



Support to African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF-II)

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21 August 2025

<https://acqf.africa>



African Continental
Qualifications Framework

Title: Support to the implementation of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF II)

Main policy: ACQF Policy Document validated in July 2023, Addis Abeba

Implementing partner: European Training Foundation (ETF), in cooperation with African Union Commission, the regional communities and member states

Financed by the European Union

Timeframe: April 2023 – end of 2026

Overall Objective (Impact)

To contribute to improved mobility and lifelong learning opportunities for African youth, as a result of:

- ❑ **enhanced comparability and transparency** of qualifications
- ❑ **enhanced recognition of skills and diplomas**
- ❑ **improved mutual trust and information-sharing** between qualifications frameworks and systems on the continent.



**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



Quadro Continental Africano de Qualificações (ACQF)

Documento Político do ACQF

Para validação pelos Estados-membros da União Africana

Versão: 17 de novembro 2022

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



ACQF: underpinnings, purposes, principles

PURPOSES OF ACQF

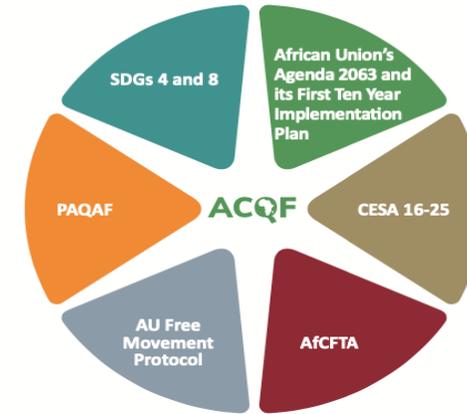
- 1 Enhance** → Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications of all types and levels, support people's lifelong learning outcomes.

- 2 Facilitate** → Facilitate validation of learning, recognition of skills, diplomas and certificates and mobility of learners and workers

- 3 Cooperate** → Work in cooperation and complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks and support African continental integration and creation of African common space of trusted qualifications.

- 4 Promote** → Promote cooperation and referencing between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

UNDERPINNINGS



PRINCIPLES

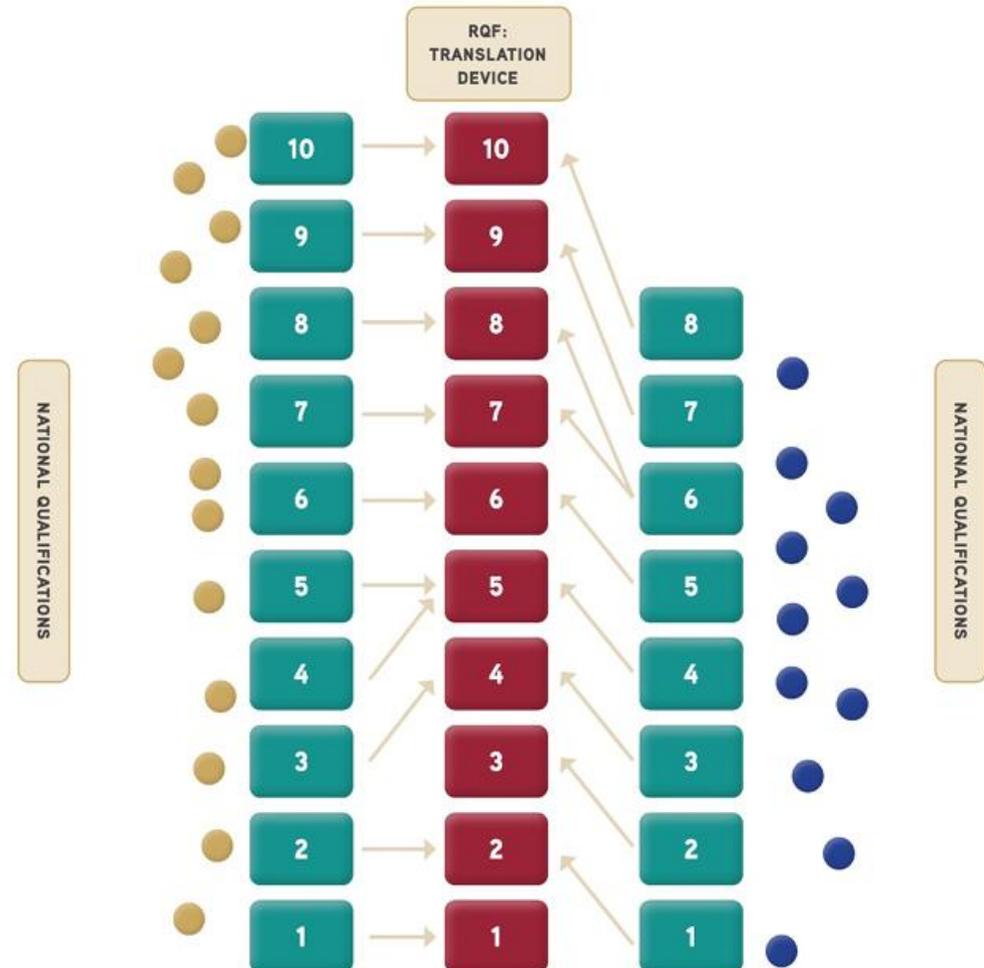
Inclusiveness:
all levels and types of qualifications, all modes of lifelong learning

