An Introduction to National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks

Global Gateway

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African Union

ETF Working together Learning for life
European Training Foundation

ACQF
African Continental Qualifications Framework

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01

What are National Qualifications Frameworks?

Some definitions ...

ACQF

Qualification

"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"

ACQF, Thematic briefs, Concepts and definitions on qualifications and qualifications frameworks, 2021
EU COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

ACQF

Why do qualifications matter?

Internationally

Comparison and recognition MOBILITY

Make pool of available skills visible for investors

Access to lifelong learning, social inclusion

Countries

Connect demand for skills with training provision RELEVANCE

Increased productivity and growth

Learners

Confirmation people's knowledge and skills

Passports to work and further learning - mobility

Qualifications system: set of elements and processes

| Qualifications standards | Quality assurance | Assessment | Certification |

| Laws Institutions | NQF Technical design | NQFs Registers |

Function: confirmation and recognition of people's learning

Other elements and processes?

Recognition of Prior Learning

Credit accumulation and transfer system

Outreach, visibility

National Qualifications Frameworks

Instruments to classify national qualifications according to:

- types (for example: General Education, Higher Education, VET, professional, non-formal education), and
- levels (typically 8 or 10 levels).

NQF Botswana

https://www.bqa.org.bw/framework/

SUB-FRAMEWORKS				
Level	General Education	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Higher Education	Minimum number of credits
10		Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	360
9		Master's Degree	Master's Degree	240
8		Bachelor's Degree Honours Post-Graduate Diploma Post-Graduate Certificate	Ordinary Bachelor's Degree Honours. Professional Bachelor's Degree Honours Post-Graduate Diploma Post-Graduate Certificate	120 600 120 60
7		Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	360 480
6		Diploma	Diploma	240 360
5	Certificate V	Certificate V		120
4	Certificate IV	Certificate IV		60
3	Certificate III	Certificate III		40
2	Certificate II	Certificate II		40
1	Certificate I	Certificate I		40

Level descriptors

Qualifications levels are described by **level descriptors** - statements which describe in broad terms what learners should know, understand be be able to do to be awarded a qualification.

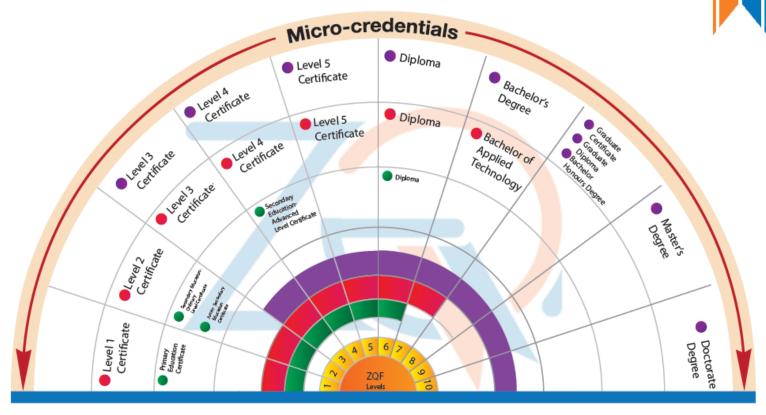The higher the NQFs level the greater depth and complexity of knowledge, skills and competencies required.

Somalia NQF – level descriptors

Level	Domains of learning		
	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
1	simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy	simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions, and use ssnipimple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems	highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self
2	basic knowledge incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas	basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straight forward problems	structured contexts under limited supervision and guidance taking limited responsibility for self and group outcomes
8	highly advanced, complex knowledge of a discipline/ area	highly advanced, complex skills required to demonstrate highly advanced analysis, communicate new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate highly advanced solutions to address highly complex and abstract problems	highly complex contexts with some specialisation demonstrating highly advanced autonomy and responsibility
9	mastery of a complex body of knowledge at the forefront of a discipline/ area	skills mastery required to demonstrate originality and new insights in research and/ or innovation and formulate and test theories to show mastery of highly complex, abstract problems	highly specialised contexts demonstrating mastery in autonomy and responsibility
10	substantial and original knowledge contribution that extends the forefront of a discipline/ area and/ or at the interface between disciplines/ areas	expert skills and techniques that demonstrate innovation, interpretation and creation of new ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate, and test theories to address emergent, new and critical problems	emergent new contexts demonstrating expertise in management of new ideas

Proposed* revised Zambian NOF

*under discussions

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Why do countries introduce NQFs?

ACQF

Policy goals:

1. To make the national qualifications system **readable abroad**, to facilitate trust, **international recognition and mobility** of learners and workers.

