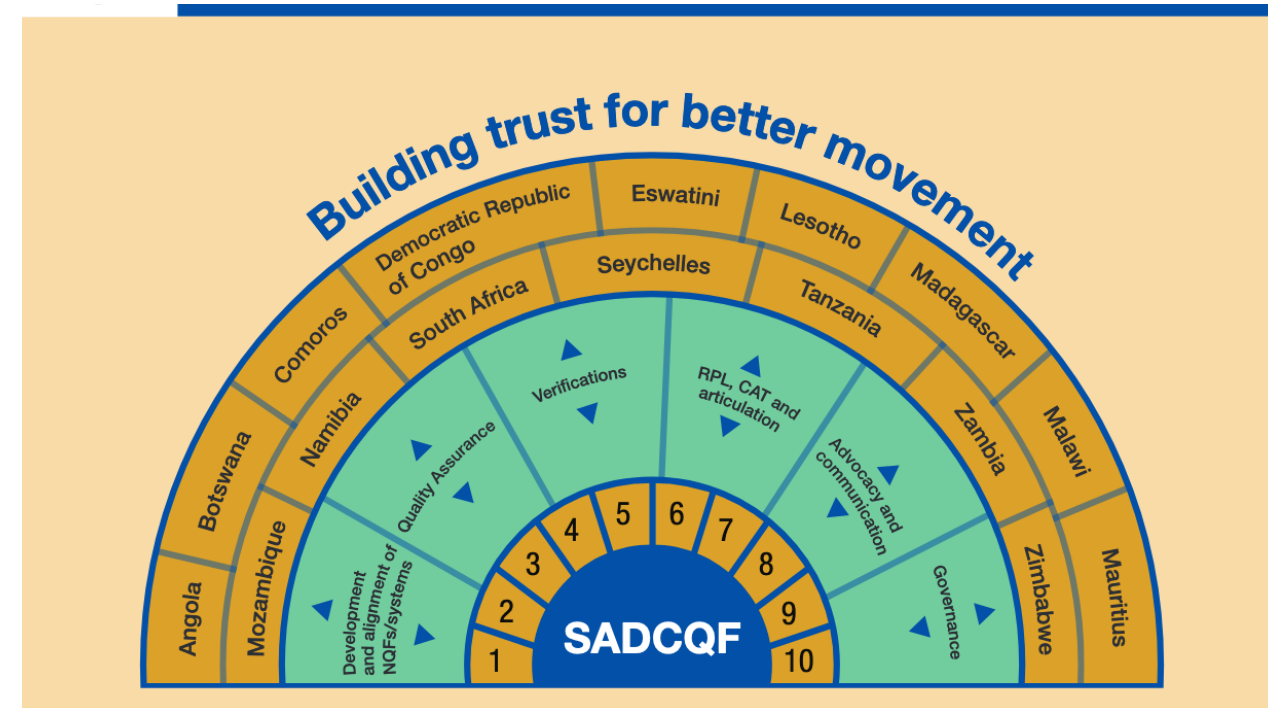# TCCA Meeting - 11-12 May 2023
Day 2

Agenda

- 7. Recapitulation key topics from day 1
- **8. Digitisation and implications for NQFs**
- 9. Level descriptors (separated PPT)
- **10. Micro-credentials**
- 11-12. Inputs for the Roadmap of SADCQF
- ACQF-II – overview of objectives and activities
- 13. Conclusions

Eduarda Castel-Branco

Session 8: Digitisation and NQFs

08

Digitisation

Processes (workflows)

Digital documentation, decision - qualifications registration

Digital platforms QA Agencies: evaluation, accreditation, recognition of foreign qualifications

Automation of qualifications registration

AI – in curriculum development

AI – in leveling

Management (data, maintenance)

Digital certifcates of evaluation of foreign qualifications

Databases, registers of qualifications

Data exchange, analysis

Interoperability
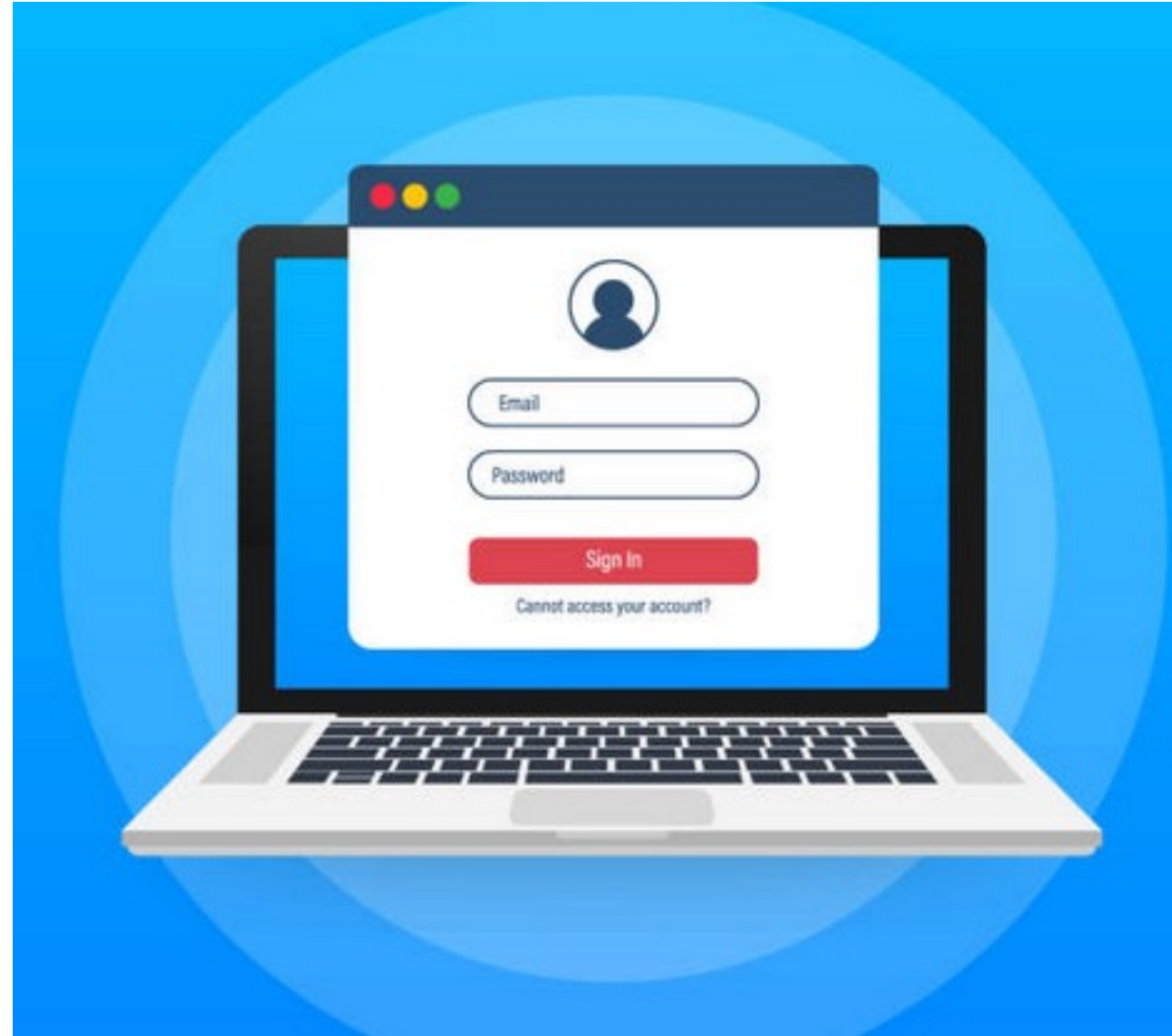
Information-sharing

Open, public platforms: information and data interactive for end-users

1. Registers of qualifications

Registers, catalogues and qualifications databases: added-value, advantages

What courses and qualifications do we have and do we need? How can I find this information?

