing.*
- *Have a perception of the fundamental principles and concepts that regulate the energy needs of buildings, as a response to indoor comfort needs and a better inclusion of construction while respecting the environment...*
- *There are various learning objectives that are operationalized in theoretical, practical, and laboratory classes, study visits, research projects, curricular internships, and the defense of the monograph at the end of the course.*
To measure the degree of compliance: 1) Periodic evaluations are conducted for both students and faculty members; 2) The submission of semestral programs and reports for each Course Unit is mandatory. 3) The filling of the class log (sumário) with content compatible with the synopsis and syllabus.
The Office of Studies and Planning conducts periodic statistical studies for all Study Cycles (CE).”

In higher education, a credit system identical to the ECTS is applied.

- Legal Basis: [Legislative Decree No. 13/2018 \(Article 36\)](#) on the Bases of the Education System; [Decree-Law N.º. 22/2012](#) of August 7 which establishes the legal regime for academic degrees and diplomas in higher education.
- [Legislative Decree N.º. 13/2018](#) determines that the organization of education provided by higher education institutions (HEIs / IES) is based on the credit system and defines:
- Credits are the measure of the number of hours of student workload.
 - The number of student workload hours to be considered in defining the number of credits includes all forms of academic work, namely contact hours, hours of practical learning (internships), fieldwork, individual and group study, and assessment.

The credit system in higher education contributes to student mobility and the recognition of prior learning.

- Student mobility between national higher education institutions of the same or different subsystems, as well as between national and foreign institutions, is guaranteed by the credit system, based on the principle of mutual recognition of the value of learning and acquired competences.
- Recognition of Prior Learning: Higher education institutions recognize, through the credit system, the professional competences and post-secondary training of applicants and enrolled students via special access modalities, which must be defined in a specific legal text.

Além disso, o [Decreto-Lei N.º 22/2012](#), alterado pelo [Decreto-Lei n.º 16/2026](#), de 24 de março de 2026, no Artigo 61º, estipula que o número de créditos alocados por unidade curricular é definido de acordo com um conjunto de princípios, dentre outros os seguintes: “O número de créditos correspondente ao

trabalho de um ano curricular realizado a tempo inteiro é de sessenta”. Esta definição está alinhada com ECTS.

Furthermore, [Decree-Law No. 22/2012](#), as amended by [Decree-Law No. 16/2026](#) of March 24, 2026, stipulates in its Article 61 that the number of credits allocated per course unit is defined according to a set of principles, including the following: *"The number of credits corresponding to the workload of a full-time curricular year is sixty."*

The credit system is implemented across higher education institutions as follows:

- One credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of student workload (encompassing all forms of learning, including contact hours, autonomous study, project work, laboratory work, and assessment).
- A full-time curricular year corresponds to 60 credits, while a (full-time semester) corresponds to 30 credits.

Source: University of Cabo Verde, [Deliberation N° 005/CONSU/2013](#) of 19/03/2013. Establishes the rules for curricular organization and the credit system in Bachelor's degree courses at the University of Cabo Verde.

In Cabo Verde, the processes for including professional qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are centralized within the [National Qualifications Catalogue](#) (CNQ), a dynamic and strategic management instrument available for public consultation. Qualifications for NQF Levels 2, 3, 4, and 5 are developed by the Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ) in response to emerging market and economic needs. Transparency in the construction and registration of these qualifications is ensured by the application of standardized references and guided by a "Procedures Manual for Developing Qualifications", guaranteeing that information is clearly structured through training modules and organized into various Professional Families.

Within the Higher Education subsystem, the registration and inclusion of qualifications (study cycles) in the NQF are managed by the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES) through rigorous evaluation and accreditation processes. These procedures are characterized by transparency, equity, and impartiality, and are formally described and made public in the Agency's ["Procedures Manual"](#). The processing of accreditation applications takes place on the ARES Digital Platform ([PD-ARES](#)), where higher education institutions submit proposals that are subsequently subjected to a Technical-Scientific Opinion issued by experts, culminating in a formal accreditation and registration decision by the Board of Directors of ARES.

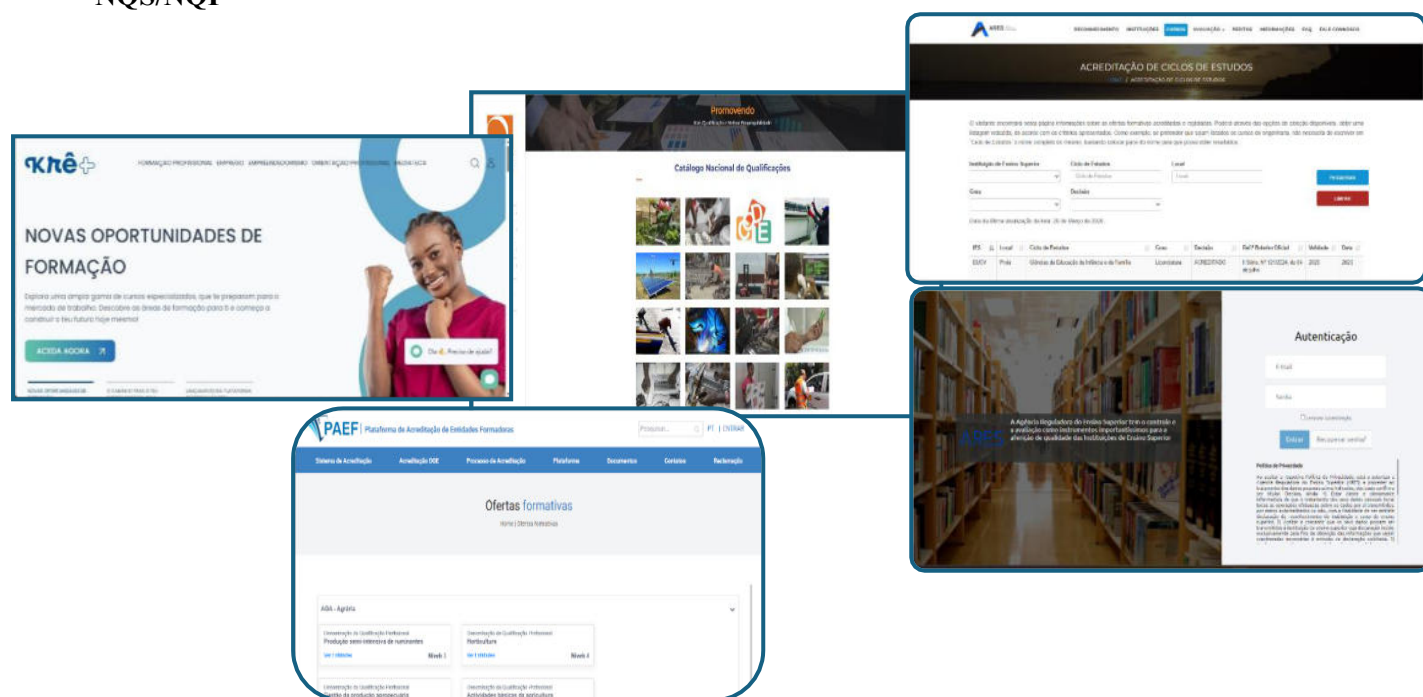
To ensure that information on qualifications is accessible, reliable, and verifiable, the country relies on public digital platforms that operate as national qualification registers. Information regarding professional qualifications can be freely accessed on the official website of the National Qualifications System, which provides an [updated list of training offers from the NQC \(CNQ\)](#). In parallel, the ARES [web portal](#) provides a searchable database containing all higher education training offers, allowing any user, through simple selection choices, to instantly verify the institution, the degree (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate, or DESP), the accreditation decision, and the validity period of the respective qualification. This architecture ensures compliance with the criterion for free and permanent access to official information regarding the positioning of each qualification within the national system.

Furthermore, within the scope of modernizing and increasing the transparency of the Technical and Vocational Education system, the Government, through the General Directorate of Employment (DGE), implemented the Training Provider Accreditation Platform ([PAEF](#)). This [digital tool](#) was developed to centralize the request and issuance of accreditation licenses (*alvarás*) for both public and private training providers. The *PAEF* automates and streamlines the entire procedure, guaranteeing high transparency within the system by allowing entities to track their processes in full and fostering faster interaction with the accrediting body.

Additionally, to ensure that information regarding training offers and the transition to the labour market is widely accessible to citizens, the [Krê+ Portal](#) was created. This [recent digital platform](#) centralizes access to professional training, internships, and job vacancies within a single interactive space.

