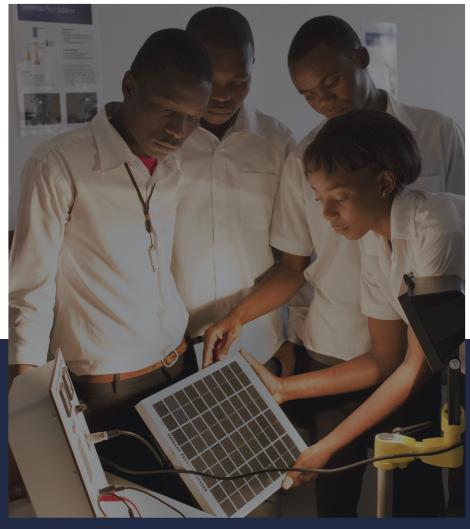
ACQF



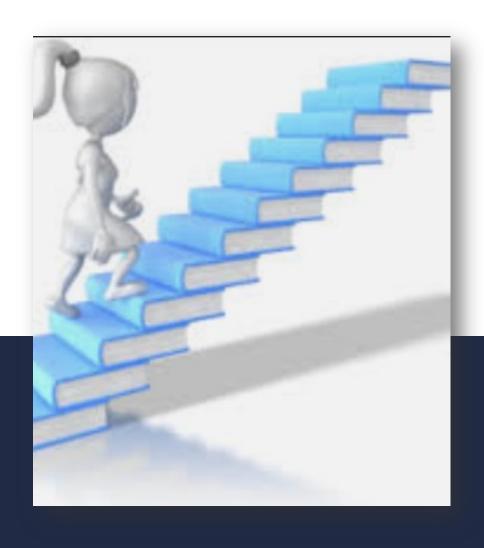


DAY 5 - SESSIONS 20, 21, 22: ACQF at work - level descriptors, referencing and communication

Facilitator: Coleen Jaftha

- Learning outcomes based <u>level descriptors</u> encourage the use and application of learning outcomes approaches across the continent
- Referencing of national qualifications frameworks and systems to the ACQF is the core function of the ACQF as a meta qualifications framework for the African continent
- An NQF/ ACQF is a system comprising the NQF/ ACQF concept, qualifications database, stakeholders, quality assurance, recognition of prior learning, Monitoring, evaluation, research & user outreach & communication







DAY 5 - SESSION 20 ACQF level descriptors TM2

ACQF level descriptors

Learning outcomes based <u>level descriptors</u> encourage the use and application of learning outcomes approaches across the continent

Key elements of ACQF level descriptors

Key features of an RQF

VISION FOR THE ACQF



▶ Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications from all sub-sectors and levels of education and training and support people's lifelong learning outcomes;



► Facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates, and mobility of learners and workers;



Work in complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks, and support the creation of a common African education space;



Promote cooperation and alignment between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

Principles

- Inclusive: all types of learning and levels of qualifications (all subsystems of education and training);
- Open: learners' & stakeholders' needs, policy learning & lessons from other QFs
- Innovation-ready: transformation of skills and learning: digitalisation, greening & beyond Covid-19 reconstruction.



Functions:

 Overarching framework against which national and regional frameworks and level descriptors can be calibrated

<u>Referencing</u> qualifications framework:

- NQF-RQF
- comparison with other international frameworks

<u>Hub, catalyst</u> for development of NQFs and their instruments



PURPOSE and SCOPE and underpinning

PRINCIPLES



Purpose, principles and scope influence the decision around number of levels and domains of level descriptors



A set of level descriptors

Specified linkages to quality assurance criteria or arrangements

Governance arrangements





Definitions

Level descriptor:

A <u>statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of a Qualifications</u>

<u>Framework</u> that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Qualification:

- Means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards
- A registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the NQF and certified and awarded by a recognised body.



Definitions contd.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF):

- 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.
- It is a way of structuring existing and new qualifications, which are defined by learning outcomes clear statements of what the learner must know or be able to do, whether learned in a classroom, on the job, or less formally. The qualifications framework indicates the comparability of different qualifications and line of progression (how one can progress) from one level to another, within and across occupations or industrial sectors (and even across vocational and academic fields if the NQF is designed to include both vocational and academic qualifications in a single framework).

Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF):

A broad structure of levels of learning outcomes that is agreed by countries in a defined and agreed geographical location. A means of enabling one national framework of qualifications to relate to another and, subsequently, for a qualification in one country to be compared to a qualification from another country.



Level descriptors of NQFs and RQFs: Similarities

Level descriptors:

- Are at the heart of development of qualifications frameworks
- Are formulated as general learning outcomes statements and signal transparency
- Are suited to a particular purpose
- Are an agreed central reference point and multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue
- Based on logic along vertical and horizontal dimensions

The basis is the same (NQFs and RQFs)



Level descriptors of NQFs and ACQF: Differences

NQF level descriptors

National level descriptors capture the complexities of the national system

 Much more detailed, describe the complexity of learning in qualifications/ qualification types and are often linked to features of existing qualifications.

As a benchmark for levels of learning achievement recognised at national level they indicate the allocation of a national qualification to an NQF level.

The positioning of two or more qualifications on the same NQF level indicates that the qualifications are broadly comparable in terms of generic complexity at that level of the NQF, regardless of where or how the qualification was obtained.

ACQF meta-descriptors

ACQF meta-descriptors signify the levels of learning complexity at a continental level

 will not capture the same complexities that are evident in national level descriptors

ACQF meta-descriptors serve complementary purposes:

- a basis for referencing levels of NQFs or systems to the ACQF
- orientation for countries/ regions in developing qualifications frameworks or systems
- orientation towards common minimum benchmarks for outcomes of learning on the continent

ACQF descriptors: underpinning principles



Underpinning principles for drafting ACQF LDs

Components of transparency:

- Learning outcomes approach
- Validation of learning from non-formal and informal contexts
- Placement of qualifications in NQF levels and registers
- Quality assurance of qualifications and NQFs
- Stakeholder participation and endorsement



Learning outcomes orientation



- ACQF level descriptors encourage a learning outcomes orientation, and facilitate lifelong learning and the recognition of learning outcomes from all contexts (formal, non-formal and informal).
- The ACQF learning outcomes-based level descriptors is an independent reference point, fit-for-purpose and include all forms of learning outcomes, irrespective of the learning context or institutional context.
- The learning outcomes of the ACQF level descriptors will be coherent and aligned across all levels and all domains of learning.



