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# ACQF

African Continental  
Qualifications Framework

## National workshop on the implementation of the SNCATS and stepping towards the development of a national micro-credentials framework

20 March 2025



Part of the  
Verian Group

# 01

Recap of Day 2 and  
agenda for Day 3

# Agenda

Time	Activity
09.00-09.15	Recap of Day 2 and agenda for Day 3
09.15-09.45 Session 1	Micro-credentials: ACQF Handbook on Micro-credentials
09.45-10.15 Session 2	Findings of the Seychelles micro-credentials survey
10.15-10.35	Tea break
10.35-11.25 Session 3	Presentation of the Seychelles micro-credentials policy scenarios working document
11.25-13.00 Session 4	Guided discussions in 4 groups on the proposed Seychelles micro-credentials policy scenarios: collection of stakeholder input and feedback
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00 Session 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group presentations</li> <li>• Plenary discussion</li> </ul>
15.00-15.20 Session 6	Roadmap for the development and implementation of the Seychelles micro-credentials policy and criteria
15.20-15.30	Day 3 wrap-ups and closing tea

# 02

## General overview of the ACQF Handbook of micro-credentials

# The ACQF Micro-credentials Handbook

**Broader goal** is to provide users at policy-making and implementation levels with practical guide on micro-credentials and their place and role in the wider qualifications system

# Structure and main topics

The handbook covers the essential aspects of micro-credentials:

- Definitions, main qualities and characteristics
- Global trends and country examples
- Purposes and use cases
- Main end user groups and providers
- Integration into NQFs
- Quality assurance frameworks
- Stackability
- Micro-credentials and RPL
- Micro-credentials and CATS
- Recommendations towards a common approach

# What are micro-credentials?

- **Various definitions** used globally (ACQF Handbook, OECD, UN, EU Commission) and nationally as well
- UNESCO definition indicates that a micro-credential:
  - a record of focused learning achievement **verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do**
  - includes **assessment** based on clearly defined standards and is **awarded by a trusted provider**
  - has **standalone value** and may also **contribute to or complement** other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through **recognition of prior learning**
  - meets the standards required by relevant **quality assurance**
- The stakeholders at the 4th ACQF Forum, Seychelles, 13-14/11/2024, jointly discussed and proposed a revised, contextualised definition of micro-credentials

Micro-credential is a certification of assessed quality assured short period of learning, which is intended to provide learners with knowledge, skills, values and competencies in a targeted area and or practice.

# What are micro-credentials?

- Set of **common characteristics** that form definitions:
  - Limited volume, less than a full degree/qualification
  - Relevance
  - Delivering specific skills, knowledge and competences
  - Typically, more flexible, accessible and affordable learning experiences
  - ...
- Microcredentials is an umbrella term for many types of short credentials: micro-degree, short courses, training certificates, certificates of competence, professional certifications, set of skills, part qualifications, partial qualifications, micro-qualifications,...



# SHAPING THE CONCEPT OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Micro-credentials are mostly associated with existing credentials that certify:

## Small learning experience

- upskilling/reskilling short courses (both in formal and non-formal settings)
- parts of formal education programmes (units of learning, modules)

## Demonstrated competence

- professional certificates/ certificates of competence awarded by professional or other authorized bodies
- validation of non-formal and informal learning

**‘Micro-credential’** means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a ***small volume of learning***:

- **Standards-based assessment:** These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria
- **Skill or competency focused:** Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences
- **Relevant:** that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs
- **Stackable:** They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials
- **Quality:** They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity

## State of play – examples from Africa

Several countries in Africa include credentials that can be considered micro-credentials in their NQFs:

- NQFs are open to part qualifications or unbundled qualifications in e.g. Angola, Eswatini, Kenya, Seychelles and South Africa
- Mauritius is developing a National Micro-credentials Framework
- Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone expressed that they are planning to include MCs in their NQFs
- PoMiSa project seeks to establish a robust framework for the recognition, quality assurance, and regulation of micro-credentials in Southern Africa at higher education level

# Challenges

- Stakeholders are still unsure or unaware of micro-credentials and its benefits
- Lack of trust
- Complexity and variety of micro-credentials offerings
- Recognition of micro-credentials
- Limited funding
- Evidence gaps, lack of systematic data collection
- ...



