

## ACQF-II

### Training Programme 2023

# “Making Qualifications Frameworks operational in a time of change”

A series of 3 workshops: onsite-online

Common theme: Making Qualifications Frameworks operational in a time of change

Speaker: Eduarda Castel-Branco



# ACQF-II Training programme 2023

- Welcome
- Benvinda(o)s
- Bienvenu(e)s



Nairobi: 9-11/Oct



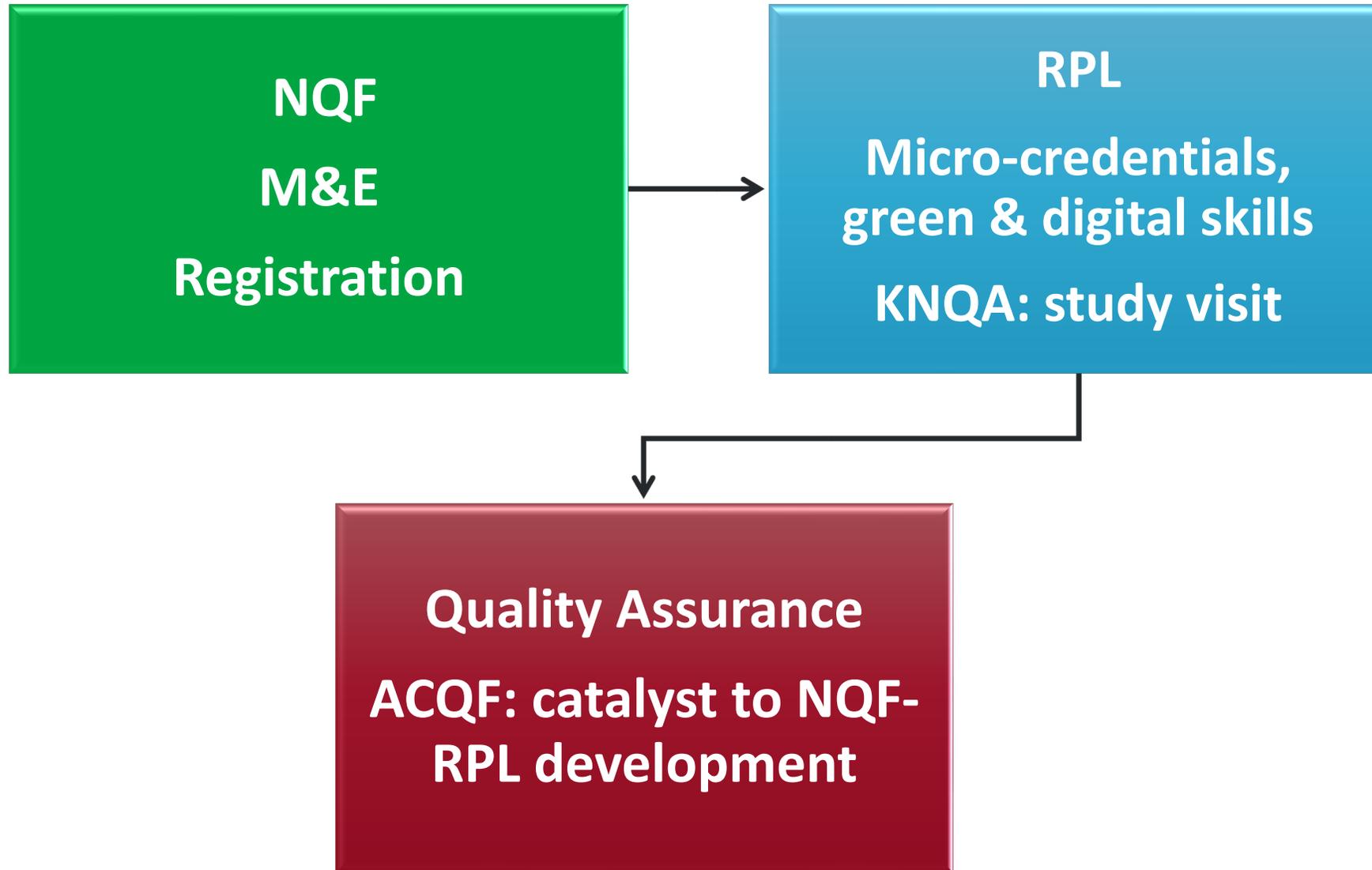
Accra: 7-8/Nov



Maputo: 5-6/Dec



# Nairobi: Agenda 9-11 October



# Agenda 9/Oct 2023

- **Session 1:** Opening
- **Session 2:** Qualifications frameworks: from needs to action
- **Session 3:** Monitoring and evaluation: not the last concern.
- **Lunch break**
- **Sessão 4:** Registration of qualifications
- Lessons learned



The poster features logos for Global Gateway, the European Union (Funded by the European Union), the African Union, and the European Training Foundation (ETF). The main title is 'African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)' under the 'DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION'. It lists the event in three languages: English, French, and Portuguese. The date is 11-13 July 2023, the venue is the Medium Conference Hall at the NCC Building in Addis Ababa, and the interpretation is in English, French, and Portuguese. A hybrid meeting format is also noted. The ACQF logo is prominently displayed, along with an image of people working together. A list of ACQF-II focus areas is provided at the bottom.

**Global Gateway** **Funded by the European Union** **African Union** **ETF** Working together Learning for life European Training Foundation

**African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

 **Validation of the ACQF Policy Document and Launch of the project ACQF-II**  
 **Validation du Document de politique ACQF et Lancement du projet ACQF-II**  
 **Validação do documento do ACQF e Lançamento do projeto ACQF-II**

**Date:** 11-13 July 2023  
**Venue:** Medium Conference Hall, NCC Building, AUC – Addis Ababa  
**Interpretation:** English-French-Portuguese  
**Hybrid meeting**

**ACQF**  
African Continental  
Qualifications Framework

**ACQF-II is:**

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



# ACQF

African Continental  
Qualifications Framework

## Session 2: Qualifications frameworks – from needs to action

09/Oct 2023: 09.45-11.15

Qualifications frameworks are a global phenomenon. More than 150 countries have developed NQFs and many have advanced their implementation. But NQFs do not work in isolation, or without partnerships and resources. A broad overview of characteristics and trends.

Speaker: Eduarda Castel-Branco



# 01

**Qualifications and  
frameworks – main concepts**

# People, society, economy...needs

Social justice

Planet

Peace and stability

Jobs

Investments

Livelihoods

Skills and qualifications

Lifelong learning

Access & Quality  
education

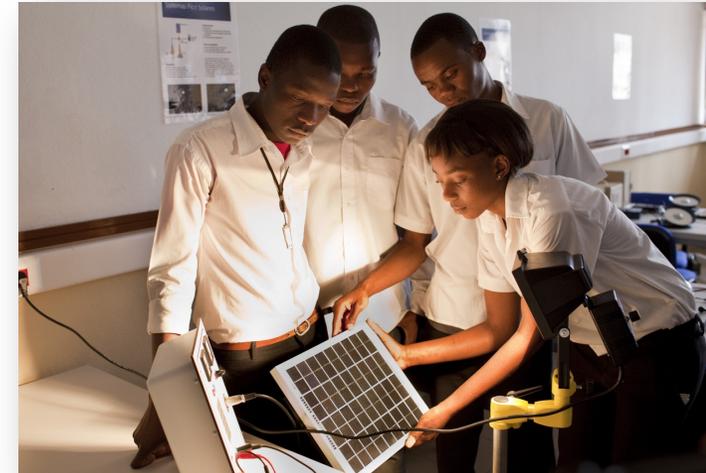


## Qualifications frameworks...

- Are effective and impactful if they work with the wider eco-system of education and training and contribute to national goals and strategies
- Need to be open to innovation and adaptation to remain relevant
- Qualifications frameworks' **(digital) tools** – important for information-sharing between institutions and for end-users' guidance
- Governance of QF: participative, inclusive, based on technical competence. *“The NQF belongs to everybody”*
- *There is much information, research, sources, tools on NQFs and RQFs*

## Important trends related to qualifications frameworks:

- Growing openness to qualifications and credentials of different types
- Support access, inclusion, progression, transparency and comparability
- Comprehensive and inclusive of qualifications and credentials of all sub-sectors (NQFs – RQFs for LLL) and all modes of learning (F-NF-I)
- Digitalisation: of qualifications and credentials; registers and catalogues of qualifications



# ACQF

African Continental  
Qualifications Framework



**A national qualifications framework (NQF)** is 'A policy and instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.

Source: EQF Recommendation

**A qualification:** means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

Source: EQF Recommendation.

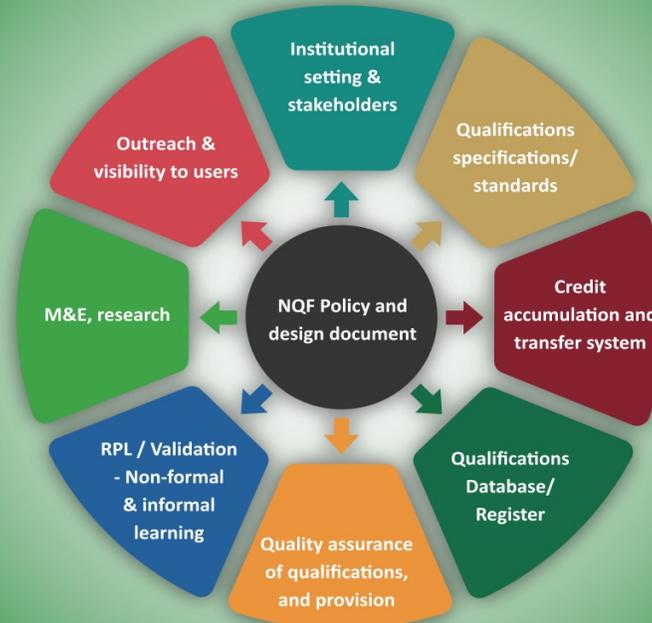
**Learning outcomes:** Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal and informal.

Source: Cedefop

**A national qualification system includes** all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These include the means to develop and operationalise national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, **quality assurance processes, evaluation and attribution processes, skills recognition** and other mechanisms linking education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems can be more or less integrated and coherent. One of the characteristics of a qualification system may be an **explicit qualifications framework**.

Source: OECD, *Bridges to Lifelong Learning*, 2007



**Level descriptor:** A statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of a Qualifications Framework that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Source: SAQA, NQFPedia

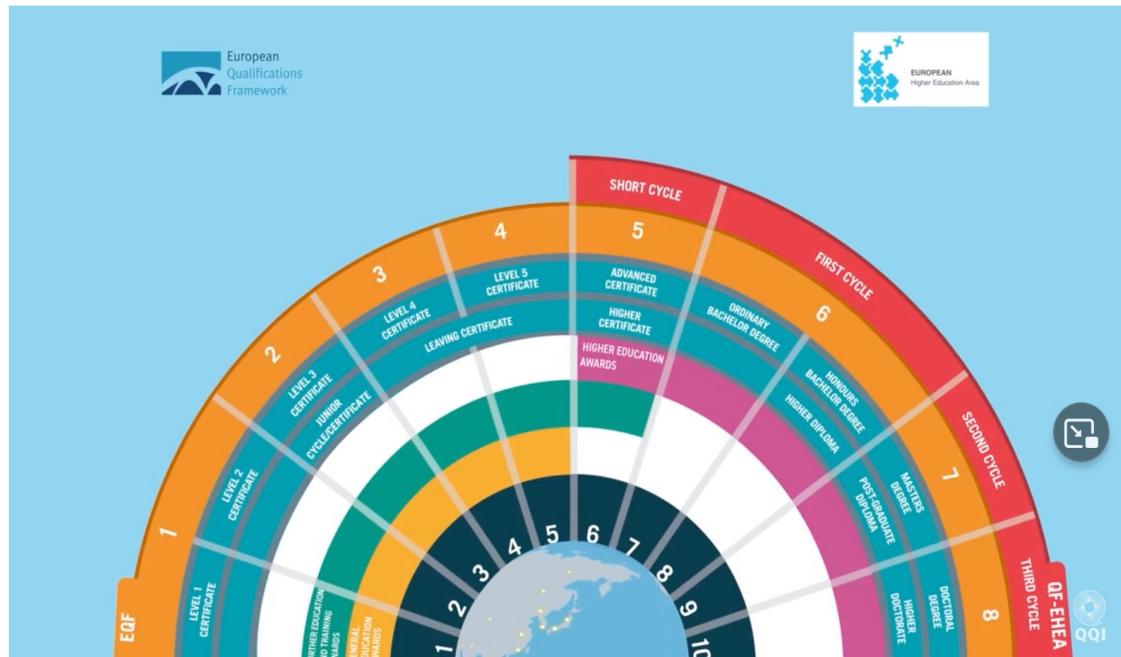
**A regional qualifications framework (RQF)** is a broad structure of levels of learning outcomes that is agreed by countries in a geographical region.

A means of enabling one national framework of qualifications to **relate** to another and, subsequently, for a qualification in one country to be compared to a qualification from another country.

Source: ASEAN

QRF: ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, *A Practical Guide and All you Need to Know*.

# National qualifications frameworks



<https://youtu.be/qK15HlhDbo4>

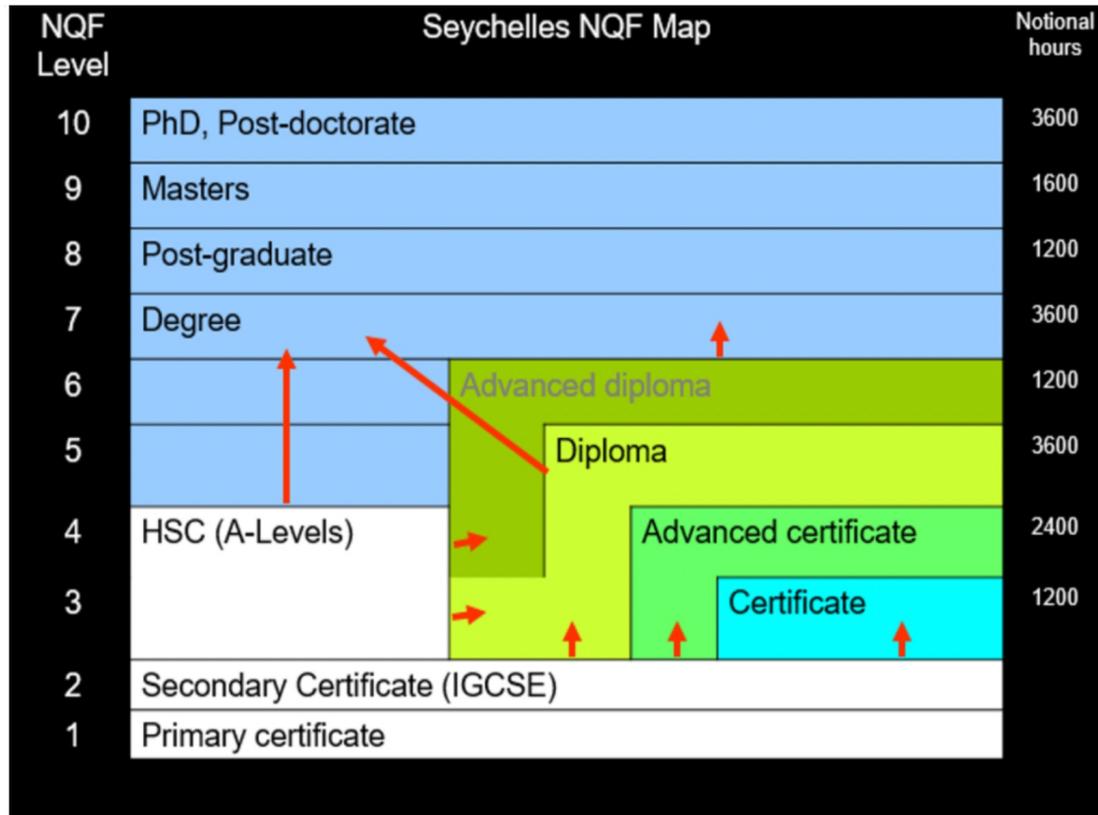
## National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) help

- To make qualifications easier to understand and compare.
- They can also encourage countries to rethink and reform national policy and practice on education, training and lifelong learning.

## Learning outcomes: a fundamental principle

- NQFs classify qualifications by level, based on learning outcomes - that is, what the holder of a certificate or diploma is expected to know, understand, and be able to do.
- This classification reflects the content and profile of qualifications.
- The learning outcomes approach also ensures that education and training subsystems are open to one another.
- Thus, it allows people to move more easily between education and training institutions and sectors.
- Learning outcomes-based qualifications: essential for RPL

# What is an NQF? (1)



- A national qualifications framework (NQF) is 'A **policy and instrument** for the **development and classification of qualifications** according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at **integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems** and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the **labour market and civil society**'.

Source: [EQF Recommendation 2017](#)

- An **instrument for the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies along a continuum of agreed levels.**
- It is a way of **structuring existing and new qualifications**, which are defined by **learning outcomes** – clear statements of what the learner must know or be able to do, whether learned in a classroom, on the job, or less formally.
- The qualifications framework indicates the **comparability** of different qualifications and how one can **progress** from one level to another, within and across occupations or industrial sectors (and even across vocational and academic fields if the NQF is designed to include both vocational and academic qualifications in a single framework).

Source:

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@ifp\\_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_103623.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_103623.pdf)

# Lesotho NQF (3): contextualised

The LQF consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across borders in the SADC region, in order to: facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States; harmonise qualifications wherever possible; and to contribute to the creation of acceptable regional standards where appropriate. The main role is to make qualifications more accessible and understandable across different country systems for the purpose of advancing human and economic development in the region.

The structure of the LQF consists of level descriptors that explain what learners should know (knowledge), understand, and be able to do (capabilities and competencies), having graduated and been awarded a qualification. The credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) mechanisms built into the framework facilitates the horizontal and vertical progression of learners, and offers entry points for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and the recognition of current competencies (RCC).