Underpinning principles for drafting ACQF LDs contd.

Future-orientation and innovation-readiness



A future-oriented ACQF acknowledges new trends in qualifications and areas of learning and attempts to encourage resilience, active learning, critical thinking, creativity, cognitive flexibility, and emotional intelligence.

• need to reflect an optimistic vision of the future of the African economy and must not only encourage the skills needed to rebuild the present but also leverage the future skills that will advance innovation (green, digital, social)

Although the ACQF level descriptors will respect national sovereignty and will not require changes to NQFs/NQSs, the level descriptors include future-oriented aspects that the ACQF wishes to encourage in the NQFs/ NQSs of its member countries.

Generic scope:



The ACQF needs to have the right balance between the wider generic scope of its level descriptors and the future-orientation agency it proposes.

- generic in scope to accommodate all types of learning, must be understood as broad statements of outcomes of learning complexity with no direct relationship to qualifications/ qualification types
- will not capture the complexities of an NQF/NQS and will not be sector-specific nor will they exclude specific learner groups through the use of language or implied contexts
- deliberately use general language and are neutral/content free, although they will be explicit in defining domains and sub-domains.



Underpinning principles for drafting ACQF LDs contd.

Developmental and cumulative:

Each successive level implies a higher level of complexity of learning:

- Adequate distinction is made between descriptors of lower and higher levels
- Repetition is avoided, i.e. each level build on the lower levels and encompass all previous levels
- Vertically and horizontally consistent



Conceptual and technical clarity and consistency:

- Each domain and sub-domain is conceptually determined with clear definitions
- As simple, brief and general as possible to facilitate clarity of the concept of the level
- Only positive, clear, specific statements are made
- Jargon-free, non-technical language/ transparent for the non-expert reader
- Concrete and definite in nature and avoid the use of words such as narrow and good, or cross references such as narrower, broader or appropriate





Development and design of ACQF descriptors



Development of ACQF level descriptors

Reference to global knowledge and practice related to level descriptors in qualifications frameworks (national, regional)

Reference to the African context

- Stocktaking and overview of level descriptors and domains of learning in existing NQFs and RQFs in Africa. <u>Outputs: ACQF Feasibility Study</u> (2021), <u>ACQF Thematic Brief 3.1: level descriptors</u> (2020).
- Special survey on NQFs, level descriptors, and learning outcomes, carried out in August 2021. The findings of the survey informed the proposed domains of learning of ACQF level descriptors.

Methodological Guidance: developed and published the Orientation Note on Regional Qualifications Frameworks (2021).

Practical method for conceptualisation, drafting, review of the ACQF level descriptors:

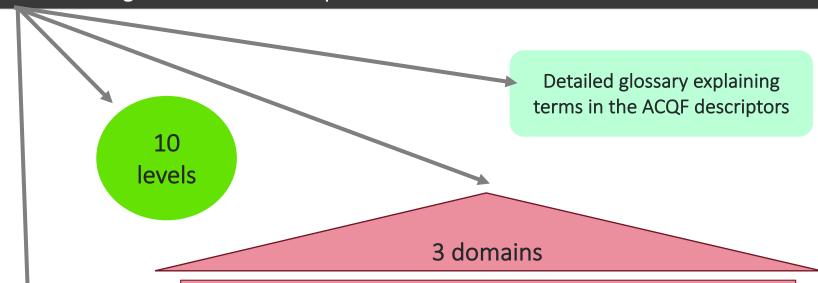
- Expert team: lead author and four contributors and reviewers
- Systematic process, based on:
 - Team meetings
 - Progressive matrix, encapsulating all versions, specific glossary, comments
 - Advanced draft of the grid of ACQF level descriptors was presented and discussed at a wider internal meeting with all experts
 - Final draft of the level descriptors was incorporated in the dedicated ACQF Guideline Two and presented for comments to the ACQF advisory group meeting, on 13 January, 2022. The guideline was shared with the advisory group four weeks before the meeting. All documents for review and debate by the advisory group are accessible at the ACQF intranet
 - The advisory group was invited to provide more substantive comments on all ACQF guidelines presented at the meeting held on 13 January, 2022. A period of four weeks was given for this consultation process, administered through a survey. The comments received were incorporated in the draft guidelines. The proposed draft level descriptors did not receive objections or requests of major modifications.



Overall design: ACQF level descriptors

The ACQF descriptors:

- are regional, generic, broad statements of learning outcomes complexity that can accommodate and value all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal)
- can be applied across all African Union countries and all education and training sectors



Underpinning principles of ACQF LDs



learning outcomes orientation



transparency



Future orientation



eneric in scope



Developmental and cumulative



Conceptual and technical clarity

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication

"Knowledge" includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles and theories in various areas

"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.

"Autonomy and responsibility" refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility



Links between qualifications levels and ACQF meta-descriptors (TM3)

Four criteria: Interplay between ACQF-NQF/NQS

ACQF Criterion 1: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the NQF or NQS and the level descriptors of the ACQF.

ACQF Criterion 2: The NQF or NQS are based on **learning** outcomes principles and related to arrangements for RPL (incl non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to <u>credit</u> systems.

ACQF 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.

ACQF Criterion 4: The national quality assurance (QA) system for education and training refers to the NQF or NQS and is consistent with the principles of QA of the

ACQF.



