

## African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)



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### FORUM OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS INSTITUTIONS

## Summary Report



**June 18-20, 2024**

**MEMLING Hotel – Virunga Meeting Room**

**Kinshasa - Democratic Republic of Congo**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Ministry of Vocational Training (MFP) of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) co-organised with the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF-II) project, the African Union Commission and African countries, the first "Continental Forum of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) institutions". The ACQF-II project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the European Training Foundation (ETF), an EU agency. This workshop took place in Kinshasa, from 18 to 20 June, at the Memling Hotel, with online streaming.

The Forum was officially opened by His Excellency, Minister of Vocational Training of DR Congo, who welcomed the representatives of countries and regions attending onsite and thanked the ACQF-II project for choosing DR Congo to host this 1st African Forum of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). The opening session included the speech of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to DR Congo, which contextualized the ACQF-II project in the panorama of EU external cooperation and congratulated DR Congo on hosting the 1st African Forum of NQFs. The introductory presentation on the objectives of the Forum, its main themes and participants was made by the coordinator of the ACQF-II project and is accessible on the [Forum's website](#).



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 and regions in the development of NQFs and related policies. The ACQF-II project develops and operationalizes innovative tools such as the Qualifications and Credentials Platform (national and continental levels), the VAE campaign, and labour market information tools. The [ACQF website](#) contains all products and up-to-date information on the project's activities with partners. This Forum is part of the programme of training, dialogue and peer-to-peer sharing workshops organised by the ACQF-II project in 2024.

**The objectives of the NQF Forum are as follows:**

- To understand and reflect on African experiences of development, reform, implementation and the impacts of NQCs and related policies. 8 countries with advanced NQFs synthesized information on achievements, impacts, and success factors as well as
- Share up-to-date information on ongoing and planned ACQF-II project activities, including training sessions on: a) referencing NQFs to ACQF; b) the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP)
- Dialogue and co-construction of the main orientations, scope and elements for roadmap and organisation of the African Qualifications Network. Validated the Basic Proposal for the Development (in July 2024) of the Network's Concept Note.

**Participants of the Forum:**

- 23 countries and 4 regions:
  1. Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, DR Congo, Eswatini, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe (Onsite).
  2. Main national institutions represented:
    - NQF Authorities: Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia
    - National Qualifications Institute: of the Republic of Angola
    - Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System: of the Republic of Cabo Verde
    - Technical Commission of the National Qualifications Framework: Mozambique
    - National Authority for Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Research (ANAQ-Sup): Senegal
    - Ghana Higher Education Commission (GTEC) – Ghana
    - Council for Higher Education (CHE): Lesotho
    - Instituto Nacional de Formação Técnica e Profissional (INAFOR) – from Guinea-Bissau
    - Ministry of Education: Zimbabwe
    - National Council for Technical, Vocational and Other Academic Awards (NCTVA) – from Sierra Leone
  3. Tunisia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda participated online (Zoom).
  4. Regions: ECCAS, SADC, UEMOA (onsite) and EAC (online – Zoom)
  5. Continental organisations: All-Africa Students Union

6. European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) – online (Zoom)
7. European Training Foundation: ACQF-II coordinator



## 2 Recommendations of the Forum

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 VAE 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 on qualifications at all levels and sub-sectors; implementation of RPL; Real-time data and analysis on skills demand. Learners' achievements.



7. Share 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.

## 2.1 Validated proposal on the African Qualifications Network

**Objective :** Sustainability of the implementation and development of the CCAQ

- **Scope:**
  - All ACQF's main areas of activity: referencing, VAE campaign, common qualifications profiles, ACQF certification platform (QCP), training and advocacy, monitoring and evaluation and research.
  - Inclusiveness, participation – all countries, institutions of the regional economic communities, other national, regional and broader organizations
  - Other areas relevant to the ACQF
- **Governance:**
  - Advisory Group – Chair and Co-Chairs (of NQF Authorities)
  - Technical groups (clusters) – with chairs and contributors (experts)
  - Political support and participation of the AUC at key moments – Memorandum of Cooperation
  - Monitoring and evaluation: regular reports, annual plans.
- **Financing:**
  - ACQF-II project: technical expertise, certification ACQF platform (QCP), events, training, pilot projects
  - Countries and regions: in-kind, financial, technical
- **Network name:** options – African Qualifications Network; Network of Qualification Framework Agencies; Network of NQFs Africa.

On the **Network's Technical Clusters**, the following proposals were discussed and validated:

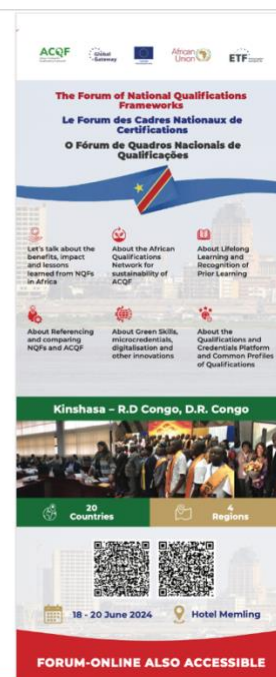
- **Cluster 1: Referencing to ACQF**
  - Steer, support referencing to ACQF and related follow-up steps (Guideline 3)
  - Follow-up steps: online publication of reports; use of ACQF levels on newly issues qualifications and registers of qualifications; communication and dissemination.
- **Cluster 2: Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) and digitalisation**
  - Steer, support, contribute to implementation at national and continental levels
  - ACQF website and tools
- **Cluster 3: Development and implementation of NQF, RPL, CATS, others**
  - Technical advise, information-sharing, peer learning activities for **common** goals and interests
  - Micro-credentials, green skills, digital skills
- **Cluster 4: Collaboration, communication and sharing**
  - With African RQFs, regional organisations, UNESCO Recognition conventions, EQF, ENIC-NARIC, Bologna Process, other networks globally
  - Communication and advocacy actions, events, social media, ACQF website
  - **Sharing ! Can we share qualifications standards and programmes widely in the AQN? Who wants to start / contribute? How?**
- **Cluster 5: Financing and fund raising**