Operating under the coordination of the [DGE](#), Krê+ brings together all stakeholders of the employment and professional training ecosystem, from training centers to support institutions, functioning as a room.

Figure 7: Ecosystem of Digital Platforms Supporting the Transparency and Management of the NQS/QNF



Source: Krê+, PAEF, US-SNQ and ARES websites

Conclusion Regarding Criterion 3:

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF/QNQ) of Cabo Verde fully complies with Criterion 3, demonstrating that it possesses transparent processes for the inclusion of qualifications and ensuring that information is reliable, verifiable, and accessible to the public. This conclusion is based on the following foundational pillars:

The NQF is characterized by its comprehensive and inclusive nature, integrating qualifications that cover the entire spectrum of the education and training system, from Level 1 (Basic Education) to Level 8 (Doctorate). The system ensures permeability between the subsystems of basic education, secondary education, vocational training, and higher education. Additionally, the framework reinforces its social and economic function by incorporating processes for the Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences (RVCC), enabling the inclusion of learning acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.

The inclusion of qualifications in the NQF is based on rigorous design methodologies that differ by subsystem but converge on their focus on learning outcomes. In vocational training, the model relies on a one-to-one correspondence between the Professional Profile (which defines competences within the labor context) and the Training Program (structured into units and modules). This process is coordinated by the Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ) with the active involvement of sectoral technical committees. In higher education, the architecture of qualifications follows the principles of the Bologna Process, with study cycles designed by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and accredited by the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES), ensuring alignment with international quality standards.

Transparency in describing the place of qualifications is reinforced by the adoption of a credit system aligned with the European ECTS. In the Cabo Verdean system, one credit corresponds to a workload of 25 to 30 hours, covering not only teaching contact hours but also autonomous study and internships.

This structure of 60 credits per curricular year allows for a clear understanding of the hours and complexity of each qualification, facilitating student mobility and the mutual recognition of competence within the continental and global space.

The registration and verification of qualifications are ensured by public digital platforms that guarantee data reliability and integrity. Professional qualifications are centralized in the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), managed by the UC-SNQ, while academic degrees are registered on the ARES digital platform following a rigorous technical opinion. This digital ecosystem is complemented by tools such as the PAEF portal (for provider accreditation) and the Krê+ Portal, which promotes the digital portability of competences. In this manner, the State guarantees that any citizen, employer, or international partner can independently and transparently verify the validity and positioning of any qualification registered in the national system.

ACQF Referencing Criterion 4

The national [quality assurance system](#) for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). [ACQF Guideline 5](#) elaborates the QA principles of ACQ).

Quality assurance is an essential pillar of transparency and trust in NQF qualifications, as well as mutual trust between different national qualification systems and frameworks. Trust in qualifications acquired nationally or abroad helps facilitate the recognition of qualifications and, consequently, supports the mobility of learners and workers, as well as the alignment between the supply and demand of skills and qualifications for social and economic development.

Legal Basis of Quality Assurance in Education and Training in Cabo Verde

Technical Education and Vocational Training

In vocational training, quality assurance processes comprise:

- Harmonized development and validation of qualifications (professional profiles, training plans, and modules) and their inclusion in the NQC (CNQ).
- Accreditation of institutions offering training.
- Quality of trainees' competence assessment and certification
- Quality of the RVCC system
- Pedagogical supervision in technical schools to verify compliance with the training programs of the technical pathway and professional qualifications.

Legal Basis:

- [Joint Orders No. 9/2020 \(CNQ\) and 10/2020 \(QNQ\)](#) of February 20: Cover the principles and regulations related to the components of professional qualifications, as well as the format and structure of competence units and training modules.
- [Decree-Law N°. 6/2013](#) establishes the legal regime for the accreditation of training entities for the development of professional training courses and actions.
- [General Directorate of Employment \(DGE\)](#): as the Accrediting Entity. The Decree-Law approving the organic structure of the MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (B.O. [N°. 76/2021, I Series, of November 2](#)), under Art. 64, paragraph 2, subparagraph e), explicitly tasks the DGE with the duty to "Accredit Training Entities and Professional Training centers and establishments" [cf. Article 64, paragraph 2, subparagraph e].
- [Decree-Law N°. 71/2021](#) of October 18 establishes the structure, organization, and operating rules of the Ministry of Education. Article 11, subparagraphs c) and I), details the competences of the National Directorate of Education, and Article 13, subparagraph m), defines the

competence of the Technical-Vocational Education and Youth and Adult Education Service regarding the monitoring of quality assurance in technical education.

- Guide or Monitoring Sheet for Qualifications Implemented under the NQC: Developed by the UC-SNQ with the participation of SETEJA and the IEPF, this document lists the main dimensions and aspects considered critical for monitoring. Its purpose is to ensure coherence, efficacy, and quality in the implementation of qualifications provided for in the NQC, thereby enhancing the quality of the National Qualifications System (SNQ) as a whole. This Guide relies on 9 dimensions for monitoring: Organization and operation; Trainees and students; Learning assessment system; Trainers and teachers; Didactic-pedagogical support materials for sessions; Internal monitoring by training entities; Training modules within real work contexts; Infrastructures; Verification of qualification implementation. This Guide applies directly to both technical education and vocational training pathways.

Higher Education Subsystem

Quality assurance in higher education is fundamentally based on two core components: **a) evaluation** and **b) accreditation and registration**

- **Evaluation** integrates two structural dimensions: **a)** internal evaluation (self-evaluation) conducted by the higher education institutions themselves, and **b)** external evaluation
- **Accreditation and Registration** apply specifically to: **a)** the creation of higher education institutions, and **b)** the creation of study cycles (programs) leading to academic degrees and diplomas.

In higher education, a robust set of legal texts, regulatory frameworks, and methodological guides are dedicated to quality assurance.

O texto jurídico fundamental é a [Lei Nº 121/VIII/2016](#), de 24 de março, que cria a ARES e aprova o seu estatuto. Esta Lei (Artigo 8) atribuiu à recém-criada ARES um grande número de competências previamente definidas nos Decretos-Lei nº 20/2012 e nº 22/2012, mencionados a seguir. A Lei aboliu o anterior Conselho para a Qualidade Académica (CPQA) e atribuiu as suas funções ao Conselho Consultivo da ARES.

The Fundamental Legal Text is the [Law Nº. 121/VIII/2016](#) of March 24, which officially established the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES) and approved its statute. Under Article 8, this Law transferred a wide array of competences to the newly created ARES that were previously defined under [Decree-Laws No. 20/2012](#) and [No. 22/2012](#). Furthermore, the Law abolished the former Council for Academic Quality (CPQA) and reassigned its functions directly to the Advisory Council of ARES.

Other legal texts governing quality assurance in higher education include:

- [Decree-Law Nº. 20/2012 of July 19](#), with amendments introduced by [Decree-Law No. 12/2015](#) of February 24: Establishes the legal regime for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs/IES).
- [Decree-Law Nº. 16/2026 of March 4](#). Establishes the legal regime for academic degrees and diplomas in higher education.
- [Decree-Law Nº. 36/2014](#) of July 23. Establishes the legal regime for access, entry, re-entry, course change, and transfer in higher education.
- [Order No. 05/2014](#) of May 28: Defines the general parameters for the selection process of professionals for the HEI Bank of Evaluators.
- General Directorate of Higher Education (DGE) – [National System for the Evaluation of Higher Education Directives](#) of the National Quality Assurance System (SNAQES)
- Cabo Verdean Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Regulations, approved by [Deliberation No. 016/CA-ARES/2020](#) of December 17, published in the *Official Gazette* (BO), II Series, No. 180/2020 of December 31.

Main Achievements of ARES in Quality Assurance:

The journey of external quality assurance in higher education marked its initial milestone in May 2018 under the coordination of the General Directorate of Higher Education (DGES). This pioneering evaluation exercise covered 9 (nine) study cycles across 5 (five) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), focusing its technical scrutiny on three essential vectors: didactic-pedagogical organization, the profile of the teaching and tutorial staff, and the physical and logistical conditions of the infrastructure²⁴. To continue the process, 15 active courses ("study cycles") were evaluated between 2021 and 2022.

