



ACQF

African Continental
Qualifications Framework

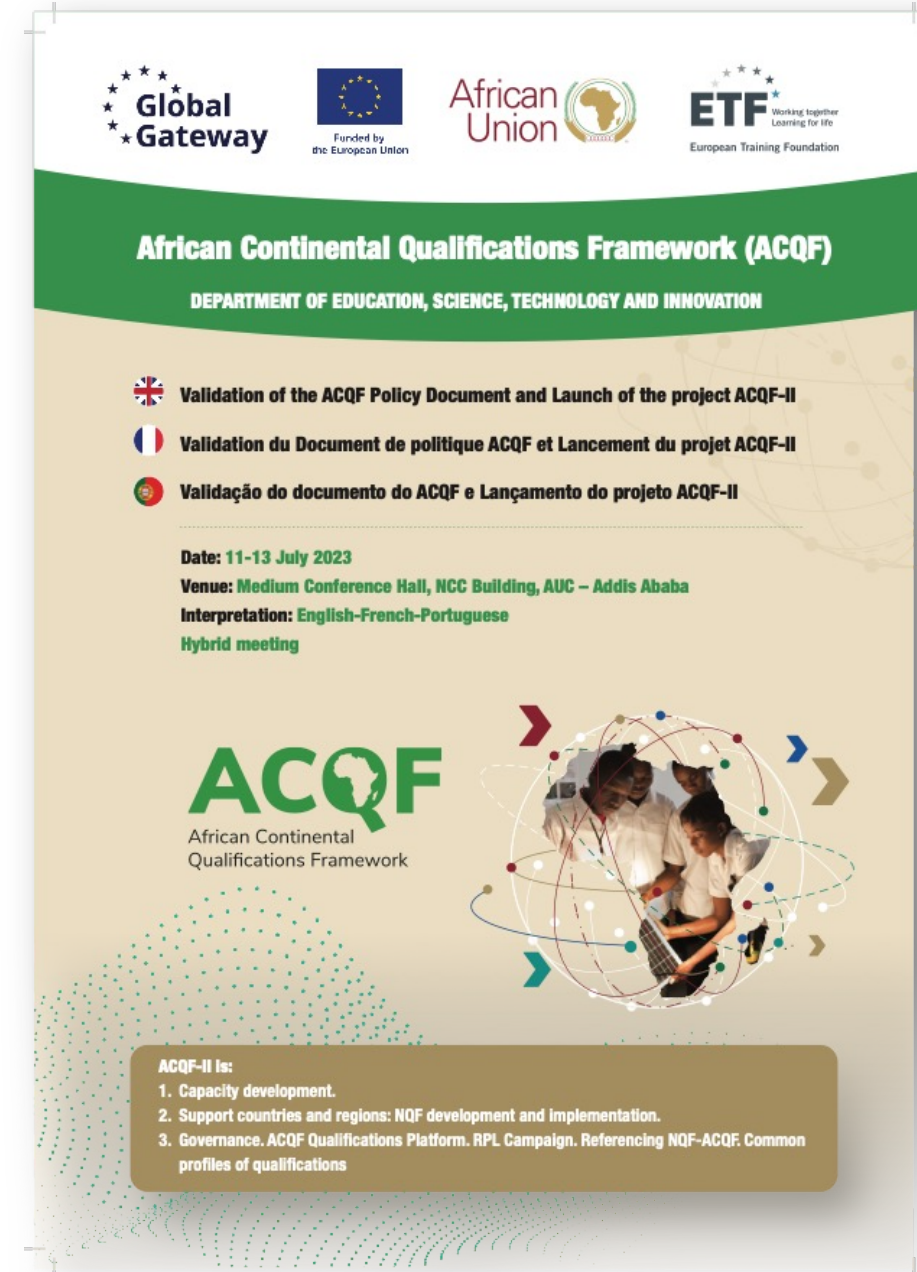
Session 5: Validation of Learning Outcomes: Focus on RPL

Nairobi, 10 October 2023

Patrick Werquin



- Focus on RPL
- Two country cases
- ACQF Guidelines 4; European Guidelines on Validation
- Discussion



The poster features logos for Global Gateway, the European Union (Funded by the European Union), the African Union, and the European Training Foundation (ETF) with the tagline 'Working together Learning for life'. A green banner at the top contains the text 'African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)' and 'DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION'. Below this, three bullet points with flags indicate the validation of the ACQF Policy Document and Launch of the project ACQF-II in English, French, and Portuguese. The date is 11-13 July 2023, the venue is Medium Conference Hall, NCC Building, AUC – Addis Ababa, and the interpretation is English-French-Portuguese. It is a hybrid meeting. The ACQF logo is prominently displayed next to an image of people working together. A box at the bottom lists the ACQF-II focus areas: Capacity development, Support countries and regions: NQF development and implementation, and Governance: ACQF Qualifications Platform, RPL Campaign, Referencing NQF-ACQF: Common profiles of qualifications.