Innovation:
future-proof, new demands - emerging skills, green skills, transversal skills

Openness:
to participation of all stakeholders, good practice, lessons learned (African, global)

Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs)

- National qualifications landscapes are complex and very diverse.
- RQFs are established to serve as a translation tools.
- African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) provides a common reference frame for qualifications levels.



CONCEPTUAL TECHNICAL DESIGN OF ACQF



ACQF is underpinned by Quality Assurance

Transparency and Trust in
Qualifications
Includes processes and
procedures to ensure
qualifications, assessment
and programme delivery
meet high standards

- **Metaframework:** translation device for referencing, comparison, cooperation between different NQFs
- **Comprehensive scope:** all levels, modes of learning
- **10 levels:** whole continuum of education and training
- **Level descriptors** expressed as learning outcomes
- **Domains of learning:** Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility
- **Learning outcomes orientation** supports:
 - Improve **transparency and comparability** of qualifications of different national systems
 - **Transparency and credibility of RPL** and validation of outcomes from experience, access to quality RPL
 - **Application of credit accumulation and transfer systems** in different academic and vocational pathways.
 - *Access, learning progression, lifelong learning, flexibility,*
 - *In design of qualifications: facilitate transfer of components of qualifications*

African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)

Inaugural workshop of the project ACQF-II (2023-2026)

11-13 July 2023 • Addis Ababa, Headquarters of the African Union

ACQF

African Continental Qualifications Framework

Supporting and connecting Qualifications Frameworks
Transparency and Mutual Trust in qualifications
Facilitating lifelong learning and mobility



ACQF-II is:

1. Capacity development.
2. Support countries and regions: NQF development and implementation.
3. Governance. ACQF Qualifications Platform. RPL Campaign. Referencing NQF-ACQF. Common profiles of qualifications

www.acqf.africa

Operationalisation of ACQF

- ✓ Referencing – core of the operational framework (operational NQFs needed)
- ✓ Qualifications and credentials platforms (QCP)
- ✓ Governance – institutional home for ACQF
- ✓ Roll-out of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- ✓ Common profiles of qualifications
- ✓ Continuous collaboration, research, monitoring

Capacity building – examples

Continental Forums

- 3rd Forum, Nairobi, Kenya – October 2024 (RPL)
- 4th Forum, Victoria, Seychelles – November 2024 (Micro-credentials)
- 5th Forum, Johannesburg, South Africa – July 2025 (Digitalisation of credentials)

**Thematic
campaigns**

Handbooks and Guidelines

Handbook on RPL for Practitioners

Handbook on Micro-credentials

Capacity building - further materials

Webinars & Workshops

Training Modules and Handbooks

Conferences

Cooperation with Regions & Countries

Thematic Briefs

Technical Notes

Networks

Video Learning Materials

Gallery: ACQF video and photos

[Technical Note 2: Registration of qualifications - comparison](#)

