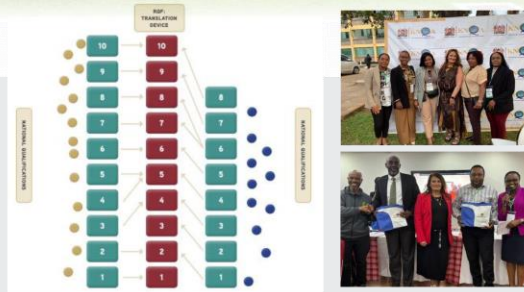


Welcome to the
**4th Forum of National
Qualifications Frameworks in Africa,
Micro-credentials for better opportunities**

Seychelles 13-14 November 2024



Micro-credentials: towards a common approach in Africa

Referencing to ACQF

Qualifications and Credentials Platform

Angola, Cabo Verde, RD Congo, Ghana, Guiné-Bissau, Eswatini,
Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone,
Somalia, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Session 2

Introduction

Micro-credentials in the context of ACQF-II

(10:00-10:20)

4th ACQF Forum, Nairobi

13-14 November 2024

Speaker: Eduarda Castel-Branco

01

**Introduction of
participants - Agenda**

ACQF **Welcome to the 4th ACQF Forum – Micro-credentials**

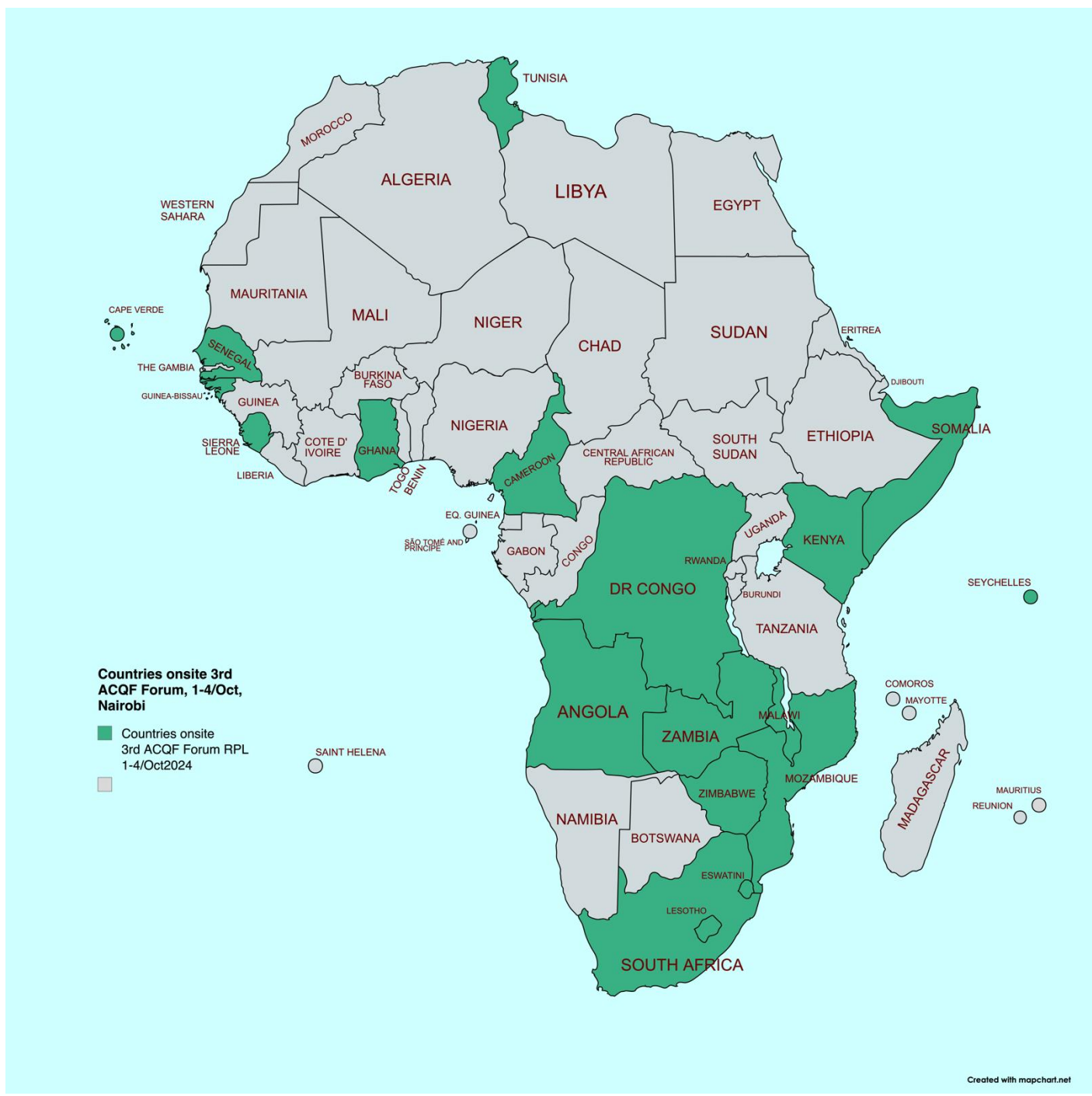
1. To all representatives of African countries and regions
2. To all national institutions and experts
3. To the experts on micro-credentials policies and research from Cedefop, OECD, New Zealand, PPMI

Angola, Cabo Verde, D R Congo, Eswatini, Ghana, Guiné-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe
SADC

Fiona Ernesta

Countries Participating onsite

Fiona Ernesta



The **10th** multi-country Workshop of ACQF-II – in 8 countries

2023

- Johannesburg, May
- **Addis, July (validation ACQF Policy document)**
- Nairobi, October
- Accra, November
- Maputo, December

2024

- Johannesburg, May
- Kinshasa, June
- Luanda, September
- Nairobi 2, October
- Seychelles, November

Paulo Costa

Project ACQF-II: Supporting implementation of African Continental Qualifications Framework

3rd ACQF Forum
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Practitioners

Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience (VAE)

Reconhecimento Validação e Certificação de Competências (RVCC)

📍 Hotel Fairview - Nairobi, Kenya

📅 1-4 October 2024



Angola, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, R.D. Congo, Eswatini, Ghana, Guiné-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

- In the context of PDCA approach (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and based on cooperation and mutual learning between all African countries, continue development and enhance support to RPL policies and implementation, with particular attention to the following aspects:
 1. **Common vision:** Develop common features, components and guidelines for harmonised RPL policies and practices trusted and understandable across countries.
 2. **RPL Guidelines:** use ACQF Guidelines and the new Handbook RPL for Practitioners as a reference for national level policies and practices.
 3. **RPL Implementation:** building on lessons from experience, it is recommended to develop and apply the full package of policy implementations tools and mechanisms, such as RPL strategy and plan, a specific monitoring and evaluation framework with supporting data collection and analysis to guide continuous improvement.
 4. **RPL implementation:** should benefit from insights, relevant lessons and experiences from other countries / regions, and be based on sharing of good practice, mutual help and harmonisation.
 5. **RPL target groups:** implementation of RPL should promote and foster social inclusion and fully apply the principle “no one is left behind”; particular attention is due to the needs of migrants, returning migrants and refugees.
 6. **RPL costing and financing:** renewed attention to design and implement sustainable models, sharing common features, building on complementarities and diversity of stakeholders and end-user organisations.
 7. **RPL innovation:** highlight and promote the innovation edge of RPL for the wider eco-system of lifelong learning and qualifications, in particular: widen the scope of RPL to include all sub-sectors of education and training; holistic and candidate-centred assessment modalities and practices; explicit articulation with other policies and mechanisms supporting progression and mobility such as credit accumulation and transfer and micro-credentials; contextualisation of language requirements for RPL processes; pointers and orientations concerning renewal of existing qualifications and development of new qualifications; Green skills, Green RPL.

ACQF
 African Continental
 Qualifications Framework

Bem-vindo
**2º Fórum dos Quadros Nacionais
 de Qualificações em África, Luanda**
 Hotel Alvalade, Luanda – República de Angola
 5-6 Setembro 2024

Welcome to the
**2nd Forum of National Qualifications
 Frameworks in Africa, Luanda**
 Hotel Alvalade, Luanda – República de Angola
 5-6 September 2024

Key Messages:

- General Education/Higher Education
- Professional Education
- General/Higher Education Qualification Levels
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Micro-Credentials
- TVET Qualification Levels
- Lifelong Learning

Key Messages:

- New generation NQFs – innovations
- Launch of Referencing to ACQF
- Quality Assurance – focus on NQFs
- RPL – never ending story
- CATS – renewed attention, new experiences
- Micro-credentials for LLL and employability
- Green NQFs – Green ACQF
- Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) – Forward!

www.acqf.africa

1. **Green Skills:** to develop recommendations towards Green NQFs, Green Curriculum (Policy, Guidelines).
2. **Referencing:** to prepare and start the pilot phase of referencing between RQFs and ACQF; continue the ongoing pilot phase (NQF-ACQF).
3. **Lifelong learning:** to seek and strengthen synergy and linkages between RPL-CATS-Microcredentials policies – enriching and strengthening the effectiveness of NQFs.
4. **Sustainability of the governance model of NQFs:** effective practices and requirement beyond support of international projects and partners what are
5. **Reinforce the use of AI** in the context of NQFs, Quality Assurance and Registration of qualifications.
6. **Mutual learning between countries:** continue exchanges – between new NQFs-older NQFs in Africa; NQFs in Africa-Europe.

