ACQF
African Continental
Qualifications Framework
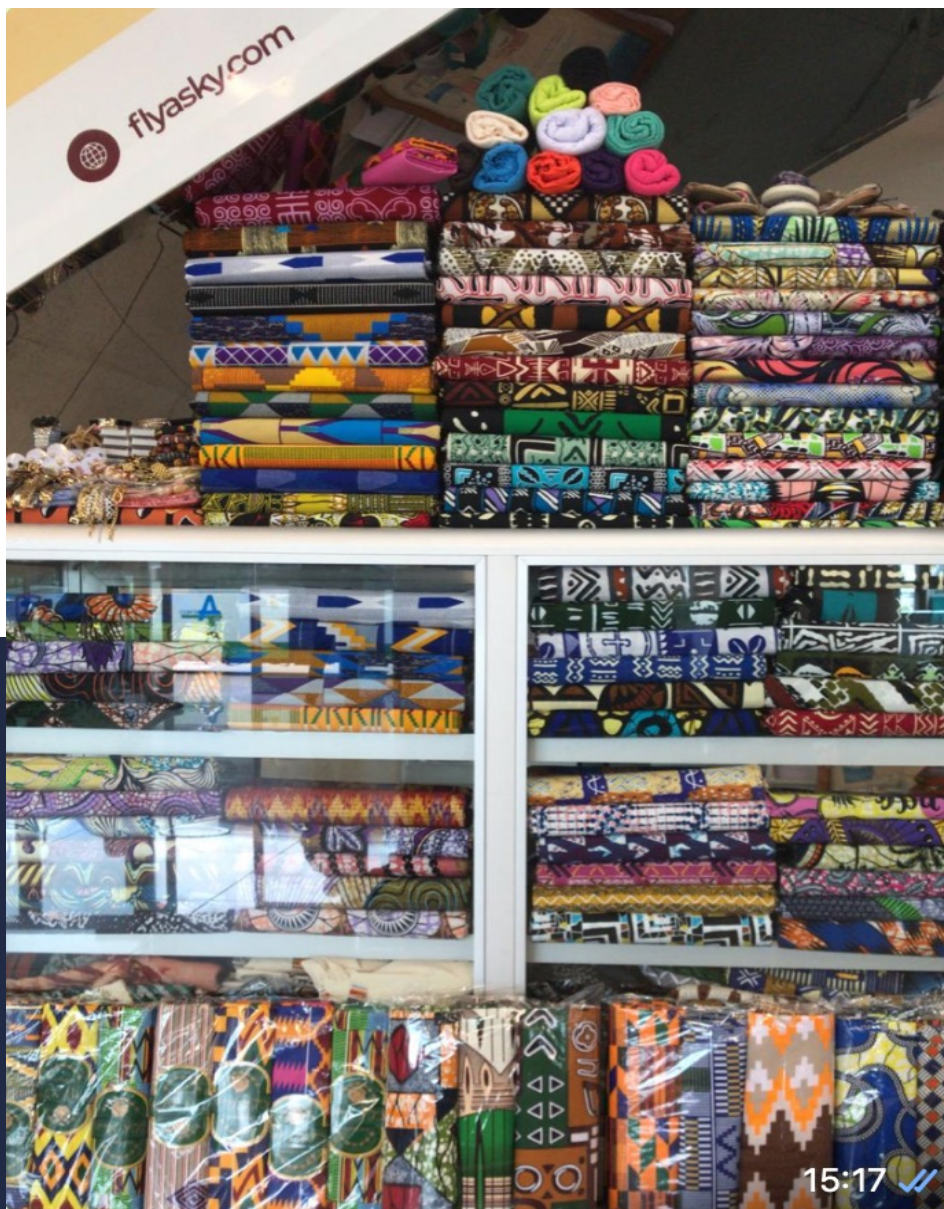
Day 2

Session 5:
Micro-credentials

For lifelong learning and employability

Sierra Leone – NQF Consultation Week
22-24 May 2024

Eduarda Castel-Branco

Topics of the presentation

Transformation and innovation. Top 10 skills 2027.

