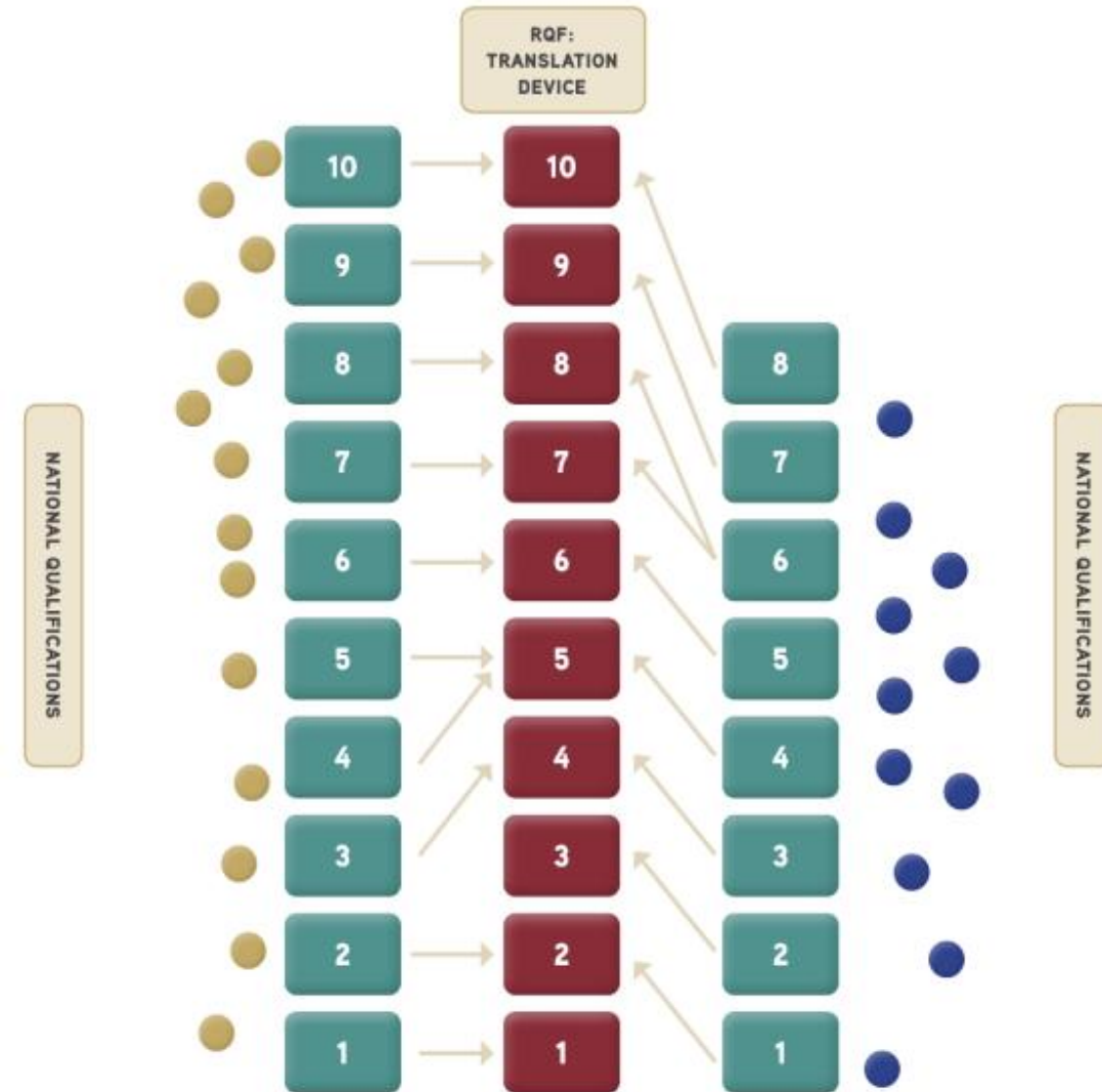


# 01

**Referencing to the ACQF  
Purpose, Importance,  
Readiness**

# Purpose

1. To systematically present and document the broader **qualifications system** and **the NQF** of the referencing country.
2. To establish a clear and transparent relationship between national qualification levels and the ten ACQF levels (level-to-level correspondence) → **Criterion 1**
3. To demonstrate alignment with agreed ACQF principles → **Criteria 2-4**



# Importance of referencing

- **Builds trust and credibility** in national qualifications systems by demonstrating alignment with agreed ACQF principles and criteria
- **Strengthens national systems** by promoting reflection, coherence and quality assurance within NQFs and qualifications frameworks
- **Enhances transparency and comparability** of qualifications across countries through a shared continental reference framework

- **Enables visibility at continental level** by allowing qualifications to be presented and compared via the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP)
- **Supports recognition of qualifications** across borders, facilitating mobility of learners and workers in Africa
- **Contributes to regional integration and economic cooperation**, including skills mobility agendas

# Readiness for referencing

## **Operational NQF**

The country has an established and functioning National Qualifications Framework that is formally adopted and actively used to classify qualifications.

## **Level descriptors in use**

Clear level descriptors based on learning outcomes are defined and consistently applied across qualifications within the NQF.

## **Quality assurance (QA) arrangements**

Robust and transparent quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure the credibility, consistency and reliability of qualifications.

## **Institutional coordination**

Relevant stakeholders (**ministries, qualifications authorities, QA bodies, social partners**) are effectively coordinated and engaged to support the referencing process.

# ACQF Referencing: What it is NOT

- **Not automatic recognition** of qualifications across countries
- **Not a replacement for national recognition procedures**
- **Not harmonisation or standardisation** of national systems or qualifications (some RQFs have mandate it – not ACQF) – it is not changing your NQF to copy ACQF
- **Not a ranking or evaluation exercise** of countries' systems

## Example: EQFs as a translation device

## Improved transparency and comparability

[Source: Compare Qualifications | Europass](#)

Ireland	EQF Levels	Austria
NQF 10 Doctoral Degree ▼ Higher Doctorate ▼	EQF Level 8	NQF 8 Doctorate (Doctorgrade) Clinical Psychology Healthcare Psychology Specialised doctor (medical) ▼
NQF 9 Master Degree ▼ Postgraduate Diploma ▼ Professional Award ▼		NQF 7 Master Degree (Master -bzw.diplomegrade) Master builder, planner and construction manager Zahnärztin/Zahnarzt (Diplomstudium der Zahnmedizin) Musiktherapeutin/ Musiktherapeut (Master-eigenverantwortliche Berufsausübung) Trainingstherapeutin / Trainingstherapeut (Master) Qualifying examination in the regulated trade of engineering offices (consulting engineers)
NQF 8 Honours Bachelor Degree ▼ Higher Diploma ▼ Professional Award ▼	EQF Level 6	NQF 6 Bachelor Degree (Bachelorgrade) Master Craftsman ▲ Meister/in für das Handwerk Fleischer Meister/in für das Handwerk Friseur und Perückenmacher (Stylist) Meister/in für das Handwerk Kraftfahrzeugtechnik Meister/in für das Handwerk Orthopädienschuhmacher Meister/in für das Handwerk Spengler
NQF 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree ▼ Professional Award ▼		Graduate professional agriculture ▼ Engineer Certified Masterchef

# 02

## Overview of the ACQF Referencing Process

# Referencing process in a nutshell

- Each country wanting to relate its national qualifications levels to the ACQF shall prepare and present a detailed **referencing report** that follows the **four referencing criteria** specified in the [ACQF Policy Document \(Annex 2\)](#) and present it to the ACQF Network
  - In addition, the referencing process should adhere to the specified **governance procedures and follow up steps**
-



**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

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



**Quadro Continental Africano de Qualificações (ACQF)**

## **Documento Político do ACQF**

**Para validação pelos Estados-membros da União Africana**

Versão: 17 de novembro 2022

## Referencing criteria: demonstrate that the NQF meets them...

**Table 1: ACQF referencing criteria**

Referencing criteria	
1	There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the <b>level descriptors</b> of the ACQF.
2	The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on <b>learning outcomes principles</b> and related to arrangements for <b>recognition of prior learning</b> (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to <b>credit systems</b> .
3	There are <b>transparent processes and procedures for including qualifications</b> in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and information on qualifications is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in a <b>national register(s) of qualifications</b> .
4	The national <b>quality assurance system</b> for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

To clarify the interplay between quality assurance and referencing, the following principles are recommended

**Quality assurance – a criterion for ACQF referencing: the referencing to the ACQF of national qualifications frameworks or systems demonstrates the degree to which quality assurance of national qualifications:**

- addresses the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification;
- addresses the application of the learning outcomes approach;
- includes feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement;
- addresses internal and external quality assurance, and the regular review of quality assurance agencies;
- is based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance;
- is supported by resources; and
- provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation.
- takes account of African Union policy orientations such as African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.

