



Revised SADCQF

Policy and Guideline



For the learners, workers and citizens of SADC —
a framework of trust, opportunity,
sustainability and innovation.



Draft 5



05/06/2026



For TCCA validation · 17-19 June 2026



Presenter: SADC Secretariat



Date: 17 June 2026



Revised SADCQF: version 5 submitted to validation at TCCA



1 Revision process:

- ✓ Decision by Ministers at the Harare Joint ESTI Ministerial Meeting (June 2025).
- ✓ Participative revision through dialogue and co-design of the Policy and Guideline Document: 2 workshops: Pretoria (Sept 2025) and Windhoek (Feb 2026).
- ✓ Evidence-based process: comprehensive survey collected views and orientations from 13 SADC Member States. Analytical report presented at Pretoria workshop and used in the conceptualisation of the revised SADCQF.
- ✓ Use of relevant information and findings from the EQF-SADCQF comparison report (2024).
- ✓ Based on benchmarking and relevant international experience.



2 Version 5 of Revised SADCQF – result of consultation and gradual evolution:

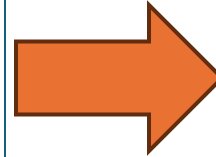
- ❖ Version 2 circulated in October 2025 for comments and orientations from all Member States. Incorporated into draft 3 for discussion.
- ❖ Presented and discussed comprehensively at the Windhoek workshop, February 2026. All proposals from participants and working groups incorporated.
- ❖ **Current version has 3 main changes:** (a) Vision: more concise formulation; (b) Inserted broad implementation roadmap for 4 years; (c) Inserted revised M&E plan – based on 4 outcomes with respective indicators.



Revised SADCQF: comprehensive, innovative, action oriented

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What is new?



1. Strategic concept: vision-objectives-scope-principles
2. Areas of activity
3. Technical components
4. Level descriptors: aligned to ACQF
5. Implementation and support mechanisms
6. Referencing guidelines
7. Conversion table ECTS-CATS
8. Monitoring and evaluation matrix



3.1 Vision

Vision of the revised SADCQF

- *A trusted, inclusive and responsive regional qualifications framework that supports lifelong learning, recognition of qualifications, skills and micro-credentials, and contributes to regional development and integration, mobility, employability, innovation, social justice and sustainability across the SADC region.*