ACQF Global Education European Union African Union ETF

The Forum of National Qualifications Frameworks
Le Forum des Cadres Nationaux de Certifications
O Fórum de Quadros Nacionais de Qualificações

Let's talk about the benefits, impact and lessons learned from NQFs in Africa

About the African Qualifications Network for Sustainability of ACQF

About Lifelong Learning and Designation of Prior Learning

About Referencing and comparing NQFs and ACQF

About Green Skills, micro-credentials, digitalisation and other innovations

About the Qualifications and Credentials Platform and Common Definition of qualifications

Kinshasa - R.D Congo, D.R. Congo

26 Countries Regions

18 - 20 June 2024 Hotel Merming

FORUM-ONLINE ALSO ACCESSIBLE

1. **Support and boost the development and implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)** – inclusive and comprehensive, future-proof, adaptable to the demands of digital and green transformation, supporting employability, social inclusion and lifelong learning, and supported by evidence.
2. **Support the connection and mutual trust between qualifications frameworks at the 3 levels (national-regional and continental):** through referencing, the ACQF platform of qualifications, innovations, the RPL campaign, and sharing of good practices. Support the establishment of the **African Network of Qualifications Frameworks**, to ensure the sustainability of the achievements of the ACQF-II project.
3. **Create synergies and complementarities between the ACQF and the Addis and Global Recognition Conventions** – with common objectives and practical actions.
4. **Harness the innovative power of the green and digital transformation of jobs and skills.** Joint policies and practices to develop green and digital skills: national, sectoral and specific (education and training, qualifications, innovation, academic research and links with industry). **Ensure an active role of NQFs, Regional Qualifications Frameworks and ACQFs as catalysts.**
5. **An urgent call to action: explore, develop and implement micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability linked to National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs).**
6. **Implement data systems and tools: interoperable databases of qualifications at all levels and sub-sectors; implementation of RPL;** Real-time data and analysis on skills demand. Learners' achievements.
7. **Disseminate experiences and best practices through sharing platforms:** technical guidelines and documentation, qualifications standards and other achievements of interest for the success and impact of the NQF, RQF and ACQF.
8. **Strengthen the capacities of institutions, human resources and stakeholders.**

Day 1

- 1. Opening.
- 2. Micro-credentials in the ACQF. Overview systems and impacts.
- 3. Panel debate: How can Africa take a leading role in harnessing Micro-credentials.
- 4. Micro-credentials in the global context. New Zealand, Cedefop, OECD
- 5. Micro-credentials in the African context. Mauritius, Seychelles, Kenya. Debate groups.
- 6. Green skills

Euarda

Day 2

- Recap day 1: Mboni Dlamini
- 7. Towards a common approach to micro-credentials in Africa. ACQF Handbook. Debate groups.
- 8. QCP – training 4
- 9. Referencing to ACQF. Group 1.
- 10. Referencing to ACQF. Group 2
- 11. Discussion of the referencing reports.
- 12. Final conclusions and recommendations. Closure

Our panelists and speakers

Recap

- Mboni Dlamini

Wisdom Mtisi

Panelists

- Antonieta Fernandes (Angola)
- Laurent Ndaywel (DR Congo)
- Carlos Mataruca (Mozambique)
- Vijayendran Naidoo (South Africa)
- Duduzile Simelane (SADC Secretariat)

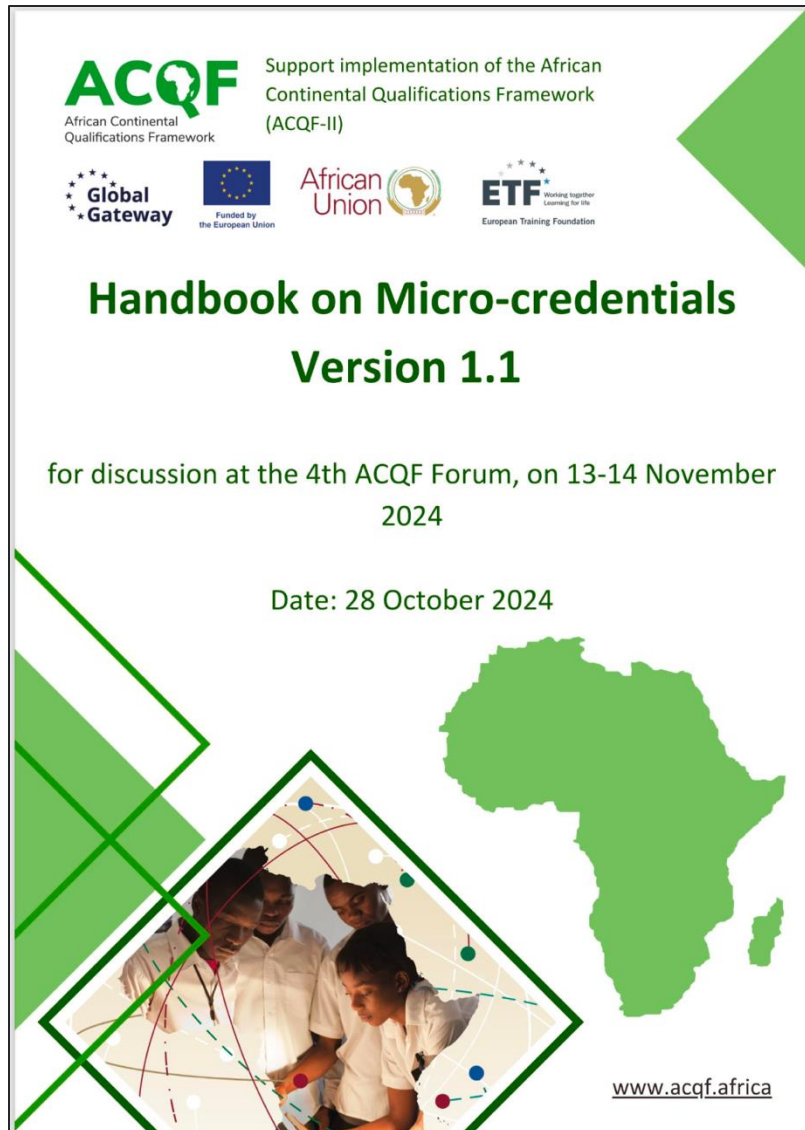
Chair: Maxwell Amoako-Kissi
(Ghana)

Speakers

- Eduarda (ACQF-II)
- Greta Kirdulyté (ACQF-II)
- Anastasia Pouliou (Cedefop)
- Simon Roy (OECD)
- Melinda Hall (NZQF)
- Romeela Mohee (Mauritius)
- Noella Baker-Albert (Seychelles)
- Rita Mudza (Kenya)

02

**Session 2: Micro-credentials for better opportunities.
Overview of micro-credentials systems and their
impacts. Trends, achievements and emerging issues.**



Some concepts and definitions

Why micro-credentials in the ACQF?