Microcredentials

Examples

01

We Know – the Future of Work is here - Transformation

Drivers of change

Digitalisation - Automation - AI

Covid-19

Greening of economy and society

Societal movements: rights, democracy, information, innovation

- The future of work arrived ahead of schedule
- "2 years of digital innovation in 2 months"
- Remote work: post-Covid19
- Wave of innovation and launch of new generation of entrepreneurs
- Digitally enabled productivity gains accelerate 4th Industrial Revolution
- Reskilling
- Learning anytime, anywhere, anything
- Hybrid skills
- New types of qualifications: micro-credentials, digital certificates

'Double-disruption'
scenario for workers
Tandem Covid-19
recession x automation &
digitalisation

Future of Jobs

Reskilling needs

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

44%

of workers' core skills are expected to change in the next five years

Source: World Economic Forum, *Future of Jobs Report 2023.*

Almost half of core skills are expected to change. Image: World Economic Forum

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

Top Skills 2023

Cognitive skills top the list of those deemed to be of greatest importance for workers in 2023.

Analytical thinking is considered to be a core skill by more companies than any other skill, making up, on average, 9.1% of the core skills reported by companies.

Creative thinking comes second, ahead of three self-efficacy skills – resilience, flexibility and agility; motivation and self-awareness; and curiosity and lifelong learning – which recognize the importance of workers' ability to adapt to disrupted workplaces.

Future of Jobs: top 10 skills by 2027

Top 10 skills on the rise

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

1. Creative thinking
2. Analytical thinking
3. Technological literacy
4. Curiosity and lifelong learning
5. Resilience, flexibility and agility
6. Systems thinking
7. AI and big data
8. Motivation and self-awareness
9. Talent management
10. Service orientation and customer service

Type of skill

- Cognitive skills
- Self-efficacy
- Management skills
- Technology skills
- Working with others
- Engagement skills

Source
World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2023.

Note
The skills judged to be increasing in importance most rapidly between 2023 and 2027

Future of Jobs Report 2023 Image: World Economic Forum

Future of Jobs Report 2023

INSIGHT REPORT
MAY 2023

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

Jobs: growing and declining

Fastest growing vs. fastest declining jobs

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

	Top 10 fastest growing jobs		Top 10 fastest declining jobs
1.	AI and Machine Learning Specialists	1.	Bank Tellers and Related Clerks
2.	Sustainability Specialists	2.	Postal Service Clerks
3.	Business Intelligence Analysts	3.	Cashiers and ticket Clerks
4.	Information Security Analysts	4.	Data Entry Clerks
5.	Fintech Engineers	5.	Administrative and Executive Secretaries
6.	Data Analysts and Scientists	6.	Material-Recording and Stock-Keeping Clerks
7.	Robotics Engineers	7.	Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll Clerks
8.	Electrotechnology Engineers	8.	Legislators and Officials
9.	Agricultural Equipment Operators	9.	Statistical, Finance and Insurance Clerks
10.	Digital Transformation Specialists	10.	Door-To-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendors, and Related Workers

Source
World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2023.

Note
The jobs which survey respondents expect to grow most quickly from 2023 to 2027 as a fraction of present employment figures

Future of Jobs Report 2023 Image: World Economic Forum

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/04/future-jobs-2023-fastest-growing-decline

02

Micro-credentials

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. Ex.: UNESCO, EU, Australia, African countries (Erasmus+ project, ACQF)

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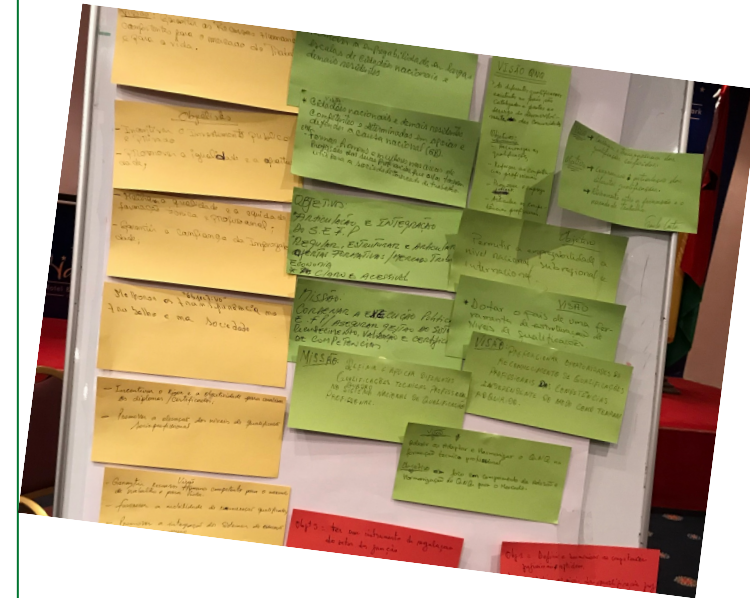
Global debate towards common definition of micro-credentials (UNESCO and partners)

- 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**: 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.
  - Purposes: personal or general educational advancement; qualifying to practice a particular profession or to follow a particular career path.