# Governance and follow up procedures

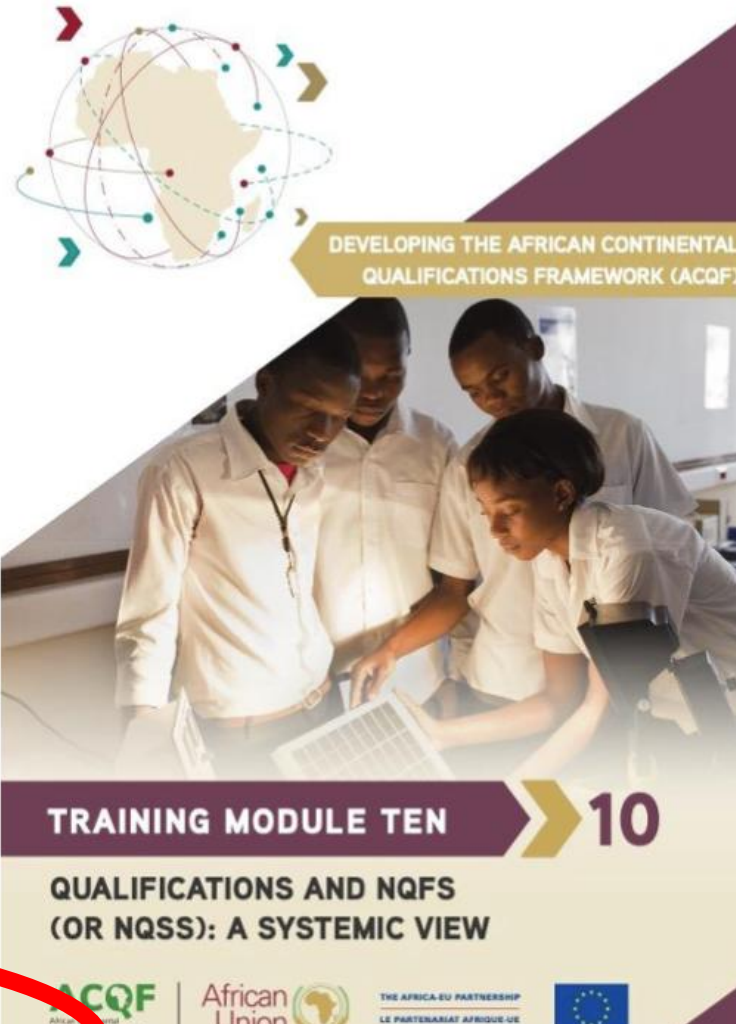
1. **Responsibilities and/or legal competence of relevant national bodies** involved in the ACQF referencing process are clearly defined and published by the relevant competent authorities.
2. The relevant national **quality assurance bodies state their agreement** with the referencing outcome and referencing report.
3. **People from other countries** who are experienced in the field of qualifications are involved in certain aspects and steps of the referencing process. Their role is advisory and supports transparency, improvement and credibility. The national referencing committee informs the ACQF implementation setting and AG on the involved **international experts**.
4. Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish **one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report**, which addresses all referencing criteria.
5. The **referencing outcome is published** by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF implementation setting and AG, on the dedicated ACQF website.
6. Following the completion of referencing, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g.: certificates, diplomas, supplements) and qualifications registers issued by the competent national authorities will contain a clear reference to the **appropriate ACQF level**, based on national legislation and procedures.

# Capacity development 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 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

### 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 development, construction and application of level descriptors. It 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.

# Detailed Steps

**ACQF**  
African Continental  
Qualifications Framework

<https://acqf.africa/>



**African Continental Qualifications  
Framework (ACQF) Network**

**Steps in Referencing to the ACQF**  
A Phased Approach

# I. Initiation of Referencing and Readiness (Steps 1 – 4)

# 1. Self-assessment and decision to start the process

- Typically carried out by the national body responsible for the qualifications framework or qualification systems.
- Considers the legal status and operational maturity of the NQF or qualification systems, functioning quality assurance arrangements and availability of level descriptors and learning-outcomes-based qualifications.
- It should gauge how close the country is to meeting the referencing criteria.

## Self-assessment - example:

ACQF Referencing Criterion 1: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF			
Self-assessment	Yes, fully: indicate evidence	Partly: indicate evidence	No: Comments
Country descriptors			
1. The country NQF is adopted and in application			
2. The country level descriptors (LDs) are clear and understood			
3. The LDs are agreed and used by the relevant stakeholders			
Link with the ACQF			
4. There is an agreed approach (method) to present the demonstrable link of the country LDs with that of the ACQF			
5. There is a demonstrable link between the NQF/ NQS levels and the ACQF level <i>Explanatory note: This is one of the outputs of the referencing process</i>			
<b>Main sources of information you can refer to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NQF legal document/ policy</li> <li>- The scope of the NQF/ NQS</li> <li>- The contexts in which the LDs are applied/ used</li> <li>- The features and descriptions of the level descriptors</li> <li>- Comparison to show the link between the national levels and ACQF levels (<b><i>NB this is an output of the referencing process</i></b>)</li> <li>- Studies/ research/ analyses</li> </ul>			

## Self-assessment (cont.):

ACQF Referencing Criterion 2: The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on learning outcomes (LO) principles and related to arrangements for recognition of prior learning (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems			
Self-assessment	Yes, fully: indicate evidence	Partly: indicate evidence	No: Comments
Learning outcomes (LOs)			
1. The LO approach is enabled by legislation			
2. The LO approach is agreed and applied in all sub-sectors			
3. The key features of the LO approach are clear and understood			
4. There are links between learning outcomes and classification of qualifications levels			
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)			
5. RPL is related to the NQF			
6. RPL is defined and agreed at policy level			
7. Assessment of LOs apply to formal, non-formal and informal learning			
8. RPL is applied in all sub-sectors of education and training			
Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)			
9. CAT is related to the NQF			
10. CAT is defined and agreed at policy level			
11. CAT is applied in all sub-sectors			
Studies/ research/ analyses			
12. There are studies/ research/ analyses to support this referencing criterion			
<b>Main sources of information you can refer to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning outcomes (LOs): legislation, agreement, application, features, platforms, supporting tools</li> <li>- RPL: legislation, application, assessment</li> <li>- CAT: legislation and application</li> <li>- Studies/ research/ analyses</li> </ul>			

## 2. Government approval

- Ensure commitment from all relevant bodies
- Government approval should include a clear mandate for referencing and ensure budgetary/human resource commitments
- Delegating to the Board of a Qualifications Authority or a Director-General at the Ministry possible
- Composition of the NRC, terms of reference and a roadmap agreed by all relevant bodies to be determined (no. of months, focal points)

# 3. Notify ACQF Network

[acqfnetwork@sqa.org.za](mailto:acqfnetwork@sqa.org.za)

- Inform the Presidency, copy Cluster 1 Chairperson and Secretary. The Cluster maintains a dashboard with referencing plans.
- **State of play presentation** via online meeting to ACQF Cluster 1 covering:
  - Features of the NQF, operationalization level
  - Main findings from self assessment with evidence (presentation or a document)
  - Tentative roadmap with timeline and date of public presentation
  - Need for support
  - Questions and answers

## 4. Set up the NRC and a Technical Working Group (TWG)

- The TWG supports the NRC, its composition and terms of reference need to be defined.
- Distinguish clearly between the strategic role of NRC (oversight, endorsement, national ownership) and technical role of TWG (mapping, evidence gathering, drafting).

## II. Capacity building and Planning (Steps 5 – 6)

## 5. Capacity building

- The Cluster plans activities for capacity building to support the journey of referencing.
- It is important to clarify expected outputs (e.g. common understanding, agreed methodology) to identified target groups (policy-makers, technical drafters, QA agencies, institutions.)

## 6. Develop a plan for referencing

The country plan includes all the steps from start to finish with deliverables at scheduled dates allowing for contingencies:

### (1) Action plan for the full process

The process should avoid being overly linear by allowing overlapping consultation and drafting where appropriate.

### (2) Plan for drafting

It is recommended that the referencing plan maps each chapter of the report and identifies sources of evidence for each criterion.

**Example:  
action plan for  
drafting  
- recommended  
for each chapter  
of the report**

No	Section of the Referencing Report	Who	By when
1	Introduction		
2	Qualifications system in country X - overview		
3	<b>General Education:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legal acts</li> <li>- Governance</li> <li>- Types of qualifications</li> <li>- Pathways</li> <li>- QA arrangements</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>		
4	TVET		
5	Higher Education		
...	NCQF		
...	<b>Criterion 1:</b> statement (fully/partially met), arguments & evidence		

# III. Drafting and Consultations (Steps 7 – 13)

## **7. First draft of the referencing report**

- Based on initial discussions, desk research on available reports, data and policy documents

## **8. Consultations**

- Preliminary consultation with key stakeholders on the first draft with clearly defined consultation's objectives (validation of evidence, legitimacy, buy-in, etc.)