# Policy pointers of the Handbook

- ❖ Develop a common definition of micro-credentials
- ❖ Consider the micro-credentials eco-system
- ❖ Have clear purposes for the use of micro-credentials
- ❖ Design learner-centred micro-credentials
- ❖ Ensure transparency of micro-credentials
- ❖ Design an effective policy framework to recognise and endorse micro-credentials based on key principles supporting design and issuance of micro-credentials
- ❖ Develop clear quality assurance procedures

# 03

## Findings of the Seychelles micro-credentials survey

# 3.1

## Introduction

# Objectives and scope

- Discover existing micro-credentials or other credentials that can be considered micro-credentials within the landscape of education and training offered in Seychelles
- Map discovered credentials against a set of characteristics
- Collect views of training providers on micro-credentials
- Collect information on learners and their views



Inform policy recommendations and support the development of  
a micro-credentialing system

# Responses

## Providers' survey

- 15 organisations responded
- 140 different micro-credentials mapped
- Government institutions, public education and training providers, companies

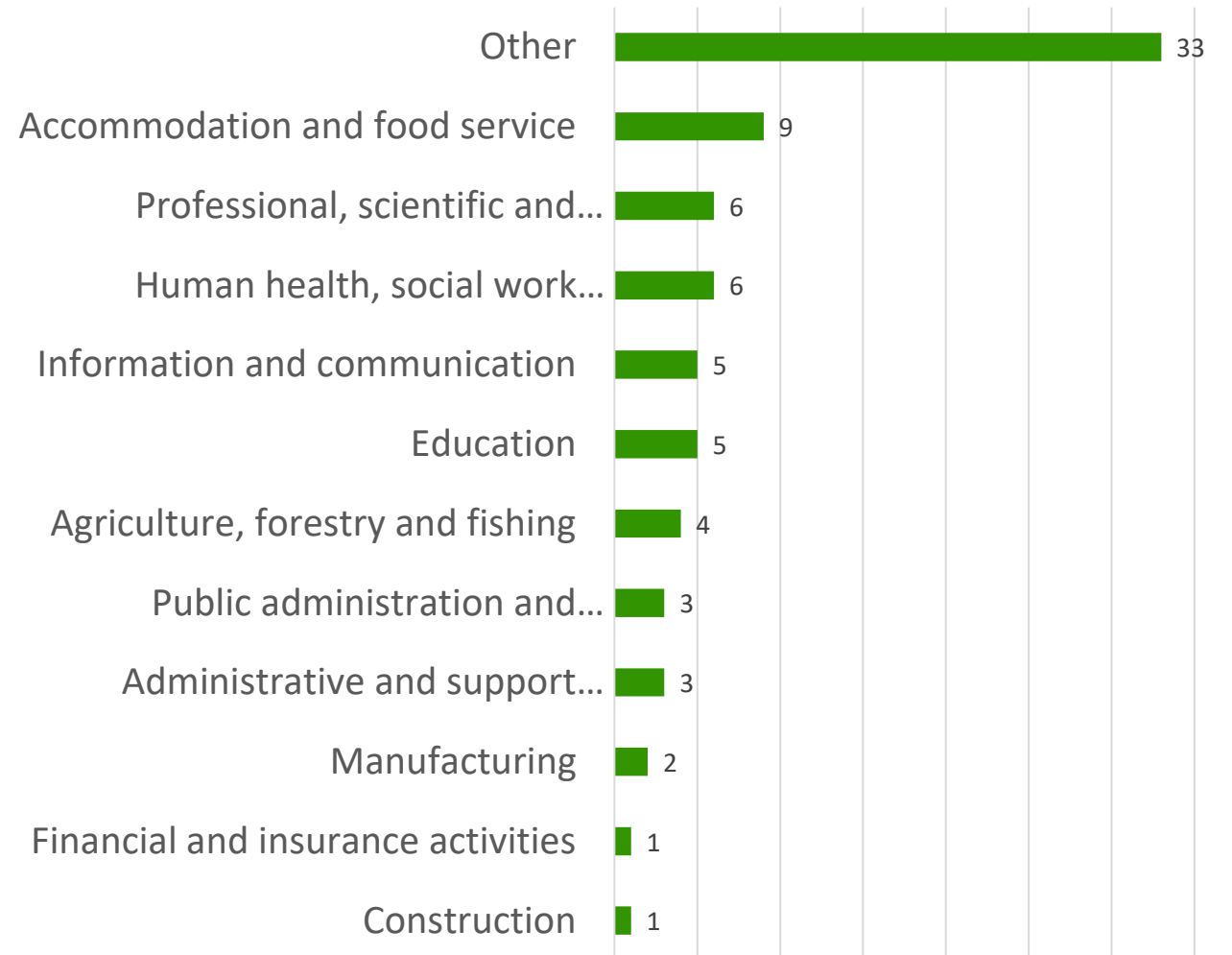


# 3.2

## Characteristics of MCs

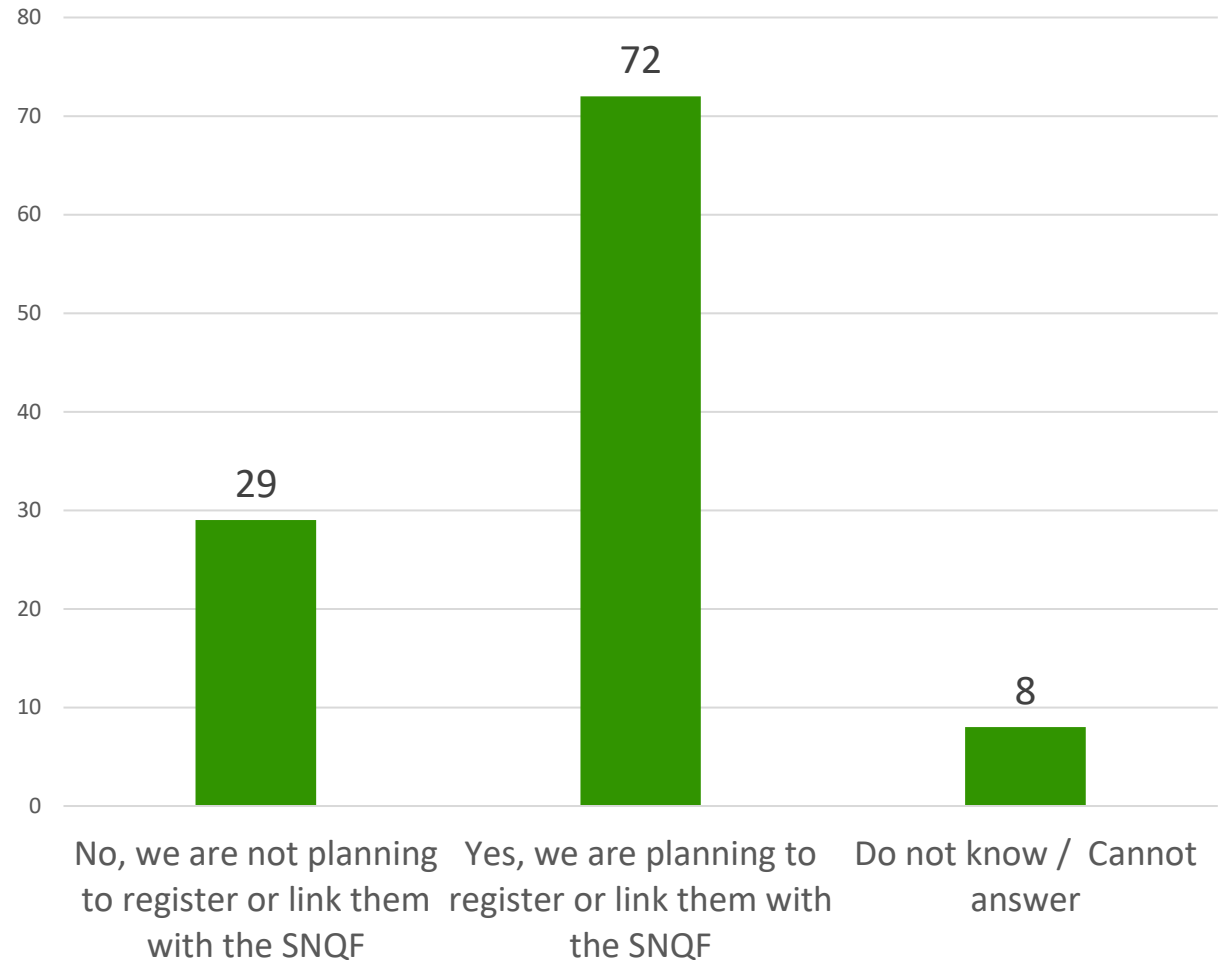
# Basic characteristics

- Mapped micro-credentials are spread across **various education and training sectors**
- Sectors such as accommodation and food services (9), professional, scientific and technical activities (6), human health and social work activities (6) and information and communication (5) are most represented
- Most have a **notional workload of 20-30 (57) or 30-50 (44) hours**. Some MCs a workload of less than 10 hours (16)
- **65% do not have a credit value** assigned to them