Micro-credentials: proposed definition

Another large **subset of credentials** can be referred to as **micro-credentials**: **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.

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
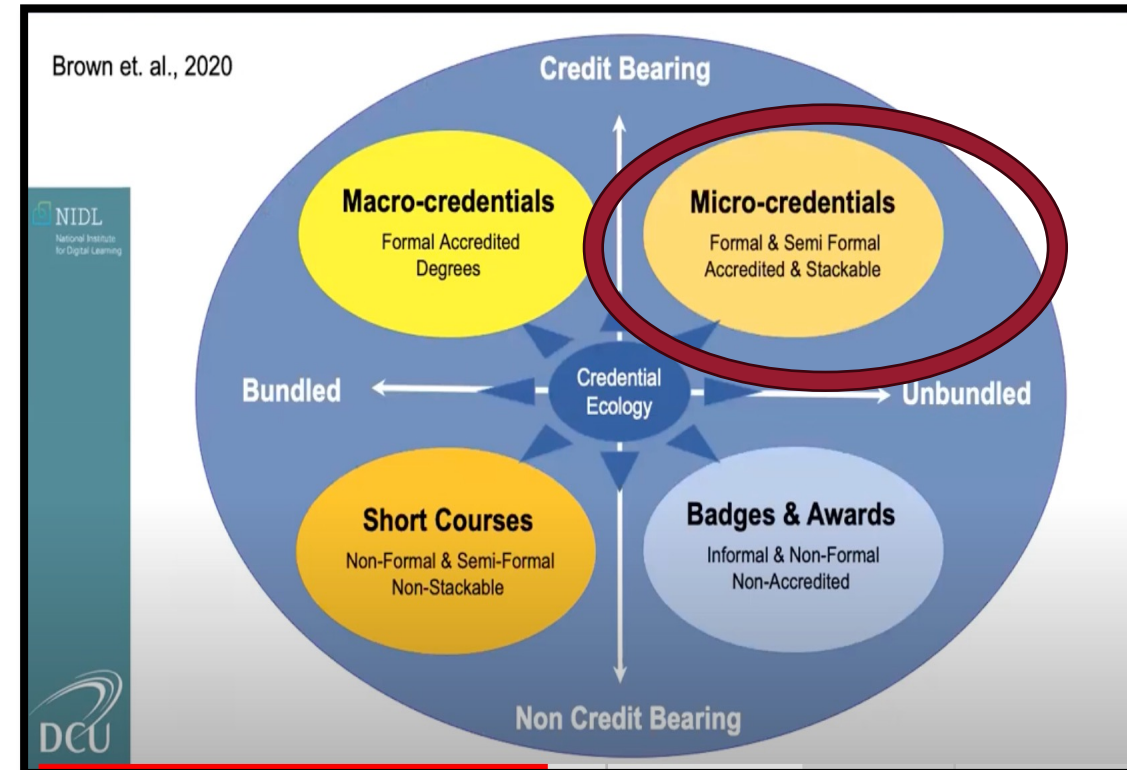
Access the video
Mike Brown, MC Observatory

