



ACQF

African Continental
Qualifications Framework



Session 8-2

ACQF-II Micro-credentials Survey

SADC TCCA meeting 2024

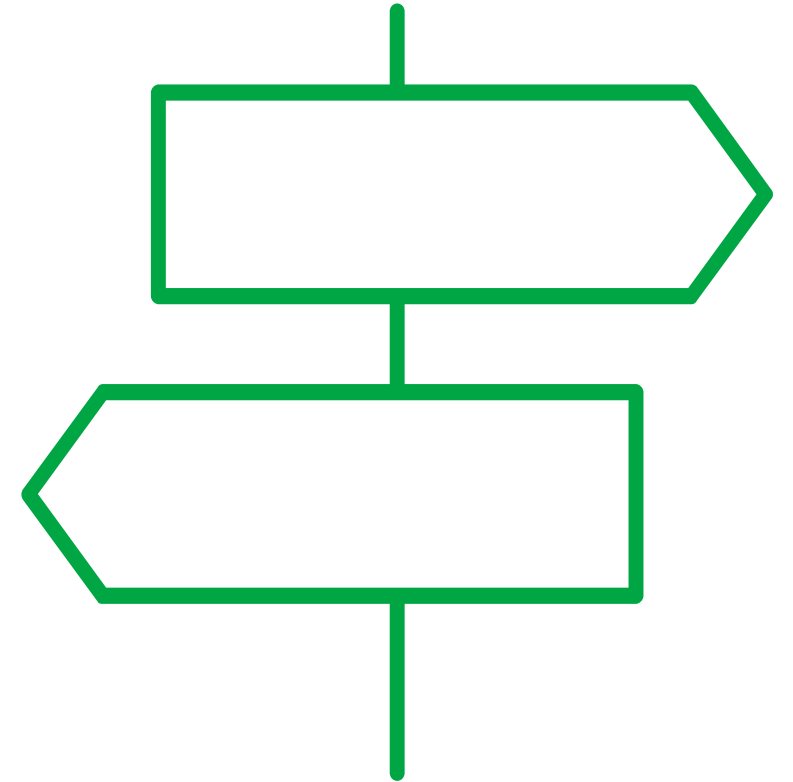
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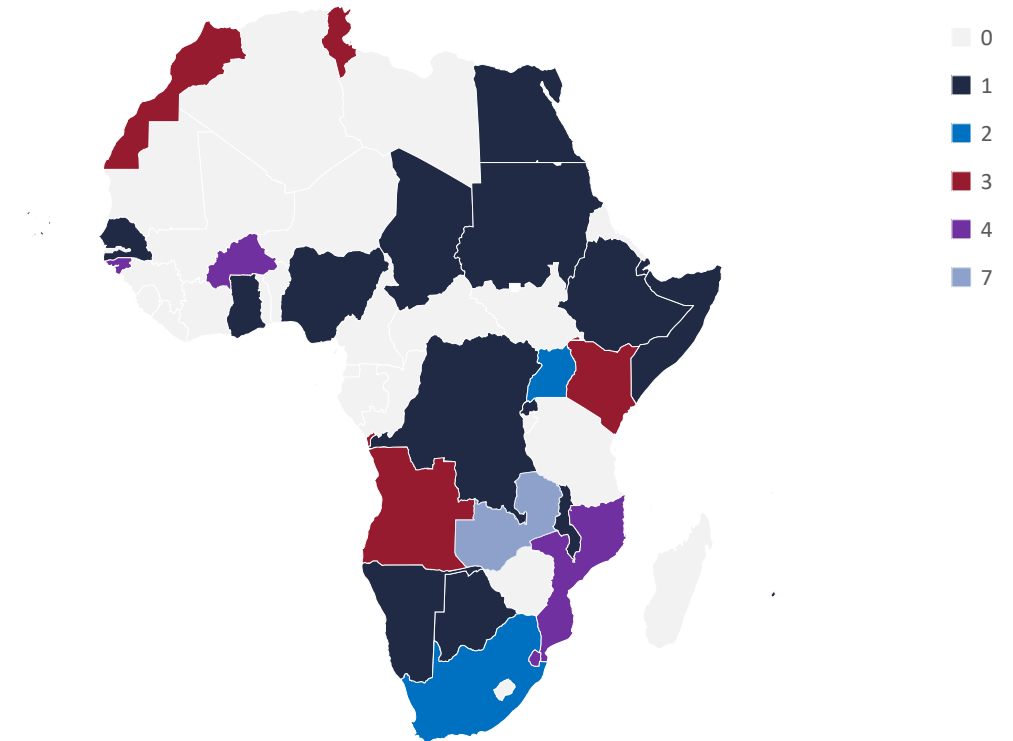
Structure of the presentation

1. **Scope and key details** about the survey
2. **Definitions and usage** of the concepts
3. **Overview of the landscape:** sectoral coverage, main providers, types of offered micro-credentials, main recipients and further characteristics of micro-credentials
4. **Stakeholders' views:** main purposes of MC, possible challenges, views on a continental approach, positioning of MC
5. **Summary**