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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**
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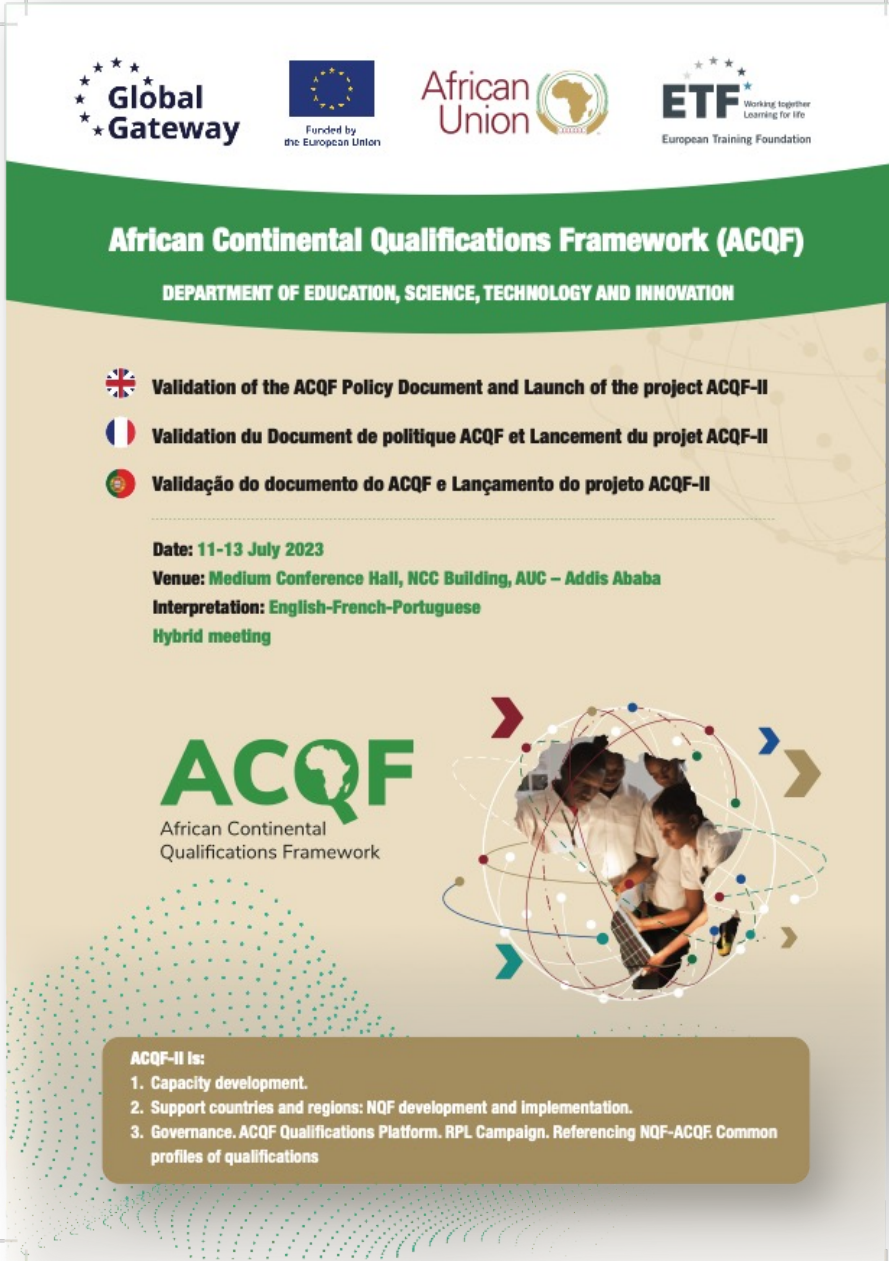
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Hybrid meeting

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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

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- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and **informal learning outcomes** against **standards** used in formal education and training.
- Thus, RPL provides an opportunity for people to acquire qualifications or credits towards a qualification or exemptions (from all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering a formal study programme) without going through a formal education or training programme.

- The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which formal, non-formal and informal learning is measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system or workplace.
- The aim is to make it possible to obtain formal recognition for knowledge gained throughout life, such as in workplaces and own reading or experiences. The RPL process also entails providing support to a candidate to ensure that knowledge is discovered and displayed in terms of a relevant qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

- A process
- An assessment
 - (Not education and training, not in the first place at least)
- All education and training institutions assess and validate learning outcomes, but RPL is specific (mainly because no curriculum)

- PLAR
- APEL, APL
- RAS
- RAC
- RNFILO
- RVCC
- VAE, VAEP
- VNFIL
- VANI
- Realkompetansevurdering

- PLAR (Canada)
- APEL, APL (UK)
- RAS (Dutch speaking Belgium)
- RAC (Quebec)
- RNFIL (OECD, 2010)
- RVCC (Portugal, Angola, Cabo Verde)
- VAE, VAEP (French speaking countries)
- VNFIL (Recommendation of the EU)
- VANI (Spanish speaking countries)
- Realkompetansevurdering (Norway)

Key Idea/issue # 1

Target group:

- RPL/RNFILO is for people with competences...
... but without the corresponding qualification
- Useful also for specific groups: migrants, refugees, post conflict situation
- But for people without competences and skills (if any), the next best alternative is: education and/or training

Key Idea/issue # 2

It is the learning outcomes that are assessed, and potentially validated, not the learning



Key Idea/issue # 3

- Assessment is the heart of the system; for
 - Trust
 - Parity of esteem
 - Equity
- And because the input process is unknown

Key Idea/issue # 4

- **Double currency:**
 - In the education and training formal system
 - In the labour market

Key Idea/issue # 5

- RPL is relevant in all education and training sectors:
 - Adult learning,
 - TVET,
 - Higher education
- More relevant for adults, because applicants need to prove they have experiential learning outcomes, and therefore experience
- RPL for young people is an option but more difficult to implement



Key Idea/issue # 6

- RPL is about visibility of competences



Key Idea/issue # 7

RPL is another route
to qualifications



Key Idea/issue # 8

- RPL is about equity
- One of the most inclusive approaches in the field of education and training



Key Idea/issue # 9

- RPL/RNFILO demands that the country has already adopted a **learning outcome-based system**
- I.e., curriculum and qualifications standards are clearly written in terms of competences and skills
- And also, the Law should state that a qualification is the result of a learning **process**, **not** a learning programme
- If the Law says a number of hours is necessary for such and such qualification, RPL will prove difficult to implement

Key Idea/issue # 10

- What matters is:
 - **Societal recognition**
(Not only technical recognition)
- Idea:
 - Involve key stakeholders up front in the process
 - Create a sense of ownership (the objective of the communication policy/strategy)

Key Idea/issue # 11

- RPL is key for **employability**
- Because a qualification is one of the main components of employability
- But RPL does not provide a job 😞 😞 😞
- It helps with finding or keeping a job, and with better wage and promotion

Key Idea/issue # 12

- RPL is not a competitor to the education and training formal system
- It's a companion 😊
- With a paradigm change, which empowers and democratises learning



Key Idea/issue # 13

RPL needs a **smart** governance

(Clear leadership, key stakeholders involved, key issues well identified: cost, price, funding, training of staff...)



Key Idea/issue # 14

- Take **no** risks
- Run a **pilot**
- A **vertical** pilot



Key Idea/issue # 15

- Do not leave candidates on their own
- Proper **guidance**
- Strong evidence, guidance is key for:
 - Success in the RPL assessment process
 - Success later in the labour market in using newly acquired qualifications
 - Minimize risks of drop-out from RPL process



Key Idea/issue # 17

There are many barriers, mostly psychological

- Many stakeholders are against RPL
- You will hear:
 - “You will award qualifications to everybody”
 - “You will award undeserved qualifications”
 - “You will create a competitor to the formal education and training system”
- Recommendation: explain, explain, explain



- Individuals
- Enterprises
- Government
- Trade unions, workers associations
- Any other that would be relevant in your country?