ARES consolidated the national quality assurance system through the operationalization of the ARES Digital Platform (PD-ARES), which dematerialized and standardized evaluation and accreditation procedures for both study cycles and institutions. A central milestone of this structuring was the conclusion, in May 2023, of [the first institutional evaluation exercise](#) to cover all ten Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operating in Cabo Verde. This process transcended the mere verification of minimum requirements, establishing an analytical baseline that identified systemic weaknesses, such as faculty qualifications and insufficient research culminating in the implementation of evidence-based follow-up mechanisms to monitor compliance with the recommendations issued to HEIs. Higher Education evaluation instruments were revised and updated, seeking to align procedures with the most widely used international standards.

In strict alignment with the principles of the ACQF, the Agency has actively participated in the comparability process between the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Cabo Verde and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), fostering transparency and mutual trust in qualification levels.

Strategic integration into international networks attests to ARES's convergence with global best practices in quality assurance, reflected in its status as an affiliated member²⁵ of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The agency assumed a regional leadership role by driving the creation of and presiding over the General Assembly of the Network of Quality Assurance and Evaluation Agencies for Higher Education in Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (RAAQES-PALOP), in addition to coordinating study projects on regulatory systems within the [CPLP space](#). Its participation in the [HAQAA3](#) initiative, aiming for harmonization with the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) and the discussion of the African Continental Academic Credit Transfer System (ACTS), demonstrates its effective commitment to continental integration and academic comparability.

Quality Assurance Processes

Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET)

In vocational training, quality assurance processes encompass several aspects, which can be grouped into four main components presented below:

- A. Harmonized development and validation of qualifications (professional profiles, training plans, and modules) and their inclusion in the NQC (CNQ).
- B. Accreditation of institutions offering training.
- C. Quality of trainees' competence assessment and certification
- D. Quality of the RVCC system

A. Harmonized Development and Validation of Qualifications (Professional profile, Training program and Modules) and their Inclusion in the NQC

As already detailed in Theme 4 of this report (Learning Outcomes Approach), professional qualifications are structured into two parts: the Professional Profile and the Training Program. The quality assurance of the development and validation of qualifications relies on the following elements, highlighting the fundamental role of stakeholders organized into Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS) and Sectoral Councils (COS).

²⁴ <https://www.ares.cv/avalia%0c3%0a7%0c3%0a3o-de-ciclos-de-estudos.html>

²⁵ <https://www.enqa.eu/membership-database/ares-higher-education-regulatory-agency/>

1. Application of the approach and processes defined in the [UC-SNQ Procedures Manual](#) regarding professional qualifications. *For more information, see Theme 4 of this report.*
2. Systematic participation of stakeholders in the process through Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS) and Sectoral Councils (COS).

The Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS) drafts the professional qualifications, while the Sectoral Councils (COS) performs their validation.

The typical Pathway for the Development and Validation of Professional Qualifications is summarized below:

- **Development of the Professional Profile:**
 - Conducted by a CTS
 - **Validation of the Professional Profile**
 - The CTS presents the drafted professional profile proposal for internal and external validation.
 - Internal Validation: Performed by a UC-SNQ technician in accordance with the criteria defined in the procedures manual, in coordination with the UC-SNQ Coordinator.
 - External Validation: Performed by the Sectoral Council (COS). Following internal validation, the UC-SNQ convenes the Sectoral Council (COS), which conducts the external validation based on pre-established criteria in the procedures manual.
- The same pathway and procedures apply to the validation of both the Training Program and the full Professional Qualification
- Once a professional qualification is externally validated, it is sent to the supervising ministry (*tutela*) for official approval and is subsequently published in the Official Gazette before finally being integrated into the NQC (CNQ).

Role and Composition of Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS) and Sectoral Councils (COS)

- **CTS:** Drafts profiles and training programs. Composed of 1 UC-SNQ technician, 1 professional family coordinator, 3 technological specialists from the productive sector, and 3 specialists from the technical-vocational training sector. All members of the CTS must hold proven experience.
- **COS:** Convened by the UC-SNQ, holds the objective to: **a)** Identify and select the professional qualifications to be developed, considering the qualification needs of the labour market in the respective sector; **b)** Suggest to the UC-SNQ the expert technicians to integrate the different Sectoral Technical Committees for drafting professional qualifications; **c)** Collect inputs and validate professional qualifications. The COS is the validating entity for the professional profiles and training programs that comprise the Professional Qualifications of the NQC (CNQ).
- **Composition of the Sectoral Councils (COS):** The COS consists of approximately 20 councilors for each of the professional families into which the CNQP is structured. All Sectoral Councils are composed of a stable core of councilors representing public entities directly involved in Technical and Vocational Training, as well as social partners, including: UC-SNQ, Ministry of Education, Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), Representatives of trade unions and civil society, Business organizations (large, medium, and small enterprises), Professional organizations, The private sector of Technical-Vocational Training, among others.

The UC-SNQ seeks to ensure dialogue and communication among COS members, which remains an active challenge to be faced. Consequently, the UC-SNQ aims to implement a mechanism for participation and commitment from the Sectoral Council that goes beyond the mere validation of professional qualifications, ensuring that communication between both entities is permanent.

B. Accreditation of Institutions Offering Training

The Training Provider Accreditation Platform ([PAEF](#)) provides online information regarding all accredited training entities. This digital platform allows users to search for entities using various parameters, including the type of training, professional family, and qualification.

Only institutions holding a **valid accreditation license** (*Alvará*) can operate as training providers within the field of vocational training. The accreditation system for vocational training entities applies to all public or private, national or foreign entities regularly constituted or registered in Cabo Verde, possessing legal personality, that meet all requirements established under the entity accreditation regime for the development of initial actions and/or continuous vocational training courses.

The establishment of the training provider accreditation regime specifically **aims to**:

- Contribute to the credibility of entities operating within the framework of the vocational training system and their respective training activities.
- Contribute to the structuring of the vocational training system and the professionalization of its stakeholders.
- Promote official recognition of vocational training courses developed by accredited training entities.
- Establish greater rigor and selectivity in access to and the effective application of public funds to support vocational training.
- Contribute to raising the quality and relevance of training interventions.
- Promote accredited training entities based on their specific competences.
- Support entities in the gradual and continuous improvement of their competences and pedagogical resources.
- Contribute to the selection of training offers that guarantee an appropriate choice, through the development of frameworks that can serve as a guidance baseline for training entities, vocational training professionals, and citizens in general.
- Stimulate the functioning of the professional training/qualifications system.

Training Entities of the NQS

The network of training entities of the NQS integrates all public, private, or mixed-management entities that develop technical education or vocational training activities, specifically:

- Technical and vocational education establishments.
- Basic and professional adult education establishments.
- Public vocational training centers.
- Private entities with accredited structures for the development of technical-vocational training activities.
- Higher education institutions with accredited structures to develop professional higher education courses.
- Training entities integrated into other government departments or other legal entities under public law.
- Non-governmental organizations and professional associations with training structures.
- Private and cooperative education establishments.

The requirements for the accreditation of training entities are published on the [PAEF website](#). Both groups of requirements indicated below are mandatory to obtain the Accreditation License.

1. Legal Requirements:

- a. Be regularly constituted and duly registered as a legal entity whose purpose is the development and execution of training activities.
- b. Have its tax and social security contributions regularized, respectively, before the tax administration and social security, and have no outstanding debts regarding national or

international public financial support.

- c. Not be in a state of suspension or prohibition from exercising its activity as a result of a judicial or administrative decision.

2. Quality Requirements:

- a. Possess human resources in sufficient numbers and with appropriate competences for the development of training, namely coordinators, trainers, and support staff.
- b. Have facilities and equipment appropriate to the specificities of the training areas, with the necessary quality and guaranteeing health and safety conditions.
- c. Demonstrate the existence of appropriate methods and instruments for trainee selection and for the evaluation of training courses and actions regarding learning and trainee satisfaction.
- d. Maintain technical-pedagogical dossiers for each training action, as defined in the Procedures Manual.
- e. Have written training contracts with both trainees and trainers.
- f. Possess methods for publicizing courses and training actions through appropriate communication channels, providing clear and detailed information.
- g. Have clearly defined operating policies and strategies that are consistent with its mission and take into account its intervention context as well as its target audience.
- h. Have a planning of training activities, namely an annual training plan, that includes the courses and actions to be developed in each of the training areas with their respective implementation schedule, the target trainees, and the human and material resources to be allocated.
- i. Have procedures for the reception and processing of complaints and grievances, as defined by the Accrediting Entity in the Procedures Manual.
- j. Have a training operational regulation in accordance with what is defined by the Accrediting Entity in the Procedures Manual.
- k. Possess self-assessment methods and instruments regarding its activity, reflecting on the continuous improvement of its services.