✓ What courses and qualifications do we have in the country (region) able to satisfy the demand for labour in emerging occupations in the sectors of agriculture, IT, energy, transport, manufacturing, healthcare...?

✓ What competences do learners acquire in course A or B?

✓ How can our construction companies quickly train and upskill their workers on skills for the greener construction? Can we compare the existing courses to select the most adequate for our needs?

✓ How many new qualifications have been registered in the last year?

✓ In which fields of education?

✓ Which existing qualifications need renewal and revision)?

Role of digital databases / registers of qualifications

- Databases / registers of qualifications are important instruments for **transparency** across the panorama of qualifications of different countries.

- The **quality, completeness and accessibility** to this information is an important service for the end-users (learners, training providers, employers, and workers) and policy makers and institutions.

- Databases / registers of qualifications also offer a view on the actual status of **implementation of NQFs.**

- The population has the right to know what courses and qualifications are available and quality-assured for easier study and career choices.

RPL - Learning — everywhere, many modes and goa.

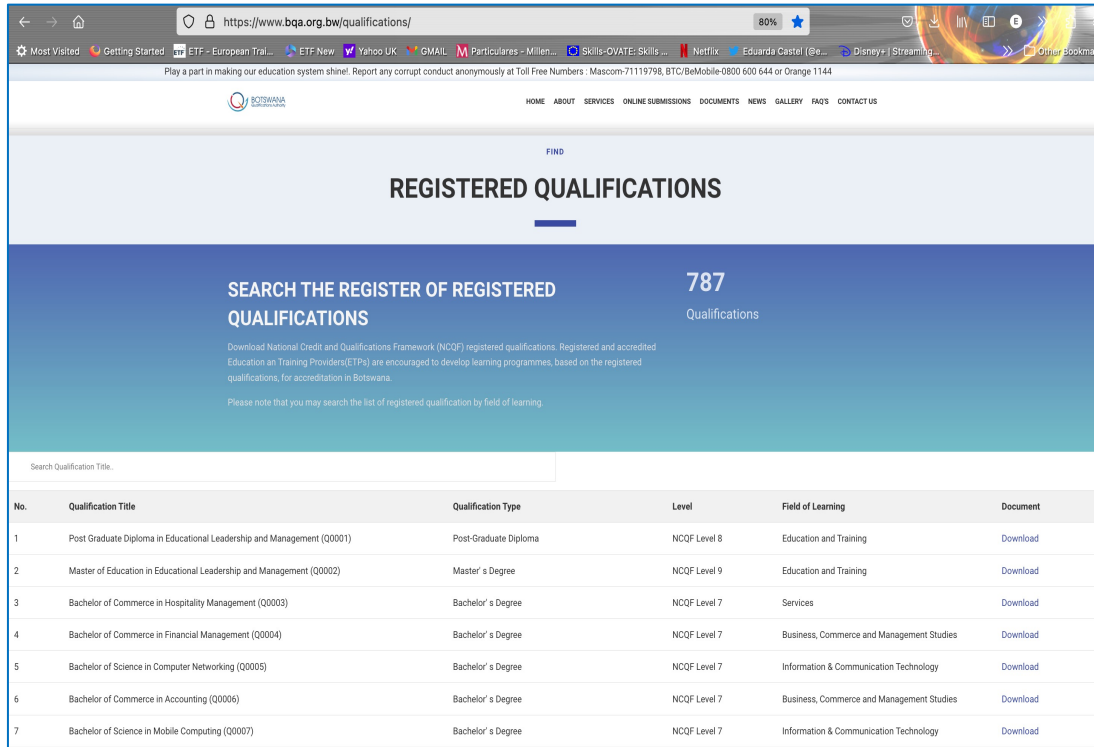# Benefits of online qualifications registers

Registration of qualifications is an important measure that enhances quality and regulation of qualifications.

It provides greater protection for the public and employers as key information required for recognition purposes is made available on the platform/database.

<u>Benefits:</u>

- Transparency of information on qualifications for different uses (comparison, career information for learners, study choices);

- Enhances quality and recognition of qualifications;

- Facilitates mobility of learners and workers from one country to another as well as across regions and continents;

- Protecting learners, employers and the public from misrepresented qualifications;

- Deepens integration and harmonisation of qualifications among states;

- Eases recognition and transfer of credits; and

- Facilitates for smooth verification and evaluation of qualifications.

Trends and developments

Botswana Qualifications Register

- In many countries globally authorities and departments managing qualifications: steps to improve and modernise the tools, technology and methods used to structure, manage and visualise information and data on qualifications.

- To improve overall transparency of qualifications - efficient sharing of information between NQFs between continents and regions is crucial.

- **Minimum qualification information fields for electronic publication in digital databases – useful for comparability of qualifications between countries in a region and data exchange.**

- **Data analysis, interoperability (between education institutions, with employment services, end users credential management).**

