Session flow

- Presentation on introduction to CATS and linkages to LLL, NQF, RPL and micro-credentials: Mr. James Mwewa (ACQF-II).

- Country cases - policies and guidelines, application and new developments (20 minutes per presenter):

  1. Kenya – Mr. Stanley Maindi (Director-Technical Services, KNQA);
  2. Mauritius – Prof R. Mohee (Coordinator, HEC), online; and
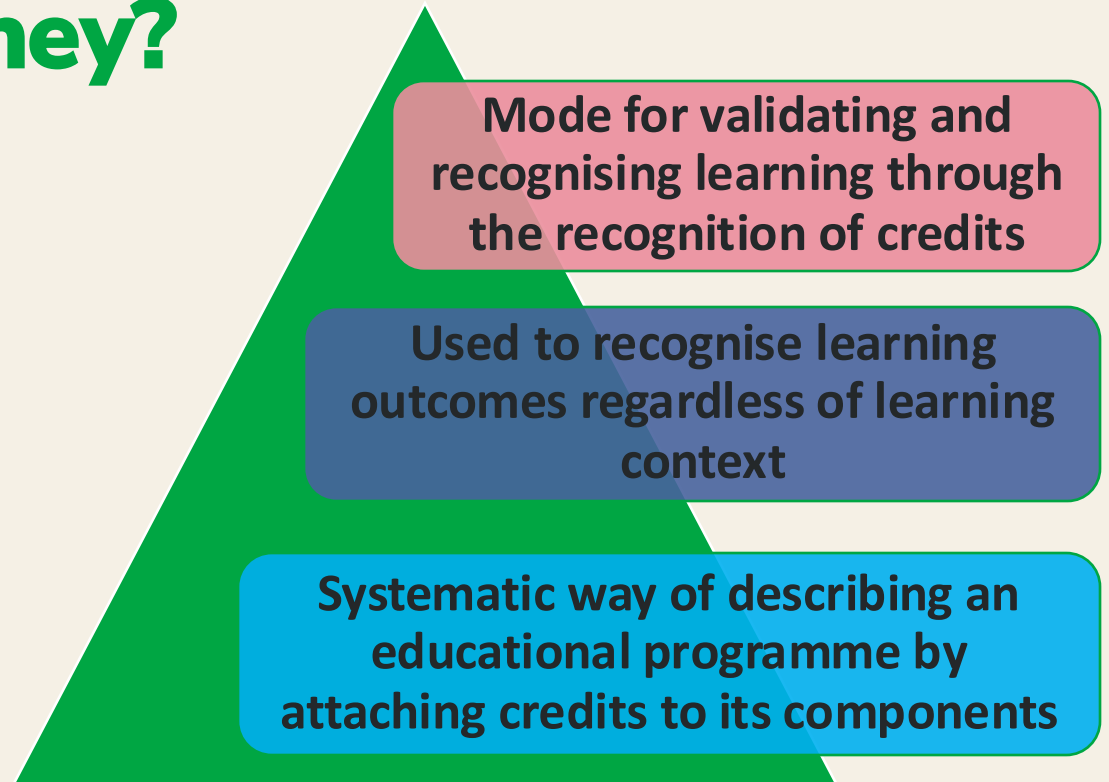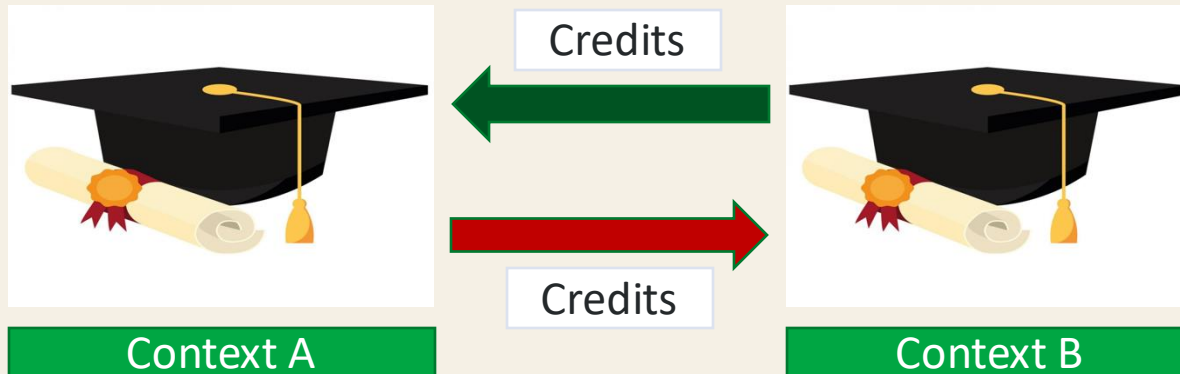 3. Seychelles – Ms. Fiona Ernesta (CEO, SQA).

