



## **ACQF-II project**

### **Technical Note 2**

# **Registration of qualifications - comparison**

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## Abbreviations

AACs	Associated Assessment Criteria
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
BEC	Botswana Examinations Council
BOTA	Botswana Training Authority
BQA	Botswana Qualifications Authority
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ELO	Exit Level Outcome
ESCoE	Electronic SAQA Certificate of Evaluation
ETP	Education and Training Provider
GE	General Education
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
MoHEST	Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology
MQFMC	Management Qualifications Framework Maintenance Committee
NCBSC	Non-credit bearing short course
NCQF	National Credit and Qualifications Framework
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQF MIS	National Qualifications Framework Management Information System
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QFMC	Qualifications Framework Maintenance Committee
QMIS	Qualifications Management Information System
QualCom	Qualifications Committee
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQF	SADC Qualifications Framework
SANQF	South African National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SI	Statutory Instrument
TEC	Tertiary Education Council
TEVETA	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority
TQF	Transnational Qualifications Framework
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority
ZQF	Zambia Qualifications Framework

# 1. Introduction and context

## Objective of the note

The [project ACQF-II](#) (2023-2026) supports implementation of the ACQF Policy Document and its Guidelines, through a combination of actions and methods, and dissemination of knowledge products such as guidelines, training modules, analyses and reports. The new series of “Technical Notes” elaborated by the ACQF-II follows on the series of “[Thematic Briefs](#)” initiated in 2021 in the context of the first ACQF project.

This **Technical Note 2** addresses a topic of capital importance for any NQF: registration of qualifications. The note aims to contribute to explain the policies, procedures, methods, and practices of registration of qualifications, by comparing three cases: Botswana, South Africa and Zambia.

Registration is a regulated process of placing qualifications in an NQF register, based on agreed quality-assured procedures to enhance transparency, quality and trust in the registered qualifications. It further provides greater public and employer confidence in the qualifications knowing that the quality of the qualifications has been independently verified and assured by a competent authority (ACQF, 2022).

## Introduction and context

The ACQF-II supports development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) and related policies in African countries, working in close cooperation and coordination with the relevant national authorities and with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

African NQFs are at different stages of development and implementation. To provide a broad overview of the panorama of NQFs and their evolution, the [ACQF Mapping Study](#) of NQFs and Regional Qualifications Frameworks proposed a categorisation of five stages. Stage 1 includes countries in which the NQF development process has not yet started; and stage 5 groups the countries with NQFs with long-standing operational experience and already reviewed. Table 1 summarises the status of NQFs, according to data available in ACQF database as of July 2023. The allocation of NQFs to stages is dynamic and changes, in function of developments such as development of NQF concept and policy documents, approval of legal texts, important changes and amendments to the structure and governance of the NQF.

**Table 1: African NQFs - by stages of development (indicative categorisation, based on data as of July 2023)**

Stage of NQF development and implementation	Number of NQFs Africa	Countries
Stage 1: NQF development to be started (2)	2	Chad, Republic of Congo
Stage 2: NQF in early thinking (9)	9	Burkina Faso, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, São Tomé e Príncipe, South Sudan, Togo
Stage 3: NQF in development and consultation (8)	10	Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan
Stage 4: NQF legal act approved, implementation started (18)	17	Angola, Burundi, Djibouti, Eswatini, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe
Stage 5: NQF in advanced implementation and reviewed (7)	7	Cape Verde, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia
<b>Total NQFs included in ACQF research</b>	<b>45</b>	

Source: ACQF database

This note is based on information and data collected through desktop research comparing registration processes in Botswana, South Africa and Zambia. As seen in Table 1, the NQFs in these three countries are in advanced implementation. More detailed explanations may be found in documentation on the websites of the Qualifications Authorities of the three countries:

- [Botswana Qualifications Authority \(BQA\)](#)
- [South African Qualifications Authority \(SAQA\)](#)
- [Zambia Qualifications Authority \(ZAQA\)](#)

All three countries are situated in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region of Africa, along with 13 other SADC countries: Angola, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Botswana is further regarded as a small state of the <sup>1</sup>Commonwealth and falls within an African Community of Small States along with Eswatini, Gabon, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and The Gambia.

The countries, surveyed in this note, have different population sizes which may have an influence on the way their frameworks are managed. As of Monday 28 August 2023, according to the [Worldometer](#), the population of Botswana was 2.6 million, South Africa was 60.5 million and Zambia was 20.5 million.

## 2. Countries in this comparison: NQF structure

The three cases of this comparison share a number of commonalities as regards the NQF structure and the credit system. These similarities can be summarised as follows:

- Scope: inclusive and comprehensive, comprising qualifications of all sub-systems of education and training, from basic to higher education. Although the three frameworks make provisions for part and full qualifications, only South Africa (SAQA) registers part qualifications on the framework.
- Sub-frameworks: these NQFs comprise three sub-frameworks covering the relevant education and training sectors in their countries.
- Three types of qualifications can be registered on the NQF: Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees.
- Level descriptors: although the domains of learning differ, the descriptors are formulated as learning outcomes.
- Credit value: one credit = 10 notional hours of learning, and a normal year of full-time study =120 credits (1200 hours of learning).

The ten-level NQF structure is in line with the ten-level SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) and the ten-level African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) that these countries form part of. Being a small state, Botswana also falls within the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).

### Botswana

The Botswana education system comes together in the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF) as defined in the [Botswana Qualifications Authority Act, No 24 of 2013](#).

The Botswana NCQF is a ten-level national framework that arranges qualifications in ascending order from Level 1 to Level 10 (Figure 1). The Botswana NCQF comprises three integrated yet differentiated sub-frameworks for the General Education (GE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education (HE) sectors. Figure 1 shows the different qualification types, their allocated credits, as well as the sub-frameworks to which they belong:

- General education has qualification types occupying Levels 1 to 5
- TVET occupies Levels 1 to 10

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<sup>1</sup> [The Commonwealth](#) (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2023) defines a small state as a country with a population of 1.5 million people or less. Botswana has larger population (like other small states: Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia, and Papua New Guinea) but shares many of the small state characteristics so is regarded as a small state.