Micro-credentials

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

- **Note: <u>Stackability</u> is a common feature for US, NZ, A, EU, IBM**

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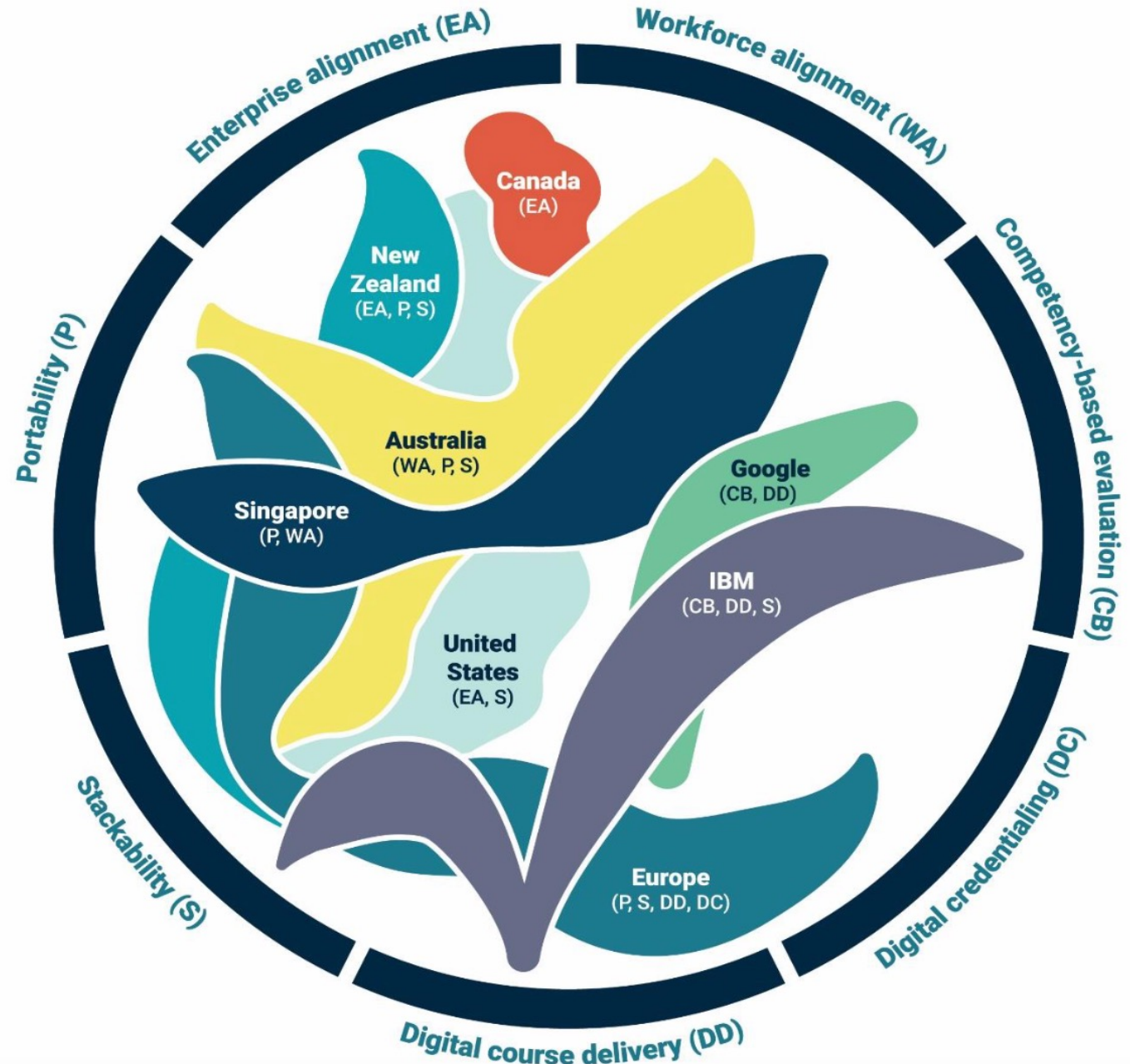
OCED: Contexts in which Micro-credentials are expected to play a role

- 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

4.2

NQF and micro-credentials: approaches and examples

3 clusters of micro-credentials

Skill Credential	Learning Unit	Short Learning Programmes
1-25 hours of learning	25-150 hours of learning	150-1500 hours of learning Typically consists of more than one learning unit
Awarded within the context of non-formal learning	Awarded within the context of formal learning and include options for assessment	Awarded within the context of formal learning and include options for assessment
Not explicitly quality assured by external QA	Often explicitly quality assured by external QA	Always explicitly quality assured by external QA
Linked to the acquisition of a specific competence	Linked to the acquisition of a set of learning outcomes	Linked to specific career progression goals
		Can be mapped to qualification frameworks, either as 'partial qualifications' or as a special category of micro-qualifications

Integrate micro-credentials into national and regional qualifications frameworks.

> **[The NQFs aim to]** *make qualifications easier to understand and compare. The NQFs classify qualifications by level, based on learning outcomes - that is, what the holder of a certificate or diploma is expected to know, understand, and be able to do. This classification reflects the content and profile of qualifications.*
>
> Source: Cedefop (2022).

Two approaches for mapping micro-credentials to existing NQFs:

- A **new micro-credential qualification type** may be established under the NQF.