C. Quality of the Assessment of Trainees' Learning Outcomes and Certification

The assessment of trainees in Vocational Training is carried out based on standards, which are the Professional Qualifications that form part of the NQC. These are structured by learning outcomes, and the assessment is conducted based on those outcomes.

The conceptual basis and structuring of professional qualifications are detailed in Criterion 4 of this comparison, highlighting Figures 4, 5, and 6, which illustrate the fundamental elements for the quality and consistency of the assessment of learning outcomes achieved by trainees: **a)** the performance criteria (in professional profiles) and **b)** the assessment criteria (in training programs).

The assessment of learning is based on evidence across two dimensions: **a)** within the process and the achievement of products and results; and **b)** evidence of knowledge. This evidence is structurally embedded into the professional qualification and serves as an operational guide for evaluating students/trainees.

The **assessment system** is governed by the following core principles:

- **Transparency:**
 - Assessment criteria are fully public;
 - ensuring that the trainee is completely informed about the designated evaluation methods and criteria;
- **Coherence**
 - It directly targets defined learning outcomes
 - maintains a personalized approach;

- is preferably qualitative in its expression;
- Tem um carácter acumulativo;
- possesses an cumulative character;
- It establishes assessment scenarios that closely mirror the actual employment environment and remains highly practice oriented.
- **Formative Focus:** It prioritizes formative assessment throughout the entire teaching-learning process, acting as a regulatory, guiding, and self-correcting mechanism for the training pathway;

D. The quality assurance of the RVCC process relies on the following structural elements:

- The accreditation of entities for the implementation of the *RVCC* process is managed by the UC-SNQ, even if the operating entity already holds a valid training license (*alvará*) issued by the DGE to deliver formal training.
- The RVCC reference framework and its corresponding assessment instruments are strictly defined based on the competence standards of the professional qualifications registered within the CNQ.
- The selection criteria for the process implementation teams are designed to ensure absolute integrity and transparency from the initial phases up to final certification.

Secondary Schools (General and Technical Pathways)

The Ministry of Education holds the primary responsibility for the quality assurance of secondary schools, particularly regarding the issuance of their operating licenses.

Additionally, technical secondary schools that offer training programs integrated into the National Professional Qualifications Catalogue must be accredited by the UC-SNQ. This specific scope of the UC-SNQ accreditation system is fundamental to determining structural coherence, maintaining supervision over provider performance, and ensuring the final reliability of the professional qualifications achieved within the CNQ.

Within the technical education pathway, operators utilize the exact same Guide (*Guião*) or monitoring and follow-up sheet for qualifications implemented under the CNQ as previously detailed for vocational training.

The Integrated School Management System ([SIGE](#)) is fully implemented across all basic education schools, facilitating communication between schools, supporting data-driven decision-making, and accelerating administrative management processes.

Higher Education Subsystem

By legislative decree, the national quality assurance system for the higher education subsystem comprises the following formalized processes:

- **Evaluation:** Divided structurally into **a)** internal evaluation (self-evaluation) conducted by the HEIs themselves, and **b)** external evaluation
- **Accreditation and Registration:** Applies directly to **a)** the creation of higher education institutions, and **b)** the creation of study cycles (programs) linked to academic degrees and diplomas.

All HEIs are legally required to establish internal evaluation and quality assurance systems and to conduct regular self-evaluations of their performance ([Article 75 of Decree-Law N°. 20/2012](#)). External evaluation covers specific institutional dimensions of the HEIs, namely: institutional development, institutional management, infrastructure, academic policy, and human resources policy. The comprehensive supervision of HEIs and their active study programs falls under the direct competence of ARES.

Currently, there are **ten** (10) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) accredited by ARES ([Table 9](#)). Information regarding their respective legal accreditation acts is published on the same page.

Table 9: Accredited HEIs in Cabo Verde

Higher Education Institution (HEI)	Legal Act & Date	Website
University of Cabo Verde (Uni-CV)	Decree-Law N°. 53/2006	https://unicv.edu.cv/
Jean Piaget University of Cabo Verde (UniPiaget)	Decree-Law N°. 11/2001	https://www.unipiaget.edu.cv/
University of Santiago (US)	Regulatory Decree N°. 19/2009	https://us.edu.cv/
University of Mindelo (UM)	Resolutuion N°. 12/2003	https://um.edu.cv/
Higher Institute of Legal and Social Sciences (ISCJS)	Regulatory Decree N°. 15/2009	http://www.iscjs.edu.cv/
Lusófona University of Cabo Verde (ULCV)	Regulatory Decree N°. 17/2009	https://www.ulusofona.edu.cv/
Higher Institute of Economic and Business Sciences (ISCEE)	Regulatory Decree N°. 20/2009	http://iscee.edu.cv/
Technical University of the Atlantic (UTA)	Decree-Law N°. 53/2019	http://uta.cv/
Catholic University School of Cabo Verde (EUCV)	Order N°. 045/ARES/2022	http://moodle.eucatolica.edu.cv/
Intercontinental University of Cabo Verde (UNICA)	Regulatory Decree N°. 18/2009	Closed

Source: [ARES](#)

ARES provides on its website the operational [evaluation Guides](#) relative to: **a)** the evaluation of study cycles, and **b)** institutional evaluation. These guides are applied directly by ARES to higher education institutions. In addition to these guides, the [Cabo Verdean Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Regulations](#) are structurally enforced.

The digitalization of quality assurance processes, information management within higher education, and the recognition of qualifications is structured within the ARES Digital Platform (PD-ARES), to which all HEIs and relevant stakeholders have active access. PD-ARES optimizes the circulation of information, institutional exchanges, and procedural efficiency. The explicit objectives of PD-ARES are:

- Manage digitally and systematically all evaluative procedures handled by ARES;
- Provide online access to ongoing processes for all involved actors (HEIs, evaluation teams, procedure managers, and the ARES Board of Directors), alongside the central collection and public distribution of higher education data;
- Guarantee greater systemic control, processing speed, and flexibility in resolving administrative and regulatory cases

Quality Assurance Bodies and Regulators in the Implementation of the NQF

➤ [Technical Education and Vocational Training \(TVET\)](#)

General Directorate of Employment (DGE): Accrediting Entity

The General Directorate of Employment is a Central Service under the government department responsible for the areas of employment and vocational training. It is tasked with the conception, planning, and technical/regulatory integration of vocational training, employment, entrepreneurship, and professional internships (cf. [Decree-Law No. 76/2021](#) of November 2).

As a Central Service, the **DGE** is legally empowered to:

- “Accredit training entities and vocational training centers and establishments” [cf. Article 64, number 2, subparagraph e)] *Maintain updated files and databases of training structures, noting their respective training modalities, necessary to update the Database of Accredited Entities*”

through the Vocational Training Service [cf. Article 66, number 2, subparagraph b) and, “Supervising the implementation and functioning of accredited centers and establishments” [cf. Article 66, number 2, subparagraph c)].

- Since the Accreditation of Training Entities is one of the core responsibilities of the DGE, this directorate is tasked with drafting and publishing the [Accreditation Manual](#).

➤ [Higher Education Subsystem - ARES](#)

Mission and Functions of ARES

In higher education, the sole quality assurance body is [ARES](#), established by [Law N°. 121/VIII/2016](#) of March 24. Article 5 states that ARES is completely independent in the exercise of its functions and is not subject to government superintendence or oversight regarding its regulatory mandates, without prejudice to the supervisory powers granted to the National Assembly. All government bodies and institutions operating within the higher education sector have a legal duty to collaborate with ARES and provide any information related to the quality assurance system.

Conclusions Regarding Criterion 4

The national quality assurance (QA) system for education and training in Cabo Verde is directly linked to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF/QNQ) and demonstrates solid coherence and alignment with the quality assurance guidelines and principles established by the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). A detailed analysis of the quality matrix highlights that the country adopts a dynamic perspective, focused on institutional strengthening and a continuous commitment to convergence with continental benchmarks.

The performance of the system against the eight ACQF quality assurance principles reflects this path of progressive consolidation:

Quality Chain and Learning Outcomes (Principles 1 and 2): Full coverage of the quality chain is structured and regulated at the macro level, spanning from the design of standards and benchmarks to final certification. In vocational training, this workflow is secured by the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), while in higher education, it is fully digitalized and managed through the ARES Digital Platform (PD-ARES). Regarding the adoption of the learning outcomes approach, its formal inclusion within the NQF descriptors represents a vanguard step, with the system currently focused on progressively deepening and consolidating the institutional ownership of these pedagogical methodologies in the daily operations of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and training centers.