3.1 Vision (2)

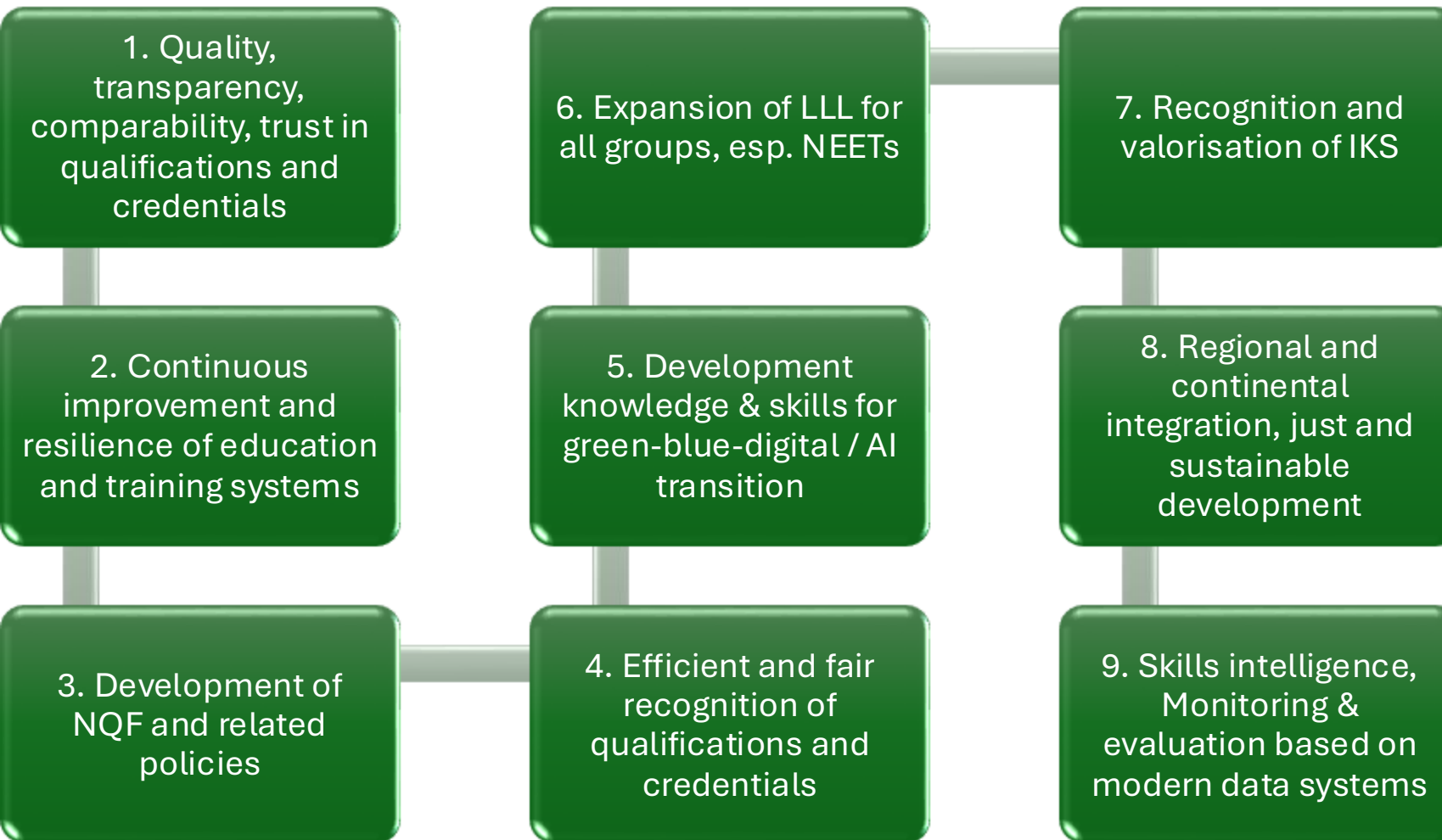
Impact

- The revised SADCQF aims to enhance **employability** through increased mobility and to support the region and its Member States in advancing innovation, as well as the **green, digital, and technological transformation of their economies and societies**, industrialisation, and the promotion of **decent work and entrepreneurship** for all people, in both rural and urban areas.

Continental and Global role

- The SADCQF actively contributes to continental integration through strengthened cooperation with the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), and the Addis Recognition Convention.
- SADCQF is fully compatible and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goals 4, 8, 5, 10 and 13.

9 Main Objectives



Scope of SADCQF



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | 01 All levels of qualifications and credentials |  | 07 Integration of digital, AI and green skills |
|  | 02 Regional / joint qualifications & standards |  | 08 Comprehensive Quality Assurance |
|  | 03 Foundational learning |  | 09 Strong partnerships and collaboration |
|  | 04 All modes of learning |  | 10 Lifelong learning: flexible pathways for upskilling and reskilling. |
|  | 05 Mechanisms for cross-border comparison, recognition |  | 11 Respect for national education and qualifications systems |
|  | 06 Sectoral and professional qualifications frameworks |  | 12 Alignment with continental and global frameworks, such as the ACQF and UNESCO conventions |

3.4 Guiding Principles

Pragmatic and forward-looking principles underpinning transformation, trust and accountability.



3.4 Guiding Principles (2)

3. Inclusivity and Equity

- Promote equal merit of all **forms of learning** — formal, non-formal, and informal.
- Promote **equitable access** and participation for **marginalised and underrepresented groups**, ensuring no learner is left behind.

4. Transparency and Quality Assurance

- Build **mutual trust** through clear standards, robust quality assurance mechanisms, and transparent referencing processes.
- Ensure **broad stakeholder participation** in the design, implementation, and review of qualifications.