Scope and key details about the survey

- The survey aimed to collect data on the place and trends of micro-credentials (MC) in the qualifications and lifelong learning systems in different African countries
- The survey was distributed **online**, via an email campaign. The questionnaire form was open between October 23 – November 21
- The micro-credentials survey received **59 complete responses**. The total number of complete responses came from **28 countries**. Most were recorded from Zambia (7), Burkina Faso (4), Eswatini (4), Guinea-Bissau (4), Mozambique (4) and Seychelles (4). Angola, Kenya, Morocco, and Tunisia all received 3-3 responses, South Africa and Uganda 2 responses



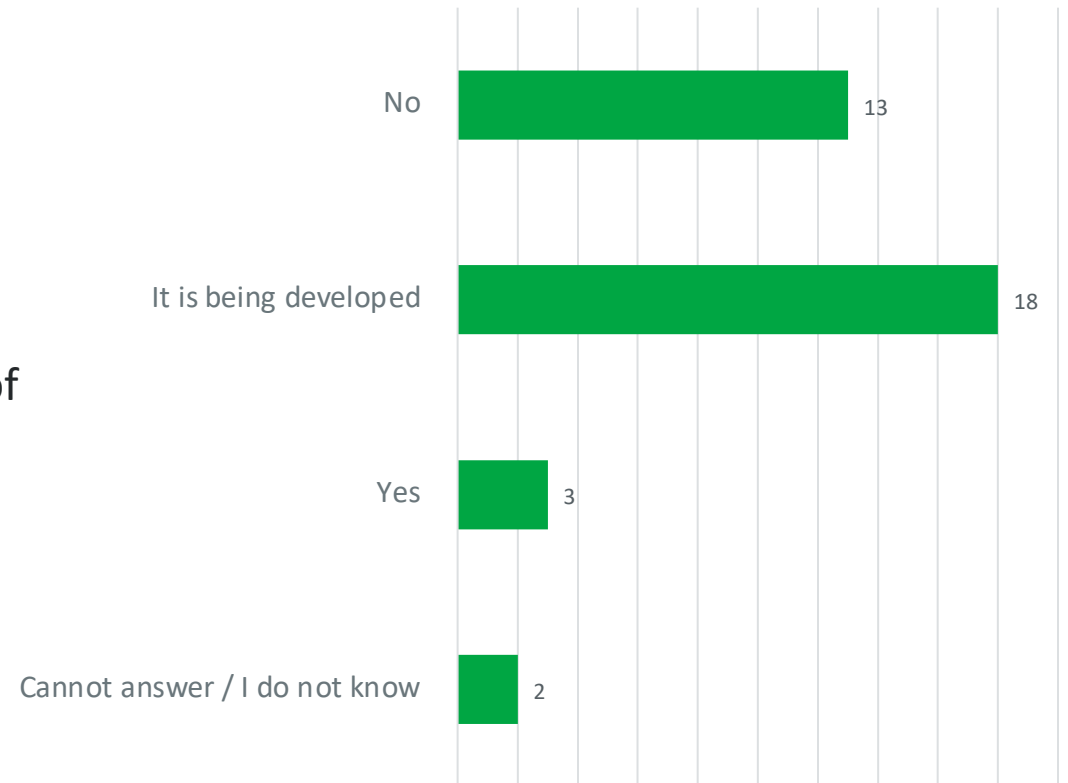
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Micro-credentials: definitions



The usage of **micro-credentials** or related terms were estimated via a 4-scale categorisation, showing that **the concept is still novel across the continent.**

- Around half of respondents (18 or 50%) claim that a formal definition of micro-credentials in their country is in the process of development, this forms a majority compared to other options. Another considerable part (13, 36.1%) indicates that there is no formal definition of the term in their educational system.
- 9 out of the 22 respondents (40.9%) answered to use **another term** than micro-credentials. Such are: “Short courses”, “certificate of attendance”, “training certificate” statement of attainment”, “certificate of participation”



Formal definitions of micro-credentials (data by respondents)