Micro-credentials in the ACQF Policy Document and Guidelines

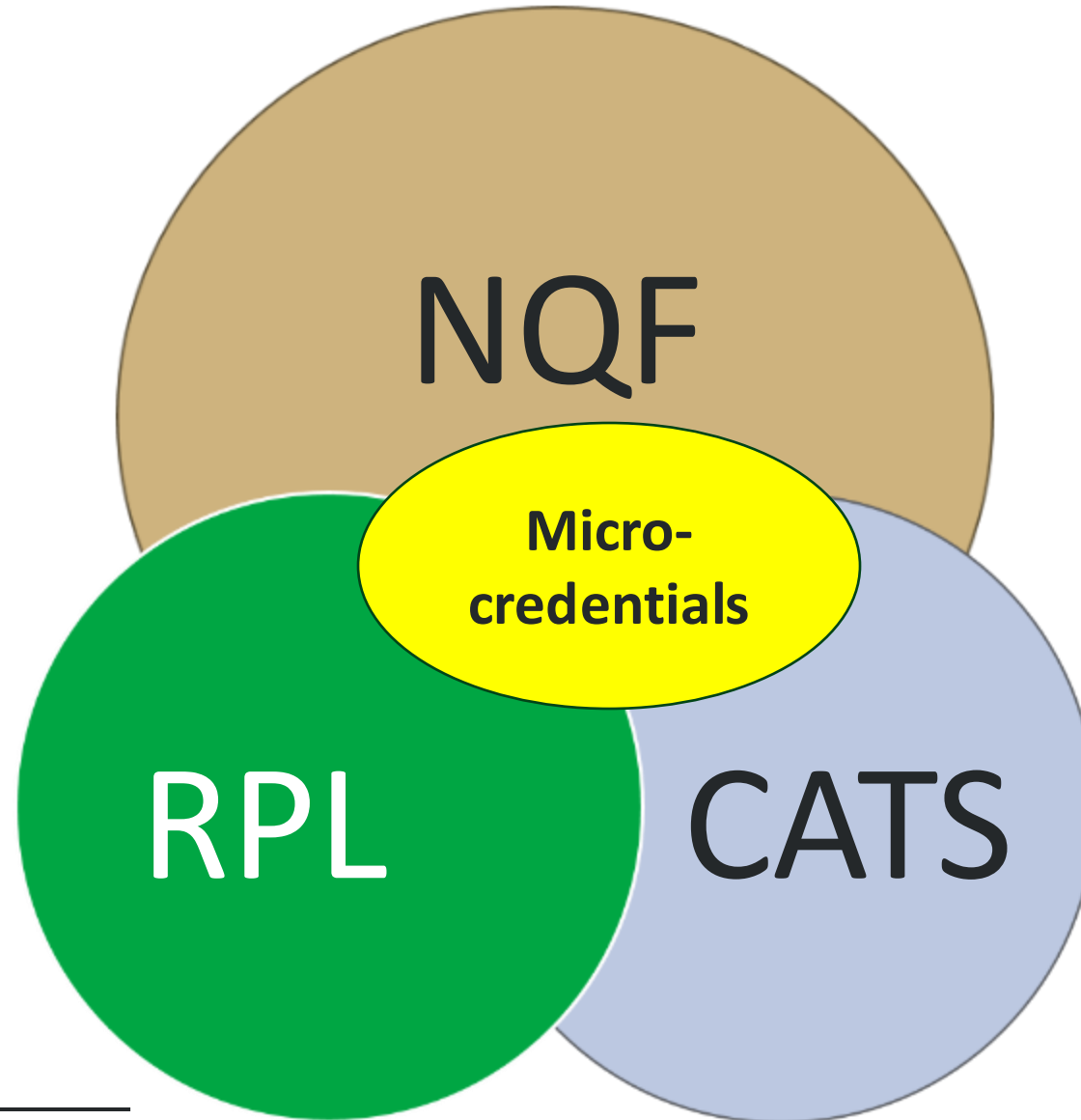
In Research of ACQF-II

In Support to countries

Micro-credentials – consistently addressed in all capacity development and knowledge-sharing activities

Linkages and developments related to NQF, RPL and CATS

NQF-RPL-CATS-Microcredentials

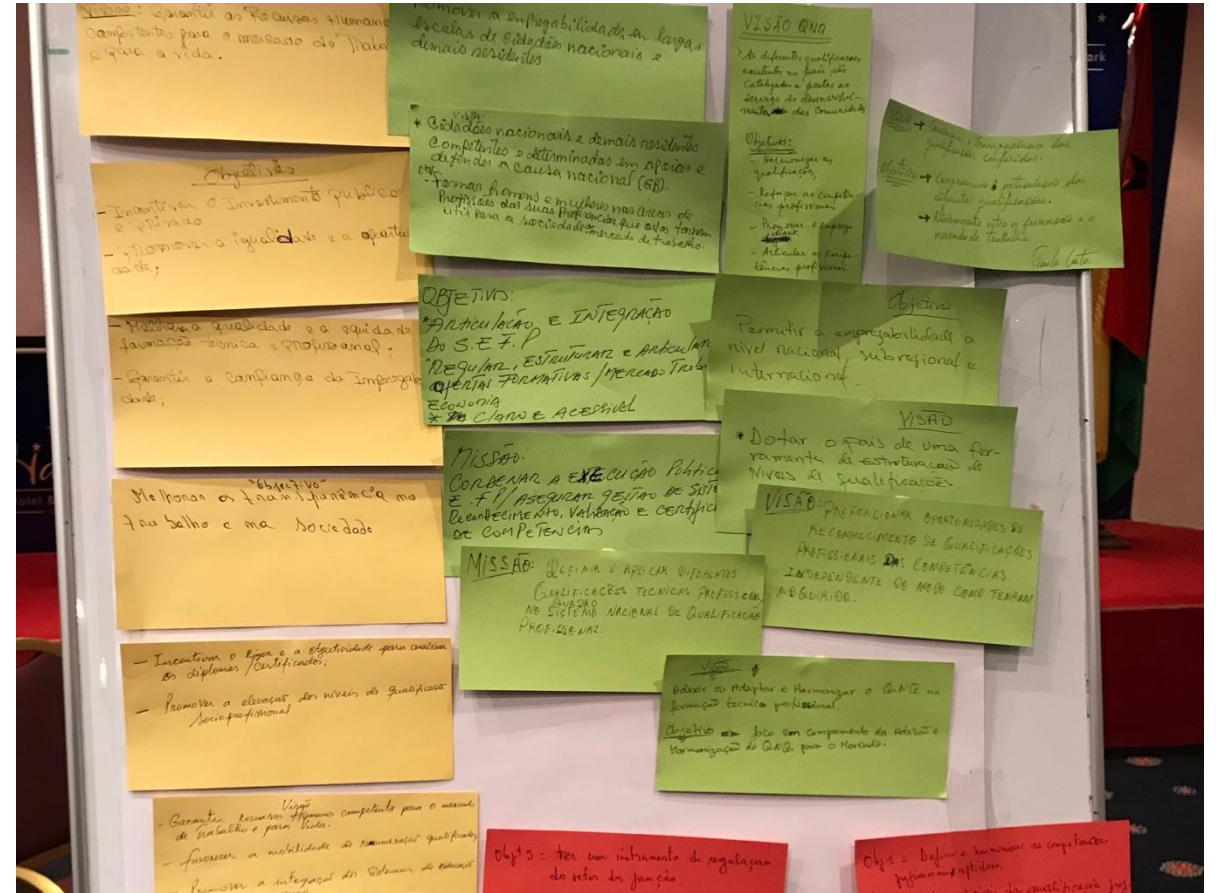


- National governments, and regional and international organisations have intensified debate and research with the aim to define the role and place of Micro-credentials in national education systems and qualifications frameworks, enhancing their benefits for lifelong learning and employability.
- In 2022 UNESCO proposed a common definition of micro-credentials, based on a process of experts' consultation of global scope.
 - UNESCO (2022). Towards a common definition of micro-credentials.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381668>
- In June 2022 the European Union approved the Council Recommendation on a European Approach to Micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability.
 - Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability 2022/C 243/02 ST/9790/2022/INIT https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.243.01.0010.01.ENG

Micro-credentials: elements of a definition

- Existing definitions (from OECD, European Commission, UNESCO, Australian Government) point to key characteristics of micro-credentials:

- ✓ Referring to learning over a limited time and/or in a specific area
- ✓ May form part of or add to formal qualifications
- ✓ Potentially ‘stackable’ over time, adding to individual learning careers
- ✓ Given their limited size and focus, more flexible than traditional qualifications
- ✓ Based on assessed learning
- ✓ Frequently delivered in a digital form.



Micro-credentials: UNESCO proposed definition

A large subset of credentials can be referred to as micro-credentials: **focused on a specific set of learning outcomes in a narrow field of learning and achieved over a shorter period of time.**

Micro-credentials are offered by commercial entities, private providers and professional bodies, traditional education and training providers, community organisations and other organisations.

While many micro-credentials represent the outcomes of more traditional learning experiences, others **verify demonstration of achievements acquired elsewhere, such as in the workplace, through volunteering, or through personal interest learning.** Micro-credentials are often promoted as an efficient way to upskill workers across the lifespan.

The proposed definition (Oliver, 2021) states that a micro-credential:

1. Is a record of **focused learning** achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do;
2. Includes **assessment** based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider;
3. Has **stand-alone value** and may also **contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials**, including through recognition of prior learning; and
4. Meets the standards required by relevant **quality assurance.**

3 clusters of micro-credentials

| Skill Credential | Learning Unit | Short Learning Programmes |
|--|--|--|
| 1-25 hours of learning | 25-150 hours of learning | 150-1500 hours of learning Typically consists of more than one learning unit |
| Awarded within the context of non-formal learning | Awarded within the context of formal learning and include options for assessment | Awarded within the context of formal learning and include options for assessment |
| Not explicitly quality assured by external QA | Often explicitly quality assured by external QA | Always explicitly quality assured by external QA |
| Linked to the acquisition of a specific competence | Linked to the acquisition of a set of learning outcomes | Linked to specific career progression goals |
| | | Can be mapped to qualification frameworks, either as 'partial qualifications' or as a special category of micro-qualifications |



1. Why Micro-credentials in the ACQF?

Your views...



- What percentage of the workforce in African countries is in **urgent need for reskilling and upskilling** - for better opportunities in employment and LLL?