POLL 1



ACQF descriptors and horizontal logic



ACQF Level descriptors 1-5

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and Responsibility
<u>Level 1:</u> The learning outcomes	<u>Simple</u> knowledge, literacy,	Simple communication, cognitive and practical	Highly structured, repetitive contexts under
related to formal, non-formal, and	and numeracy	skills required to follow simple instructions,	close supervision and guidance taking minimal
informal learning at this level		and use simple, <u>repetitive</u> solutions to address	responsibility for self
include:		simple problems	
<u>Level 2:</u> The learning outcomes	<u>Basic</u> knowledge	Basic communication, cognitive and practical	<u>Structured</u> contexts under limited supervision
related to formal, non-formal and	incorporating comprehension	skills required to use <u>concrete</u> information,	and guidance taking limited responsibility for
informal learning at this level	and recall of factual and	ideas and known solutions to address straight-	self and group outcomes
include:	operational knowledge in	<u>forward</u> problems	
	some areas		
<u>Level 3:</u> The learning outcomes	Factual and operational	A <u>range</u> of communication, cognitive, practical	<u>Predictable</u> contexts under <u>routine</u> supervision
related to formal, non-formal, and	knowledge incorporating	and technical skills required to <u>interpret</u> and	and guidance, with <u>initiative</u> for self-
informal learning at this level	some theoretical aspects in	communicate ideas and detailed information,	responsibility and some responsibility for
include:	some areas	and <u>select and use</u> known solutions to address	group outcomes
		<u>familiar</u> problems	
<u>Level 4:</u> The learning outcomes	Mainly factual, operational or	Well-developed technical skills required to	Varied (predictable and unpredictable)
related to formal, non-formal and	technical knowledge	analyse information and new ideas, <u>make</u>	contexts with adaptability and initiative for
informal learning at this level	incorporating theoretical	informed judgements, communicate outcomes	self-direction under general guidance, taking
include:	aspects in one or more areas	and apply <u>varied</u> solutions to varied (familiar	full responsibility for self, some planning and
		and unfamiliar) problems	responsibility for group outcomes and initiative
			for responsibility for others
<u>Level 5:</u> The learning outcomes	Mainly technical or	A <u>range</u> of well-developed technical skills, <u>with</u>	<u>Unpredictable</u> contexts with full autonomy
related to formal, non-formal, and	theoretical knowledge with	some specialisation, required to analyse	and full responsibility for self and group
informal learning at this level	substantial depth in a	information and new ideas, construct and	outcomes, and some responsibility for others
include:	discipline/area	communicate a <u>coherent argument</u> , and apply	
		a <u>range of solutions</u> , often in combination, to	
		address <u>unfamilia</u> r problems	

To assist the comparison of NQF descriptors with ACQF descriptors:

- It will help to identify key words in each level
- This also assists with checks for horizontal coherence



ACQF Level descriptors 6 -10

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and Responsibility
<u>Level 6:</u> The learning outcomes	Highly technical or theoretical	Highly technical and specialised skills required to	Highly variable contexts with well-
related to formal, non-formal	knowledge, with specialisation in	collate, analyse, synthesise, and communicate a	developed autonomy and
and informal learning at this	a discipline/area	range of information and new ideas, and	responsibility for self and group
level include:		<u>formulate or adapt</u> different solutions to address	outcomes and responsibility for
		complex and sometimes abstract problems	resources and processes
<u>Level 7:</u> The learning outcomes	Advanced analytical and/or	Advanced, specialised skills required to	Complex and variable contexts
related to formal, non-formal	<u>specialised</u> knowledge of a	demonstrate advanced analysis and initiative for	with advanced autonomy and
and informal learning at this	discipline/area	new insights and ideas in research and/or	responsibility
level include:		innovation, and formulate advanced solutions to	
		address complex and abstract problems	
<u>Level 8:</u> The learning outcomes	Highly advanced, complex	Highly advanced, complex skills required to	Highly complex contexts with
related to formal, non-formal	knowledge of a discipline/area	demonstrate highly advanced analysis,	some specialisation demonstrating
and informal learning at this		communicate new insights and ideas in research	highly advanced autonomy and
level include:		and/or innovation, and formulate highly	responsibility
		advanced solutions to address highly complex	
		and abstract problems	
<u>Level 9</u> : The learning outcomes	<u>Mastery</u> of a complex body of	Skills mastery required to demonstrate originality	Highly specialised contexts
related to formal, non-formal	knowledge at the forefront of a	and new insights in research and/or innovation	demonstrating mastery in
and informal learning at this	discipline/area	and formulate and test theories to show mastery	autonomy and responsibility
level include:		of highly complex, abstract problems	
<u>Level 10:</u> The learning outcomes	Substantial and original	Expert skills and techniques that demonstrate	Emergent new contexts
related to formal, non-formal,	knowledge contribution that	innovation, interpretation and creation of new	demonstrating expertise in
and informal learning at this	extends the forefront of a	ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate,	management of new ideas
level include:	discipline/area and/or <u>at the</u>	and test theories to address emergent, new, and	
	<u>interface</u> between	critical problems	
DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACOE I	disciplines/areas		

To assist the comparison of NQF descriptors with ACQF descriptors:

- It will help to identify key words in each level
- This also assists with checks for horizontal coherence

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication



Countries may add more detail, more specific elements

Many NQFs have very concise elaborations of the level descriptors



ACQF descriptors (horizontal logic and glossary)Example (simple, L1)

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and Responsibility
Level 1: The learning outcomes	<u>Simple</u> knowledge,	Simple communication, cognitive and	Highly structured, repetitive contexts
related to formal, non-formal,	literacy, and numeracy	practical skills required to follow simple	under <u>close</u> supervision and guidance
and informal learning at this		instructions, and use simple, repetitive	taking minimal responsibility for self
level include:		solutions to address simple problems	
Level 2: The learning outcomes	Basic knowledge	Basic communication, cognitive and practical	Structured contexts under limited
related to formal, non-formal	incorporating	skills required to use concrete information,	supervision and guidance taking
and informal learning at this	comprehension and recall	ideas and known solutions to address	<u>limited</u> responsibility for self and
level include:	of factual and operational	straight-forward_problems	group outcomes
	knowledge in some areas		

Meta-descriptor glossary

	Term	In the ACQF level descriptors the term:	Progression in	Levels
			complexity	
1	Simple	Means uncomplicated and easy to understand.	Simple to	L1
		It can be used without experience and is found	straightforward/	
		at the lowest level of complexity	basic	



ACQF descriptors (horizontal logic and glossary)Example (mastery, L9)

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and Responsibility
<u>Level 9</u> : The learning	Mastery of a complex body of	Skills mastery required to demonstrate	Highly specialised contexts
outcomes related to	knowledge at the forefront of	originality and new insights in research	demonstrating mastery in
formal, non-formal and	a discipline/area	and/or innovation and formulate and test	autonomy and responsibility
informal learning at this		theories to show mastery of highly	
level include:		complex, abstract problems	
Level 10: The learning	Substantial and original	Expert skills and techniques that	Emergent new contexts
outcomes related to	knowledge contribution that	demonstrate innovation, interpretation	demonstrating expertise in
formal, non-formal, and	extends the forefront of a	and creation of new ideas required to	management of new ideas
informal learning at this	discipline/area and/or at the	critically evaluate, formulate, and test	
level include:	<u>interface</u> between	theories to address emergent, new, and	
	disciplines/areas	critical problems	