## **9. Second draft of the referencing report**

# 10. International experts' involvement

- Determine who the experts are in consultation with the Cluster 1
- International expert involvement provides a perspective that the Cluster (which is an insider network) may not fully replicate.
- Recommendation: involve international experts from outside of the Cluster.

## **11. Third draft**

- Following recommendations from the experts to the second draft

## **12. Review by peer countries**

- The Cluster to determine number of peers who should review the drafts, how selection is made and any criteria to be fulfilled e.g. similar NQF maturity, prior ACQF referencing experience

## **13. Fourth draft**

- Following recommendations from peer countries

# IV. National Endorsement (Steps 14 – 16)

## **14. Stakeholders' validation**

## **15. Endorsement by national bodies**

- As per ACQF Referencing governance procedures – sign off by all relevant QA bodies

## **16. Approval by Government for submission**

As per country arrangements:

- Either approval by Cabinet/minister, or
- one Cabinet/ministerial mandate at the start (Step 2), with the submission itself handled at institutional level with sign-off duly endorsed by all regulators.

# V. ACQF Submission & Validation (Steps 17 – 18)

## 17. Submit the Report to ACQF Presidency

- The Presidency shares the report with a **panel of ACQF Network members and experts** (for their second review) who submit a written assessment of the report.
- The Presidency to determine composition of the Review Panel and its Terms of Reference

## 18. Presentation to the ACQF Forum - validation

- Presentation together with comments from the panel to all ACQF Network members (opportunity to comment for all Network members)
- Validation (suggestion: by consensus)
- The Presidency accepts the report for publishing (if necessary – after last amendments).

# VI. Post-referencing

## Publication

- By the ACQF Network on the ACQF website
- By the referencing country

## Indicating ACQF levels

- On national credentials
- In the data bases
- Good practice: indicate in the report steps taken to allow for publication of ACQF levels (regulatory amendments may be required – include them in your plans!)

Questions, comments,  
clarifications?

03

**Referencing report –  
Proposed structure and  
content**

# What makes a good referencing report?

A good report is:

- a policy narrative explaining your system
- a legal + QA evidence dossier
- a technical demonstration of alignment; it provides argumentation and evidence per criterion
- a communication tool for international readers

# Example report's structure

## Introductory elements:

Introduction and rationale  
Executive Summary  
Table of content  
List of acronyms

## REPORT'S CORE

### I. System narrative

### II. Technical referencing

- Criterion 1
- Criterion 2
- Criterion 3
- Criterion 4

### III. Governance procedures

### IV. Conclusion/ Issues to be addressed and how

## Annexes:

Supporting evidence of choice  
List of regulatory documents  
References  
Lists of tables  
List of figures  
Glossary of terms

# Let's start with the cover...

*If it's not in the title... did it even get referenced?*

Mandatory elements:

Report referencing the [Country] National Qualifications Framework of to the African Continental Qualifications Framework

Country name

Lead body

Date (year)

Logos (National Authority, ACQF, African Union)

Optional: subtitle, e.g. ↓

*Promoting Mutual Understanding, Transparency and Comparability of Qualifications.*



# PART I — SYSTEM NARRATIVE

## I.1. Context & system overview:

- socio-economic context
- labour market trends, key challenges
- human capital development strategies

## I.2. Education and training system:

- **For each sub-system** -General Education, TVET, Higher Education, Non-formal learning: governance, main legal acts, qualifications types, pathways and articulation, quality assurance arrangements, application of learning outcomes approach, RPL, core statistics with sources.

## I. 3 NQF in depth:

- Purpose
- Governance and functions
- Structure, Level descriptors, Qualifications types
- Stage of development and implementation

# Use of figures is strongly encouraged (examples)

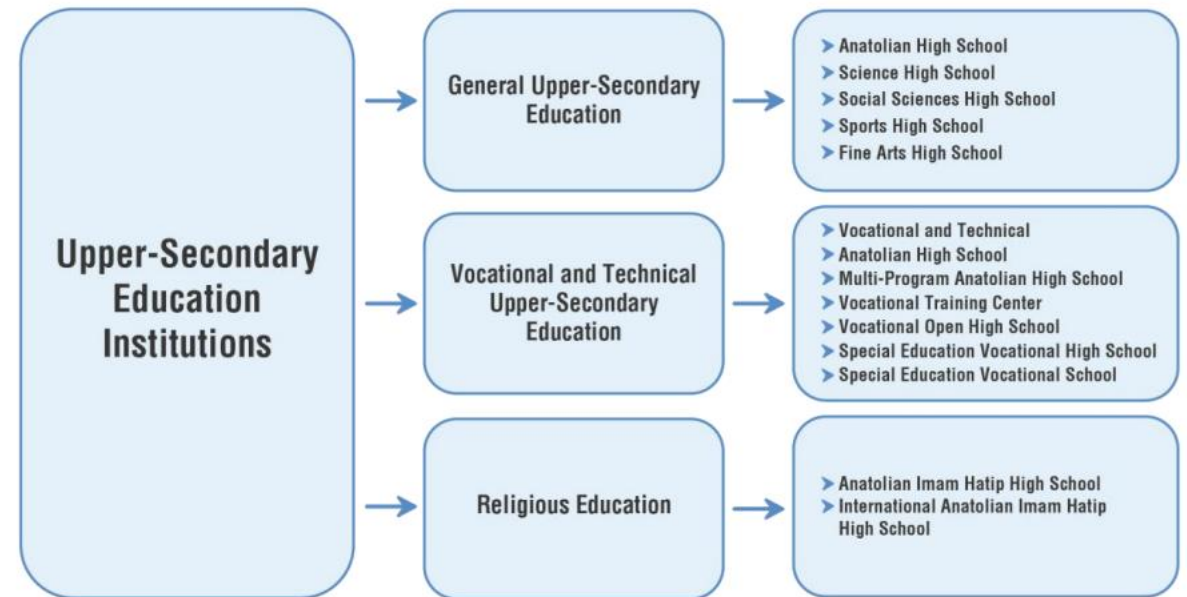
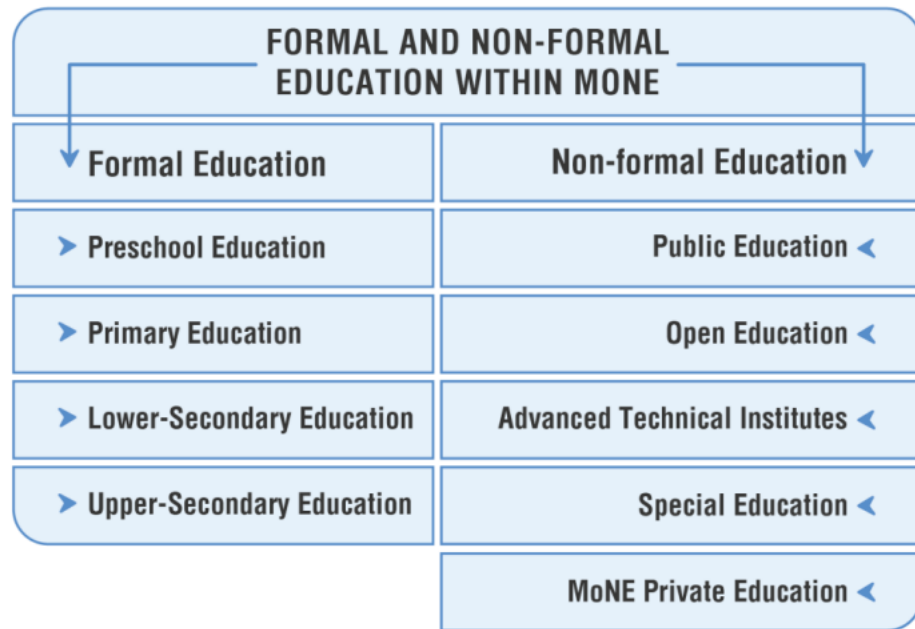


Figure 4 : Distribution of Upper-Secondary Institutions

Source: EQF Referencing Report | Turkey | Europass

# PART II — REFERENCING CORE

Each criterion section should preferably follow the **same internal logic**:

- Restate the criterion verbatim
- Explain national approach
- Present evidence (legal acts, operational documents, templates of standards process charts, research) with links in the footnotes, additional pieces of evidence in the Annexes
- Provide analysis
- Conclusion: criterion met / mostly met/ how
- Address gaps transparently with proposals for further actions

## **II. 1. Criterion 1: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF.**

II.1.1. Conceptual comparison of the NQF and ACQF

II.1.2. Detailed level-to-level analysis in a table

**For each level – a narrative section** with analysis and judgement on best-fit

II.1.3. Level mapping matrix

# Referencing Criterion 1:

*“There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF.”*

Technical approach

# What does “demonstrating links” mean?

Establishing a **transparent correspondence** between NQF levels and ACQF levels

Based on **level descriptors comparison** (knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility)

Not a mechanical match → requires **analytical judgement supported by evidence**

# Meeting criterion 1 is a major output of referencing

- A perfect fit between the national and ACQF descriptors **is not expected** as they serve distinctly different purposes. National level descriptors serve a national context and will be more detailed than those of the ACQF, whereas the ACQF descriptors will be broader and more general.
- There will be no national qualifications directly linked / registered to the ACQF, as a result of referencing, since the comparison is between levels (NQF and ACQF). National qualifications are registered on the national framework.