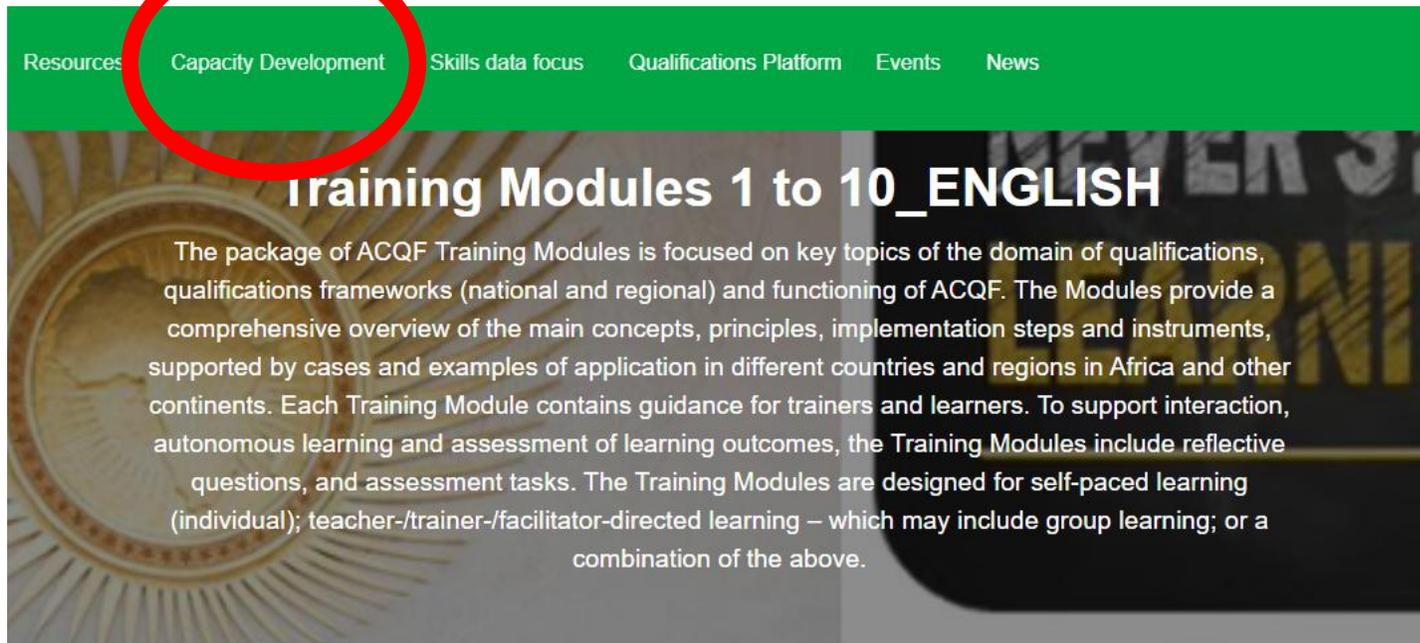
This Technical Note 2 addresses a topic of capital importance for any NQF: registration of qualifications.

[Technical Note 3: Linkages and complementarities Addis Recognition Convention-NQF-ACQF](#)

Fair and trusted recognition of learning, qualifications, credentials is essential for mobility of learners and workers, and for successful regional and continental integration. Recognition of qualifications and operational qualifications frameworks are complementary parts of the ecosystem of lifelong learning.