5. Agility, Responsiveness and Data Use

- Maintain the **capacity to adapt** swiftly to evolving labour market demands, societal changes, and technological advances.
- **Promote the systematic use of data, foresight, and stakeholder feedback to keep qualifications relevant, fit for purpose, and future oriented.**
- **Leverage data science, analytics, and data exchange in qualifications management to enhance skills matching, generate real-time intelligence on qualification and credential supply and demand, and facilitate smoother employment access and mobility.**





4. Areas of activity of SADCQF

- The SADCQF will be implemented through a coherent set of interrelated areas of activity designed to promote regional cooperation, knowledge exchange, and capacity development.
- These activities directly support the strategic objectives of the SADCQF and contribute to its progressive institutionalisation and growing impact across Member States.



Roadmap: eight Areas of Activity



The operational foundation for implementation, institutionalisation and growing impact.

1 Regional & global alignment

Conventions, ACQF, EQF and QA networks

2 NQF development & referencing

NQF updates, referencing reports and communication

3 Quality assurance coherence

Regional QA guideline, tools, data and community of practice

4 Recognition & mobility

Joint qualifications, micro-credentials, standards and MRAs

5 Digitalisation & recognition

Registers, QCP, verifiable credentials and skills intelligence

6 Capacity development

Guidelines, peer learning, training and methodological packages

7 Monitoring arrangements

Inventory, skills intelligence, results framework and data system

8 Evaluation

Thematic, comparative and impact studies for improvement

Eight interrelated areas connect policy, tools, support, evidence and impact.

5. Technical Components of the SADCQF



- The effective implementation of the revised SADCQF relies on a **coherent set of technical components** that ensure **coordination, transparency, and sustainability** across the region.



- These components provide the **institutional and operational backbone** of the SADCQF, linking policy vision with practice and enabling Member States to cooperate effectively in advancing lifelong learning, recognition, and mobility.

The technical components comprise:



1.

Governance arrangements



2.

Core instruments and guidelines



3.

Articulation and lifelong learning tools



4.

Digital systems for qualifications management



5.

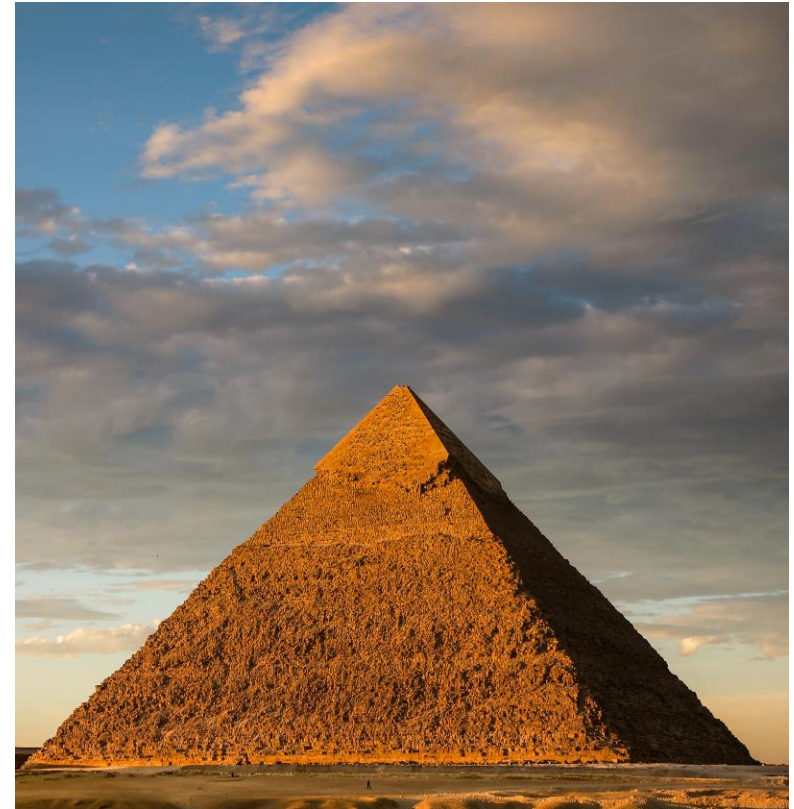
Communication, dissemination and advocacy mechanisms