- Supply: the system, the government, the provision
- Demand: the individual applicant
- The process, as generally understood, is the “demand” side of RPL; it is what individual applicants go through

Information Advice and Guidance	

Information Advice and Guidance	Welcome

Information Advice and Guidance	Welcome
	Information <i>(comprehensive)</i>

Information Advice and Guidance	Welcome
	Information <i>(comprehensive)</i>
	Decision, by the <u>individual</u> , to apply

Administrative registration (web page)	

Administrative registration (web page)	Provision of the administrative form to the potential applicant

Administrative registration (web page)	Provision of the administrative form to the potential applicant
	Guidance (light)

Administrative registration (web page)	Provision of the administrative form to the potential applicant
	Guidance (light)
	Handover of the completed administrative form by the applicant

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	Guidance (light)
	Handover of the completed administrative form by the applicant
	Administrative decision to accept the applicant

Application screening and eligibility	

Application screening and eligibility	Guidance (intermediate)

Application screening and eligibility	Guidance (intermediate)
	Handover of the eligibility portfolio

Application screening and eligibility	Guidance (intermediate)
	Handover of the eligibility portfolio
	Eligibility interview

Application screening and eligibility	Guidance (intermediate)
	Handover of the eligibility portfolio
	Eligibility interview
	Decision to send the (eligible) applicant to the assessment

Assessment	

Assessment	Guidance (comprehensive)

Assessment	Guidance (comprehensive)
	Handover of the portfolio of (self-analysed) competences and skills

Assessment	Guidance (comprehensive)
	Handover of the portfolio of (self-analysed) competences
	Analysis of the portfolio

Assessment	Guidance (comprehensive)
	Handover of the portfolio of (self-analysed) competences and skills
	Analysis of the portfolio
	Convening notice sent to applicant

Assessment	Guidance (comprehensive)
	Handover of the portfolio of (self-analysed) competences
	Analysis of the portfolio
	Convening notice sent to applicant
	Final assessment (practical test, written examinations, on-the-job observation, simulation...)

Assessment	Guidance (comprehensive)
	Handover of the portfolio of (self-analysed) competences and skills
	Analysis of the portfolio
	Convening notice sent to applicant
	Final assessment (practical test, written examinations, on-the-job observation, simulation...)
	Interview with the panel of assessors

Certification	

Certification	Validation of learning outcomes

Certification	Validation of learning outcomes
	Making and stamping of the qualification

Certification	Validation of learning outcomes
	Making and stamping of the qualification
	Awarding of the qualification to successful applicants

Certification	Validation of learning outcomes
	Making and stamping of the qualification
	Awarding of the qualification to successful applicants
	Explaining the reasons for failure to unsuccessful applicants. Recommendations (further practice, or formal training)

Appeal	?????

The Flow Chart: A Possible Ideal Approach

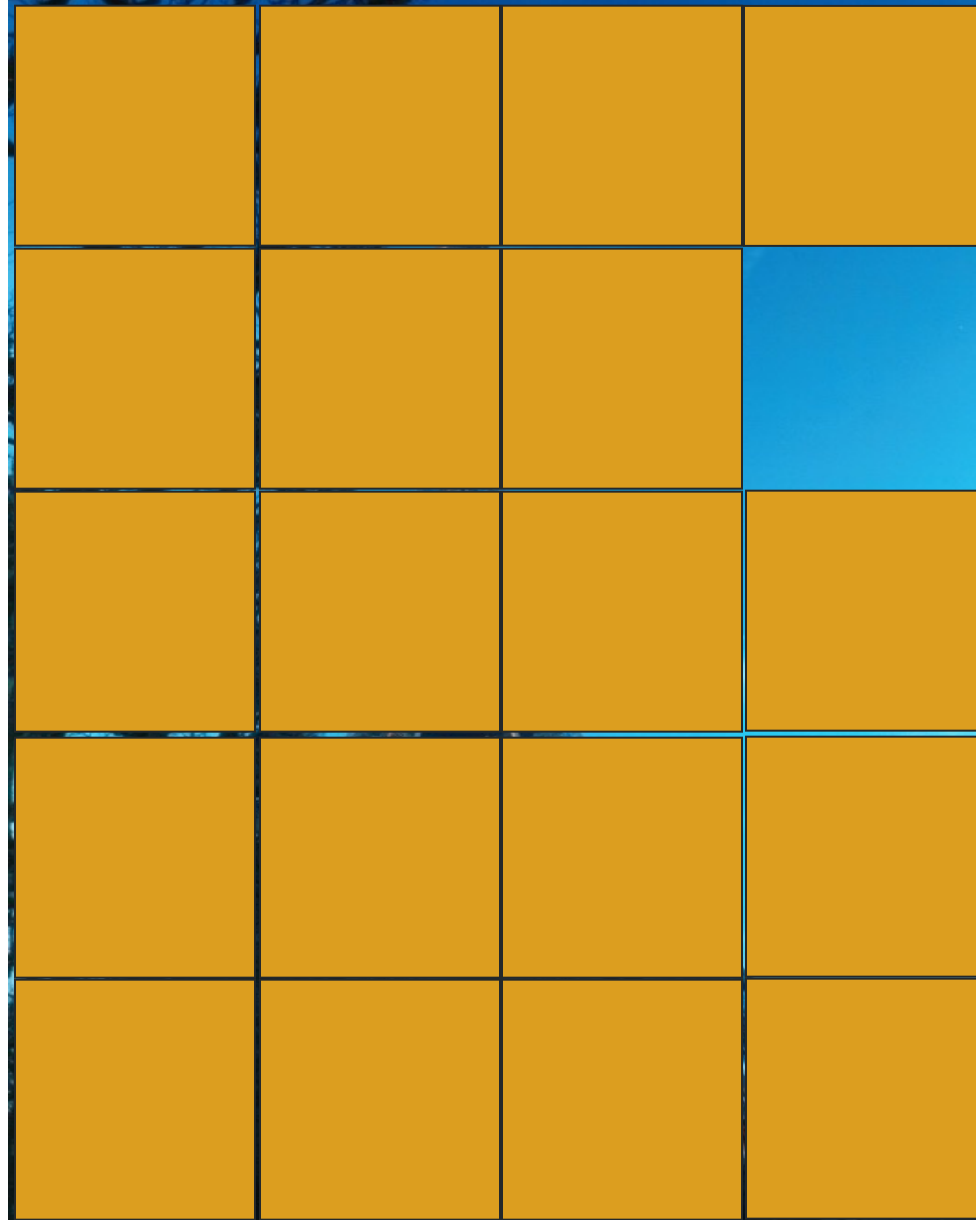
Stages	Purposes
Information, advice and guidance	Greeting learners (potential applicants)
	Information and guidance to the potential applicant (comprehensive, with information about the benefits, the process and its potential duration)
	Identification of the evidence to substantiate claim for application (partly with RPL staff)
	Decision of the individual to apply
Administrative registration	Provision of the administrative form
	Guidance 1 (light)
	Handover of the administrative form by the applicant
	Waiting time (Decision to accept the application by the RPL staff)
Application screening and eligibility	Guidance 2 (intermediate, including advice about evidence gathering)
	Handover of the eligibility portfolio
	Eligibility interview
	Waiting time (Decision to send the applicant to the assessment by RPL staff))
Assessment (of learning outcomes and competences)	Guidance 3 (comprehensive, especially concerning the preparation to the assessment)
	Handover of the portfolio of [self-analysed] competences.
	Waiting time (Analysis of the portfolio of competences by assessor(s))
	Waiting time (Convening notice send to applicants)
	Supplementary assessment (see Box 11)
	Interview with the panel of assessors
Certification (of competences)	Waiting time (Validation of the learning outcomes and competences)
	Waiting time (Making and stamping of the qualification) – Recording of outcome
	Awarding of a qualification to successful applicants.
	Explaining the reasons for failure to unsuccessful applicants.
	Suggestions for further practice, or formal education and training.