Meta-descriptor glossary

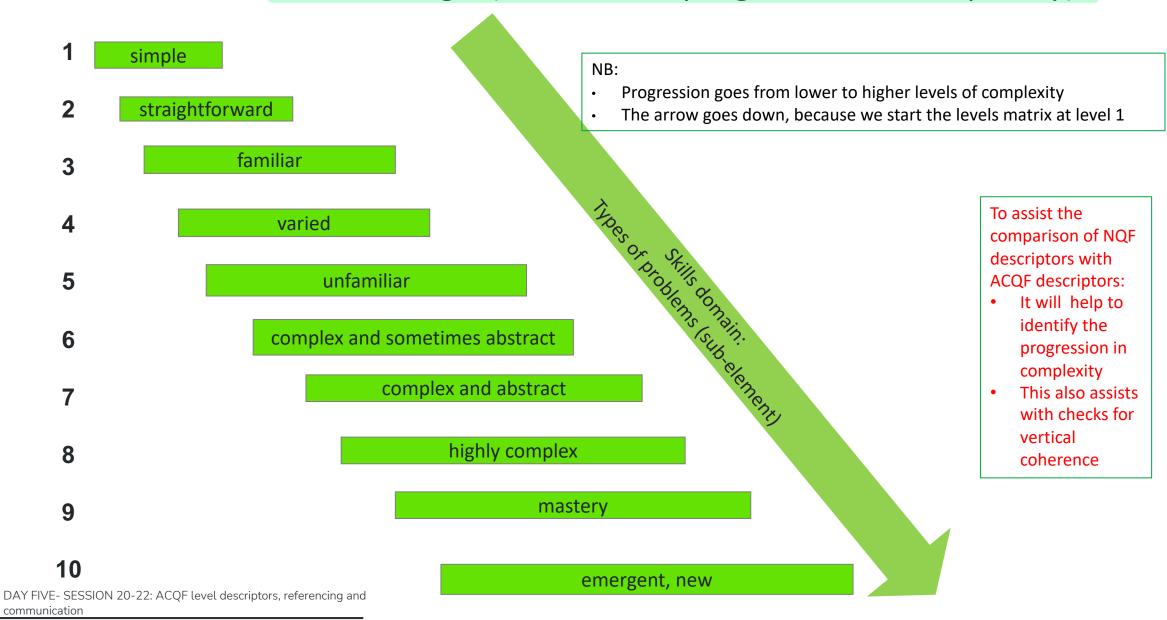
Term	In the ACQF level descriptors the term:	Progression in complexity	Levels
Mastery	Means superiority in knowledge and skills	Mastery to	L9
		expertise	

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication

ACQF descriptors-Vertical logic



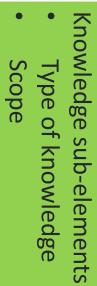
Vertical logic (cumulative, progression in complexity)





informal learning at these levels include: The learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and

붓		Knowledge domain		
	Level	Type of Knowledge	Scope	
earning outcomes	Level 1	Simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy		
ק ס	Level 2	Basic knowledge incorporating comprehension	In some areas	
		and recall of factual and operational knowledge		
<u> </u>	Level 3	Factual and operational knowledge	In some areas	
		incorporating some theoretical aspects		
related	Level 4	Mainly factual, operational or technical	In one or more areas	
ב ב		knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects		
5	Level 5	Mainly technical or theoretical knowledge with	In a discipline/ area	
to formal		substantial depth		
<u>บ</u>	Level 6	Highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with	In a discipline/ area	
5		specialisation		
non-formal	Level 7	Advanced analytical, and/ or specialised	Of a discipline/ area	
		knowledge		
	Level 8	Highly advanced, complex knowledge	Of a discipline/ area	
ם ממ	Level 9	Mastery of a complex body of knowledge	At the forefront of a discipline/ area	
	Level 10	Substantial and original knowledge contribution	That extends the forefront of a discipline/ area	
			and/ or at the interface between disciplines/	
			areas	



		Skills domain		
The Level	Type of skills	Response to information	Addressing types of problems	
Level 1	Simple communication,	Follow simple instructions	Use simple repetitive solutions to address	
ing	cognitive and practical skills		simple problems	
Level 2	Basic communication,	Use concrete information and ideas	Use known solutions to address	
com	cognitive, and practical skills		straightforward problems	
Level 1 Level 2 Level 3 Level 3 Level 4 Level 5 Level 6 Level 7 Level 8 Level 9 Level 10	A range of communication,	Interpret and communicate ideas and	Select and use known solutions to address	
rela	cognitive, practical and	detailed information	familiar problems	
ıted	technical skills			
E Level 4	Well-developed technical skills	Analyse information and ideas, make	Apply varied solutions to address varied	
for		informed judgements and communicate	(familiar and unfamiliar) problems	
mal		outcomes		
Level 5	A range of well-developed	Analyse information and new ideas, and	Apply a range of solutions often in	
on-f	technical skills with some	construct and communicate coherent	combination to address unfamiliar problems	
orn	specialisation	arguments		
<u>a</u> Level 6	Highly technical and	Collate, analyse, synthesise, and	Formulate or adapt different solutions to	
anc	specialised skills	communicate a range of information	address complex and sometimes abstract	
<u> </u>		and new ideas	problems	
Level 7	Advanced skills	Demonstrate advanced analysis and	Formulate advanced solutions to address	
n <u>al</u>		initiative for new insights and ideas in	complex and abstract problems	
lea		research and/ or innovation		
Level 8	Highly advanced, complex skills	Demonstrate highly advanced analysis	Formulate highly advanced solutions to	
		and communicate new insights and	address highly complex and abstract	
# <u> </u>		ideas in research and/or innovation	problems	
Level 9	Mastery	Demonstrate originality and new	Formulate and test theories to show mastery	
e		insights in research and/or innovation	of highly complex, abstract problems	
Level 10	Expert skills and techniques	Demonstrate innovation, interpretation	Critically evaluate, formulate and test	
VI .		and creation of emergent and new	theories to address emergent, new and	
		ideas	critical problems	

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication

Skills sub-elements Addressing types of problems Response to information Type of skills

