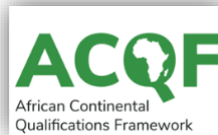


Project ACQF-II
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*“Forum of the institutions of National
Qualifications Frameworks”*

Program

ACQF-II 2024 Workshop Program

Training, dialogue, peer-to-peer sharing

Kinshasa, 18-20 June 2024

Hotel MEMLING

KINSHASA - Democratic Republic of Congo

1 Introduction

The Ministry of Vocational Training and Trades (MFPM) of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) co-organises with the "African Continental Qualifications Framework" (ACQF-II) project and African countries the "Continental Forum of the institutions of National Qualifications Frameworks". This workshop will take place in Kinshasa, from 18 to 20 June, at the Memling Hotel.

1.1 Background and objectives of the workshop

This Forum is part of the programme of training, dialogue and peer-to-peer sharing workshops organised by the ACQF-II project in 2024. This workshop will be followed by a series on the following themes: evolving qualification frameworks; digitization of certification management; referencing between national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and ACQF; Validation of prior learning (VAE); credit accumulation and transfer systems; micro-credentials; the rise of green skills and the role of qualifications frameworks; common occupational profiles; governance of qualifications in a changing world; the ACQF Qualifications and Micro-Credentials Platform; the African Qualifications Network. These workshops will be hosted by different African countries, in the months: July to November.

The ACQF-II project was launched in April 2023 to support the implementation of ACQF as a continental policy instrument, contributing to transparency, comparability and recognition of qualifications, collaboration between NQFs, promotion of lifelong learning, and support to Member States in the development of NQFs and related policies. The ACQF-II project develops and operationalises innovative tools such as the Qualifications and Credentials Platform (national and continental levels), the RPL campaign, and labour market intelligence tools. The ACQF Website is home to all outputs and updated information on the activities.



Context

Considering the African Continental Education Strategy (ACCESS-25), in particular its Goals 4c), 4d) which call on Member States to: 4c) "Establish National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) to facilitate the creation of multiple pathways for the acquisition of skills and competencies as well as mobility between sub-sectors; and 4d) "Develop a

continental qualifications framework linked to regional qualifications frameworks as well as national qualifications frameworks in order to facilitate regional integration and graduate mobility".

Led by the [ACQF Policy Paper](#) that was validated by the Member States of the African Union in July 2023 and the primary role it gives to capacity building, networking, advocacy and communication;

Supported by the project "Implementation of the African Continental Qualifications Framework", supported by the African Union, the European Union and ETF in the period 2023-2026;

Noting the imperative of lifelong learning, mobility of skills and qualifications, and improved employability, which NQFs need to support and strengthen

Recalling the importance of education, training and skills for the success of the green and digital transformation, for sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth, and for the beneficial use of new forms of Artificial Intelligence;

Noting the need for innovation in education and training systems (all levels) to strengthen their response to labour market and societal demands, and to adopt new approaches to skills development and recognition, such as micro-credentials and validation of non-formal and informal learning;

Guided by the context of African integration strategies, in particular Agenda 2063 and its Implementation Plan for the first ten years 2023, CESA-25, the African Continental Free Trade Area, as well as the seventeen recommendations made by the African Qualifications Framework and TVET Network;

Inspired by the priorities set by the African Union for the year 2024 dedicated to the theme "*Educating an Africa fit for the twenty-first century – building resilient education systems, for increased access to inclusive, qualitative, lifelong learning, and relevant to Africa*".

Objectives of the NQF Forum

The objectives of the NCF Forum are as follows

- Understand and reflect on African experiences of development, reform, implementation and impacts of NQFs and related policies.
- Share up-to-date information on ongoing and planned activities of the ACQF-II project, including a training session on the Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP).
- Dialogue and co-construct the main orientations, scope and roadmap elements for the launch and operationalization of the African Qualifications Network.

1.2 Key concepts and objectives of NQFs

More than 150 countries around the world are developing National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). In Africa, the number of NQFs in development and implementation is growing rapidly. This dynamic is visible in all regions, particularly in the SADC and EAC, which are home to NQFs with concrete experiences and accompanied by political backing, as well as technical and digital tools that promote the relevance of implementation and impacts for governments, target populations and socio-economic partners. Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) in Europe, Africa and Asia support the connection and mutual trust between NQFs in their communities of countries.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria corresponding to specific levels of learning, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and to improve the transparency,

accessibility, permeability, and quality of qualifications with regard to the labour market and civil society. NQFs are only functional if they are synchronized with the country's major socio-economic and human resource development policies, as well as with the diverse lifelong learning ecosystem.

Qualifications have multiple functions. They tell employers what their holders are expected to know, understand and be able to do ('learning outcomes'). They may be a condition of access to certain regulated professions. They help education and training authorities and providers to determine the level and content of learning completed by a given person. They are also important on a personal level, as they sanction the achievements of learners. The role of qualifications is therefore crucial in improving employability, promoting mobility, and providing access to continuing education and training.

The development and implementation of the CNC has a substantial added value in the modernization of the ecosystem for the development of skills at all levels and professions in all countries. But implementation requires **governance** supported by **technical capacity, action in partnership with employers and trade unions, and strengthening the quality of training and trainers**. In most countries that have functioning NQFs, specific structures for management and implementation of the NQF are established and supported by the State.