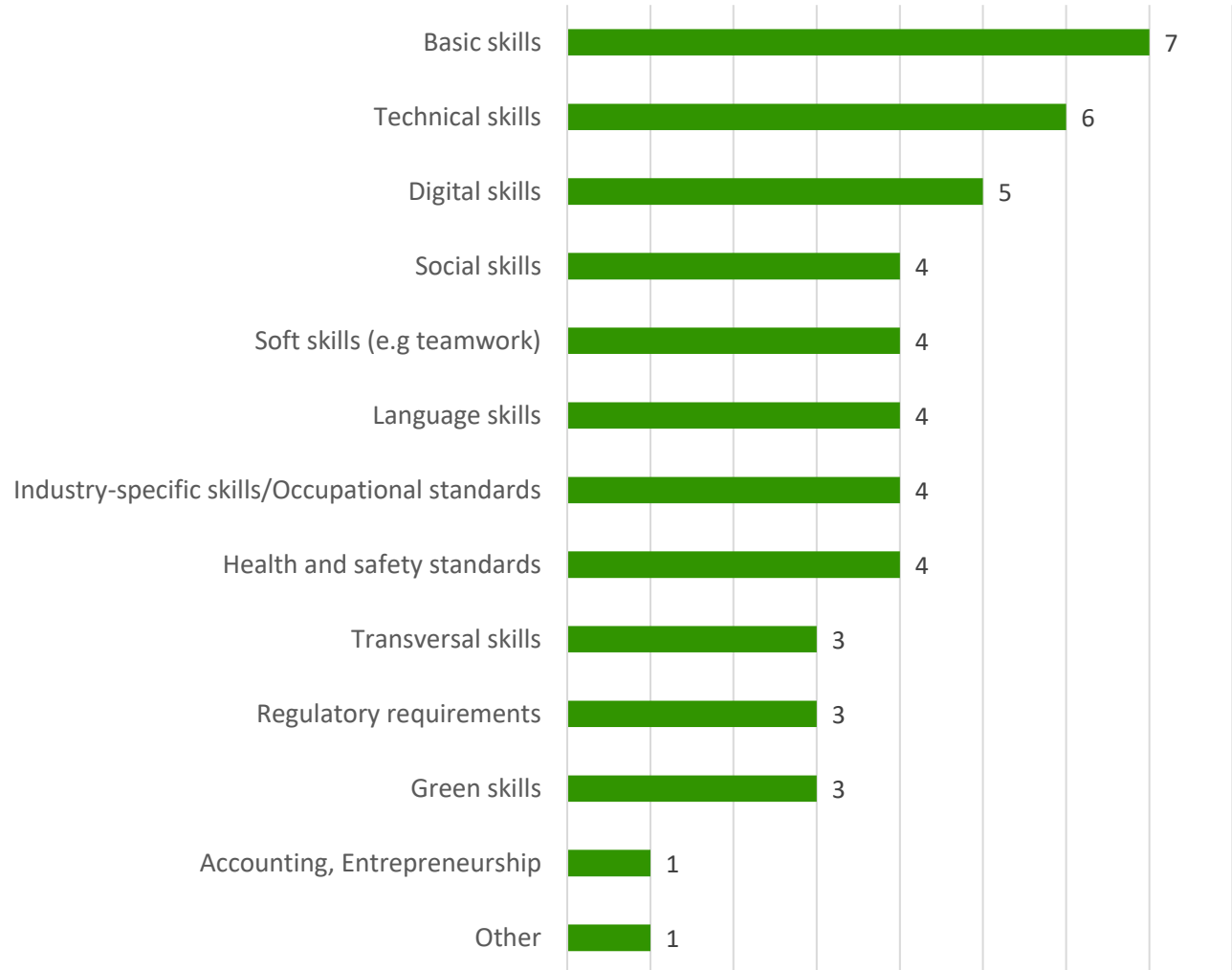
# Basic characteristics

- Many organisations **plan to register their credentials**, indicating a move towards greater formalisation and recognition of micro-credentials (66.1%)
- The significant share of **MCs mapped were not externally quality assured by a competent body** (69.9%)



# In-depth look on mapped micro-credentials

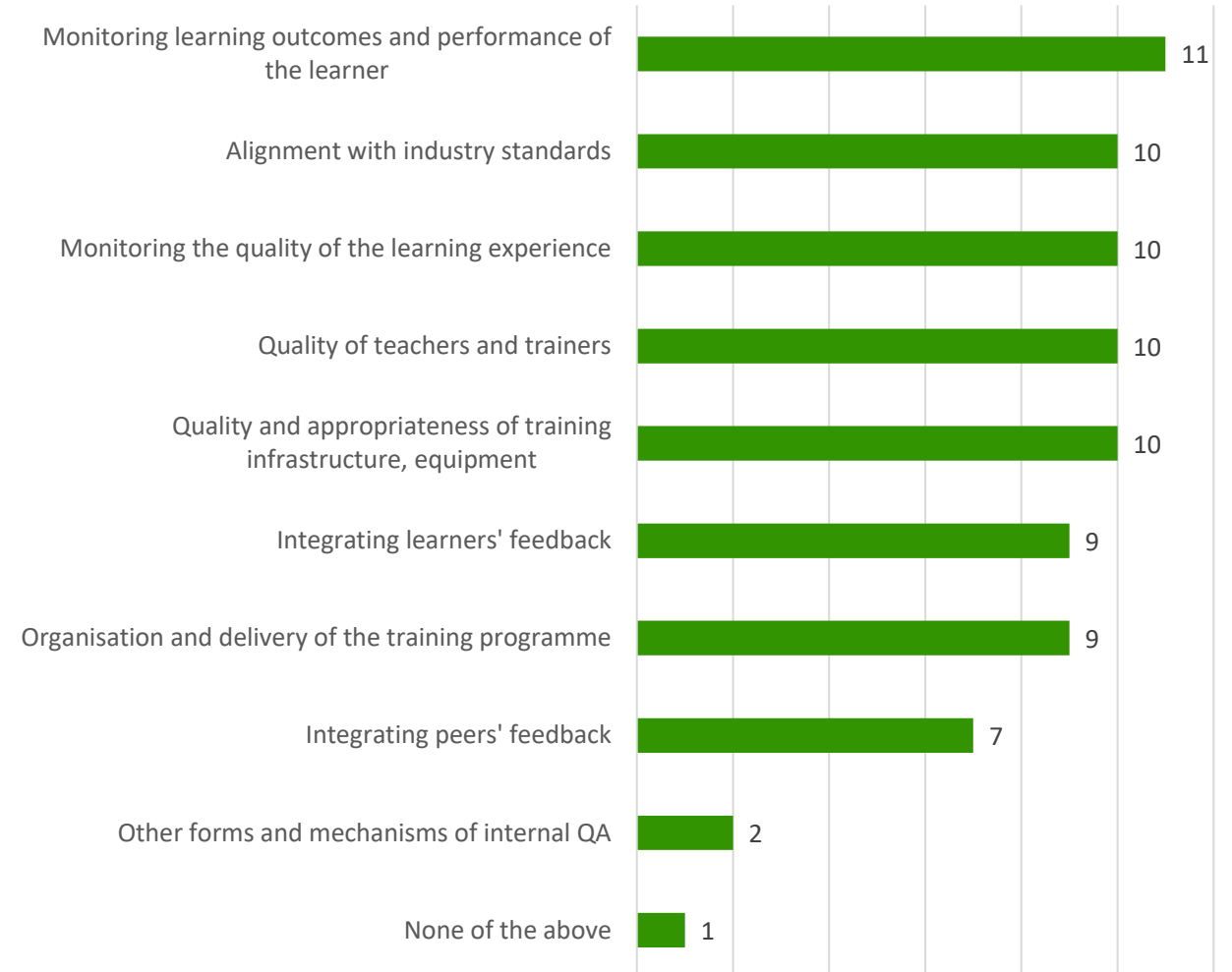
- Half of the surveyed micro-credentials (52.2% or 70) are standalone
- There is a **predominant preference for onsite, in-person learning** (90.3% or 121 credentials)
- Of the 7 organisations that responded to the survey's question on learning outcomes, the majority (6) designed the activities leading to micro-credentials based on learning outcomes