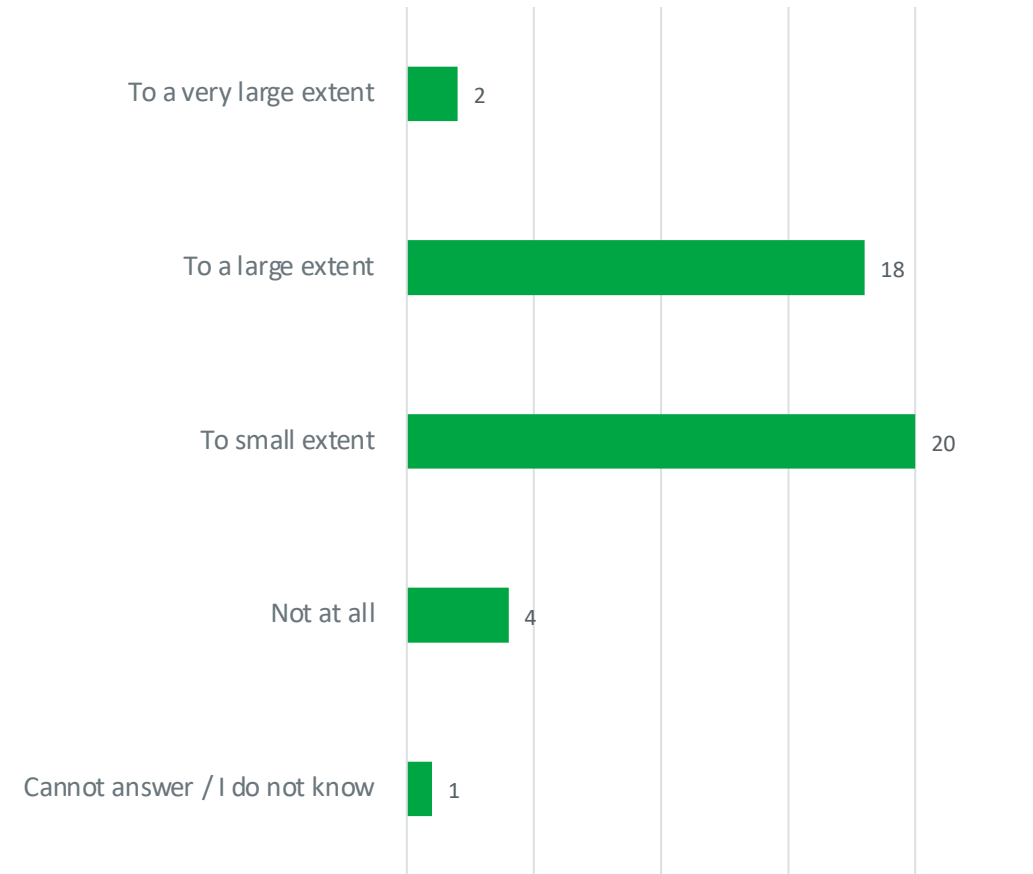
Micro-credentials: usage of terms



Micro-credentials are not yet referred to in official policy documents according to the plurality of the responses (21, 46.7%). Around a third of the responses reported that the concept is mentioned or referred to (16, 35.6%), while quite a lot of respondents could not answer the question (8, 17.8%).



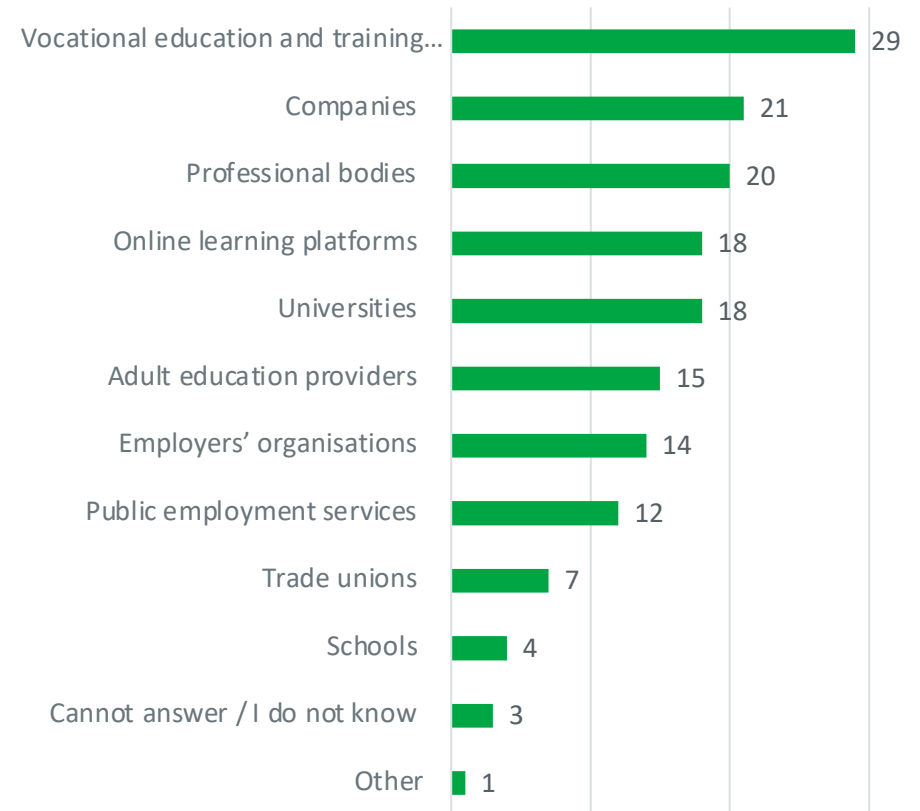
Discussion in national and regional fora are more extended. The majority of the respondents think that micro-credentials are discussed at least to a large extent or very large extent (20, 44.4%). An identical share thinks that there are discussions to a smaller extent (20), while only 4 responses (8.9%) claimed that there are no discussions.