The partnership, collaboration, and synergy between ACQF and NCCs in Africa contribute to change and to reforms of the skills development and lifelong learning ecosystems, with a major role in the following dimensions:

- **Mutual trust, better understanding between countries and between regions in Africa and elsewhere:** ACQF and the NQFs form a vast ecosystem that will lead to an African zone of trusted qualifications. These achievements will be the result of the referencing of the NQFs and RQFs to the ACQF, the reinforcement of quality and the sharing of up-to-date information on the qualifications of the different countries that the ACQF QCP aims to amplify.
- **International comparability of qualifications, fair mobility of learners and workers, recognition of the qualifications of national citizens returning from migration:** the ACQF and the NQFs are instruments that can be understood in Africa, Europe, and other continents. All NQFs speak a common language, despite differences in education and training systems and structures. The qualifications of the NQFs will be comparable to those of other countries. Recognition and mobility (vertical, horizontal, international, and international) is supported by instruments such as credit

accumulation and transfer systems, RPL, digital qualifications catalogues and platforms and referencing between NQF, RQF and ACQF.

- **Relevance:** Review and improvement of existing qualifications and development of new qualifications that meet the new requirements of society and the world of work. Real-time databases and analyses on employer demand trends, and platforms for disseminating this evidence are essential elements to guide reforms, the development of qualifications for adaptability and employability, and finally, for equitable and inclusive growth where all have the right to trusted qualifications for their fair and adequate insertion into the world of work, society and the world.
- **Clarity, comparability, and consistency:** through the harmonization and quality assurance of qualifications, aligned with the levels of the CNC and referenced to the ACQF; through the principles of the competency-based approach. Large disparities and inconsistencies in existing qualifications and qualification levels lead to labour market mismatches, such as difficulties in matching jobs with employer dissatisfaction when recruiting staff for large projects and day-to-day operations.
- **Career guidance:** Support for the improvement of information and career guidance for young people and adults. The CNC registers all quality qualifications and provides this information to the various users through digital databases that can be accessed online. Learners are then provided with transparent information on the content of qualifications, pathways to further training and horizontal mobility to other qualifications for emerging jobs. The choice of training courses is becoming more objective, based on credible information on occupations and the content of qualifications. ACQF is contributing through the implementation of an innovative, digitalized and connected online instrument: the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP).
- **Social inclusion:** Through the learning outcomes approach, the NQFs and ACQF support the validation and recognition of skills and competencies acquired at work and in social experiences, in non-formal and informal learning. This is a major innovation that promotes access to qualifications for all experienced workers, motivated and active young people, and adults. It is a question of social equity: citizens can have their acquired skills visible and documented. The validation of prior learning (RPL) is based on the NQF standards and is based on quality procedures that ensure the credibility of the assessment and certification. ACQF supports VAE in Africa through a specific Campaign, which includes the training of RPL Practitioners, the dissemination of a new Methodological Guide for RPL Professionals, the development of national RPL Policy documents and Guides and actions to disseminate good practices of RPL between countries.
- **Finally, all CNCs are open to innovation, such as:** new types of qualifications for lifelong learning and flexible training (micro-credentials); new and emerging skills, especially those that are essential for trades and jobs to become 'green' and workers able to work with new green techniques and materials. In addition, digitalization is impacting every stage of social and business life, requiring huge efforts to reskill and upskill millions of employees and workers. The CNC has the political assets and technical tools to contribute to this skills revolution.
- **The ACQF-NQF ecosystem is essential for the African continent, the youngest in the world, which wants and must create an equitable, sustainable and green economic marvel,** industrialize, offer innovative services, produce added value, boost productive agriculture, which feeds the continent while being able to export, generate quality and productive jobs for the entire population and capitalize on the skills and cultural richness of the African populations.

2 Workshop Program

The workshop is structured in 9 thematic areas:

Day	Themes	Countries, facilitation
June 18 09.30-13.00 13.00-14.00 Lunch	Opening, welcome, official speeches. 1. NQFs in Africa: Reforms, Impacts and New Perspectives. Lessons learned from more experienced NQFs. Innovations from younger NQFs.	AU Commission. MFPM, ACQF. Angola, Cape Verde, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, Zambia, Zimbabwe. ACQF
	14.00-17.00	2. ACQF: Policy overview, activities, and implementation tools. 3. Lifelong learning. RPL. Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems. Micro-credentials.
June 19 09.30-13.00 13.00-14.00 Lunch	4. Governance of ACQF: African Qualifications Network. Objectives, organisation, members, roadmap. Dialogue, consensus. 5. Comparison and cooperation between ACQF and other Regional Qualifications Frameworks and other relevant Networks.	ACQF-II – MFPM. All countries. ACQF, Seychelles, Cape Verde, Senegal, UEMOA, ECCAS, EAC
	14.00-17.00	6. NQF-ACQF referencing – key activity of the ACQF. Comparability, recognition, and portability of qualifications. Mutual trust between countries and NCC.
	7. Digital and green transformation. Role of the NQFs. 8. Transparency and digitalization of CNCs and ACQFs. Databases and platforms of qualifications: examples.	ACQF-II, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone Mauritius, Kenya, Europe
June 20 09.30-13.00 13.00-14.00 Lunch 14.00-15.30	9. ACQF's Digital Platform for Qualifications and Micro-Credentials (QCP). Training on QCP concepts and tools. Final debate. Upcoming ACQF workshops and activities with all countries. Thanks. Fence. Culture of the Democratic Republic of Congo	ACQF-II MFPM, ACQF, CUA

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