- A micro-credential may be **outlined as a subunit** of an existing qualification on the NQF.

Quality Assurance

✓Incorporate micro-credentials into your **institutional quality assurance** system.

    ❑Delivery of courses, assessment and certification.

    ❑Feedback from learners and external stakeholders (such as employers and professional bodies)

✓**Externally review** the quality of your institution.

✓**Publish** methods and results of internal and external quality assurance.

Transparency

✓ **Publish the learning outcomes**, notional **workload** and **credit** points of micro-credentials.

  ❑ Document link with teaching, learning and assessment criteria and methods.

  ❑ Document link with formal taxonomies such as skill or competence frameworks (e.g. ESCO).

  ❑ Publish information on micro-credentials using the standard model.

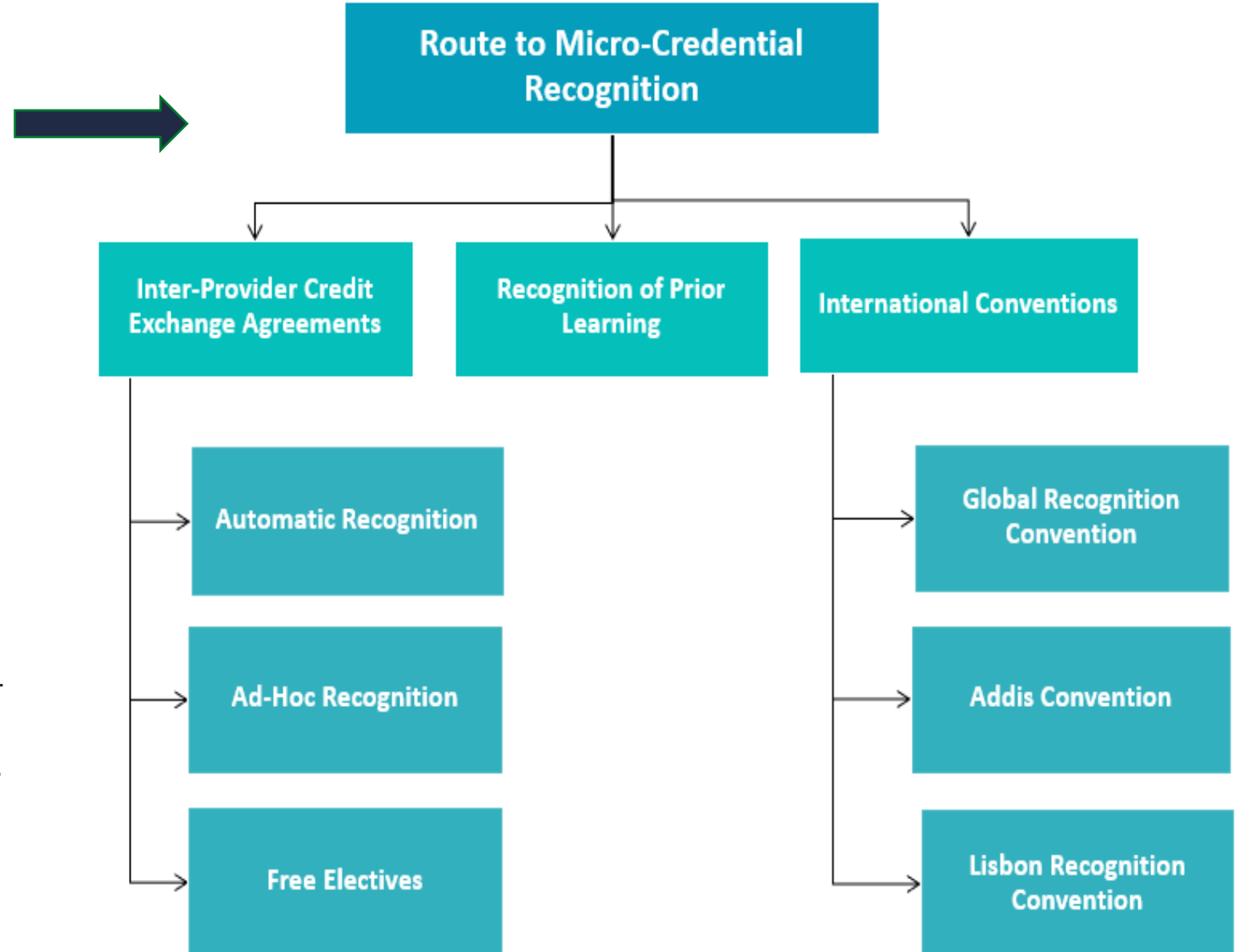✓ **Integrate micro-credentials into national and regional qualifications frameworks.**

For education or training purposes:

- ✓ **Enable multiple, feasible routes** for micro-credential recognition

- ✓ **Seek collaboration** with private or public sector entities (which may include professional bodies, companies and other enterprises) to co-design and offer micro-credentials which may be automatically recognised for employment and education purposes.