% Very high

% High

% Low

A time of deep and multi-dimensional change requires:

- Learning
- Upskilling
- Reskilling
- Recognition of skills / Learning outcomes
 - Certification
 - Lifelong learning
 - Lifewide learning

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills>

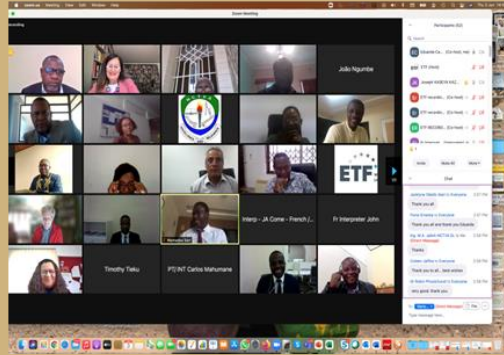
Reskilling needs

44%

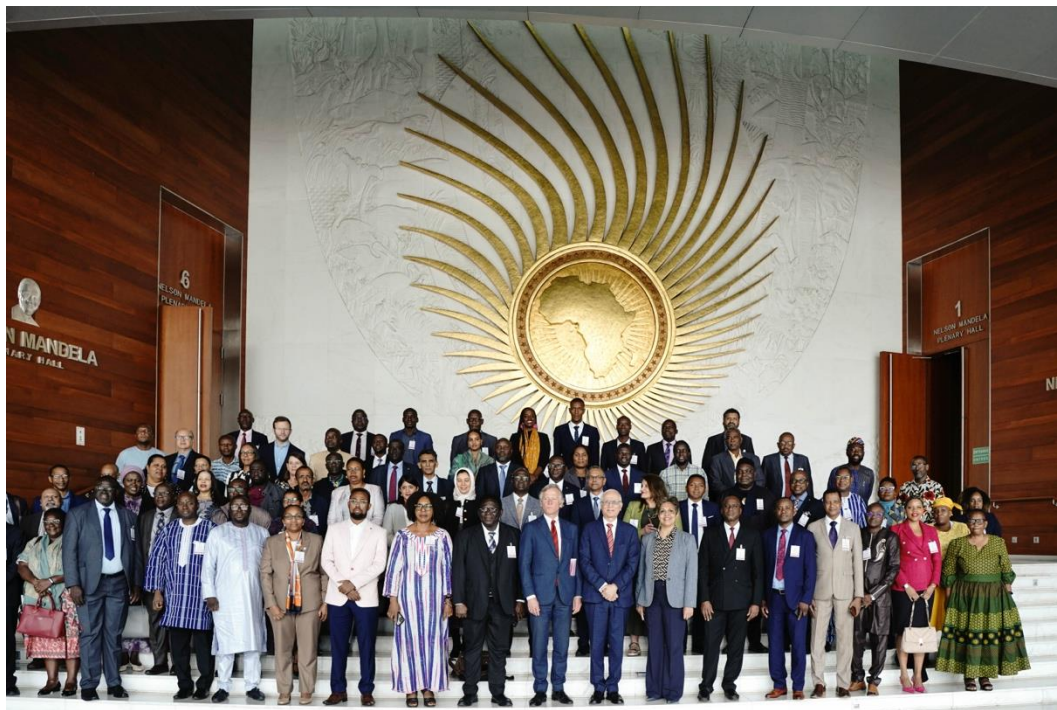
of workers' core skills are expected to change in the next five years



Source: World Economic Forum,
Future of Jobs Report 2023.



Many factors in favour of effective, flexible, recognised micro-credentials



Large number of population who need upskilling and reskilling – **Micro-credentials enable engagement in flexible, short and focused training**

Need to **enter / re-enter formal education and training** – for young people, women, workers.

Short, flexible training for social-professional inclusion of **labour migrants and refugees**

Large investment programmes require **employees, workers with updated skills and qualifications** (construction, mining, transport, tourism, telecommunications...)

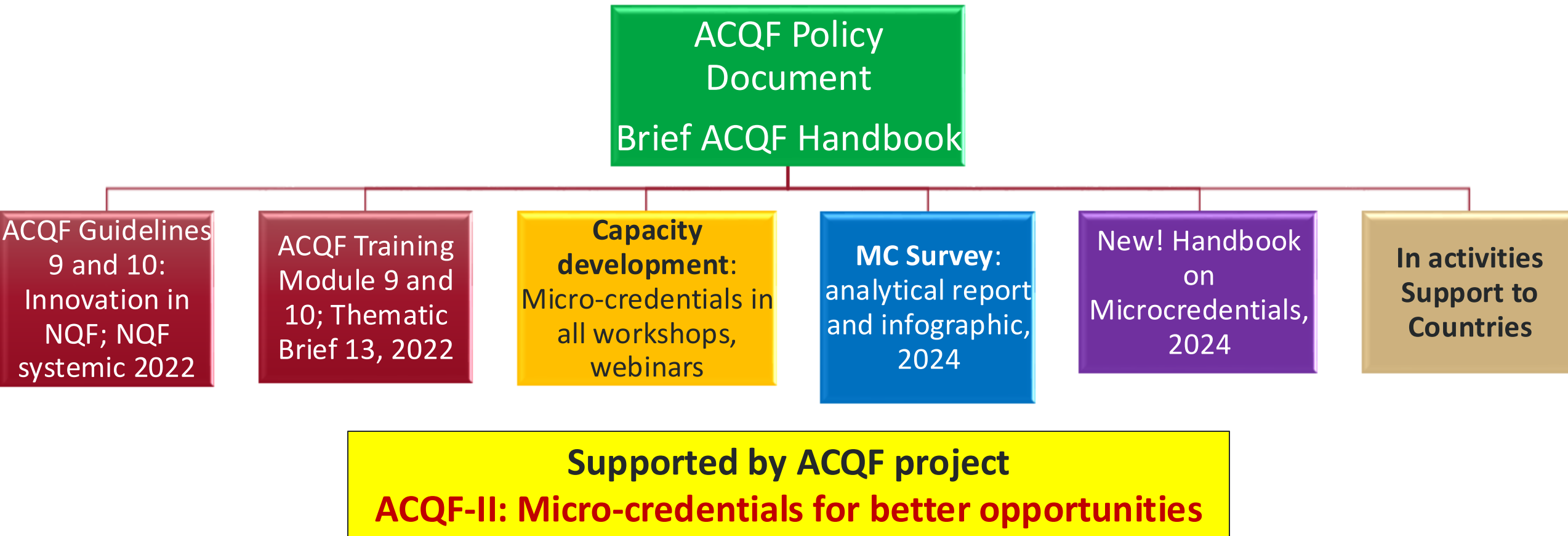
Competitiveness of productive activities in key economic sectors require timely availability of the **right skills mix**

Micro-credentials interact with RPL and contribute to innovation in NQF: a) As outcome of RPL; b) As component of RPL portfolio / identification and documentation phases of RPL process; c) inclusiveness of the NQF scope

2. Micro-credentials in the ACQF Policy Document and ACQF Activities

2. Overview – RPL in ACQF context

[ACQF Website:
www.acqf.africa](http://www.acqf.africa)





**African Continental Qualifications Framework
(ACQF)**

ACQF Policy Document

**Submitted for African Union Member State Validation
Exercise**

Version: 17 November 2022



**Cadre continental africain des certifications
(ACQF)**

Document de politique de l'ACQF

Pour validation par les états membres de l'Union Africaine

Version du 17 novembre 2022

<https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-policy-document-upon-validation-by-au-member-states-en-fr-pt>



Quadro Continental Africano de Qualificações (ACQF)

Documento Político do ACQF

Para validação pelos Estados-membros da União Africana

Versão: 17 de novembro 2022

Micro-credential definition in the ACQF Policy document

- **Micro-credential** means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a **small volume of learning**. These learning outcomes will have been **assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria**. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with **specific** knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are **owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable**. They may be **stand-alone or stackable / combined into larger credentials**. They are underpinned by **quality assurance** following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.



HANDBOOK

A Brief Handbook on the African
Continental Qualifications Framework

ACQF **Micro-credentials: in the objectives and principles of ACQF**

- The objectives of the ACQF are:

- To support comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications and **foster lifelong learning**.
- **To facilitate validation of learning from different contexts, contribute to recognition of diplomas and certificates and support mobility (of learners, workers, services);**
- To work in cooperation and complementarity with national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and systems and regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs), support NQF development, strengthen human and technical capabilities, and the creation of a common African education and qualifications space; and
- To promote cooperation, trust, and mutual understanding, by means of referencing with qualifications frameworks in Africa and worldwide.