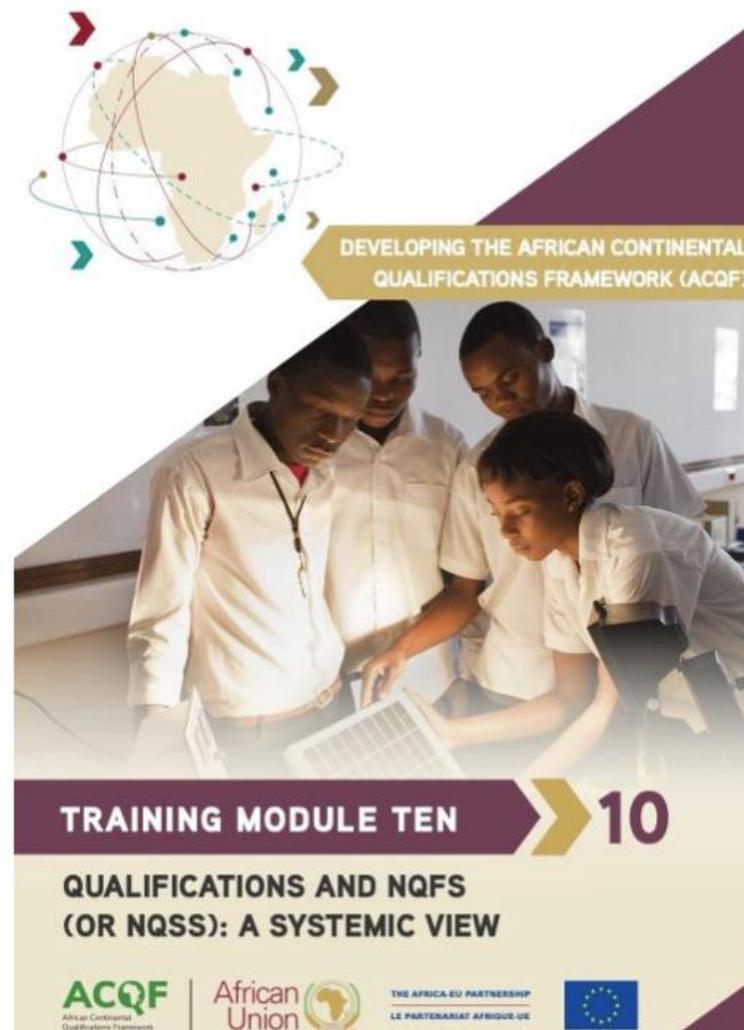
For more materials – visit <https://acqf.africa>



Resources **Capacity Development** Skills data focus Qualifications Platform Events News

Training Modules 1 to 10_ENGLISH

The package of ACQF Training Modules is focused on key topics of the domain of qualifications, qualifications frameworks (national and regional) and functioning of ACQF. The Modules provide a comprehensive overview of the main concepts, principles, implementation steps and instruments, supported by cases and examples of application in different countries and regions in Africa and other continents. Each Training Module contains guidance for trainers and learners. To support interaction, autonomous learning and assessment of learning outcomes, the Training Modules include reflective questions, and assessment tasks. The Training Modules are designed for self-paced learning (individual); teacher-/trainer-/facilitator-directed learning – which may include group learning; or a combination of the above.



DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (ACQF)

TRAINING MODULE TEN

10

QUALIFICATIONS AND NQFS (OR NQSS): A SYSTEMIC VIEW

ACQF African Continental Qualifications Framework | African Union | THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

Webinars & Workshops

Training Modules and Handbooks

Micro-Credentials Handbook

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - Handbook for RPL Practitioners

Manual de Apoio

Training Module 1: Learning Outcomes

Comprehensive overview of the application of learning outcomes in NQFs, RQF and ACQF.

Training Module 2: Levels and level descriptors in the context of ACQF

Training Module 2 guides you through the concepts, construction and application of level descriptors, explains the details of the elaboration of ACQF level descriptors.

Training Module 3: Referencing to ACQF

Training Module 3 presents the goals, criteria and procedures for referencing of National Qualifications Frameworks to ACQF, and proposes self-assessment tools and questions to help your country engage with the referencing process.

Support to NQFs

Stage of NQF development and implementation

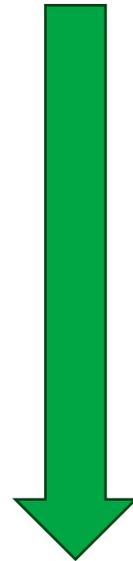
Stage 1: NQF development not started

Stage 2: NQF in early thinking

Stage 3: NQF in development and consultation

Stage 4: NQF in place (fully developed, approved as a legal act, started implementation)

Stage 5: NQF operational and reviewed



GOAL:

increase the number of countries with NQFs at stages 4 and 5 (implemented or advanced) equipped with qualifications database and monitoring systems.