# **Comparison should include 4 elements (to be included in the report in Chapter on Criterion 1):**

1. Conceptual comparison of the NQF and ACQF
2. Detailed level-to-level analysis (typically with a comparison table) highlighting convergences and differences - forces and documents explicit reasoning
3. For each level – a narrative section with an analysis of the degree of correspondence between the descriptors of each framework – documents the reasoning and provides an explanation of why this ACQF level is the best fit.
4. Level mapping matrix – summarises and visualises the result of the comparison.

# (1) Conceptual comparison

The country's referencing group analyses and compares the level descriptors of the NQF and those of the ACQF, showing the similarities and differences in terms of:

- **Scope** of the frameworks
- **Levels' structure** (no. of levels)
- **Domains of learning** underpinning the level descriptors (how many, their definitions, if available)
- **The level descriptors:**
  - their purpose
  - the logics of vertical and horizontal dimensions
  - their semantic comparison

# More information on ACQF domains & level descriptors

## ACQF Training module 2: Levels and level descriptors

The ACQF is a 10-level qualifications framework comprising **three domains** of learning outcomes:

- knowledge
- skills
- autonomy and responsibility

increasing in breadth, depth, and complexity when moving from lower to higher levels.

	Domains of learning		
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
	Type of knowledge Scope of knowledge	Type of skills Response to information Addressing types of problems	Context Autonomy Responsibility
<b>Definition of the domains of learning</b>	<i>“Knowledge” includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles, and theories in various areas</i>	<i>“Skills” refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills.</i>	<i>“Autonomy and responsibility” <u>refers</u> to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility</i>
<u>Level 1</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy	simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions, and use simple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems	highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...
<u>Level 6</u> : the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with specialisation in a discipline/ area	highly technical and specialised skills required to collate, analyse, synthesise and communicate a range of information and new ideas, and formulate or adapt different solutions to address complex and sometimes abstract problems	highly variable contexts with well-developed autonomy and responsibility for self and group outcomes and responsibility for resources and processes

## Analysis of levels and domains:

- How many?
- Domains' definitions (sub-domains)
- Structural differences with ACQF domains and levels in terms of:
  - vertical progression;
  - horizontal dimensions?

## (2) More detailed comparison of level descriptors

- ❑ In addition to the conceptual comparison of the two frameworks a more detailed comparison **of the contents** of NQF descriptors and ACQF descriptors must be carried out - for each level
- ❑ It will analyse level-to-level similarities and differences for each of their domains
- ❑ **Correspondences**, **partial fit** and **differences** between ACQF level descriptors and NQF level descriptors can be indicated in colours.

Key: Green = perfect fit of terms; Blue: partial fit of terms; Red: important differences

SNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
2	<p>Apply procedures and/or techniques related to language, mathematical, ICT, scientific, historical, socio-cultural and environmental domains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to gain and <b>apply a range of knowledge and skills at a detailed level.</b></li> <li>• Determine the proper methods and procedures to respond to a variety of problems.</li> </ul>	<p>Deal with propositions which will be directly linked to a concern, topic or theme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate <b>concrete thinking skills to solve simple problems.</b></li> <li>• Demonstrate <b>general communication skills</b>, which are familiar and routine, to inform, recall and express facts, ideas, views, opinions and feelings.</li> <li>• Apply a simple understanding of the values and ethics in carrying out basic tasks.</li> </ul>	<p>Involved in independent learning but will often <b>require input or guidance from others</b> to complete tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display qualities and transferable skills useful in situations requiring the exercise of <b>some personal responsibility and judgement.</b></li> </ul>	2	<p><b>basic knowledge</b> incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas</p>	<p>basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use <b>concrete information, ideas and known solutions</b> to address <b>straightforward problems</b></p>	<p>structured contexts <b>under limited supervision and guidance</b> taking <b>limited responsibility</b> for self and group outcomes</p>

## **(3) Narrative justification accompanying each level-to-level comparison**

Narrative section includes an analysis of the degree of correspondence between the descriptors of each framework by referring to **specific descriptor elements**.

This section documents the reasoning and provides a justification why this ACQF level is the best fit.

### **The “best-fit” principle**

- Identify **closest alignment across level descriptors**
- Accept **minor differences with justification**

### **Knowledge**

Knowledge at Level 2 of the two frameworks show important differences rather than similarities in that whilst the ACQF refers to basic knowledge which incorporates comprehension of recall of factual and operational knowledge, the SNQF refers to application of a range of knowledge and skills at a detailed level. The latter is more specific in the application of procedures and techniques within the school (in relation to subjects) and in relation to responding to a diversity of problems which is absent in the ACQF.

### **Skills**

There are similarities in that both frameworks refer to demonstration of communication skills at basic or general level and the demonstration of concrete thinking skills to solve simple problems or the use of cognitive skills to utilise concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straightforward problems. The SNQF goes further and elaborates on application of simple understanding of values and ethics whilst engaged in basic tasks.

### **Autonomy and responsibility**

Level descriptors of both frameworks show very close similarities. The SNQF avers that learners would be involved in independent learning, but with input or guidance from others with some personal responsibility and judgment. Similarly, the ACQF promotes structured context under limited supervision and guidance with limited responsibility for self.

### **Summary**

There are important differences for knowledge. The level descriptors of the SNQF go further than comprehension of recall of factual and operational knowledge. In that respect, the SNQF presents a picture of a learner having gained or gaining knowledge in the diverse school subjects and responding to a multiplicity of problems.

In terms of skills, there is a partial fit of terms. Both frameworks emphasise basic or general communication skills, concrete thinking skills, addressing simple or straightforward problems, in spite of the fact that the SNQF also requires application of values and ethics in the discharge of tasks. With regards to level descriptors for Autonomy and Responsibility, there is almost a perfect match. Terms, although different, mean the same.

It is determined that despite some differences in the level descriptors for the knowledge domain at Level 2 of the two frameworks, there is a match.

# Approach to determining correspondence (proposal)

NQF Level	ACQF Level	Degree of correspondence	Summary of Alignment
Level X	Level Y	<b>Full</b>	Strong alignment across all domains Clear and direct correspondence
Level X	Level Y	<b>Substantial (best-fit)</b>	Overall alignment across domains Some differences in scope / emphasis
Level X	Level Y	<b>Partial (<i>if used</i>)</b>	Partial alignment across domains Notable differences across multiple domains <b>Use only when alignment is fragile!</b> Correspondence still possible with explanation

## (4). Level mapping matrix (output)

**Example:**

ACQF	NQF
10	8
9	7
8	6
7	6
6	5
5	4
4	3
3	2
2	1
1	1

# Validation criteria

The process of linking levels should demonstrate:

- Clear methodology
- Transparency – document differences, assumptions, even uncertainties
- Consistency of interpretation across levels – internal coherence
- Evidence-based reasoning
- Stakeholder involvement – validation by multi-expert teams to reach a common judgement and enhance confidence
- Clarity of documentation

## II. 2. Criterion 2: The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on learning outcomes principles and related to arrangements for recognition of prior learning (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems

II.2.1. LOs in NQF design

II.2.2. Use of LOs across sub-systems

II.2.3. LOs in qualification design (standards)

II.2.4. LOs as basis for assessment and certification

II.2.5. LOs and Quality Assurance (e.g. in accreditation)

### II. 2. 6....NQF related to RPL

Demonstrate that:

- RPL is recognised in national legislation
- The NQF explicitly includes RPL as a pathway to qualifications