Procedures Manual of LQF. [https://www.che.ac.ls/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Procedures-Manual\\_LQF-Approved-1.pdf](https://www.che.ac.ls/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Procedures-Manual_LQF-Approved-1.pdf)

# Qualifications frameworks: types



KNQF STRUCTURE

KNQF Level	General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework			Notional hours (minimum)
10	Doctorate Degree			3600 after KNQA level 9
9	Master's degree			2400 after KNQA level 7
8	Post-Graduate Diploma	Professional Bachelor's Degree	Professional Master Craft Person	1200 after KNQA level 7 or 6000 after KNQA level 2
7	Bachelor's Degree		Master Crafts Person –I or Management Professional	4800 after KNQA 2 or 2400 after KNQA level 6
6	National Diploma		Master Crafts Person –II or Professional Diploma	2400 after level 2 or 1200 after KNQA level 5
5	National Certificate		Professional Certificate or Master Craft Person III	1200 after KNQA level 2 or 600 after level 4
4	National Vocational Certificate-IV		National Skills Certificate –I GTT-I	600 after KNQA level 2 or 300 after level 3
3	National Vocational Certificate-III/Artisan Certificate		National Skills Certificate -II / (GTT – II)	300 after KNQA level 2
2	Secondary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate-I	National Skills Certificate -III / Government Trade Test (GTT-III)	Primary Education (Level 1)
1	Primary Certificate		Basic Skills/Skills for Life	Birth Certificate

National (currently over 150 in the world)

- Comprehensive, inclusive scope – large majority
- Partial: sub-sector – TVET, HE

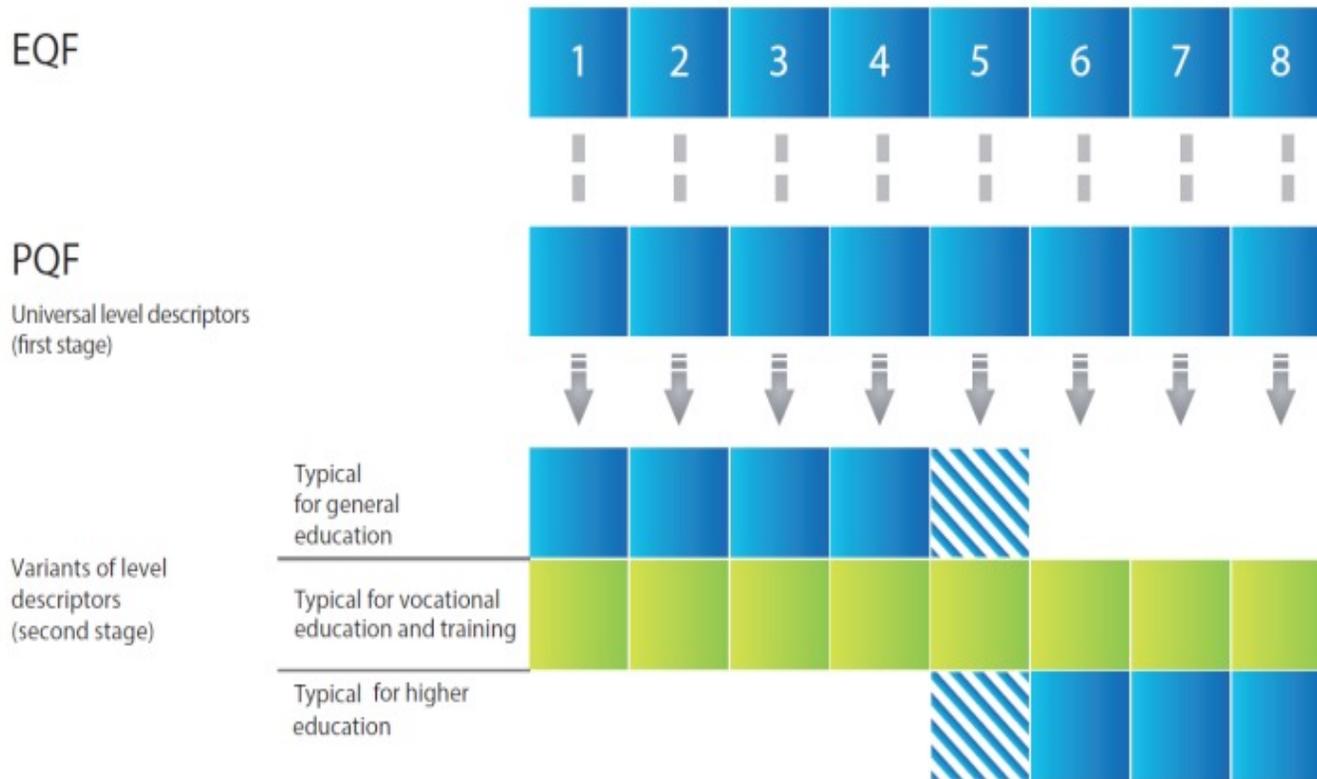
Sectoral

- Economic or professional scope: welding, banking, energy industry...

Regional: overarching, meta-frameworks (currently: some 17 initiatives at different stage of development and implementation)

# NQF with several layers

The structure of the Polish Qualifications Framework



Source: IBE.

## NQF

First and second stage descriptors constitute a coherent whole. They should be read together to fully understand the uniqueness of each level.

### Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF)

Next to the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF), sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQF), maybe established SQF: typical for TVET qualifications

Sectoral qualifications frameworks translate the assumptions of the Integrated Qualification System (IQS) into an industry/sector realities, highlighting their specificity and development directions.

#### 4 sectoral frameworks included in the IQS:

- sport,
- tourism,
- construction,
- development services.

#### Draft sectoral frameworks developed for further nine areas:

- Banking
- information technology,
- telecommunications,
- fashion industry,
- public health,
- trade, agriculture,
- chemical industry,
- energy industry,
- automotive industry.

#### Development of the following sectoral frameworks is planned:

- Mining
- education,
- real estate.

## Functions of NQF

1. Communication: disseminate and clarify – goals, qualifications, structures; transparency.
2. Reform: contributes to change, improvements, innovation.
3. Regulation: part of regulatory framework of qualifications.

**In Europe: mostly 1 and 2**

**In Africa: 1, 2 and 3**

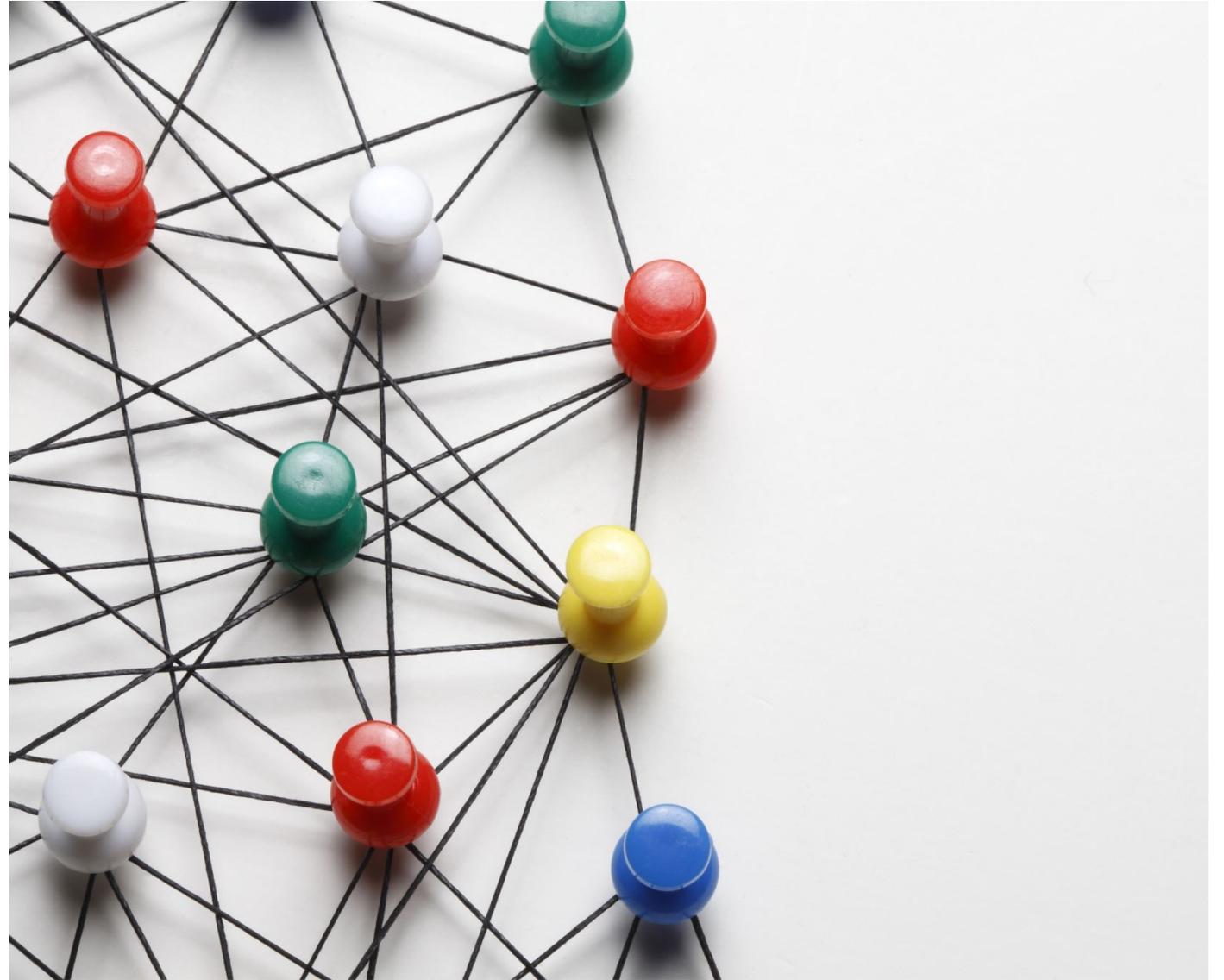
# 1. Communication

# 2. Reform

# 3. Regulation

## Regional qualifications frameworks

- European Qualifications Framework (41 countries)
- SADC (16 countries)
- IGADQF (8 countries)
- EAQFHE (7 countries)
- ASEAN QRF (10 countries)
- ...ACQF (55 countries)



# Regional Qualifications Framework

What is the common key term ?

- A broad structure of levels of learning outcomes that is agreed by countries in a geographical region. A means of enabling one national framework of qualifications to relate to another and, subsequently, for a qualification in one country to be **compared** to a qualification from another country.

ASEAN QRF: [ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, A Practical Guide and All you Need to Know. Page 33.](#)

- Regional Qualifications Framework: consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective **comparability** of qualifications and credits across countries in a region

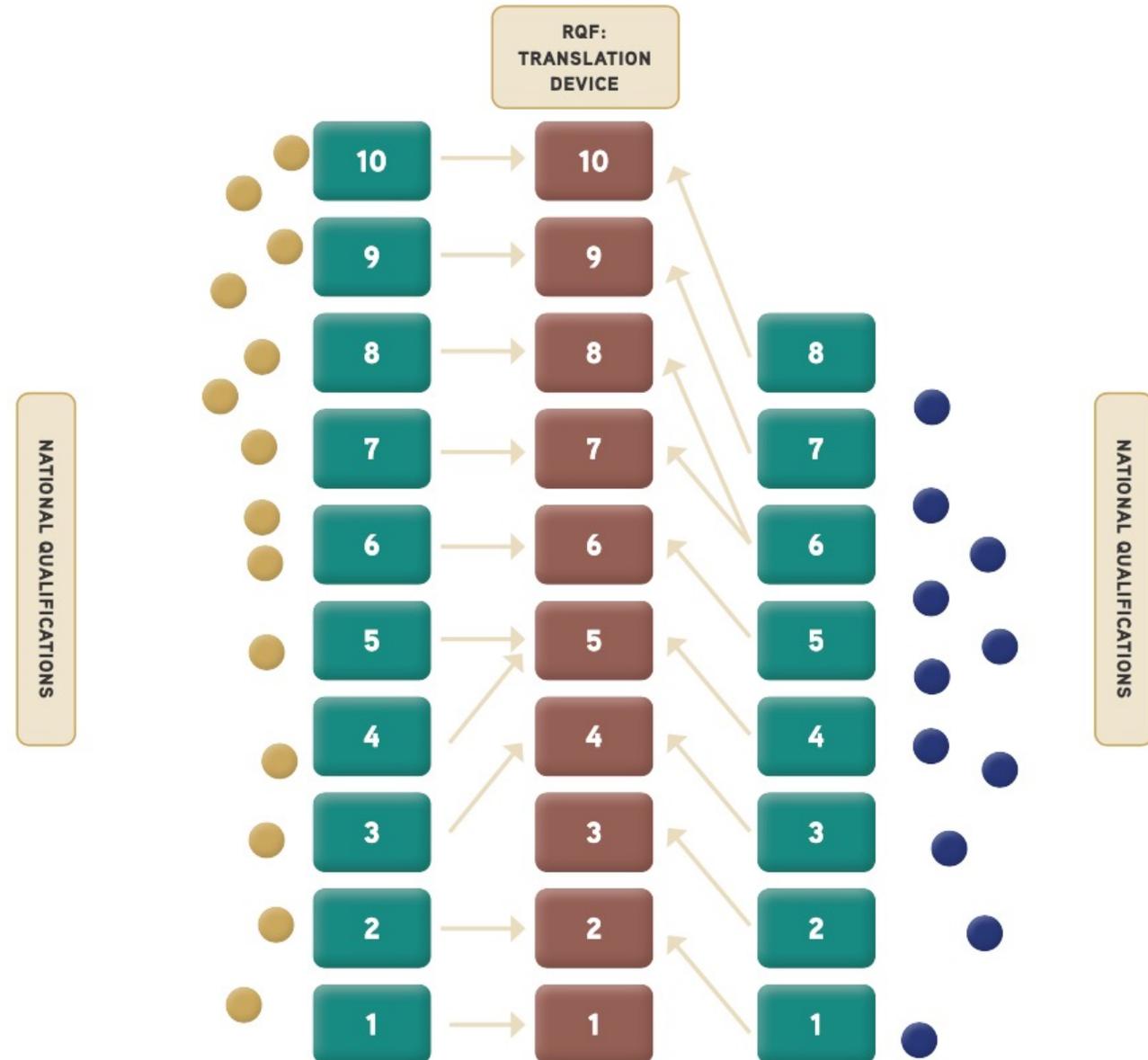
Tuck R. 2007. An Introductory Guide to NQF

## RQF:

- Metaframework
- Translator / comparator / common language

## Linkage NQF-RQF:

- criteria and procedures for referencing;
- peer learning;
- common database of qualifications



### Example:

EQF – Tool to compare NQFs with EQF

German NQF: 8 levels

Irish NQF: 10 levels

Here: levels 5 to 8 EQF

Germany (2020)	EQF	Ireland (2020)
<b>NQF 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctorate and equivalent arts degrees (<i>Doktorat und äquivalente künstlerische Abschlüsse</i>)</li> </ul>	<b>EQF 8</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctoral degree</li> <li>Higher Doctorate</li> </ul>
<b>NQF 7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (traditional German courses of higher education study such as the first degrees of Diplom or Magister, State examinations) (<i>Master und gleichgestellte Abschlüsse (Diplom, Magister, Staatsexamen)</i>)</li> <li>Strategic professional (IT) (certified) (<i>Strategische/r IT Professional (Geprüfte/r)</i>)</li> <li>Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 7) (<i>Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 7)</i>)</li> </ul>	<b>EQF 7</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master degree</li> <li>Postgraduate diploma</li> <li>Level 9 Professional award</li> </ul>
<b>NQF 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (<i>Bachelor und gleichgestellte Hochschulabschlüsse</i>)</li> <li>Specialist commercial clerk (certified) (<i>Fachkaufmann/-frau (Geprüfte/r)</i>)</li> <li>Business management specialist (certified) (<i>Fachwirt (Geprüfter)</i>)</li> <li>Master craftsman (certified) (<i>Meister (Geprüfter)</i>)</li> <li>Operative professional (IT) (certified) (<i>Operative/r Professional (IT) (Geprüfte/r)</i>)</li> <li>Trade and technical school (advanced vocational training governed by federal State law) (<i>Fachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte berufliche Weiterbildungen)</i>)</li> <li>Advanced vocational training pursuant to § 54 of the Vocational Training Act (level 6) (<i>Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach § 54 BBiG (Niveau 6)</i>)</li> <li>Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 6) (<i>Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 6)</i>)</li> </ul>	<b>EQF 6</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honours bachelor degree</li> <li>Higher diploma</li> <li>Level 8 Professional award</li> </ul> <b>NQF 7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ordinary bachelor degree</li> <li>Level 7 Professional award</li> </ul>
<b>NQF 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT specialist (certified) (<i>IT-Spezialist (Zertifizierter)</i>)</li> <li>Service technician (certified) (<i>Servicetechniker/in (Geprüfte/r)</i>)</li> <li>Advanced vocational training pursuant to § 54 of the Vocational Training Act (<i>Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach § 54 BBiG (Niveau 5)</i>)</li> <li>Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 5) (<i>Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 5)</i>)</li> </ul>	<b>EQF 5</b> ⓘ	<b>NQF 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advanced certificate Show details ▾</li> <li>Higher certificate</li> <li>Level 6 Professional award</li> </ul>

## Example:

EQF – Tool to compare NQFs with EQF

German NQF: 8 levels  
Irish NQF: 10 levels

Here: levels 1 to 4 EQF

### NQF 4

- Upper secondary general education school leaving certificate – General higher education entrance qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife (AHR)*) Subject-linked higher education entrance qualification (*Fachgebundene Hochschulreife (FgbHR)*)
- Higher education entrance qualification for university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulreife (FHR)*)
- Dual VET (three-year and three-and-a-half-year training courses) (*Duale Berufsausbildung (3- und 3 ½-jährige Ausbildungen)*)
- Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal State law) (*Berufsfachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte Berufsausbildungen)*)
- Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal law in healthcare and elderly care) (*Berufsfachschule (Bundesrechtliche Ausbildungsregelungen für Berufe im Gesundheitswesen und in der Altenpflege)*)
- Full-time vocational school (fully qualifying vocational education and training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and trades regulation Code) (*Berufsfachschule (vollqualifizierende Berufsausbildung nach BBiG/HwO)*)
- Retraining qualification pursuant to the Vocational Training Act (level 4) (*Berufliche Umschulung nach BBiG (Niveau 4)*)

### NQF 3

- Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate – General education, 10 years (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA)*)
- Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate – Full-time vocational school (*Berufsfachschule (Mittlerer Schulabschluss)*)
- Dual VET (two-year training courses) (*Duale Berufsausbildung (2-jährige Ausbildung)*)

### NQF 2

- Lower secondary school leaving certificate – General education, 9 years (*Erster Schulabschluss (ESA)*)
- Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year, introductory training) (*Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 2; BvB, BvB-Reha, BV, EQ)*)
- Basic vocational training – Full-time vocational school (*Berufliche Grundbildung*)

### NQF 1

- Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year) (*Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 1; BvB, BvB-Reha, BV))*)

### EQF 4

### NQF 5

- Level 5 certificate  
[Show details](#) ▾
- Leaving certificate
- Level 5 Professional award

### EQF 3

### NQF 4

- Level 4 certificate  
[Show details](#) ▾
- Leaving certificate

### EQF 2

### NQF 3

- Level 3 certificate  
[Show details](#) ▾
- Junior certificate / Cycle  
[Show details](#) ▾

### EQF 1

### NQF 2

- Level 2 certificate  
[Show details](#) ▾

### NQF 1

- Level 1 certificate  
[Show details](#) ▾

# Compare NQF Türkiye and North Macedonia

Source:

[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/nqfs-online-tool/qualifications-comparison?country\\_1=MK&year\\_1=5338&country\\_2=TR&year\\_2=5338](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/nqfs-online-tool/qualifications-comparison?country_1=MK&year_1=5338&country_2=TR&year_2=5338)

North Macedonia (2020)	EQF	Turkey (2020)
<b>NQF 8</b> <b>Doctorate diploma</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 8 1	<b>NQF 8</b> <b>Doctoral diploma (PhD, proficiency in arts, specialty in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary)</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system
<b>NQF 7 - 7 A</b> <b>Second cycle master of science diploma (from 60 to 120 ECTS)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 7 1	<b>NQF 7</b> <b>Master diploma (with thesis)</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Master diploma (without thesis)</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system
<b>NQF 7 - 7 B</b> <b>Second cycle diploma for specialist studies (60 ECTS)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)		
<b>NQF 6 - 6 A</b> <b>First cycle university diploma (240 ECTS)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>First cycle vocational diploma (240 ECTS)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 6 1	<b>NQF 6</b> <b>Bachelor diploma</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 6 vocational qualification certificate</b> Category: NVQ
<b>NQF 6 - 6 B</b> <b>First cycle university diploma (180 ECTS)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>First cycle vocational diploma (180 ECTS)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)		
<b>NQF 5 - 5 A</b> <b>Short cycle higher education (vocational) diploma (uverenie)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 5 1	<b>NQF 5</b> <b>Associate diploma (academic)</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Associate diploma (general)</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 5 vocational qualification certificate</b> Category: NVQ
<b>NQF 5 - 5B</b> <b>Post-secondary diploma for specialist education (diploma za specijalistichko obrazovanie)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>Craftsman diploma (diploma za majstorski ispit)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)		
<b>NQF 4</b> <b>Upper secondary general education diploma</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>Upper secondary technical diploma</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>Upper secondary arts diploma</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>Vocational certificate (CVET)</b> Category: Vocational qualifications Show details	EQF 4 1	<b>NQF 4</b> <b>High school diploma</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>High school diploma (VET, fine arts and sports)</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Mastership certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 4 course completion certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 4 vocational qualification certificate</b> Category: NVQ
<b>NQF 3</b> <b>Vocational diploma (three years) (diploma)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>Vocational certificate (CVET)</b> Category: Vocational qualifications Show details	EQF 3 1	<b>NQF 3</b> <b>Journeyman certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 3 course completion certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 3 vocational qualification certificate</b> Category: NVQ
<b>NQF 2</b> <b>Vocational certificate (two years)</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>Vocational certificate (CVET)</b> Category: Vocational qualifications Show details	EQF 2 1	<b>NQF 2</b> <b>Level 2 adult learning certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 2 course completion certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system  <b>Level 2 vocational qualification certificate</b> Category: NVQ
<b>NQF 1</b> <b>Certificate of primary education</b> Category: Educational qualifications (formal)  <b>State certificate for adult education (literacy and numeracy skills)</b> Category: Vocational qualifications Show details	EQF 1 1	<b>NQF 1</b> <b>Literacy certificate</b> Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system

# What is a qualification system?

- This includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning.
- These systems include the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, QA processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society.
- Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. One feature of a qualifications system may be an **explicit framework of qualifications**.