- Higher education occupies Levels 6 to 10

SUB-FRAMEWORKS				
Level	General Education	Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	and Higher Education	Minimum number of credits
10		Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	360
9		Master's Degree	Master's Degree	240
8		Bachelor's Degree Honours Post-Graduate Diploma Post-Graduate Certificate	Ordinary Bachelor's Degree Honours.	120
			Professional Bachelor's Degree Honours	600
			Post-Graduate Diploma	120
			Post-Graduate Certificate	60
7		Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	360
6		Diploma	Diploma	480
				240
5	Certificate V	Certificate V		120
4	Certificate IV	Certificate IV		60
3	Certificate III	Certificate III		40
2	Certificate II	Certificate II		40
1	Certificate I	Certificate I		40

**Figure 1: Botswana National Credit and Qualifications Framework**

Source: BQA (2021:7)

[Botswana Qualifications authority \(BQA\)](#) is directly responsible for administering the NCQF and regulating the three sub-frameworks without any formal separated quality assurance bodies (BQA, 2021):

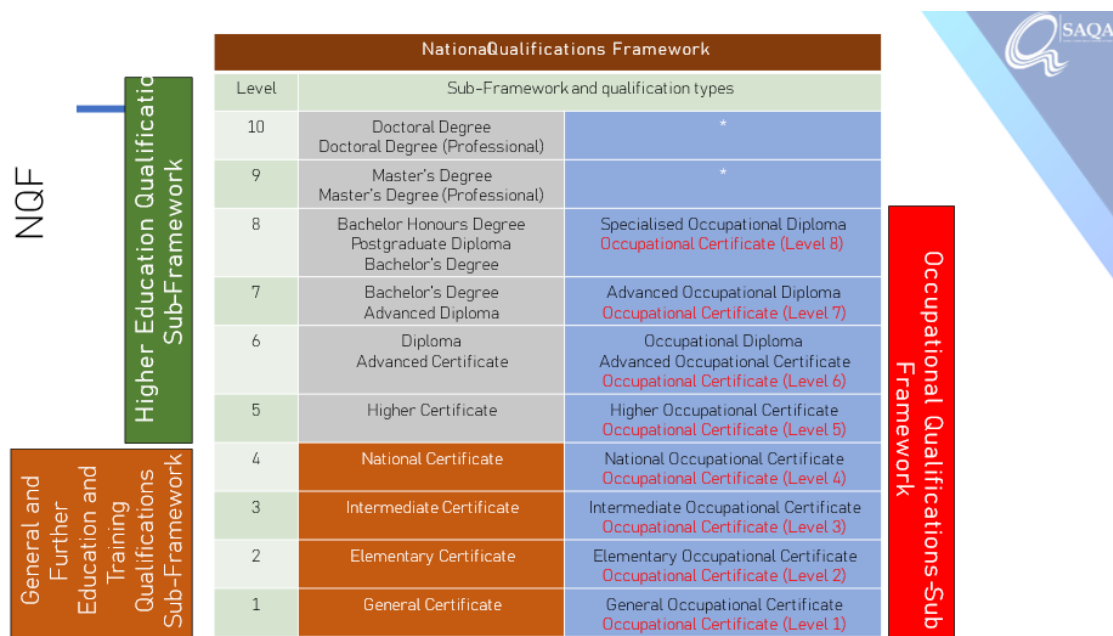
- Units within BQA administer quality assurance functions (the functions of the Tertiary Education Council (TEC) and the Botswana Training Authority (BoTA) were migrated to BQA.
- The Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) is a separate body responsible for examinations, assessment and certification in the General Education sub-framework, however BEC is accountable to BQA and the overarching NCQF.

### South Africa

The South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF) is a single, comprehensive, integrated system for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications as encapsulated in the relevant Acts (and subsequent amendments) establishing the NQF (RSA, 1995; RSA, 2008; RSA, 2019).

The SANQF is a ten-level framework that comprises three co-ordinated Qualifications Sub-Frameworks for general and further education qualifications, occupational qualifications, and higher education (Figure 2). The [South African Qualifications Authority \(SAQA\)](#) co-ordinates the NQF Sub-Frameworks but quality assurance is the executive responsibility of the three Quality Councils (QCs) namely Umalusi, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE):

- The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) qualifications occupy Levels 1-4 of the NQF. Quality assurance oversight is with Umalusi.
- The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) qualifications occupy levels 1-8 of the NQF. Quality assurance oversight is with the QCTO
- The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) qualifications occupy Levels 5-10 of the NQF. Quality assurance oversight is with the CHE.



**Figure 2: The South African National Qualifications Framework**  
 Source: SAQA (2023a)

### Zambia

The Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 13 of 2011 was enacted by the Government of the Republic of Zambia to “provide for the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework; establish the [Zambia Qualifications Authority \(ZAQA\)](#); register and accredit qualifications; provide measures to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; and provide for matters connected with, or incidental to the foregoing” (ZAQA, 2023b). Considering this mandate, ZAQA has, since 2016, been implementing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for the classification, accreditation, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications called the Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF).

The ZQF integrates three sub-frameworks namely

- General Education
- Trades and Occupations
- Higher Education.

It further assigns ten (10) levels of qualifications to the national framework. The ten (10) levels are defined by learning outcomes which are in the form of qualification level descriptors. The structure of the current ZQF (version of 2016) is shown below. (ZAQA, 2023b). A new development since 2020 is noteworthy, as Zambia has reviewed the NQF, notably the level descriptors and the map of levels and qualifications. The revised NQF will be public once the new Act is passed.