- The ACQF is driven by the following principles:

- ***Inclusiveness*: encompass all levels and types of qualifications, all forms and stages of learning and modalities of certification;**
 - ***Innovation*: support new developments related to green, digital, and other emerging skills, new roles and occupations, new technologies and societal demands, and digital and **micro-credentials** for learning; and**
 - ***Openness*: to participation of all stakeholders and AU member states, to learn from experiences and good practice from Africa and other regions and continents.**
-

Micro-credentials in ACQF Policy document

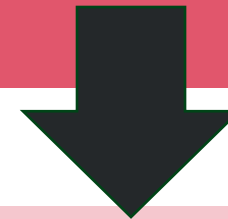


In 3.3. Conceptual-technical design of ACQF:

Level descriptors, Learning outcomes orientation, Recognition of prior learning, credit accumulation and transfer, contribution to recognition of foreign qualifications, underpinned by quality assurance, international cooperation and continuous improvement



Support transparency and relevance of digital certification and micro-credentials



Lifelong learning, portability of skills and qualifications and mobility are in rapid transformation, under the impact of digitisation. ACQF in cooperation with the regional and national qualifications frameworks and stakeholders will support common understanding of the requirements for trusted promotion of the potentialities of new types and technologies of certification and credentials, their quality assurance and recognition.





Referencing NQF to ACQF



RPL Campaign



Qualifications and Credentials Platform / database (QCP)



Qualifications and credentials: common profiles between countries



Capacity development, peer learning, training



Communication, networking, advocacy



Analysis; Monitoring and evaluation

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CDP) 2021 – 2022

THEMATIC CDP BRIEFS **13**

MICRO-CREDENTIALS - TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

ACQF African Continental Qualifications Framework

African Union

THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

ACQF African Continental Qualifications Framework

ACQF-II
Micro-credentials
Survey Report

Global Gateway

European Union

African Union

ETF European Training Foundation

PPMI Part of the Verian Group

ACQF African Continental Qualifications Framework

Global Gateway

European Union

African Union

ETF European Training Foundation

Micro-credentials Survey Report

► **Main objectives of the Micro-credentials survey (MC)**

The survey collected data on the place and trends of micro-credentials in the qualifications and lifelong learning systems in different African countries. More specifically, it gathered information on the common types of micro-credentials, explored organisational differences and investigated various characteristics such as stackability, quality assurance methods, inclusion in NQFs and information requirements. Moreover, the survey gathered stakeholder perceptions, information on the current offering of micro-credentials and future plans. Given the various definitions of micro-credentials used across the globe, respondents were asked to consider various concepts sharing common features of micro-credentials.

► **Key findings of the survey**

► **Usage of terms and formal definitions**

The usage of micro-credentials were estimated via a 4-scale question, specifying various degrees of adoption. Results show that **micro-credentials (or related concepts) are novel across the continent**. Overall, 36 respondents (61%) answered that the **term is used at least to some degree in the context of their education systems**. In turn, another 19 (32%) responded that the term, or other approximate concepts, are not used.

In the following, we will provide a brief assessment of the current extent of the usage of micro-credentials.

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Yes, it is well established in the policy framework and widely used by providers and learners | 3 |
| Yes, but it is new and its used among providers and learners is only starting | 17 |
| Yes, but only in the context of policy debate and research | 16 |
| No, it is not all used in any context | 19 |
| Cannot answer / I do not know | 4 |

While discussions on micro-credentials have started on most cases, **formal definitions are not yet widely adopted**. Half of the respondents (18 responses or 50.0%) claim that formal definition of micro-credentials in their country is in the process of development, this forms a majority compared to other options. Another considerable part (13, 36.1%) indicates that there is no formal definition of the term in their educational system.

Three respondents indicated to have a formal definition from Sudan and Zambia.

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 3 |
| It is being developed | 18 |
| No | 13 |
| Cannot answer / I do not know | 2 |

Micro-credentials Survey and analysis: published.

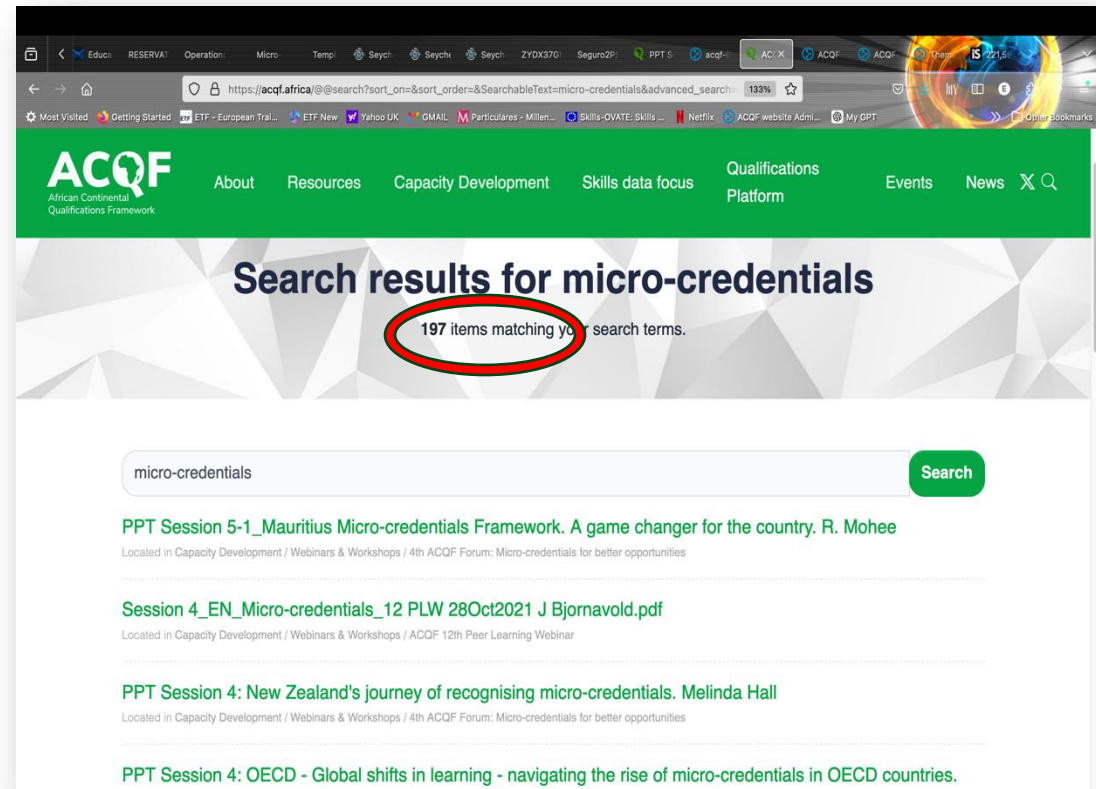
New Handbook on Microdentials validated – comments gathered via a survey and working groups discussion at 4th Forum, 13-14/Nov

Continental Micro-credentials Forum (13-14/Nov in Seychelles)

Micro-credentials in NQF development – with countries: Angola, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Seychelles.

Micro-credentials survey – Seychelles. Report published, validated by SQA. Roadmap for further developments: policy and implementation.

Micro-credentials capacity development activities – workshops national and continental.



3. Micro-credentials in ACQF Research

ACQF Surveys 2024

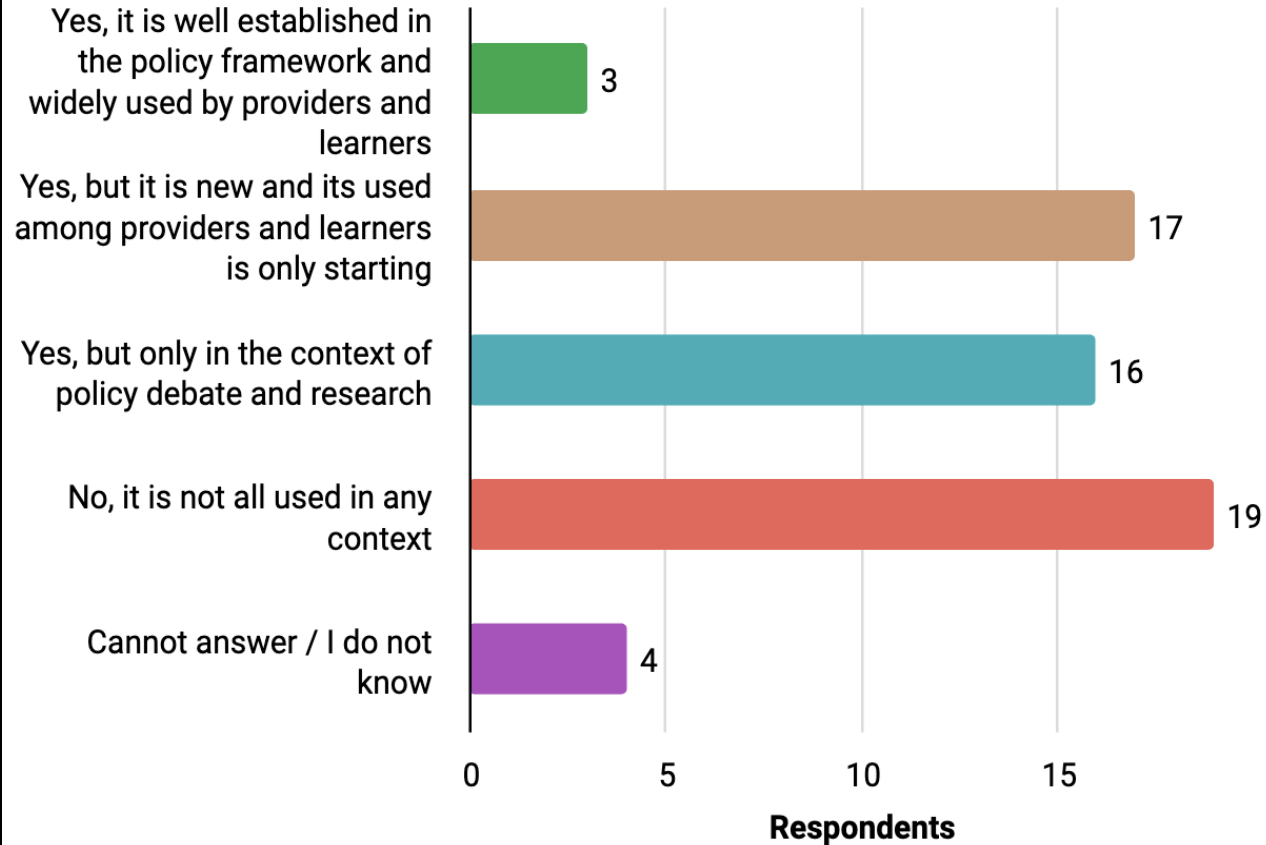
- NQF
 - **RPL**
 - Micro-credentials
-
- 28 countries submitted full responses