Source: OECD, Bridges to Lifelong Learning, 2007. <https://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/qualificationssystemsbriidgetolifelonglearning.htm>

# What is a qualification?

Means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

Source: EQF 2017

Therefore, a qualification is a specification of learning outcomes that is approved by an authority (accrediting body) as meeting the requirements of the NQF.

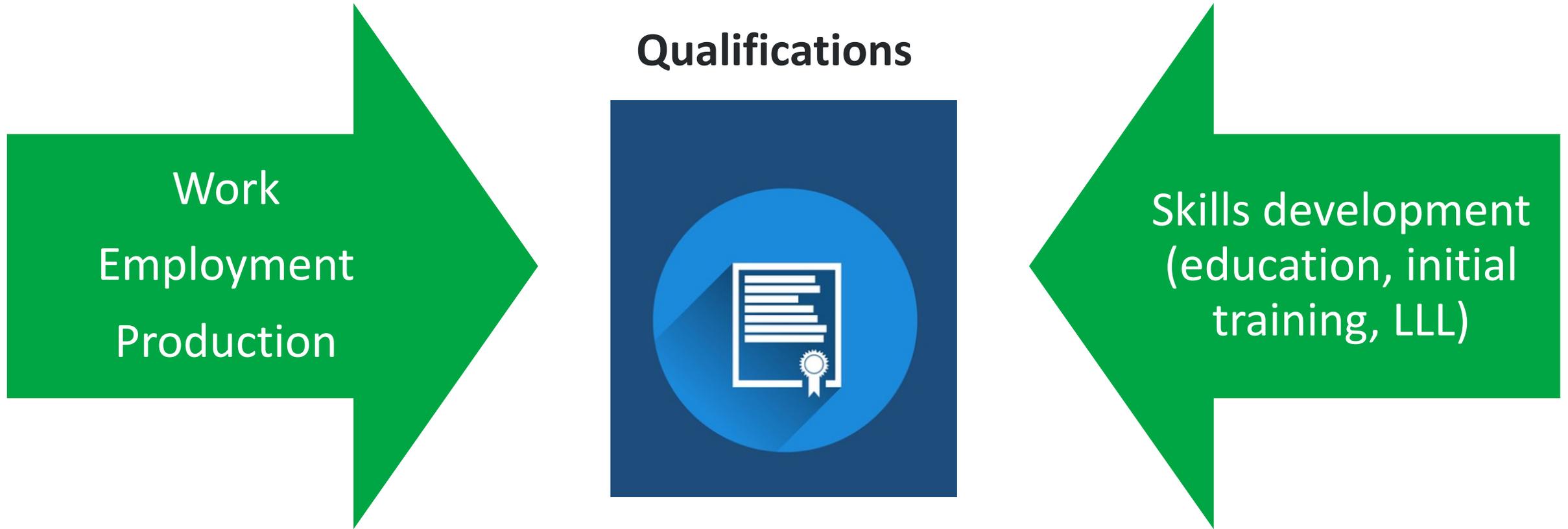


**Qualificação de Nível 5 em Mecânica de Maquinagem**

Código	Módulo	Créditos
ME NG480011	Documentar projetos para instalações de máquinas	4
ME NG480002	Executar desenhos e modelos tridimensionais simples por meio do computador	4
ME NG480003	Controlar a qualidade de peças usando elementos de metrologia	4
ME NG480004	Planear e organizar os trabalhos de manutenção de equipamentos industriais	4
ME NG480005	Orientar os trabalhos de manutenção e instalação de equipamentos industriais	4
ME NG480006	Utilizar técnicas e ferramentas para atividades complexas de manutenção e reparação de máquinas e equipamentos	5
ME NG480007	Utilizar ferramentas, planos e manuais para atividades de manutenção e reparação de máquinas e equipamentos	4
ME NG480008	Tornear peças simples utilizando ferramentas com comando numérico por computador (CNC)	5
ME NG480009	Fresar peças simples utilizando ferramentas com comando numérico por computador (CNC)	5
ME NG480010	Maquinar peças complexas utilizando máquinas CNC e CAD/CAM	5
ME NG480011	Supervisionar oficinas, recursos humanos e processos de produção	4
ME NG480012	Executar o projeto Integrativo	6
ME NG480013	Adaptar especificações de trabalho em empresas industriais	20
MO FEG20001	Usar o inglês para propósitos sociais, pessoais e profissionais	2
MO FEG20002	Comunicar informação relacionada com o trabalho	2
MO FEG20003	Ler e responder a comunicações escritas	2
MO FEG20004	Produzir materiais escritos	2
MO FEG20005	Interpretar o espaço físico em 3-D	2
MO FEG20006	Participar num debate como cidadão principal e como interveniente	4
MO FEG20007	Interpretar informação escrita em textos de carácter informativo e explicativo; produzir textos explicativos e informativos	2

ANEP - Av. Mão Tse Tung No. 72, P.O.Box 4063, Maputo, Moçambique  
 Email: direcao-geral@anep.gov.mz, Tel. 258 21 484030/7 Fax. +258 21 486127 Cal. Office: +258 82 3209730/30435568/3209750

# Between the world of work and the world of education and training



Information on  
demand in labour  
market

Professional  
standards

Qualifications  
standards

Develop  
Training  
Programmes

Delivery  
training

Assessment  
and  
certification

M&E -  
performance

# Abundant literature and sources on qualifications frameworks

- ACQF website: library - <https://acqf.africa/resources/library/publications-from-international-sources>
- ACQF Training Modules: <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules>
- ACQF Thematic briefs: <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/thematic-briefs>
- ACQF Mapping study: <https://acqf.africa/resources/mapping-study>
- Cedefop: [Library of publications on NQF](#)
- [Cedefop: Online tool on NQFs Europe](#)
- Cedefop: [European Database of VNFIL](#) (“RPL”)
- Global Inventory NQF-RQF – ETF, Cedefop, Unesco
- EQF: webpage at Europass
- EQF: comparison - <https://europa.eu/europass/en/compare-qualifications>
- EQF: evaluation (2 + new in 2022-2023)
- Agencies, authorities in charge of NQFs
- ILO (Tuck, R.), 2007, An Introductory Guide to NQF.  
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@ifp\\_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_103623.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_103623.pdf)

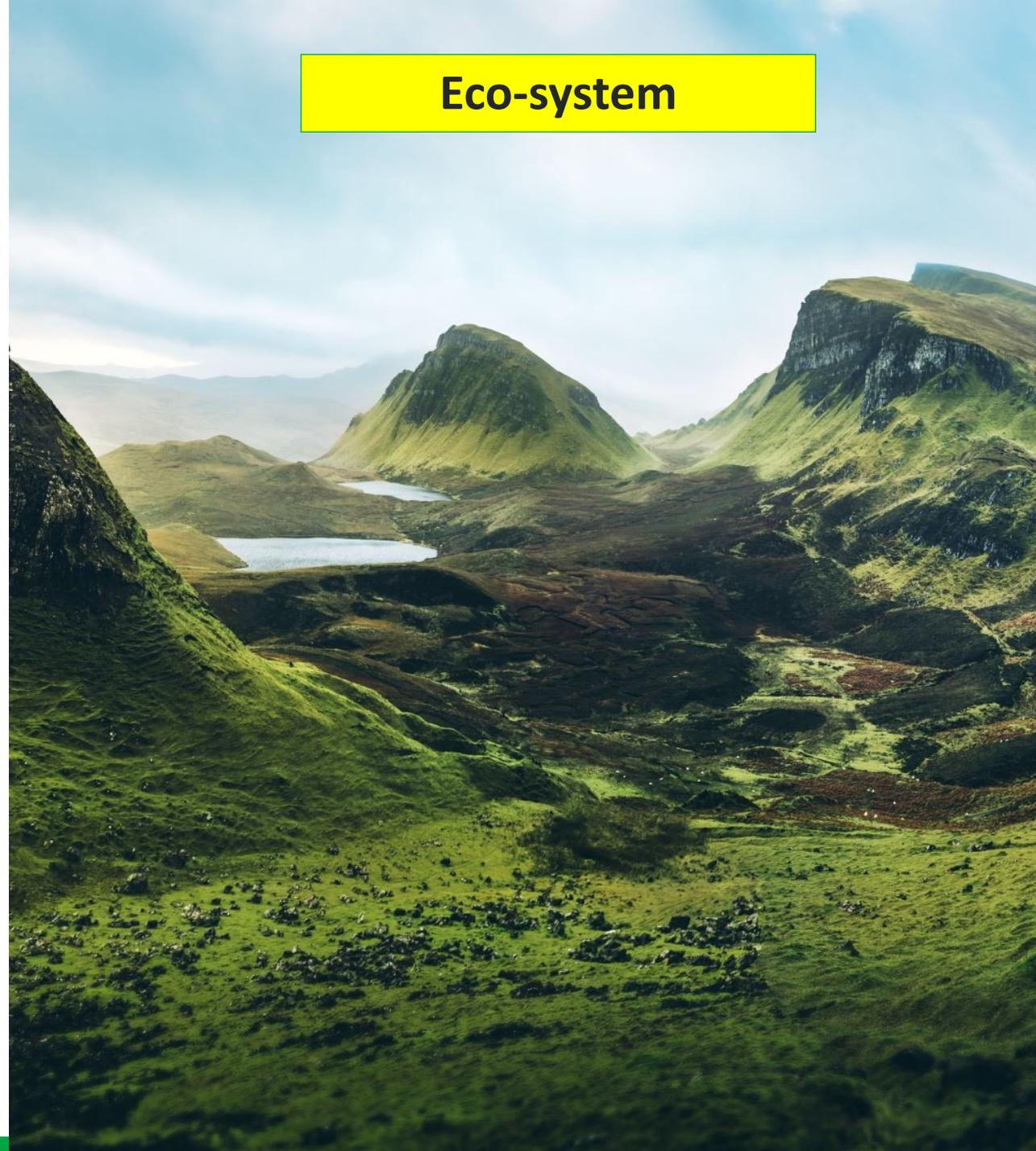
# 02

**Main elements of the  
NQF**

# The systemic view of NQF



Eco-system



## Vision

- Concept, policy document
- Rationale, objectives, scope, functions, principles, level structure, qualifications types
- Governance

## Legal basis: diverse

- Law, Acts
- Decrees
- Ministerial decisions, ordinances
- Resolution
- Regulations
- No specific NQF legal act, but reference in several documents

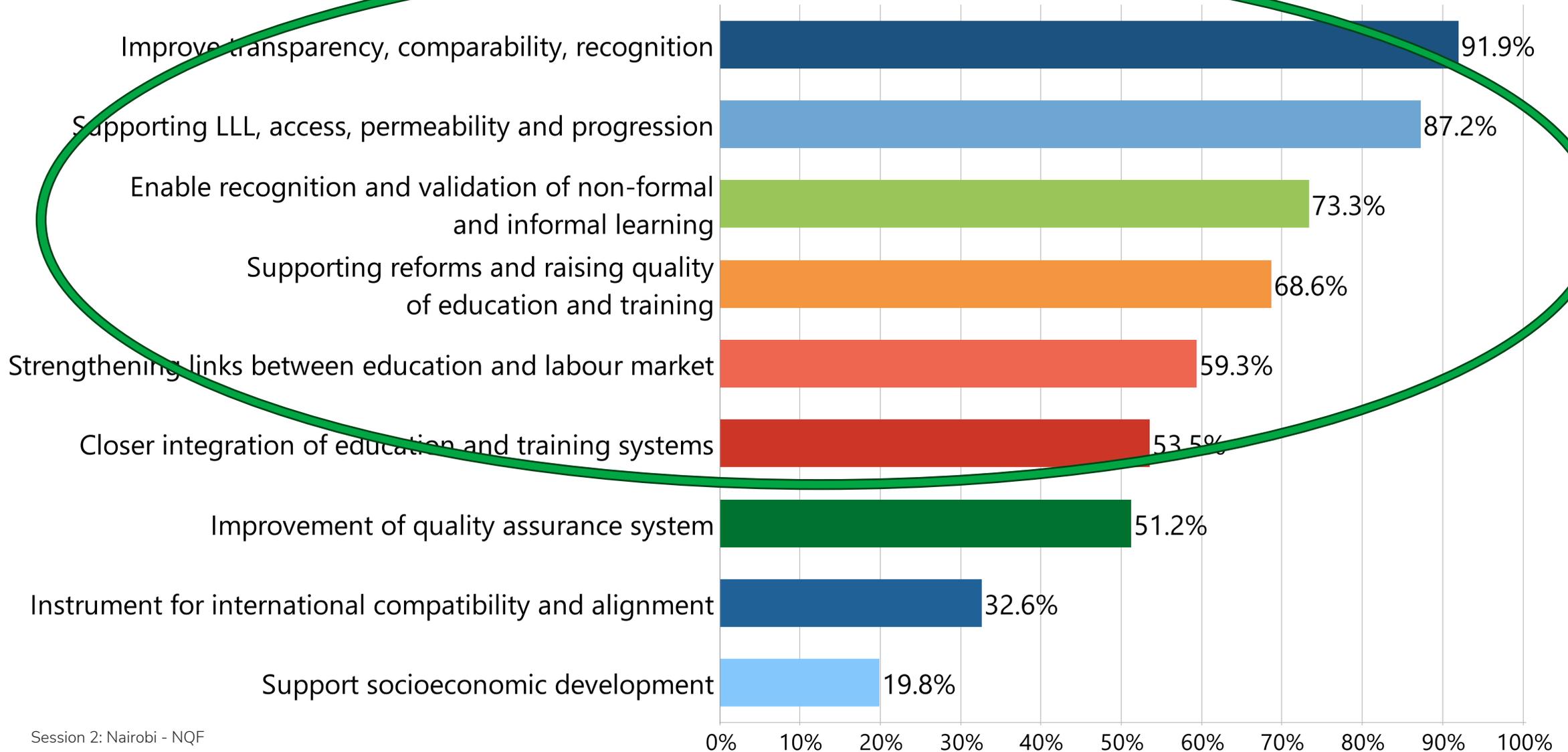
## Implementation tools

- Policies and regulations: on qualifications development; on classification; on registration; on registers; on QA; on credit system; on recognition of qualifications
- NQF implementation entity: statute, internal procedures, tools and website
- Information and support packages for implementers
- Tools, registers, MIS, data analysis

# Scope and purpose of the NQF

- Scope, purpose and governance set-up need to logically align, and inform the further development of the technical aspects of the NQF
- **Scope:**
  - To support LLL, articulation and progression: the large majority of NQFs are comprehensive and inclusive in scope – include qualifications from the whole continuum of the education and training system.
    - ✓ Note: however, the NQF classifies and contains qualifications. If certain parts of the education system do not issue qualifications – not concerned by the NQF.
- **Purpose:**
  - Analysis of African NQFs indicates that the purpose or objectives vary; some NQFs have highly detailed lists and others less so; some have varied over time e.g. Rwanda
  - Purpose or objectives need to be clear, relevant for the context.
  - Objectives needs to be...monitored!

# Objectives of NQFs (study: 87 countries)



# What does this mean? Easier said than done?

Transparency?

= Not opaque

- Clarity: learning outcomes
- Coherence: linkages btw qualifications

Permeability and progression?