Results from ACQF survey on registers 1

32. State-of-play of database(s) / register(s) of qualifications in your country: please tick all that applies.

More Details

🔵 Our database includes all qualifi...	3
🟠 Our database includes only qual...	7
🟢 We have different databases of ...	4
🔴 We are developing new databas...	3
🟣 Information from the qualificati...	3
🟤 The qualifications database(s) is ...	2
🩷 I don't know	0
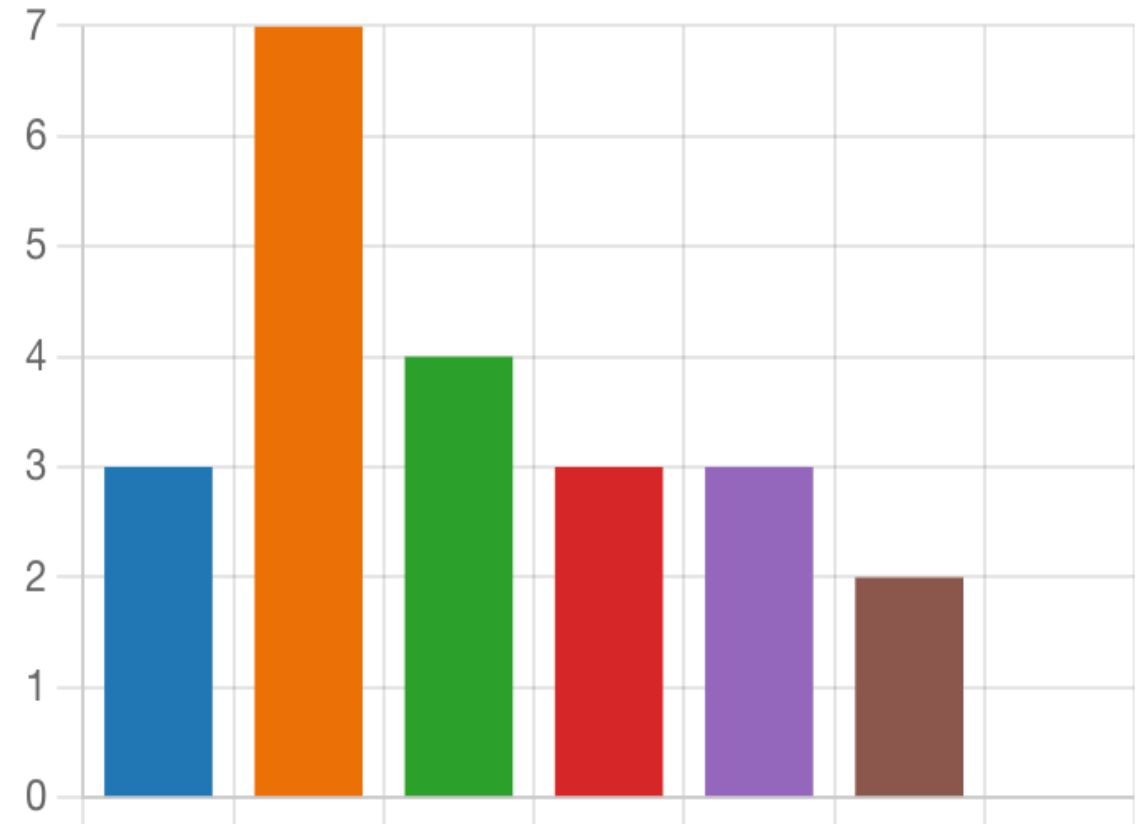
Results from ACQF survey on registers 2

33. What elements of data fields for electronic publication of qualifications does the database consist of. Please tick all that applies.

More Details

	Element	Count
🔵	Title of qualification	9
🟠	Unique identifier code / number	8
🟢	NQF level	7
🔴	Learning outcomes	7
🟣	Sector / classification	7
🟤	Expiry date	8
🩷	Information on quality assurance	5
⚪	Other elements	2
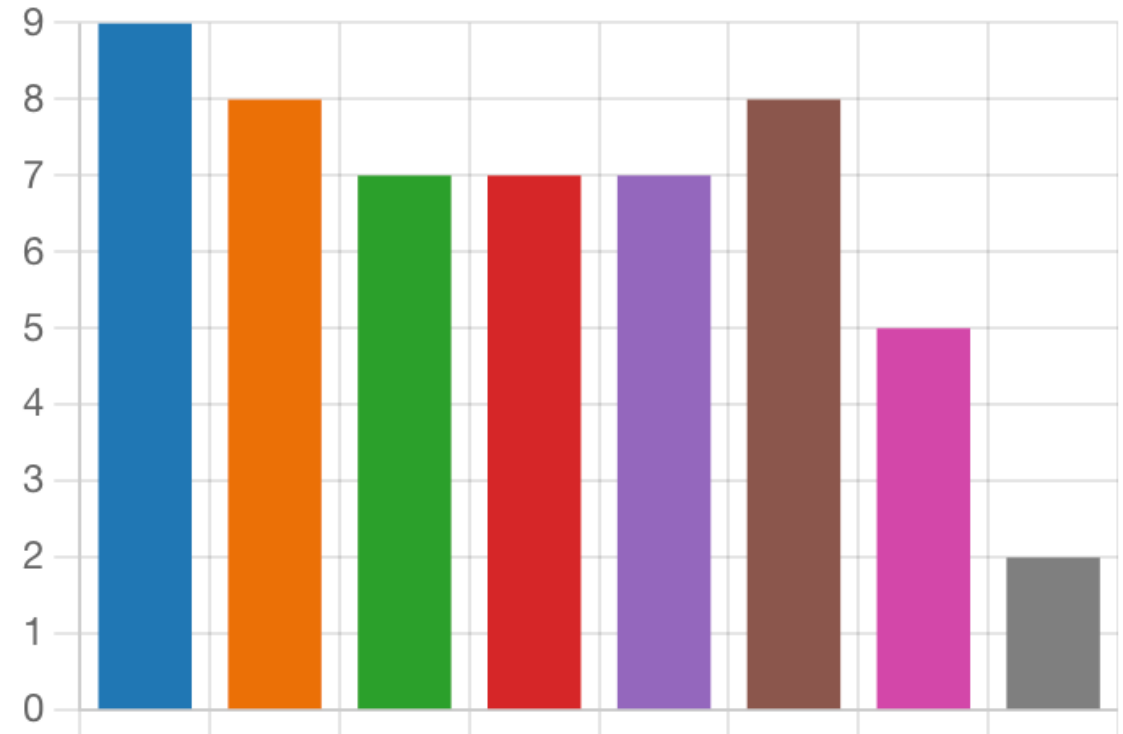
What is the National Qualifications Catalogue? Ex.: Cabo Verde

- Dynamic instrument for strategic management of qualifications, which are essential for the competitiveness and modernisation of the economy, and for personal and social development of individuals.

- Integrates learning outcomes-based qualifications, which can be acquired via RPL. NQF level. (*Ordinance 09/2020 on the CNQ*)

Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações

- **From country to country there is variation of the features of qualifications registers on:**
  - ➢ Procedures to place qualifications and credentials in registers
  - ➢ Data and content, format of main documents
  - ➢ Functions
  - ➢ Digital features, access

New Zealand Qualifications Framework register

- New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) register, formerly known as the Sector Qualifications Register (SQR): designed to be the **single, authoritative register of data for qualifications** (including awards), programmes and components of programmes.

- The Development of the NZQF register is a key component of the **Education Sector Digital Strategy programme of work, and of NZQA's Future State Portfolio**. NZQA worked closely with both the Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Education to build the NZQF Register and consider conditions for access, use, and management of this core education data.

Benefits

- **Unified data system** Removed the need to store qualification and programme information in separate systems across various education agencies

- **Interaction, streamlining process:** Provide tertiary education organisations and NZQA the opportunity to interact online during the quality assurance process, modernising the way qualifications are approved and updated, and streamlining the process

- **Enable the real-time** publication of information relating to approved qualifications

- Provide an **adaptable, robust, reliable, cost-effective information system**, which is easier to implement and maintain.

https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/

Qualifications databases - online: examples

Portugal

Netherlands

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

https://database.nlqf.nl/

Qualifications databases – online: examples

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

https://www.nok.si/en/sqf-register

Learning opportunities and qualifications – Europass (at EU level)

- "**European Learning Model**": multilingual data model providing a single vocabulary for the description of learning in Europe. Single model at European level promotes data exchange and free movement of workers and learners through comparability, portability and transparency of data. https://europa.eu/europass/en/node/2128

  Application Profiles

  - Visualisation and definition of concepts

  - Learning Opportunities and Qualifications (LOQ)

  - Accreditation (AMS)

  - Person Identity (PID)

  - European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC)

  The European Learning Model is an extension of the **W3C Verifiable Credentials data model** expressed as JSON-LD (formerly XML/XSD), for the purposes of providing a standardised format to describe learning within the European Union and European Economic Area. For further technical information, you can visit Github, the Publication Office, and Interoperability pages.