ZQF Level	General Education	Trades and Occupations	Higher Education		
10			Doctorate Degree		
9			Master's Degree		
8			Post-Graduate Diploma		
7			Bachelor's Degree		
6			Diploma		
5			Level 5 Certificate		
4			Level 4 Certificate		
3			Level 3 Certificate		
2B			Senior Secondary Education Certificate		
2A			Junior Secondary Education Certificate		
1	Primary Education Certificate				
Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance Bodies established by Acts of Parliament in Zambia				
Qualifications	The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA Act No.13 of 2011)				

**Figure 3: The Zambia Qualifications Framework**

Source: Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA). 2016. Zambia Qualifications Framework Structure

### 3. Concepts

Some [common concepts](#) (ACQF, 2021) underpin registration of qualifications:

- National Qualifications Framework – means a policy and instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.
- Level Descriptor – means a statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.
- Learning Outcomes – mean statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

#### **Registration of qualifications**

In all three countries, **registration refers to a process of including a qualification in the country's NQF, if it meets the relevant criteria.**



## Botswana

In Botswana, registration is a process of including a qualification in the Botswana NCQF if it meets the relevant criteria. According to definitions of qualifications and part qualifications on the [BQA website](#):

### **Qualification:**

- A qualification is a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process, obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved a specific set of learning outcomes to set standards
- A part qualification is an assessed unit of learning that is registered by BQA as part of a qualification (including a module and a unit standard)

### **Registration:**

- BQA (2021) refers to Stage 5 of the qualification development process as “Registration of qualifications”. BQA registers qualifications on the NCQF once they meet the overall requirements for registration:
- Once the qualification has been quality assured, validated and finally approved, it is registered on the NCQF
- Once registered, the qualification is in the public domain and any ETP can access it to develop learning programmes and submit them for BQA accreditation.

## South Africa

In South Africa, registration is a process of including a qualification in the South African NQF if it meets the relevant criteria.

### **Qualification:**

- In South Africa, “Qualification” means a registered national qualification. The national qualification registered on the NQF is assessed in terms of the exit level outcomes and awarded and certified by the Quality Council or its accredited provider. It consists of a planned combination of learning outcomes with a defined purpose, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning.

### **Registration:**

- All qualifications offered in South Africa must be registered on the NQF by SAQA, through an approval decision by the SAQA Board. The SAQA Board is the only NQF decision-making Body and is appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST). The approval to register a qualification and/or part-qualification depends on the extent to which the recommended qualification and or part-qualification meets the *Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework* (SAQA, 2022b) and the requirements and criteria from the relevant Quality Council (QC).

## Zambia

In Zambia, registration is a process of including a qualification in the ZQF if it meets the relevant criteria.

### **Qualification:**

- In Zambia, a national qualification is a nationally recognised qualification.

### **Registration:**

- Registration and Accreditation of Qualifications is the process that ZAQA undertakes of examining or assessing a qualification, based on set criteria, to establish an appropriate level on the Framework for quality assurance and recognition purposes. It is a process of granting official status to a qualification. (Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ); GRZ, 2011 and 2018; ZAQA, 2023b).

## 4. Rationale and benefits

Registered qualifications have a significant benefit to individual qualification holders and economies of countries. This is in line with the benefits outlined in the [ACQF Training Module 6: Registration of qualifications](#) (ACQF, 2022):

- Provides valid, transparent information on the qualifications (entry requirements, learning outcomes, progression, credits, etc).
  - This information can be used to support verification, comparison and recognition (national and cross-border) of qualifications when workers, learners, educators and researchers seek opportunities for work and further learning in their own country or in other countries
  - Once the qualification is registered it can be offered as a study opportunity by education and training institutions. Any learners with a strong, consistent academic history, who want to further their studies but lack the funding to do so, is eligible to apply for bursaries, scholarships and learnerships towards the registered qualification
  - Employers can use the registered qualification to get a sense of what the qualification holder is able to know, understand and do, and use the information to develop job advertisements and job profiles
- Provides greater trust in the quality of the qualification in the register, as endorsed by relevant stakeholders. In this regard, registered qualifications protect the public, including learners and employers against misleading information on qualifications
- Provides statistics and real-time information on qualifications that can be used for research purposes, policy development, and educational and economic decision-making.

### Botswana

A qualification registered on the Botswana NCQF is a national qualification and available in the public domain. Once in the public domain, education and training providers (ETPs) may apply for accreditation to offer learning programmes that lead to achievement of the registered qualification. While qualification developers have no exclusive claim over the registered qualification, the ETP has exclusive ownership for the learning programme developed towards the registered qualification (BQA, 2021, page 17). In Botswana, the terms “National” and “Botswana” are protected terms in the context of Botswana qualifications.

### South Africa

All qualifications registered on the SANQF are national qualifications, except classified, confidential qualifications (as requested by the relevant QC). Information on all SANQF qualifications, unless prohibited by law (as in the case of confidential qualifications), is accurate, transparent and publicly available. Qualifications can only be legally offered once registered and the QC has a responsibility to ensure that the public is protected against misleading information about SANQF qualifications. This includes ensuring that:

- providers disseminate and advertise accurate information about the legal status of the SANQF qualifications
- qualification information, on the websites of the QCs and providers, and in the transcripts of qualifying learners, is consistent with the SANQF qualification information.

SANQF nomenclature like NQF levels and credits are only used in the context of SANQF qualifications.

### Zambia

In Zambia, a national qualification is a nationally recognised qualification. However, qualifications registered and accredited on the ZQF remain properties of the respective NQF sub frameworks’ appropriate authorities and awarding bodies, and therefore, are not publicly accessible. In terms of visibility and accessibility of information on registered and accredited qualifications, an annual list/ database containing basic but useful information on registered and accredited qualifications is published on ZAQA’s website as

well as social media platforms. All costs relating to the registration and accreditation process, as well as subsequent maintenance of the qualifications are borne by the awarding bodies.

## 5. Legal-regulatory framework

### *Types of qualifications on the register*

#### **Botswana**

In Botswana, qualifications are national, not institutional, and all qualifications at all levels of the NCQF can be registered. ETPs may apply for accreditation of a learning programme that they can offer towards the qualification that is registered on the NCQF. BQA discourages proliferation of qualifications by [capping the number of registered qualifications with the same title](#) on the NCQF. BQA also publishes, on their website, a list of non-credit bearing short courses (NCBSCs). These courses do not fall within the mandate of the NCQF Act.