= Not deadend

- Recognition of all types learning / outcomes
- Qualifications different types & volume
- Closer integration btw sub-systems

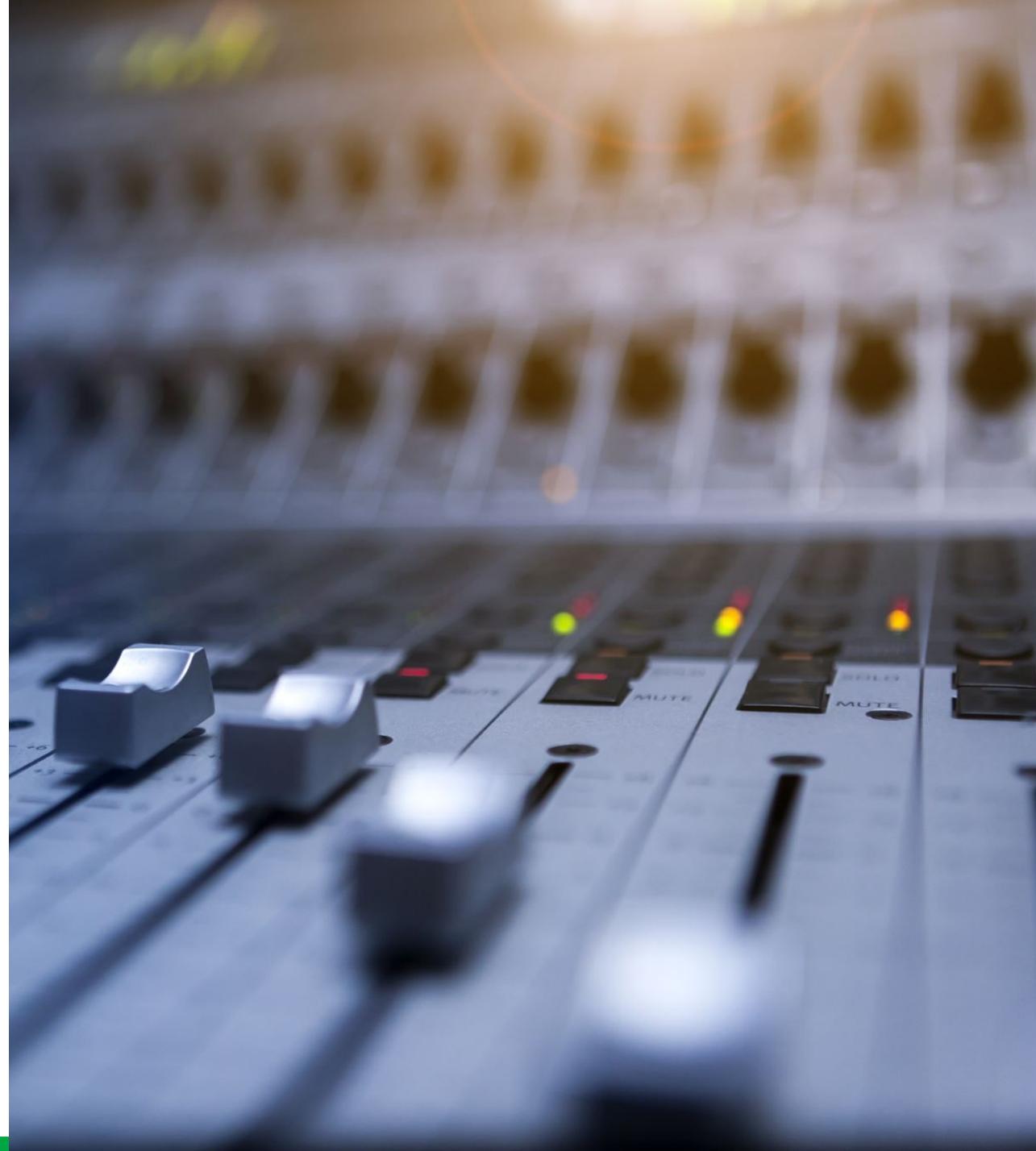
Strengthen links btw education & LM

= Not flying blind

- Skills needs and occupations - anticipation & monitoring qualifications
- Systematic involvement sectors, professional bodies
- Data, analysis, LMI

# Levels of NQF / RQF

## Level descriptors



**Level Descriptor** – means a statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

---

**Learning Outcomes** – mean statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

**Note: expected and achieved learning outcomes!**

# Levels and level descriptors

- Number of levels of **learning complexity**
  - Influenced by the implicit levels of learning complexity of various qualification types
  - And by international/regional trends and consideration
- Purpose of levels is to be able to **locate a qualification** on the NQF
- Needs to have a **vertical and horizontal logic**

# Level descriptors and domains

- Written as **learning outcomes**
- Need to agree on the definitions of **each domain**, and the principles for drafting

Level descriptors and domains	Pros and Cons
Separate multiple domains	Provides clarity for reader and ability to compare the 'build' of each domain. Assists in horizontal and vertical logic.
Merged statement with domains embedded	May be difficult to compare the different levels of complexity, and harder to determine the horizontal and vertical logic.

# Overview — situation in Africa

QF	Number	Comments
NQF of 10 levels	16	13 in SADC, 1 in Kenya, 1 in Rwanda, 1 in The Gambia,
NQF of 8 levels	6	West, East and North Africa
NQF of 7 levels	1	Tunisia
6-level sectoral NQF	1	Nigeria (NSQF — TVET)
5-level sectoral NQF	1	Senegal (TVET)

Country	Domains of learning — level descriptors
Angola	Knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility
Botswana	Knowledge, skills and competence
Eswatini	Knowledge, skills, personal attributes
Lesotho	Areas of knowledge; nature of competences; Agency and context
Mauritius	Demand; learning processes
Mozambique	Knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility
South Africa	<p>“Applied competence” has <b>10 categories</b>, used across all 10 levels: Scope of knowledge; knowledge literacy; method and procedure; problem solving; ethics and professional practice; accessing, processing and managing information; producing and communicating of information; context and systems; management of learning; accountability. And <b>3 constituent elements</b>: a) foundational competence (intellectual / academic skills of knowledge together with analysis, synthesis and evaluation; b) practical competence (operational context); c) reflexive competence (learner autonomy).</p>
Seychelles	The degree of complexity of the tasks; reasoning and problem solving; knowledge; autonomy and responsibility
Zambia	Foundational competence; practical competence; reflexive competence.

# EQF context: levels



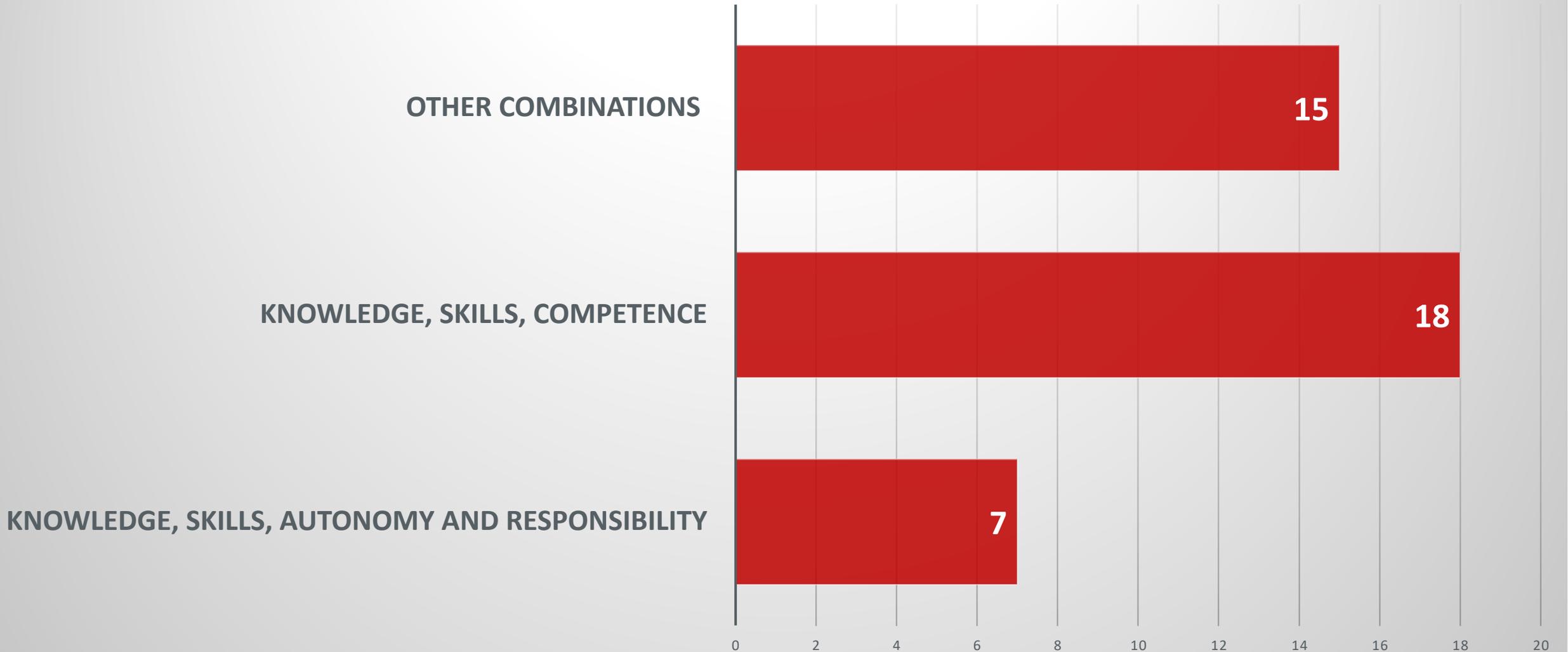
Sessic

NQF Level structure	Nr of NQF
7	2
<b>8</b>	<b>36</b>
10	2
TOTAL	40

- Strong predominance of 8-level NQFs.
- Some NQFs have levels and sub-levels to better accommodate the qualifications of different national systems

# EQF Context – level descriptors

## EQF Context: Domains of learning NQF



# Databases, registers, catalogues, repertoires

**Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações**

The grid contains the following images:

- Top-left: Logo for CNE (Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações).
- Row 1, Column 2: A chef in a white uniform working with dough.
- Row 1, Column 3: A person watering plants in a greenhouse.
- Row 1, Column 4: A technician in a blue cap working on an air conditioner.
- Row 2, Column 1: A mechanic in a blue shirt working on a car.
- Row 2, Column 2: A construction worker in an orange vest laying bricks.
- Row 2, Column 3: A forklift operator in a red shirt.
- Row 2, Column 4: A person talking on a mobile phone.
- Row 3, Column 1: A person using a power tool on a boat.
- Row 3, Column 2: A welder wearing a blue mask and mask.
- Row 3, Column 3: A mechanic in a black shirt working on an engine.
- Row 3, Column 4: A person holding a green object.
- Row 4, Column 1: A person using a laptop.
- Row 4, Column 2: A person working with metal.
- Row 4, Column 3: A person holding a certificate.
- Row 4, Column 4: A security guard in an orange vest standing next to a car.

# Qualifications and management tools

## “Objects”

- Full qualifications – “Metacredentials”
- Part qualifications
- Micro-credentials
- Units
- Standards

## “Tools”

- Classification(s), taxonomy: international, national
- Register of qualifications
- Other registers



# What is the Qualifications Register?



The Registration of Qualifications is a process whereby national quality-assured qualifications are placed in the NQF qualifications register/database



It is a process and tool for transparency and quality assurance.



The content of the logs may vary between countries; and the formats, access, and digital platforms as well.

Country	Register / database of qualifications	Number of Qualifications and levels included	Key features
<b>Botswana</b>	<a href="#">Botswana Qualifications Authority – Register of qualifications</a>	822 full qualifications All levels of NCQF	The register is searchable by title of qualification (search by key word tool). Qualifications documents can be viewed and downloaded.
<b>Mauritius</b>	<a href="#">National Qualifications and Unit Standards</a> Maintained and managed by MQA	167 qualifications distributed in 22 sectors. As of 21/03/2022: 98 qualifications are published, 67 under review. Includes: qualifications of Levels 1 to 6 of NQF	The digital online database of National Qualifications and Unit Standards is accessible as a repository of qualifications files in PDF format. Qualifications at all levels (1–6) are structured in unit standards – in learning outcomes. Harmonized format.
<b>Mozambique</b>	<a href="#">National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications</a> Managed and maintained by <a href="#">ANEP</a>	164 qualifications registered, at levels 2 to 5. 149 published in the online catalogue (21/03/2022) 19 independent modules	The digital online National Catalogue is accessible as a repository of qualification files in PDF format. All qualifications - standardised format, which includes: general information, units of general competencies, units of vocational competencies, training modules (general and vocational)

Country	Register / database of qualifications	Qualifications included	Key features
<b>Cape Verde</b>	<a href="#">National Catalogue of Qualifications</a> UC-SNQ	64 full qualifications (levels 2 to 5 of the NQF)  Standards RPL	<p>The digital online Catalogue is accessible as a repository of PDFs.</p> <p>All qualifications are structured based on a standardised format, including: professional profile, units of competence (learning outcomes and assessment criteria), training programme (modules) and training module for work context.</p> <p>The qualifications in the Catalogue are distributed in 15 professional families. The Catalogue includes also a new Transversal Training Module of 3 units (entrepreneurial competences).</p>
<b>South Africa</b>	<a href="#">SAQA: register of qualifications and part-qualifications</a>  Managed and maintained by <a href="#">SAQA</a>	Large number of qualifications  All NQF levels	<p>The SAQA online register contains searchable databases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">All qualifications and unit standards</a> (no matter their status)</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Registered qualifications and unit standards</a> (NQF qualifications)</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Qualifications and unit standards that have passed their registration end date</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">Professional Bodies and Professional Designations</a></li> </ol>

## Portugal

<https://catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/>

## The Netherlands

Are you looking for information about what someone can do and knows after obtaining a diploma or certificate? Or, do you want to know the NLQF level of a qualification, or how this information compares to that of another qualification? Choose above how you want to filter, compare, or share that information.

**CLASSIFICATION OF DUTCH QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NLQF AND EQF**

Legend:

- white = preparatory secondary vocational education and training
- light blue = basic vocational pathway
- light green = advanced vocational pathway
- light orange = combined vocational and theoretical pathway
- light purple = theoretical pathway
- dark blue = senior secondary vocational education and training
- dark green = entry level vocational education and training
- dark orange = basic vocational education and training
- dark red = advanced vocational education and training
- dark purple = middle management or specialist vocational education and training
- dark yellow = higher general secondary education
- dark grey = pre-university education

<https://database.nlqf.nl/>

# Examples from EU

Higher & Higher Education Authority

Home Qualifications and Awards Licensed Institutions Non-Formal and Informal Learning More about the MQF

## Malta Qualifications Database beta version

Detailed information about all programmes referenced to the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)

Search

SEARCH

Advanced Search

### Malta Qualification Database

The Malta Qualifications Database is a unique database that contains information on study programmes offered in Malta. Detailed information about each programme could be accessed through this database.

All accredited study programme from MQF level 1 until MQF level 8 can be found in this database. These include

<http://qualifications.ncfhe.gov.mt/#/dashboard>

SLOVENSKO OGRODJE KVALIFIKACIJ

SLO MENU

## SQF Register

ISCED 2013 FIELD

All

ISCED 2013 SUBFIELD

All

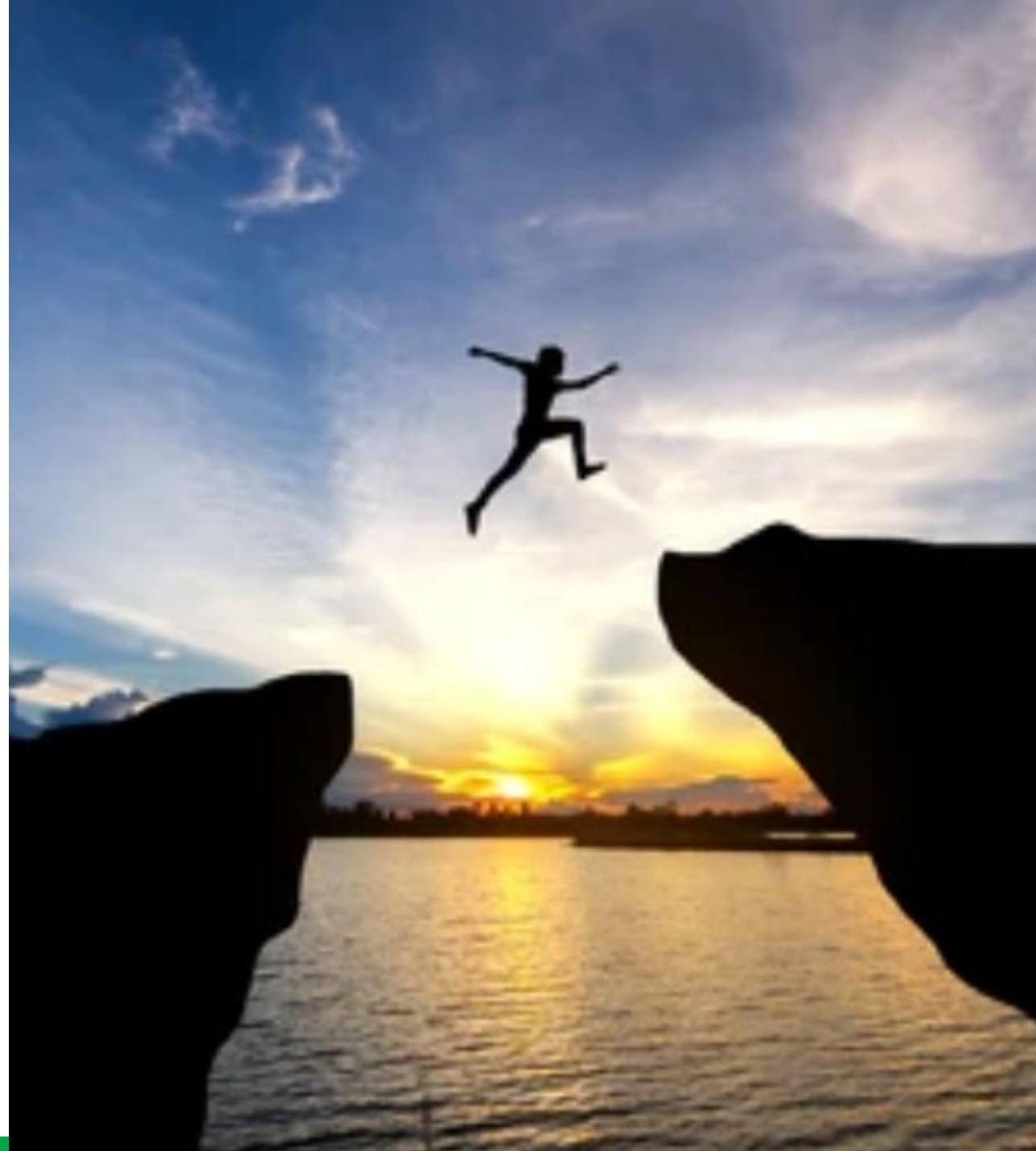
SEARCH

Slovenia: <https://www.nok.si/en/sqf-register>

**All learning matters  
RPL and NQF (in-depth  
content – session 5)**

# RPL

## Make the invisible - visible



# Make the invisible - visible: recognise skills acquired by experience/informal, non-formal learning

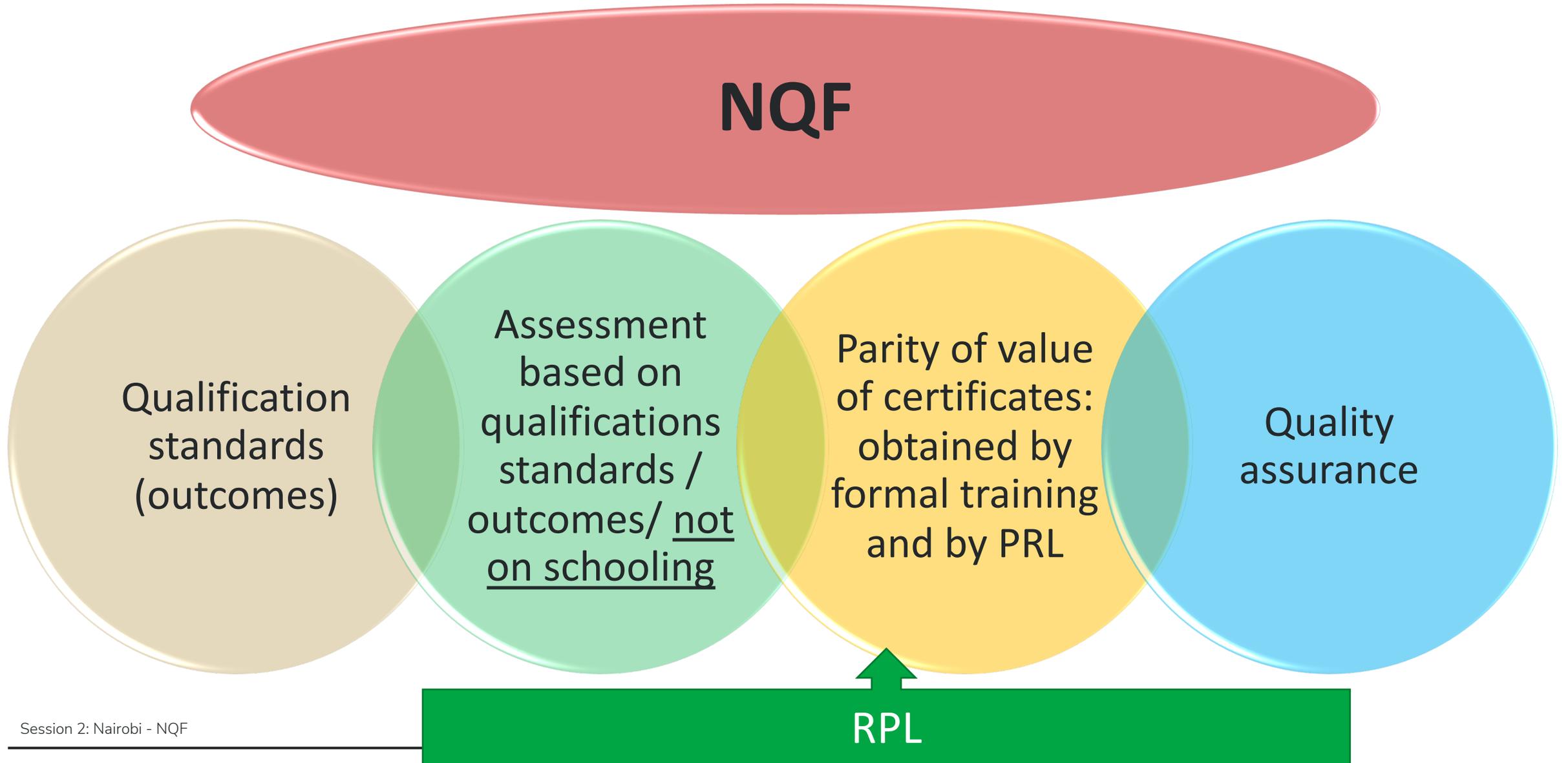
Non-formal and informal learning are key parts of lifelong learning

People learn at anytime, anywhere throughout their lives, not only in formal education and training systems and pathways, but also in non-formal and informal learning settings.