The extent to which micro-credentials (or other term specified) are referred to in national and regional policy discussions

Landscape: sectoral coverage and providers

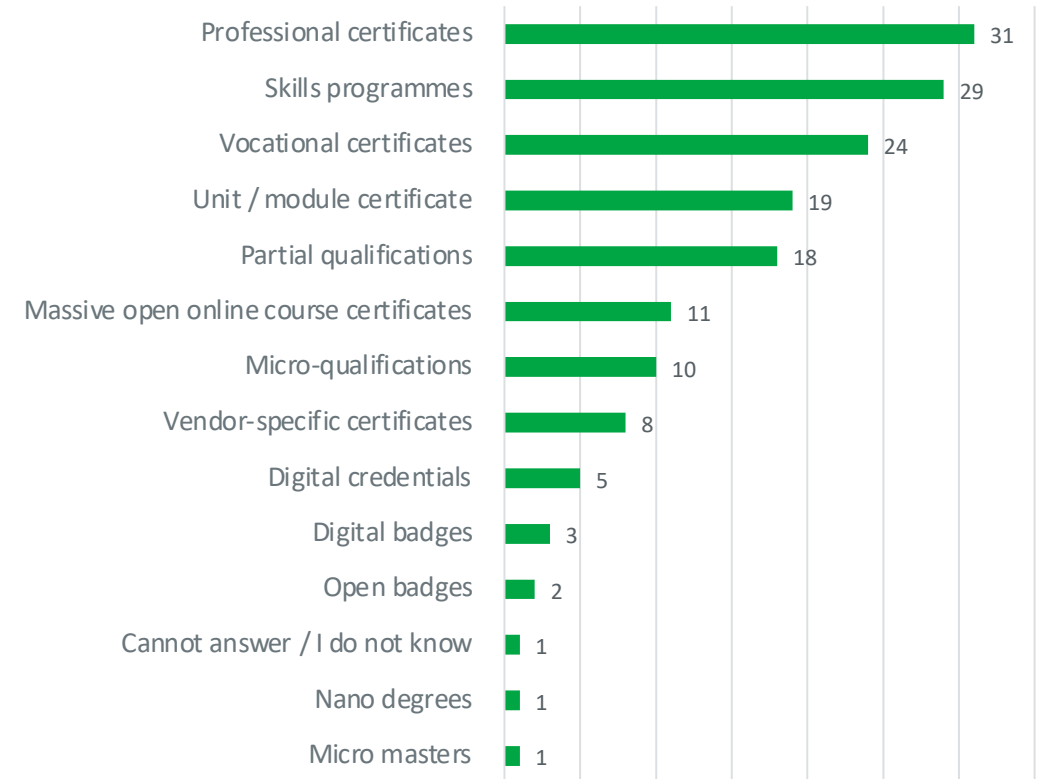
- Micro-credentials are being outstandingly more times offered in **technical and vocational education and training sector** as selected by 36 (47.4%) respondents. Almost two times fewer (19, 25%) respondents indicated that micro-credentials are applied in higher education, while 12 (15.8%) answered that they are offered in adult education.
- Considering providers of micro-credentials, **vocational education and training providers** are mentioned slightly more frequently than others – 29 (17.9%) respondents indicated them as the main providers. Companies and professional bodies follow with 21 (13.0%) and 20 (12.3%) respondents choosing these institutions respectively. Online learning platforms and universities were each chosen by 18 (11.1%).



Main providers of micro-credentials (multiple-choice, data by respondents)