<https://acqf.africa/resources/surveys-acqf-ii-nqf-rpl-micro-credentials>

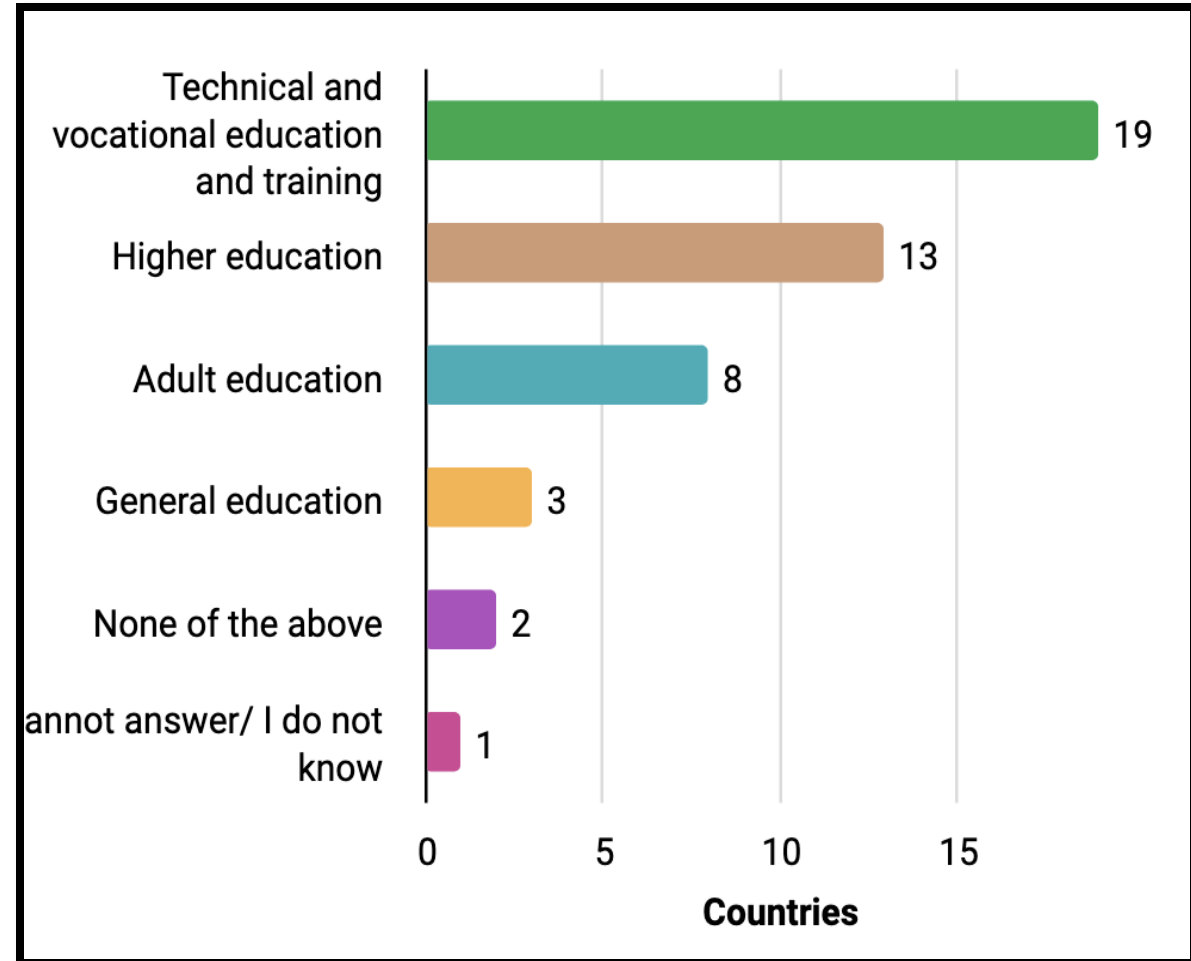
Figure 1. Number of respondents across participating countries



Usage of terms and formal definitions



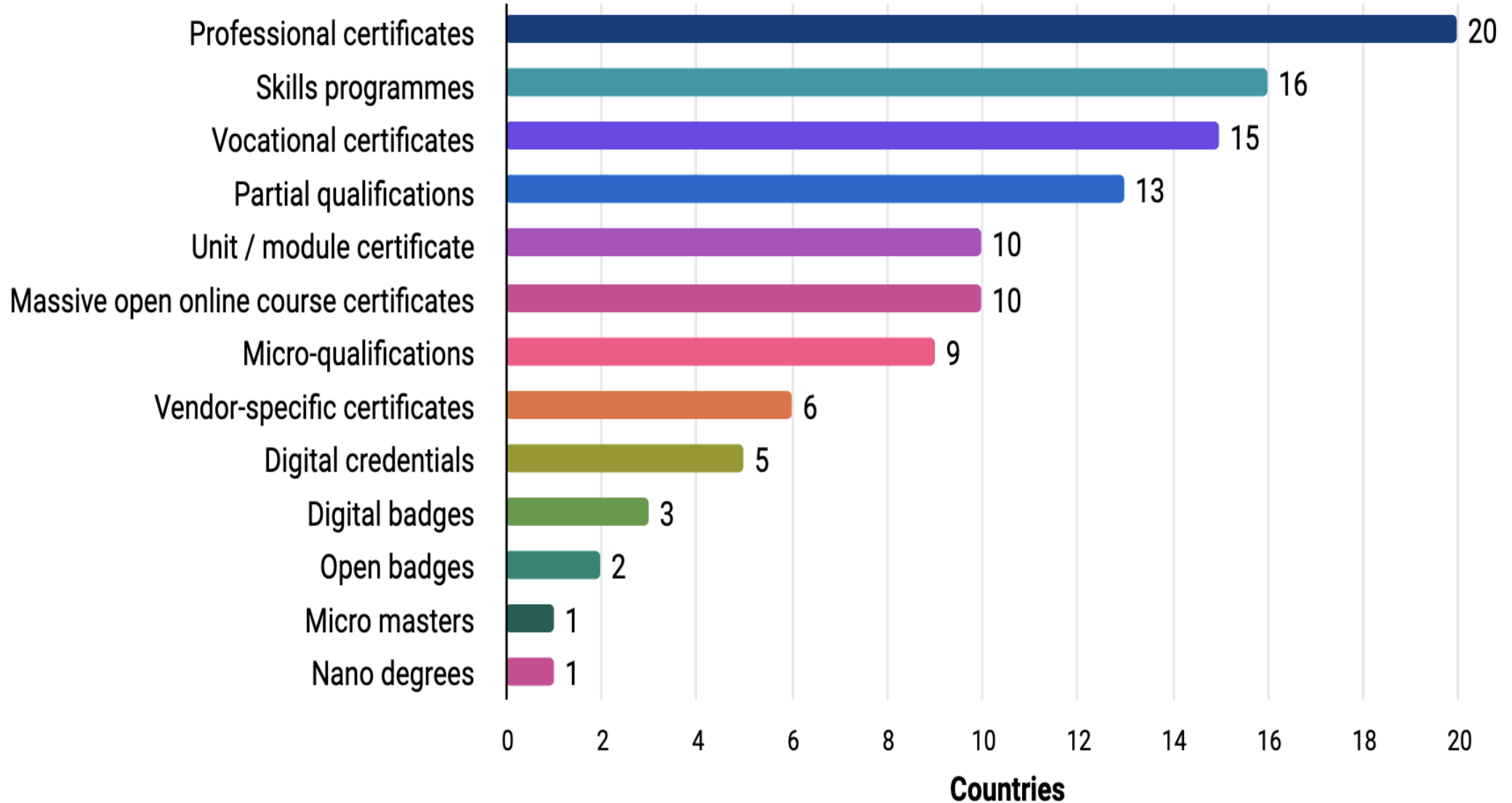
Education and training sectors offering micro-credentials