External and Internal Assurance and Feedback Loops (Principles 3 and 4): External Quality Assurance (EQA) is widely consolidated and operational, with the General Directorate of Employment (DGE) and ARES systematically conducting rigorous entity accreditation and study cycle evaluation processes. To complement the effectiveness of this external regulation, Cabo Verde embraces the strengthening of [Internal Quality Assurance Systems](#) (IQA) within institutions as a core strategic priority, promoting a culture of self-regulation and improving data collection and graduate tracking channels to close the continuous feedback loop required by the reference framework.

Measurable Standards and Resource Allocation (Principles 5 and 6): The regulatory framework in force relies on public guidelines, methodological guides, and evaluation regulations. The country is working on the continuous standardization of measurable, outcomes-focused indicators, reducing margins of subjectivity and raising the bar beyond minimum compliance requirements. In terms of resources²⁶, the ecosystem has demonstrated structural resilience and mobilization capacity, actively capturing Treasury funding and securing international cooperation support to address the challenges of infrastructure, technological equipment, human resources capacity building, and the upgrading of bibliographic resources both at the level of the regulator and the institutions themselves.

²⁶ <https://www.ares.cv/assets/documentos/informacoes/Relatorio%20de%20Atividades%20da%20ARES%20-%202022.pdf>

Transparency and Continental Alignment (Principles 7 and 8): The transparent sharing of information on evaluation results is one of the greatest strengths of the Cabo Verdean system. Transparency is ensured publicly through the [digital registry](#) on the National Qualifications System (NQS) website and in the [searchable database](#) of ARES, allowing any user to verify the validity and accreditation of training offers. The system is also under strong development to encourage an even more proactive culture of accountability (*accountability*) by school and academic institutions toward civil society. Finally, alignment with African Union guidelines is fully operational. Cabo Verde's active participation in prestigious networks²⁷ such as AfriQAN and RAAQES-PALOP, and its integration into the continental HAQAA3 initiative²⁸, demonstrate a firm commitment that formally prepares the country to submit its agencies and frameworks to external evaluations balanced against the *African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA)*.

In short, the presented evidence attests that the quality assurance ecosystem in Cabo Verde not only consistently references the parameters of the ACQF but also adopts a clear agenda of modernization, digital innovation, and continuous improvement, ensuring the international credibility of national qualifications and the consequent mutual trust within the continental space.

Governance and Follow-Up Procedures for Referencing

➤ Governance of the Qualifications, Education, and Training System of Cabo Verde

The governance model of the NQF in Cabo Verde is characterized by the involvement of a large number of institutions representing political decision-making levels (Ministries and Directorates) as well as executive bodies (such as the UC-SNQ and ARES).

Despite its mandate for the coordination and implementation of the NQF defined by legislation, the UC-SNQ plays a more prominent and decisive role in all matters related to the NQF (CNQ), development of professional qualifications, coordination and facilitation of the RVCC, and dissemination of information about the NQF, while ARES plays the leadership role in matters related to study cycles (courses) and higher education qualifications.

The involvement of stakeholders such as employers, trade unions, and civil society organizations is defined in the legislation regulating the UC-SNQ, being mandatory in the technical processes of designing professional qualifications. Sectoral Councils and Sectoral Technical Committees play a fundamental role in the development and validation of professional qualifications.

The **main government agencies** responsible for the **education** and **vocational training system** are:

- Ministry of Education (**ME**)
- National Directorate of Education (**DNE**)
- General Directorate of Employment (**DGE**)
- Ministry of Finance and Business Development (**MFFE**)
- General Directorate of Higher Education (**DGES**)
- Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (**UC-SNQ**)
- Higher Education Regulatory Agency (**ARES**)

The **ME** is the government department whose mission is to define, execute, and evaluate the national policy of the educational system for pre-school, basic, secondary, and technical education, and education, extra-school education, higher education, scientific research, and technological development, as well as school social action. It is, therefore, an institution that aggregates all subsystems of the educational system and plays a leadership role in developing human resources, skills, and qualifications within the NQF. The Ministry ensures the oversight (*tutela*) of many of the NQF's

²⁷ <https://www.ares.cv/assets/documentos/informacoes/plano-de-atividades-da-ares-2024.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.ares.cv/assets/documentos/informacoes/plano-de-atividades-da-ares-2025.pdf>

qualifications in partnership and coordination with the UC-SNQ. To this end, it cooperates with the **DGE** and the **UC-SNQ**, which are under the oversight of the **MFF**.

The **DNE** is the service responsible for strategic design, regulation, monitoring, evaluation, and coordination of the educational policies outlined for pre-school, basic, secondary, and technical-vocational education, youth and adult education, special education and inclusion, citizenship, evaluation and educational quality, school management and support, and multimedia and pedagogical communication. **DNE** integrates several internal services, among which are the Technical-Vocational Education and Youth and Adult Education Service (**SETEJA**), whose mission is to design, coordinate, and support technical-vocational education activities from a perspective of qualification, certification, and professional integration.

The **DGE** holds specific responsibilities linked to the vocational training subsystem:

- Ensure the execution of activities defined by the Government, consult with sector leaders, and refine strategies and methodologies for the implementation of government policies in the areas of employment and employability;
- Draft technical opinions within the framework of executing employment, self-employment, vocational training, and entrepreneurship policies;
- Propose appropriate regulations for the training and employment sectors and accredit training entities as well as vocational training centers and establishments. Within its organic structure, the **DGE** operates the Vocational Training Service (**SFP**), which provides technical support related to the design and formulation of vocational training policies. This service aims to ensure the alignment of vocational training with job market realities and the permanent updating of tools necessary for job search activities.

The **MFFE** assumes the strategic mission of designing and executing the State's macro-financial and patrimonial management policies, regulating the budget, the treasury, and the tax system. Simultaneously, it acts as the driving engine for economic development through business promotion, investment attraction, and competitiveness enhancement. It integrates vital operational areas such as employment, vocational training, technological innovation, and the continuous modernization and reform of Public Administration.

The **primary mission** of the **UC-SNQ** is to ensure the structuring of the NQS to promote and develop the integration of training offers through the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ) and the evaluation and accreditation of professional competences. The scope of attributes assigned to the **UC-SNQ** is extensive, highlighting tasks linked to:

- The development, updating, and maintenance of the NQC;
- Contributing to the strategic convergence between academic and professional qualifications;
- Conducting studies and research on employment, skills required by the labour market, technological changes, and their subsequent impact on qualifications;
- Coordinating and supporting the National Commission for Professional Equivalences (CNEP) and maintaining the official database of granted professional equivalences;
- Coordinating Sectoral Councils and Sectoral Technical Committees;
- Keeping the NQF systematically updated, as well as managing its relationship with the qualification systems of other countries or regions;
- Submit technical proposals relative to the main instruments and measures, such as NQF quality assurance, the core competences framework, the credit system for technical education and vocational training, distance learning, and others.

The **UC-SNQ** is led by the Unit Coordinator and comprises: **a)** The Interministerial Technical Committee for Qualification (CTIQ); **b)** The Executive Secretariat; **c)** The CNEP, which is a specialized body of the NQS.