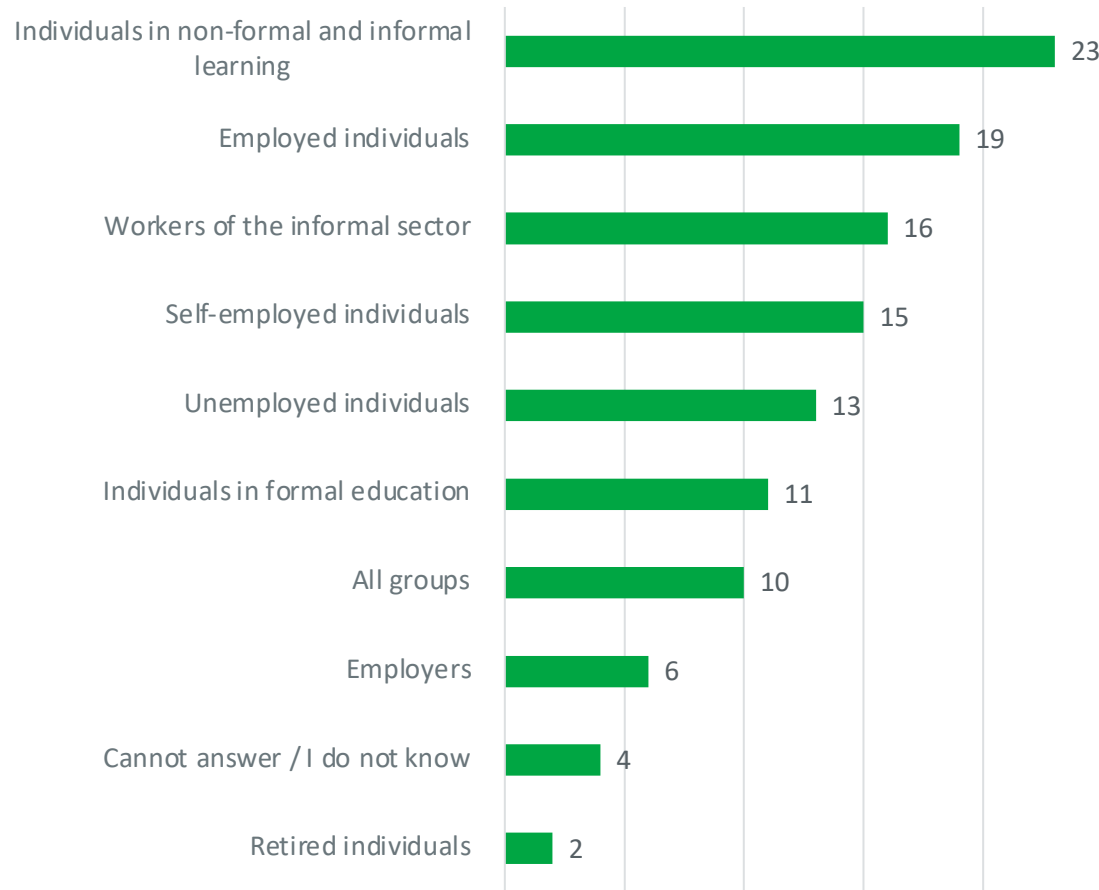
Landscape: type of micro-credentials

- An analysis of micro-credential types reveals a **focus on professional development and skills acquisition**, with digital credentials being less prevalent. Professional certificates (31, 72.1%), skills programs (29, 67.4%), vocational certificates (24, 55.8%) and partial/part qualifications (18, 41.9%) emerge as the most widely offered types.
- Among the **reasons for not offering micro-credentials**, the organisations cited various considerations, all of which were represented in largely equal weight. Providers explained that they do not offer micro-credentials because employers do not recognise these, micro-credentials are not accredited by responsible agencies/bodies, they are not compatible with NQFs or because the organisation only offers full qualifications.



Most common types of micro-credentials offered in responding countries (data by respondents)

Landscape: main recipients



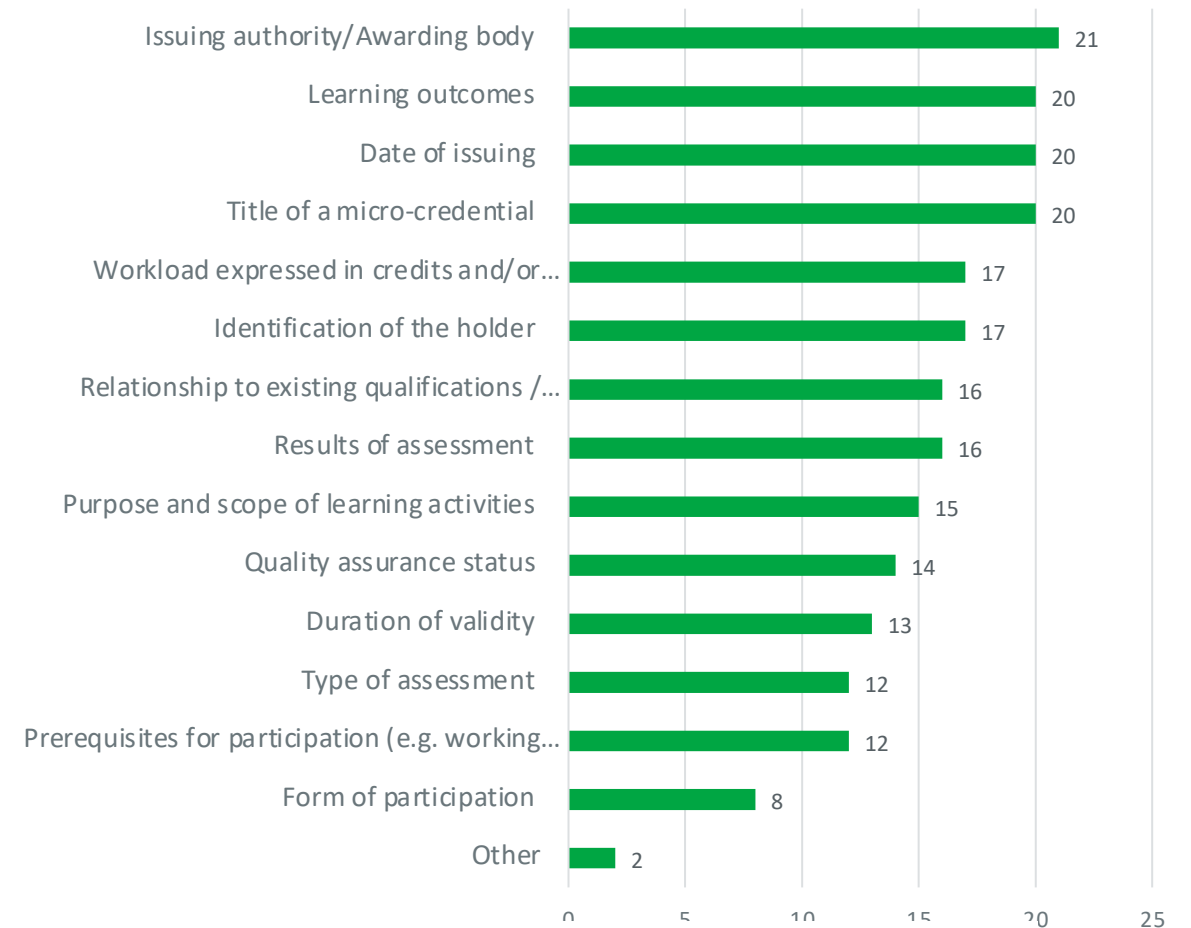
Main recipients of micro-credentials by various groups of learners (data by respondents)