Knowledge, skills and competences acquired in all contexts and modalities of learning (incl. experience) can be identified, documented, assessed and certified.

## NQFs support and need RPL

# What connection with NQF?



SEYCHELLES QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

National Guidelines for the Implementation of  
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

July 2017



Terça-feira, 17 de Agosto de 2021 I SÉRIE — Número 158



**BOLETIM DA REPÚBLICA**

PUBLICAÇÃO OFICIAL DA REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

**Decreto n.º 58/2021**  
de 17 de Agosto

Havendo necessidade de dotar o Subsistema de Educação Profissional de normas e procedimentos, aplicados ao processo de reconhecimento de competências adquiridas, através de aprendizagem ao longo da vida, em contextos de trabalho, formação não formal e informal, ao abrigo do disposto no n.º 2 do artigo 15, da Lei n.º 23/2014, de 23 de Setembro, Lei de Educação Profissional, alterada e republicada pela Lei n.º 6/2016, de 16 de Junho, o Conselho de Ministros decreta:

ARTIGO 1

É aprovado o Sistema de Reconhecimento de Competências Adquiridas, abreviadamente designado SRCA, em anexo, que é parte integrante do presente Decreto.

ARTIGO 2

Compete ao titular superintende a área do ensino técnico profissional aprovar o Regulamento do Sistema de Reconhecimento de Competências Adquiridas, no prazo de 60 dias, a partir da data da publicação do presente Decreto.

ARTIGO 3

O presente Decreto entra em vigor na data da sua publicação.



**ORIENTAÇÕES METODOLÓGICAS PARA A  
IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DO SISTEMA DE RECONHECIMENTO  
DE COMPETÊNCIAS ADQUIRIDAS (SRCA)**



Junho 2022



GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI

**RECOGNITION OF PRIOR  
LEARNING GUIDELINES**



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

**Recognition of Prior Learning  
Guidelines**

June 2016



**National Policy and Criteria for the  
Implementation of  
Recognition of Prior Learning  
(Amended in March 2019)**

SEYCHELLES QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

National Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

February 2017



GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI

**RECOGNITION OF  
PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**

**ASSESSORS GUIDE**



POLICY AND CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF  
PRIOR LEARNING IN ZAMBIA

JUNE 2016

53

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY (VETA)



**GUIDELINES FOR  
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR  
LEARNING ASSESSMENT  
(RPLA) IN TANZANIA**



RPL is not only assessment! It is process...



Autoridade Nacional da Educação Profissional

## RPL in Mozambique – NQF Professional

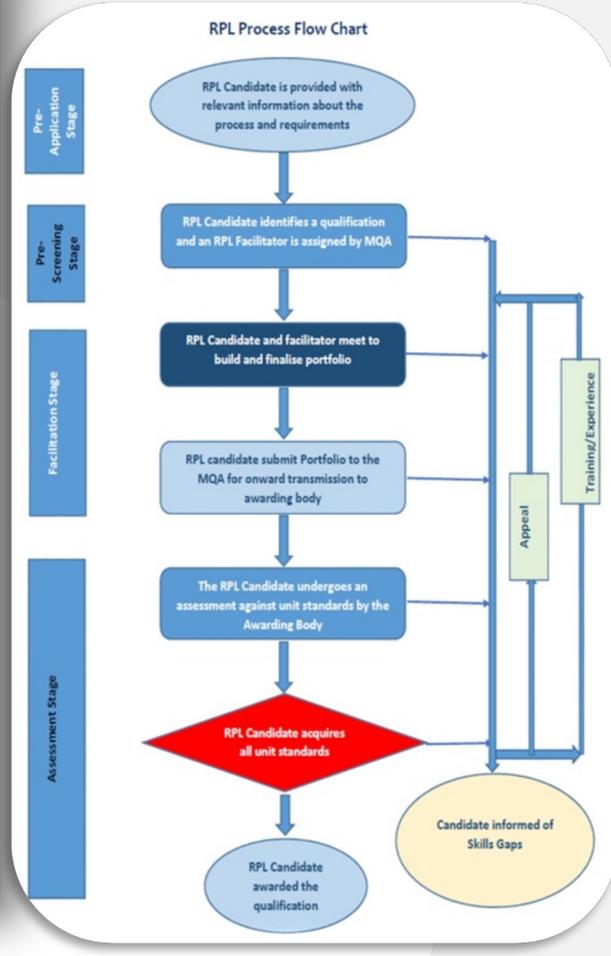
### Assessment Tests in the Pilot Project:



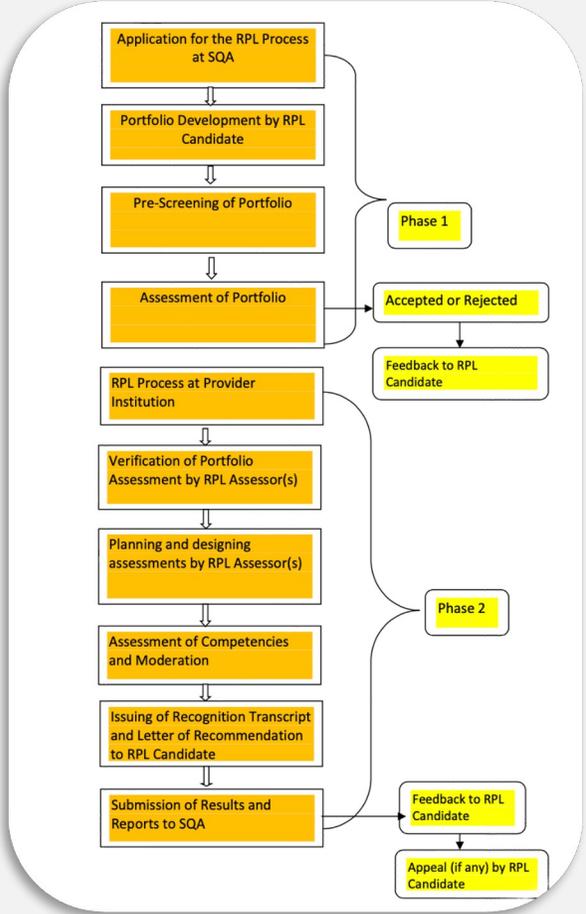


**POR UMA EDUCAÇÃO PARA O TRABALHO E DESENVOLVIMENTO DO PAÍS**

Mozambique



Mauritius



Seychelles

## Regional RPL policies and guidelines

### EU - Cedefop:

- <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>
- <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3093>

ACQF: <https://acqf.africa/resources/recognition-of-prior-learning>

SADCQF

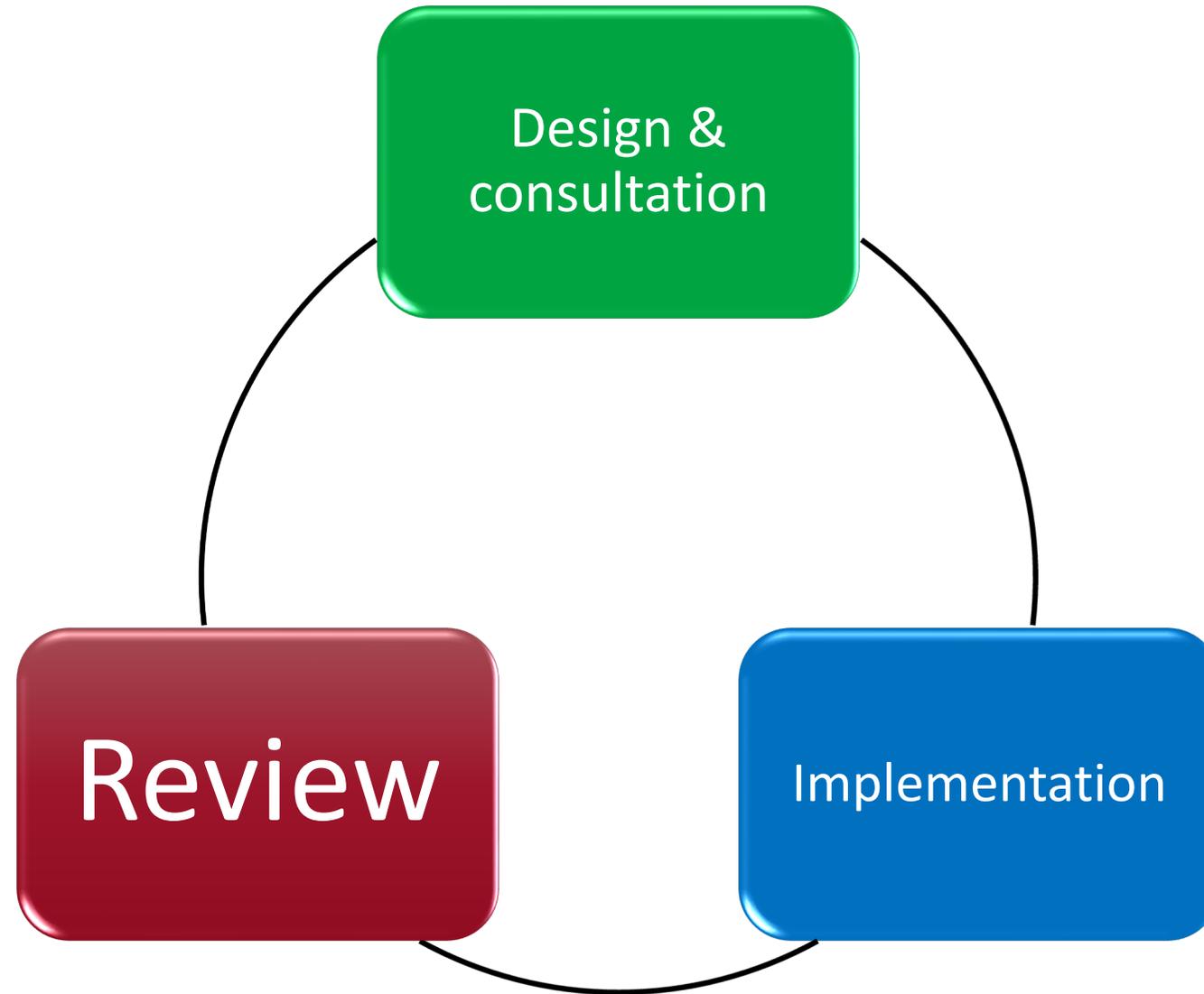
EAC



03

Lifecycle of an NQF

# Lifecycle of an NQF



# OBa

**Phase 1 - NQF design  
and development**

# What is included in this phase?

1. Conceptualisation and design of the NQF during which countries analyse and define the “why, what for, what, how, with whom, when” of the NQF - rationale and main objectives of the future NQF. Results in:
  - Outline of the NQF providing the basis for wider dissemination and discussion within a smaller group of key stakeholders.
  - Key architectural features, such as purpose, scope and structures, are drafted.
2. Consultation and testing stage. Future NQF proposal is presented to and discussed within a broader group of stakeholders, normally as part of a public consultation process. Countries may choose to test the proposed NQF levels and qualification types through projects or targeted consultations.
3. Official establishment/adoption stage. NQF is formally documented and agreed to through a decree/law or a formal agreement between stakeholders.

# Critical questions for proposed NQF

Focus	Questions
Plan for development	'Why, what for, what, how, with whom, when?' Overall approach to development? Who will manage development? Stakeholder engagement? Tested or trialled?
NQF design: Purpose and scope	What are the goals to be achieved? Scope of NQF? How will it link to other QFs within the country?
NQF design: Structures	Levels and descriptors: Number of levels, domains? Volume of learning measure: What will measure? How will it be used? Qualification type descriptors: How will be documented? Map/table or text based?
NQF general queries	Does design of NQF promote use of learning outcomes, lifelong learning, learning pathways, and access and equity principles? Does the structure reflect 'common sense'?
Legal basis	How will the NQF be formalise, e.g. decree, regulations, agreed in policy?
Governance and funding	How will the NQF be managed and governed? How will the NQF be 'owned' by stakeholders? How will it be funded? How will it be staffed?

# Critical questions for proposed NQF: Linkages

Focus - Linkages	Questions
Recognition of NF and IF learning	How will the NQF provide the policy basis and support access to the validation of nonformal and informal learning? What policy linkages need to be made with the quality assurance strategies, e.g. embedded in quality standards for qualification specifications and for provider provision?
Credit transfer	How will the NQF provide the policy basis and support access to the validation of formal learning? Will it be only policy advice or will it link to a credit accumulation and transfer system?
Registers	What registers need to be established for those qualification located and accepted onto the NQF? Who will be responsible for these registers, e.g. centralised NQF body or sectoral QA body?
Quality assurance	How will the NQF be linked to QA strategies? Especially: development, design and approval of qualification specifications; and approval of providers and approval of programmes leading to a NQF qualification? How will policy coherence of QA strategies be achieved?
Other legal acts	Other laws and regulations will be affected by the proposed NQF? Who will be responsible for ensuring coherence across laws and regulations?
Microcredentials	How will microcredentials be recognised within the qualifications system?
Recognition of foreign qualifications	What information needs to be made available to support the country's citizens as a sending country? What linkages with other frameworks would be made? What information needs to be made available as a receiving country?

# What is usually in NQF texts (suggested)

## On NQF

- Background: wider issues addressed, benefits for people, LLL
- Objectives, principles, scope, NFIL
- Technical design: levels and descriptors, qualifications types, NQF map/table, volume of learning measure, e.g. credits
- Quality assurance linkages
- Components / instruments (register / database, monitoring & evaluation, standards, classifications)

## On NQF governance

- NQF lead entity: different models apply
- Roles, responsibilities and key functions
- Interactions sub-sectors education and training – on NQF
- Interplay between stakeholders
- Resources

OSb

**Phase 2: NQF  
implementation**

# Implementation phase

- Move from initial policy design and legal framework of the NQF to the operationalisation of the framework, focusing on:
  - ✓ Consolidating governance and associated legal acts
  - ✓ Establishing and practically applying the linkages to associated structures and the quality assurance arrangements, and moving to full practical implementation
  - ✓ Consolidating administrative and technical capacity and expertise.
- Full implementation requires time and not all strategies and capacities will be available at the same time.

# Critical questions of the implementation phase

Focus	Questions
Design to full implementation	How will aspirations and vision for the qualifications system be articulated? Who will develop an implementation plan? Who needs to agree to it? How funded, resourced, and monitored?
QA of qualifications	How will the link be made between NQF and the requirements for development and approval of qualifications?
QA of provider provision	How will the link be made between NQF, qualifications and the programmes leading to them? Who will approve and monitor? What sanctions and rewards will be applied?
Assessment	Who is responsible for assessment of individual achievement? How will assessment decisions be validate/moderated?
Certification	Who will issue NQF documentation? Who will monitor?
Data collection	Who is responsible for setting data standard? Who will collect and retain data?
Registers	How will registers be made public? What information should be public?
Credit transfer system	How will system be negotiated? Will it be part of or separate to the NQF?
Visibility of the NQF	How will NQF be communicated? How will dialogue with stakeholders be facilitated?
Technical capability	How will QA agency staff and provider staff capability and expertise be developed?

# 03c

## Phase 3: NQF monitoring and review

- Learn much more at **Session 3: M&E**

# Monitoring of NQF implementation



How will implementation be monitored?



What data exists that can be used to monitor implementation?



Regional examples for monitoring NQF implementation within the qualifications system:

ACQF Guideline and TM on M&E (Nº 7)

Aspects M&E within quality assurance frameworks or guidelines:

- UNESCO for the Asia Pacific TVET sector,  
<https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/guidelines-quality-assurance-tvet-qualifications-asia-pacific-region>
- EQAVET framework for TVET sector,  
[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01)&from=EN)

- Major reviews can occur at any time, can draw on monitoring activities
- Qualifications frameworks are used to promote the trust and transparency of individual qualifications and the qualifications systems to which they belong. In doing so, they:
  1. Act as a classification device to organise qualifications according to type and/or level
  2. Set down (or link to) the quality measures for qualifications to be entered or accepted onto the qualifications framework
  3. Act as an official bridge to international users of domestic qualifications and holders of international qualifications.