Social partners contribute to the coordination of the NQS through institutionalized participation in the CTIQ and the CNEP. Other entities making up the governance and implementation framework of the

NQS include the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS), and higher education institutions

Within the scope of responsibilities for creating and managing the National Qualifications Catalogue (NQC), the following temporary support and consultative bodies are established alongside the UC-SNQ:

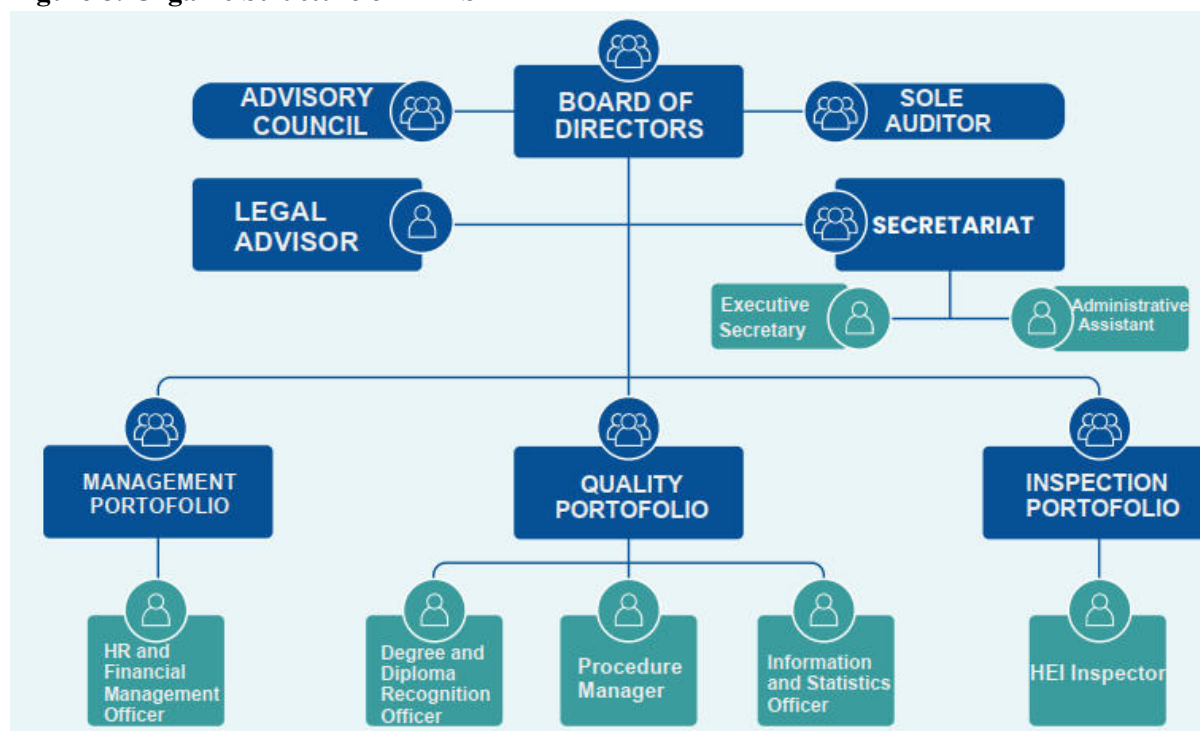
- **Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS)**, Responsible for providing technical support in designing professional profiles and defining associated training modules for specific professional qualifications, corresponding to each of the professional families registered in the CNQ.
- **Sectoral Councils (COS)**, responsible for validating the professional profiles and training modules of each of the professional qualifications drafted by the CTS and approved by the UC-SNQ.

The **DGES** is responsible for the coordination, execution, and management of public policies directed toward the development and consolidation of the higher education subsystem. Through the DGES, the Ministry of Education (ME) ensures the continuous supervision and monitoring of the academic progress of students receiving scholarships, covering both direct funding lines from the Government of Cabo Verde and those established through international cooperation partnerships.

In higher education, as already mentioned, the sole quality assurance body is **ARES**, established by Law N°. 121/VIII/2016 of March 24. Article 5 states that ARES is independent in the exercise of its functions and is not subject to government superintendence or oversight regarding its regulatory mandates, without prejudice to the supervisory powers granted to the National Assembly. All government bodies and institutions operating within the higher education sector have a legal duty to collaborate with ARES and provide any information related to the quality assurance system.

The organic structure of ARES is illustrated in figure 8.

Figure 8: Organic Structure of ARES



Source: [ARES](#)

ARES has an annual budget allocated by the Ministry of Finance to cover its operating expenses, which encompasses personnel costs and the procurement of goods and services.

To fulfill its mission, **ARES** has managed to mobilize additional resources:

- **From the Treasury**, through a project named *Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation System in Cabo Verde*, which allowed and continues to allow the coverage of expenses related to the evaluation exercises of study cycles and institutions.
- **From International Cooperation**, Through a *Study Project on the Evaluation and Regulation of Higher Education – CPLP Space*.

The revenues of ARES consist of:

- Fees due for evaluation and accreditation acts;
- Fees due for the recognition of degrees and diplomas issued by foreign HEIs;
- Fees due for the provision of other services;
- The proceeds from fines applied in the exercise of its sanctioning competence.

Challenges to Address

The conclusion of this pilot referencing exercise constitutes a historic milestone for the National Qualifications System (NQS/SNQ) of Cabo Verde. However, the robustness and transparency demonstrated throughout the report also highlights that the practical consolidation of this continental matrix requires continued focus on an agenda of modernization and institutional improvement.

In this regard, four priority strategic challenges have been identified, which the country adopts as short- and medium-term development goals:

1. **Formal Inclusion of NQF Tiers in Higher Education Diplomas:** Although the legal framework and quality assurance provided by ARES are consolidated, current practice in issuing higher education diplomas (DESP, Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate) is restricted to indicating the respective academic degree or study cycle, without explicit mentioning the corresponding NQF level. The challenge lies in the technical and regulatory operationalization necessary to ensure that all issued qualifications begin to contain this formal indication, enhancing ex-post transparency.
2. **Operationalization and Expansion of RVCC in the University Subsystem:** The Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences (RVCC) mechanism has achieved solid maturity and robust mainstreaming within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). However, its application in higher education is still in an initial stage of reflection. The strategic challenge consists of designing and implementing an RVCC methodology specifically adapted to the academic context, opening doors to even more flexible and inclusive learning pathways for the active population.
3. **Unified Regulation of the Credit System in TVET:** In clear contrast to higher education, where the credit system is harmonized with the European ECTS model, the vocational training and technical education subsector still requires the publication of comprehensive guidelines and orientations for credit accumulation and transfer. Structuring this policy is embraced as a fundamental step to enable genuine horizontal and vertical permeability between the different educational subsystems.
4. **Strengthening Internal Quality Assurance and Closing Feedback Loops:** complement the recognized efficacy of the External Quality Assurance (EQA) mechanisms led by the DGE and ARES, the system grapples with the need to deepen the culture of self-evaluation at the micro level. The challenge focuses on supporting educational institutions and training centers in developing fully functional Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS), as well as in institutionalizing systematic graduate tracking studies, ensuring the continuous improvement of the training offer in the face of labor market dynamics.

Final Considerations

The referencing process of the National Qualifications Framework of Cabo Verde to the African Continental Qualifications Framework constitutes an unequivocal testament to the country's alignment with regional and pan-African integration policies, designed under the aegis of the African Union and in the spirit of Agenda 2063. In an economic juncture marked by the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the deepening of mobility goals within the ECOWAS space, the transparency and cross-border legibility of qualifications emerge as indispensable strategic assets for sustainable socio-economic development.

This exercise of self-assessment and semantic comparison will demonstrate to the international community and continental partners that, despite being structured in an 8-level architecture, the NQF (QNQ) of Cabo Verde possesses a structural and conceptual density perfectly equivalent and compatible with the granular 10-level scale of the ACQF. The methodological use of multiple mappings at the base and top of the higher education system reflects rigorous scientific honesty, safeguarding the integrity of qualifications and ensuring a solid foundation of mutual trust.

The demonstrated legal robustness, the intelligent digital transition promoted by the ecosystem of digital platforms (such as PD-ARES, PAEF, and the Krê+ Portal), and the unequivocal commitment of central agencies and services to international quality standards (ENQA, RAAQES-PALOP, and the ASG-QA guidelines under the HAQAA3 initiative) attest that Cabo Verde possesses not just a formal qualifications framework, but a living, inclusive, and constantly improving system.

In closing this Pilot Referencing Report, the Cabo Verde Technical Working Group (TWG) reaffirms its determination to lead by example in the West African sub-region. The progressive overcoming of the identified challenges will consolidate the country as an intercontinental platform for knowledge, ensuring that the talent, effort, and competences acquired by Cabo Verdean citizens are fully recognized, valued, and mobile throughout the African continent.

Referencing to ACQF

Summary Guidance

Launching the pilot phase – at 2nd NQF Forum in Luanda, 05-06/September 2024

Methodology and Template for a streamlined approach (version 1 – 08/08/2024)

1. Introduction

The [ACQF Policy Document](#), validated at the ACQF Addis Conference on 11-13 July 2023, defines the purposes and scope of the ACQF, its seven main areas of activity and the ACQF level descriptors (Annex 1 of this document).

Referencing is the first of these areas, to drive comparison, transparency, mutual understanding between frameworks and facilitate recognition and fair mobility of people. As a meta- and referencing qualifications framework for the African continent, the ACQF aims at connecting the national (and regional) qualifications frameworks of the community of African Union (AU) member states. This core function is based on the process of referencing national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) or systems to the ACQF, following agreed criteria and procedures and peer review by the member countries.