2. To **improve quality and relevance** of national qualifications.

3. To **illustrate pathways between qualifications and support mobility of learners** between different qualification types and from one level to another.

4. To **harmonise the national qualifications systems** (quality assurance principles and standards).

5. To **inform about the national qualifications** and to support the learners in their choice of learning pathways.

6. To facilitate **recognition of prior learning (RPL)** and transitions between working life and training.

7. To improve **access to lifelong learning**.
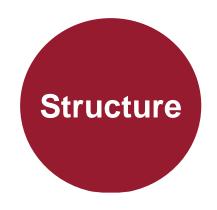
03

What happens when countries introduce NQF?

Decisions on policy goals and priorities

What are your goals?

Decisions on technical features of the NQF

Structure

No. of levels

Domains, level descriptors

Scope & Coverage

Comprehensive or not

Types of qualifications included

Formal and non-formal qualifications

Part-qualifications

Microcredentials

Comprehensive review of:

- national qualifications and relations between them
- possible learning pathways (identification of dead-ends)
- criteria and rules for developing, awarding and registering qualifications – **quality assurance**
- standards for qualifications description
- roles of stakeholders in managing qualifications

- Revising qualifications, curricula, assessment instruments
- Introducing quality assurance mechanisms
- Introducing new learning pathways
- Introducing CATS, recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Reaching users:

- Setting up **national register of qualifications**
- Initiating process of **inclusion** of individual, quality -assured qualifications to the register.
- Delivery of new training programmes, new assessment models
- Operationalising CATS and RPL
- Awarding qualifications

Indicating NQF levels on the certificates and diplomas awarded to learners.

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Stages of NQF development

2023 ACQF Survey: NQFs in Africa

Stage of NQF development and implementation	Number of NQFs in Africa	Countries
Stage 1: NQF development not started	4	Burkina Faso Chad, Gabon, S. Tomé and Príncipe
Stage 2: NQF in early thinking	4	Senegal, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan
Stage 3: NQF in development and consultation	14	Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda Madagascar Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Morocco, Republic of Congo
Stage 4: NQF in place (fully developed, approved as a legal act, started implementation)	12	Angola, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zimbabwe Burundi, Egypt, Lesotho, Rwanda
Stage 5: NQF operational and reviewed	8	Cabo Verde, Kenya, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia Botswana, Mauritius
TOTAL number of countries in this overview	42	

https://acqf.africa/resources/surveys-acqf-ii-nqf-rpl-micro-credentials/survey-of-national-qualifications-frameworks-in-africa-analytical-report

05

Selected elements of NQFs

Learning outcomes

To assign a level to a qualification a sufficiently detailed information about the **learning outcomes** confirmed by this qualification needs to be available.

Learning outcomes describe the minimum requirements for knowledge, skills, and responsibility / autonomy that is confirmed by the award of a qualification.

Accompanied by **assessment criteria** which give more detailed information on what is expected from learners for each learning outcome.

Clarity about the content of qualifications

Possibility to compare qualifications

Possibility to validate learning from experience, RPL

Traditional content-based qualification

Qualification described using learning-outcomes

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration

- Requires completion of 120 credit hours.

- Courses include finance, marketing, management, and economics.

- Final exam and project required for graduation.

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration

- Graduates can analyze financial statements and assess business performance.

- Able to develop and implement marketing strategies tailored to business goals.

- Demonstrates leadership and team management skills in diverse business environments.

- Assessment includes case studies, group projects, and practical business simulations.

Quality assurance – key to trust

Qualifications included in national qualifications registers should be <u>quality-assured</u>:

- **Relevant:** developed and validated by stakeholders, its content make sense to the learners and the labour market.
- **Well-described:** in standard formats covering i.a. levels, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, access and progression routes.
- **Adequately assessed:** through valid and reliable assessment.
- Confirmed by a **certificate bearing NQF logo and level** = quality mark.

Only quality-assured qualifications should be included in the NQF register with NQF level.
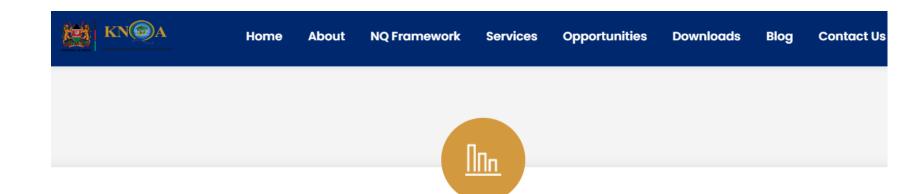
NQF registers / qualifications databases to understand, analyse and compare qualifications

- Information about qualifications has to be accessible online **to reach users.**

- Qualifications registers make qualifications **visible and transparent**.