#### **South Africa**

All qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the SANQF are national qualifications, except classified, confidential qualifications (regulated by law and on request of the relevant QC). In South Africa, qualifications cannot have less than 120 credits and part-qualifications cannot have more than 119 credits.

Qualifications and part-qualifications achieved through RPL are also registered on the NQF.

In South Africa, for the purposes of the NQF Act and the NQF MIS, a distinction is made between the word “registered” and “recorded” and “recognised”. For example:

- Qualifications, part-qualifications, learning programmes:
  - Qualifications and part-qualifications are registered on the NQF
  - Learning programmes are recorded. This is a way of discouraging proliferation of qualifications
- Learners and learner achievements:
  - The number of learners and learner achievements are recorded/ loaded
- Professional bodies:
  - Professional bodies are recognised
  - Professional designations are registered
  - Individuals with professional designations are recorded/ loaded
- Trades:
  - Trades are recorded on the NQF.

#### **Zambia**

The current ZAQA Act provides for registration and accreditation of qualifications and part qualifications. However, currently only full qualifications from Level 1 to 10 are registered and accredited on the ZQF. The ZQF registers full qualifications with a minimum duration of 1 year (1200 notional hours, 120 credits) in the following classes/ categories (ZAQA, 2023b):

- Current (active) qualifications: those in current use and programmes leading to such qualifications are currently being offered by a training institution
- Expiring qualifications: which are being replaced with a new qualification and for which a decision has been made for them to be discontinued in the future; or which may continue to be available to existing students while they complete the learning programme or training path, but no new students may be enrolled with a time limit for the expiry period, following which they will be assigned discontinued status
- Discontinued qualifications: the qualifications should no longer be awarded; and learning programmes leading to such qualifications must not be offered.

The current ZQF does not have any unit standards, skills awards or any qualifications with a duration of less than 1 year (less than 1200 notional hours, 120 credits). In as much as registered and accredited qualifications are nationally recognised (national qualifications), they remain the property of the appropriate authorities and awarding bodies (institutional). Each awarding body develops its own qualifications regardless of whether similar qualifications exist in another awarding body.

### ***Workflow of registration***

All three countries have an established and quality-assured workflow to process applications for registration, with their respective Boards providing the final validation before the qualifications are registered and published.

#### **Botswana**

As stated on the BQA website this is the [workflow process for the registration of qualifications on the Botswana NCQF](#)

- Identify a need for a qualification
- Verify the need for a qualification from Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)
- Apply for pre-approval (by BQA) of the qualification ([online](#)).
- Develop the Qualification
- Conduct a wider stakeholder consultation to obtain approval of the qualification
- Obtain professional body endorsement (if applicable)
- Submit application for registration of the qualification on the NCQF
- Audit the qualification against NCQF Requirements
- Register qualification on the NCQF

BQA internal registration workflow and approval structures (BQA, 2021):

- By this stage (Stage 5) the qualification would have gone through four quality assurance checks: Qualification developer; Internal verification; BQA officers processing the application; and Experts Panel
- Recommendation for Approval in BQA is done by:
  - NCQF Services Department to the Management Qualifications Framework Maintenance Committee (MQFMC)
  - MQFMC to the Qualifications Framework Maintenance Committee (QFMC) of the Board
  - QFMC of the Board to the BQA Board
- Approval by the BQA Board
- Once approved, it is registered on the NCQF.

The BQA Board provides the final legal validation before the NCQF qualification is included in the register.

#### **South Africa**

QC processes:

- In South Africa, each QC has its own specific system and process for the development of qualifications for its Sub-Framework. All three QCs include consultation with relevant stakeholders but at different stages in the development process:
  - QQSF: The QCTO establishes a Qualifications Development Committee, consisting of representatives for the sector, which develops the qualification. The QCTO recommends registration of the qualification to SAQA after the qualification has gone through the relevant quality checks. After registration of the qualification by SAQA, providers apply for QCTO accreditation to offer it
  - GFETQSF: The GFETQSF works similarly to the QCTO system. Qualifications are developed by a committee established by Umalusi. Umalusi recommends registration of the qualification to SAQA after the qualification has gone through the relevant quality checks. After registration

of the qualification by SAQA: Public institutions may offer it; Private institutions must apply for Umalusi accreditation to offer it.

- **HEQSF:** Providers develop their own qualifications, consult relevant stakeholders, and then seek CHE accreditation. The CHE recommends registration of the qualification to SAQA after the qualification has gone through the relevant quality checks. After registration of the qualification, the provider may market and offer it. Providers also develop learning programmes and submit to the CHE for accreditation

#### SAQA internal registration workflow and approval structures

- At all points in the registration workflow the correspondence, dates, lists, tracking grids and letters to and from the SAQA CEO, are filed by the relevant admin persons
- Only the QCs may recommend qualifications to SAQA, after the qualification has passed the relevant QC quality checks. The QC sends a list of recommended qualifications to the SAQA CEO
- The recommended qualifications, date of letter and date of email are recorded on relevant tracking grids
- Acknowledgement letters are sent to the QCs from the SAQA CEO's office
- The tracking grids are sent to the relevant managers of units within SAQA. The Managers distribute to the qualification specialists
- The specialists screen the qualification documents:
  - Qualifications that do meet the requirements are returned to the QCs, with relevant documentation showing what needs to be amended. After approval by managers, letters to QCs are sent via the SAQA CEO's office
  - Where qualifications meet the criteria, managers prepare an agenda pack of qualifications (timeously) for the meeting of the SAQA Qualifications Committee (QualCom), a sub-committee of the SAQA Board
- The Senior Manager approves the agenda pack and submits, in due time, before the QualCom meeting
- The QualCom:
  - either approves for registration on the NQF, or
  - returns to the QC for further amendments. Qualifications are returned by letter via the CEO's office
- The SAQA Board or the SAQA EXCO ratifies the QualCom decision for registration
- Approved qualifications are captured on the NQF Management Information System (MIS). The MIS reflects the Board or EXCO decision number
- Registration letters are sent to QCs via the CEO's office

The SAQA Board provides the final legal validation before the SANQF qualification is included in the NQF MIS. The Board decision number is included in the qualification register.