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>

Technical support to NQFs in 2025

Botswana:

review of 9 policies
(RPL, referencing,
assessment...)

Eswatini:

Development of RPL
policy, proposal for
RPL pilot

Guinea-Bissau:

Operationalisation of
NQF Office, manuals,
procedures

Somalia:

policies on NQF, CATS
and RPL

Support to
Regional QFs:
SADC QF

Seychelles:

Micro-credentials
policy

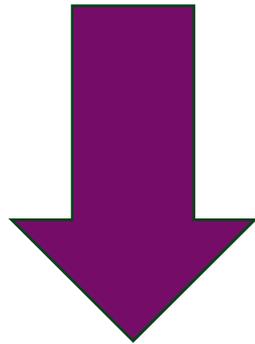
Zambia:

NQF review,
consultations

RQF processes - referencing

Presentation and publication of a **Referencing report**:

- relationships between NQF and RQF levels
- detailed information about national qualifications (QA arrangements, Recognition of Prior Learning, register)



Possibility to indicate RQF levels next to the NQF levels in databases and on national certificates/diplomas

ACQF Referencing criteria:

1. Level descriptors
2. Learning outcomes
3. Transparency on inclusion qualifications in NQF and register
4. Quality assurance

Quality assurance – key to trust

Qualifications included in national qualifications registers should be quality-assured:

- **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.