The main micro-credential recipients are **individuals taking part in non-formal and informal learning** – they were selected by almost one-fifth of respondents (23, 19.3%). Other substantially present groups are:

- Employed individuals indicated by 19 stakeholders (16.0%)
- Workers of the informal sector and self-employed individuals were chosen by 16 (13.4%) and 15 (12.6%) respondents respectively.
- 10 (8.4%) respondents indicated that all learners' groups benefit from micro-credentials.

Landscape: further characteristics

- **Around 7-8 information elements are consensual** in the case of micro-credentials included in NQFs. These are the learning outcomes, title, issuing authority or awarding body, date of issuing, workload, identification of the holder. This holds largely true both in case of MC included and not included in NQFs.
- Overall, 9 countries (out of the surveyed 28) indicated that micro-credentials can be included in their NQFs. Furthermore, 7 countries have indicated that these micro-credentials can be stacked up with other qualifications and credentials.



Information elements of micro-credentials included in NQFs (multiple choice, data by respondents)

Stakeholders' views: future and main purposes

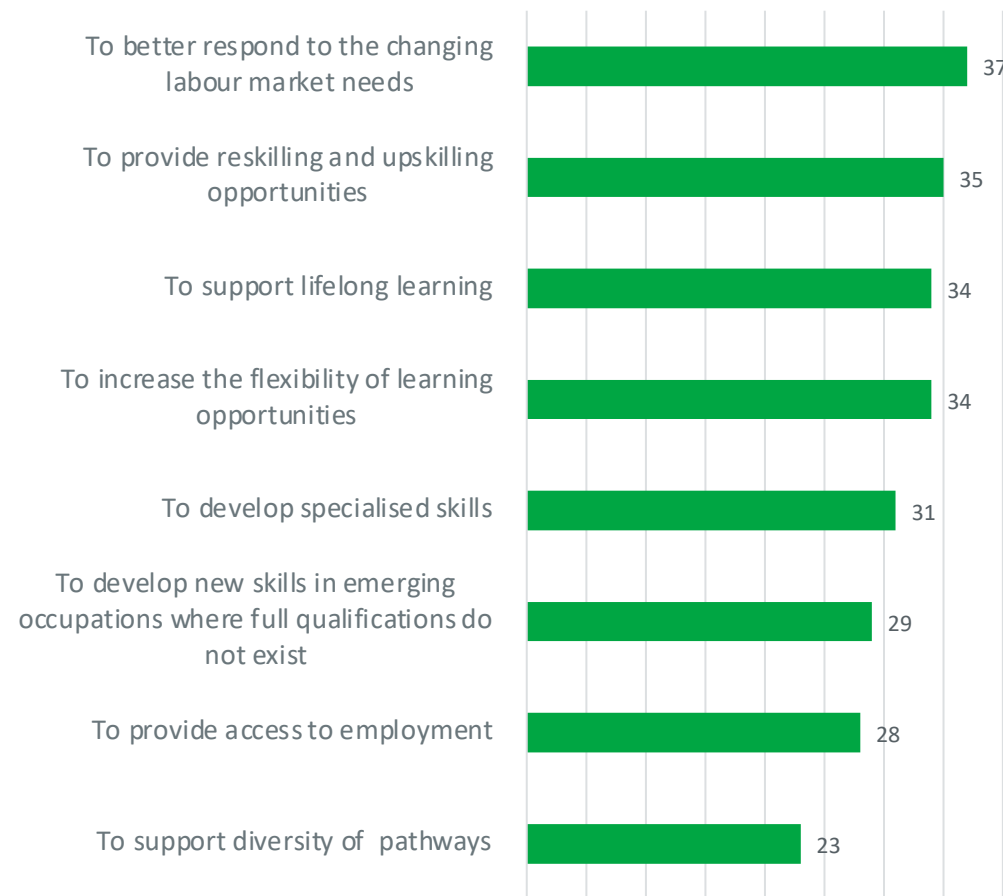


The absolute majority indicated that the **growth of micro-credentials is expected** to a large or a very large extent – such expectations were claimed by 19 (42.2%) and 18 (40%) respondents out of 45 respectively.



Results indicate a need for a **strong alignment of micro-credentials with the evolving needs of the labour market**. This is evident from the most popular purpose being that micro-credentials should better respond to changing labour market needs (37 respondents), as well as other purposes selected by more than 30 respondents (see below).

Other answer options have been chosen between 23-8 times. The least selected priorities were: to develop green skills (8), to support new models of pedagogy (9) and the facilitation of digital pedagogy (13).