Skills and knowledge that micro-credential learning outcomes focus on (multiple choice, frequency of organisations)

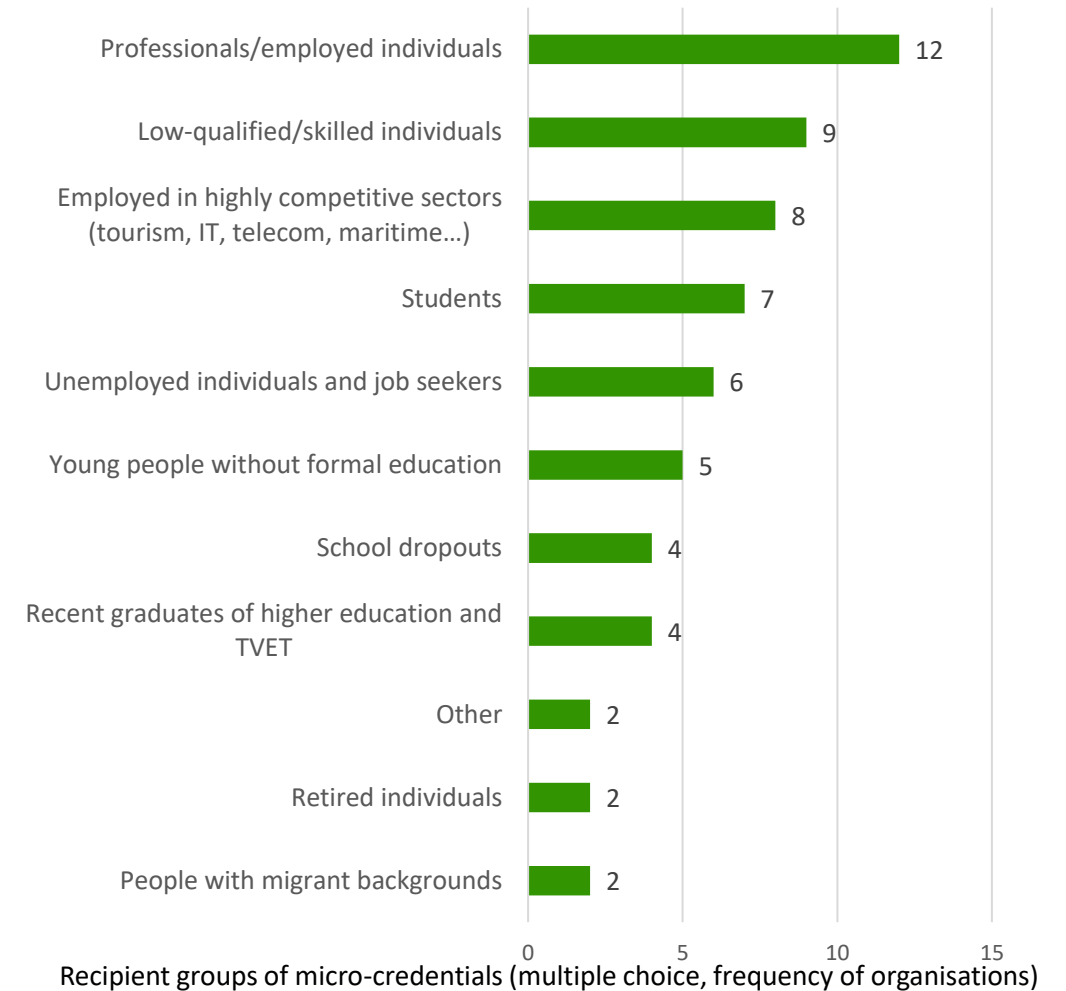
# In-depth look on mapped micro-credentials