Describe level of implementation across subsystems

#### **Evidence:**

NQF law / policy document

RPL policy or guidelines

RPL procedures

Qualification award rules

Pilot projects examples, statistics

**+ chapters on credit system**

## 11.3. 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.

### 1. Legal and institutional framework

Legal basis for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF / NQS

Roles and responsibilities of:

- Qualifications authority
- Awarding bodies
- QA agencies

Show step-by-step process (flow or table)

### 2. Processes for inclusion of qualifications

Procedures for:

- development
- evaluation
- approval
- registration

Criteria used for inclusion:

- learning outcomes
- level assignment
- QA requirements

**+ EVIDENCE**

# CONT.

## 4. National register(s) of qualifications

Description of the register(s):

- scope (which qualifications are included)
- structure and data fields
- responsible authority

## 5. Accessibility and transparency

Is the register:

- publicly accessible (online?)
- user-friendly
- regularly updated

## EVIDENCE:

- **links**
- **screenshot**
- **examples of registered qualifications**

## II.4. Criterion 4: The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).



Quality assurance – a criterion for ACQF referencing: the referencing to the ACQF of national qualifications frameworks or systems demonstrates the degree to which quality assurance of national qualifications:

- addresses the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification;
- addresses the application of the learning outcomes approach;
- includes feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement;
- addresses internal and external quality assurance, and the regular review of quality assurance agencies;
- is based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance;
- is supported by resources; and
- provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation.
- takes account of African Union policy orientations such as African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.

# Examples

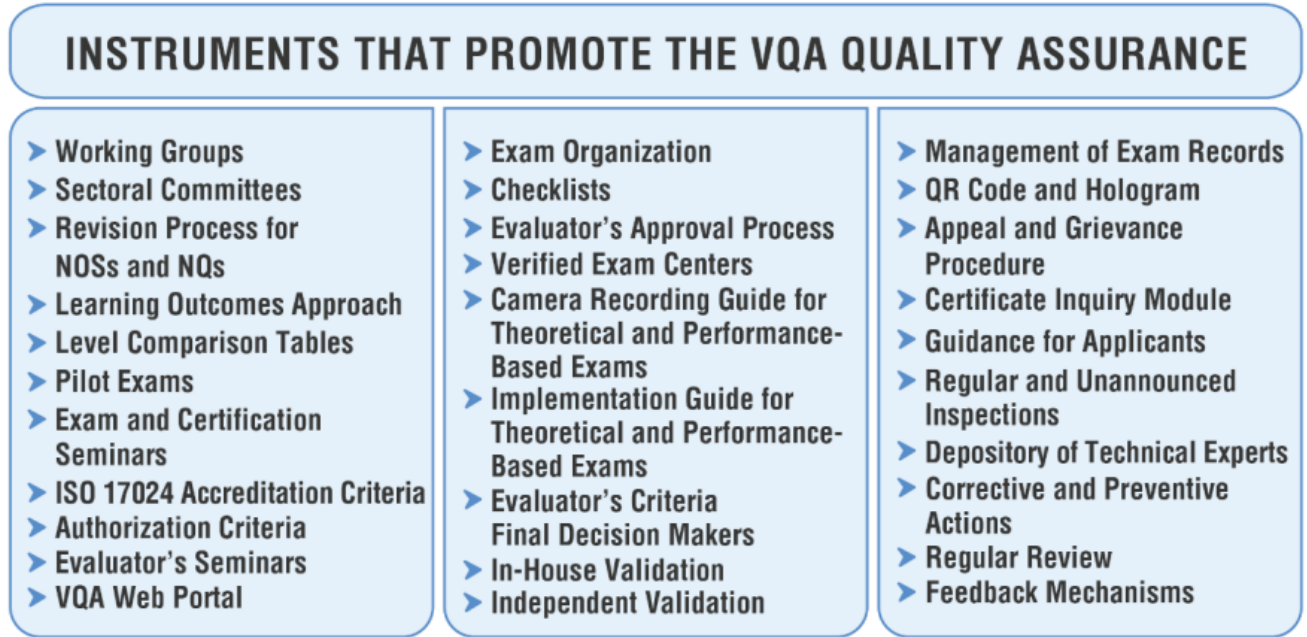


Figure 15 : Instruments that Promote the VQA Quality Assurance



Figure 22 : TQF Quality Assurance System

# III. Governance procedures and follow-up

## 6 Sections to be addressed one by one:

1. Responsibilities and/or legal competence of relevant national bodies involved in the ACQF referencing process are clearly defined and published by the relevant competent authorities.
2. The relevant national quality assurance bodies state their agreement with the referencing outcome and referencing report.
3. People from other countries who are experienced in the field of qualifications are involved in certain aspects and steps of the referencing process. Their role is advisory and supports transparency, improvement and credibility. The national referencing committee informs the ACQF Governance Structure on the involved international experts.
4. Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report, which addresses all referencing criteria.
5. The referencing outcome is published by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure, on the dedicated ACQF website.
6. Following the completion of referencing, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g.: certificates, diplomas, supplements) and qualifications registers issued by the competent national authorities will contain a clear reference to the appropriate ACQF level, based on national legislation and procedures.

# III. EVIDENCE



**STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS**  
**CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Budgetary institution, A. Goštauto g. 12, LT-01108 Vilnius, Lithuania, tel. +370 5 211 3694, www.skvc.lt, e-mail: skvc@skvc.lt  
Data has been accumulated and stored in the Register of Legal Entities, code 111959192

To whom it may concern

27 December, 2023

*S-603*

**REGARDING INFORMATION IN THE REFERENCING REPORT OF THE LITHUANIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) acts as a national quality assurance agency for higher education and academic information and recognition centre. Among other tasks, SKVC carries out external evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programmes, advises higher education institutions within its competence, publishes accreditation results, carries out the follow-up of the external evaluation, analyses indicators related to the quality of studies, and performs other thematic analysis.

We confirm that the information provided in the report on referencing the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area on quality assurance in higher education is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.

Sincerely yours,  
Director

Almantas Šerpatauskas

# IV. Conclusion / Issues to be addressed

## 7. Further Actions

Consultations and discussions during updating of the referencing report, have highlighted the challenges in implementing the LTQF and the areas where the actions are needed to address these challenges.

**In the field of general education, in the context of the recently initiated curriculum reform and the start of the indication of the LTQF levels in primary and lower secondary education certificates and Matura certificate, it is recommended to:**

- Raise awareness among the general education schools community about the LTQF and the referencing of primary, lower and upper secondary educational attainment levels to the LTQF levels, about the LTQF level information provided in the educational documents and the benefits of this information for the learner. To organise targeted information campaigns for career professionals and teachers to convey and explain this information to parents/guardians and pupils;
- Analyse and further develop the definitions of learning outcomes in the curricula, to increase their recognition and understanding in the society, thus also strengthening the perception of the importance of educational attainment levels and of the opportunities for further learning.

## 8. Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Future Developments

Targets Set	Target Period
<p><b>Studies on Developing the TQF and Keeping It Up-To-Date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is planned to undertake thematic studies on updating the TQF Regulation,</li> <li>• To promote establishment and operation of quality assurance systems for qualifications under the TQF,</li> <li>• To control whether or not the qualifications requested to be included in the TQF by Responsible Bodies meet the necessary requirements and placing those that meet such requirements in the TQF.</li> <li>• To raise collaboration with relevant Institutions/Organizations for the qualifications that are not yet included in TQF,</li> <li>• To validate non-formal and informal learning.</li> </ul>	2025-2029
<p><b>Including new qualification types in the TQF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is planned to conduct preliminary surveys on the possibility to place new qualification types in the TQF,</li> <li>• To complete necessary studies on legislation in case that new qualification types are identified,</li> <li>• To analyze the current situation of Türkiye through field research regarding micro credentials discussed under the new qualification types, create an inventory for micro credentials, executing consultation on micro credentials with stakeholders, identify the potential activities as part of the TQF and developing guide books and legislation with relevant Institutions in order to achieve quality assurance about micro credentials.</li> </ul>	2025-2027
<p><b>Ensuring Horizontal and Vertical Transfer between Qualifications Placed in the TQF</b></p>	

**Questions, comments,  
clarifications?**

04

**Stakeholders  
engagement**

# Stakeholder Engagement and Validation Processes

---

*Who to involve, when, and how*



# Stakeholder Engagement — Who Must Be Involved

*The referencing report must document ALL stakeholder involvement with evidence*

## Government & Policy

- Ministry of Education (MOET)
- Ministry of Labour & Employment
- Cabinet / responsible minister
- Other relevant ministries

*Political mandate and budget authority. Ministry provides the approval to proceed and endorses the final report.*

## Education & Training Sector

- Universities and higher education institutions
- TVET providers and TVET Authority
- Basic education authorities
- Industry training bodies