6. Level Descriptors of the SADCQF



6. Level Descriptors of the SADCQF (1)

- The revised SADCQF Policy and Guidelines adopt the ACQF level descriptors as the common foundation for further development and technical alignment.
- The SADCQF is committed to ensuring and maintaining close compatibility between the level descriptors of both meta-qualifications frameworks — the SADCQF and the ACQF — in order to strengthen comparability, promote coherence, and optimise efficiency and synergy in the referencing of NQFs across the region, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of processes and procedures and the associated costs.



6. Level Descriptors of the SADCQF (2)

- Each of the ten SADCQF levels represents learning outcomes achieved through formal, non-formal, and informal learning at that level. The SADCQF level descriptors define how the three domains — knowledge, skills, and autonomy and responsibility — express the key dimensions of learning (breadth, depth, and context) and increase in complexity from lower to higher levels.
- Understanding the horizontal and vertical logic of the level descriptors is further supported by a glossary that clarifies key terms and concepts.



6. Level Descriptors of the SADCQF (3)

	Domains of learning		
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
<i>Definition of the domains of learning</i>	<i>In the context of the SADCQF, "Knowledge" refers to the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. It represents the body of facts, principles, theories, concepts, and practices related to a field of study or work, and provides the foundation for understanding, analysis, and problem solving. Knowledge includes various dimensions: factual, conceptual, procedural, contextual, reflective, indigenous.</i>	<i>In the context of the SADCQF, Skills refer to the ability to apply knowledge effectively to perform tasks, solve problems, create solutions, and adapt to different contexts. Skills reflect what a learner can do, both in predictable and in changing or complex environments. Skills integrate the following dimensions: transversal and durable skills, cognitive skills, practical skills, digital skills, AI and data literacy skills, green skills, innovation and entrepreneurial skills.</i>	<i>In the context of SADCQF "Autonomy and responsibility" refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility in learning and work.</i>



7. Implementation and Support Mechanisms



- Effective implementation of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) requires sustained national commitment, coordinated regional support, and a culture of mutual learning and accountability.



- This chapter outlines how Member States and SADC structures cooperate to ensure coherent, progressive implementation of the SADCQF and its associated instruments.



National
Commitment



Regional
Cooperation



Mutual
Learning



Accountability



CHAPTER 7
Opening Slide



Building a trusted, coherent, and collaborative system
for qualifications across the SADC Region.



SADCQF
SADC QUALIFICATIONS
FRAMEWORK

7. Implementation and Support Mechanisms



1. Roadmap - 4 years

2. National implementation processes

3. Regional support measures

4. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

5. Capacity development and resource mobilisation



SADCQF
QUALIFICATIONS FOR
REGIONAL INTEGRATION
AND PROSPERITY

Implementation Plan for the Revised SADCQF (Years 1-4)



This implementation plan was developed by representatives of SADC Member States during the second meeting of the Working Group supporting the revision of the SADCQF, held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 10 to 12 February 2026.



Sequenced activities, key indicators, timeline and indicative funding/support arrangements

LEARN

UPSkill

WORK

THRIVE

LIFELONG LEARNING.
MOBILITY. RECOGNITION.
SHARED PROSPERITY.