- With the standards we enter the discussion about assessment

- Assessment: where do you need to look? How much do you need to see?
- Key components of assessment
- Eligibility: an issue on its own
- The key to RPL assessment
(Assessment Procedures vs. Assessment Standards)

ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

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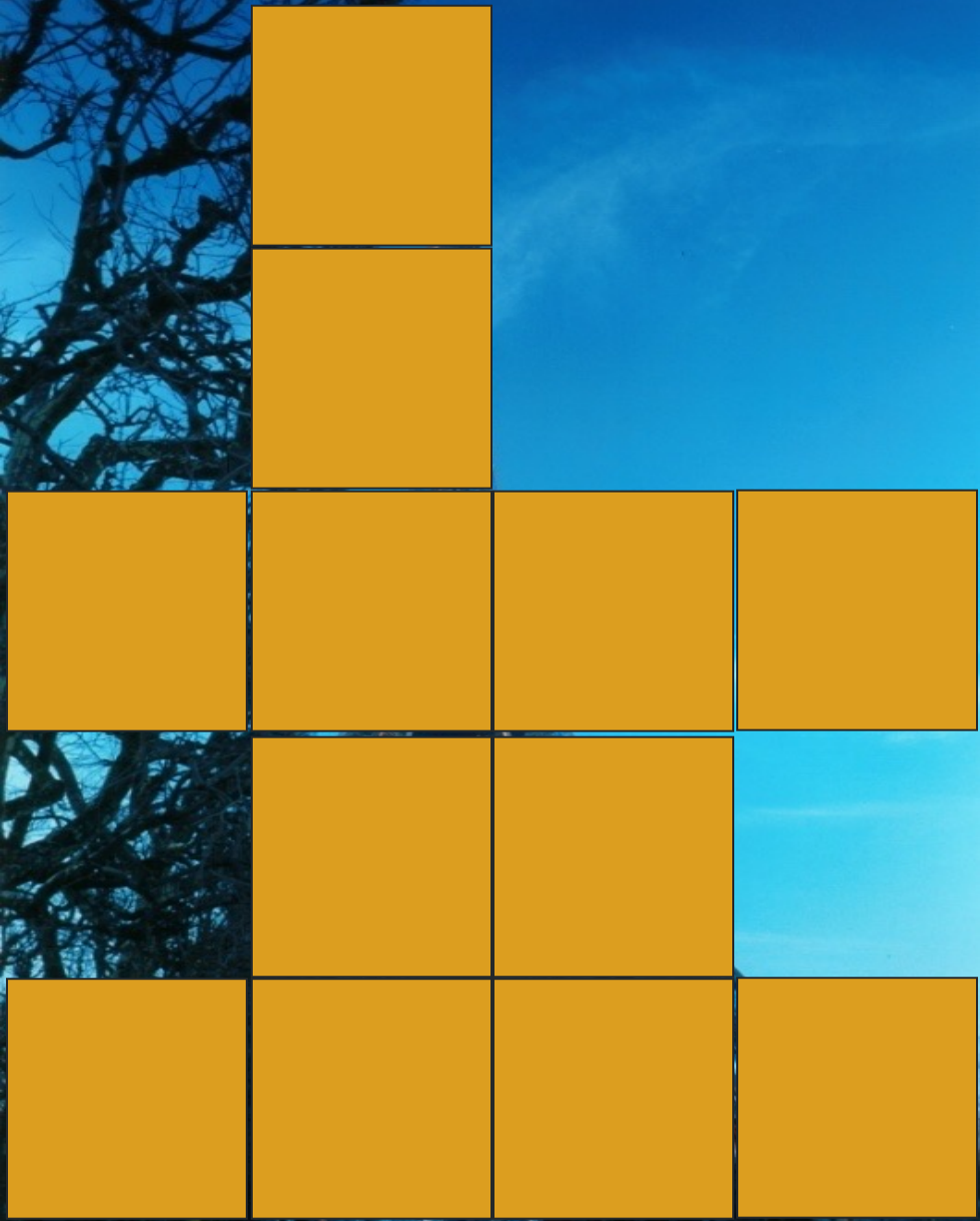
4 squares

But does
NOT help
much!



ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

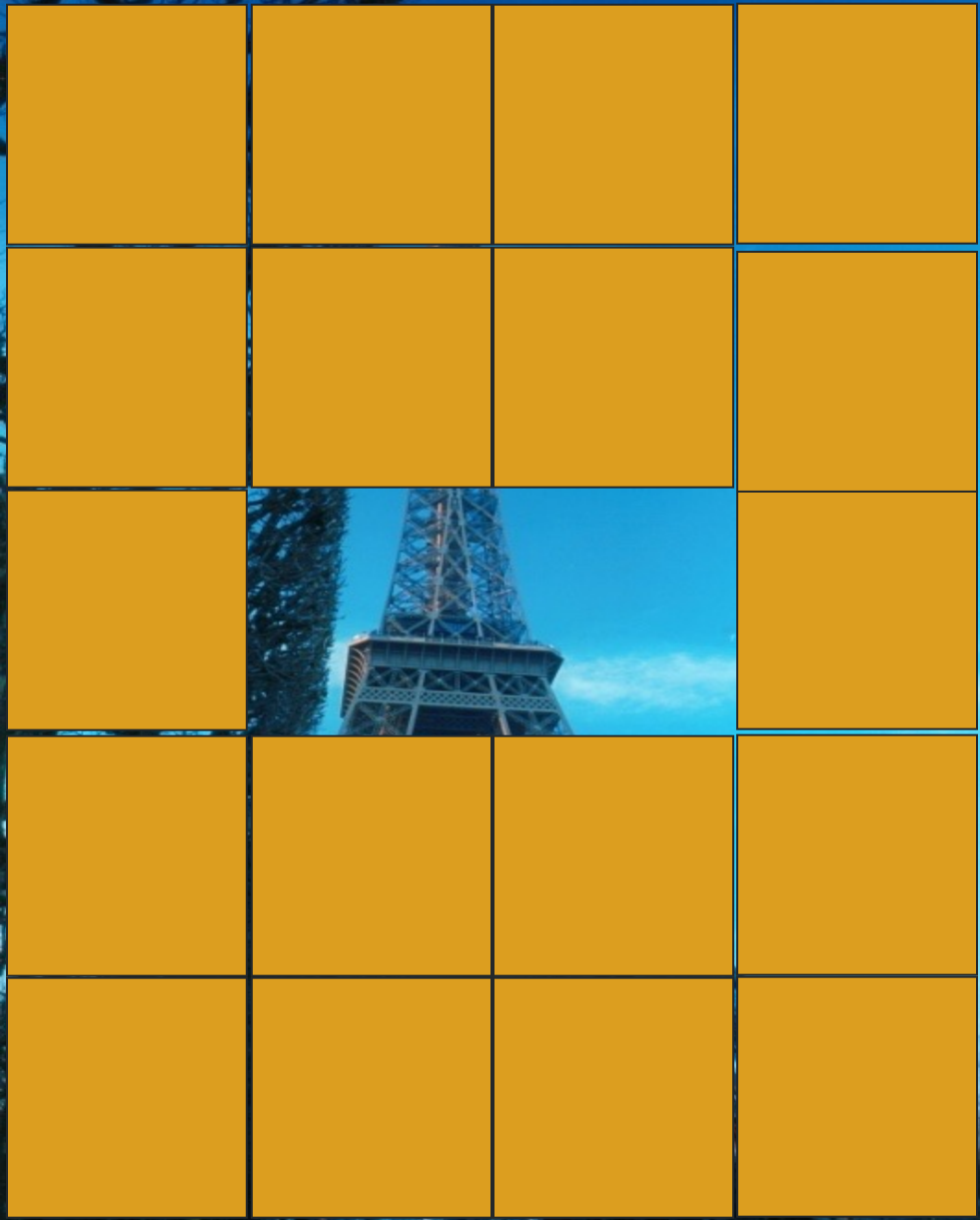
**Where do
you need
to look?**
☹️☹️☹️



ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

**2 squares
only but
Better!**

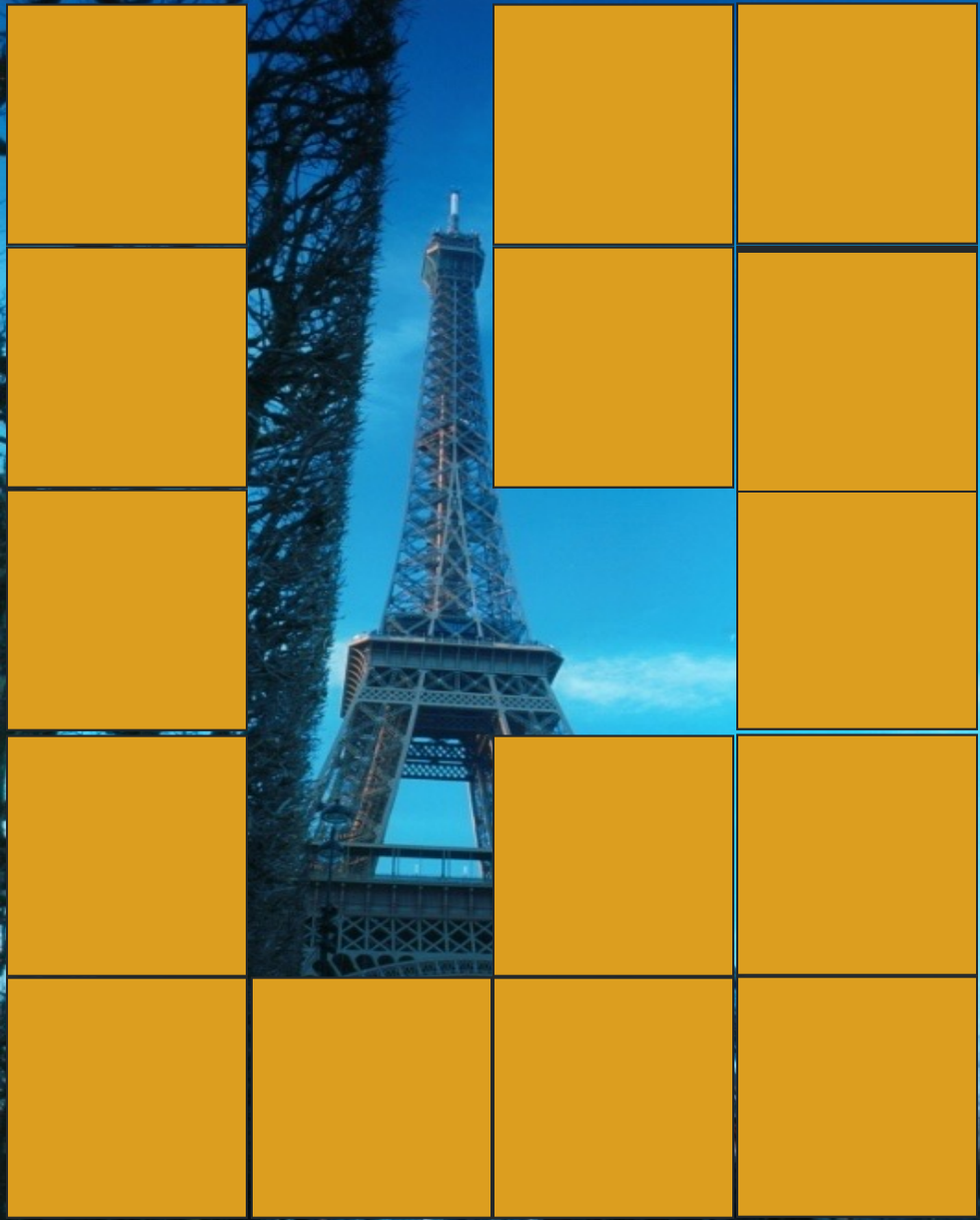
😊😊😊



ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

**Probably
enough**

😊😊😊



You may not
need to see
the full
picture to
identify the
competences
and skills



Assessment – The Heart of the System

- At least:
 - Transparent
 - Valid
 - Reliable and fair
 - Authentic^o
- Quality Assurance (depending on the level of formalisation you need) (see Session 8)
- Professional assessors (teachers? professionals? RPL experts)

Assessment – Methods

- Simulation
- Observation
- Portfolio (a self-reflecting tool, not a list)
- Written examinations
- Tests
- Interviews
- Panel
- Practical task(s)