## ACQF 1st ACQF NQF Forum - Kinshasa, 18-20 June 2024



Theme 2 ACQF: Policy overview, activities, tools

1st NQF Forum - Kinshasa



## 3 Themes of the Forum

### 3.1 Sources and technical references

- [ACQF Policy Document](#)
- [ACQF Policy Document](#) (English)
- [ACQF Documento político](#) (Português)
- [ACQF Training Modules](#)
- [ACQF Training Modules](#) (English)
- [Surveys RPL, Micro-credentials, NQF](#)
- [ACQF Skills Data Focus](#) - common occupational profiles
- [ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform \(QCP\)](#) – reports and summaries on the ongoing development of the QCP

### 3.2 Presentations and Key Messages

**Theme 1: NQFs in operationalization - achievements, success factors, adaptation to learning and labour market transformations, future perspectives.**

Experiences were shared by representatives of the authorities of the following Qualifications Frameworks:

- Angola, Ms. Edgarda Neto – INQ. [Presentation available on the ACQF website.](#)
- Cabo Verde, Mr. Amílcar Mendes – UC-SNQ. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- Kenya, Dr. Alice Kande – KNQA. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- Lesotho, Dr. Molise Nhlapo – CHE. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- South Africa, Mr Japie Nel – SAQA. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- Zambia, Mr Fidelis Cheelo – ZAQA. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- Presentations on the [NQF from Eswatini](#) and the [NQF du Mozambique](#) are available on the Forum's webpage.

The experiences of the 8 NQFs show that common characteristics have been established between NQFs from different countries and education and training systems. These similarities are the result of

the common language and principles of the NQFs globally and promote comparability and transparency among NQFs across the continent.

The differences observed between NQFs can be characterized as a "non-substantial difference", i.e., they do not prevent nor limit comparability; they are the result of contextualization to socio-political realities and needs and to the education and training system. Thus, these differences can be referred to as "diversity" of solutions adapted to different contexts and histories.

- **Common characteristics and similarities between the presented NQFs – in summary:**

1. **Objectives:** to improve the transparency, clarity and comparability of qualifications of all types and levels; to clarify the articulation, pathways and bridges between education-training subsystems; to strengthen learners' mobility and lifelong learning, contributing to employability and skills matching; to promote parity of esteem for all learning modalities (formal, non-formal and informal), and the validation of learning outcomes contributing to social inclusion and decent work; facilitate the recognition of qualifications between countries and institutions; ensure the credibility and authenticity of the titles and documents of all national qualifications; strengthen the approximation between the qualifications awarded and socio-economic and labour market trends and needs; promote innovation and renew qualifications to meet new demands and the green and digital transformation (new skills, changing occupations); promote regional and global cooperation of qualifications frameworks, and referencing with regional and continental qualifications frameworks.
2. **Principles:** application of the learning outcomes approach; ensure the quality of NQF-referenced qualifications of all types and levels; application of NQF rules and criteria in a comparable and objective manner; involvement of socio-economic stakeholders and partners and the world of education and training, employment, technology, innovation and research.
3. **Scope:** inclusive and broad, promoting lifelong learning and mobility and progression. All NQFs include qualifications of all types and levels of all subsystems: from primary (basic) to higher education. All NQFs facilitate and support the recognition of knowledge and skills in all learning modalities (formal, non-formal and informal).
4. **Structure:** Most NQFs in Africa are structured in 10 levels, and Cabo Verde has adopted an 8-level structure. This difference is non-substantial, as it does not prevent or limit the comparability and referencing between these NQFs.  
Certain NQFs join-up 3 sub-frameworks (General education, TVET and Higher education), others have a fully integrated structured. In all cases, the objectives, principles, quality criteria and level descriptors of the NQF apply in equal and comparable manner to the sub-frameworks.
5. **Level descriptors define the NQFs' steps of "learning complexity":** levels are defined by descriptors that express the vertical (depth) and horizontal (breadth) logic of the NQF. The 8 countries that presented their NQFs apply fairly similar descriptor domains, notably in the following combinations: a) knowledge, skills and competences; b) knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility; c) domains of knowledge, nature of skills, context and agency; d) Some of these NQFs are currently undergoing reforms and updates, including the revision of descriptors to better adapt them to changing skills needs and to improve comparability between NQFs in Africa and globally – as is the case in South Africa and Zambia.
6. **Qualifications in the National qualifications registers and catalogues:**

- The majority of NQFs include full qualifications; some NQFs also include partial qualifications (covering part of units of outcomes defined in the standard) and "micro-credentials".
- Qualifications are registered in the Qualifications Registers or Catalogues, which are accessible to all users on the websites of the national qualifications authorities and councils/commissions. That is the case of South Africa ([SAQA Register](#) – All qualifications and Unit Standards), Botswana ([BQA Qualifications Register](#)), Cabo Verde ([Catálogo Nacional das Qualificações](#)), Mauritius ([MQA - National Qualifications and Unit Standards](#)). Mozambique ([Catálogo Nacional das Qualificações Profissionais – ANEP](#)).