European Qualifications Frameworks

Source: www.europass.europa.eu

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

ACQF referencing – progress and plans

Pilot referencing with 8 countries

Capo Verde

Eswatini

Kenya

Lesotho

Seychelles

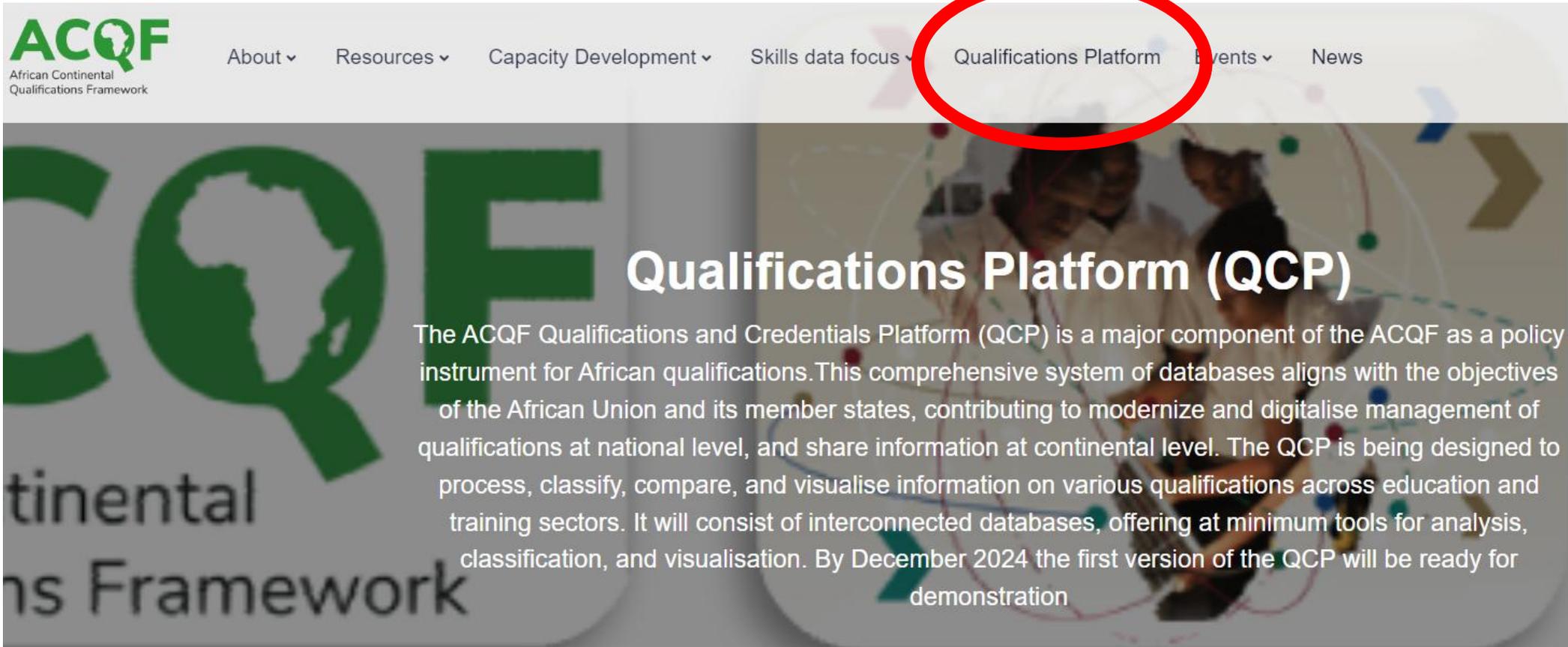
South Africa

Zimbabwe

Making information open, connecting qualifications databases and reaching people

The ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP)

<https://acqf.africa/qualifications-platform>



The screenshot shows the ACQF website's navigation menu with the following items: About, Resources, Capacity Development, Skills data focus, **Qualifications Platform** (circled in red), Events, and News. Below the navigation is a large banner for the Qualifications Platform (QCP) featuring a group of people and a globe. The banner text reads: **Qualifications Platform (QCP)**
The ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) is a major component of the ACQF as a policy instrument for African qualifications. This comprehensive system of databases aligns with the objectives of the African Union and its member states, contributing to modernize and digitalise management of qualifications at national level, and share information at continental level. The QCP is being designed to process, classify, compare, and visualise information on various qualifications across education and training sectors. It will consist of interconnected databases, offering at minimum tools for analysis, classification, and visualisation. By December 2024 the first version of the QCP will be ready for demonstration.

Qualifications and Credentials Platform

 Learning outcome (2)

 Accreditations

 Credit points

 Awarding opportunities

 Learning opportunities

 Publisher

Diploma in Business Administration

● Active

Thematic area

Financial Management and Accounting

ACQF level 9

NQF level 8

ID 123456

Published 11.11.2011



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See similar 

Compare 

Learning outcome (2)

Proficient in Advanced Project Management Techniques

Proficient in Key Business Administration Practices

Governance – ACQF Network

Importance of an institutional home for the framework

Network Presidency Elected:

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

- Kenya Qualifications Authority (KNQA)
- Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA)

Workplan & 4 Technical Clusters

1. Organisation of the Network, governance
2. Identifying donor organisations, initiate contacts
3. ACQF implementation – continue referencing
4. Promotion and awareness building
5. Enhancing digital presence
6. Undertake common research
7. Support organisation of annual conferences