- Virtual reality
- A mix of all or part of the above

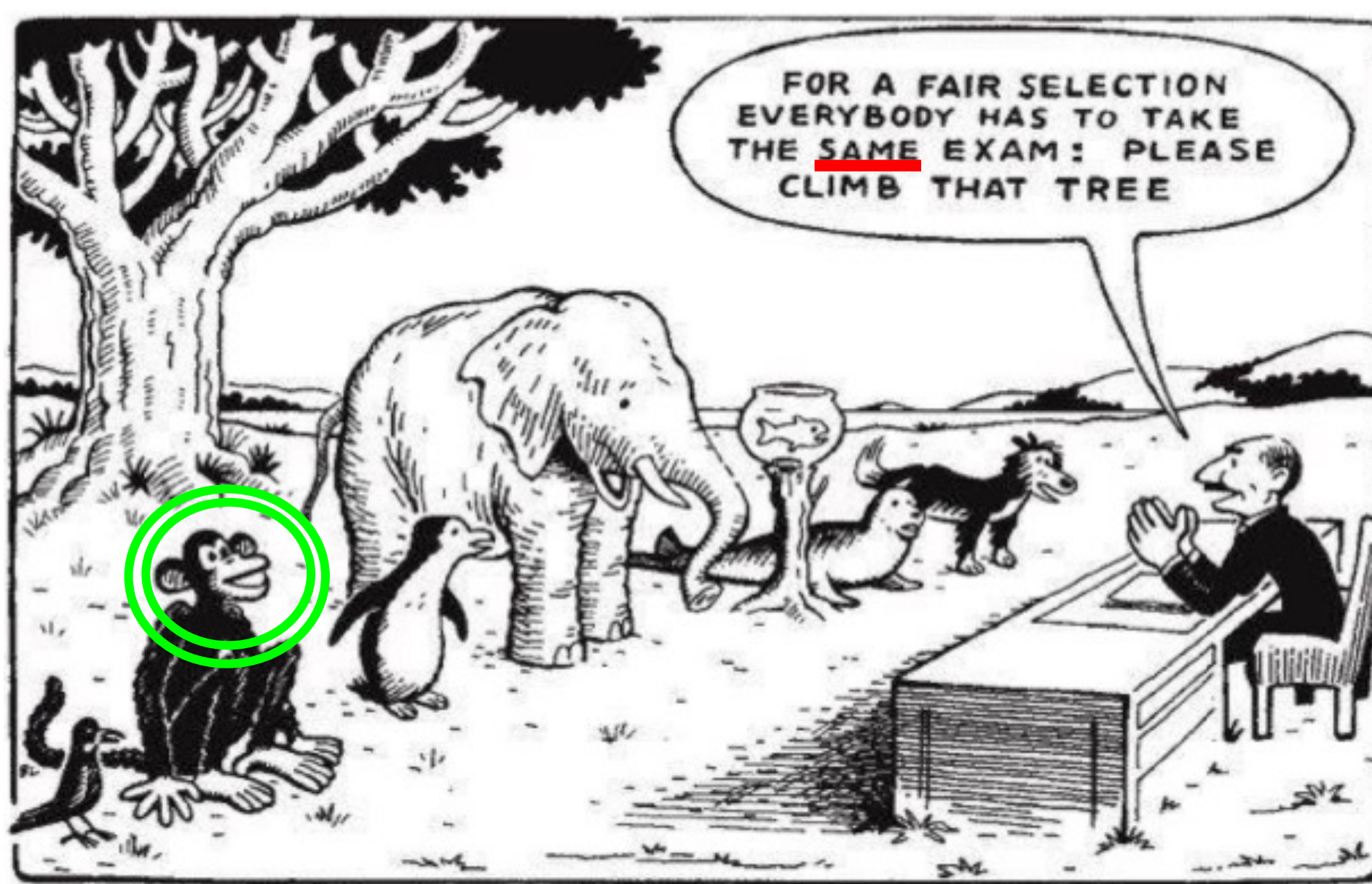
Initial Stage: Eligibility (or the Right to Apply for RPL)

- Cost of not doing it
- How many years of experience?
- There is room for improvement (initial interview, small portfolio)



The Key to RPL Assessment

- Same assessment standards...
...but different assessment procedures



Exact reference unknown (see for instance: <http://imgur.com/VPqOi>) - Maybe Based on Einstein's quote

Main Challenges re: Assessment

- For guidance officers, together with the candidates, finding the qualification(s) that matches the candidate's experiential learning outcomes (match with the Qualifications Standards)
- Promising avenue: holistic portfolio
- Having qualifications standards written in terms of learning outcomes (competences and skills)...
... or elaborate them