Introduction

❑Indeed, national qualification frameworks are desirable game changers in these dynamic times.

❑However, it is imperative to note that there is more to QFs than just structures of qualification levels and descriptors.

❑For QFs to be real game changers, they need to be accompanied by implementable standards, policies and systems that make the understanding, classification, comparability and recognition of qualifications easier.

❑Easy understanding and comparability of qualifications promotes flexibility in learning pathways, articulation, mobility and progression within and across QFs.

❑An example of such a system is credit accumulation and transfer system (CATS).

CAT Systems – what are they?

'Credit systems' means a transparency tool for facilitating the recognition of credit(s). These systems can comprise, inter alia, equivalences, exemptions, units/modules that can be accumulated and transferred, the autonomy of providers who can individualise pathways, and the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

EQF Recommendation (2017)

Mode for validating and recognising learning through the recognition of credits

Used to recognise learning outcomes regardless of learning context

Systematic way of describing an educational programme by attaching credits to its components

Credits

Credits

Context A

Context B

Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems at a Glance

It is a form of currency used to exchange acquired learning outcomes for a qualification

Recalling some definitions related to CATS

SADC-CATS Guideline, 2021	South Africa, SAQA

SADC-CATS Guideline (2021)

- **Credit:** The amount of learning contained in a qualification or part-qualification whereby one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning. Credits are generally expressed in whole numbers.

- Credit accumulation: The totalling of relevant credits required to complete a qualification or a part-qualification.

- Credit transfer: The vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification on the same or a different level, usually between different programmes, departments or institutions. **Credit transfer is the key to successful study mobility**. Education and training institutions may make agreements which **guarantee automatic recognition and transfer of credits**.

- 'Credits' means the amount of learning contained in a qualification or part-qualification whereby one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning. (SAQA, 2021).

- 'Credit transfer' means the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification on the same or different level, usually between different programmes, departments or institutions. (SAQA, 2021)

- *Source of these definitions: SAQA. 2021. Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework. (as Amended, 2021).*
  https://www.saqa.org.za/sites/default/files/2021-04/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Credit%20Accumulation%20and%20Transfer%20within%20NQF-2021.pdf

Recalling some definitions related to CATS...cont'd

Credit (EQF Recommendation)

- 'Credit' means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes. (EQF, 2017).

- 'Credit transfer' means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context. (EQF, 2017)

- *Source of these definitions: EQF Recommendation 2017.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN#d1e32-20-1

Credit (ECTS)

- ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined **learning outcomes** and their **associated workload**.

- 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent, which normally comprises a number of educational components to which credits (on the basis of the learning outcomes and workload) are allocated. ECTS credits are generally expressed in whole numbers.

- *ECTS users' guide 2015*, Publications Office, 2017, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/87192

Types and modalities of credit transfer

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Types:

- **Block credit transfer:** entails reducing the total credit of the receiving programme by the amount of credits from the completed programme.

- **Course exemption:** An individual may be exempted from taking a specific course or module of a programme based on the learning achieved in previous studies. This is applicable to both completed and uncompleted programmes.