Main purposes of micro-credentials (multiple choice, up to 8 of the most important items, data by respondents). Top 8 options displayed only.

Stakeholders' views: challenges



The data suggests that the **main challenges** in implementing micro-credentials revolve around their recognition and standardisation. Furthermore, the fact that micro-credentials are a new form of credentials also carries certain innate challenges, such as the lack of coverage by current policies, trust of and recognition by stakeholders, as well as a lack of a common definition. On the other hand, the issues of accessibility and cost were mentioned by fewer respondents. This could suggest that micro-credentials are generally seen as affordable and accessible.



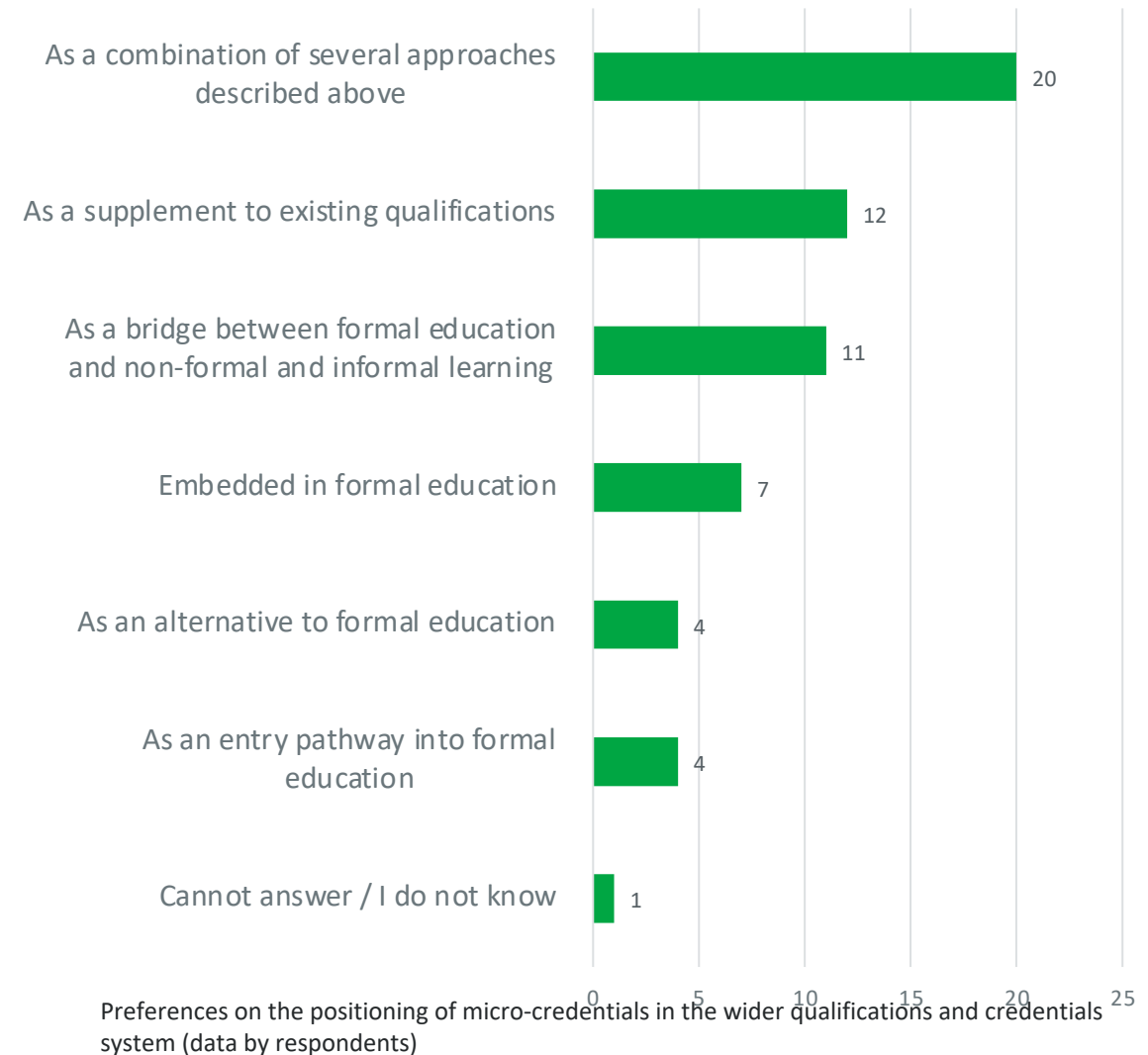
Main challenges related to the uptake of micro-credentials (multiple choice, up to 5 of the most important items, data by respondents)

Stakeholders' views: positioning of micro-credentials



The plurality of respondents (20 or 33.9%) identified that they would see micro-credentials as a **combination of several approaches**.

- 12 (20.3%) people claimed that they would position micro-credentials as a **supplement to existing qualifications** and slightly less (11, 18.6%) would consider them as a bridge between formal education and non-formal and informal learning. 7 (11.9%) respondents would see them as embedded in formal education while 4 (6.8%) respondents each would place micro-credentials as an alternative to formal education and as an entry pathway into formal education.