- **Majority of micro-credentials are assessed** (either by an organisation itself or an independent assessor)
- **Most organisations indicated that they have implemented internal quality assurance mechanisms** for their micro-credentials (12 organisations or 85.7% of the organisations that responded)



# Recipients

- **Professionals/employed individuals** are the most frequent group awarded with micro-credentials (reported by 12 or 80% of the providers). There is also a strong focus on upskilling and reskilling, with **low-qualified/skilled individuals being another frequently targeted group** (selected by 9 organisations)
- In terms of different age cohorts, the highest concentration of micro-credential recipients is found in the **18-45 age range**, with the three different age categories within this interval selected by three-quarters of the providers (11 or 73.3%)
- Micro-credentials are being awarded across a **broad spectrum of educational attainment**, from those with no formal education to individuals with tertiary degrees

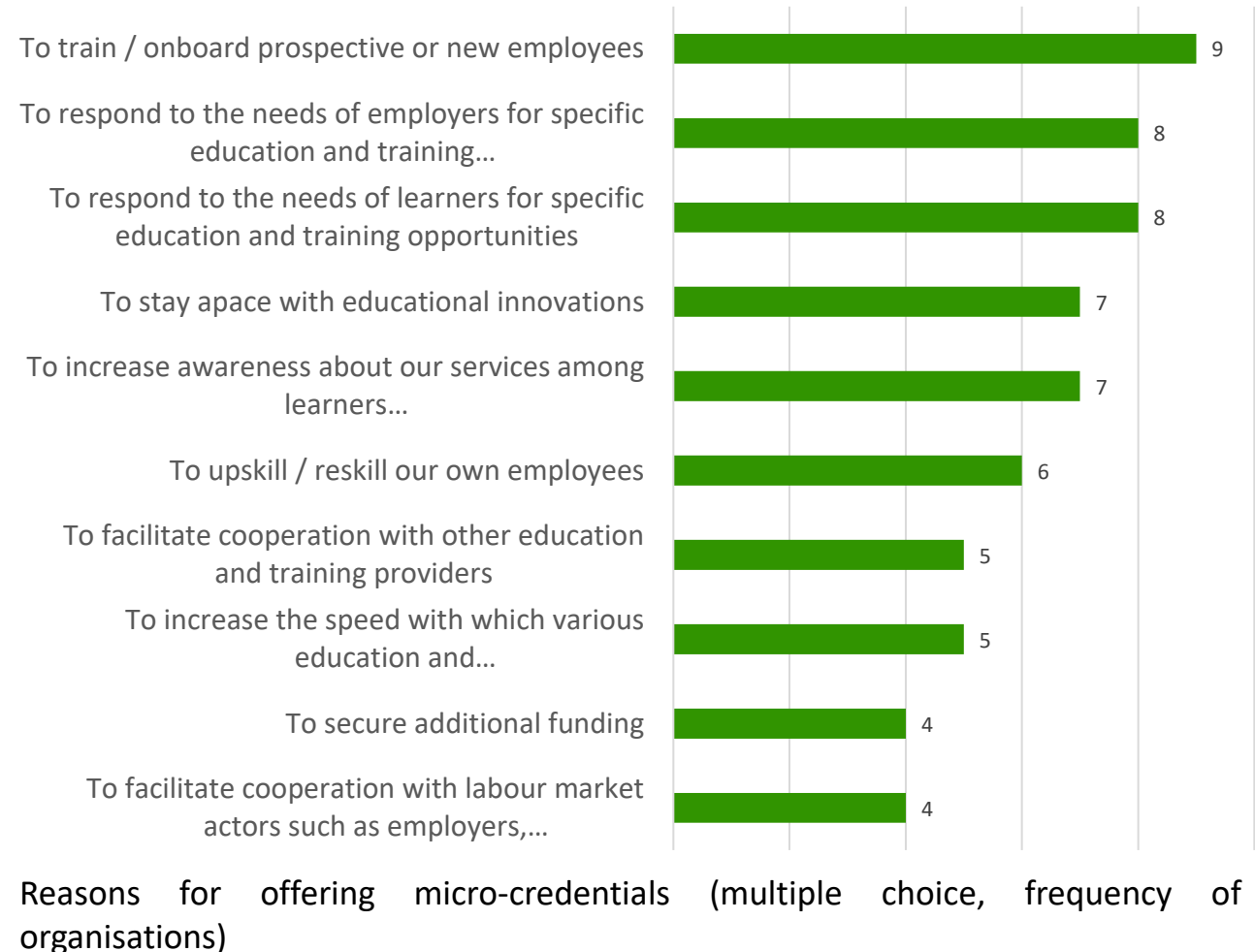


# 3.3

## Stakeholder perceptions

# Main benefits and reasons for providing micro-credentials

- According to the providers, main benefit is that micro-credentials are **accessible** to diverse learning groups (12 or 80% of the providers surveyed). **Flexibility** and **responsiveness** to labour market needs are the other main perceived benefits by providers
- The main reasons for offering micro-credentials revolve around their **utility in workforce development and their adaptability to specific training needs**, while also playing a role in innovation and organisational branding





# Challenges and barriers

- **Lack of integration of micro-credentials into the national qualifications framework, lack of legislation regulating micro-credentials and the lack of strategic policies** are the most frequently mentioned challenges
- An overwhelming majority of the organisations (12 or 80%) cite the **lack of recognition of micro-credentials as the top barrier to the uptake of micro-credentials**



# Future directions

- **Inclusion in the national qualifications framework**, highlighting the importance of aligning micro-credentials with recognised educational standards (mentioned by 9 or 60% of the providers), **public awareness campaigns and success stories of individuals and organisations** were selected as the main methods for the promotion of the development of micro-credentials
- All those responding (10 organisations) indicated that the **SNQF should be opened up to micro-credentials** either to a large or to a very large extent
- Identifying the various needs (73.3%), assessing their impact on upskilling and reskilling (66.7%) and co-delivering and co-developing micro-credentials also rank highly as critical objectives for providers

04

Break

# 05

## Micro-credentials policy scenarios

# The policy framework for micro-credentials in Seychelles

- The national policy framework and guidelines for micro-credential providers
- Establishing requirements for micro-credentials in Seychelles
- **The main objectives of the framework are to:**
  - Recognise quality short credentials
  - Encourage the uptake of micro-credentials
  - Facilitate the use of micro-credentials for upskilling and reskilling
  - Promote a more integrated approach to education and training