**7. Governance of the NQFs:** The governance structure of the 8 NQFs can be categorised into 4 models:

1. **Model 1: National Qualifications Authority:** responsible for the implementation, integrity and quality of the NQF and its instruments (such as the qualifications register/catalogue); promotion and management of related policies (such as validation of prior learning and the system of credit accumulation and transfer, innovations such as micro-credentials); monitoring and evaluation and review of the NQF; coordination and collaboration with relevant ministries and public structures, stakeholders and social partners, and regional and continental qualifications NQFs and frameworks. These authorities are registered institutions with legal status, and endowed with technical and financial management autonomy, and accountable for achievements, efficiency and impact to the concerned ministry(s).  
This is the case of the NQFs of South Africa (SAQA), Botswana (BQA), Eswatini (EQA), Kenya (KNQA), Zambia (ZAQA). Angola has also adopted this model, but the structure is called the "National Institute of Qualifications" (INQ). Other African countries also have opted for NQF Authorities: Mauritius (MQA), Namibia (NQA), Seychelles (SQA).
2. **Model 2: Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System.** Role and functions similar to those of model 1, defined by decree creating the NQF and its governance. This is the case of the UC-SNQ of Cabo Verde, which is accountable towards the supervising Ministry for achievements and efficiency. The UC-SNQ has its own management and coordination structure that integrates socio-economic stakeholders and other relevant ministries.
3. **Model 3: NQF department within an existing institution (Council on Higher Education).** Role and functions similar to those of model 1. This is the example of Lesotho.
4. **Model 4: NQF Technical Commission** – brings together all key ministries and stakeholders for the planning and implementation of NQF activities. The functions, tasks and coordination of the Technical Commission are defined by the decree approving the NQF and its components and governance structure. The Technical Commission is coordinated by the National Council for Evaluation and Quality of Higher Education (CNAQ) and is accountable for achievements and efficiency towards a transversal ministry responsible for the reform of public administration. Mozambique has adopted this model, pending the gradual development of a long-term option for the governance of the NQF.



**8. Achievements of the NQFs:** The 8 countries reported a wide range of achievements, the extent of which depends on the history of implementation of the NQFs, which differs substantially between countries such as South Africa (whose NQF has 29 years of history) and Angola and Mozambique (whose NQFs are the youngest – established by decrees issued in 2022). Main achievements mentioned by the 8 countries:

- Harmonization, clarification, systematization and structuring of the panorama of training programs and respective qualifications.
- Transparency of qualifications through databases, registries and platforms for sharing up-to-date and credible information on qualifications at all levels and fields of study.
- Improvement of the articulation between training programmes and qualifications and the flexibility of courses and bridges between levels, fields of study and sub-sectors.
- Implementation of the competency-based / learning outcomes approach for the development and registration of qualifications and their referencing to the NQF levels.
- Implementation of the validation of learning outcomes from all modalities and contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) and parity of esteem and rights of qualifications resulting from RPL– promoting the growth of the proportion of the population with recognised qualifications, and the transition to the formal and formal economy.
- Harmonized quality assurance for all NQF qualifications.
- Facilitation of the recognition of qualifications between countries.
- Better dialogue and consultation between actors in the education and training subsystems - to facilitate comparability, mobility, articulation, and lifelong learning.
- Established NQF governance structures that are operational and have well-defined functions and specific competencies and technical capabilities for the NQF activities.
- Monitoring and evaluation, evidence, revision and updating of the NQFs: databases, evaluation studies, participatory initiatives to review the NQFs.
- Documentation and instruments related to the NQF: websites, legal acts, concept papers, technical user support guides and manuals, related policy documents and guides (RPL, credit systems), occupational and qualification standards, databases/registers and catalogues of qualifications, other specific databases such as learners' achievements and professional bodies.
- Pooling knowledge on NQFs, sharing of successful practices and experiences, support for the development of NQFs of neighbouring countries in Africa – promoting mutual trust, comparability and recognition between countries.

**9. NQF success factors:** The 8 countries have identified their success factors, including:

- Implementation of the NQF across the entire education and training system – all levels and fields of study.
- Alignment of qualifications (existing and new) with the NQF's levels, principles and criteria.
- Gradual implementation, pilots for the implementation of new policies and instruments – promoting the early effective start as well as the collection of information on the strengths and weaknesses/challenges of new initiatives and methods.