The ACQF referencing approach, criteria and procedures are described in [ACQF Guideline 3](#) (and the related [Training Module 3](#)). ACQF referencing has been a topic on the agenda of several multi-country and country-specific workshops, notably at the 1st NQF Forum (Kinshasa, 18-20 June 2024, see [presentation](#)).

2. Referencing

Referencing of national (and regional) qualifications frameworks and systems to the ACQF is the core function of the ACQF as a meta qualifications framework for the African continent. Referencing to the ACQF is guided by four *Referencing Criteria* (Table 1) and a set of procedures and follow-up steps defined in the *Governance, procedures and follow-up steps* (Table 2). Moreover, it is important to note the Quality principles associated to referencing criterion 4 (Table 3).

Referencing is a process of **comparison and linking** national qualifications frameworks to the ACQF and should be done through the national qualifications frameworks or, where these do not exist, national qualifications systems.

The referencing process determines **correspondence level to level** between NQF and the ACQF. By this process, national qualifications included in the referenced NQF are in turn referenced to the ACQF. This is a key outcome of the process.

NQFs and their associated quality assurance arrangements are the key instruments for referencing to ACQF. Referencing a NQF provides for greater transparency and understanding of a country's qualifications and the explanation of the level of implementation of quality assurance arrangements strengthen the trust in the outcomes of these qualifications.

Fig. 1: Referencing criteria – the essential topics

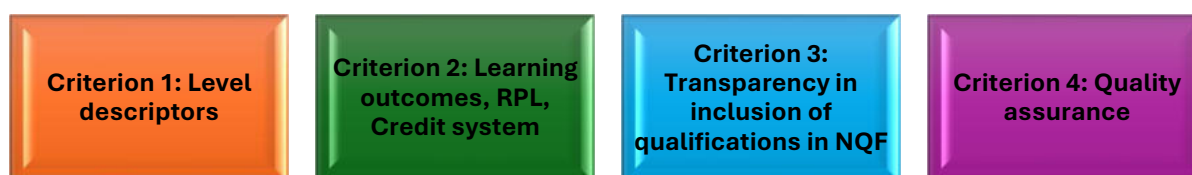


Table 1: ACQF referencing criteria

Referencing criteria	
1	There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF.
2	The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on learning outcomes principles and related to arrangements for recognition of prior learning (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems .
3	There are transparent processes and procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and information on qualifications is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in a national register(s) of qualifications .
4	The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

Table 2: Components - ACQF referencing governance procedures and follow-up

Governance procedures and follow-up	
1.	Responsibilities and/or legal competence of relevant national bodies involved in the ACQF referencing process are clearly defined and published by the relevant competent authorities.
2.	The relevant national quality assurance bodies state their agreement with the referencing outcome and referencing report.
3.	People from other countries who are experienced in the field of qualifications are involved in certain aspects and steps of the referencing process. Their role is advisory and supports transparency, improvement and credibility. The national referencing committee informs the ACQF Governance Structure on the involved international experts.
4.	Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report, which addresses all referencing criteria.
5.	The referencing outcome is published by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure, on the dedicated ACQF website.
6.	Following the completion of referencing, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g.: certificates, diplomas, supplements) and qualifications registers issued by the competent national authorities will contain a clear reference to the appropriate ACQF level, based on national legislation and procedures.

Quality assurance guidelines of referencing to ACQF

The purpose of referencing criterion 4 is to establish: a) trust in the Quality assurance of the qualifications of ACQF Member countries, and b) a link between the Quality assurance of member states and the Quality assurance instruments available on the continent. The relevant ACQF guideline is Guideline 5: Quality assurance.

To clarify the interplay between quality assurance and referencing, the principles defined in Table 3 are recommended:

Table 3: Quality assurance guidelines of referencing to ACQF

Quality assurance – a criterion for ACQF referencing: the referencing to the ACQF of national qualifications frameworks or systems demonstrates the degree to which quality assurance of national qualifications:

1. addresses the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification;
2. addresses the application of the learning outcomes approach;
3. includes feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement;
4. addresses internal and external quality assurance, and the regular review of quality assurance agencies;
5. is based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance;
6. is supported by resources; and
7. provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation.
8. takes account of African Union policy orientations such as African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.

One objective of the ACQF is to foster trust in the quality of qualifications of the Member States. The referencing report needs to describe and explain the key national Quality assurance systems that operate in the country. Given that there may be several Quality assurance systems operating in one country, the referencing process is an opportunity to bring coherence to the system. It also presents an opportunity to present the country's response to the quality assurance of the learning outcomes approach used in the country.

Benefits of referencing

Referencing is a process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF, thereby building on national ownership, collaboration between relevant institutions and stakeholders, provision of evidence for transparency of the analysis and reporting on all referencing criteria and procedures.

Referencing to ACQF is good for the countries, (and regions) and good for the continent, as it is a process of self-assessment contributing to improvement, to renew stakeholders' dialogue, enhance visibility and understanding of the NQF at national level, and to improve mutual trust and transparency between different national and regional qualifications frameworks across the continent.

At national level, referencing contributes to self-assessment of the status of the national qualifications framework and system to identify areas for reform and improvement and to draw attention to the NQF among national policy institutions and stakeholders. At continental level and between countries, referencing to the ACQF of a significant and increasing number of national qualifications or systems leads to the creation of a common area of trusted qualifications and enables the transformative potential of the ACQF for the continent.

Qualifications and Credentials Platform

The ACQF is a framework of national qualifications frameworks. National qualifications are not to be registered in the ACQF because they are quality assured and registered in the respective NQFs. Without prejudice to this attribute, African Union member states are encouraged to make use of the ACQF

Qualifications and Credentials Platform (database) to publish information on their NQF and their national qualifications. Thanks to its scale and international outreach, the ACQF database holds multiple benefits for the national qualifications institutions.

Post-referencing use of ACQF levels on qualifications documents

Further to the referencing process, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications framework or system (certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent qualifications authorities should contain a clear reference to the appropriate ACQF level.

Internationalisation and comparison / referencing to other frameworks

As the ACQF develops, comparison with other meta-frameworks and referencing with African regional frameworks can be planned and conducted. The ACQF aims to enhance information sharing on qualifications and NQFs in Africa and globally, building on referencing outcomes, the ACQF website and other transparency tools. The ACQF will cooperate with the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (Addis Convention)²⁹ and with the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education³⁰.

3. Piloting referencing to ACQF: a streamlined template and process

ACQF-II project is mandated to support the pilot referencing of NQFs (and RQFs) to ACQF. This process is based on the above-mentioned Guideline 3, but is conducted through a streamlined approach, based on group work and peer learning between the interested countries.

This first pilot phase is conducted in a period of 4 months – September-December 2024 – guided by the indicated sources, this template, presential meetings at ACQF-II workshops and webinars.

Overall Plan of the Pilot Referencing Process

- Luanda: 05/09/2024. Launch the pilot referencing process. First round of pilot presentations. Debate.
- Nairobi: 04/10/2024: Second round of pilot referencing presentations. Debate.
- Seychelles: 14/11/2024: Third round of pilot referencing presentations. Debate
- Webinar 1: 19/11/2024 (indicative): Feedback. Recommendations.
- Webinar 2: 28/11/2024 (indicative): Review final pilot reports.
- Webinar 3: 10/12/2024 (indicative): Feedback. Conclusions. Roadmap.

4. Template

This is the proposed template for your pilot referencing exercise and brief report.

Outline of the brief referencing report

1. Summary (*indicatively: 1 page*)
2. Structure of education and training system. Overview of NQF – stage of development and implementation (*indicatively: 2 pages*)

²⁹ UNESCO, Addis Convention, at: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49282&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html#STATE_PARTIES. Adopted on 12 December 2014 and entered into force on 15 December 2019.

³⁰ UNESCO, Global Convention, at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/education/higher-education/global-convention>. Adopted in November 2019.