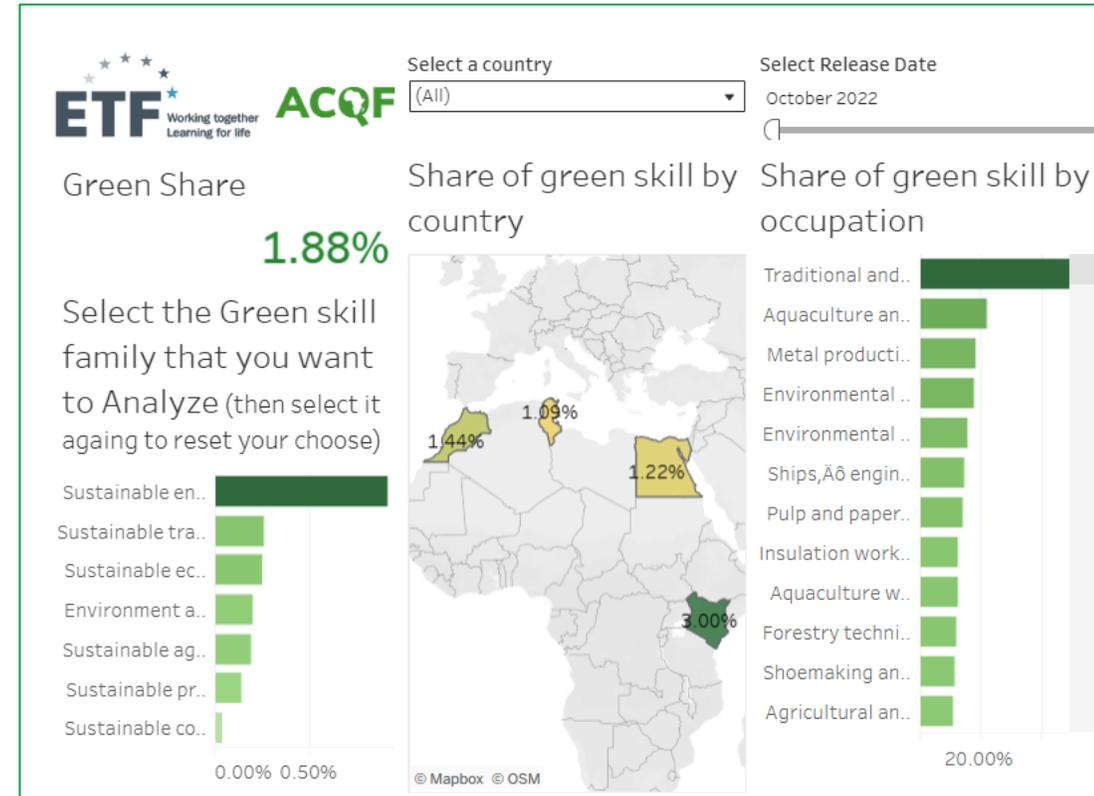
[Network's Inception Document,](#)

To join: acqfnetwork@saqa.org.za

Common Skills Profiles:

- Skills Data Focus
- Online Job Adds Analysis: real-time labour market intelligence
- Green skills dashboard: a new data visualisation tool focused on green skills and occupations
- 20 occupational profiles currently visible with skills and trends

Kenya
Morocco
Tunisia
Egypt



Plans - linking data on qualifications with data on skills profiles of occupations

- What skills are appearing in the job vacancies and how well are they covered by the learning outcomes in existing qualifications?
- What are the emerging occupations for which no training offer is available?

Coordination with other ongoing initiatives

- African Occupational Standards Framework, Critical Skills Bank

ACQF-II project support available

- Technical advice in development and operationalisation of qualifications framework (priority for NQFs) and related policies or in their review.
- Capacity building and peer learning activities
- Involvement in ACQF Network activities (upcoming Forum in Mauritius: acqfnetwork@saqa.org.za)
- Comparison tools: Qualifications and Credential Platform (support to countries to map and enter their data on qualifications)

Development of a Regional QF

Political and legal foundations + governance

- Regional policy mandate
- Legal instruments
- Institutional arrangements – Implementation Unit?

Stakeholders' engagement, consensus building

- National authorities, regulators, social partners & industry
- Communication, advocacy

Technical specification of RQF (architecture)

- Regional levels and level descriptors
- Competence standards
- Referencing criteria and processes

Quality Assurance

- Regional QA principles
- Accreditation criteria and mechanisms
- Capacity building for QA agencies

Curriculum & standards harmonisation

- Competence standards aligned with industry needs
- Regional guidelines for curriculum structures and credit systems

Tools for recognition and mobility

- Recognition (verification) policies
- Mobility pathways
- Recognition mechanisms
- RPL, CATS policies
- Digital tools: registers, learner records

Capacity Development & Resources

- Training for implementers
- Sustainable financing model for implementation
- Technical assistance and knowledge sharing platforms

Implementation and Monitoring

- **Roadmap, phased roll-out**
- Pilot testing
- Sustainability measures
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework

**Questions, comments,
clarifications?**

ACQF

Thank you!
Merci!
Obrigada!