#### **Zambia**

The procedure for the registration and accreditation of qualifications on the ZQF involves the following major stages (ZAQA, 2023b):

- Application by an appropriate authority: in considering an application, the following is considered: eligibility; procedure; forms, attachments and fees; performance criteria; and reporting the results of the application
- Evaluation of qualifications by experts: a panel of experts is constituted to evaluate qualifications. Members of a panel contribute to the specialist knowledge and skills needed to effectively evaluate qualifications for registration and accreditation. They have knowledge of current research and best practice, appropriate teaching and assessment methods and the context of the qualification applied for. The composition of a panel is decided on a case-by-case basis, considering the scope of the application
- Decision making by Management and the Board: communication of the decision by the ZAQA regarding an application is sent out to the applicant within seven working days after the decision is made. A concise explanation of key factors and reasons for the final decision is incorporated into

the written report that is communicated to the applicant. The decision of the Registration and Accreditation Committee may be any one of the following:

- Approval – where the application meets all the requirements for registration and accreditation
  - Conditional Approval – where there are some issues in the application that need to be resolved by the applicant
  - Rejection – where the application does not meet the requirements for registration and accreditation
  - De-registration – where an Awarding Body flouts the terms and conditions of registration and accreditation, such as failure to resubmit conditionally registered and accredited qualifications within the stipulated timelines
- Appeal by the appropriate authority within 30 calendar days from the date of communication of the decision, if necessary
  - Publication of list/ database of registered and accredited qualifications: the Authority publishes annually a list of registered and accredited qualifications in line with section 9 (2) of the ZAQA Act No. 13 of 2011. The publication list includes the following details:
    - Name of the awarding body
    - Title (name) of the qualification
    - ZQF qualification type
    - ZQF level
    - Status of each qualification.

Upon endorsement by the Board, an approved qualification is included on the list/ database of registered and accredited qualifications by ZAQA. Thereafter, ZAQA publishes the consolidated list/ database of all qualifications registered and accredited on the ZQF.

### ***Main requirements for registration***

Across countries, the information about qualifications in qualifications documents and registers/ databases varies in terms of structure, data fields and format of the main learning outcomes (ACQF, 2022).

In Botswana, South Africa and Zambia there are main common requirements for development, registration, re-registration and de-registration of qualifications e.g.,

- Stakeholder endorsements: Quality Council/ Provider/ Qualification developer
- Sub-Framework and related qualification descriptors/ naming of qualifications/ Qualification Title/ Organising Field and Sub-Field; Alignment with NQF levels and level descriptors/ learning domains
- Learning outcomes approach (purpose, rationale, alignment with levels and descriptors, exit level outcomes and assessment)
- Credits, duration of programmes/ exit level credits, CAT
- Entry requirements
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Qualification structure/ Rules of Combination
- Exit Level Outcomes, Delivery and learning modes, Associated Assessment Criteria, Integrated Assessment/ Assessment
- International/ regional comparability
- Articulation requirements/ progression/ education and employment pathways
- Registration period and related expiry periods/ status of qualifications
- Protected terms
- Classification and coding

The Table 2 below compares the three systems in terms of the **common criteria required for registration** on the NQF.

**Table 2: Comparison of registration systems in Botswana, South Africa and Zambia – common criteria**

Botswana	South Africa	Zambia
Identification of qualification developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quality Council</li> <li>○ Provider name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of applicant</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Justification and evidence of need</li> <li>○ Stakeholder support</li> <li>○ Rationale and purpose of the qualification</li> <li>○ Graduate profile learning outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Purpose</li> <li>○ Rationale</li> <li>○ Exit Level Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aims</li> <li>○ Learning outcomes</li> <li>○ Stakeholder involvement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title</li> <li>○ Sub framework</li> <li>○ Qualification type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sub- Framework and title</li> <li>○ Qualification type according to the Sub-Framework policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Qualification title</li> <li>○ Qualification type according to the qualification descriptors, qualifiers, etc</li> </ul>
Field and Sub-Field	Organising Field and Sub-Field	Subject area
Level	NQF level of the qualification/part-qualification	ZQF level of qualification
Entry requirements including access and inclusion	Entry requirements (including entry through RPL)	Entry requirements including entry through RPL
Performance/ criteria/ demonstrated behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exit Level Outcomes</li> <li>○ Associated Assessment Criteria</li> <li>○ Integrated Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delivery and learning modes</li> <li>○ Assessment</li> <li>○ Qualifications and experience of the trainers and assessors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Qualification structure</li> <li>○ Rules of combination</li> <li>○ Qualification award and certification</li> </ul>	Rules of combination	Qualification structure
RPL	RPL	No specific criterion but embedded in criterion on entry requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CAT</li> <li>○ Credit value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Credits</li> <li>○ Credits and exit level credits according to the Sub-Framework policies</li> </ul>	Credits and duration
Progression pathways (learning and employment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Purpose</li> <li>○ Rationale</li> <li>○ Articulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education and employment pathways</li> </ul>
Regional and international comparability	International comparability	No specific criterion for registration. However, care is taken during the evaluation stage to ensure that all registered and accredited qualifications are internationally comparable

Review period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Registration/ re-registration start date</li> <li>○ Registration end date</li> <li>○ A last date for enrolment of learners</li> <li>○ A last date for achievement of the qualification/ part-qualification</li> </ul>	○ Qualification review period
Classification and coding	SAQA qual I.D and board decision number	Publication list details

### **Registration period, revision and renewal of qualifications**

#### **Botswana**

Registration period:

- In Botswana, in terms of the NCQF Regulations, a qualification is registered for a period of five years.

Review:

- A review period of five years is operational for NCQF qualifications; however, this time-period may change as and when necessary. A qualification developer or BQA can initiate a review, however, all changes to the register requires BQA's approval.