# Purposes of micro-credentials in Seychelles

**Micro-credentials framework will not substitute but supplement national policies in two areas:**

- Education and training policies:
  - promoting a more integrated inclusive approach to education and training
  - increasing the relevance and flexibility of education and training programmes
  - enhancing skills development
- Employment and labour market policies:
  - addressing skills mismatches and skills in demand
  - promoting lifelong learning
  - enhancing employability

# The policy framework for micro-credentials in Seychelles

- **The framework will establish the requirements for micro-credentials by:**
  - Setting a national definition for micro-credentials
  - Agreeing on the principles of good quality micro-credentials
  - Establishing critical elements to describe micro-credentials
  - Outlining a minimum criteria for the inclusion of micro-credentials in the SNQF
  - Facilitating the use of micro-credentials for credit accumulation and transfer and recognition of prior learning
  - ...?

# Definition of micro-credentials

*“micro-credential” means a record of **focused** learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do, and includes **assessment based on clearly defined criteria**, and is awarded by an **accredited or recognised provider***

- Definition will be supplemented by standard information element to describe micro-credentials (e.g. link to elements describing qualifications and part qualifications)
- Micro-credentials can be:
  - standalone or part of a programme
  - based on unit standards or courses
  - based on other learning outcomes



# Standard information elements for micro-credentials

- Recommended elements to describe micro-credentials (by the ACQF Handbook):
  - Title of the micro-credential
  - Awarding body
  - Learning outcomes
  - Workload and duration (hours and/or credits)
  - Assessment methods and criteria
  - Quality assurance
  - Level in the NQF (if applicable)
  - Mode of delivery
- Other elements can be included (e.g. prerequisites or entry requirements, integration and stackability options, supervision, learning opportunities and pathways, etc)

# Inclusion of micro-credentials in the SNQF

- It is **not obligatory** to include all micro-credentials into the SNQF
- Micro-credentials can be included in the SNQF:
  - during registration of unit standards or part qualifications
  - during accreditation of programmes or courses
  - included on request by providers
- To be included in the SNQF micro-credentials will have to meet specific criteria (e.g. notional hours, learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance)
- Micro-credentials registered on the SNQF might have to include the same information elements as required for qualifications and part qualifications

# Quality assurance of micro-credentials

- Micro-credentials should be externally quality assured:
  - institutional accreditation
  - programme accreditation
  - both
- SQA can verify micro-credentials on request (if not part of accredited programme)?
- Micro-credentials need to adhere to the principles of good quality to be recognised:
  - Internal and external QA
  - Valid assessment
  - Relevance to labour market and learners
  - Transparency (standard elements for describing micro-credentials)
  - ...?