SKILLS INTELLIGENCE



Qualifications Alignment



Learning Pathways



Recognition & Mobility



Data for Decisions

HOI ALIGNMENT

RECOGNITION & MOBILITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE

LIFELONG LEARNING

SADC MEMBER STATES



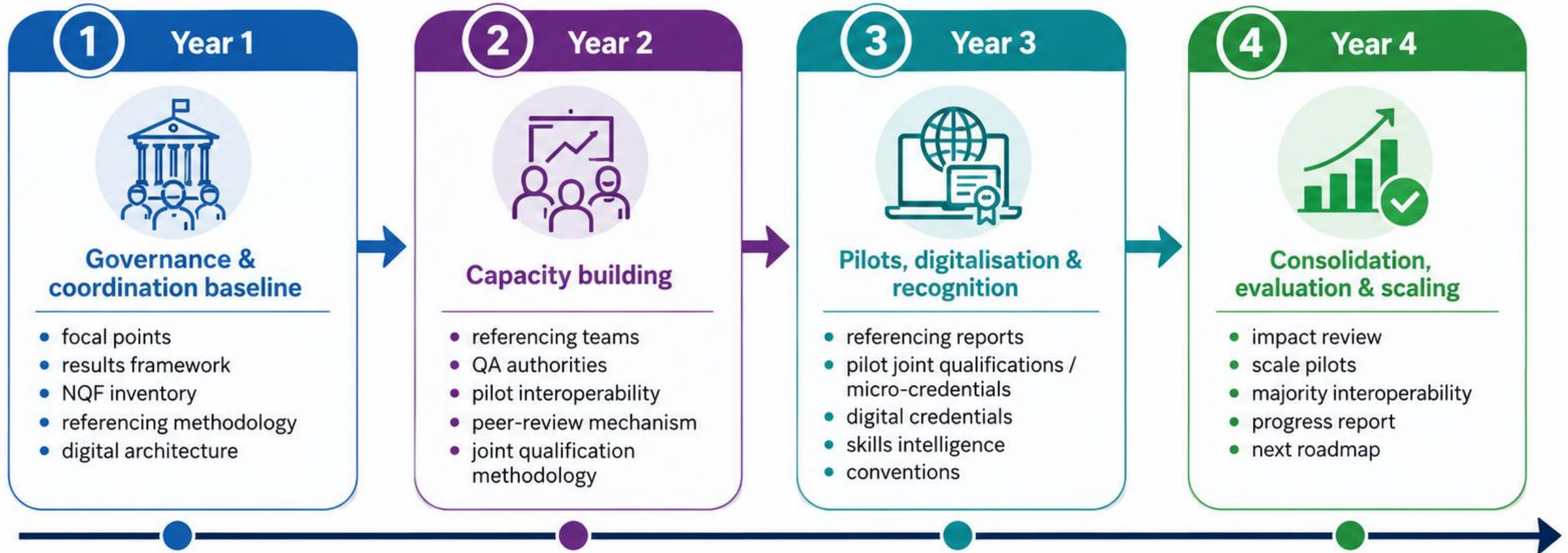
Presenter:
SADC Secretariat



Date:
17 June 2026

Four-year implementation roadmap

Sequenced phases from governance baseline to evaluation, consolidation and scaling.



Implementation plan developed by Member State representatives · Windhoek, Namibia · 10–12 February 2026

Implementation Plan for the Revised SADCQF (Years 1-4)

No.	Sequenced activity	Key indicators	Timeline	Funding
Phase 1 - Year 1: Governance and Coordination Baseline				
1.1	Establish or confirm national SADCQF focal points and regional expert pools	% of Member States with designated focal points; regional expert roster approved by TCCA	Months 1-6	MS
1.2	Develop the detailed results framework, M&E toolkit, indicator toolkit and reporting templates	Results framework and M&E toolkit approved; data collection templates disseminated	Months 1-6	ETF, MS
1.3	Update and publish the inventory of NQFs and related policies, including RPL, CATS, micro-credentials, QA and digital tools	Inventory updated and published; % of Member States submitting complete data	Months 3-9	MS, UNESCO
1.4	Develop a contextualised SADCQF referencing methodology aligned with the ACQF	Referencing methodology adopted by TCCA	Months 6-12	ETF, MS
1.5	Develop the regional digital architecture roadmap for register interoperability and skills intelligence	Digital roadmap approved by TCCA; technical design document completed	Months 6-12	OBREAL, ETF, MS