*Validate level correspondences from the provider perspective. Confirm that descriptor language reflects delivery reality.*

## NQF & QA Bodies

- Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA)
- Relevant QA agencies by sector
- Professional bodies and councils
- Accreditation bodies

*QA bodies must provide formal written agreement statements. Their endorsement is a mandatory annex — not optional.*

## Social Partners & Civil Society

- Employer organisations and chambers
- Labour unions and worker representatives
- Learner representative bodies
- Community and informal learning bodies

*Provide labour market perspective on level correspondence. Confirm that qualifications at each level are recognised by employers.*

# Staged Engagement — Four Phases

*Stakeholder engagement must run through the entire referencing process, not concentrate at the end*

1

## INCEPTION

*From Day 1*

- ▶ Obtain government mandate · establish NRC with ToR
- ▶ Stakeholder mapping · produce engagement plan
- ▶ Formally notify QA bodies — start endorsement clock
- ▶ Inception briefing for all key stakeholders

2

## DRAFTING

*Throughout drafting*

- ▶ Share draft criterion sections with relevant specialists
- ▶ TWG sessions for level correspondence analysis
- ▶ Send Criterion 4 draft to QA bodies for technical review
- ▶ Log written input → update draft → communicate back

3

## CONSULTATION

*Mid-to-late draft*

- ▶ Structured validation workshop — broad participation
- ▶ Breakout sessions by sub-sector
- ▶ Structured feedback forms + rapporteur templates
- ▶ Consolidated feedback report within 10 working days

4

## FINALISATION

*Before submission*

- ▶ Request formal QA body agreement statements
- ▶ Request written expert review statements
- ▶ Secure national certification / Board / Ministry endorsement
- ▶ Compile mandatory annexes

# Four Principles for Effective Consultation

## 1 Purpose-Driven

Every consultation activity must have a stated purpose communicated in advance. The four distinct purposes — awareness-raising, analytical input, formal endorsement, legitimation — must not be conflated.

## 2 Staged Across the Process

Engagement is a phased programme, not a single event. High-influence stakeholders (QA bodies, Ministry) require deep, sustained, formally documented engagement — not just workshop attendance.

## 3 Mode-Appropriate

Different stakeholders and purposes require different methods: TWG sessions for technical analysis, bilateral meetings for QA endorsement, validation workshops for legitimation, written review for experts.

## 4 Feedback Always Closes the Loop

After every consultation, feedback is logged, assessed, incorporated or declined with a reason, and communicated back to participants. Consultation without loop closure is not engagement — it is information collection.

# Planning a Validation Workshop

*Design, structure and the five feedback instruments that make it documentable*

## Workshop Structure (4 phases)

<b>FRAMING</b> 30–45 min	NRC presents process, ACQF context, draft conclusions, specific questions. Distribute structured feedback forms.
<b>PLENARY VALIDATION</b> 60–90 min	Walkthrough of key conclusions: level table, QA system, RPL. Questions and preliminary comments.
<b>BREAKOUT GROUPS</b> 60–75 min	Sector groups (HE, TVET, Professions, Social Partners) work through structured questions. Rapporteur records findings.
<b>CONSOLIDATION</b> 45–60 min	Groups report back. NRC responds to key concerns. Agree next steps and feedback processing timeline.
<b>WRITTEN FEEDBACK FORMS</b> 15–20 min	Participants complete structured forms before leaving — scale ratings + specific amendments + institutional affiliation.

## Participant Preparation

- ▶ Send pre-reading pack 3+ weeks in advance (draft sections, ACQF descriptors, questions to address)
- ▶ Targeted invitation specifying each participant's expected contribution
- ▶ Brief preparation note on workshop format and what to think about beforehand

## Post-Workshop — 5 Steps with Timelines

<b>Day 5</b>	Compile Feedback Register from all instruments
<b>Day 10</b>	Produce Consolidated Feedback Summary by category
<b>Day 15</b>	NRC produces Response Record — incorporate / decline + reason
<b>Day 20</b>	Communicate Response Record back to all participants
<b>Ongoing</b>	Update draft report; document changes with feedback source reference

# The QA Body Formal Endorsement Process

Four steps — the most consistently missing element from first-draft referencing reports

⚠ Formal written QA body agreement statements are a MANDATORY ANNEX — the report cannot be submitted without them.

1

## EARLY NOTIFICATION

*Inception Stage*

- ▶ Write formally to each QA body — attach the QA Checklist section and a sample statement
- ▶ Explain the endorsement requirement and give advance notice of timeline
- ▶ Request a named contact person within each QA body

2

## TECHNICAL ENGAGEMENT

*Drafting Stage*

- ▶ Share draft Criterion 4 section + relevant criterion content for their mandate
- ▶ Bilateral meeting or written exchange to address factual concerns
- ▶ This is distinct from and prior to the formal endorsement request

3

## FORMAL ENDORSEMENT REQUEST

*Finalisation Stage*

- ▶ Send final draft of sections being endorsed — after consultation workshop
- ▶ Provide a template statement (they may adopt, adapt or replace)
- ▶ Allow minimum 4 weeks; follow up proactively at 2 weeks

4

## DOCUMENTATION

*Before Submission*

- ▶ Annex all statements — clearly labelled, on institutional letterhead, signed
- ▶ Reference each statement in the main text by annex number
- ▶ Document any limitations or conditions; explain if a body did not respond

# The Critical Distinction

*Consultation and engagement are not the same thing*

## CONSULTATION

*A one-time activity*

- ▶ Stakeholders are informed and invited to comment
- ▶ Typically a single workshop or document review
- ▶ Creates a record of participation
- ▶ Necessary — but not sufficient



## ENGAGEMENT

*A sustained, purposeful relationship*

- ✓ Stakeholders are invested in the outcome
- ✓ Input genuinely influences the process
- ✓ QA bodies understand what their endorsement commits them to
- ✓ Involvement is formally recognised in the final report

**The ACQF process requires BOTH — consultation for legitimacy, engagement for credibility. They must be sequenced correctly.**

# Six Key Process Messages for NRCs

## Stakeholder Engagement and Validation — what the process requires

1

Plan engagement as a phased programme from inception — not as a single event near completion

2

Engage QA bodies early for substantive technical review, then separately for formal endorsement — allow 4–6 weeks

3

Use structured instruments — feedback forms, rapporteur templates, response records — to capture and close every consultation loop

4

Maintain a Stakeholder Engagement Register from Day 1 and treat it as a living document throughout

5

Write a dedicated, standalone stakeholder engagement chapter in the referencing report — not scattered references throughout

6

Annex the documentation: registers, workshop reports, feedback summaries, QA statements and expert review notes are the evidence the chapter claims

# Full stakeholder coverage and documentation

All relevant quality assurance bodies must be involved, especially where multiple sub-systems exist (HE, TVET, general education) and different regulators oversee qualifications

 **Good practice:**

QA bodies draft /validate **sections related to their own** sub-systems:

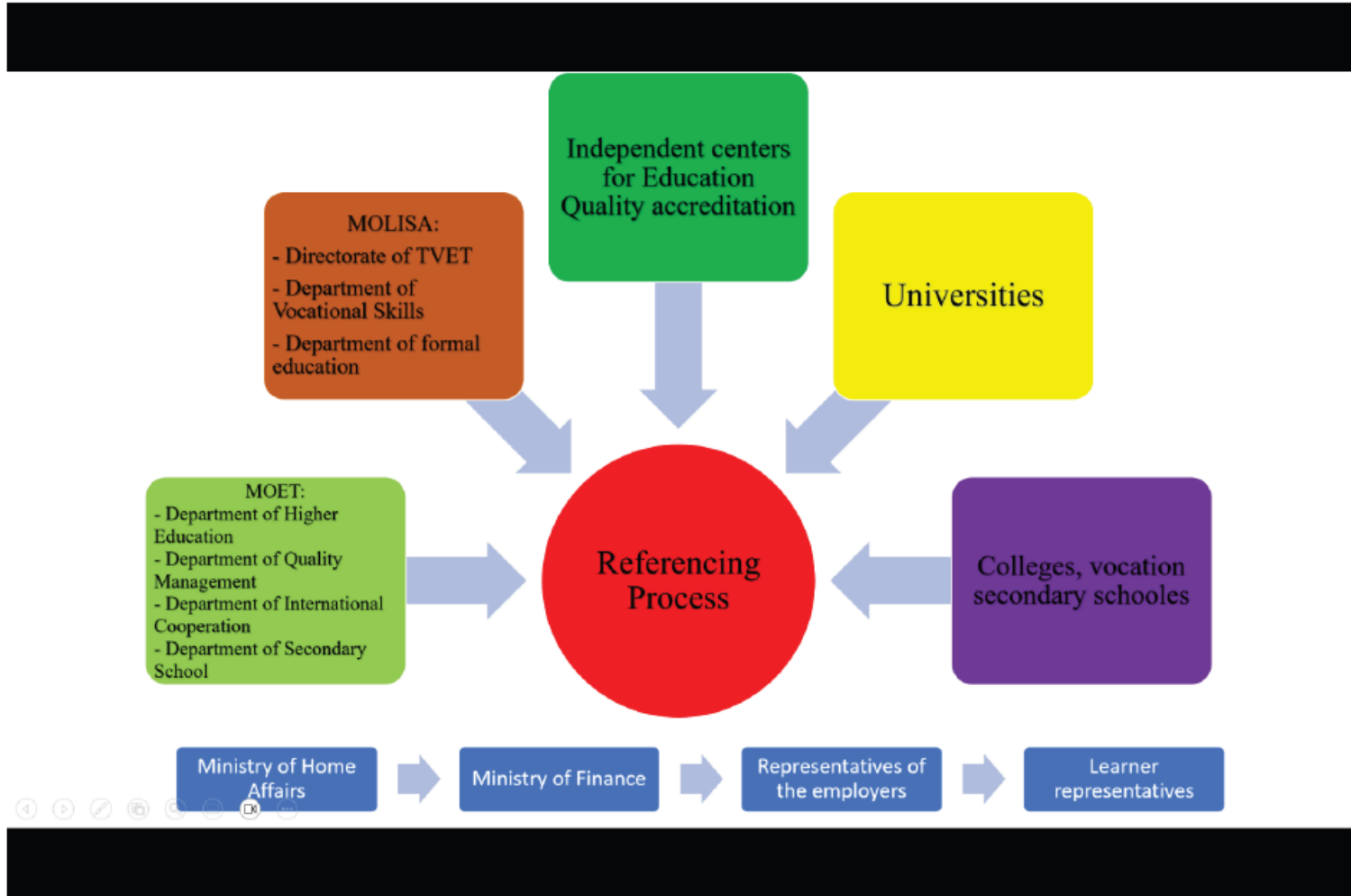
**Table 2 — Technical Working Group (TWG)**

Institution	Role	Contribution
Qualifications Authority	Lead drafting	Report coordination
QA Bodies	QA input	Sections on QA arrangements
Universities / TVET	Technical input	Descriptor interpretation

# Evidence of stakeholder involvement in the Referencing Report - examples

**Table 2.1. The role of agencies directly and indirectly participating in the development of referencing process**

No.	Agency Name	Role in AQRF Reference	Functions related to VQF	Legal Basis/ Jurisdiction
<b>AGENCIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE FORMULATION OF REFERENCING PROCESS</b>				
1	MOET	The agency leading the AQRF reference process, developing the outline and content related to HE in the Referencing Report	Manages general education and HE; develops and issues academic programs; manages qualifications; recognises foreign qualifications	Education Law (2019); Decree No. 37/2025/ND-CP dated 26/02/2025; Decision 1982/QD-TTg (promulgated VQF)
1.1	Department of HE	As a unit under MOET, it is tasked with researching and establishing a network of experts to develop referencing process, responsible for the content of referencing process	Manages admissions and academic activities of HEIs; advises on policies to improve the overall quality of the HE system	Decision No. 552/QD-BGDDT dated March 3, 2025
1.2	Department of Quality Management	Develops regulations for evaluating program quality and institutional quality; coordinates international qualification recognition	Manages accreditation activities; recognises international qualifications	Circular 13/2021/TT - Board of Directors; Circular No. 26/2013/TT- BGDDT



**Figure 2.1. Roles and Responsibilities of involved stakeholders in referencing process**

# Record of meetings

**Table 4 — Record of Meetings and Consultations**

Date	Meeting Type	Participants	Purpose	Output
	NRC Meeting	NRC members	Approve roadmap	Minutes
	TWG Workshop	Experts	Draft mapping	Draft text
	Consultation	Stakeholders	Validate content	Feedback report

# Evidence for validation and endorsement

Include as ANNEXES in the Report:

- ✓ List of endorsing institutions
- ✓ Scans of signed declarations of endorsement by QA Bodies
- ✓ Scan of official approval (if applicable)

**Table 5 — Validation and Endorsement Process**

Step	Institution	Evidence
Stakeholder validation	NRC / broader stakeholders	Validation workshop report
Technical endorsement	QA bodies	Written confirmations
Final endorsement	NRC	Signed decision
Government approval	Ministry / Cabinet	Official approval note

# Scan of Endorsement Declaration



**STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS**  
**CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Budgetary institution, A. Goštauto g. 12, LT-01108 Vilnius, Lithuania, tel. +370 5 211 3694, www.skvc.lt, e-mail: skvc@skvc.lt  
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Sincerely yours,  
Director

Almantas Šerpatauskas

05

# Common Issues - Overview

# Where do most challenges arise?

- **Hesitation** about meeting the criteria
- **Insufficient system readiness**
- **Limited stakeholder involvement** and its documentation
- **Limited resources** – too few drafters

## Concerning the report:

- **Overly descriptive** reports with limited analysis and justification
- **Weak or missing evidence** to support claims
- **Inconsistent structure and formatting** (e.g. missing sections, numbering issues)
- **Unclear methodology** for level comparison



# “What if we do not fully meet the criteria?”

## Common concerns:

“Our system is not fully implemented”

“We have gaps in QA / RPL / registers”

“We are not aligned in all sectors”

“Will we fail the referencing?”

## Proposed approach:

Be transparent about limitations

## Clearly distinguish:

- what is implemented
- what is planned

## Include:

- Gaps
- Plans for improvement

This **strengthens credibility** and contributes to building the zone of trust

# When is the system not fully ready?

## Typical situations

- NQF exists but:
  - is not fully operational (empty)
  - limited implementation across sectors
- Gaps identified in:
  - level descriptors
  - QA arrangements
  - registers / data systems

Countries realise during self-assessment that **referencing may be premature**

## What next?

Countries take different approaches:

- Implementation-first:**  
Strengthen application of the NQF before referencing
- Revision-first:**  
Adjust NQF design (e.g. descriptors, structure) before referencing
- Sometimes a parallel approach:**  
Start of referencing while improving system

06

**Common Issues  
Concerning Report**

# Methodological and Analytical Weaknesses

## Level comparison:

- not fully systematic
- missing side-by-side analysis
- unclear justification of “best-fit”
- Missing analytical narrative

## Strategies to address this issue:

- **Use a clear, repeatable methodology:**  
domains and levels →  
comparison → judgement
- **Combine:**  
tables (technical clarity)  
narrative (interpretation)
- **Provide:**  
examples of descriptors  
explanation of differences

# Weak Evidence: “Policy aspirations vs reality” gap

- Claims not supported by:
  - data
  - examples
  - legal references
- Confusion between:
  - **policy intention vs**
  - **actual implementation**
- Lack of:
  - statistics (e.g. register usage, RPL uptake)
  - case studies

## Strategy to address it:

### Always ask:

👉 “What is the evidence?”

### Add:

- concrete examples (qualifications, QA cases)
- references to laws (articles, regulations)
- basic statistics

# Governance, Stakeholders and Validation Issues

- Limited evidence of:
  - stakeholder consultations
  - involvement of industry / providers
- Unclear:
  - roles of committees
  - governance of referencing process
- Weak validation:
  - reports not formally endorsed
- missing signatures / authorisation

## Strategies to address:

### Clearly document:

- who was involved
- how consultation was done
- what feedback was integrated

### Distinguish:

- technical drafting
- stakeholder validation

### Include:

- meeting records
- stakeholder lists
- endorsement statements

# Structural, Clarity and Usability Issues

## Poor navigation:

- incomplete table of contents
- missing numbering
- unstructured sections

## Key information:

- hidden in annexes
- not linked to main text

## Lack of:

- glossary
- diagrams
- clear visuals

## Strategies to address these issues:

### Ensure:

- consistent structure
- complete table of contents
- clear section titles

### Improve usability:

- add diagrams (system, processes)
- move key content into main text
- include glossary

 Use the ACQF checklist

# What matters most

- Honesty about the current state
- Clear methodology and justification
- Strong evidence and examples
- Inclusive stakeholder process



Referencing is not just about alignment — it is a **tool for system development, transparency and trust**

# Links to Referencing Reports

## [European Qualifications Framework Referencing Reports | Europass](#)

europass Europass tools Learn in Europe Work in Europe About Europass Stakeholders

## EQF Referencing Reports

Select the country to see the EQF Referencing Report.