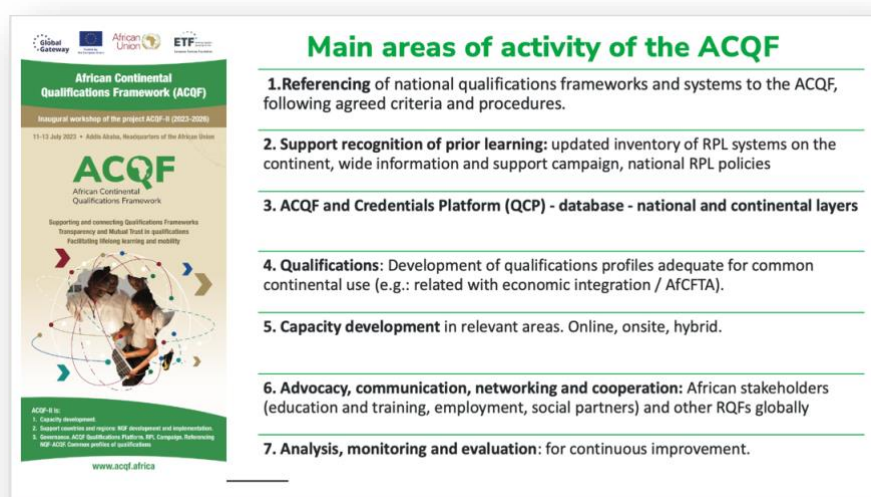
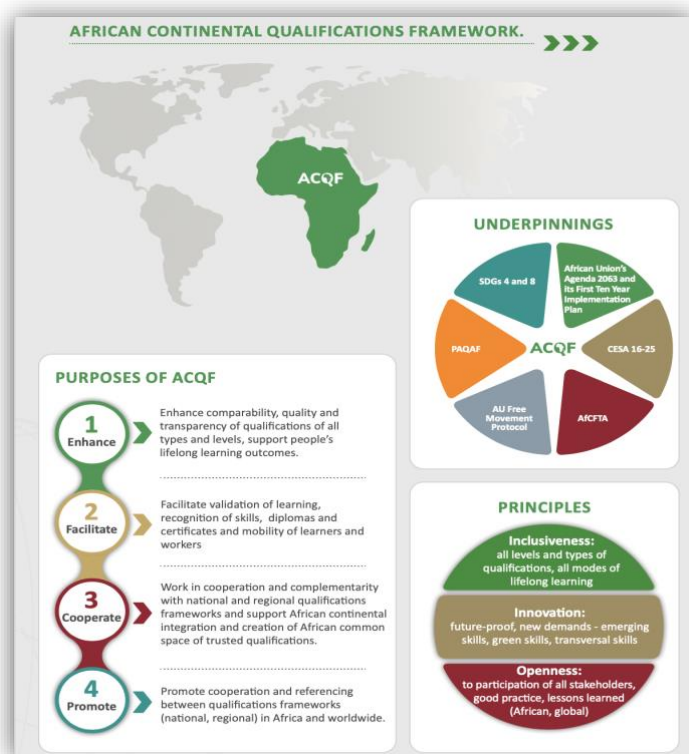
- Relevance and clarity of legislation and regulations
- Operational NQF governance structures with specific resources and skills
- Dialogue and consultation with relevant government structures and stakeholders.
- Monitoring and evaluation, based on analyses and data on skills needs, quality of training, integration of qualified people into the labour market, and others.
- International cooperation and mutual learning – based on networking and sharing of experiences and successful solutions from other NQFs and Certification Authorities.
- Use of lessons learned from benchmarking and comparison exercises with other NQFs and regional qualifications frameworks.



## Theme 2: Overview of ACQF and ACQF-II Project Activities and Tools

The reference presentation on theme 2 is accessible from the [webpage of the Forum](#).

- Presentation by the Coordinator of the ACQF-II project, on the content of the ACQF Policy Document, the objectives, principles, scope and structure of ACQF levels and main activities of the ACQF as a policy instrument for the comparability and transparency of qualifications, referencing and collaboration between qualifications frameworks and support for the recognition of qualifications and mobility.
- The main priorities and activities of the ACQF-II project highlighted cooperation with different countries on the topics of qualifications frameworks, RPL and credit systems, as well as on micro-credentials and digitalisation.
- The tools available on the ACQF website include, among others: 10 Thematic Guides with their 10 Training Modules; information tool on the NQFs; monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support tool, indicators and results framework; tool on common occupational profiles and qualifications; resources on RPL and micro-credentials, including results of research surveys.



**Theme 3: Lifelong learning – the development and application of: a) RPL, b) Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS) and c) Micro-credentials.**

Experiences from three countries were shared by representatives of the NQF Authorities:

- **RPL:**
  - [Kenya: available on the Forum's website.](#)
  - [Mauritius: available on the Forum's website](#)
  - [Mozambique: available on the Forum's website](#)
- **CATS:**
  - [Kenya: available on the Forum's website](#)
  - [Zambia: available on the Forum's website](#)

- **Micro-credentials:**
  - [Mauritius: available on the Forum's website](#)

The developments of the policies and methodological and application guides of the RPL and CATS are well documented in the presentations of the three countries and share a significant number of common characteristics. In particular: the definitions and scope of RPL and CATS, the systemic links with the NQFs, the application of the learning outcomes approach and the contribution to the objectives of the NQFs in terms of mobility and lifelong learning.

The processes of application of RPL, based in logically interconnected phases, ranging from orientation and information, identification, documentation, evaluation, certification are quite similar in the three cases presented.

The presentation of Mauritius (MQA) on the development of micro-credentials was highly appreciated by all the countries and regions present. The presented approach and conceptual foundations are based on the experiences and recommendations of international organisations such as the European Commission, OECD and UNESCO, which makes the new "Micro-credentials Framework" of Mauritius comparable, well-grounded and understandable in all contexts of application of micro-credentials. Reference definitions on micro-credentials:

- **European Commission**

'Micro-Credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. (European Commission, 2021)

- **OECD**

Micro-Credentials are an organized learning activity with an associated credential; the credential recognizes a skill or competency that has been acquired through an organized learning process and validated through an assessment. (OECD, 2021)

- **UNESCO**

A micro-credential • is a record of focused learning achievement, verifying what the learner knows, understands, or can do. • includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and awarded by a trusted provider. • has stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning. • meets the standards required by relevant quality assurance (UNESCO 2022).