# Micro-credentials and credit accumulation and transfer and recognition of prior learning

- Micro-credentials can be:
  - Credit bearing
  - Non credit bearing
- Only credit bearing micro-credentials can be included in the SNQF
- Formal learning providers can recognise non-credit bearing micro-credentials:
  - SNCATS procedure
  - RPL

# 06

## Guided discussion of policy-scenarios

## Group 1: Definition and elements to describe micro-credentials

*“micro-credential” means a record of focused learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do, and includes assessment based on clearly defined criteria, and is awarded by an accredited or recognised provider*

- Does the proposed definition meet your needs? Do we need to add other elements to the definition?
- What elements should be mandatory to describe micro-credentials?
- What elements should be optional to describe micro-credentials?

## Group 2: Inclusion of micro-credentials in the Seychelles National Qualification Framework

- What could be the criteria for inclusion of micro-credentials in the SNQF?
- How should the SNQF level of a micro-credential be defined?

## Group 3: Quality assurance and principles of quality micro-credentials

- What are the principles of good quality micro-credentials?
- How do you see the incorporation of micro-credentials into your institutional quality assurance system?

## Group 4: Micro-credentials and credit accumulation and transfer and recognition of prior learning

- What could be the criteria to evaluate micro-credentials for their recognition (e.g. for exemption from part of a programme, to grant access to a programme or qualification)?
- Could micro-credentials be awarded in the result of RPL?

07

Lunch break

# 08

**Roadmap for the development  
and implementation of the  
Seychelles MC policy**

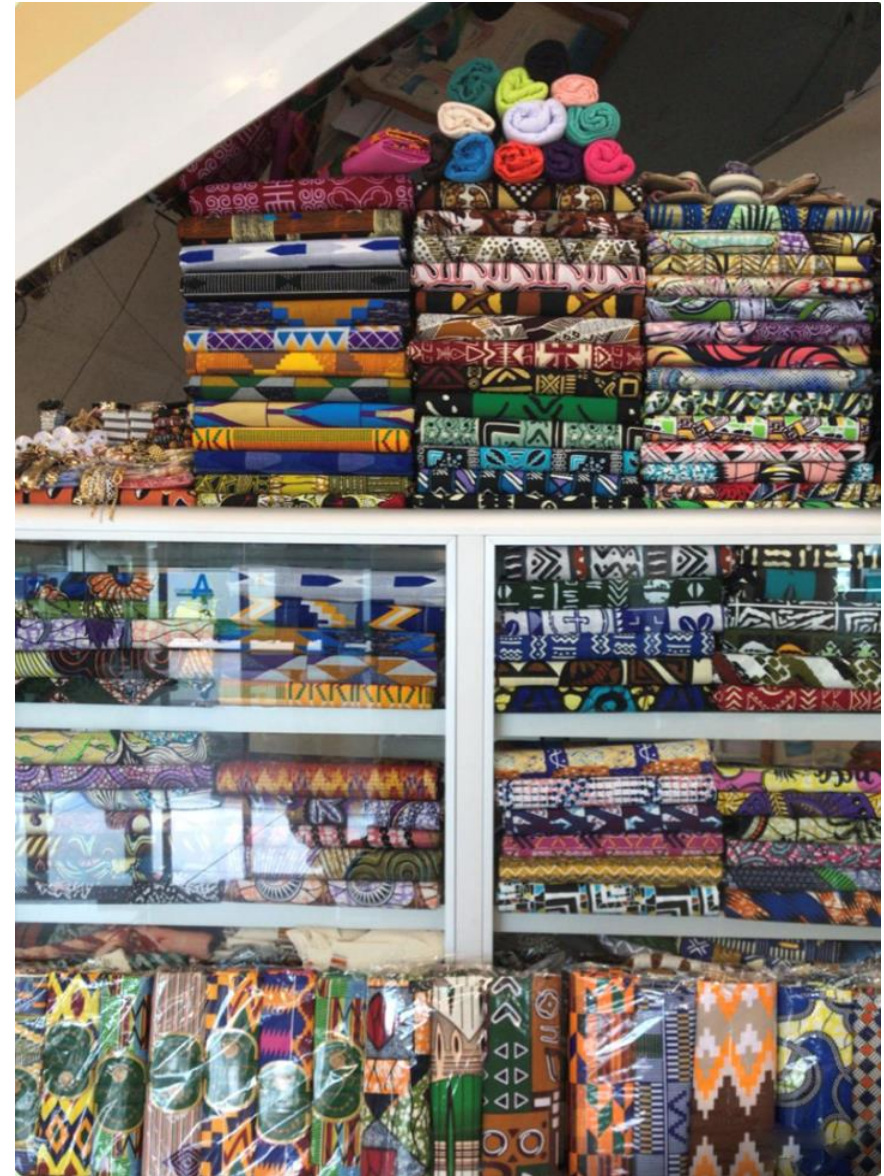


# 09

## Day 3 wrap-up

Thank you

Merci



Credit: Eduarda Castel Branco