Phase 2 - Year 2: SADCQF Capacity Building

2.1	Train national referencing teams and quality assurance authorities	At least two regional workshops held; number of participants trained	Months 12-24	ETF, AU, UNESCO
2.2	Support Member States to initiate SADCQF referencing processes	Number of referencing processes launched	Months 15-24	MS
2.3	Launch pilot interoperability between national qualification registers	At least three interoperable national registers; data exchange functional	Months 18-24	ETF, OBREAL
2.4	Establish a regional peer-review mechanism for referencing reports	Peer-review protocol approved; at least two peer reviews conducted	Months 18-24	MS
2.5	Develop a methodology for joint SADC qualifications and micro-credentials	Methodology toolkit approved by TCCA	Months 18-24	ETF, OBREAL, UNESCO

Phase 3 - Year 3: Pilots, Digitalisation and Recognition Strengthening

3.1	Publish and validate the first wave of national referencing reports on the SADC website	Number of reports validated by TCCA	Months 24-36	MS
3.2	Implement pilot joint SADC qualifications and micro-credentials in priority sectors, including green, digital and AI	At least two pilot joint qualifications or micro-credentials launched; sector partnerships formalised	Months 24-36	OBREAL, MS
3.3	Deploy regional digital credentialing tools, including QR or blockchain prototypes	Digital credential prototype operational	Months 24-36	ETF, MS
3.4	Operationalise the regional skills intelligence platform	Skills intelligence dashboard live; periodic labour market briefs issued	Months 30-36	ILO, MS
3.5	Strengthen cooperation with the Addis and Global Recognition Conventions through joint events and guidance	At least one joint event conducted; cooperation mechanism formalised	Months 24-36	UNESCO, AU, MS

Phase 4 - Year 4: Consolidation, Evaluation and Scaling

4.1	Conduct an implementation evaluation and impact review	Regional evaluation and impact review report completed	Months 36-42	MS, UNESCO
4.2	Scale joint qualifications and micro-credentials based on pilot evaluation	Additional priority sectors onboarded	Months 36-48	OBREAL, ETF
4.3	Expand interoperability to the majority of Member States	At least 70% of Member States interoperable	Months 36-48	MS, ILO
4.4	Publish the regional progress report to Ministers	Biennial progress report submitted	Month 48	MS
4.5	Update the roadmap for the next implementation cycle	Revised roadmap approved	Month 48	MS



7.1 National implementation processes (1)



At national level, implementation of the SADCQF builds on existing National Qualifications Framework (NQF) structures, policies and governance mechanisms.



01

Each Member State defines its own national implementation plan, aligned with SADCQF objectives, principles, processes and agreed timelines.



02

These national plans are coherent with, and directly support, implementation of the revised SADCQF at regional level.



**Aligned national action.
Stronger regional impact.**

Delivering the revised SADCQF together.



CHAPTER 7.1

National implementation processes (1)



Building a trusted, coherent, and collaborative system for qualifications across the SADC Region.



SADCQF

SADC QUALIFICATIONS
FRAMEWORK



7.2 Regional support measures (technical assistance, peer review, expert pools) - (2)



Main support measures include:

1



Technical assistance
for national referencing reports, NQF development or renewal, and QA alignment.

2



Peer review
by experts from other Member States to validate reports and implementation progress.

3



Regional expert pools
in QA, articulation, qualification design, micro-credentials, RPL, and digital and green skills.

4



Guidelines, toolkits and training materials
for consistency and support.

5



Regional workshops, communities of practice and online exchanges
to promote mutual learning.

6



Information sharing and synergy
with other SADC policies and initiatives to reinforce coherence and visibility.



National Commitment



Regional Cooperation



Mutual Learning



Accountability



CHAPTER 7

Implementation and Support Mechanisms



Building a trusted, coherent, and collaborative system for qualifications across the SADC Region.



SADCQF

SADC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

7.4 SADCQF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework



A coherent structure for tracking progress, outcomes and long-term impact across Member States.



The complete SADCQF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Matrix is included in [Annex 9.6](#). It provides a coherent structure for tracking progress, outcomes and long-term impacts of implementation across Member States. It supports **transparency, accountability, learning** and **continuous improvement**, aligned with the SADCQF Vision and Objectives.

The framework serves to:

1



Track implementation progress

across Member States.