- **Learning opportunities and qualifications**: 21 countries have linked their qualifications databases to EU QDR – and information is visualised at "Find a course" on Europass (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey.)

- For **data consistency and interoperability** required: agreed accepted **taxonomies / classifications; agreed metadata.**

Credential Engine (USA)

Making Opportunitie

Credential Engine is a non-profit on
consistent information and fuel the
find the best pathways.

About Credential Engine ⌄   **News & Events ⌄**   🔍

Credential Transparency ⌄   Credential Engine Partners ⌄   Develop Solutions ⌄   Publish Credentials ⌄   Resources ⌄

WHAT WE DO

🔍 **Credential Transparency**
We are on a mission to level the credential landscape. Learn about why this work matters.

🔗 **Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL)**
The standard for making credentials and competencies and their relationships to learning and work beneficial, open data.

⚲ **Credential Registry**
Our registry hosts detailed information about credentials and fuels tools and services.

HOW WE DO IT

🏛 **Policy & Advocacy**
We work with policy makers and leaders to advance credential transparency through legislation of all types and at all levels.

🖐 **Support for Products**
We work with different product and service providers to align technologies and build capabilities to advance the mission and value of credential transparency.

✔ **Tailored Services**
A wide range of services that meet the needs of organizations managing credential and competency data

🤝 **Strategic Partnerships**
We don't do anything alone. Instead, we take a collaborative approach to our work.

CREDENTIAL ENGINE IN ACTION

Credential Publisher ↗
Credential Finder ↗
Infographic and Video

1.076 MILLION
Credentials in the U.S.

$2.13 TRILLION
Spent in education and training

59.69 THOUSAND
Credential providers across the U.S.

Learn more about Credential Engine and Illuminate Paths to a better future.

Credential Engine (CTDL)

Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL)

- Discovering and understanding credentials, competencies, and learning and career pathways is difficult. To fix this problem: created the CTDL schema, a common language for any organization to use with their information systems to empower learners, workers, educators, employers, and policymakers.

- CTDL is the family of de facto standards for making descriptions of credentials and other resources available as data for search and cross-system interoperability.

- A large dictionary of terms that is at users' fingertips for creating descriptions where you can use all of the terms or only those terms that meet your needs.

- The power of the CTDL comes from every term having semantic meaning and from using a model based on specifications for the semantic web. This means that the CTDL is designed to include terms for **linking data**.

- CTDL linked data structure enables telling complete stories to answer questions such as how much a credential cost, how long to earn it, requirements to enrol, courses that are required, transfer value, preparation for other credentials, jobs it prepares people for, pathway options, outcomes, and more.

https://credentialengine.org/credential-transparency/ctdl/

Sum-up: varying range of functions / tools in the examples

Accessible, systematised public publication of information on qualifications – more or less detail **(Botswana, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Mauritius, Portugal...)**

Benchmarking, comparison of qualifications: nationally, international **(Slovenia)**
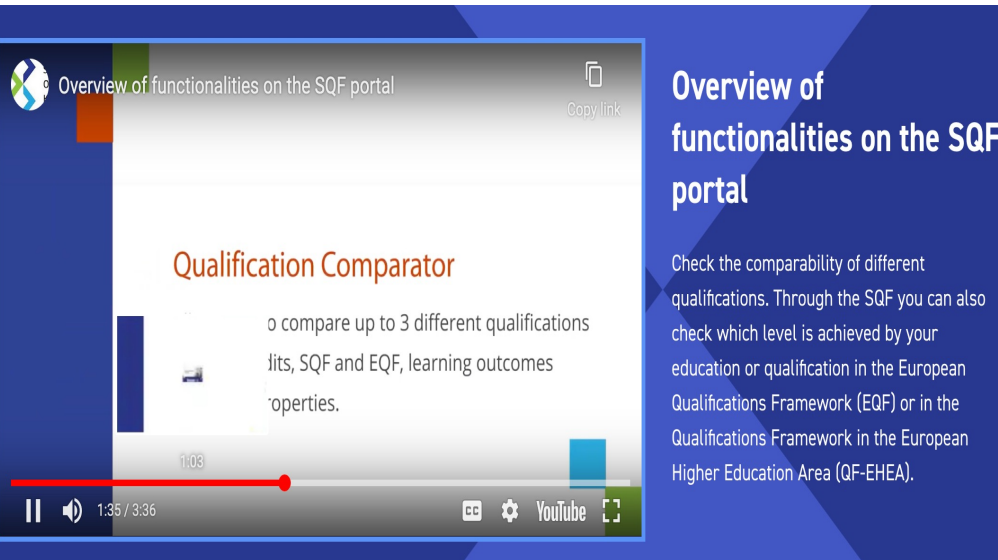
Career orientation and progression – horizontal and vertical **(Slovenia)**

Understanding national qualifications framework / system **(NZQR, BQA Register, Portugal, Ireland)**

Education Future (NZQR)

International cooperation, especially recognition of foreign qualifications **(Ireland...)**

Data analysis (SAQA, US Credential Engine)

[Video on Slovenia Qualifications register](https://youtu.be/Xjt1a0mYhjc)
https://youtu.be/Xjt1a0mYhjc

Data fields for electronic publication of qualifications (*ACQF policy document*)

Common / mandatory:

- Title of qualification

- Field of education and training (according to ISCED-2013, fields of education and training – ISCED-F 2013)

- Country code

- NQF level – ACQF level

- Awarding body or competent authority

- Description of the qualification: short statements on the learning outcomes – what the learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do

- Credit points/notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (if available)

- Expiry date (if available)

- Link to qualifications database (if available)

Optional:

- External quality assurance/regulatory body

- Ways to acquire the qualification

- Relationship to occupations or occupational classification.

ISCED-F 2013, at: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-en.pdf

Qualifications registers

- Clarity and transparency

- Systematisation

- Digital

- Online

- Interoperability

- Data exchange

- Services for all users: guidance, transparency, comparison, verification
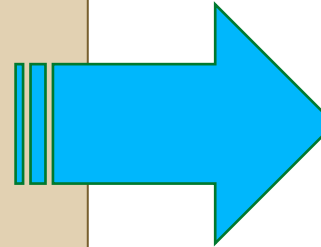
Worth the investment

Poll

1. **Are you satisfied with the status of your country's register of qualifications?**
   - Yes, fully meets our needs
   - We plan to enhance its performance, functions, data exchange
   - We do not have a register of qualifications yet
   - We have several separated manual registers, not digitalised / not accessible online
   - We plan to start soon a unified digital register

2. **What types of qualifications, certificates, credentials can be inclued in the register?**
   - All types and levels
   - Full qualifications only
   - Only national qualifications
   - All qualifications in the register are based on learning outcomes

3. **How many qualifications are included in the NQF register?**
   - 50-100
   - 100-500
   - 500-1000
   - Above 1000

AI – in education and qualifications domain

AI is integral part of life

- **Built from data, algorithms, hardware, and connectivity – AI enables machines to imitate human intelligence, like perception, problem solving, language interaction and creativity.**

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a ubiquitous concept and tool already found across society and an integral part of everyday life, enabling many valuable services and functions.