- Individuals can explore available learning pathways to support lifelong learning.

- Information includes i.a: qualification title and level, learning outcomes, awarding bodies, entry requirements and pathways.

- **Recognition bodies** can easier compare foreign qualifications - supporting mobility.

- Monitoring the use of qualifications.

- Possibility of linking with other data systems.

Example 1: NQF register Kenya

Kitale National Polytechnic

10 ▼ entries per page
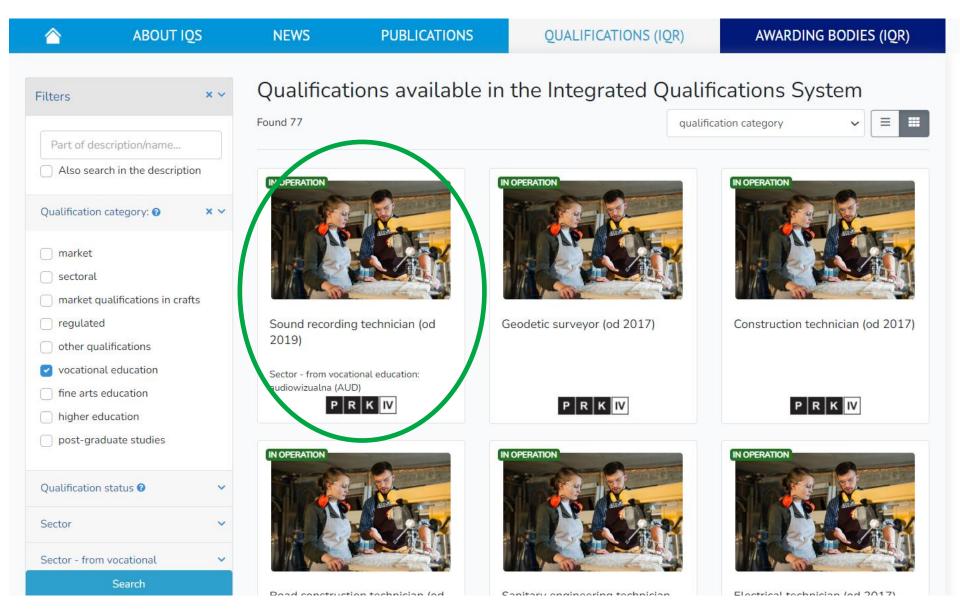
Search:

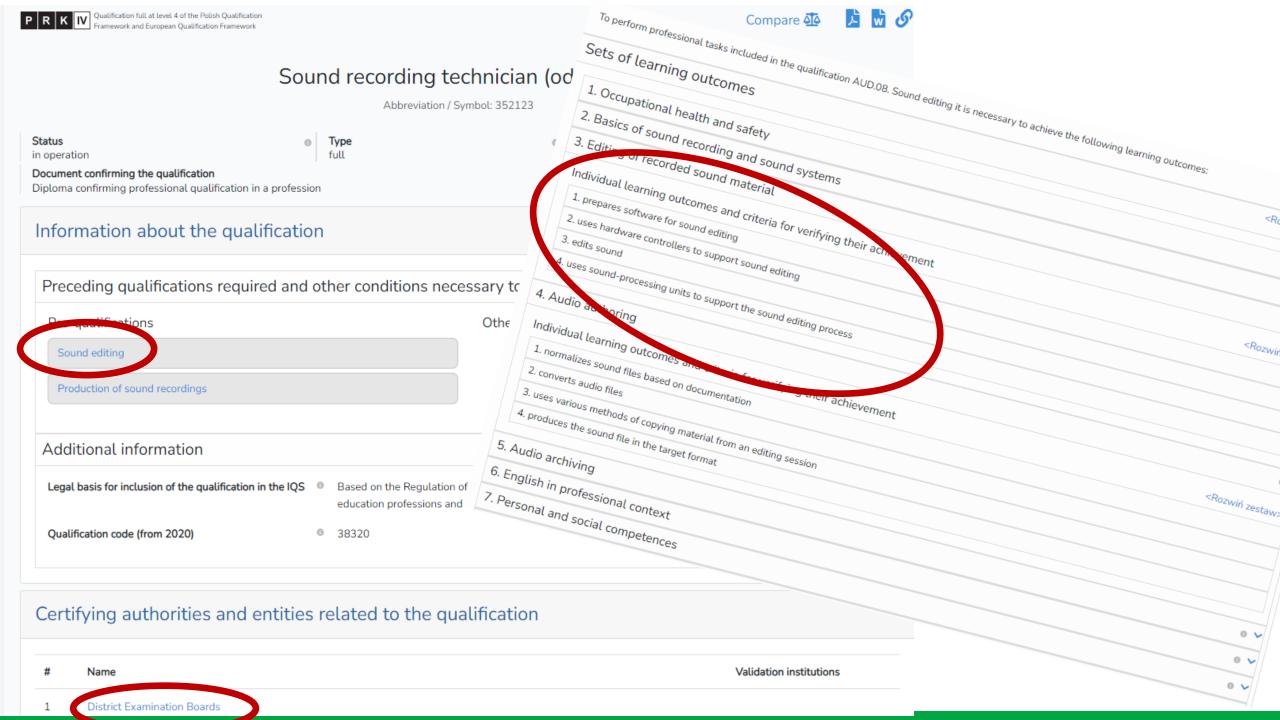| KNQF Code	Qualification name	Qualification classification	KNQF Level	Minimum entry Requirements	KNQF Credit	Assessment Body
071606T4	Port Logistics	Motor Vehicles, Ships and Aircraft	6	KCSE Mean Grade C- or Level 5 Qualification	238.5	KCNP
021105T4	Cruise Animation	Audio-visual techniques and media production	5	KCSE Mean Grade D or Level 4 Qualification	148.1	KCNP
071504T4	Marine Welding	Mechanics and metal trades	4	KCSE Mean Grade E or Level 3 Qualification	99.8	KCNP
021304T4	Marine Painting	Fine arts	4	KCSE Mean Grade E or Level 3 Qualification	100.5	KCNP
021104T4	Cruise Animation	Audio-visual techniques and media production	4	KCSE Mean Grade E or Level 3 Qualification	101.5	KCNP