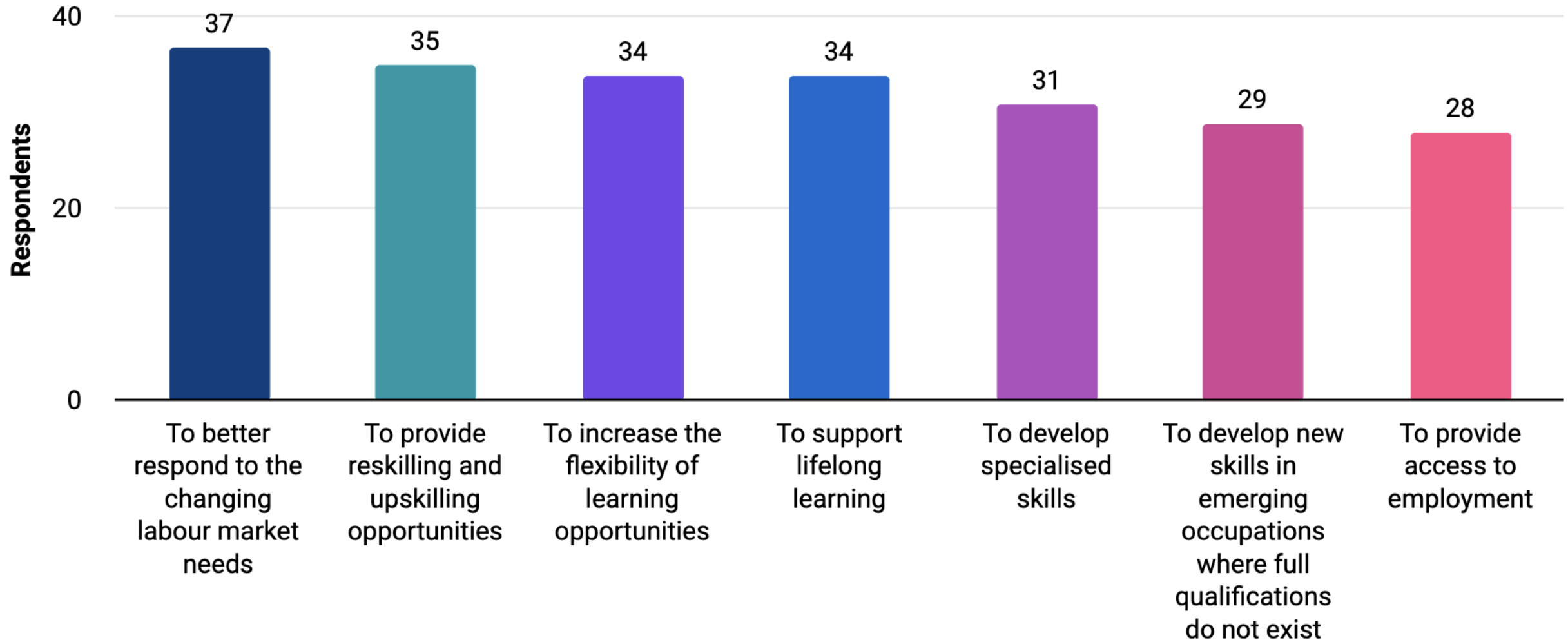


Micro-credentials Survey: some key results

▶ Most common types of micro-credentials

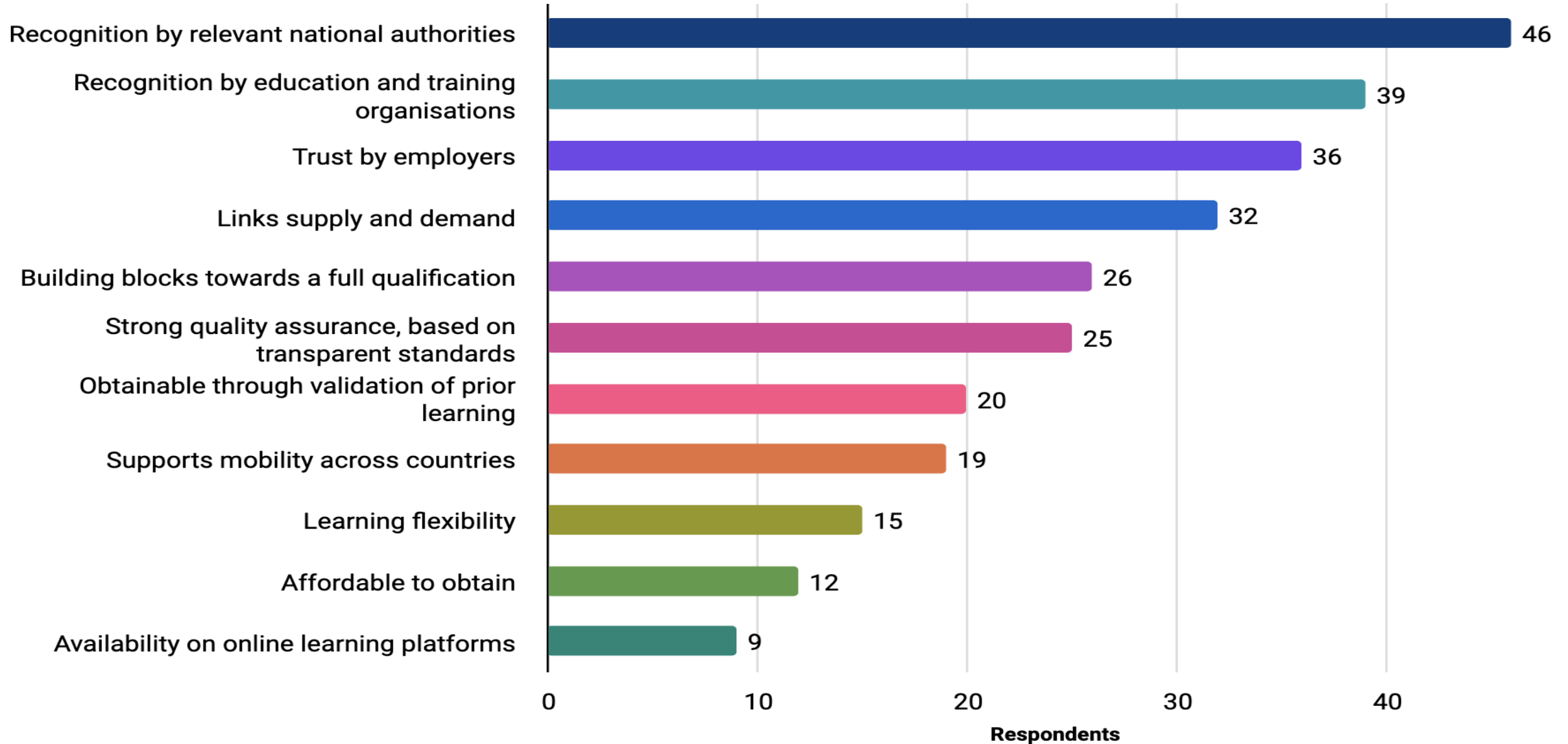
Types of micro-credentials (multiple-choice)