- Therefore, basic understanding and knowledge of AI should be a critical component of student education to foster successful global citizens.\

- UNESCO on AI in education: https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence.
  - New: AI and Education – Guidance for Policy Makers. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000376709
  - Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence was adopted by acclamation by 193 Member States at UNESCO's GC in 11/2021. The main idea: "Human-centred AI"

AI and qualifications

Uses, scope

- AI literacy: AI across curriculum
- AI and coding schools for youth
- Linking LO of qualifications with classifications of occupations and skills (ESCO)
- Comparison: courses / qualifications with LM needs (Big Data analysis)
- Evaluating qualifications – for NQF levelling (Poland)
- AI and education policy

Poll:

1. When was the term "AI" first used?
   a. In the 50s
   b. In the 60s
   c. In the 90s
2. What is the position and policy of your country in respect to AI in the domain of education?
3. Name 1 example / practice related with AI in the domain of education, qualifications, credentials in your country? In SADC?
4. What benefits do you expect from AI in education / qualifications?
5. What challenges and risks do you anticipate?

Digital credentials
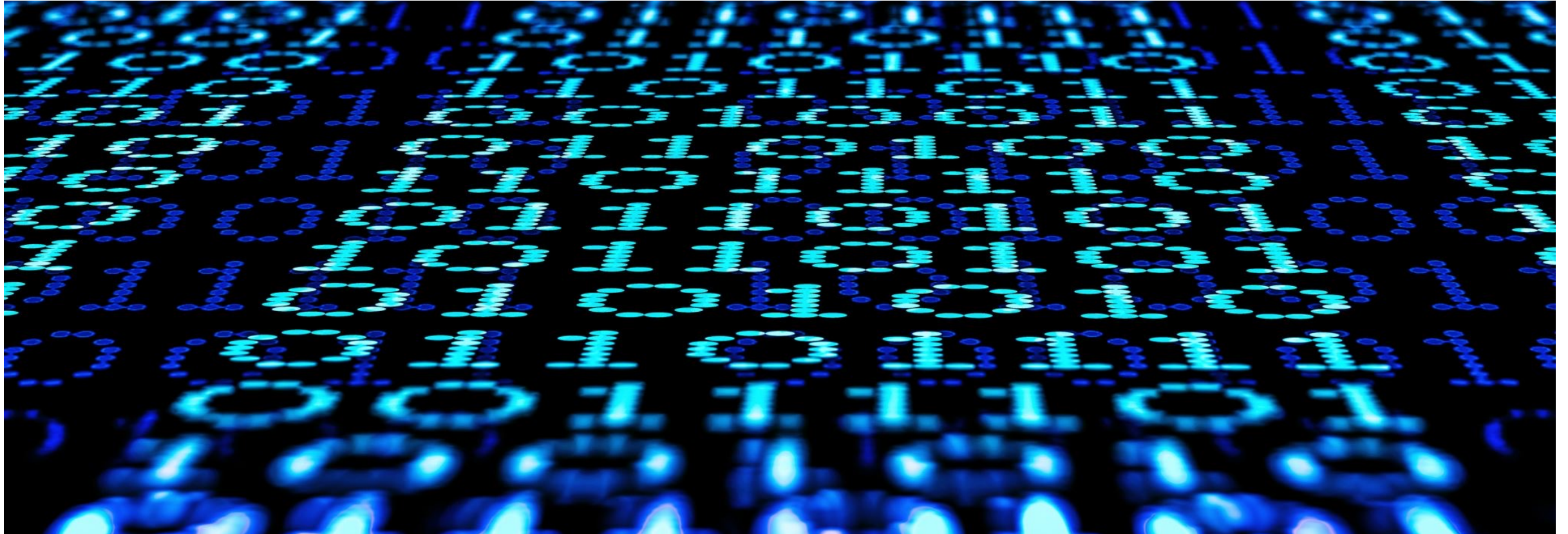
Digital credentials

Wider scope: community of countries - EU

EDCL: European Digital Credentials for learning are **statements issued by an organisation to a learner, documenting their learning:**

- qualifications (e.g. professional certificates, university diplomas and other learning achievements),
- activities (e.g. participation in classes and non-formal learning events),
- assessments (e.g. transcripts of records), and
- entitlements (e.g. right to enrol in learning opportunities, or to undertake an occupation.

The built-in instant and automatic authentication and verification checks support recognition and help reduce administrative burdens by immediately showing if a credential has been tampered with or whether it was issued by an unauthorised organisation. European Digital Credentials for learning have the same legal validity as paper-based credentials and are recognised throughout the European Education Area.

National scope:

- SAQA issues Digital Certificates of Evaluation of foreign qualifications.
- Zambia: ZAQA QMIS and E-certificate
- Other countries: Cabo Verde issues digital certificates for recognition of foreign qualifications

What is a European Digital Credential for Learning?

A **digital credential** covers two areas:
- **Content** = learning outcomes, skills, description of the activities
- **Envelope** = area of identity, authentication, secure delivery policies
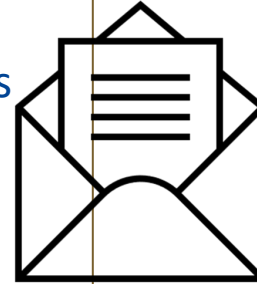
A **European Digital Credential for Learning:**
- Is a claim related to the learning achievement of a person. It creates the link between an individual, an awarding body, and a learning achievement.
- Consists of **data** that is structured in accordance with a data model (the **European Learning Model - ELM**).
- **Tamper-proof** and secure (they respect data privacy). Comply with the **international standards** of "verifiable credentials" and are **GDPR compliant (data protection and privacy).**
- Require an e-seal (= digital signature with legal value in line with the EU e-IDAS regulation).

- **Digital qualifications** (in HE and TVET) issued (or in preparation) by several countries using the EDC infrastructure

- Credential **recognition** – DigiNet, SEA-EU, ECCOE projects

- Malta issuing 2000+ **transcripts of records** in early 2022

- ESN, European Commission, SEPIE issue **non-formal** training certificates

- European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) **building own solution**

- Vendors (e.g. Moodle, Hyland, Digitary) developing own **interoperable credentialing products**

ZAQA E-Certificate

Source: PPT by CEO ZAQA at ACQF Training Week, 09/2022

Features and Benefits ZAQA E-Certificate

It has a digital seal to confirm the outcome of your ZAQA evaluation/ verification in real-time	It confirms the ZAQA feedback in real-time securely accessed from the QMIS	It can easily to shared and accessed from any smart gadget anywhere in the world	Assists to decrease real or perceived fraud, loss of certificates	ZAQA's digital certificates and seals cannot be misrepresented, they are revoked and re-issued automatically by reference to ZAQA's QMIS

Source: PPT by CEO ZAQA at ACQF Training Week, 09/2022

Session 10:

Micro-credentials. Brief overview – some global developments

Micro-credentials: elements of a definition

- 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**.
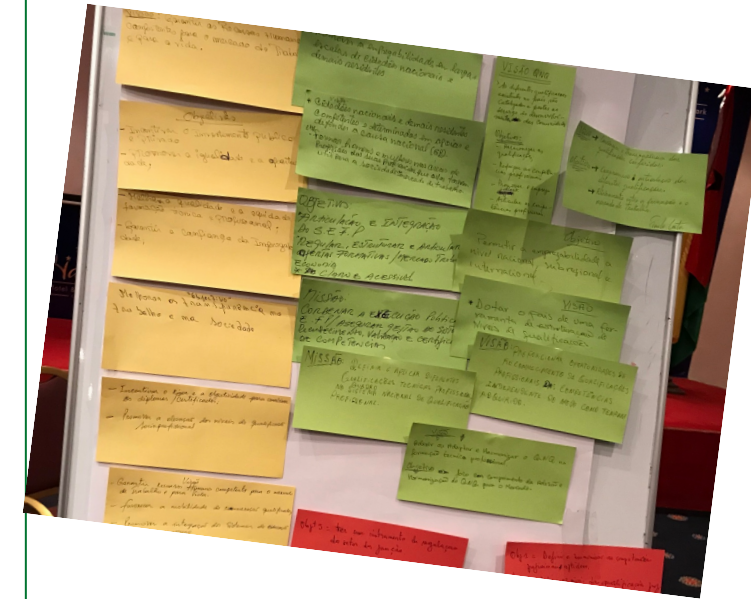
Global debate towards common definition of micro-credentials (UNESCO and partners)

- In 2019-2021 UNESCO promoted a global debate towards a common definition of micro-credentials, based on extensive expert consultation, analysis of definitions from 15 countries and literature review. The key proposals and underpinning reflection were discussed in September at an international conference (UNESCO, 2021). **The author of the report (Oliver, 2021) concludes "When it comes to micro-credentials, micro is the distinguishing feature, but to be accepted and trusted, micro-credentials must be seen to bear the quality hallmarks of credentials".**

- **Credentials** verify, validate, confirm, or corroborate a person's learning achievements, knowledge and preparedness for performing tasks. Credentials are diverse with regard to their scope, status and purpose.

- A large subset of credentials can be referred to as **macro-credentials**: generally, these include degrees, diplomas, certificates and licences, often awarded by accredited, recognised or regulated educational and other institutions or organisations. They indicate learning achievement of a broad body of knowledge, transferable skills or technical proficiency and may take a number of years to complete. While some are pursued for personal or general educational advancement, others are associated with qualifying to practice a particular profession or to follow a particular career path.

Proposed definition

Another large **subset of credentials** can be referred to as **micro-credentials**: these are typically focused on a specific set of learning outcomes in a narrow field of learning and achieved over a shorter period of time. Micro-credentials are offered by commercial entities, private providers and professional bodies, traditional education and training providers, community organisations and other types of organisations. While many micro-credentials represent the outcomes of more traditional learning experiences, others verify demonstration of achievements acquired elsewhere, such as in the workplace, through volunteering, or through personal interest learning. Micro-credentials are often promoted as an efficient way to upskill workers across the lifespan.

- **The proposed definition (Oliver, 2021) states that a micro-credential:**

1. Is a record of focused learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do;

2. Includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider;

3. Has stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning; and

4. Meets the standards required by relevant quality assurance.

Context of development of micro-credentials

The number and diversity of micro-credential offerings has expanded substantially in recent years, accelerated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A large part of all employees will need reskilling and the urgency of getting people back to work gives new momentum to "micro-credentials", which hold promises and challenges.

The common understanding on the role and potentialities of micro-credentials in the era of digital learning and economy is central to the debate. Countries, regional communities and international organisations globally are deploying initiatives to clarify the state-of-play and develop policies and measures to better contextualise micro-credentials.

Lifelong learning is essential

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.**

Potentialities of micro-credentials

Micro-credentials are one of the **big movements** in education and training.

The should be at **service of Big Ideas**, rather than being considered the Big Idea...

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)

Credential ecology: quadrants

Brown et. al., 2020

NIDL
National Institute for Digital Learning

Credit Bearing

Macro-credentials
Formal Accredited Degrees

Micro-credentials
Formal & Semi Formal Accredited & Stackable

Bundled ← Credential Ecology → **Unbundled**

Short Courses
Non-Formal & Semi-Formal Non-Stackable

Badges & Awards
Informal & Non-Formal Non-Accredited

Non Credit Bearing

DCU
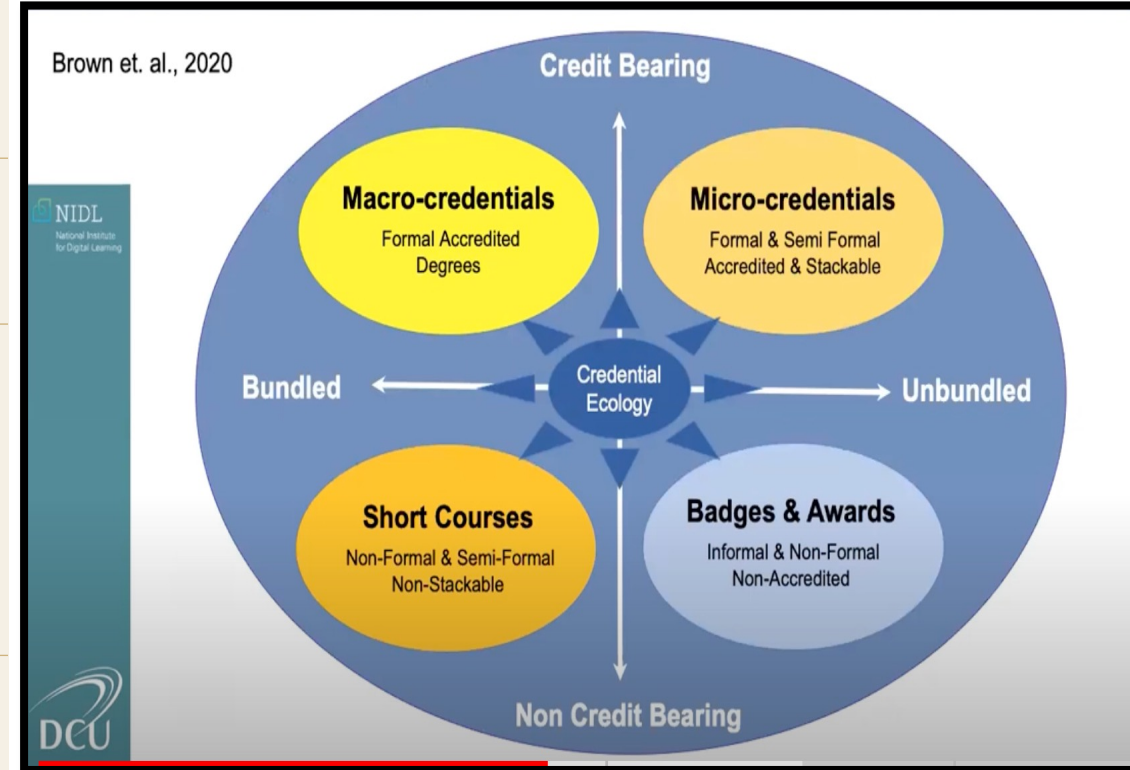
Access the video
Mike Brown, MC Observatory

Micro-credentials

Stylized version: how different micro-credential regimes aim to incorporate varying sub-sets of the **seven qualities.**

Approaches to Stackability of Micro-credentials Options for Ontario, Prepared for Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer, March 2023
https://www.oncat.ca/sites/default/files/media-files/r2246_micro-credentials_final_report_21-3-23.pdf