2



Assess operational use

for comparability, recognition and mobility.

3



Identify gaps and good practice

implementation gaps, capacity needs and good practice.

4



Support evidence-based improvement

continuous improvement and reporting to SADC structures.

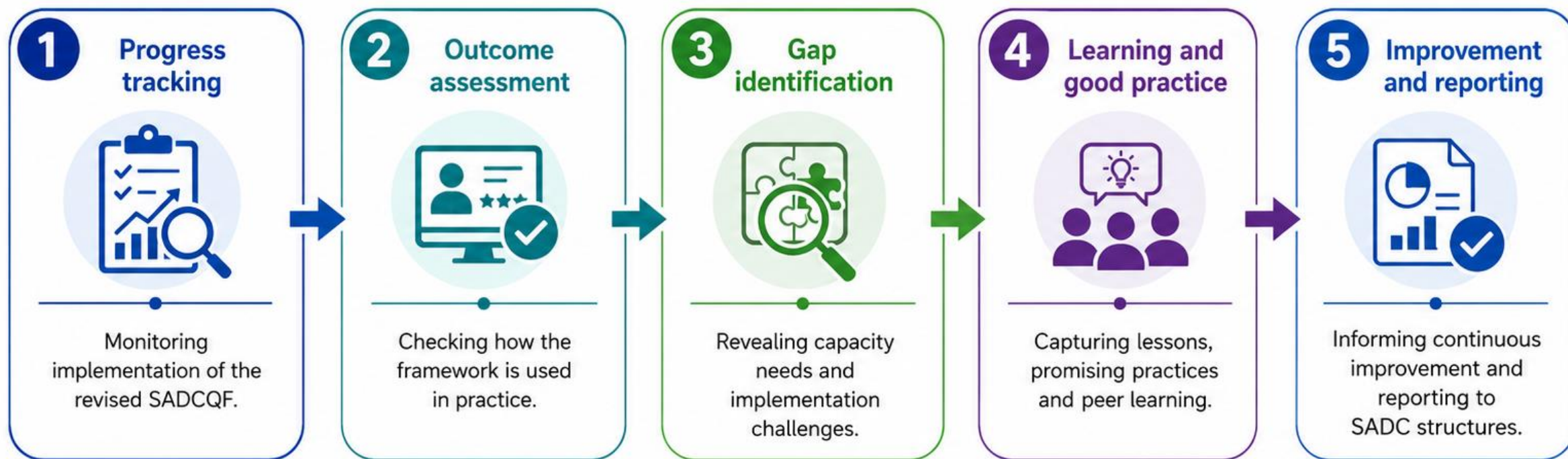


The M&E Framework helps turn implementation into **measurable learning, accountability** and **action**.



Monitoring and Evaluation in practice

Transparency, accountability and learning for effective SADCQF implementation.



Why it matters

A strong M&E approach ensures **transparency**, **accountability** and **informed decision-making**. It helps Member States and SADC structures **learn** from implementation and **strengthen results** over time.



Matrix of indicators by SADCQF Outcome

Outcome 1: Updated knowledge on trends and practices

Output	Indicators	Data Sources
SADCQF Governance and Coordination	• Number of SADCQF governance structures established and functional • Number of Regular meetings of the SADCQF Technical Committee • Number of Dedicated national SADCQF focal points appointed	• Meeting reports • Terms of reference • National nominations and progress reports
RQF & National QF Development and Referencing	• Number of NQFs Developed • Number of MS NQF reference reports validated by TCCA • SADCQF referenced to an international RQF	• NQF development reports • NQF Referencing reports • Peer review outcomes • National policy and legislative documents
SADCQF Quality Assurance Coherence	• % Alignment of national QA principles with SADCQF requirements • %/Evidence of QA cooperation across borders • %/Inclusion of QA information in referencing reports	• QA frameworks and guidelines • Peer review feedback • Technical reports from NQAs and QA