*Source: Quality and Qualifications Ireland 2017.*

# Critical questions of the review phase

Classification device	Sets out (or links to) quality measures	Bridge between domestic and international qualifications
<p>Is the NQF helping to raise aspirations to learn?</p> <p>Do citizens use the NQF to use progression opportunities?</p> <p>Does the NQF assist in overcoming barriers to qualifications, including through the validation of nonformal and informal learning?</p> <p>Are valuable qualifications sitting outside the NQF that should be brought in?</p>	<p>Is the NQF raising the standard of qualifications in terms of the use of learning outcomes, content, assessment, and certification processes?</p> <p>Is the NQF applying the right kinds of pressures to qualification owners to describe and operate their qualification appropriately?</p> <p>Is the NQF helping to increase the potential of qualifications to provide social and economic returns to holders?</p>	<p>Do people abroad use the NQF to appreciate elements of specific domestic qualifications?</p> <p>Is it easy to make comparisons between the domestic qualifications and international qualifications?</p> <p>Are the links to international qualifications clear?</p> <p>Is the quality assurance functions of the NQF inspiring confidence among international application to domestic education and training programmes?</p>

04

**NQFs in Africa: trends**

# African trends

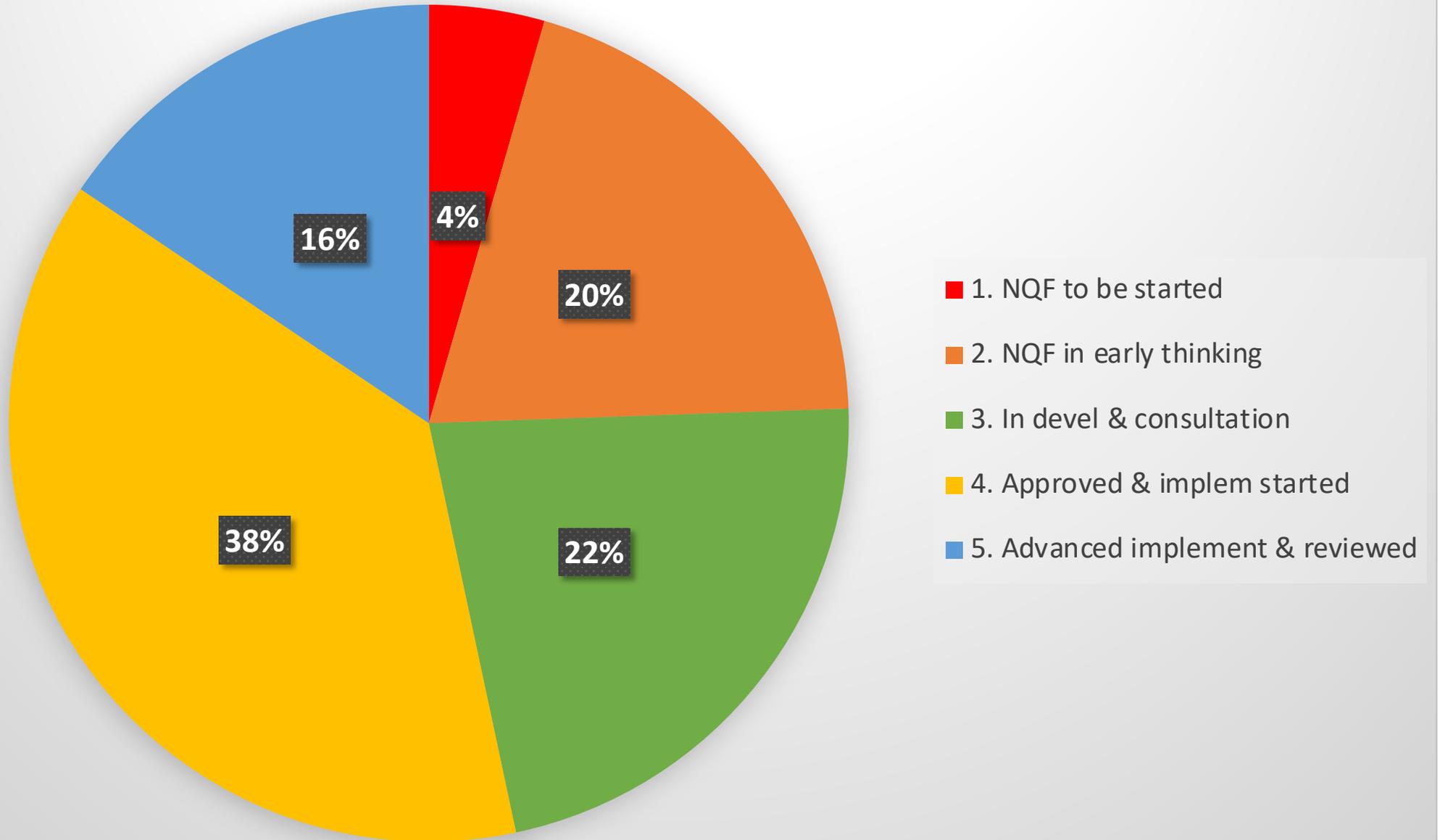
- Growing number of NQFs approved and implementation started



# NQF in Africa by stage of development

Stage of NQF development and implementation	Number of NQFs Africa	Countries
NQF development to be started	2	Chad, Republic of Congo
NQF in early thinking	9	Burkina Faso, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, São Tomé e Príncipe, South Sudan, Togo
NQF in development and consultation	10	Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan
NQF legal act approved, implementation started	17	Angola, Burundi, Djibouti, Eswatini, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe
NQF in advanced implementation and reviewed	7	Cape Verde, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia
Total	45	

**NQFs in Africa: 5 stages of development & implementation Number: 45 countries**

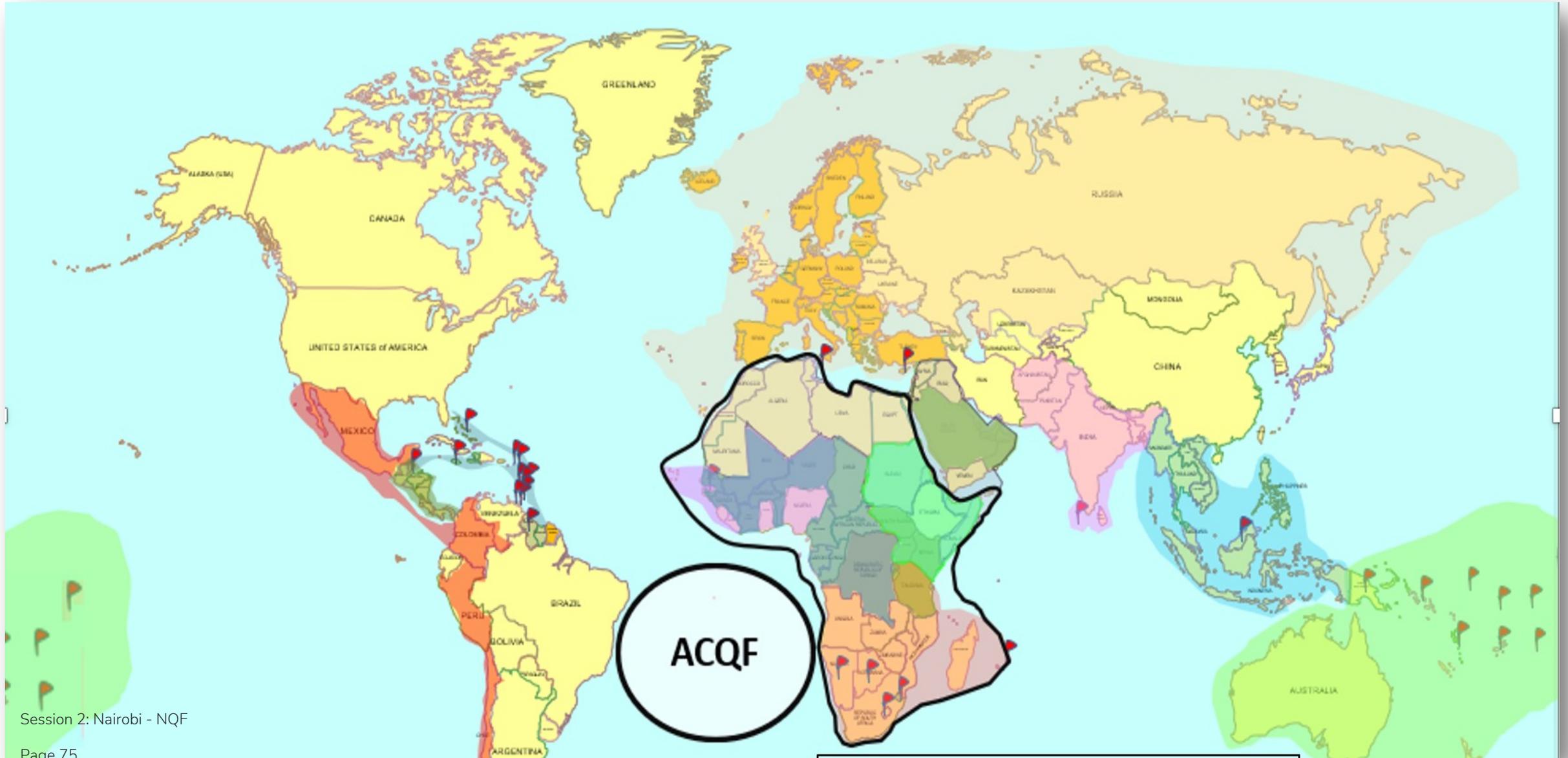


AACQF

African Continental  
Qualifications Framework

# ACQF A very large Regional Qualifications Framework

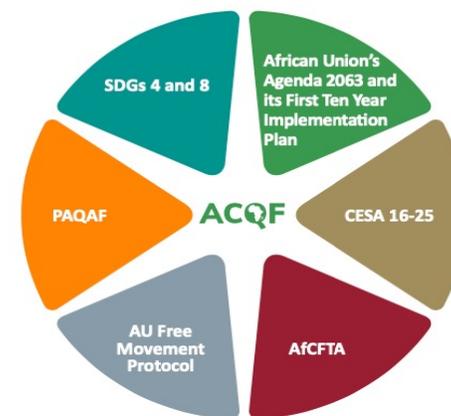
- African Union Policy Initiative
- Based on AU policies (CESA-25, AU Free Movement Protocol, AfCFTA)



# ACQF Policy Document validated at the Addis conference 11-13 July 2023: underpinnings, purposes, principles



## UNDERPINNINGS



## PURPOSES OF ACQF

- 1 Enhance** → Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications of all types and levels, support people's lifelong learning outcomes.
- 2 Facilitate** → Facilitate validation of learning, recognition of skills, diplomas and certificates and mobility of learners and workers
- 3 Cooperate** → Work in cooperation and complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks and support African continental integration and creation of African common space of trusted qualifications.
- 4 Promote** → Promote cooperation and referencing between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

## PRINCIPLES





**ACQF is underpinned by  
Quality Assurance**

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

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

## 7 main areas of activity

“ACQF creates mutual trust”

Areas - as per ACQF Policy Document



Referencing NQF / NQS to ACQF



Support Recognition of Prior Learning



ACQF Qualifications Platform and MIS



**Qualifications:** common profiles for priority sectors AfCFTA / continental integration



Capacity development



Networking and cooperation



Analysis, monitoring and evaluation

# REFERENCING NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS OR SYSTEMS TO ACQF



ACQF aims at **connecting** the national (and regional) qualifications frameworks of the community of African Union (AU) member states. This core function is based on the process of **referencing to ACQF**.

---



**Referencing:** process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF following criteria and procedures.

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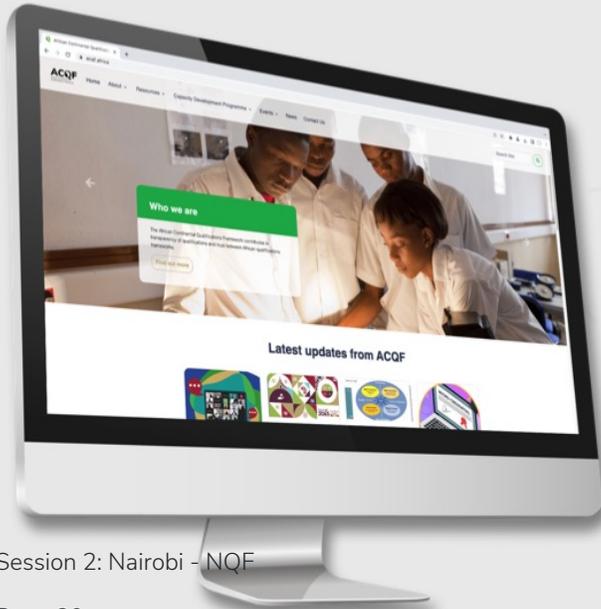
At **national level**, referencing contributes to self-assessment of the status of the national qualifications framework or system to identify areas for reform and improvement

---



At **continental level and between countries**, referencing to the ACQF of a significant and increasing number of national qualifications or systems leads to the creation of a common area of trusted qualifications and enables the transformative potential of the ACQF for the continent.

And much more on ACQF website for stakeholders, policy makers, education and training providers, learners and experts interested in themes and issues related to national and regional qualifications frameworks and their related systems, tools and governance.



# Want to know more about ACQF?

Visit our website:  
<https://acqf.africa/>

05

**Trends in Europe:  
EQF**

# What is the EQF?

- A **translation grid** for qualifications across countries
- Defined in terms of **learning outcomes** (knowledge, skills, responsibility & autonomy)
- 8-Level reference framework, covering **all types and all levels of qualifications**
- **41 countries**



# EQF Objectives



Transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications

Employability, mobility and social integration of workers and learners

Linking formal, non-formal and informal learning

Supporting the validation of learning outcomes acquired in different settings

Contributing to modernising education and training systems

# ACQF Main milestones (as June 2023, 39 countries reporting)

Objective	Reached by countries (number)
Referencing to EQF	36 (92% of all involved countries)
Renewed referencing to EQF	6 countries
EQF levels on certificates, diplomas, and supplements	34 (87%)
EQF levels on databases or registers of qualifications	25 (64%)
Transparency of information: <a href="#">Publication of referencing reports</a>	32 (82%)
Transparency of information – inclusion in the <a href="#">Tool to compare NQFs on Europass portal</a>	29 (74%)
Transparency of information and use of the Annex VI of EQF Recommendation: connection of national databases / registers with the QDR and publication of qualifications in Europass ( <a href="#">Learning Opportunities in Europass</a> ). Accessed: 27/03/2023)	19 (49%)

https://irq.ie/

Home Page > Qualifications

● COURSES ● PROVIDERS ● QUALIFICATIONS



**Filters**

Field of learning

NFQ Levels

EQF Levels

Award Class

Sector

Awarding Body

Credit (ECTS)

From 0 To 360

0 360

Clear Filter

Search for Qualifications



9594 results

**DBABE | DBA**

Field of Learning - **Education**  
 NFQ Level 10 | **EQF Level 8**  
 Class - Major  
 Credit - 270 (ECTS)



**DCLIND | DClinDent**

Field of Learning - Dental studies  
 NFQ Level 10 | EQF Level 8  
 Class - Major  
 Credit - 270 (ECTS)



**DCLINP | DClinPsych**

Field of Learning - Psychology  
 NFQ Level 10 | EQF Level 8  
 Class - Major  
 Credit - 270 (ECTS)



**DEDS | DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

Field of Learning - Education science  
 NFQ Level 10 | EQF Level 8  
 Class - Major  
 Credit - 180 (ECTS)



**DSOCSC | DOCTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Field of Learning - Social work and counselling  
 NFQ Level 10 | EQF Level 8  
 Class - Major  
 Credit - 360 (ECTS)



**DAHE | DOCTORATE IN HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION**

Field of Learning - Education science  
 NFQ Level 10 | EQF Level 8  
 Class - Major  
 Credit - 180 (ECTS)



**CEDEFOP** National Qualifications frameworks (NQFs) online tool

Introduction Overview Countries Frameworks comparison Qualifications comparison About Contact

## Welcome

Frameworks help make qualifications easier to understand and compare. They can also encourage countries to rethink and reform national policy and practice on skills, qualifications and lifelong learning. By offering information on qualifications through their databases and on certificates, diplomas and supplements, they are extending their outreach to stakeholders and the wider public, ultimately also beyond their borders.

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) classify qualifications by level, based on [learning outcomes](#). This classification reflects the content and profile of qualifications - that is, what the holder of a certificate or diploma is expected to know, understand, and be able to do. The learning outcomes approach also ensures that education and training sub-systems are open to one another. Thus, it allows people to move more easily between education and training institutions and sectors.

The main catalyst for the development of comprehensive national qualification frameworks in Europe has been the [European qualifications framework for lifelong learning \(EQF\)](#). 38 countries committed to the EQF are developing or implementing national qualifications frameworks mostly covering all levels and types of qualifications: the 27 Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey.

The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe also reflects the [Bologna process](#) and the agreement to implement qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA). All countries implementing the EQF are participating in this process.

Overall progress by 2022 ~

**Overview** of national qualifications frameworks in Europe

European **inventory** on national qualifications frameworks across **38 countries**

**Compare** national qualification frameworks

Compare national qualifications levels to the **EQF**

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An Agency of the European Union

CEDEFOP National Qualifications frameworks (NQFs) online tool

Introduction Overview Countries Frameworks comparison Qualifications comparison About Contact

Overview

Use the table and the filters below to gain an overview of NQF developments in Europe. It is possible to compare countries based on reporting year, stage of development and whether the NQF has been linked to EQF.