Mauritius' experience is now consolidated in the form of a 5-pronged Micro-Credential Framework (Guidelines) listed below. The implementation phase is in planning and will be supported by the main institutions responsible for the implementation of the NQF (MQA), the quality assurance and coordination of higher education and the relevant training and awarding institutions.

1. Guideline 1: Objectives for MC framework, coverage, principles, players
2. Guideline 2: Definition of MC – information requirements for increased transparency
3. Guideline 3 : Credit award and stackability
4. Guideline 4: Inclusion and levelling of MC against NQF, quality assurance
5. Guideline 5: National register, credit bank and open badge options

The Principal Secretary (PS) responsible for vocational training of Kenya appreciated all the experiences, and highlighted the new developments reported by Mauritius regarding micro-credentials. The PS stressed the importance and urgency of developing a comprehensive approach to the deployment of micro-credentials to strengthen lifelong learning and employability in Kenya. This plea concerning micro-credentials was validated among the 8 Recommendations emanating from the Forum.

**Theme 4: Governance of ACQF - African Qualifications Network. Objectives, organization, members, roadmap. Proposals, debate, consensus.**

The main findings are presented in Chapter 2.1 of this report.

Reference presentation: accessible on the [Forum webpage](#).

Documentation on themes 5 to 9 is available on the Forum's website, in the form of presentations. The key elements of these themes are briefly outlined below.

**Theme 5: Comparison and cooperation between ACQF and the other Regional Qualifications Frameworks and relevant networks.**

Les présentations de référence sur ce thème sont disponibles sur le website du Forum:

- [Presentation of the ACQF](#)
- [Presentation of the CCMEFP-UEMOA](#)
- [Presentation by the SADC Secretariat](#)
- [Presentation of EAC – IUCEA](#)
- The representative of ECCAS, Mr. Maxime Ake, made his speech without a PPT.

**Common highlights of the session:**

- Qualifications frameworks implemented at national level (NQFs) play a key role in regional and continental integration, mobility and comparability, hence the importance of well-structured cooperation between the three levels (national, regional and continental).
- The regional and continental levels need to support each other and act as catalysts for the development of NQFs across the continent.
- Synergies and comparability between qualifications frameworks can be based on the ACQF as a continental framework, in particular: reference to the ACQF Policy Document and its technical components such as the 10 Guides and 10 Training Modules, and the ACQF website. Among the structuring elements of ACQF that can be used by other frameworks (national and regional): the ACQF Objectives and Principles; the level descriptors of the ACQF; the ACQF's referencing approach and criteria; transparency and digitisation tools, such as the Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP).

**Regional qualifications frameworks: SADCQF and RQF of EAC**

- The experiences of the two regional qualifications frameworks, SADCQF and the Framework of the East Africa Community testify to their commitment in the conceptualization and implementation of the strategic objectives of these frameworks, in particular as regards harmonization, quality and recognition of qualifications, better mobility of learners and workers and integration of migrants and refugees who continue to flow into the countries of the 2 regions. Both regional frameworks face issues related to resources necessary to address the key activities. Work in cooperation with ACQF can contribute to partly alleviate these difficulties.
- The SADCQF cooperates with 16 Member Countries, 11 of which have NQFs in operationalization, albeit with diverse histories of implementation. In 2024, the SADCQF was compared to the European Qualifications Framework. The new roadmap of 2023-2026 of SADCQF provides for increased cooperation with ACQF and EQF and referencing in synergy SADCQF-ACQF.
- The EAC Regional Qualifications Framework has continued to develop since its adoption and is articulated with the tools for regional harmonization of quality assurance, RPL, development of



professional certifications and recognition of qualifications. A strengthening of cooperation with ACQF and the possibility of referencing between the two frameworks was mentioned.

- ECCAS is also committed to the fundamental objective of growth of productive employment supported by relevant skills and trusted qualifications at all levels of education and training systems, including non-formal and informal learning. The start of cooperation with ACQF for the development of a regional and national qualifications frameworks was mentioned and discussed.

Sharing and pooling is one of the salient dimensions of the session, illustrated by the example of the CCMEFP-UEMOA presented by its Secretary General. Main conclusions of this experience in brief:

- Strengthening the sharing of good practices and solutions adapted to the contexts of African countries and regions is an imperative of paramount importance. Pooling has demonstrated its advantages and achievements through the CCMEFP-UEMOA Digital Platform, which already contains 5975 vocational training resources listed in 9 countries. The Platform can be accessed here: [www.mutualisation.ccmefp-uemoa.org](http://www.mutualisation.ccmefp-uemoa.org)
- Sharing and pooling - **a formidable tool for sub-regional and inter-regional integration whose objective is to strengthen national vocational training systems** in support of the economic and social development of the Member States.
- In view of its noble objectives, the **need to popularize the platform** and support **all the actors of vocational training** (public authorities, private sector, partners) for the financing of the activities of the National Pooling Entities (ENM)
- The **ambition** at the level of the CCMEFP-UEMOA:
  - **To raise employment and vocational training to the level of the priorities** of States and **to ensure better financing of the initiatives** undertaken;
  - Make the CCMEFP-UEMOA an **effective tool for integration, development and a culture of peace, through training, professional integration and the skills and labour market information systems.**
- **Strategic partnerships, particularly with the ACQF**, are a sine qua non condition for strengthening our training and professional integration systems.
- The CCMFPM has begun the implementation of the **Regional Vocational Training Program (PROFOR)**: 24 Priority Professions identified and a harmonized framework document for the development and adaptation of training curricula adopted in 2023.