https://knqa.go.ke/kitale-national-polytechnic/

Example 2: NQF register Poland

Source: https://kwalifikacje.gov.pl/en/k

Compare ⚖️

Sound recording technician (od

Abbreviation / Symbol: 352123

Status
in operation

Type
full

Document confirming the qualification
Diploma confirming professional qualification in a profession

Information about the qualification

Preceding qualifications required and other conditions necessary to

Pre-qualifications

Othe

Sound editing

Production of sound recordings

Additional information

Legal basis for inclusion of the qualification in the IQS ⓘ Based on the Regulation of education professions and

Qualification code (from 2020) ⓘ 38320

Certifying authorities and entities related to the qualification

To perform professional tasks included in the qualification AUD.08. Sound editing it is necessary to achieve the following learning outcomes:

Sets of learning outcomes

1. Occupational health and safety

2. Basics of sound recording and sound systems

3. Editing of recorded sound material

Individual learning outcomes and criteria for verifying their achievement

1. prepares software for sound editing

2. uses hardware controllers to support sound editing

3. edits sound

4. uses sound-processing units to support the sound editing process

4. Audio authoring

Individual learning outcomes and criteria for verifying their achievement

1. normalizes sound files based on documentation

2. converts audio files

3. uses various methods of copying material from an editing session

4. produces the sound file in the target format

5. Audio archiving

6. English in professional context

7. Personal and social competences

<Rozwiń zestaw>

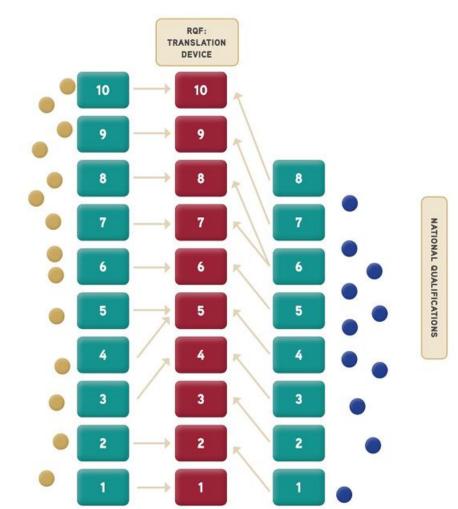| #	Name	Validation institutions
1	District Examination Boards	

What are Regional Qualifications Frameworks?

Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs)

- National qualifications landscapes are complex and very diverse.

- RQFs are established to serve as a translation tools.

- Example: African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) provides a common reference frame for qualifications levels.

RQF processes - referencing

The referencing process:

- Feasible for countries with operational NQFs / whose NQFs are approved and in implementation
- process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks to the RQF
- self-assessment aspects but collaborative process

The referencing results in:

- Publication of a **Referencing report**: relationships between NQF and RQF levels, detailed information about national qualifications (QA arrangements, Recognition of Prior Learning)
- Possibility to indicate RQF levels next to the NQF levels on national certificates/diplomas
- Possibility to connect national data on qualifications to the regional databases.

