



African Continental
Qualifications Framework

Session 12: Registration and Databases of Qualifications in NQF – Training Module 6

Presenter: Mr. Modest Hamalabbi, ZAQA

Registration of qualifications enhances quality and regulation of qualifications

Accessible searchable registers / databases of qualifications are a fundamental tool for the goals of any NQF: transparency, comparability of qualifications; information for recognition; guidance for the wider public.

Presentation Outline

- Introduction to Registration of Qualifications
- Cases and Experiences: Registers and databases of qualifications
- Technical design and main specifications for ACQF database of qualifications
- Use of ACQF levels in qualifications registers and databases
- Conclusion

Introduction

What is Registration of Qualifications?

- Registration of qualifications is a process through which national quality assured and registered qualifications are placed on the NQF register / database of qualifications

Purpose of Registration of qualifications

- Provide users with information for study and career choices and management
- Enhance mutual understanding, acceptability and recognition of qualifications amongst countries
- Provide for smooth verification and evaluation of qualifications
- Promote the quality of education and training provision
- Enhance mobility and portability of qualifications

ACQF Benefits of Registration of qualifications

Transparency of Information on qualifications for different uses and target groups

Enhances quality and recognition of qualifications

Facilitates for smooth verification and evaluation of qualifications

Facilitates mobility of learners and workers from one country to another as well as across regions

Protecting learners, employers and the public from misrepresented qualifications

Deepens integration and harmonisation of qualifications among states

Eases recognition and transfer of credits

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Cases and Experiences

Trends and developments

- In many countries across the globe, the authorities and departments managing qualifications at national level are taking steps to improve and modernise the tools, technology and methods used to structure, manage, and visualise information and data on qualifications.
- For improved global transparency on qualifications and efficient information-sharing between NQFs across continents and between regions, a number of themes need shared views e.g.
 - **Minimum fields of information on qualifications for electronic publication in digital databases**

Snapshot on some national registers / databases in Africa

| Country | Register / database of qualifications | Qualifications included | Key features |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Botswana | Botswana Qualifications Authority – Register of qualifications | 401 full qualifications - all levels of NCQF | <p>The register is searchable by title of qualification (search by key word tool). Qualifications documents can be viewed and downloaded.</p> <p>The online register publishes a list of qualifications (title, type, level, field, document). All registered qualifications are formatted based on a standardised model. Section B of the model - Qualifications Specifications contains: graduate profile (learning outcomes) and the associated assessment criteria (detail and clarify the learning outcomes).</p> |
| Mauritius | National Qualifications and Unit Standards Maintained and managed by MQA | 167 qualifications distributed in 22 sectors As of 21/03/2022: 98 qualifications are published, 67 under review Includes: qualifications of levels 1 to 6 of NQF. | <p>The digital online database of National Qualifications and Unit Standards is accessible as a repository of qualifications files in PDF format.</p> <p>Qualifications at all levels (1—6) are structured in unit standards,, described as learning outcomes. All qualifications files are structured following harmonized format. The qualification files on the database include data on level, credits, review date, access to qualification including through RPL, list of unit standard titles and respective credits, and brief description of the purpose of the qualification.</p> |

Snapshot on some national registers / databases in Africa

| Country | Register / database of qualifications | Qualifications included | Key features |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Mozambique | <p>National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications</p> <p>Managed and maintained by ANEP</p> | <p>164 qualifications registered, at levels 2 to 5.</p> <p>Published on the online Catalogue (21/03/2022): 149.</p> <p>19 independent modules</p> | <p>The digital online Catalogue is accessible as a repository of qualification files in PDF format.</p> <p>All qualifications are structured following a standardised format, which includes: general information, units of general competencies, units of vocational competencies, training modules (general and vocational), training programme (modules) and training module in the real context of work.</p> <p>The qualifications in the Catalogue are distributed in 16 professional families. Moreover the Catalogue also includes 19 independent modules.</p> |
| South Africa | <p>SAQA: register of qualifications and part-qualifications</p> <p>Managed and maintained by SAQA</p> | <p>Large number of qualifications of all levels (over 22,000)</p> | <p>SAQA online register contains searchable databases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All qualifications and unit standards (no matter their status) 2. Registered qualifications and unit standards (NQF qualifications) 3. Qualifications and unit standards that have passed their registration end date 4. Professional Bodies and Professional Designations |

Snapshot on some national registers / databases in Africa

| Country | Register / database of qualifications | Qualifications included | Key features |
|------------|--|---|---|
| Cape Verde | National Catalogue of Qualifications UC-SNQ | 64 full qualifications (levels 2 to 5 of the NQF) | <p>The digital online Catalogue is accessible as a repository of PDFs.</p> <p>All qualifications are structured based on a standardised format, including: professional profile, units of competence (learning outcomes and assessment criteria), training programme (modules) and training module in the real context of work.</p> <p>The qualifications in the Catalogue are distributed in 15 professional families. The Catalogue includes also a new Transversal Training Module of 3 units (entrepreneurial competences).</p> |
| Kenya | New : National Qualifications Information Management System (NAQIMS) Register of qualifications KNQA | 1,262 registered qualifications | <p>NAQMIS is a system for automating processes, based on Blockchain technology to register: a) qualifications awarding institutions (QAIs), b) qualifications and c) learners' records.</p> <p>Managed and maintained by KNQA</p> |