	Autonomy and responsibility domain				
Level	Context	Autonomy	Responsibility		
Level 1	Highly structured,	Close supervision and	Minimal responsibility for self		
	repetitive contexts	guidance			
Level 2	structured contexts	Limited supervision and	Limited responsibility for self and group outcomes		
		guidance			
Level 3	Predictable contexts	Routine supervision and	Initiative for self-responsibility and some		
		guidance and initiative for	responsibility for group outcomes		
		adaptability			
Level 4	Varied (predictable and	Adaptability and initiative for	Full self-responsibility, some planning and		
	unpredictable) contexts	self-direction under general	responsibility for group outcomes and initiative for		
		guidance	responsibility for others		
Level 5	Unpredictable contexts	Full autonomy	Full responsibility for self and group outcomes and		
			some responsibility for others		
Level 6	Highly variable contexts	Well-developed autonomy	Well-developed responsibility for self and group		
			outcomes; responsibility for resources and processes		
Level 7	Complex and variable	Advanced autonomy	Advanced		
	contexts				
Level 8	Highly complex contexts	Highly advanced autonomy	Highly advanced		
	with some specialisation				
Level 9	Highly specialised contexts	Mastery of autonomy	Mastery		
Level 10	Emergent, new contexts	Expertise	Expertise in management of new ideas		

ContextAutonor

Autonomy and responsibility sub-elements

Autonomy Responsibility

DAT FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF tevel descriptors, referencing and communication



Application of level descriptors



Easing application of level descriptors

Application of learning outcomes-based level descriptors can be challenging.

Understanding the role, concepts, vertical and horizontal logic of NQF level descriptors is fundamental, and should be a theme in every teacher training programme, in the curricula of pedagogical institutes and in relevant capacity development programmes promoted by ministries, NQF institutions, and curriculum development projects. Level descriptors are a fundamental link between the NQF and vast system of learning, teaching, and certification.

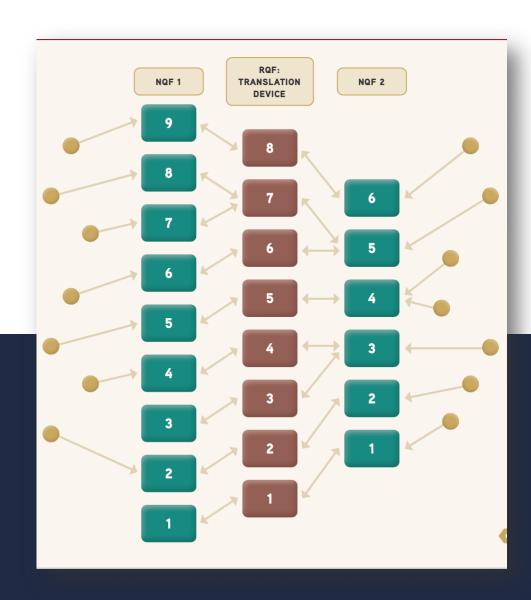
To ease use and application, these level descriptors should:

- Be detailed enough to capture the complexities of an NQF/ RQF
- Be general enough to accommodate different parts of the qualifications systems
- Be suitable for all contexts (not too academic, theoretical, and wordy)
- Explain the logic of the domains, sub-domains, and levels preferably with an accompanying glossary
- Be consistently applied in countries
- o Be made visible and accessible to users through training, capacity building, workshops, and information sessions
- Capture the balance between being prescriptive and being descriptive



POLL 2







DAY 5- SESSION 21:
Referencing to the ACQF
TM3

Referencing to ACQF

Referencing of national qualifications frameworks and systems to the ACQF is the core function of the ACQF as a meta qualifications framework for the African continent

Key elements of referencing to the ACQF



Referencing: ACQF activity

"By virtue of its objectives, principles and conceptualtechnical design, the ACQF will deliver on the following main areas:

> <u>These seven areas</u> are developed in the ACQF Feasibility Study presented to the ACQF Advisory Group meeting of 28 July 2021.

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication

1. Referencing
of national
qualifications
frameworks
and systems
to ACQF

2. Support recognition of prior learning (RPL

6. Networking and cooperation

and evaluation

improvement

5. Capacity
development
in the relevant
thematic areas

4.
Qualifications and development of qualifications profiles

3. ACQF
<u>Qualifications</u>
<u>Platform</u>
(database)



Referencing: Definition

Referencing to the ACQF:

- A process to compare national qualifications frameworks/ qualifications levels with those of the overarching qualifications framework (ACQF).
- Through a structured referencing process, based on agreed and common criteria and procedures, a national multistakeholder team of experts defines and establishes the relationship/link the NQF/NQS levels and quality assurance with those of the ACQF.
- The purpose of referencing to the ACQF is to contribute to clarity and mutual trust between national qualifications frameworks and systems, to comparability of qualifications of different countries, to transparency and information-sharing on qualifications frameworks and systems.



Referencing: what it is and what it is not

Referencing

- is a process of comparison and linking national qualifications frameworks to the ACQF and should be done through the national qualifications frameworks
- will be open to all countries with operational NQFs/ whose NQFs are at an advanced stage of development/approved
- is conceived, structured, and conducted as a gradual process that can take longer in certain countries than
 in others. Where countries are unable to meet all the referencing criteria, they can engage in a phased
 referencing
- <u>Is about supporting, encouraging, improving</u>

Referencing:

- is not a competitive process or ranking between countries
- is not an exam to pass or fail. It is a process of self-assessment, mutual learning, comparison and transparency



Role of ACQF governance structure

ACQF Governance Structure:

- At the continental level, the ACQF Governance Structure has an oversight responsibility for the referencing process.
- It has the mandate and technical capacity to provide guidance and support to national referencing processes, to promote a participative and efficient model of referencing, to support information-sharing with all African Union countries, to endorse the completed countries' referencing reports, and ensure their publication on the ACQF website.

The ACQF governance structure and Support Team will have the capacity to:

- encourage countries to initiate referencing,
- provide technical and methodological support to countries to support the ACQF and NQFs,
- advance referencing processes and
- endorse and publish referencing reports.



Referencing success

EQF: The actual reports on the referencing of NQFs to EQF can be accessed at Europass / EQF.