#### Theme 6 focused on the ACQF Qualifications Platform (QCP)

Theme 6 introduced for the first time in the ACQF-II multi-country workshops the training sessions on the ACQF Qualifications and Micro-Qualifications Platform (QCP), currently in the initial phase of technical development.

The presentation made by the technical team in charge of the development of the QCP Platform is clear and very complete and can be consulted on the [Forum website](#). The next training sessions will continue to be aligned with ACQF NQF Workshops. An online training platform will be prepared and launched for all ACQF stakeholders and interested countries.

#### Theme 7: Transparency and digitalisation of NQFs and qualifications

This theme was exploited in form of presentations from 4 countries (South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Tunisia) and the presentation on European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDCL) made by the European Commission's expert (DG EMPL).

These presentations highlighted the added value of the digitalization of NQF processes, qualifications databases and other tools and the main concepts, data models and relevant international standards such as Open Data, interoperability and data exchange.

Presentations accessible on ACQF website:

- [Botswana](#)
- [Kenya](#)
- [South Africa](#)
- [Tunisia](#)

#### Theme 8: Green and digital skills and the role of the NQF

Green with a touch of brown is the colour of recovery. Greening of the economy and society – at heart of post-Covid19 recovery strategies and growth in many countries. **Green growth opportunities abound across massive sectors such as energy, mobility, and agriculture.** Just as digital-economy companies have powered stock-market returns in the past couple of decades, so green-technology companies could play that role in the coming decades. EU, US, China, Japan, South Korea's Green New Deal, Canada, Africa – green stimulus packages

To compensate for expected job losses, global efforts to decarbonize in response to the climate crisis are giving rise to a wealth of green jobs across sectors and industries. A green-recovery scenario could generate around 3.5% of additional global GDP growth and a net employment gain of 9 million new jobs each year, according to International Energy Agency data. The green transition could **create 30 million jobs globally in clean energy, efficiency and low-emissions technologies by 2030.** But while there has been continued growth in green jobs for the past four years, **reskilling and upskilling towards green skills is not keeping pace.**

The 1<sup>st</sup> ACQF Forum of National Qualifications institutions addressed the theme on green and digital skills and leveraged it as a panel of 4 countries (Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, and Senegal) and a continental organisation (All Africa Students' Union).

- The background presentation on green and digital skills is available on the [Forum website](#).
- [Zimbabwe's PPT](#) "Skills for the Green Economy – TVET" can be viewed and downloaded.

#### Panel Questions

- a) What is the importance of *green skills* (or *skills for the green economy*) and *digital skills* in your country's education and qualifications system? Can you share information on key policy initiatives and plans? And some cases of good practice among education and training providers?
- b) What data and information do you use on the demand for and needs for green skills in different professions and economic sectors in your country?
- c) What should be the role and contributions of NQFs towards a systemic expansion of green qualifications and skills in national qualifications?
- d) How can ACQF support the greening of NQFs and the place of digital skills in qualifications? Could you share your ideas and recommendations on the common principles of "green NQFs" in Africa?

#### Definition of green and digital skills:

##### **A) Green skills**

An important area of political debate and action and one that has become a priority in research (quantitative and qualitative) and social communication. Several international organizations, regional communities, research centres, civil society organisations and professional organisations are working on analysis and taxonomies related to green skills.

Cedefop defines **green skills** as "the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to live, work and act in economies and societies that seek to reduce the impact of human activity on the environment".

**Skills for the green economy consist of:**

- **Transversal skills**, linked to sustainable thinking and action, relevant to all economic sectors and occupations.
- **Specific skills** needed to adapt or implement standards, processes and services to protect ecosystems and biodiversity and reduce energy, material and water consumption.
- **Highly specialised skills** needed to develop and implement green technologies such as renewable energy, wastewater treatment or recycling.

Skills for the green economy are also referred to as skills for green jobs, skills for the green transition, or green skills.

## **B) Digital skills**

**Ability to use digital technologies confidently, critically and responsibly and engage with them for learning, at work and for participation in society.**

**Digital skills include information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including coding), security (including digital wellbeing and cybersecurity-related skills), intellectual property issues, problem-solving and critical thinking.**

### **Panel**

Aggregate data indicate that job growth in green and greening occupations far outpaces job growth in non-green occupations. However, companies are faced with a significant lack of skills that allow workers and employees to adapt to the greening of the company and its services and products. According to LinkedIn data, the majority of workers admit that they do not have transversal, specific and highly specialized skills for green and greening jobs.

All the countries on the panel indicated that these themes are part of policies and practices related to education and training systems and some have started processes of reform and revision of curricula and training programs from the lower levels of the NQF, to ensure that young people are aware and prepared for the challenges and requirements of greening and digitization of jobs, of society and lifelong learning pathways and modalities.

The 4 countries were unanimous on the need to coordinate a) policies and concept papers that concern green and digital skills, with b) implementation texts and tools, facilitating the dissemination to all stakeholders at the national, provincial and institutional levels, businesses and trade unions; and ensuring the training and awareness of the various actors of the education and training system, in particular trainers and teachers.