3. Referencing criterion 1 (*indicatively: 2 pages + annexes*)
4. Referencing criterion 2 (*indicatively: 3 pages*)
5. Referencing criterion 3 (*indicatively: 2 pages*)
6. Referencing criterion 4 (*indicatively: 3 pages*)
7. Governance procedures and follow-up of referencing (*indicatively: 1 page*)
8. Issues to be addressed. Conclusions. (*indicatively: 1 page*)
9. Sources: national legal basis, guidelines, analyses, statistics; international (regional, continental, global) sources as adequate

Brief referencing report - Total: indicatively – 15 pages + annexes

Chapters 3 to 6 address each of the 4 referencing criteria. Therefore, they are the most important for the pilot referencing presentations. National referencing teams draft these very brief chapters, focusing on the fundamental features and evidence demonstrating the extent to which the NQF meets the requirements of the 4 criteria. The guiding themes proposed in Table 4 are useful to structure content and maintain the focus on

Table 4: Guiding themes by referencing criterion

<u>Criterion 1: level descriptors</u>	<u>Criterion 2: learning outcomes, RPL, Credit system</u>	<u>Criterion 3: transparent procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF; register of qualifications</u>	<u>Criterion 4: Quality assurance</u>
1. Level structure of the NQF.	1. Learning outcomes: supported and promoted by NQF?	1. Scope of NQF: levels, sub-sectors; formal, non-formal, informal learning. Micro-credentials. Qualifications not included in NQF.	1. National Quality assurance framework refers to NQF and is compatible with Quality assurance guidelines of referencing.
2. Domains of descriptors. Definition of the domains.	2. Application in all sub-sectors? Which sub-sectors more advanced (TVET, general education, Higher education, adult learning)	2. Policy, procedures for development of new qualifications; renewal of existing qualifications: brief description. Role of qualifications authority, regulators.	2. Quality assurance of NQF and register of qualifications: brief description.
3. Qualifications map	3. RPL: policy, guidelines in place? RPL professionals? Status of implementation (starting, advanced) – by sub-sectors.	3. Policy, procedures for registration of qualifications. Role of qualifications authority, regulators.	3. Transparency, dissemination of Quality assurance regulations; support to application, capacity development.
4. Comparison to ACQF level descriptors	4. Credit accumulation and transfer system: policy, guidelines in place? Status of implementation (starting, advanced) – by sub-sectors.	4. Information on qualifications accessible in register / database of qualifications. Management of register / database.	4. Data, analysis on quality and effectiveness of qualifications for users, labour market and society.

5. Pilot Referencing Report

Country:

National qualifications institution responsible and leading the pilot referencing exercise:

Drafting team:

Date of report:

Annex 1: Level descriptors of the African Continental Qualifications Framework

Each of the ten ACQF levels represents learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at that level. The ACQF level descriptors capture how the three domains of knowledge, skills and autonomy and responsibility (A&R) increase in breadth, depth and complexity when moving from lower to higher levels and are supported by a glossary explaining the terms.

ACQF Level descriptors

Level	Domains of learning		
	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
Definition of the domains of learning	<i>In the context of ACQF “Knowledge” includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles, and theories in various areas</i>	<i>In the context of ACQF “Skills” refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills.</i>	<i>In the context of ACQF “Autonomy and responsibility” refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility</i>
<u>Level 1</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy	simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions, and use simple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems	highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self
<u>Level 2</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	basic knowledge incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas	basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straight forward problems	structured contexts under limited supervision and guidance taking limited responsibility for self and group outcomes
<u>Level 3</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	factual and operational knowledge incorporating some theoretical aspects in some areas	a range of communication, cognitive, practical and technical skills required to interpret and communicate ideas and detailed information and select and use known solutions to address familiar problems	predictable contexts under routine supervision and guidance, with initiative for self-responsibility and some responsibility for group outcomes
<u>Level 4</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mainly factual, operational or technical knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects in one or more areas	well-developed technical skills required to analyse information and new ideas, make informed judgements, communicate outcomes and apply varied solutions to varied (familiar and unfamiliar) problems	varied (predictable and unpredictable) contexts with adaptability and initiative for self-direction under general guidance, taking full responsibility for self, some planning and responsibility for group outcomes and initiative for responsibility for others
<u>Level 5</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mainly technical or theoretical knowledge with substantial depth in a discipline/ area	a range of well-developed technical skills, with some specialisation, required to analyse information and new ideas, construct and communicate a coherent argument, and apply a range of solutions,	unpredictable contexts with full autonomy and full responsibility for self and group outcomes, and some responsibility for others

Level	Domains of learning		
	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
		often in combination, to address unfamiliar problems	
<u>Level 6:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with specialisation in a discipline/ area	highly technical and specialised skills required to collate, analyse, synthesise and communicate a range of information and new ideas, and formulate or adapt different solutions to address complex and sometimes abstract problems	highly variable contexts with well-developed autonomy and responsibility for self and group outcomes and responsibility for resources and processes
<u>Level 7:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	advanced analytical and/ or specialised knowledge of a discipline/ area	advanced, specialised skills required to demonstrate advanced analysis and initiative for new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate advanced solutions to address complex and abstract problems	complex and variable contexts with advanced autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 8:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly advanced, complex knowledge of a discipline/ area	highly advanced, complex skills required to demonstrate highly advanced analysis, communicate new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate highly advanced solutions to address highly complex and abstract problems	highly complex contexts with some specialisation demonstrating highly advanced autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 9:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mastery of a complex body of knowledge at the forefront of a discipline/ area	skills mastery required to demonstrate originality and new insights in research and/ or innovation and formulate and test theories to show mastery of highly complex, abstract problems	highly specialised contexts demonstrating mastery in autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 10:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	substantial and original knowledge contribution that extends the forefront of a discipline/ area and/ or at the interface between disciplines/ areas	expert skills and techniques that demonstrate innovation, interpretation and creation of new ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate, and test theories to address emergent, new and critical problems	emergent new contexts demonstrating expertise in management of new ideas

Definition and scope of the three domains of learning of ACQF level descriptors

Knowledge

Includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles, and theories in various areas. The learning outcomes at all ten ACQF levels relate to formal, non-formal and informal learning. The knowledge domain comprises two sub-domains or elements:

- Type of knowledge
- Scope of knowledge

Skills

Refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems/ issues. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills. The learning outcomes at all ten ACQF levels relate to formal, non-formal and informal learning. The skills domain comprises three sub-domains:

- Type of skills required
- How the skills are used to respond to information
- How skills are used to address types of problems

Autonomy and responsibility

Refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility. The learning outcomes at all ten ACQF levels relate to formal, non-formal and informal learning. The autonomy and responsibility domain comprises 3 sub-domains:

- the context in which autonomy and responsibility is applied
- the extent to which autonomy is applied
- the extent to which responsibility is applied.

Responsibility as a domain of level descriptors has three elements: self, group outcomes and resources.

Annex 2: Level descriptors of the NQF

	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Level 1	Basic general knowledge applied to a limited and defined set of activities.	Basic operational skills required to carry out simple and routine tasks.	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context, with responsibility for his/her own performance.
Level 2	Basic operational knowledge of a field of work or study. Expresses ideas and concepts through verbal communication and effective writing.	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools.	Work or study under supervision with some degree of autonomy. Demonstrate capacity to perform certain independent tasks in certain structured opportunities with intermediate levels of support and direction.
Level 3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study, and with understanding of certain theoretical and technical elements of processes, materials and basic terminology.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information. Provides technical support to solve specific problems.	Take responsibility for executing tasks independently in an area of work or study when simple decisions or initiatives are required. Work effectively with others, as a member of a group and take limited responsibility for others in small teams and working groups. Requires support, direction and supervision in unknown situations. Adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems.
Level 4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study, relevant for the function.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study. Manage own activity in the framework of established orientations in contexts of study or work, generally predictable, but susceptible to change.	Supervise the routine activities of third parties, assuming certain responsibilities in terms of evaluation and improvement of activities in contexts of study and work. Take responsibility for own outputs/results in work and semistructured learning situations. Work independently when immediate decisions are required with certain initiative.

			Define own objectives and targets in accordance with the goals of the organisation and effectively manage time.
Level 5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of study or work and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge, which includes abstract technical understanding and capacity to search additional information and knowledge to improve the execution of functions.	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems in routine situations and new contexts and activities.	Manage and supervise in contexts of study and work susceptible to unpredictable change. Revise and develop performance of self and others, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Work independently when decisions or initiatives at intermediate level are required. Be able to organize the work for you and the team, according to the objectives and goals of the organization and support others to effectively manage time
Level 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles.	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of study or work. Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts.	Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.
Level 7	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of study or work, supporting the capacity of original thinking and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.	Manage and transform study or work contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.
Level 8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields.	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice.	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research.

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