The main achievements of the EQF for transparency of qualifications and mutual trust between NQFs, as of February 2022 can be summarized as follows:

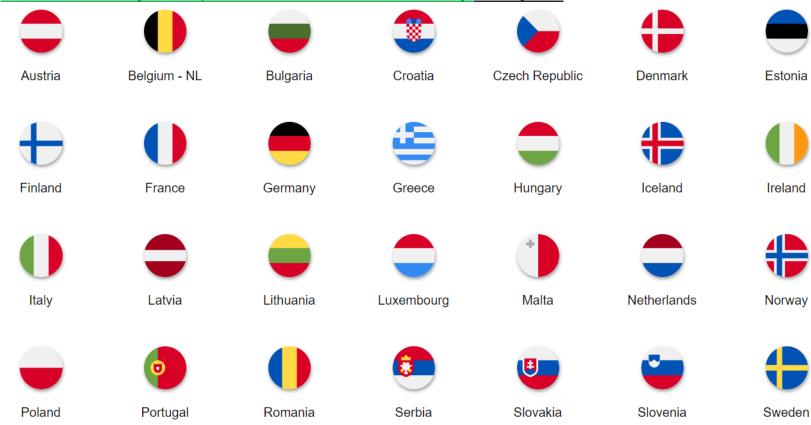
- EQF acted as a catalyst to develop NQFs. If in 2008 only three EQF countries had NQFs, 37 out of 38 involved countries have adopted and are implementing NQFs.
- The large majority of EQF countries have developed and launched digital qualifications databases, accessible online.
- 36 (out of 38) involved countries have completed the process of referencing to EQF, and five countries have presented a renewed updated referencing report.
- 33 (out of 38) countries are using EQF levels on their qualifications documents (certificates, diplomas, supplements) and 23 are using EQF levels on their national qualifications databases.
- Other transparency tools of the EQF include the <u>portal of referencing reports</u> (in which 31 reports are published), and the <u>digital tool</u> to compare NQFs across Europe (in which 29 NQF are included).
- More recent developments include the connection of national qualifications databases and registers with the EQF (Europass) Qualifications database register. A growing number of countries are linking their databases through this mechanism.

SADCQF: <u>South Africa</u> and <u>Seychelles</u> completed. Some countries in the final stages of the process

AQRF: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand completed



Find and Compare Qualifications Frameworks | Europass





https://europa.eu/europass/en/compare-qualifications

you can see how National
Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)
and systems relate to one
another.
You can select 2 countries from
the flag icon below to see what

With the help of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

You can select 2 countries from the flag icon below to see what types of qualifications are included in national frameworks referenced to the EQF. You can find up to 5 examples of qualifications for each national qualification type.

source

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication



Referencing criteria and governance



ACQF referencing criteria

Four criteria: Interplay between ACQF-NQF/NQS There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the NQF or NQS and the level descriptors of the ACQF.

ACQF Criterion 2:

The NQF or NQS are based on learning outcomes principles and related to arrangements for RPL (incl non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

ACQF 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.

ACQF Criterion 4:
The national quality
assurance (QA) system
for education and
training refers to the
NQF or NQS and is
consistent with the

principles of QA of the ACQF.



ACQF governance, follow up

- 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.
- The relevant national quality assurance bodies state their agreement with the referencing outcome and referencing report.

Governance, procedures and follow-up

- 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.
- Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report, which addresses all referencing criteria.
- The <u>referencing outcome is published</u> by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure, on the dedicated ACQF website.
- 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.



Member states are invited...







Member States are invited to address each of the referencing criteria from a national perspective and report the national position

The referencing outcome is consolidated in a validated single national referencing report which, according to agreed set of criteria, represents a statement of the comparable relationship between the NQF/ NQS & ACQF

The referencing report is shared with members of ACQF Governance
Structure for comments & remarks, & may require reviews & amendments before endorsement at ACQF governance level



POLL 3

Referencing report and referencing steps



Referencing report structure defined by country's referencing team. However, few (4 suggested) minimum elements:

Description of whole education and training system, including adult learning, literacy and basic skills, continuing training; pathways for learners; QA; main institutions & stakeholders & their roles in the system; main legislative acts, regulatory texts

2

The NQF: goals, principles, legal & regulatory acts, levels & descriptors, governance, registers / databases of qualifications
Status of implementation
Main challenges & plans for further development



3

Fundamental component of report:

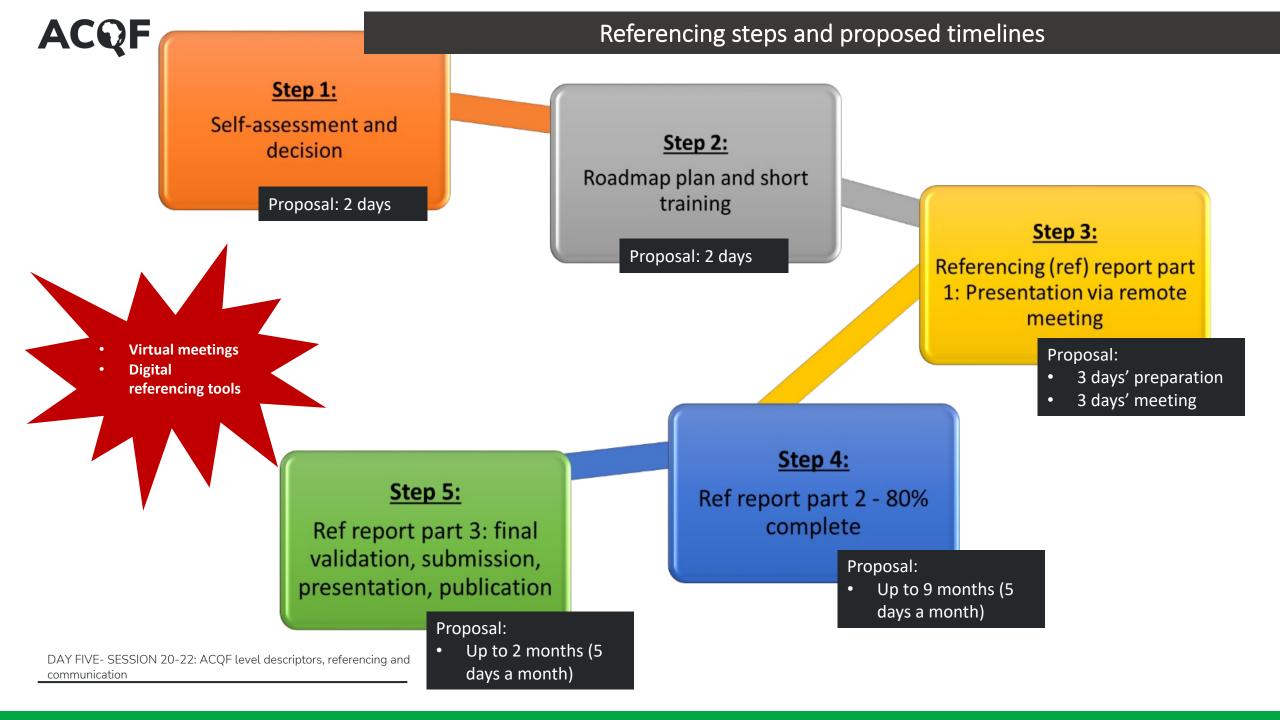
- chapter to demonstrate how NQF / NQS meets ACQF referencing criteria. Each criterion addressed separately
- Brief overview of referencing process, stakeholders' involvement, endorsement by national competence bodies, follow-up measures
- To avoid duplication and ensure coherence, should build (refer to) on chapters describing education & training & NQF
- Use of examples & references to sources contributes to robustness & credibility of argumentation in this chapter,
 & is strongly recommended