- EQF Referencing Report | Albania
- EQF Referencing Report | Austria
- EQF Referencing Report | Belgium - Flemish Community
- EQF Referencing Report | Belgium - French Community
- EQF Referencing Report | Croatia
- EQF Referencing Report | Cyprus
- EQF Referencing Report | Czechia
- EQF Referencing report | Denmark
- EQF Referencing Report | England and Northern Ireland
- EQF Referencing Report | Estonia
- EQF Referencing Report | Finland
- EQF Referencing Report | France

## [ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework - ASEAN Main Portal](#)

### AQRF Referencing Report of ASEAN Member States:

1. [Malaysia](#)
2. [Philippines](#)
3. [Thailand](#)
4. [Indonesia](#)
5. [Viet Nam](#)

## [EQF Referencing Report | Turkey | Europass](#)

[asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025\\_02\\_ASEAN-QUALIFICATION-REFERENCE-FRAMEWORK-Viet-Nam.pdf](https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025_02_ASEAN-QUALIFICATION-REFERENCE-FRAMEWORK-Viet-Nam.pdf)

Questions, comments,  
clarifications?

06

# Quality Assurance of the Referencing Report – Checklist

# Checklist Overview

*Six sections covering all ACQF referencing quality requirements*

**A**

## Structural Compliance

Documentation, evidence trail, references

**B**

## Terminology and Consistency

Glossary, abbreviations, consistent use of ACQF terms

**C**

## Presentation and Accessibility

Structure, formatting, cross-referencing, figures

**D**

## Criterion-Specific Requirements

Criteria 1–4: level correspondence, LO, qualifications, QA

**E**

## Governance Procedures and Follow-Up

National bodies, QA statements, experts, certification, publication

**F**

## Sign-Off

NRC endorsement before submission to ACQF Network Presidency

# Section A — Structural Compliance

*Evidence, references and the quality of the documentation base*

- All legal, regulatory, policy, and operational documents cited in the report are identified with full references
- Links to official sources or references to document repositories are provided
- The status of each evidence source is indicated (e.g., legislation, regulation, policy document, operational template, institutional document)
- The report demonstrates a clear evidence trail for each ACQF referencing criterion

**Why this matters:** Reviewers must be able to verify every claim in the report independently. An incomplete reference list, broken links, or unclassified sources are the most common reasons a first draft is returned for revision. Build the evidence trail criterion by criterion all along— not at the end.

# Section B — Terminology and Consistency

*National and ACQF terminology must be consistently applied*

- A glossary of key terms is included, reflecting both national and ACQF terminology
- National terminology is clarified where it diverges from ACQF or continental terminology
- A list of abbreviations and acronyms is provided, including national and ACQF-specific acronyms
- Terminology is used consistently throughout the report
- ACQF level descriptors are accurately represented and correctly referenced

**Key watch point:** The ACQF uses 'Autonomy & Responsibility' as its third domain. Most national frameworks use 'Competencies'. These are not the same. The glossary must address this difference explicitly.

# Section C — Presentation and Accessibility

*The report must be professionally structured and readable by international reviewers*

Tables, charts, and diagrams are used to present level correspondences, QA system structures, and stakeholder mapping clearly

The report's structure is logical and headings are clear, with each ACQF criterion addressed in a dedicated section

Internal cross-referencing is accurate and functional

Annexes are referenced in the main text and clearly labelled

Tables and figures are correctly numbered and referenced

The report is accessible to readers unfamiliar with the national qualifications system

**Remember:** The report is a public document reviewed by continental experts who do not know your national system. Every acronym, institutional name and policy reference must be explained. Treat it as a document for an informed international audience.

# Section D — Criterion-Specific Requirements

*Each of the four referencing criteria must be addressed with dedicated evidence*

## CRITERION 1: Level Correspondence — NQF to ACQF

- Evidence supporting each level-to-level correspondence between the national NQF and the ACQF is provided
- Reasoning for each level correspondence is clear, transparent, and defensible
- The methodology used to establish level correspondences is described
- A level correspondence table is included, mapping each national level to the corresponding ACQF level
- Where a national level does not correspond to an ACQF level, the gap is clearly identified and explained

All 10 NQF levels must appear in the correspondence table with domain-by-domain analysis (Knowledge / Skills / Autonomy & Responsibility). A methodology statement is mandatory — not optional.

# Section D — Criterion-Specific Requirements (continued)

## CRITERION 2: Learning Outcomes & Lifelong Learning

- The national framework/system is demonstrated to be based on a learning outcomes approach, consistent with ACQF principles
- A description of how learning outcomes are defined and used in each education and training sub-system is included
- The lifelong learning dimension of the national system is explained, including access pathways for all learners
- Permeability between education and training sub-systems (e.g., general, vocational/technical, higher education) is described
- Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (RPL) are explained
- The relationship between validation/RPL, credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), and the NQF is clarified

RPL must be described within the NQF context — not just as a separate policy document.

# Section D — Criterion-Specific Requirements (continued)

## CRITERION 3: Inclusion of Qualifications & Allocation to Levels

- Procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the NQF are clearly described for each education and training sub-system
- Criteria for the allocation of qualifications to specific levels are explained
- Information is provided on qualifications outside the formal system and whether/how they may be included in the NQF
- The status of the process of inclusion of qualifications in each sub-system is clearly stated
- All registered qualifications are verifiable and publicly accessible in a national register(s) of qualifications

Provide a direct URL to the qualifications register as verifiable public evidence. A description alone is not sufficient — reviewers must be able to access and verify the register themselves.

# Section D — Criterion-Specific Requirements (continued)

## CRITERION 4: Quality Assurance Systems

- National quality assurance systems are clearly described for all relevant education and training sub-systems
- QA bodies are clearly identified and their mandates clarified, with coverage across sectors and levels explained
- The relationship between national QA systems and the NQF is described
- Consistency with relevant continental and regional QA principles is addressed, including alignment with African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA) or equivalent regional instruments
- The extent to which QA arrangements support recognition and portability of qualifications within the African continent is noted

Alignment with ASG-QA must be demonstrated with specific references — not simply stated. Show which ASG-QA principles are met and how the national QA system delivers against them.

# Section E — Governance Procedures and Follow-Up

*Mandatory requirements beyond the four referencing criteria*

## E1 | Responsibilities and Legal Competence of Relevant National Bodies

- All national bodies involved in qualifications governance are identified
- Their legal mandates and responsibilities are clearly described with reference to the enabling legislation
- Their roles, functions, and legal mandates are explicitly documented
- The relationship between the national qualifications authority and relevant ministries, QA bodies, and sector bodies is explained
- Documentation of responsibilities and legal competence is formally published and publicly accessible to ensure transparency regarding who holds authority and accountability in the referencing process

Governance documentation must be publicly accessible — not merely available internally. Include links to published mandates, legislation and official institutional descriptions.

# Section E — Governance Procedures (continued)

## E2 | QA Bodies' Agreement Statements Formal statements = MANDATORY ANNEX

- Formal statement(s) of agreement from relevant national quality assurance bodies are included as an annex
- Any limitations, conditions, or reservations expressed by QA bodies are clearly documented and addressed
- The process through which QA bodies were engaged and provided their statements is described

## E3 | International & Continental Expert Involvement Written statements = MANDATORY ANNEX

- International and/or continental experts have been involved in the referencing process
- The selection process and criteria for expert involvement are described
- The role of each expert is documented (e.g., peer reviewer, technical advisor, workshop facilitator)
- Expert feedback is reflected in written form in the final report
- Where technical support from the ACQF Cluster on Referencing was provided, this is acknowledged

# Section E — Governance Procedures (continued)

## E4 | Competent National Body & Certification

- The competent national body responsible for the referencing process is clearly identified
- Arrangements for the national certification and endorsement of the referencing report are described
- The report is structured as one comprehensive document, incorporating all required evidence and annexes
- Evidence supporting the referencing conclusions is clearly included and referenced throughout

## E5 | Publication & Dissemination

- Arrangements for the publication of the referencing report are described, including the intended platform(s) and timeline
- The report will be made available on the ACQF Website and national qualifications authority website
- A dissemination plan to key national and continental stakeholders is outlined

# Section E6 & Section F — Certificates and Sign-Off

## E6 | ACQF Levels on Certificates & Transcripts

- Arrangements for including ACQF levels on national qualification certificates, diplomas, and transcripts are described
- An implementation timeline for the inclusion of ACQF level indicators on certificates is provided
- Communication and awareness-raising plans for stakeholders regarding the display of ACQF levels are referenced

## SECTION F | Sign-Off

*This checklist should be completed by the lead drafting expert and verified by the National Referencing Committee before submission of the referencing report to the ACQF Network Presidency.*

<b>Checklist completed by:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Version:</b>	

Questions, comments,  
clarifications?