Digital skills are very diverse and rapidly changing, in line with the accelerated development of technologies, applications and instruments for managing, analyzing, and interoperating all processes in the digitized society in which we live. In this context, in addition to basic and transversal digital skills, which are essential to the lives of the entire population, it is essential to pay renewed attention to the digital skills essential to the deployment of the benefits of data science, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative AI. A real "AI literacy" movement should be discussed and supported by the education-training systems, the NQFs and ACQF.

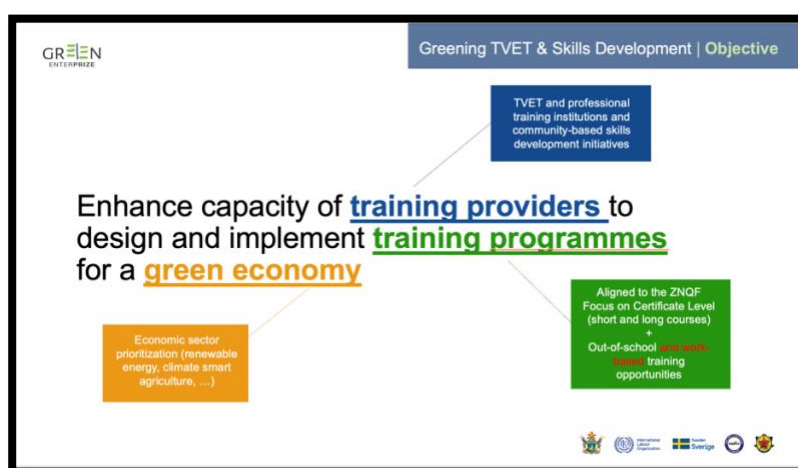
NQFs are important for establishing clear pathways for vertical progression and horizontal comparability of new education and training qualifications in new fields. They also strengthen the coherence between educational production in green skills areas and the needs of the labour market.

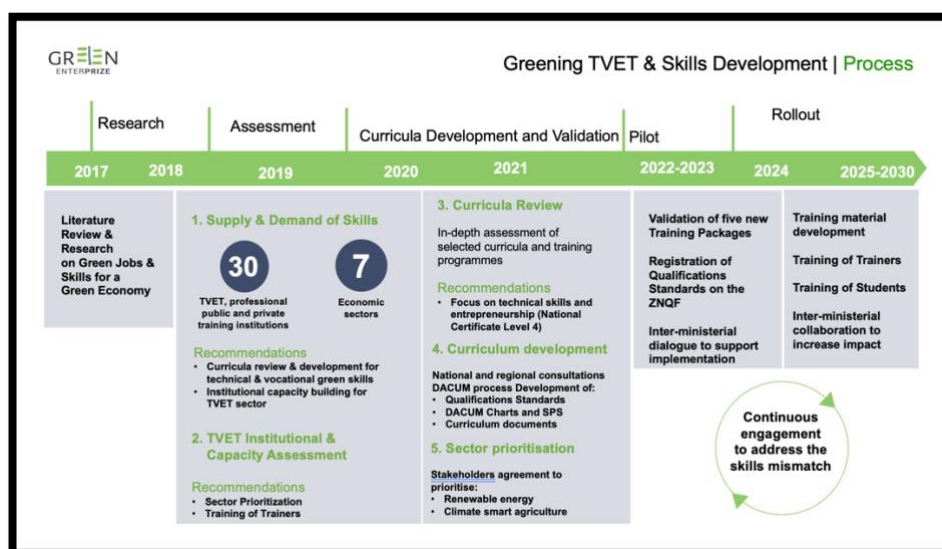
NQFs are essential to ensure that learning outcomes are set at the right level of qualification, educational institutions and industry develop qualification standards based on clear level descriptors that allow for the articulation and portability of qualifications in new priority areas.

The 'greening' of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) in Member States is a complex and multidimensional process that involves the integration of sustainability principles and practices into the design, delivery and evaluation of qualifications, with the ultimate aim of equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to a sustainable future. This may involve adding new qualifications, revising existing qualifications, or developing new learning paths.

- This may involve technical support on how to add new qualifications, revise existing qualifications, or develop new learning pathways.
- The ACQF should provide technical support on the development of national strategies and practices to green the NQFs
- Once the NQFs have been greened, the capacity development of leaders and stakeholders of the NQFs will be essential.

Key highlights from the **specific submission from Zimbabwe: Imperative Government Policies informing Green Skills Development through Heritage Based CBET Curriculum**. Through the project “Green Enterprize” the country put into practice concepts and objectives related to green economic development aligned with the National Development Strategy (2021-2025). In 2019 Zimbabwe prioritised the development of Green Skills and partnered ILO and UNESCO to develop Guidelines for Green Skills Development guided by the Zimbabwe National Qualifications Framework (ZNQF) to develop and meet Zimbabwe’s Human Skills Capabilities for the attainment of Vision 2030 anchored on innovation principles.





### Theme 9 concerning referencing at the ACQF explored:

The presentation on Referencing to ACQF is available on the [Forum website](#).

- The conceptual and methodological sources of the "referencing" theme: [ACQF Guideline 3](#) and its [Training Module 3](#); supplemented by [ACQF Handbook](#) and Self-Assessment Tool.
- The Goals and Benefits of referencing for Countries, Regions, and the Continent
- The organisation of referencing, ensuring a quality and comparability approach, based on the 4 main referencing criteria supplemented by the package of common procedures.
- The essential themes of referencing reports
- The indicative roadmap for all interested countries
- The proposal for referencing in synergy for countries in regions that have an operational regional framework (such as that of SADC). This referencing avoids duplication and completes the process in a harmonised and synchronised way – for SADCQF and ACQF.
- Several countries have expressed interest in joining the ACQF Referencing Pilot Group, including: Angola, Cabo Verde, Eswatini, Kenya, South Africa, and Mauritius.