NQF linked to EQF: - Any - Reporting year: 2020

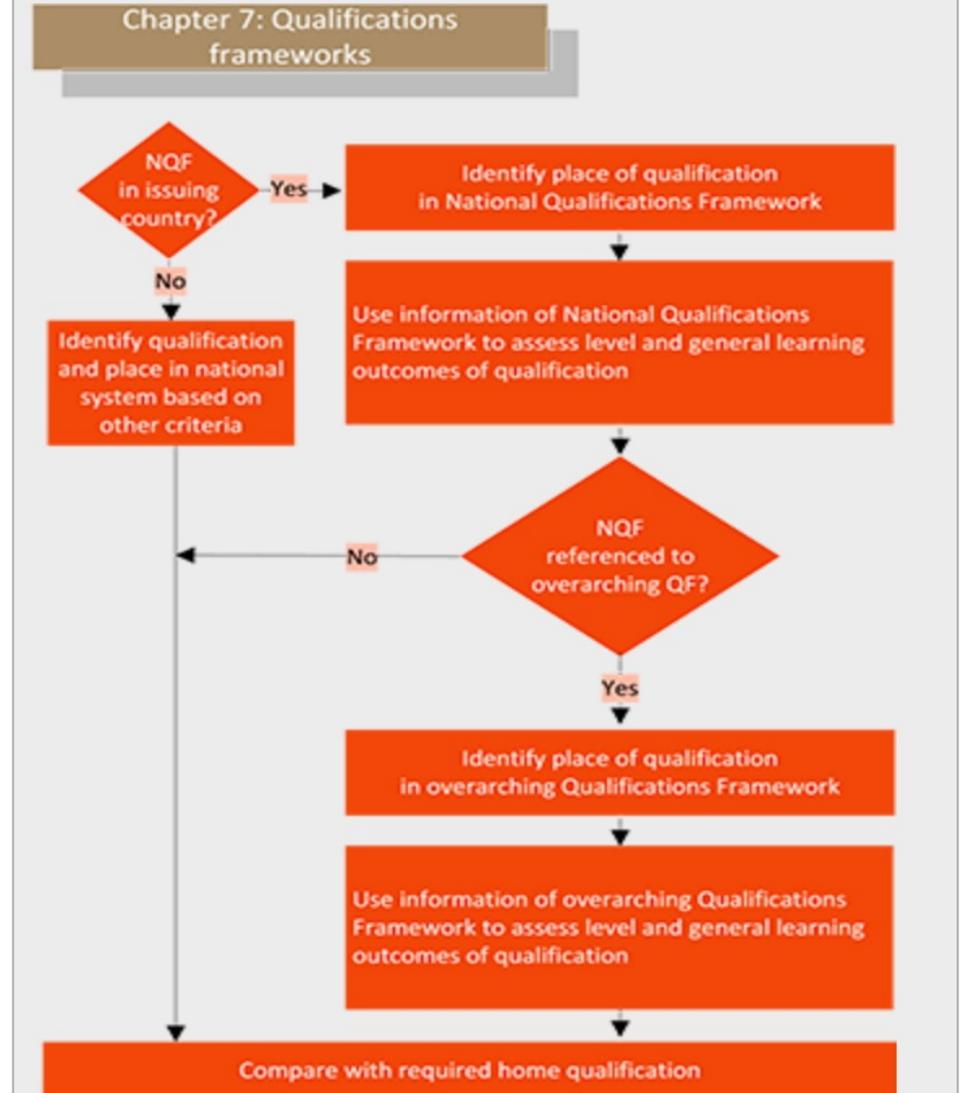
COUNTRY	REPORTING YEAR	SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK	NUMBER OF LEVELS	LEVEL DESCRIPTORS	LEGAL BASIS/STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT	NQF LINKED TO EQF	NQF/EQF WEBSITE	QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER/DATABASE
Albania	2020	Comprehensive NQF including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training and lifelong learning qualifications for adults and people undertaking specialised courses for professional development.	Eight	knowledge, skills, wider competences	NQF law (adopted in 2010, revised in 2018) (in Albanian) <a href="#">Activating stage</a>		<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">VET register</a>
Austria	2020	Designed as a comprehensive NQF; currently includes qualifications awarded in formal education and training (higher education and VET qualifications); qualifications under the responsibility of other ministries such as defence and health. First non-formal/non-regulated qualifications included.	Eight	knowledge, skills, competence	Federal Law 14/2016 on the NQF (in German) <a href="#">Operational stage</a>	2012	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Qualifications register</a>
Belgium-DE	2020	Comprehensive NQF for lifelong learning including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training.	Eight		Decree on establishing a qualifications framework for the German-speaking Community (2013) (in German)			
Belgium-FL	2020	Comprehensive NQF including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training (educational qualifications) and from the professional qualifications system.	Eight	knowledge / skills, context / autonomy, responsibility	Decree on the qualification structure (2009) (in Dutch) <a href="#">Operational stage</a>	2011, 2014 update	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Qualifications database</a>
Belgium-FR	2020	Designed as a comprehensive framework; including all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training and from the professional qualifications system. It currently includes vocational and secondary general education qualifications and qualifications awarded through validation at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5, as well as HE qualifications at levels 6 and 7.	Eight	knowledge / skills, context / autonomy / responsibility	Decree on cooperation agreement between the three francophone governments on the creation and management of CFC (2015) (in French) <a href="#">Activating stage</a>	2013	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Qualifications register</a>
Bosnia & Herzegovina	2020	Designed as a comprehensive NQF for lifelong	Eight	knowledge, skills,	Decision of the CoM on the adoption of		<a href="#">Website</a>	

# Use of information on NQF-EQF in recognition

- EAR Manual: <http://ear.enic-naric.net/emanual/>
- This manual has been developed as part of the European Area of Recognition Project (EAR).
- It contains standards and guidelines on all aspects of the recognition of foreign qualifications and aims to provide the credential evaluators from the European National Information Centres network and National Academic Recognition and Information Centres network ([www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net)) with a practical tool to assist them in their daily recognition work.



## FLOWCHART



06

**Closing remarks**

# Closing comments

- As a policy instrument, an NQF does not function in isolation but is part of a broader ecosystem, the qualifications system. It is intrinsically linked to its **quality assurance** arrangements and a range of **associated structures (e.g. registers) and strategies (e.g. RPL)**, And needs to be part of a coherent response within the system.
- Qualifications frameworks should have at their core:
  - Accessibility for all citizens
  - Formal recognition regardless of how or where the learning was gained; formal, nonformal and informal learning
  - Transparency of learning outcomes as well as of quality assurance arrangements
  - Relevance to the needs of the country and citizens; not just limited to labour needs but relevant to the broader social and community needs
  - Quality assurance arrangements so that qualifications are recognised and accepted as an accurate reflection of what an individual knows, understands and can do.

- **Strength of an NQF is derived by its linkages and strategies deployed.**
- **National initiatives**, e.g., lifelong learning, facilitation of learning pathways, validation of formal learning (credit transfer), validation of nonformal and informal learning (recognition of prior learning)
- **Strategies and functions** of a responsible body:
  - Recognition of foreign qualifications
  - Making connections with other NQFs and RQFs
- **Quality assurance arrangements:**
  - Registers/databases of qualifications approved onto the NQF
  - Quality assurance of qualifications (utilising qualification quality standards, policies, guidelines)
  - Quality assurance of provider sand their programmes leading to a qualification (utilising quality standards, policies, guidelines).

07

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

# Panel discussion

- Kenya
- Somalia
- Democratic Republic of Congo

- Dr Alice Kande Gakio, KNQA
- Mr Adbifitah Abdi Mohammed, Ministry of Education Culture and Higher Education
- Mr Laurent Ndaywel Mbosele, Ministry of TVET and Occupations

## Panel debate: questions

### 1. NQF in your country context and strategies:

- How does the NQF fit in and contribute to the national policies, strategies and goals related to education and skills, employment, youth, social policies, economic growth, and others?

### 2. NQF and change in the education and training system:

- What are your plans (or concrete observations) about the key elements of change and innovation fostered (or built in) by the NQF in the wider education and training system?
- What are the key conditions / factors to make that change happen, overcoming resistance and vulnerabilities?



**End of presentation**  
**References**

01

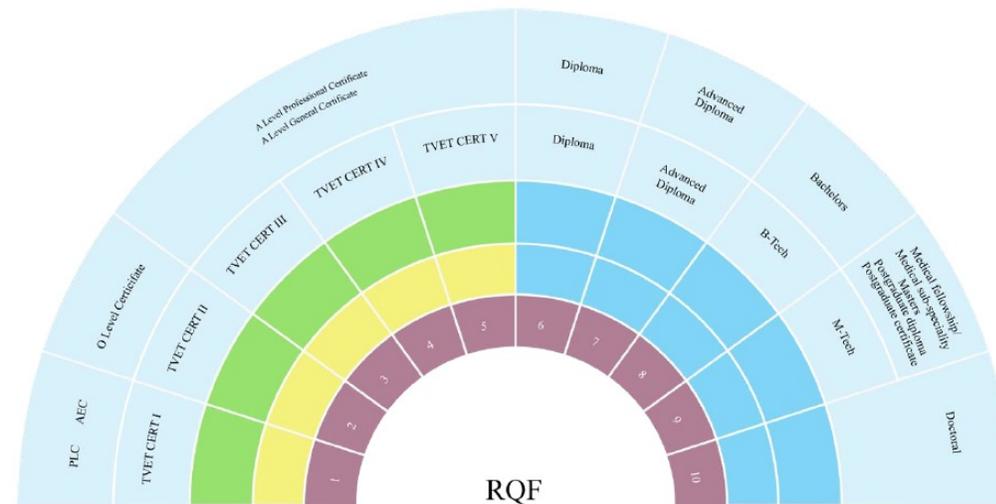
**Logic and coherence  
of NQF**

# Overarching considerations

- Key purpose is to reflect the needs of the country's qualification system, or be a catalyst for change of the system
- NQFs function within a regional context and the influence of RQFs cannot be ignored. RQFs can aspire to have a neutral influence, e.g. EQF, AQRF; whereas others aim to directly influence the NQF
- Consider:
  - What stakeholders need to be involved in the development?
  - How will the design be negotiated and agreed?
  - How will the NQF be tested and trialled?

# Logic and coherence of the NQF

- The NQF specifications need to have logic and coherence. Do all the component parts align?
- Do the diagrams promote a range of pathways or articulation, or do they reinforce current barriers and perceptions?

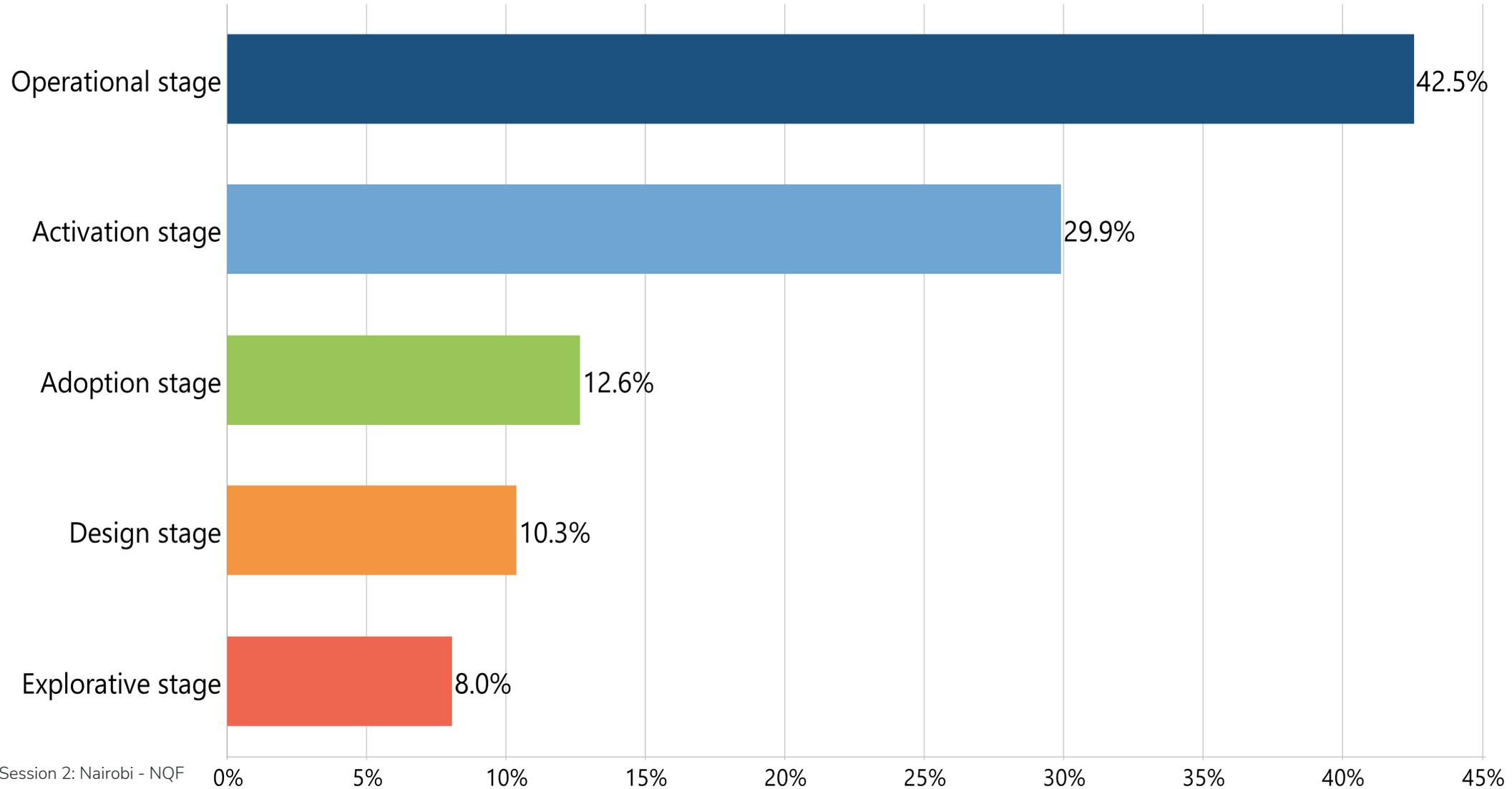


Key:

<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Qualification levels	<span style="color: green;">■</span> Basic education
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> Awards at the appropriate levels	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Lower level TVET
	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> General & TVET Higher education

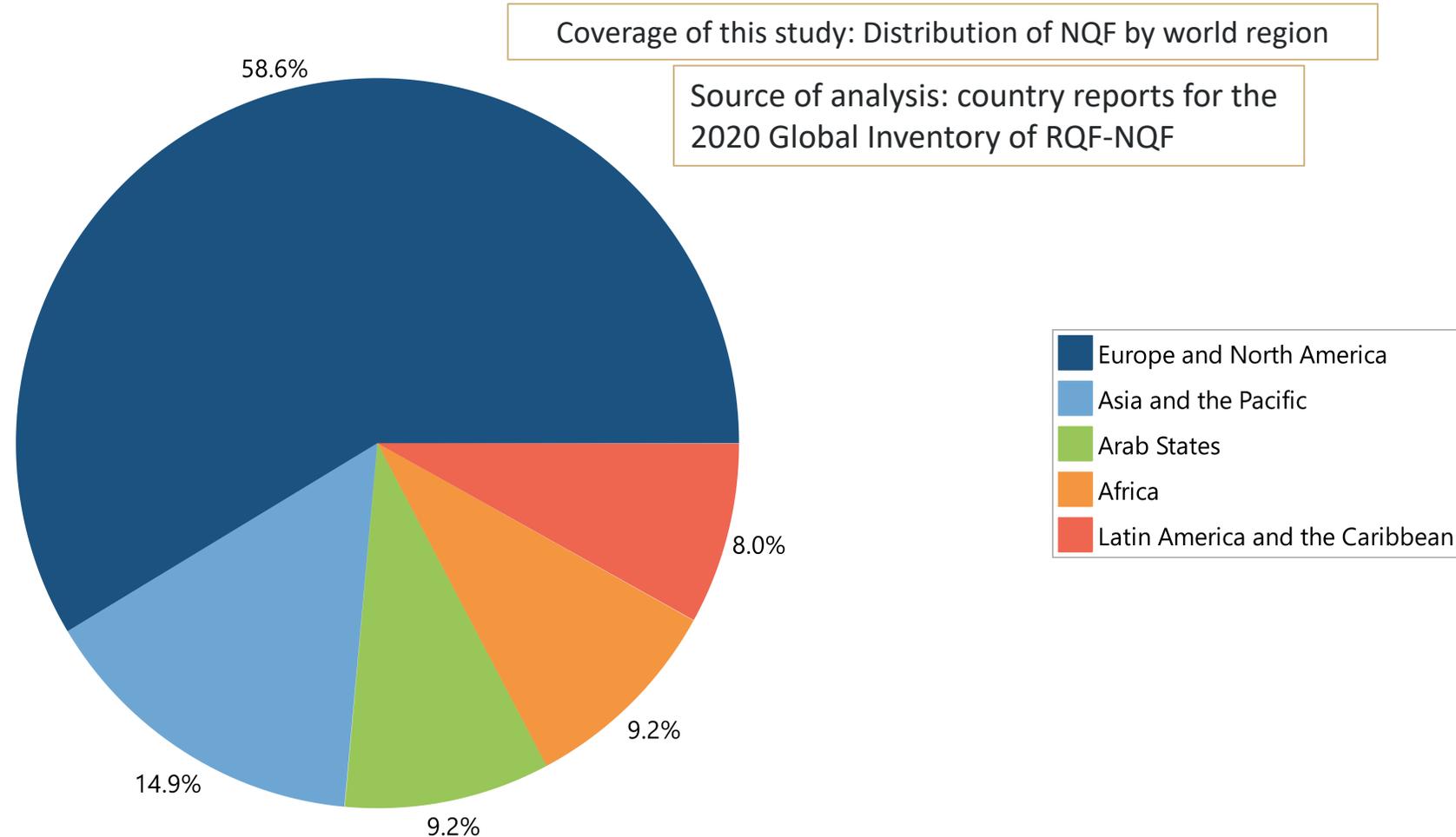
Rwanda QF 2021

# Stages of the NQF (study: 87 countries)



# ETF analysis based on reports from 87 countries

- More than 150 countries: developments/evolution of NQF
- The analysis takes into account **5 stages of development**: explorative, design, adoption, activation, operational



# RQF in the world: 15 initiatives (+ EQF)

RQF initiatives identified and investigated	
1. African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)	9. Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa
2. Arab Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (AQF; ANQAHE Model)	10. Marco de cualificaciones Alianza del Pacífico (Pacific Alliance) (MCAP)
3. ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf)	11. Marco de Cualificaciones para la Educación superior centroamericana (MCESCA)
4. CARICOM Qualifications Framework (CQF)	12. Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards/Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF)
5. Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement supérieur (CAMES) <sup>3</sup>	13. Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework
6. ECOWAS Regional Qualifications Framework of West Africa	14. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Regional Qualifications Framework
7. East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)	15. Transnational Qualifications Framework for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (TQF VUSSC)
8. Gulf Qualifications Framework (GQF)	

# 02

**Trends: NQFs in Europe**  
**EQF (ECB)**

# Europe

# EQF



European Commission

## 10 years of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

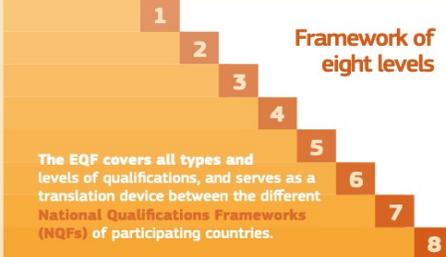
What is the EQF and how does it work?

**2008** ○ **Launched**

The EQF is a common reference framework of eight levels based on learning outcomes.

**2017** ○ **Reviewed**

**2018** ○ **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary**



**Framework of eight levels**

The EQF covers all types and levels of qualifications, and serves as a translation device between the different National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) of participating countries.

**What are the EQF's objectives?**

The EQF aims to improve the transparency and comparability of people's qualifications.

It also aims to:

-  modernise education and training systems,
-  increase the employability, mobility and social integration of individuals,
-  link all types of learning and support the validation of learning outcomes.

**What are learning outcomes?**

- 1 Learning outcomes express what a person is expected to know, understand and is able to do.
- 2 They describe the content of qualifications, clarifying what is expected from a learner.
- 3 They support progression in learning, making it possible to compare and combine learning from different contexts (formal, non-formal or informal).

**Which countries participate in the EQF?**

**39**

countries currently participate in the EQF.

**34**

have already related their own NQFs to the EQF.

**How was the EQF developed?**

 Stakeholders from the world of education/training, employment and civil society are involved in the development and implementation of the EQF and of NQFs.

 All qualifications with an EQF level are underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms to ensure their content and level can be trusted.