Modalities:

Vertical, horizontal and diagonal.

ACQF

Purpose of CATS

Example: to provide a common understanding and unified framework for implementation of credit accumulation and transfer across the education and training sector, as well as for the designing and quality assurance of learning programmes.

Some possible objectives of CATS

- Support access to education and training, and flexibility of learning pathways.

- Enhance lifelong learning and employability of learners.

- Enhance intra and inter institutional mobility of learners within and outside the country.

- Enhance the comparability of learning outcomes and qualifications.

- Promote equity and fairness in the country's education and training system.

- Contribute to the enhancement of quality and relevance of qualifications.

Beneficiaries of/ key stakeholders in CATS

1. Students/ Applicants
2. Policy Makers (Govt - Ministries)
3. NQF Bodies
4. Quality Assurance Agencies
5. Education and Training Providers
6. Professional Bodies
7. Industry/ Employers
8. Society

Some benefits of CATS

Facilitates easy mobility of learners and workers, also knowledge and skills transfer, global citizenship

Promotes lifelong learning through flexible learning pathways/ self-paced learning

NO! Duplication of learning

QUALITY QUALIFICATIONS

Some benefits of CATS...Cont'd

- Promotes skills development and enhances employability of citizens.

- Promotes adherence to set standards – quality qualifications.

- Helps institutions to create customised learning opportunities for learners and employers.

- Enhances the responsiveness of institutions, particularly to the learner market.

- Supports efforts towards the provision of equal learning and employment opportunities for all - equality.

- Ensures availability of skilled and competent workforce.

- Facilitates multi-skilling and up-skilling of employees.

- Leads to reduced cost of retraining.

Allocating credits to a learning programme using the notional hour approach

1. • All learning programme components are described based on expected job tasks or responsibilities

2. • Learning outcomes of each programme component are defined

3. • All learning activities are described

4. • Workload needed for a learner to complete the learning activities is estimated (in hours)

5. • Estimated workload is expressed in credits (by dividing the hours by 10)

Types of credit systems

System 1: SADC CATS (Widely used in Africa)

System 2: ECTS (Europe)

System 3: AUCS (America)

1 Credit = 10 notional hours, 120 Credits per Year

1 ECTS Credit = 25 – 30 hours, 60 ECTS Credits per Year

1 Semester Credit Hour = 15 – 16 Contact Hours, 30 Semester Credit Hours per Year

Linking CATS to the NQF and RPL

- NQFs and related policies (CATS and RPL) are used as quality assurance tools in education and training systems.

- The underlying fact about CATS, RPL and NQFs is that they all use **learning outcomes** to measure and recognise the amount of learning that has taken place after a learning process.

- CATS is also considered a form of RPL used in most jurisdictions to recognise learning outcomes acquired from formal learning settings.

- Both CATS and RPL are indispensable in the optimal operationalisation of NQFs.

- The three work together for the good of the education and training system – quality, relevance and equality as well as promoting transparency, comparability and recognition of qualifications.

- This ultimately facilitates portability of qualifications, access and mobility, and LLL.

Linking CATS to Lifelong Learning

- CATS allows for recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competencies) acquired from any learning context and mode.

- A growing number of learners now follow 'stand-alone' credit-bearing educational units or courses, without pursuing specific qualifications.

- Education institutions are faced with the need to satisfy diversified learner groups and provide opportunities for individual learning pathways and different modes of learning.

- Consequently, many are diversifying and offering credit-bearing educational components with innovative modes of learning and teaching for all, through new technologies and Open Educational Resources.

Linking CATS to Micro-credentials

- Using the learning outcomes approach, credits can be allocated to micro-credentials.

- Allocation of credits to micro-credentials facilitates the placement of the credentials on NQFs, and their recognition.

- Credit-bearing credentials can be stacked into bigger credentials or full qualifications.

- Thus supporting the modularisation approach to the development of programmes.

- Credit rating is another way of quality assuring micro-credentials.

THANK YOU!