POLL 1: Snapshot on some national registers / databases in Africa

1. What are the benefits of accessible online registers of qualifications? (Open-ended)
2. State-of-play of database(s) / register(s) of qualifications in your country: please tick all that applies.
 - a) Our database includes all qualifications of all levels and types delivered in the country
 - b) Our database includes only quality-assured qualifications with NQF levels
 - c) We have different databases of qualifications for different sub-sectors (VET / Higher education / others)
 - d) We are developing new database(s) of qualifications
 - e) Information from the qualifications databases is accessible online for the wider public
 - f) The qualifications database(s) is / are not operational

Snapshot on some national registers / databases in Africa

- From the snapshot of the national registers/databases of countries selected in Africa, we can learn the following:
 1. The NQF qualifications registers and databases are differently structured.
 2. Information on the format and content of qualifications is digitalised – but not in all countries
 3. Information is accessible and searchable online for users
 4. The information on qualifications is useful for the following:
 - Comparison of qualifications between countries – NQF level, type of qualification, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, volume of learning
 - Transparency on the learning outcomes behind the qualifications
 - Transparency on the quality assurance behind the qualifications' development and approval
 - Support end-users - for career orientation and progression, and choice of study pathways
 - For mobility of learners and workers
 - For recognition of qualifications

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ACQF Qualifications Platform (in planning, first ideas)

Technical design and main specifications

- Strategic tool that will be used to generate and access vital information and statistics about most aspects of recognised qualifications in Africa.
- Poised to become a key continental source of information for human resource and skills development in policy, infrastructure and planning.
- Will provide availability of information for decision making in the recognition of qualifications and aid in the enhancement of quality of qualifications
- As a transparency instrument for users' information and guidance, it will serve and support the national qualifications authorities and the awarding bodies, and the continent as a whole.
- Complements, supports, and can interoperate with national and regional databases, and does not aim at replacing or changing existing national qualifications databases.

ACQF Database Scope/Uses

Use by National qualifications frameworks or systems

- Information sharing on national qualifications referenced to the ACQF
- Countries may adopt the technology and infrastructure provided by the ACQF Platform as a free service

International qualifications

- qualifications are awarded by a legally established international body (association, professional sector) and used in more than one country
- Inclusion in the ACQF database contributes to transparency and trust

Common continental qualifications profiles

- qualifications profiles related to priorities and sectors of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other AU policies
- common profiles are free for countries to use to design national courses and programmes

Qualifications from sectoral organisations and other institutions awarding micro-credentials

- the awarding institution should first register the qualification in the Member State where they intend to award the qualification

ACQF Main features of the database of qualifications

Accessibility – should be easily accessible from any part of the world at any time and allow for multi-user data access.

Usability – should be searchable and user-friendly.

Stability – should be designed in such a manner as to prevent the loss of data due to among other things system crashes.

Interoperability – the database should allow for communication and interchange of information with other national and regional databases.

Dependability – the database should produce data that is reliable, consistent and accurate.

Flexibility – the database should allow for modifications as and when need arises.

Security – should protect against unauthorised access to data.

Recoverability – the database should allow for recovery and restoration of lost or manipulated data.

Minimum fields of information on qualifications for electronic publication in digital ACQF qualifications database (required)

- Title of qualification
- Field of education and training
- Country code
- Type of qualification
- Level (NQF, RQF, ACQF)
- Awarding body or competent authority
- Description of the qualification: short statements on the learning outcomes
- Credit points/notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes
- Expiry date
- Link to qualifications database (if available).

Minimum fields of information on qualifications for electronic publication in digital ACQF qualifications database (optional)

- Unique qualification code
- External quality assurance/regulatory body
- Ways to acquire the qualification
- Relationship to occupations or occupational classification
- Other fields.

POLL 2: Elements of the ACQF Database of Qualifications

Reflect on the database of qualifications from your country.

1. Which of the required minimum fields of information of the ACQF Database of qualification are not part of your country's database of qualifications?

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Use of ACQF levels in qualification
registers and databases

Use of ACQF Levels in National Registers

- Competent authorities will reference their NQFs or qualifications to the ACQF level descriptors as recommended under Guideline 3 of the ACQF
- Competent authorities who have referenced their NQFs or qualifications to the ACQF level descriptors can indicate the ACQF level (according to the results of referencing) on all newly issued qualifications and qualifications registered on their national registers/databases.

ACQF instruments for information sharing

- ACQF's main instruments for information-sharing are the website and the Qualifications database.
- African Union member states are encouraged to use the ACQF Qualifications database to publish information on their NQF and their national qualifications.
- ACQF supports information-sharing on NQFs in Africa to facilitate recognition and portability of qualifications.

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Conclusion

- Registration of qualifications is very important as it enhances the quality and regulation of qualifications.
- ACQF Qualifications Platform will be a collection of national quality assured and registered qualifications; and other standards, qualifications and credentials - relevant for continental integration.
- The placement of qualifications on the ACQF database will promote transparency, comparability, mobility and portability of qualifications thereby creating opportunities for access to learning, transfer of learning and progression in learning among member state nationals. Countries can cooperate on a voluntary basis with ACQF Qualifications Platform.
- The ACQF database of qualifications is a strategic tool that will be used to generate and access vital information and statistics about qualifications in Africa.
- Recognition and portability of qualifications is well supported where there is adequate information sharing on the qualifications by Member States.