Sources:

 relevant legislative-regulatory framework, guidelines, standards, important databases / registers

To ensure report is easy to read & understand, it should be structured in comprehensive & integrated way, make use of cross-referencing between chapters, use examples, & attractive layout





Referencing capacity and arrangements



Principles

Referencing contributes to continuous improvement of the NQF / NQS and to mutual understanding between countries

ACQF referencing will be coordinated, managed and quality assured by the ACQF governance structure, acting in full respect for the following **principles**:

- The ACQF is a public policy and instrument
- The ACQF is holistic, integral and unified
- Referencing between NQFs and the ACQF is based on:
 - trust and integrity of the process,
 - o coordination, support and continuous improvement of the process and outcomes
 - establishing and maintaining the zone of trust by providing transparency to the process



Support to countries

The needed robustness of referencing should not be the result of overly complex and time-consuming activities, but of dialogue, peer review, analysis, self-assessment, and an evidence-based report.

Support will be given to countries to plan and carry out efficient and streamlined referencing processes

The country is the major beneficiary.

Referencing will be encouraged and advanced through:

- Regular referencing briefs from the ACQF governance structure
- Full use of various platforms and communication methods
- ACQF Website https://acqf.africa/
- Digital tool to support the referencing process
- Good documentation to ease the coordination and monitoring process
- Dissemination of ACQF Guidelines and training modules
- Established principles, templates and digital tools
- Training sessions (mostly virtual) in relevant languages
- Peer-sharing and Coaching
- Online communication and e-meetings

Referencing: challenges and solutions



Challenge

Learning outcomes approaches may not be adopted or well developed, or well understood

Some countries only have sectoral QFs and only these may have qualifications framework levels. How will referencing be undertaken here?

The referencing processes may span many years due to delays in national decision-making processes

Countries may not fully meet the requirements of all the referencing criteria, but are committed to undertake the preparation to referencing. How will they be encouraged?

Solution

The referencing process itself will strengthen learning outcomes approaches

A partial/ sectoral referencing is proposed for these countries

 The National ACQF Referencing Committee (team or task force) may propose ways to minimise delays in decision-making

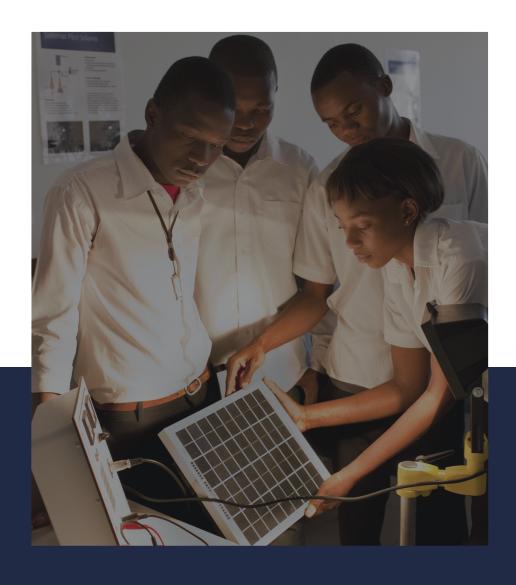
Main gaps and challenges will be identified by criterion. The ACQF Governance Structure will discuss and agree a roadmap for improvements with each AUMS, and a revised report with evidence on the improvements and responses to ACQF remarks will be submitted and discussed for validation. This process motivates the countries to plan and undertake the necessary improvements.

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication



POLL 4

ACQF





DAY FIVE- SESSION 22: ACQF/ NQF communication GL8

ACQF/ NQF communication

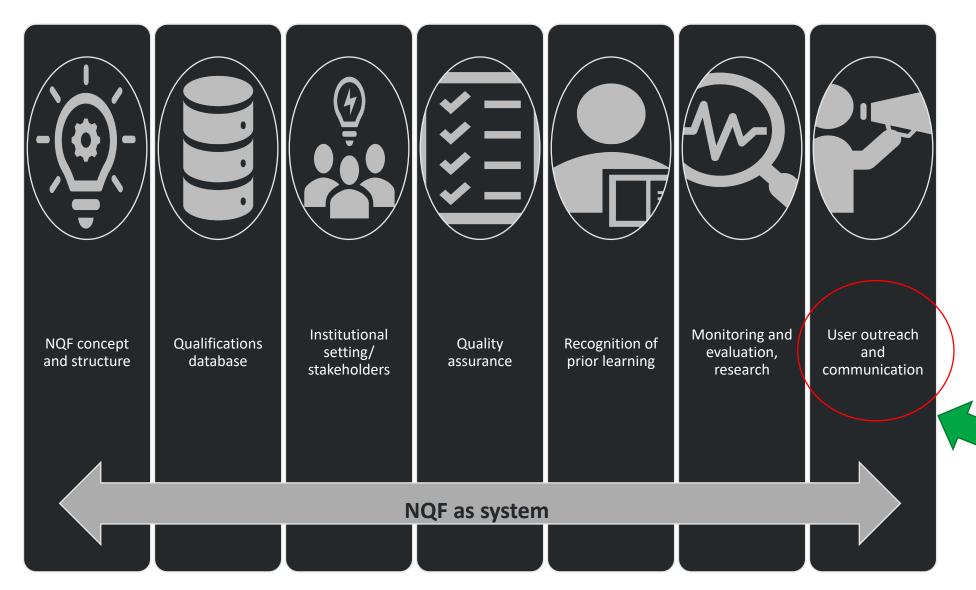
An NQF/ ACQF is a system comprising the NQF/ ACQF concept, qualifications database, stakeholders, quality assurance, recognition of prior learning, Monitoring, evaluation, research & user outreach & communication



Key elements of NQF/ACQF communication



Place of Communication and Outreach in NQF as a system





What is NQF/ ACQF communication?