For employment purposes:

- ✓ Non-formal or informal learning providers should tailor recommendations in the Micro-Credentials Guide to design and offer fit for purpose interoperable micro-credentials (e.g. as part of **Continuous Professional Development** schemes).

Route to Micro-Credential Recognition

- **Inter-Provider Credit Exchange Agreements**
  - Automatic Recognition
  - Ad-Hoc Recognition
  - Free Electives
- **Recognition of Prior Learning**
- **International Conventions**
  - Global Recognition Convention
  - Addis Convention
  - Lisbon Recognition Convention

In the context of European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

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

"Use micro-credentials, where appropriate, as a tool to strengthen and complement 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

ANNEX I

Union standard elements to describe a micro-credential

This annex includes a list of common Union standard elements to describe micro-credentials that can be used as a resource to support implementation.

Mandatory elements:	Identification of the learner
	Title of the micro-credential
	Country/Region of the issuer
	Awarding body
	Date of issuing
	Learning outcomes
	Notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits, wherever possible)
	Level (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential (EQF, QF-EHEA), if applicable
	Type of assessment
	Form of participation in the learning activity
	Type of quality assurance used to underpin the micro-credential
Optional elements, where relevant (non-exhaustive list)	Prerequisites needed to enrol in the learning activity
	Supervision and identity verification during assessment (unsupervised with no identity verification, supervised with no identity verification, supervised online, or onsite with identity verification)
	Grade achieved
	Integration/stackability options (standalone, independent micro-credential/integrated, stackable towards another credential)
	Further information

These standard elements will be included in a Union data model[1] that specifies a common format for describing micro-credentials. The data model will be available as an open standard

Elements to structure and design a Micro-credential (EU Recommendation on a commin approach to micro-credentials)
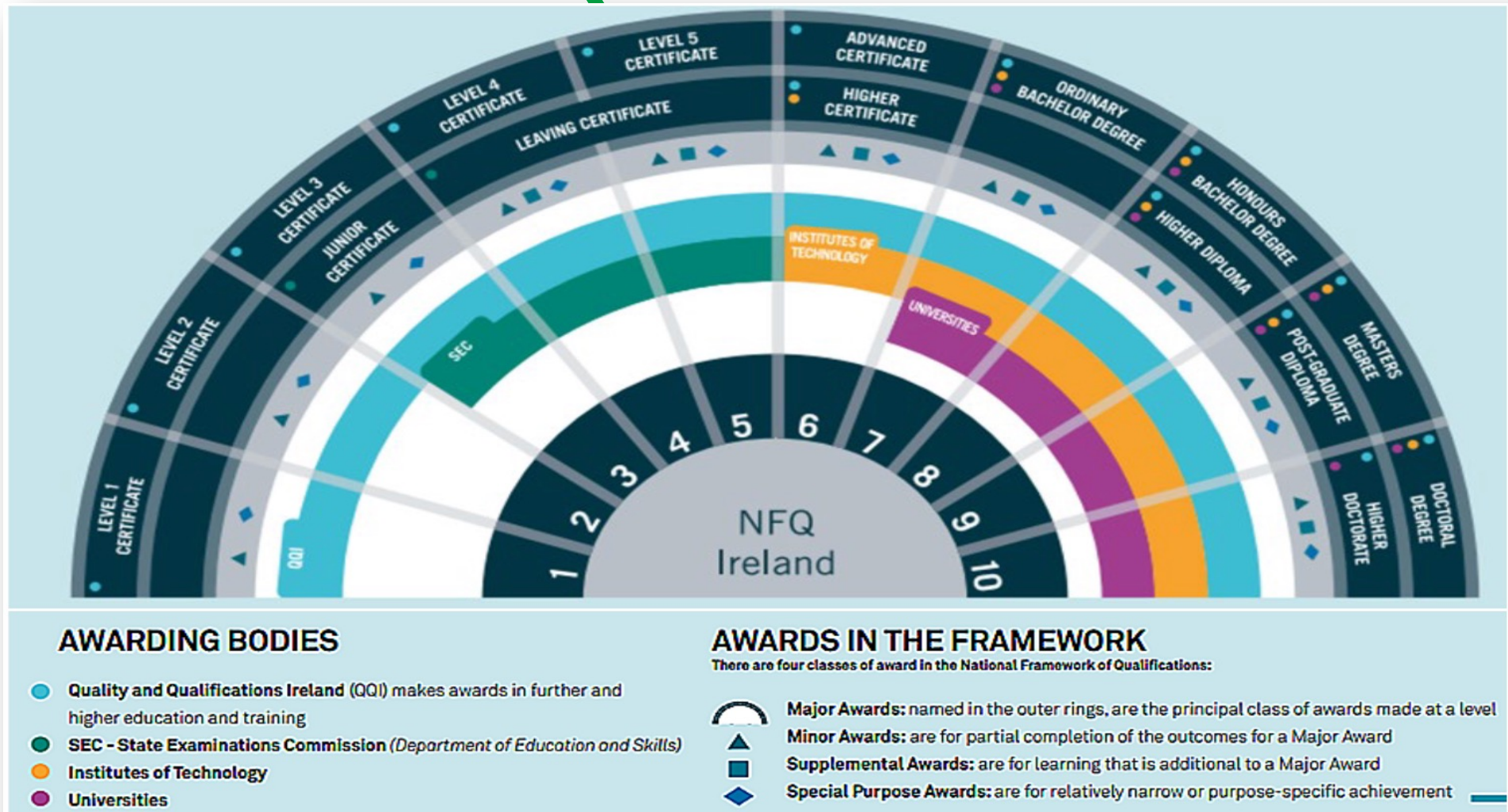
In the NFQ of Ireland