Outcome 2: Strengthened capacity of NQFs lead institutions/Authorities

Output	Indicators	Data Sources
SADCQF Capacity Building	• Number of technical staff trained on SADCQF implementation • Number of regional peer-learning activities conducted • Number of national technical guidelines and tools produced	• SADC, UNESCO, AU, ETF • Training records • Workshop reports • Capacity development plans
Regional and Global Alignment	• Number of national QA principles aligned with SADCQF requirements • Number of QA cooperation across borders reported • Number of AU/SADC/UNESCO joint events conducted on Addis Convention awareness	• Comparative technical analyses • Regional and continental reports • SADC–UNESCO/AU coordination records

Outcome 3: Operational partnerships for joint qualifications developed

Outputs	Indicators	Data sources
Use of the SADCQF for Recognition and Mobility: Joint Qualifications, Micro-credentials and standards with regional currency and recognition	• % use of SADCQF in qualification recognition decisions • Number of national recognition guidelines Referencing the the SADCQF levels • Number of learner or labour mobility reports submitted • Number of pilot joint qualifications launched	• Recognition case studies • Surveys of credential evaluators • National Institutional and employer standards feedback

Outcome 4: Enhanced interoperability of NQF databases

Outputs	Indicators	Data sources
Digitalisation and Recognition Strengthening	• Number of SADCQF communication materials • % of the SADCQF awareness among key stakeholders • Number of Stakeholder consultations and workshops conducted • Regional skills intelligence platform established • Number of Periodic Labour Market Reports submitted • Digital credential prototype operational • SADCQF website established	• SADCQF Communication products on stakeholder engagement reports • SADCQF Stakeholder surveys • SADCQF Event participation record • Periodic Labour Market briefs issued :ILO • SADCQF QCP report
Monitoring Arrangements	• Number of Annual national implementation reports submitted by Member States • Number SADCQF Technical Committee Monitoring reports submitted	• Regional synthesis report coordinated by the SADC Secretariat • Use of MS peer review reports to validate progress and quality • SADCQF M&E Integration reports
Evaluation	• Number of Mid-term Evaluation Reports: • SADCQF End-term Evaluation report submitted	• SADCQF Mid-term Evaluation Report:Focused on implementation progress, capacity, and governance effectiveness. • SADCQF End-term Evaluation report submitted: Assess impact on recognition, mobility, and regional trust.

7.5 Capacity development and resource mobilisation



Capacity development is essential to ensure sustainable implementation of the SADCQF. The Secretariat, in partnership with Member States and development partners, will promote targeted actions to strengthen institutional, technical, and human capacities.

Priority areas include



1 Training and coaching

for NQF and QA staff, referencing teams, and data experts.



2 Regional learning programmes

on qualifications frameworks, QA, skills intelligence, and digital credentialing.



3 Research support

on qualifications, labour-market needs, and emerging green and digital skills.



4 Mobilisation of financial and technical resources

from regional and international partners to sustain implementation, innovation, and knowledge-sharing.



Effective capacity development contributes to building a **resilient and dynamic SADCQF community**, capable of advancing the framework's goals of **transparency**, **comparability**, and **recognition** of qualifications across the region.



Annexes toolkit



9. Annexes Toolkit

Practical tools that help users apply, interpret and monitor the revised SADCQF.

Why the annexes matter



Support
implementation



Improve
consistency



Facilitate referencing
and credit transfer



Strengthen
monitoring and
learning

9.1

Annex 1: Glossary of key terms



Defines the main concepts
and language used in the
SADCQF.

9.2

Annex 2: Referencing guidelines (short version)



Provides a concise guide for
linking national frameworks
to the SADCQF.

9.3

Annex 3: SADCQF Guidelines in force



Lists the guidelines already
adopted and available
for use.

9.4

Annex 4: SADCQF Guidelines in development



Shows the priority guidance
tools currently being
prepared.

9.5

Annex 5: Conversion table ECTS-SADC CATS



Helps compare and
translate credit values
across systems.

9.6

Annex 6: Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix of SADCQF



Presents indicators and
data sources to track
progress, outcomes
and impact.



Together, the annexes turn the SADCQF into a practical toolkit for **implementation**,
cooperation and **continuous improvement**.