- ➤ User outreach and communication is a key component of NQF/ ACQF development.
- > It is a means of ensuring that the message reaches the people.
- Communication <u>raises visibility and creates awareness</u>, but also ensures that useful <u>information is available to drive policy, decision-making and training</u>.
- It is also a way to harness the <u>available yet most suitable instruments</u> to engage stakeholders including policy makers and the general public.
- This relates to ways to manage knowledge, share information and drive outreach and advocacy.



NQF/ ACQF communication elements

Communication objectives

Purpose:

- Information/ awareness
- Offer support/ build relationships
- Feedback (send and receive)

Key messages

Network including stakeholder directories and distribution lists

- Target audiences:
 - ✓ Internal
 - ✓ External (local, international): audience type

Visual identity

Frequency

Principles

Channels and resources (people and costs):

- Website
- Social media (of all stakeholders)
- NQF helpline
- Videos and infographics
- Events
- email correspondence
- Publications
- Media coverage

Challenges

Monitoring and evaluation

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication



ACQF/ NQF communication guidelines and principles

Regular communication will help reduce uncertainty and engage stakeholders at appropriate times

All the interactions within the ACQF/ NQF will contribute towards its perceptions

Communication should be **positive**, seek to improve contact between all ACQF/ NQF stakeholders, and provide an opportunity for follow up or questions

Any standard templates, especially regarding writing styles and graphic identity must be made available to relevant users.

ACQF/ NQF Communication is sensitive to donor requirements concerning communication and other contractual obligations

Whether communication is internal or with the general public, it is important that the messages are **consistent**.

- Each communication fits the <u>technical level of the intended audience</u>, avoiding acronyms and definitions that may not be clear.
- ACQF/ NQF communication points should be <u>clear and easily recognisable</u> in terms of its purpose, audience, frequency, most direct way to state it, and action required from the recipient.
- Messages should be <u>succinct</u> and aim to clarify a few points rather than cover an unlimited range of issues. Messages should be people-centred. Where appropriate, a story-telling approach is used: one that emphasises the impact of the action on individual lives

DAY FIVE- SESSION 20-22: ACQF level descriptors, referencing and communication



ACQF/ NQF communication guidelines and principles contd.

ACQF/ NQF communication is undertaken, where appropriate, through partnerships with individuals and organisations that can have a potential **multiplier** effect, uses the local language(s) and considers the local context, is consistent with actions in terms of human and financial resources and responsibilities

- ACQF: The <u>ACQF website</u> is the standard ACQF platform, houses all relevant news, documents, events, video clips, presentations, updates, etc. All data on the website can be downloaded and is available for sharing. All communications should include the link to the ACQF website.
- NQFs: Similarly NQF communication is best housed within a website that can be easily accessed by the public. NQF communications should include a link to the NQF website.

The ACQF website is a very reliable source of information for NQFs

Examples: Communication for different stages of NQF development



No	Stage of NQF development	Countries	
1	NQF development to be started	Chad, Republic of Congo, São Tomé e Príncipe	
2	NQF in early thinking	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Togo	
3	NQF in development and consultation	Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Madagascar, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Somalia	
4	NQF legal act approved, implementation started	Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, <mark>Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique,</mark> Namibia, <mark>Nigeria</mark> , Rwanda, <mark>Senegal</mark> , Seychelles, <mark>Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda,</mark> Zambia, Zimbabwe	
5	NQF in advanced implementation and reviewed	Cape Verde, Mauritius, South Africa	



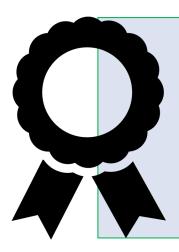


Stage 5: NQF in advanced implementation and reviewed					
Main goals of	Main tools and approaches	Stakeholders involved	Challenges		
communication					
 To monitor NQF implementation To assess the impact of the NQF To develop manuals and guidelines to assist NQF use To monitor quality assurance and RPL To monitor qualification databases and qualification profiles To review and strengthen the NQF 	 Seminars/ workshops/ conferences to gather feedback on NQF implementation tools and activities by ministries, authorities, employers, companies, students, etc Peer exchanges and PLWs Research on the impact and assessment of the NQF Webinars, radio broadcasts, news items and short videos on the successes and challenges of the NQF Information on the numbers and types of queries received on the NQF helpline and FAQs Websites and social media of different NQF actors 	 Relevant Ministries Sector councils/ authorities Stakeholders in charge of qualifications and databases relating to higher education, TVET and general education Quality assurance and RPL agencies/ authorities The public including learners and workers 	 Assessment of impact may require many resources, including financial resources which may hamper progress 		



Communicating on the value added by NQFs



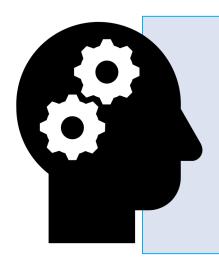


VALUE

Communicate the value of NQFs to attract stakeholders and get them involved.

What are the benefits?

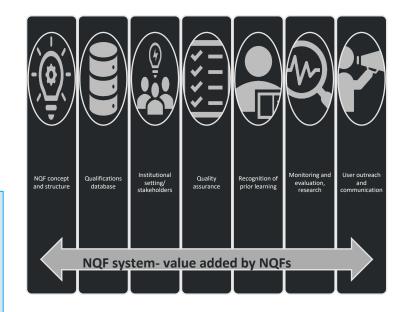
What is the change that NQFs bring?



COMMON LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING

To make NQFs clearer for all stakeholders and users.

Variety of tools explaining and unpacking what the NQF is about (all dimensions of the NQF) e.g. leaflets, short information booklets, etc





Some examples of outreach tools

Coleen

Europe: Comparison tool of EQF

Botswana: **BQA**

Zambia: ZAQA

South Africa: SAQA

Eduarda

"Interpretative Guide" of the Portuguese NQF: https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/312/QNQ GuiaInterpretativoQ

NQ 2014.pdf

Cape Verde: National Catalogue of Qualifications of Cape Verde

Malta: Malta Qualifications Database

Portugal: National Catalogue of Qualifications of Portugal



ACQF is...mutual learning, mutual trust

15 peer learning webinars

40 country cases presented

1 training
programme – 1
week, 105 stable
participants

10 Guidelines

10 training modules

21 training presentations on all NQF themes

13 country and regional mapping reports on NQFs

1 report review implementation SADCQF

1 mapping report on African school curriculum

3 reports support to countries in NQF development path

International conferences and experts' meetings



POLL 5