The Seven Qualities of Microcredentials
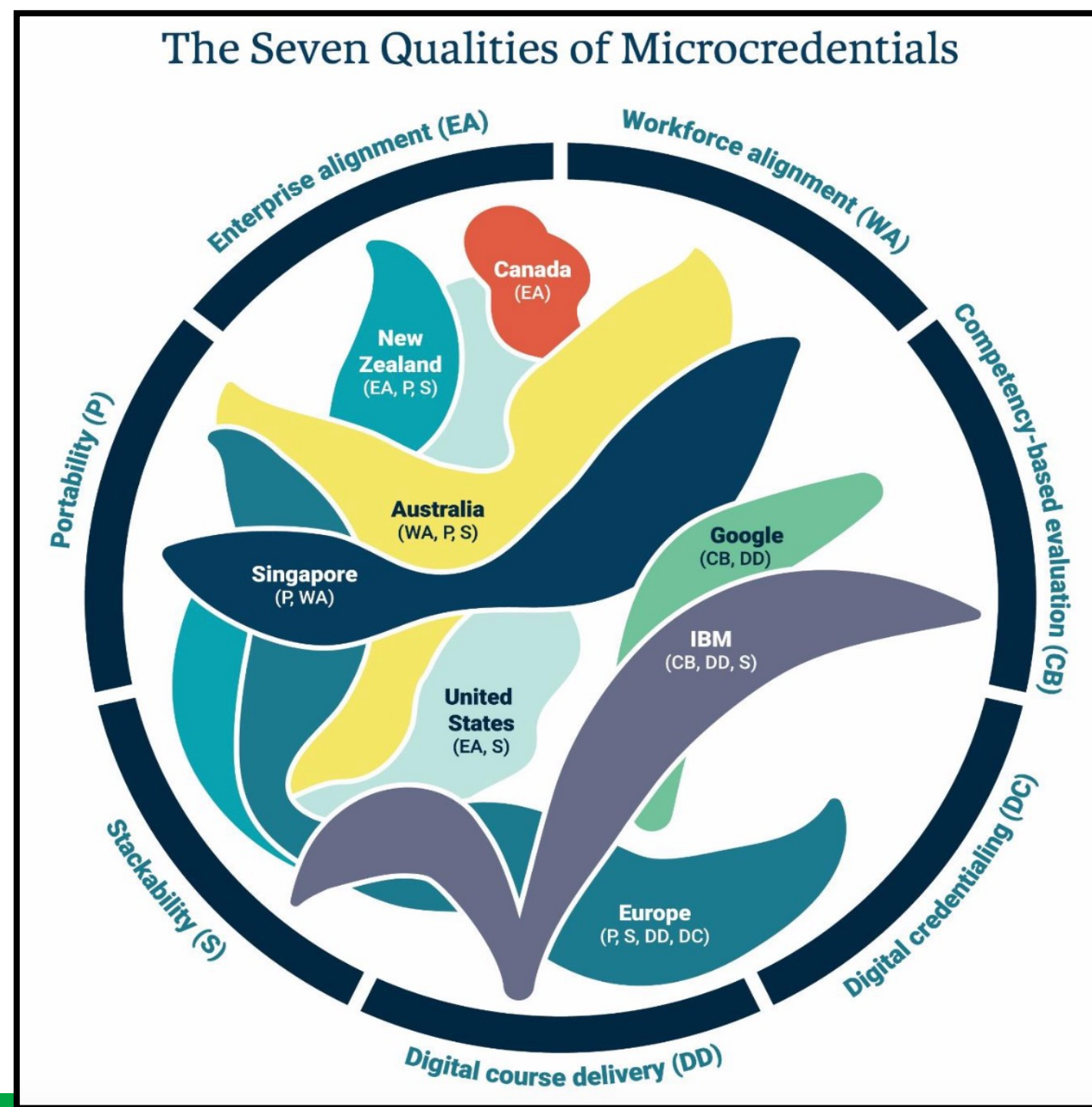
"Seven qualities" - continued

- To be clear: there is nothing suggesting that any of these other jurisdictions or micro-credential providers have the "right" mix of qualities in their systems. Every jurisdiction will design its micro-credential policies to suit local conditions. However, certain attributes of micro-credential are essentially unobtainable in the absence of certain framework policies.

- A system of portability requires that individual credentials carry both credit values and an indication of the skill level of the instruction, the latter of which in turn requires an accepted qualifications framework like those in Europe or New Zealand (…*what about Africa*?)

OECD: Micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability - study

- Micro-credentials are increasingly prominent in discussions around education, training and labour market policy.

- Policymakers, educators and trainers across the world envision micro-credentials to be an innovation with a multitude of potential uses and benefits – a sort of all-purpose solution for the problems confronting education, training and labour market systems – and some have begun to integrate them into existing practice and policy frameworks.

- However, evidence on the value and impact of micro-credentials remains scarce, limiting commitment on the part of stakeholders.

https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability_9c4b7b68-en

Contexts in which Micro-credentials are expected to play a role

- Upskilling and reskilling
- Employability
- Lifelong Learning
- More flexible, learner-centred education
- Access to and completion of education and training
- Student international mobility
- Social inclusion
- Active citizenship and well-being

OECD, 2023. Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability: Uses and Possibilities: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9c4b7b68-en.pdf?expires=1683402111&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=EC532C674B9D2AB9D69D7DB18202E488

Way forward for governments

- Micro-credentials do not deliver on their potential automatically.

- For micro-credentials to play a role in enhancing learners' employability, facilitating access to higher education, improving degree completion, and promoting social inclusion, policymakers need to make interventions to steer and support learners and providers.

1	Micro-credential initiatives need clarity about their purpose and target population if they are to be effective in achieving their goals
2	Funding support for micro-credential learners and providers should be sustainable and ensure micro-credentials remain accessible to all
3	Achieving the full potential of micro-credentials will require changes to quality assurance and academic recognition policies
4	Information provision for learners needs to go beyond the development of an online information portal to reach a wider population
5	Public policies can encourage collaborations between education and training providers and industries in micro-credential development and delivery

OECD, 2023. Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability: Uses and Possibilities: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9c4b7b68-en.pdf?expires=1683402111&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=EC532C674B9D2AB9D69D7DB18202E488

Australia National Micro-Credential framework

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.

Australia: National Micro-credentials Marketplace

- https://www.microcredseeker.edu.au/
  - **Microcred Seeker: "The new way to get ahead"**
  - Goal: Seek, explore and compare courses (tertiary education and training providers)
- Course levels – according to Dreyfus model:
  - ✓ Novice
  - ✓ Advanced beginner
  - ✓ Competent
  - ✓ Proficient
  - ✓ Expert

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

"Use micro-credentials, where appropriate, as a tool to <u>strengthen and complement</u> 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

Adopted 16/06/2022: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2802%29

Transparency - metadata

- In both Europe and Australia, the micro-credential frameworks are agnostic as to the actual purpose of micro-credentials (i.e., credential completion/stackability/portability vs. labour market alignment).

