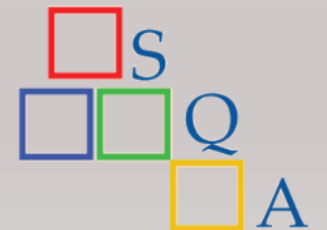


SNQF to ACQF Referencing

Session 9-3
4th ACQF Forum

Seychelles
13-14 November



Recognising your Competencies

Criterion 4



The national **quality assurance system** for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

National Quality Assurance system



Compatibility with Quality assurance guidelines of referencing.

- The national quality assurance system for education and training is operational. The SQA is the body responsible for quality assurance of the national education and training system from general education to TVET, through to the tertiary/higher education sector.
- Quality assurance of the early childhood sector is the mandate of the Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD-UNESCO Category 2 Institute). The two bodies operate independently of each other.
- The SQA is the national body with overall responsibility for the validation of non-formal and informal learning through the process of recognition of prior learning (RPL). It develops and implements the related national policy and Guidelines and implements the first stage of the validation process. The second and final stage is done by education and training institutions.

National Quality Assurance system (cont.)



Recognising your Competencies

- The SQA also has the responsibility for Standard-setting as relate to tertiary education and training (Including TVET). The setting of standards for public general education is under the purview of the Ministry of Education. Private general education providers adopt their individual standards, but they are all geared towards international examinations.
- *Assessment bodies:* There is a Division within the Ministry of Education responsible for management of international examinations for public schools. This ensures that quality assurance procedures as established by the international examination bodies are adhered to. Private schools have their individual internal processes.
- As for tertiary education and training institutions, these have their internal QA processes for assessment. These are quality assured by the SQA through the processes of programme and institutional accreditation.

National Quality Assurance system (cont.)



- *Certification bodies:* The QA agency (SQA) does not have the certification function. This is the responsibility of certificate issuing entities.
- *Industry bodies:* There are several industry bodies with responsibility for QA, but the focus is not on education and training. Industry participation is sought for Job Analysis Workshops (JAW) and initial stage in standards/qualifications and programme development.
- *Funding bodies:* Primarily the Government for public entities and quality assurance compliance is not a requirement.
- There is the QA system established within education and training providers (IQA). Tertiary education and training providers have well established QA Policy and Guidelines.

National Quality Assurance system (cont.)



- *Labour market and society stakeholders involvement in relevant phases/ aspects of quality assurance of qualifications:*
- Professional bodies where these exist endorse standards and qualifications.
- Standards Developers – responsible for developing qualifications
- Standards Evaluators – responsible for evaluating and final editing qualifications.
- Executive Committee –appointed by the SQA Board and responsible for approval of qualifications for registration on the SNQF

Compatibility with the ACQF QA guidelines



The national QA systems show compatibility with the QA principles of the ACQF:

QA systems:

- address the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification;
- addresses the application of the learning outcomes approach;
- includes feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement, such as action plans and progress reports;
- addresses internal and external quality assurance through internal institutional audits and self-evaluations, and institutional and programme accreditation;
- is based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance as evidenced in the SQA Quality Assurance Manual and the 'Looking at our Schools' 'Framework for Inspection of School of Advanced Level Studies and private institutions', 'Inspection Framework for School for the Exceptional Child';
- is supported by resources from the Government budget;
- provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation in that accreditation and School Inspection reports are circulated to stakeholders.
- **What is not prevalent in the national QA systems is the issue of regular review of quality assurance agencies since there is just one quality assurance agency nationally.**

Consideration of African Standards and Guidelines



- The national QA systems takes account of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.
- Weaknesses lie in the periodic internal and external reviews of the national QA systems or agency for continuous improvement. The system for continuous QA of its own practices is fragmented with the main focus being on what has been achieved.
- There is need to consider planned and periodic comprehensive internal self-assessment of its processes, practices and activities, including data analysis.
- The SQA has for some years intended to subject itself to periodic external review on the basis of self-assessment by a regional, continental or international QA body and has been preparing for this. However, the challenge has been to secure the financial resources for such project as SQA is a Government budget-dependent body and other priorities take precedence.

Register of qualifications



Recognising your Competencies

- The SQA maintains a register of qualifications and part-qualifications which is in word format. The register is updated periodically and reports are uploaded on the SQA website for public information. The register includes registration and review dates among the qualification/ part-qualification specific information.

Transparency, dissemination of quality assurance regulations



- Transparency is central in all activities of the SQA. This is also emphasised in its 'Customer Service Charter'. The SQA Act 2021 and corresponding regulations make provision for appeal which in turn reflects transparency.
- Quality assurance regulations are visible and in the public domain via the SQA website. The revised NQF Regulations have recently been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and at the time of writing the document is being prepared for gazetting.
- Capacity development is a continuous process at SQA. These take different forms such as participation in webinars, workshops, and conferences, enrolment on relevant programmes, professional development courses, and specialised training.
- SQA also engages in capacity development of education and training institutions

Data, analysis on quality and effectiveness of qualifications for users, labour market and society.

- This is an area that SQA has not yet considered due to no internal human resource capacity and funding.
- An annual destination survey of graduates is conducted by Employment Department.

Governance procedures and follow-up of referencing



- SQA is the relevant national body involved in the ACQF referencing process. A Referencing Committee made up of QA officers with knowledge of alignment and referencing processes. Responsibilities of the Committee have been derived from the roadmap for the pilot referencing of the ACQF-11 project. Internally, members of the Committee were allocated specific tasks in line with the referencing requirements. The tasks were undertaken either in pairs or individually. A schedule of meetings of the Committee was also agreed on and implemented.
- The SQA Board was informed on the pilot referencing process at its meeting of September 2024. The Minister responsible for Education was also informed through the Minutes of the meeting.
- Government Ministries and Departments and the general public will be informed through the SQA website (yet to be done) and its annual Newsletter.

Governance procedures and follow-up of referencing (cont.)



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

- SQA is the national quality assurance body and it states its agreement with the referencing outcome and referencing report.

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.

- Representatives of countries participating in the ACQF project are involved in certain aspects and steps of the referencing process in an advisory and supportive role and as critical friends. The ACQF Governance Structure provides the platform by enabling pilot countries to present progress in Forums organised.

Governance procedures and follow-up of referencing (cont.)



Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report, which addresses all referencing criteria.

- The Referencing Report will be endorsed by the Referencing Working Group and the SQA Board will approve the Report. The SQA, represented by the Chief Executive Officer will certify the report. It will be presented to the High Level Committee of the Ministry of Education.

The referencing outcome is published by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure, on the dedicated ACQF website.

- The referencing outcome will be published on the SQA website. It will also be published on the ACQF dedicated website upon its final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure.

Governance procedures and follow-up of referencing (cont.)



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.

- The newly revised National Qualifications Framework Regulations (Regulations 2024) makes provision for issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the SNQF to be endorsed by and include such information as may be determined by the competent national authority (SQA). It stipulates at Regulation 76. (3) that ‘Certificates issued for qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework shall be endorsed in the manner determined by the Authority.’
- Further, Regulation 68. (2) (e) avers that ‘the design of Academic Transcript shall include such other information as may be determined by the Authority.’
- The above implies that there is provision for recognised qualifications documents to include a clear reference to the appropriate ACQF level. Qualifications uploaded in the qualifications register will contain a field for ACQF levels.

Thank you

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