 Main purposes of micro-credentials

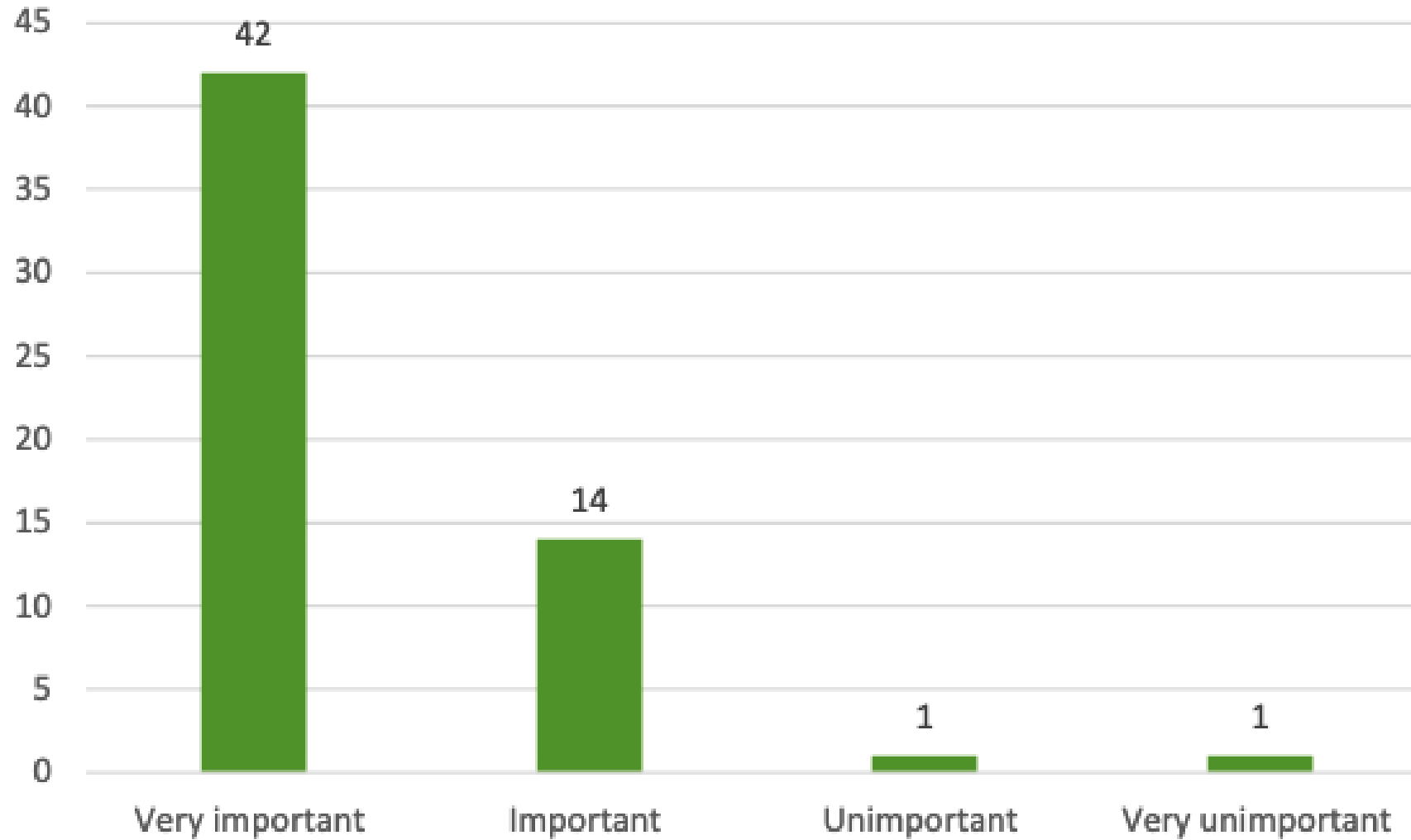
Purposes of micro-credentials (top 8, multiple-choices)

► Features of high-quality micro-credentials



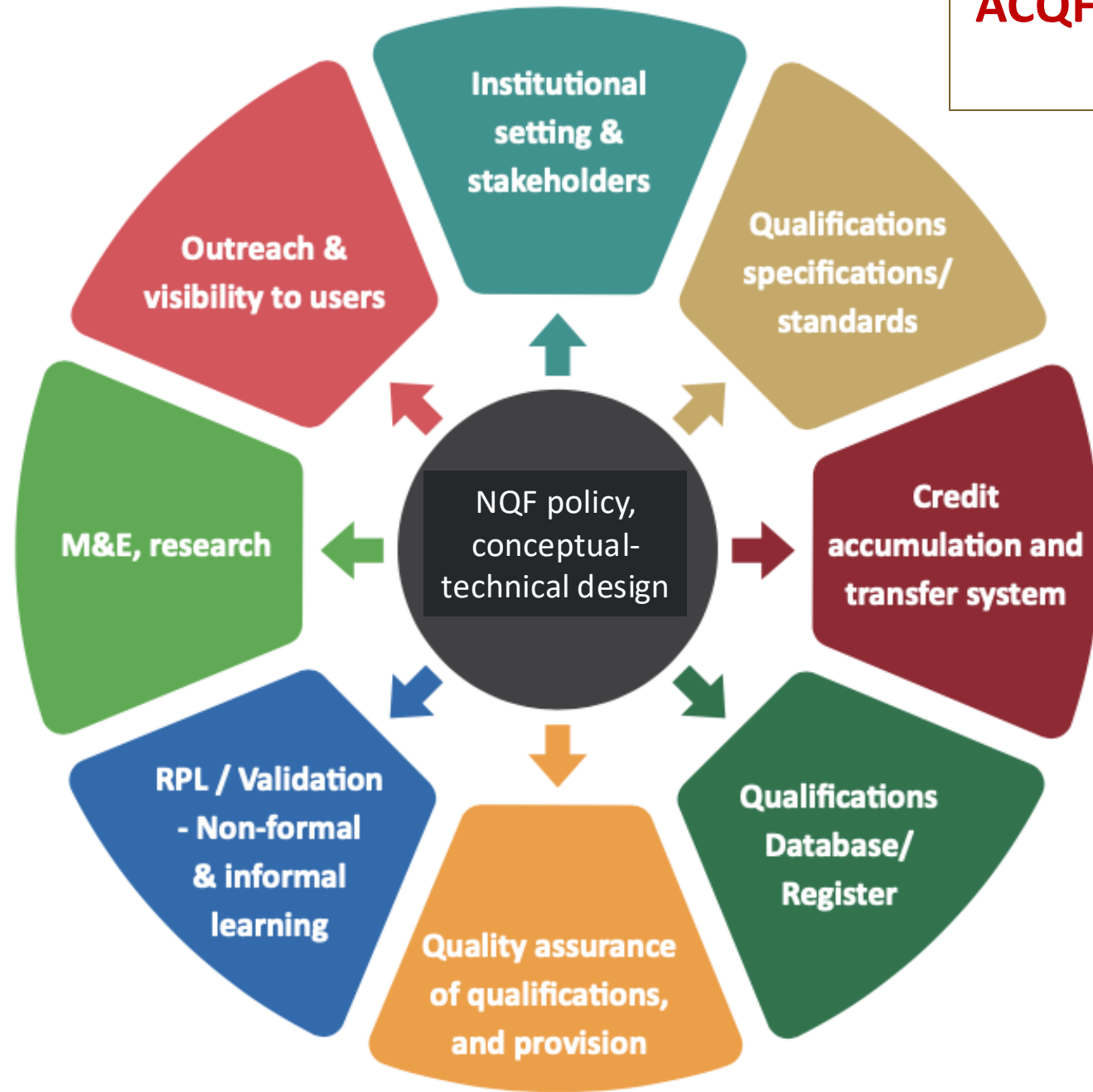
Micro-credentials Survey: some key results

Importance of developing a common approach to micro-credentials in Africa



4. Micro-credentials in ACQF activities of support to countries

ACQF approach on NQF: a systemic view or an eco-system



- NQFs do not work in isolation
- NQF must adapt to change and meet new demands from the transformation of work, technology, learning, climate, demography
- NQFs and RQFs belong to all stakeholders

| Country | Scope (ongoing, planned) | Micro-credentials specific (ongoing, planned) |
|--------------|---|---|
| Angola | NQF implementation, NQF Register, CATS, RPL; QCP | Micro-credentials policy, practice; QCP |
| RD Congo | NQF concept; NQF development planning; NQF Authority – inputs on organisation; QCP | Micro-credentials in NQF; QCP |
| Eswatini | RPL Policy; QCP | QCP |
| Ghana | Eco-system 3 Policies: Compreh. GhNQF + RPL + CATS: developed; advanced stakeholder consultation; QCP | Micro-credentials in NQF; QCP |
| Guiné-Bissau | NQF Concept; NQF Policy document approved. QCP | Micro-credentials in NQF; QCP |
| Mozambique | NQF M&E; NQF capacity development; QCP | QCP |
| Senegal | NQF Concept Document - in consultation. QCP | Micro-credentials in NQF; QCP |
| Sierra Leone | NQF Cap dev; RPL, CATS Policy; QCP | Micro-credentials in NQF; QCP |
| Seychelles | SNCATS Policy and Guidelines – completed; Micro-credentials; QCP | Micro-credentials: syrvey and analysis; QCP |
| Somalia | Eco-system: NQF-RPL-CATS – to start development | Micro-credentials in NQF; QCP |
| Zambia | NQF review – in planning | QCP |
| Zimbabwe | QCP | QCP |

5. Some developments in ACQF related to linkages between NQF-RPL-CATS-Micro-credentials

Sum-up: Links NQF-RPL-CATS-Microcredentials

Policy complementarity and coherence: in terms of concepts, goals, principles – for: holistic scope, effectiveness for end-users / target groups, impact in LLL and employment policies

Interdependence: NQF needs micro-credentials, and vice-versa

Learning outcomes approach: a key common building block

Units of competence – modular training: can facilitate application and access to CATS and RPL

QCP: information-sharing on qualifications and micro-credentials (country and connected continental)

Quality assurance and relevance (labour market, society): the common link towards trust, credibility and recognition

Learner-centered emphasis: assuring empowerment and buy-in.



Thank you!

Merci!

Obrigada!

Mersi!

ecb@etf.europa.eu