Renewal- Qualifications due to expire or de-registration or amendments (BQA, 2022):

- BQA issues a public notice (as at 4 August 2023) on its website of [qualifications due to expire](#), and invites an expression of interest for renewal and review of NCQF qualifications. Expressions of interest are submitted to BQA, through the online portal, within 30 calendar days of the publication of the notice
- Qualification developers must apply for renewal of registration at least six months before the expiry date, in accordance with sub-regulation 18(1) of the [BQA NCQF Regulations](#) (BQA, 2016).
- An application for renewal must be submitted to the BQA at least six months before expiry of the qualification:
  - The application needs to provide evidence that the enrolment profile, the content and outcomes are consistent with the rationale and purpose of the qualification.
  - Evidence is also needed to prove that graduates are meeting the requirements of the relevant industry or profession
  - The application must include full details of any changes to the curriculum design or learning outcomes that have been introduced since the last registration, as well as any changes planned for implementation during the renewed period of registration.

Intention to revoke accreditation:

- BQA issues an [intention to revoke accreditation of learning programmes](#). This is done to protect the learners so that they do not enrol in these programmes

#### **South Africa**

Registration period:

- In South Africa, qualifications in the different NQF Sub-Frameworks have different registration periods:
  - Five years: General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) qualifications under the GFETQSF Quality Council, Umalusi
  - Five years: Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) qualifications under the QC, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
  - Three years: Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) qualifications under the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

Re-registration or Deregistration:



- SAQA informs the QC, in advance, of qualifications that will reach their registration end date:
  - It is then the responsibility of the QC to recommend the re-registration or de-registration of the qualification in line with the relevant NQF and QC policy requirements
  - Qualifications are only de-registered if the QC confirms in writing that consultation took place and that there are no outstanding legal cases with the provider.

Amendments:

- The QC may recommend amendments to registered qualifications
  - A new SAQA ID number is issued where there is a change in the Title, the NQF level or credits of the qualification, or where there are more than 50% changes to the content of the qualification.

## **Zambia**

All registered qualifications on the ZQF are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain useful, relevant and continue to meet the needs of learners, industry, professional bodies and other stakeholders for which they were initially developed (ZAQA, 2023b). The review/ renewal periods of qualifications on the ZQF vary according to ZQF level:

- ZQF Level 1: Five years
- ZQF Level 2: Five years
- ZQF Level 3: Two years
- ZQF Level 4: Three years
- ZQF Level 5: Four years
- ZQF Level 6: Five years
- ZQF Level 7: Six years
- ZQF Level 8: Six years
- ZQF Level 9: Six years
- ZQF Level 10: Six years

For programmes lasting more than 5 years, such as Medicine, review is undertaken in a period of 8 years (ZAQA, 2023b).

### ***Institutions responsible for registration***

All three countries have Qualifications Authorities that are the custodians of the respective country's NQF. The Qualifications Authorities work with the relevant Sector Bodies to ensure the relevance of the qualifications.

## **Botswana**

In Botswana, BQA is directly responsible for regulating the Botswana NCQF and its sub-frameworks (General Education (GE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and Higher Education (HE) without any separate quality assurance bodies. BQA is a parastatal established by the [Botswana Qualifications Authority Act, No 24 of 2013](#). The functions of the previous Tertiary Education Council (TEC) and the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) were migrated to the BQA. The Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) continues to function as a separate body responsible for examinations, assessment and certification in the General Education sub-framework, but is accountable to BQA and the overarching NCQF administered by BQA. (BQA, 2021: 10).

The BQA Act mandates the Authority to:

- Be responsible for all qualifications, from early childhood to tertiary level
- Design, develop and implement a common quality assurance platform, and regulate its compliance
- Register and validate qualifications and part qualifications, and ensure their relevance to social and economic needs
- Evaluate and register local and external qualifications

- Maintain a national database of assessors, moderators, Education and Training Providers (ETPs) and learners
- Register and accredit ETPs, assessors, awarding bodies and moderators
- Accredit learning programmes
- Develop and review quality standards, and ensure compliance through a monitoring and evaluation system
- Design methods of validating the achievements of learners
- Recognise and validate competencies for purposes of certification
- Design procedures and rules for the protection of enrolled learners
- Develop, implement and maintain an overarching National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF)
- Set teaching and learning standards for ETPs
- Ensure international recognition for the national qualifications system and the international comparability of qualifications
- Develop standards for the recognition of external qualifications
- Maintain a national database of qualifications
- Design qualifications and curricula for General Education (GE) and tertiary education, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education (HE)
- Contribute toward the development of international competency frameworks
- Set criteria for the development of national education and training quality and inspection standards
- Develop policy and criteria for work-based teaching, workplace learning and work-based learning programmes, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS)
- Advise the Minister on all matters pertaining to its functions
- Perform any function consistent with this Act that the Minister may, by regulations, determine; and
- Do all such things and perform all such functions as may be necessary for, or incidental to, the attainment of the objectives of the Authority.

There is a [basket of policies, instruments and guidelines](#) available on the BQA website to assist stakeholders and the general public to understand the work of BQA.

BQA also makes available an [NCQF manual, guidelines & instruments](#) to assist qualification developers and ETPs to design and develop qualifications and learning programmes for the Botswana context.

### **South Africa**

Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST)

- The MoHest determines the [Sub-Frameworks that comprise the NQF](#) (DHET, 2020) and promulgates the qualification types to be offered on each of the three Sub-Frameworks of the NQF. The MoHEST also appoints the SAQA Board as the key NQF decision-making body.

SAQA and its Board

- All qualifications offered in South Africa must be registered on the NQF by SAQA, through the SAQA Board.
- SAQA, as custodian of the NQF, co-ordinates the Qualifications Sub-Frameworks (QSFs) and develops overarching policies that ensure that qualifications meet national standards:
  - Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2012)
  - National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa (SAQA, 2014)
  - Policy and Criteria for evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African NQF (as amended in 2017) (SAQA, 2017)
  - Addendum on the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (March 2019a)
  - National Policy and Criteria for the implementation of RPL (as amended in 2019) (SAQA, 2019b)

- Policy and criteria for credit accumulation and transfer within the NQF (as amended, 2021) (SAQA, 2021)
- Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (as amended in 2022) (SAQA, 2022b)
- Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008 (as amended in 2023) (SAQA, 2023b)
- Only the QCs may make recommendations to SAQA for qualifications to be registered on the NQF. SAQA evaluates the qualifications to ensure they meet the relevant *Sub-Framework Policy* requirements and NQF Policy and Criteria requirements for the development, registration, re-registration and de-registration of qualifications. Recommended qualifications that do not comply with the criteria are returned to the QCs with clear indications on where amendments are needed.