- Fact: all education and training institution assess learning outcomes and most of them award credits and or qualifications
- RPL is based on the exact same principle except that the acquisition of learning outcomes is not monitored (nor quality assured, see Section 7)
- RPL assessment is not an assessment against a curriculum
- RPL assessment is not an assessment done by the teacher/lecturer/trainer/professor

- But: what is awarded to successful candidates must carry the same value, and have the same currency in the labour market and the society at large
 - So, there must be a common reference: the standard
 - Occupational standards (statements of the activities and tasks; tool for employers)
 - Assessment standards (statements of the learning outcomes to be assessed, for assessors)
 - Qualification standards (all rules)
- => The last 2 have criteria for assessors

- Consult – with your stakeholders – about what would be acceptable in terms of procedure
- Use existing assessment or qualification standards or elaborate some (possibly from occupational standards)
- Communicate about it (transparency)
- Do quality assurance at the level of assessment (most appropriate moment to do it, because the learning process is unknown) (see Session 8)

- Role important of NQF in RPL
- The NQF in TVET, in HE
- Common features (transparency, equity, visibility, learning outcomes)
- Learner (candidate)-centred
- Catalogue of qualifications (NQC, a coordination mechanism)
- RPL a condition for registration in the NQC
- The necessary creation of user-friendly qualifications

- Andorra
- Azerbaijan
- Colombia
- France
- Ireland
- Morocco
- Tunisia

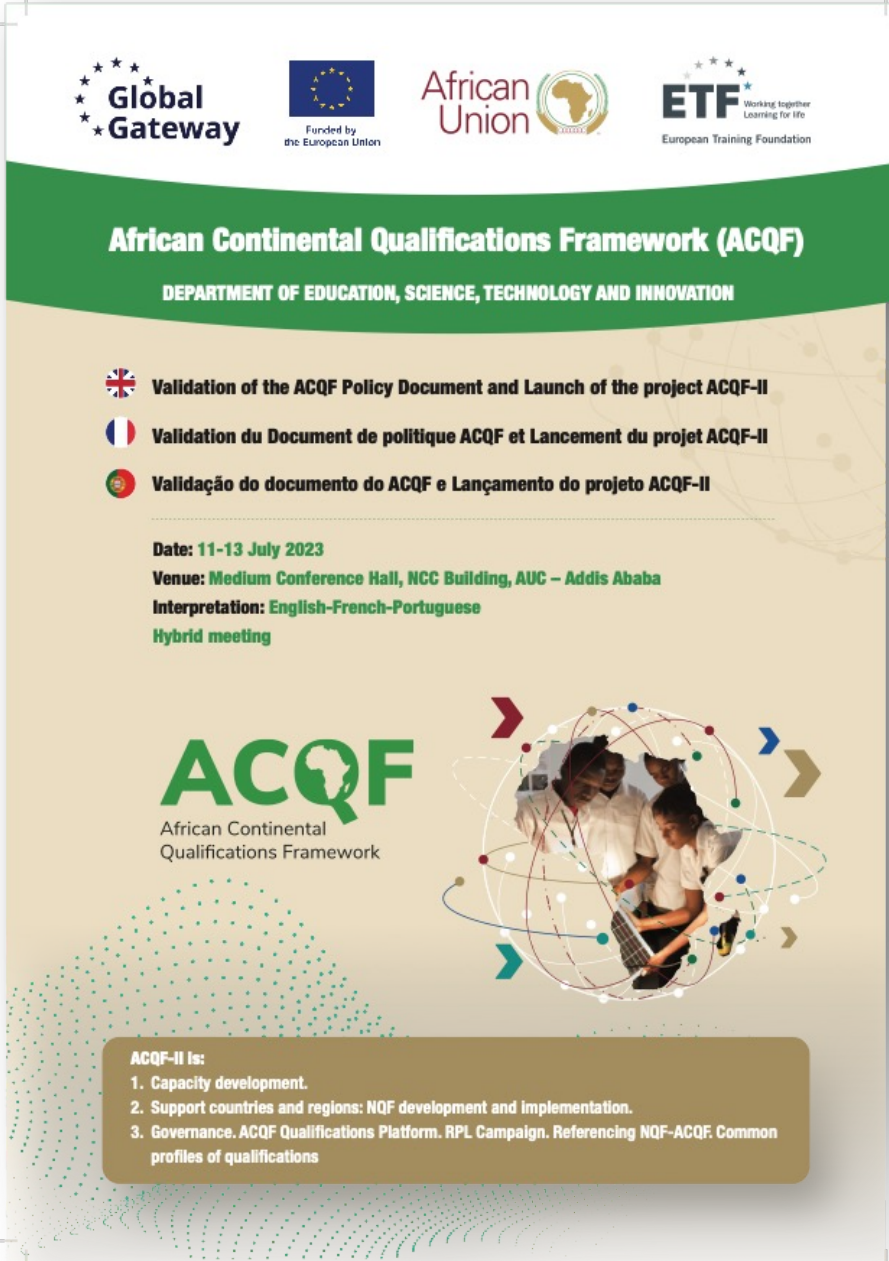
- RPL the natural companion of RPL (gender-equity friendly, motivation, positive, equitable, progressive, stepping stone)
- Complex but not complicated
- Vertical piloting
- New paradigm (competences and skills already there)
- New and decent jobs, promotion in jobs
- Visibility of (new) competences and skills
- Social inclusion and redress

**Merci
beaucoup**

Questions?