Social Europe

# What is the current institutional basis of the EQF?



## Legal base

Council recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning



## Governance

- EU level: EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG)
- National level: EQF National Coordination Points (NCP)

EQF is established with a Council recommendation

2008

Evaluation of the 2008 EQF Council recommendation

2013

Review of the 2008 EQF Council recommendation

2017

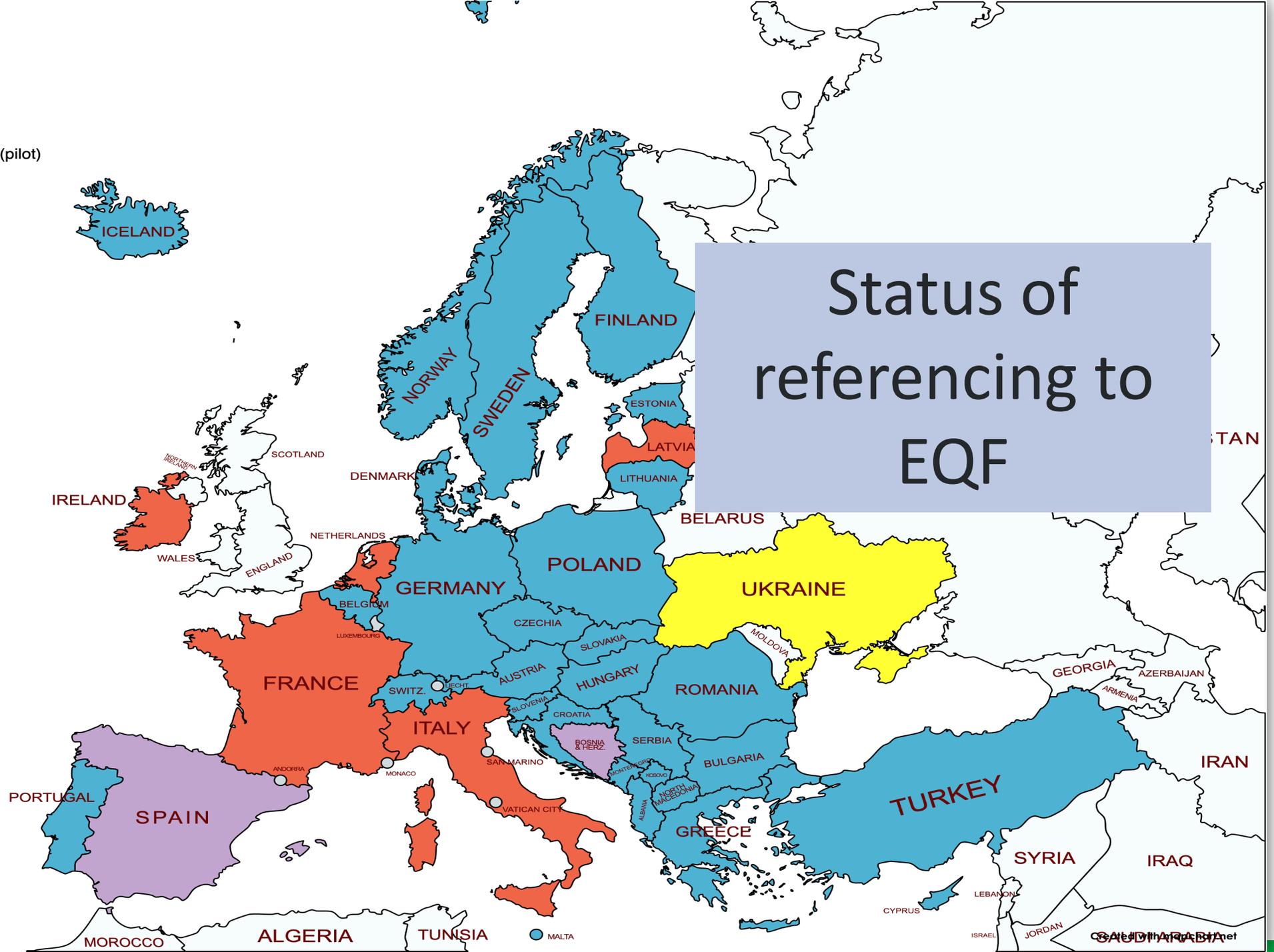
Evaluation of the 2017 EQF Council recommendation

2022

- Referenced to EQF
- Updated referencing
- Not yet referenced
- Comparison with EQF (pilot)
- Not EQF participants

**38**  
 countries

# Status of referencing to EQF



- Technical comparison with NQFs of:
  - Australia
  - New Zealand
  - Hong-Kong

- **New approach to comparison:**
  - Basis: Article 13 of the EQF Recommendation 2017
  - Pilot phase (2021-2022): Ukraine (almost completed), Cape Verde (preparatory steps), SADCQF (agreed with SADC Secretariat)
  - After analysis of lessons from pilot phase: more countries and RQFs

## Article 13

Explore possibilities for the development and application of criteria and procedures to enable, in accordance with international agreements, the comparison of third countries' national and regional qualifications frameworks with the EQF

# Milestones - reached

Objective	Achievement	Countries
EQF levels on qualifications documents (upon referencing to EQF)	33 countries on diplomas, certificates (out of 36 referenced countries)	BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, FR, IE, IT, CY, FI, LT, LV, MT, NL, HU, PL, PT, SI, SK, SE
EQF levels on qualifications databases	23 countries	
Transparency of information on NQF: inclusion in the tool to compare NQFs / EQF	30 countries	
Transparency of information on NQF: connecton of national registers to publication of qualifications in Europass platform	18 countries	BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FR, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, HU, PL, PT, SI, SE

<https://europa.eu/europass/en/compare-qualifications>

## Find, understand and compare qualifications types that are part of national qualifications frameworks and systems

With the help of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) you can see how National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) and systems relate to one another.

You can select 2 countries from the flag icon below to see what types of qualifications are included in national frameworks referenced to the EQF. You can find up to 5 examples of qualifications for each national qualification type.



Austria



Belgium - NL



Bulgaria



Croatia



Czech Republic



Denmark



Estonia



Finland



France



Germany



Greece



Hungary



Iceland



Ireland



Italy



Latvia



Lithuania



Luxembourg



Malta



Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Portugal



Romania



Serbia



Slovakia



Slovenia



Sweden



Switzerland



Turkey

Please select 2 countries to compare NQF levels

Compare

# Contribution of the EQF



03

# Structures of an NQF

# Qualification type descriptors

- How qualification types are described within NQFs vary
- Bring together the two metrics of:
  - Level of complexity
  - Volume of learning measure
- If text based descriptors, will include additional fields:
  - Purpose
  - Admission requirements
  - Progression or pathways

# Levels and level descriptors

Approaches to design of level descriptors	Pros and Cons
Qualifications types are aligned to level descriptors [using map/table or text based descriptor]	<p>Allows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple qualification types to be ascribed to a level of learning complexity</li> <li>• Levels to be interpreted holistically as a qualification type outcome, and that the levels build on the level below</li> <li>• The knowledge, skills and other domains at one level include those at the lower levels.</li> </ul>
Level descriptors are written for each qualification type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May potentially limit the descriptor to only one qualification type per level descriptor</li> <li>• May force the levels to be read independently of each other, and ascribes only information in this level to the qualification type</li> <li>• May be a confusion as to what is a qualification type descriptor</li> <li>• Usually only used in NQFs that have a limited number of qualification types</li> </ul>

# Volume of learning

- Is amount of learning required to successfully complete the qualification
- May be described as a duration or hours measure (often translated into a credit value). Can assist in:
  - Consistency of size of qualification
  - Credit transfer processes
- A review of the definitions indicates that the volume of learning across the following examples are based on:
  - **Notional hours** or estimated hours and are not a 'fixed' figure
  - **An average learner.** Within this notion of an average learner is also a consideration that the learner has limited knowledge and skills of the field of study/practice. Some frameworks indicate that the average learner has 'no underpinning knowledge and skills in the field of study'.

# Overview – status in Africa (sample)

Country	Definition	Volume
Cape Verde	All forms of academic work	HE: 25-30 notional hours of workload. 1 curricular year = 60 credits (aligned with ECTS)
Mozambique	Notional hours: contact hours (theoretical, practical, laboratory), individual learning, projects, preparation for exams, exams	HE: 1 credit = 25-30 hours; 1500 h year TVET: 1 credit = 10 hours
Namibia	Directed and self-directed learning and assessment	1 credit = 10 notional hours
Rwanda	Notional learning hours include direct contact time with teachers or trainers ('directed learning'), time spent in studying, doing assignments, and undertaking practical tasks ('self-directed') as well as time spent in assessment	1 credit = 10 notional hours, 1200 hours for an academic year
South Africa	Notional hours includes contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, individual learning, group work, projects and others	1 credit = 10 notional hours

# Qualification type descriptors

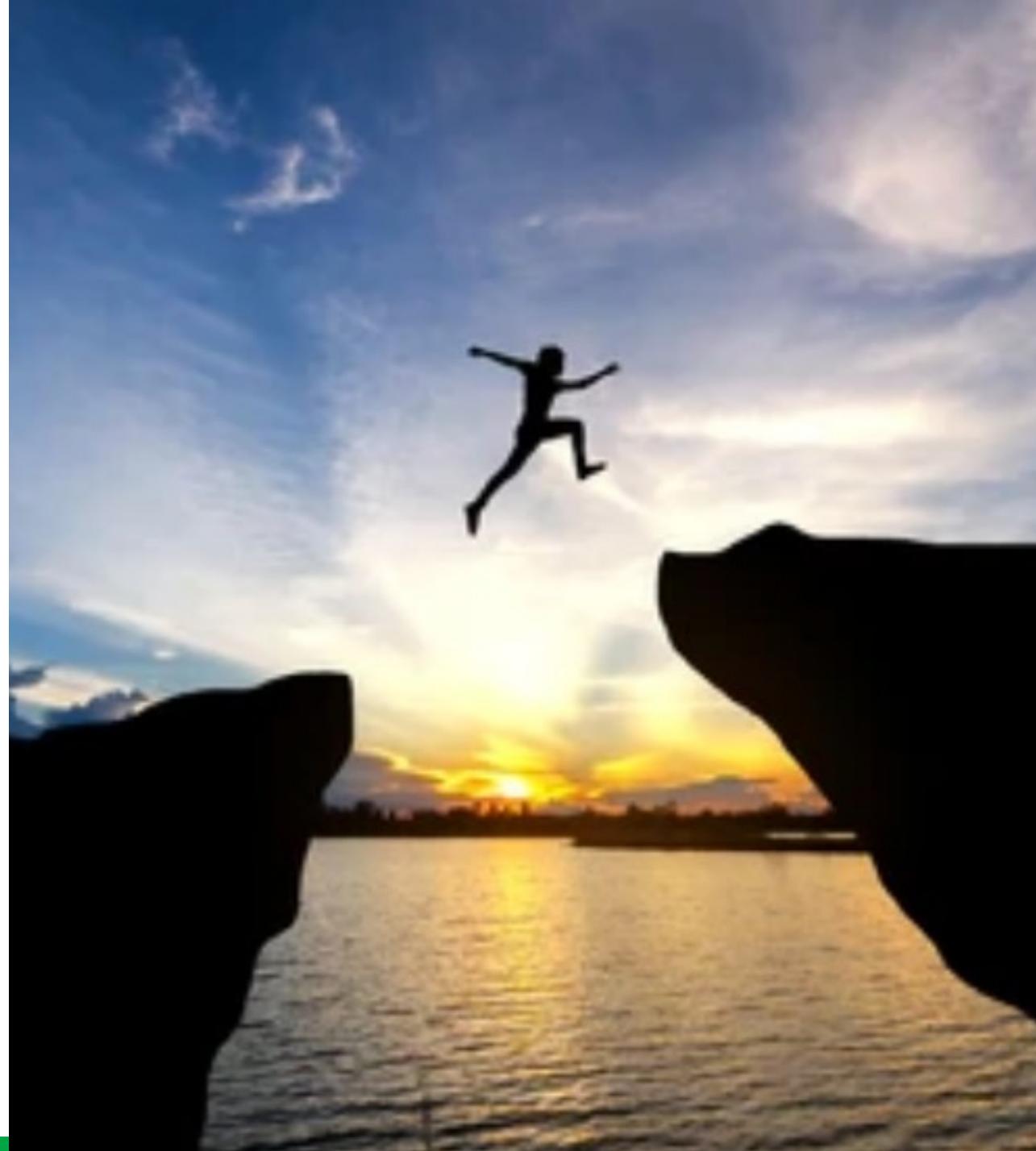
- Bring together the two metrics: level of complexity and volume of learning.
- May be dealt with as:
  - Simply the level descriptor specifically for a qualification type
  - A map/table that brings together the two metrics
  - A text based descriptor [e.g. Botswana, Namibia]. Proposed headings:
    - ❖ Entry requirements (only for Bachelor and above to promote access into qualifications)
    - ❖ Purpose as this assist especially in distinguishing between two qualification types at the same level
    - ❖ Linkages to other qualification types as this promotes pathways discussions
    - ❖ Level
    - ❖ Credit value.

04

**Recognition of  
prior learning**

## RPL gives us wings

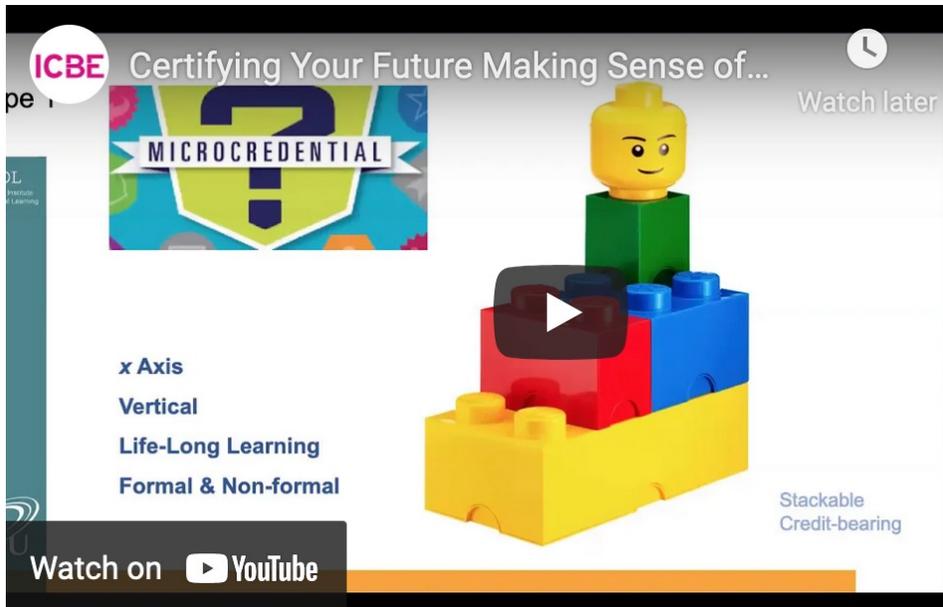
Recognition, validation and certification of competence (RPL, RVCC/RCA, VAE)



05

**Micro-credentials**

# Lifelong learning is essential



[Access the video](#)

An effective culture of lifelong learning is key to ensuring that everyone has the knowledge, skills and competences they need to thrive in society, the labour market and their personal lives.

It is essential that people can access **quality and relevant education and training, upskilling and reskilling throughout their lives**. Lifelong learning opportunities should be part of the long-term strategy of education and training institutions to improve their responsiveness to the fast-changing needs of employers and learners. This would enable a more diverse body of learners to upskill and reskill.

Higher education institutions, vocational education and training (VET) institutions, adult learning providers and other providers of micro-credentials, including employers – need to cooperate and integrate the latest research findings in the design and update of learning opportunities.

Micro-credentials can help **certify the outcomes of small, tailored learning experiences**.

They make possible the **targeted, flexible acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences** to meet new and emerging needs in society and the labour market and make it possible for individuals to fill the skill gaps they need to succeed in a fast-changing environment, while not replacing traditional qualifications.

**They can, where appropriate, complement existing qualifications**, providing added value while not undermining the core principle of full degree programmes in initial education and training.

Micro-credentials could be designed and issued by a variety of providers in different learning settings (formal, non-formal and informal learning settings)

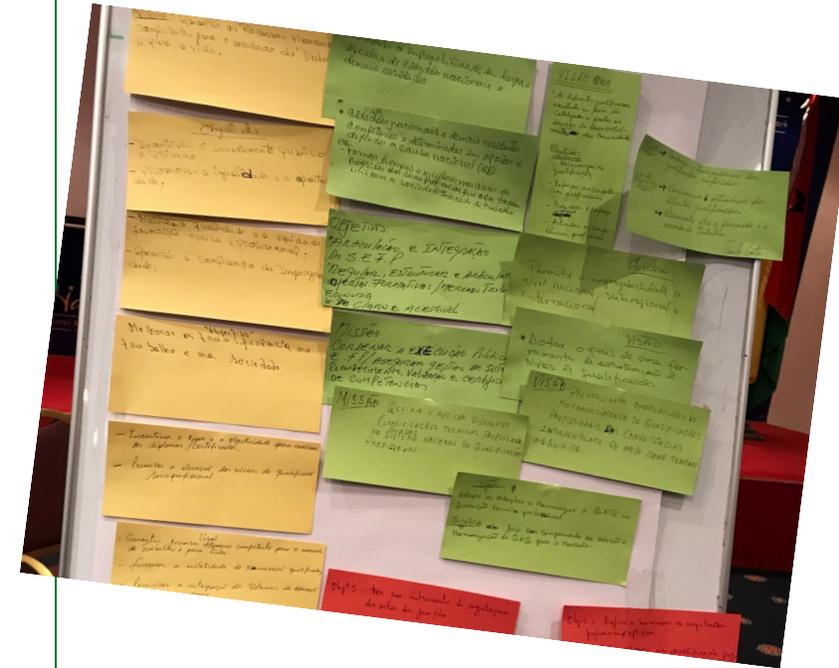


[Access the video](#)

# Micro-credentials: elements of a definition

The number and diversity of micro-credential offerings have expanded substantially in recent years, accelerated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Micro-credentials hold promises and challenges.

- Existing definitions (from OECD, European Commission, UNESCO, Australian Government) point to key characteristics of micro-credentials:
  - ✓ Referring to learning over a limited time and/or in a specific area
  - ✓ May form part of or add to formal qualifications
  - ✓ Potentially 'stackable' over time, adding to individual learning careers
  - ✓ Given their limited size and focus, more flexible than traditional qualifications
  - ✓ Based on assessed learning
  - ✓ Frequently delivered in a digital form.



The Australian Government (2021) adopted the [National Micro-Credentials Framework](#), which uses the following definition:

- A micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning or competency, with a minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) award qualification, that is additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of an AQF award qualification.

### What can constitute a micro-credential?

- TVET skill sets or units of competency.
- Modularised, assessed components of existing higher education curriculum or subjects.
- Industry learning that is assessed (such as vendor certifications, professional learning).
- Other forms of assessed learning or competencies (e.g. Vocational Education/Higher Education /Industry courses not currently accredited by a regulatory authority, and those by other providers).

### What does not constitute a micro-credential?

- Unassessed learning or courses, including work-integrated learning without an assessment.
- Badges which are obtained through participation only (i.e. without an assessment).
- Formal qualifications within the AQF and macro-credentials, including diplomas, certificates and master's degrees.

# EU: Recommendation on European approach to micro-credentials for LLL and employability: 10 principles

“Use micro-credentials, where appropriate, as a tool to strengthen and complement existing learning opportunities, increase participation in lifelong learning”

1. Quality
2. Transparency
3. Relevance
4. Valid assessment
5. Learning pathways

6. Recognition
7. Portability
8. Learner-centred
9. Authentic
10. Information and guidance

# Micro-credential Observatory

The Research Observatory on Micro-credentials (ROM) is a NIDL initiative in partnership with the [ECIU University](#). The aim is to provide a curated and regularly updated collection of major reports, policy initiatives and research-related publications on the growth of micro-credentials in higher education and lifelong learning more generally.

- [NIDL Activities](#)
- [NIDL Research](#)
- [Major Policy Initiatives](#)
- [National & International Reports](#)
- [Useful Reading: Articles, Books & Papers](#)
- [Events, Conferences and Webinars](#)
- [Microcredentials Sans Frontières Network](#)



- Many articles published in 2022:  
<https://www.dcu.ie/nidl/micro-credential-observatory>