Referencing is about  
demonstrating...

**ACQF Referencing  
Criterion 1:**

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the NQF or NQS and the level descriptors of the ACQF.

**ACQF Referencing  
Criterion 2:**

The NQF or NQS are based on learning outcomes principles and related to arrangements for RPL (incl non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

**ACQF Referencing  
Criterion 3:**

There are transparent processes and procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and information on qualifications is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in a national register(s) of qualifications.

**ACQF Referencing  
Criterion 4:**

The national quality assurance **(QA) system** for education and training refers to the NQF or NQS and is consistent with the principles of QA of the ACQF.

## 4 Workshop Program

Venue: Memling Hotel, Virunga Room

Date, Time	Themes	Chairs, Speakers
<b>June 18</b>		
09.30-10.45	Opening. Welcome, official speeches. Presentation of the participants. Objectives of the Forum	<b>Chair: D.R. Congo</b> ACQF-II Coordinator Delegation of the European Union Minister of Vocational Training of the D.R.Congo
10.45-11.00	Coffee break	Conference space Memling Hotel
11.00-13.00 <b>Theme 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs): Dynamics in Africa</b> Lessons and experiences: key achievements, benefits and impacts. Factors and conditions for success. New developments: adaptation, reforms, new tools and revision of the NQFs. Lessons learned from more experienced NCCs. Innovations from newer NQFs.</li> </ul>	<b>Chair: Kenya, Principal Secretary Dr Esther Muoria</b> <b>Presentations and speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola, Ms. Edgarda Neto - INQ</li> <li>- Cabo Verde, Mr. Amílcar Mendes – UC-SNQ</li> <li>- Kenya, Dr. Alice Kande - KNQA</li> <li>- Lesotho, Dr. Molise Nhlapo - CHE</li> <li>- South Africa, Mr Japie Nel - SAQA</li> <li>- Zambia, Mr Fidelis Cheelo - ZAQA</li> </ul>
<b>13.00-14.00</b>	Lunch	Conference space Hotel Memling
14.00-17.00  <b>Theme 2</b> <b>14.00-14.45</b>  <b>Theme 3</b> <b>14.45-17.00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ACQF-II: Overview of policy areas, activities and implementation tools.</b></li> <li><b>Lifelong Learning – African Experiences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Validation of prior experiential learning (RPL)</li> <li>b) Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS)</li> <li>c) Micro-credentials.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Chairs: Sierra Leone (Abdul Rahman Sesay and Guinea-Bissau (Paulo Costa)</b>  2. Presentation. ACQF-II Coordinator  3. Presentations <b>a) RPL:</b> Kenya, Cabo Verde, Mauritius <b>b) CATS:</b> Kenya, Zambia. <b>c) Micro-credentials:</b> Mauritius
<b>June 19</b>		
09.30-13.00  <b>Theme 4</b> <b>09.30-11.15</b>  <b>Theme 5</b> <b>11.30-13.00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Governance of ACQF: African Qualifications Network.</b> Objectives, organization, members, roadmap. Dialogue, consensus.</li> <li><b>Comparison and cooperation between ACQF and other regional qualifications frameworks and other relevant networks.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Chairs: Ghana (Maxwell Kissi) and Senegal (Abdou Lahate Cissé)</b>  4.ACQF-II coordinator. Presentation, group work on 4 questions and presentation of the results from working groups.  5.ACQF, UEMOA, CCMEFP, ECCAS, EAC, SADC
<b>13.00-14.00</b>	Lunch	Conference space Hotel Memling
14.00-17.00  <b>Theme 6</b> <b>14.00-16.00</b>  <b>Theme 7</b> <b>16.00-17.00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ACQF Certification Platform (QCP): Training on QCP concepts and tools.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Chairs: Zimbabwe (Wisdom Simon Mtisi) and All Africa Students Union (AASU) (Peter Kwasi Kodjie)</b>  6. Presentations and practical cases. ACQF-II: QCP Technical Team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transparency and digitization of the CNQF and the ACQF.</b> Databases and Qualification Platforms: Examples from Africa.</li> </ul>	7. Short presentations and panel: Botswana, South Africa; Tunisia (online).
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June 20		
<b>09.30-12.00</b>  <b>Theme 8</b> <b>09.30-10.45</b>  <b>Theme 9</b> <b>11.00-12.30</b>  <b>12.30-13.30</b> <b>Final session:</b> Conclusions and closing	<b>8. Digital and green transformation. Role of the NQFs.</b>  <b>9. NQF-ACQF referencing – ACQF's key activity.</b> Quality, comparability, recognition and portability of qualifications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDCL).</b> By: Céline Jambon. European Commission.</li> <li>• Summary Conclusions and Recommendations</li> <li>• Final debate and evaluation</li> </ul>	<b><u>Chairs:</u> Cameroon (Prof. R. Wamba) and South Sudan (Prof. Job Akuei)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel: DR Congo, AASU, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Senegal.</li> <li>• ACQF-II coordination</li> </ul> Presentation of the final conclusions: ACQF-II coordinator
<b>13.30-14.00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	Conference space Memling Hotel

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