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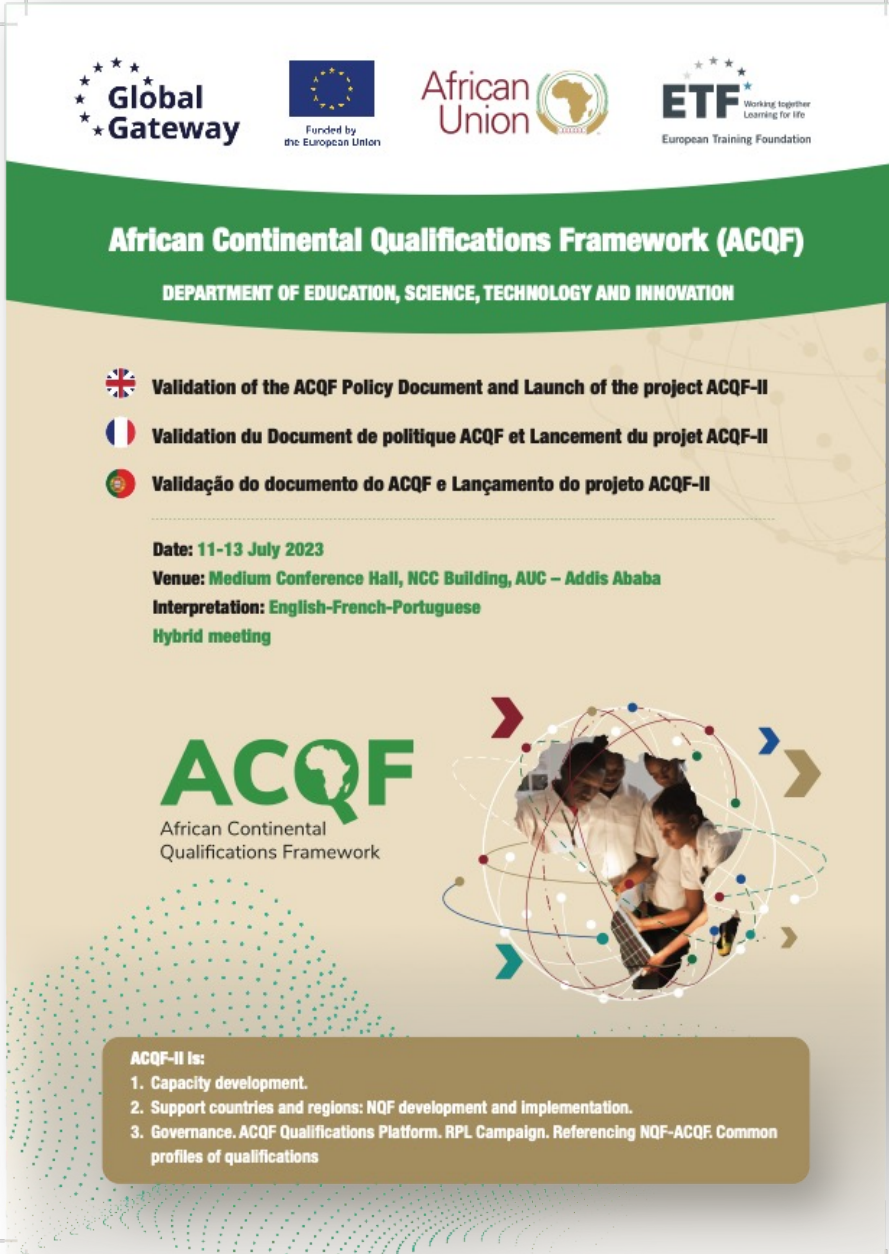
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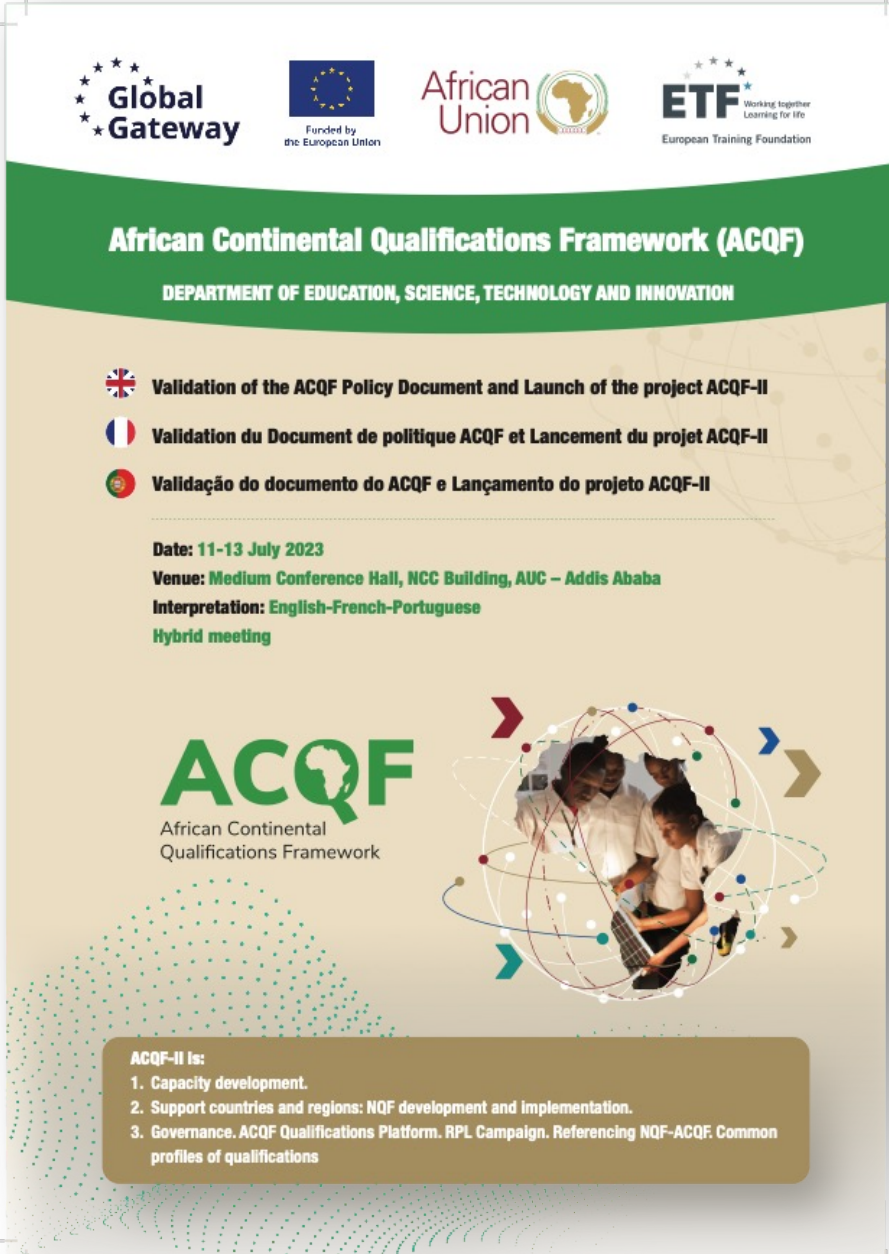
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