- Remarkably, both jurisdictions arrived at the same conclusion: take-up of any type of micro-credentials is reliant on their transparency. **Metadata associated with each credential – is key.**

- Both jurisdictions have made it mandatory / recommended for the issuers of micro-credentials to attach certain forms of metadata with each credential. In the EU the "required/optional" are described as "open standards". In Australia, the "critical/recommended" elements are mandatory requirements for courses to be placed in the "national marketplace" for micro-credentials.

Micro-credential metadata requirements

European Union	Australia
Required/"critical" information elements	
Title of Micro-credential	Title of Micro-credential
Name of provider	Name of provider
Country of Issue	Content/Description
Date of Issue	Date of Delivery
Learning Outcome Description	Learning Outcome Description
Workload (in ECTS)	Learner Effort (workload hours)
Level	Credit/recognition (includes level of qualification)
Type of assessment	Assessment
Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance
Form of participation in learning activity (i.e., delivery mode)	Delivery Mode
	Certification
	Prerequisite
	Language
Optional/recommended elements	
Integration/Stackability	Stackability
Prerequisites	Expiration of credential (if any)
Identity verification	Depth of learning
Grade Achieved	Jurisdiction of issue
	Industry Support
	Recommended prior knowledge/experience
	Industry/Occupation
	Industry Alignment

Micro-credential Observatory: a great source

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.

National Institute for Digital Learning

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- NIDL Activities

- NIDL Research

- Major Policy Initiatives

- National & International Reports

- Useful Reading: Articles, Books & Papers

- Events, Conferences and Webinars

- Microcredentials *Sans Frontières* Network

- Large number of articles published in 2022-2023: https://www.dcu.ie/nidl/micro-credential-observatory

Websites, resources on micro-credentials: open information

- **In NQF registers:**
  - New Zealand (NZQA): https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/micro-credentials/
    - Register of micro-credentials NZQA: https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/microcredentials.do
    - Up to 40 credits – levels 3 to 8 of NQF

  - **Portugal: National Qualifications Catalogue**: https://catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/
    - 8663 courses of short duration (75-350 hours of learning)

- **Toolkits: Ontario Micro-credentials Toolkit:** https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/microcredentialtoolkit/

Websites, resources on micro-credentials: open information (2)

- **ACQF website:** https://acqf.africa/resources/micro-credentials
- **Cedefop**: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/microcredentials-labour-market-education-and-training
- **ETF:** working on a Guideline for development and recognition of Micro-Credentials
- EU: A European Approach to Micro-Credentials: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials

- **New survey**: https://www.holoniq.com/notes/micro-credentials-survey-2023-insights?utm_campaign=Weekly%20Education%20Marketing%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=257668719&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9AW9h3XTlKkCALx1MFTX6515BlTWs4V5GeO7EdAbCUYOBGELgA3TN43nQjKY7B30_AxaBgAGsBVj7OKaftMoJ4yi8Dvw&utm_content=257668719&utm_source=hs_email

Poll

1. **Is the number and diversity of micro-credentials growing in your country / training offer?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - We do not have sufficient data
   - Perhaps

2. **Which sub-sectors / institutions offer short courses providing micro-credentials. Choose as many options as adequate.**
   - Higher education
   - TVET
   - Professional associations / bodies
   - Large companies
   - NGOs
   - Schools
   - Others

Poll (2)

3. What are the main purposes of micro-credentials in your country?

- Reskilling, upskilling
- Employability
- Articulation
- Access to higher levels of education
- Social inclusion
- Others

4. Micro-credentials and the NQF: does the legislation provide for inclusion of micro-credentials (or proxies) in the NQF / register?

- Yes
- Not
- No, but we are working on it
- I am not sure

Session 11: Roadmap

Your inputs to new roadmap 2023-2026

Please consider:

The purposes of SADCQF

Main areas of Recommendations of the Review report

Realistic perspective, context

A. ON THE PURPOSES OF SADCQF

Purposes:

1. Providing a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC.

2. Facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications in all member states.

3. Harmonising qualifications wherever possible.

4. Promoting the transfer of credits within and among member states and even beyond.

5. Creating SADC regional standards where appropriate.

Conclusions

➤ The five purposes remain relevant and valid as the SADCQF enters a second half-decade of life.

➤ **These are objectives requiring sustained and long-term commitment and balanced complementarities with other policy instruments, e.g., with mutual recognition agreements, and fair integration of labour migrants.**

➤ Further action sustained by resources and partnerships will be needed to generate the intended impacts in terms of comparability, mutual recognition, and mobility.

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REVIEW REPORT: RECOMMENDATIONS IN 8 CLUSTERS

A. **On the five purposes of SADCQF**

B. Governance and implementation model

C. Legal basis and methodological framework of SADCQF

D. NQF development and **alignment**

E. **New demands – new developments**

F. Dissemination and application of SADCQF Handbooks and Guidelines

G. Capacity development

H. Interplay between SADCQF and ACQF

ON PURPOSES OF SADCQF:

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW ROADMAP

1. **SADCQF Guidelines and Manuals** on RPL, CAT, Recognition (& other themes) – dissemination, training, support to application / transposition at country level.

2. **Streamlining and reactivating alignment/referencing** to SADCQF: support and invite all SACD member states to plan and participate in the process. Revise and update the Booklet (2017).

3. **Follow-up to alignment**: Use of **SADCQF levels** on newly issued qualifications documents of NQF aligned/referenced to the SADCQF: develop the concept and guideline, submit it to approval by the ministers.

4. New developments related to **digitalisation of qualifications management, micro-credentials, common profiles** (occupations, qualifications and new skills): develop the concept note, constitute a dedicated working group, raise funding, partnerships, roadmap.

5. **Capacity development and peer sharing**: national level, SADC level, and wider international level

6. Strengthening of **cooperation with the ACQF and EQF**

7. **Monitoring and evaluating** systems and instruments to support a **plan-do-monitor-review** approach for SADQF implementation.

8. **On improved governance, organisation, resources of the implementation of SADCQF**

SADCQF: new roadmap (2023-2026)

1. Time available for discussion and formulation of proposals for the roadmap in groups (tables):
   - ➢ **45 minutes**
   - ➢ **+ 30 min for presentation of results of the discussion**
2. All participants contribute
3. 1 rapporteur per group
4. Groups: tables – at least 5 participants per group
5. **Discuss / define: scope of theme; most important actions; milestones per theme / action; involved stakeholders / partners; key observations**
6. Please write in the **coloured cards**
7. **Presentation of results: 5 min per group**

Distribution of the themes by groups (1)

Group 1

1. SADCQF Handbooks, Manuals, Leaflets, technical documentation, updates NQFs

2. Streamlining, support, reactive alignment / referencing

3. Follow-up to alignment: publication reports, use SADCQF levels

Group 2

4. New developments:
   - Digitisation (qualifications);
   - Micro-credentials;
   - Common profiles of qualifications
   - Others

Group 3

5. Capacity development and peer-sharing related with NQFs, RQFs topics and needs

6. Interplay and cooperation with other RQFs: ACQF, EQF

Distribution of the themes by groups (2)

Group 4

7. Monitoring and evaluatation: support SADCQF implementation.

8. On improved governance, organisation, resources - for the implementation of SADCQF

Group 5

Other themes of interest for SADCQF readmap

- 2 themes not yet listed / included

NQFs do not work in isolation
NQF: a systemic view