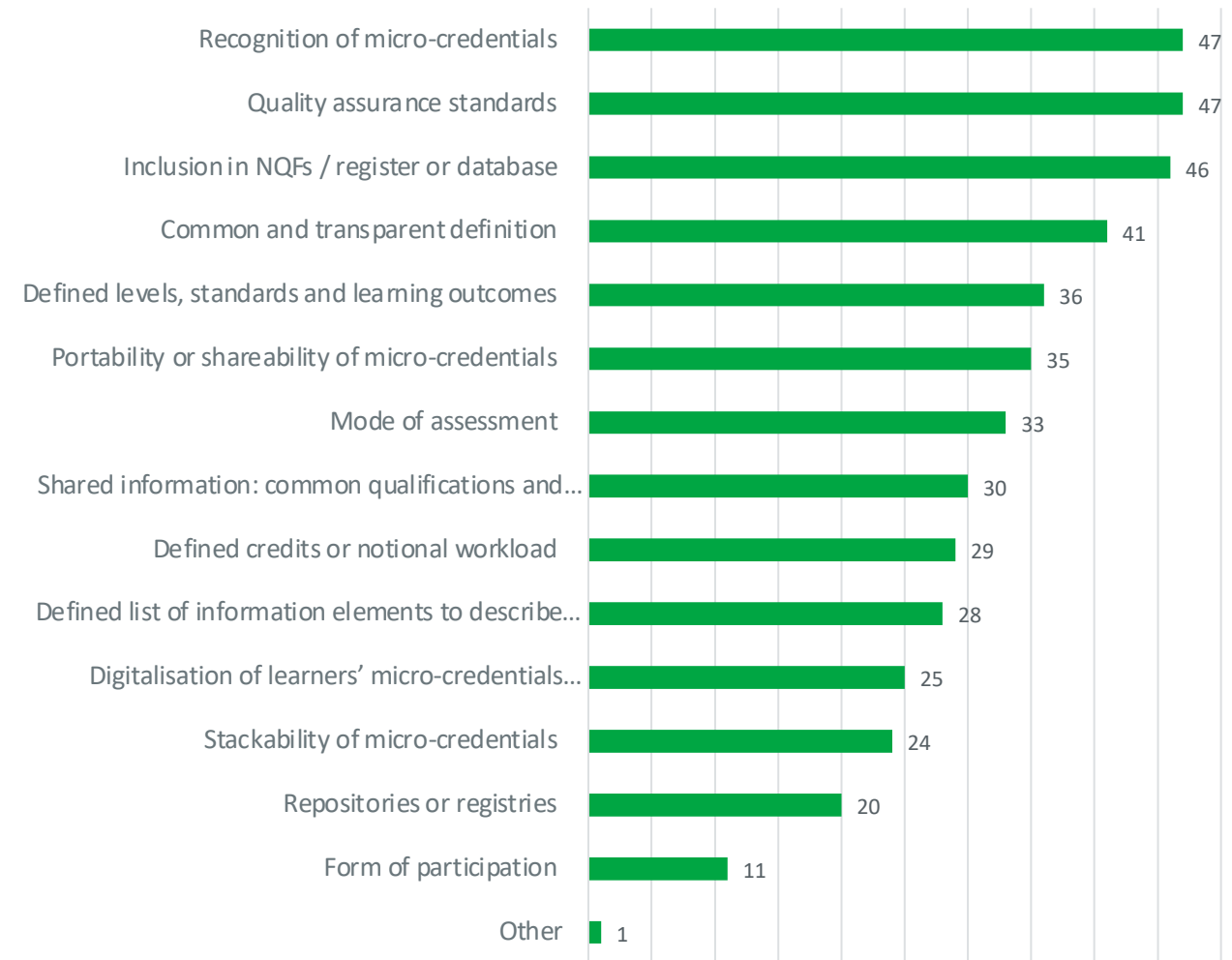


Stakeholders' views: a continental approach



The survey results clearly indicate a strong consensus on the **importance of developing a common continental approach** to micro-credentials. A significant majority (42 respondents or 72.4%), consider this approach to be very important. An additional 24.1% deem it important.

The most frequently mentioned **elements of this common approach** are the **recognition of micro-credentials** and **quality assurance standards**, each selected by 47 respondents. The inclusion in NQFs or a register/database (46), and a common and transparent definition (41), defined levels, standards and learning outcomes (36) were also highlighted.



Main aspects of the common approach (multiple choice, data by respondents)

Summary



The mapping shows that micro-credentials are in a nascent phase in Africa but interest and development is very much present. Nonetheless, as of yet, many countries have not yet started concrete development.



Future trends are perceived positively – a vast majority of respondents believe that the expected growth of micro-credentials will happen to a large or very large extent.



Technical and vocational education and training dominate with regard to the current offering of micro-credentials.



Stakeholders expect micro-credentials to contribute to various societal aims. Among the most commonly selected are to better respond to the changing labour market needs, to provide reskilling and upskilling opportunities to support lifelong learning and to increase the flexibility of learning opportunities. Recognition by relevant national authorities, however, was outstanding among other features of high-quality micro-credentials.



Thank you for your attention!

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