#### Quality Councils and their stakeholders

- Quality assurance (QA) of qualifications in the Sub-Frameworks of the NQF is the executive responsibility of the respective Quality Councils (QCs)
- Only QCs may recommend qualifications, to SAQA, for registration on the NQF for their Sub-Framework
- Several stakeholders are involved with the QCs: including Providers, Assessment Bodies and Partners, Development Quality Partners, Sector Education and Training Authorities and professional bodies. Stakeholder consultations are important when determining the rationale for the qualification namely:
  - how the qualification or part-qualification will benefit the sector, society and the economy
  - who identified the need for the qualification and why
  - how the qualification will meet the needs of the sector (e.g., address a scarce skill)
  - the details of consultation and who participated in the development (e.g., professional/ industry bodies, higher education institutions, etc),
  - how society and the economy will benefit (e.g., green economy, etc).
  - typical learners for the qualification or part-qualification
  - types of occupations/ jobs/ professions that qualifying learners are likely to enter
  - possible work and learning pathways for qualifying learners.
  - how the qualification meets the requirements for professional registration, membership or licencing required by recognised professional bodies (where applicable)

#### Providers of qualifications

- All Providers that want to offer NQF qualifications must be registered with the relevant Department (Department of Basic Education or Department of Higher education and Training ) and accredited by the relevant QC:
- *Public providers:*
  - As promulgated in the relevant legislation all public providers in SA are established by Acts of Parliament.
  - Public providers, since they are established under these Acts, do not require another form of registration.
- *Private providers:*
  - Private providers of higher education must be registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)
  - Independent schools offering basic education must be registered with the Education Departments in the provinces where they deliver their services
  - In order for private providers to be registered they must first be accredited by the relevant QC
- All providers, both public and private, must be accredited by the QCs if they want to offer learning programmes that lead to qualifications and part-qualifications.
- Even if providers are registered and accredited, all the national qualifications and part-qualifications that they offer must be registered on the NQF.

## Professional bodies

- The NQF Act states that it applies to professional designations, through SAQA being mandated to recognise professional bodies and register professional designations for the purposes of the NQF. Professional bodies may neither be registered nor accredited as providers of qualifications. They may, however, offer non-credit bearing learning for Continuing Professional Development of their members, and as stipulated in SAQA (2023), may, if delegated by a relevant QC:
  - recognise suitable workplaces and training providers
  - conduct assessment of workplace experience
  - be involved in the curricula of learning programmes
  - set their own board examinations
  - develop and/or quality assure qualification/s required for the awarding of professional designations.

## **Zambia**

The ZAQA is the custodian and regulator of all Zambian qualifications and responsible for the registration of qualifications on the ZQF. In order to achieve the objectives of the ZQF, ZAQA is expected to:

- Develop and implement policy and criteria for the development, accreditation, and publication of qualifications after consultation with the Appropriate Authorities
- Accredite a qualification recommended by an Appropriate Authority if it meets the relevant criteria
- Publish an annual list of prescribed standards and accredited qualifications of the sub-frameworks (General Education, Trades and Occupations and Higher Education).

The process of registering qualifications on the ZQF is preceded by development of curricular and learning programmes by awarding bodies (Universities, Colleges, Professional Bodies, etc.) in the case of the Higher Education Sub Framework, Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) for the Trades and Occupations Sub Framework as well as Ministry of Education through the Department of Standards and Curriculum Development for the General Education Sub Framework.

The appropriate authorities manage, and quality assure/ accredit the curricular/ learning programmes and training provision in the three sub frameworks of the ZQF before recommending them to ZAQA for registration and accreditation as qualifications on the ZQF:

- Ministry of Education through the Department of Standards and Curriculum Development (for General Education),
- Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (for Trades and Occupations)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA) (for Higher Education)

External experts in the qualification subject area are then sourced from government ministries/ agencies/ regulators, industry, academia, professional bodies, associations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)/ Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), etc. to constitute panels of experts that evaluate qualifications to establish if they are registrable.

## **6. Outcomes**

### ***Kinds of qualifications registers available***

The three Qualifications Authorities (BQA, SAQA and ZAQA) maintains their country's NQF registered databases. The registers/ lists/ databases of qualifications information are in the public domain and freely available. Some of the related lists like learner records are available at a fee.

### **Botswana**

BQA maintain lists of registered qualifications and accredited learning programmes, registered and accredited ETPs, legacy programmes and non-credit bearing short courses. The following registers are free, open, accessible in the public domain and available online on the website of [BQA](#):

- Registered and accredited qualifications and learning programmes.

- A [register of registered qualifications](#) (from Level 3 to Level 10). As at 4 September 2023, there were 822 valid [registered qualifications](#) on the NCQF.
- A [list of learning programmes](#) (from Level 3 to Level 10) accredited under the NCQF, following accreditation and registration of the provider and registration of the qualification
- Providers:
  - A register of [registered and accredited higher education training providers](#)
  - A list of [registered and accredited TVET education and training providers](#)
- Legacy programmes: In Botswana, a legacy programme is a qualification or programme that was recognised before the Botswana NCQF was promulgated:
  - A [list of legacy learning programmes for public providers](#) as modified on 16 June 2022
  - A [list of legacy learning programmes for private providers](#) as modified on 16 June 2022
- Non-credit bearing short courses:
  - BQA issues [criteria and guidelines for approval of non-credit bearing short courses](#) (NCBSCs) and [quality assurance standards and accreditation procedures for non-NCQF programmes](#). These programmes do not fall within the ambit and the scope of the NCQF but are critical to the development and upskilling of human resources e.g. company/work-specific, designed to meet the need for skilled persons in highly specialised areas, or to train employees to apply new technologies or operate new machinery. Other courses are general, and the knowledge and skills can be applied across different sectors of the economy. It is therefore critical that they are subjected to the rigors of quality assurance and approval processes although they do not lead to a full or part- qualification. BQA publishes a [list of NCBSCs](#) and list of [expired NCBSCs](#) to assist the public. These lists are freely available online.