ACQF Referencing criteria:
1. Level descriptors
2. Learning outcomes
3. Transparency on inclusion qualifications in NQF and register
4. Quality assurance
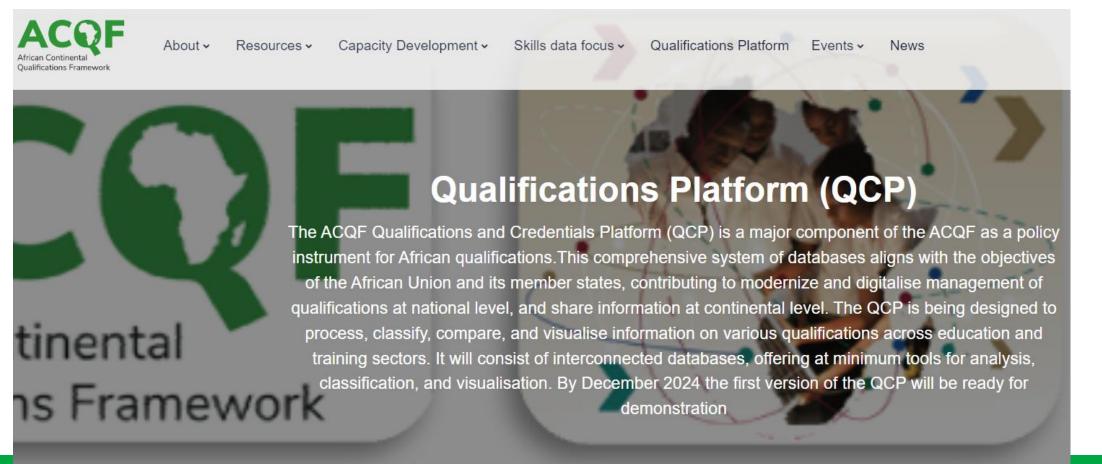
European Qualifications Frameworks

🇸🇮 Slovenia	🇪🇺 EQF Levels	🇮🇪 Ireland
NQF 10 Doctoral degree (Diploma o doktoratu znanosti) ▾	**EQF Level 8**	**NQF 10** Doctoral Degree ▾ Higher Doctorate ▾
NQF 9 Post-graduate research Master of science degree (Diploma o magisteriju znanosti) ▾		
Specialisation diploma following academic higher education (Diploma o specializaciji) ▾		
NQF 8 Master degree (Diploma o strokovnem magisteriju) ▾	**EQF Level 7**	**NQF 9** Master Degree ▾
Specialisation diploma following pre-Bologna professional higher education (Diploma o specializaciji)		Postgraduate Diploma ▾
Pre-Bologna diploma of academic higher education		Professional Award ▾
Higher education diploma (Diploma o visoki izobrazbi)		
NQF 7 Academic bachelor diploma (Diploma o izobraževanju prve stopnje – univerzitetna, UN) ▾	**EQF Level 6**	**NQF 8** Honours Bachelor Degree ▾
Professional bachelor diploma (Diploma o izobrazevanju visokem strokovnem, VS) ▾		Higher Diploma ▾
Pre-Bologna professional higher education diploma (Diploma o visokem strokovnem izobraževanju		Professional Award ▾
Specialisation diploma following old short cycle higher education (Diploma o specializaciji)		**NQF 7** Ordinary Bachelor Degree ▾
Certificate of supplementary qualification (SQF level 7) ▾		Professional Award ▾

Source: www. europass.europa.eu

Making information open, connecting qualifications databases and reaching people

The ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP)

https://acqf.africa/qualifications-platform

07

More materials on NQFs

More materials on NQFs

https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules
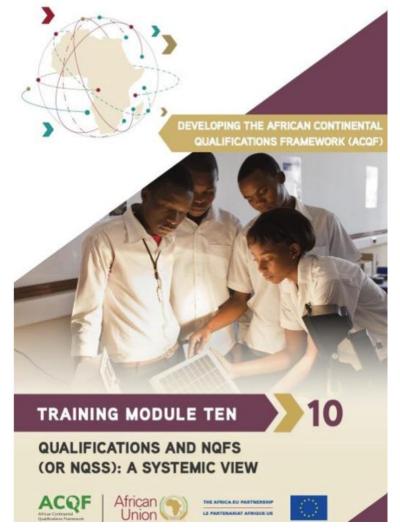
ACQF

Thank you!
Merci!
Obrigada!