### **South Africa**

SAQA is the custodian of the NQF Management Information System (NQF MIS). As at 4 September 2023: the following information was freely available on the searchable SAQA database, in the public domain and freely accessible:

- [8678 qualifications registered](#)
- [103 professional bodies](#)
- [374 professional designations](#)
- [13990 qualifications that have passed their registration end date](#)
- [15699 unit standards that have passed their registration end date](#)
- [749 trades](#)

The NQF MIS also provides information that can be used by researchers. Some of the information is extracted at a fee, and on request, and some information is freely available in the annual reports of SAQA.

The [SAQA annual report 2021/ 2022](#) (SAQA, 2022a: 27) shows the total number of learners and qualification achievements loaded on the NQF MIS:

- Learners loaded:
  - More than 21 million total number of learners (exact number is 21 365 389). One learner may have multiple qualification achievements
  - More than 123 thousand learners who achieved anything through RPL (exact number is 123 965)
- Achievements loaded:
  - More than 18 million qualification achievements (exact number is 18 981 210)
  - More than 115 million part-qualification achievements (exact number is 115 575 193)
  - More than 40 thousand qualification achievements through RPL (exact number is 40 024)
  - More than 1 million other achievements through RPL (exact number is 1 965 249)
  - More than 1 million people awarded professional designations (exact number is 1 244 090)

SAQA also maintains records of qualifications that have been verified, for purposes of work or further learning for:

- National qualification achievements records that have been verified and verification letters issued

- Foreign qualification achievements verified and electronic SAQA certificates of evaluation (eSCoE) issued

SAQA also maintains records of qualifications that were found to have been misrepresented:

- Misrepresented national qualifications
- Misrepresented foreign qualifications
- Misrepresented eSCoEs

## **Zambia**

The ZAQA Qualifications Management Information System (QMIS) is the online system used to manage the Zambia Qualifications Framework and a database of learner achievements in Zambia. The QMIS:

- provides employers and decision makers with comprehensive information about education and training. It keeps a record of registered and accredited qualifications of Quality Assurance Bodies and Appropriate Authorities in Zambia
- enables users to apply for verification and evaluation of their qualifications online and obtain e-certificates that are in real time and can be shared digitally with potential employers or further education institutions. Universities and other higher education institutions can register their courses for assessment against the international standards.

Under Section 9 (2) of the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 13 of 2011 of the Laws of Zambia, the ZAQA publishes an annual list of the prescribed standards and qualifications of the sub-frameworks. The current ZAQA Act and SI provides for registration and accreditation of qualifications and part qualifications. However, currently only full qualifications from Level 1 to 10 are registered and accredited on the ZQF.

The distribution of registered and accredited qualifications on the ZQF as at 31 August 2023 (ZAQA, 2023a) was 584:

- 313: Approved (fully accredited), out of which 1 has an expiring status
- 191: Conditionally registered and accredited
- 44: Discontinued
- 36: Pending Renewal

ZAQA also maintains lists of verified and misrepresented qualifications. As at 8 September 2023, there were 11 024 verified qualifications and 62 misrepresented qualifications.

ZAQA maintains a [database of qualifications registered and accredited](#) on the ZQF. The register/ database is accessible on the ZAQA website, social media platforms and can also be accessed free of charge from ZAQA upon request.

## **7. Summary**

This technical note provided a comparison of registration of qualifications in three countries situated in the SADC region of Africa namely Botswana, South Africa and Zambia. These three countries have different population sizes yet many similarities in their registration processes.

### **All three countries:**

- have integrated, ten-level, comprehensive NQFs comprising three sub-frameworks covering the relevant sectors in their countries. The qualifications on each sub-framework, in the respective country, occupy different levels on their respective NQFs.
- have a set of learning outcomes based level descriptors that define their NQF levels.
- register three types of qualifications: Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees.

### **In all three countries:**

- registration refers to a process of including a qualification in the country's NQF, if it meets the relevant criteria.
- one credit = 10 notional hours of learning.

- registered qualifications have a significant benefit to individual qualification holders and the economies.

**All three countries:**

- make provision for qualifications and part-qualifications to be registered on the NQF.
- In both Botswana and SA, qualifications registered on the NQF are national qualifications, in contrast to Zambia where the qualifications remain the property of the relevant authorities. In South Africa, all qualifications are in the public domain unless prohibited by law as in the case of confidential qualifications.
- have an established and quality-assured workflow to process applications for registration, with their respective Boards providing the final validation before the qualifications are registered and published.
- are comparable regarding common main criteria/ requirements for development, registration, re-registration (renewal) and de-registration of qualifications, for example:
  - Stakeholder endorsements: Quality Council/ Provider/ Qualification developer
  - Sub-Framework and related qualification descriptors/ naming of qualifications/ Qualification Title/ Organising Field and Sub-Field; Alignment with NQF levels and level descriptors/ learning domains
  - Learning outcomes approach (purpose, rationale, alignment with levels and descriptors, exit level outcomes and assessment)
  - Credits, duration of programmes/ exit level credits, CAT
  - Entry requirements
  - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
  - Qualification structure/ Rules of Combination
  - Exit Level Outcomes, Delivery and learning modes, Associated Assessment Criteria, Integrated Assessment/ Assessment
  - International/ regional comparability
  - Articulation requirements/ progression/ education and employment pathways
  - Registration period and related expiry periods/ status of qualifications
  - Protected terms
  - Classification and coding.

**All three countries:**

- have Qualifications Authorities (BQA, SAQA, ZAQA) that are the custodians of their respective country's NQF and maintains the country's Qualifications Management Information System. The Qualifications Authorities work with the relevant Sector Bodies to ensure the relevance of the qualifications.
- provide registers/ lists/ databases of qualifications information that are in the public domain and freely available. Some of the related lists like specific, validated learner records are available at a fee.

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