Ireland: NFQ

Figure 3: The Irish NQF. Source: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2021).

Micro-credentials are awarded by universities, institutes of technologies, other awarding bodies, the State Examinations Commission and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)[11].

Ireland: micro-credentials in the NFQ

Micro-credentials are incorporated at every level of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications

They are represented in three different forms:

"Minor Awards" (at any level, outcomes of partially completed "Major Awards" can be awarded).

"Supplemental Awards" (from Level 4 onwards, learning in addition to "Major Awards" can be awarded).

"Special Purpose Awards" (specific achievements can be awarded at any level)

In the National Qualifications Catalogue (register) - Portugal

Portugal: National Catalogue Qualifications - ANQEP (UFCD)

- UFCD: proxy of micro-credentials
- Access: National Catalogue of Qualifications – ANQEP.
- Can be combined into a full qualification.
- UFCD: Volume of learning: 2.25 – 4.5 credit points
- Separate UFCD: does not give a <u>level of qualification</u>.

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

UFCD: Unidade de Formação de Curta Duração; Unit of Training of Short Duration

In the National Micro-credentials Framework Australia

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 <u>minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) award qualification</u>, that is <u>additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of an AQF award qualification.</u>

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

ACQF

In the NQF of New Zealand

New Zealand Qualifications Framework
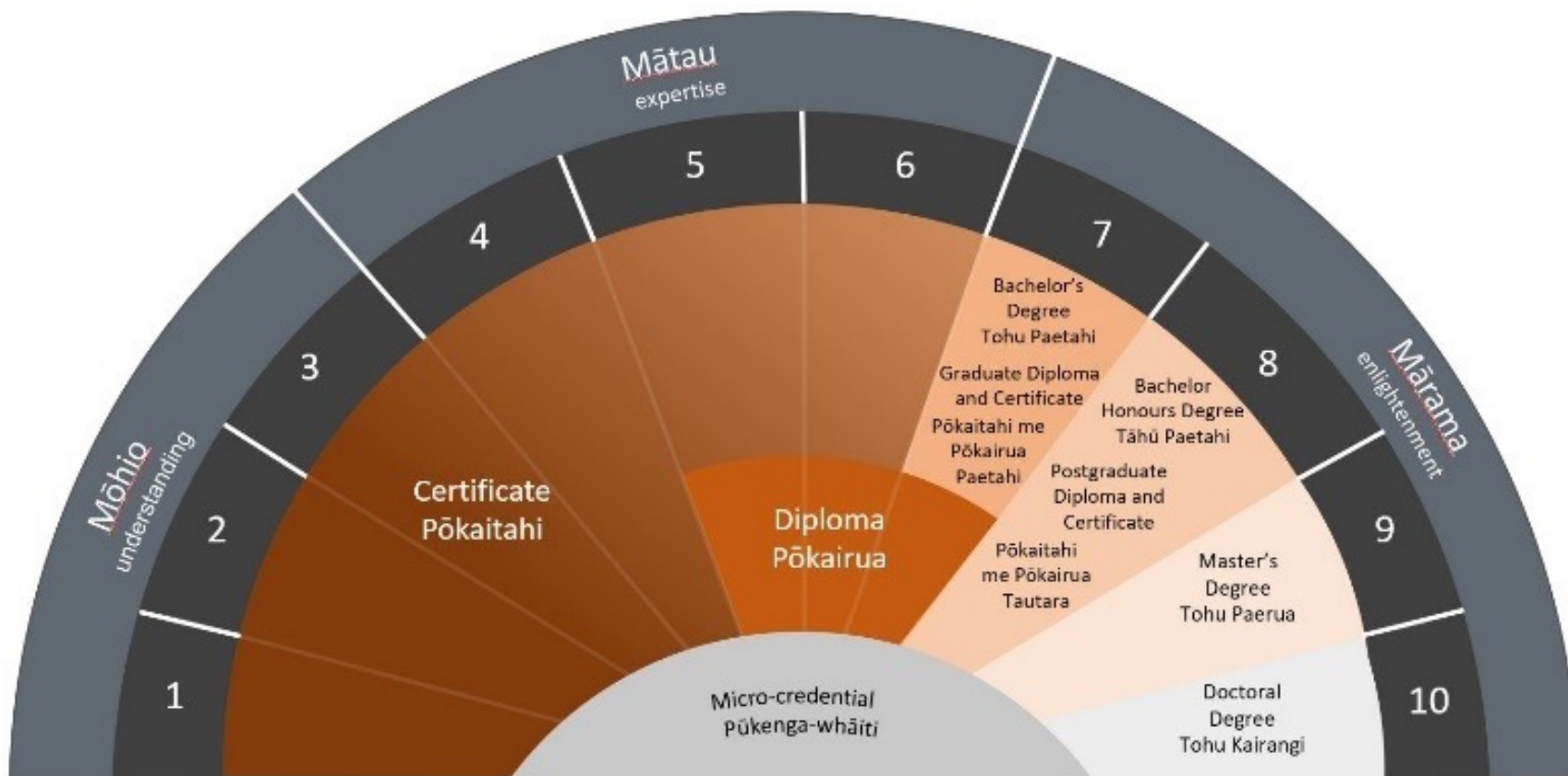
Micro-credentials can be listed at any level (from 1 to 10) of the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF).

They must:

- Have at least one credit (10 learning hours) and are typically more than 5 credits and less than 40 credits.

- State the learning outcomes, demonstrate that they meet an industry or community need and include an assessment component.

- Vocational micro-credentials must include any relevant skills standards

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/microcredentials.do

Register of NZQA-approved Micro-credentials

Keyword

Developer name or Education Organisation number

Search

421 results found. Displaying page 1 of 3.
Please refine your search, if required.

Next Page >>

Title	Level	Credits	Developer	Approval Date	Review Date	
Core Construction of Forestry Roads (Micro-Credential)	3	40	Muka Tangata - People, Food and Fibre Workforce Development Council	01/2024	30/12/2026	
ADAS (Trainee) Offshore ROV Pilot (Micro-credential)	5	20	Omne Marine Training Centre Limited	08/2022	02/08/2024	
ADAS Diver Medical Technician (Offshore) (Micro-credential)	5	10	Omne Marine Training Centre Limited	07/2022	02/08/2024	
ADAS Diver Medical Technician (Onshore) (Micro-credential)	5	10	Omne Marine Training Centre Limited	07/2022	30/10/2025	
ADAS Diver Medical Technician (Refresher) (Micro-credential)	5	5	Omne Marine Training Centre Limited	08/2022	02/08/2024	
ADAS Offshore Supervisor Trainee (Air) (Micro-credential)	6	6	Omne Marine Training Centre Limited	08/2022	02/08/2024	
ADAS Onshore ROV Pilot (Micro-credential)	4	29	Omne Marine Training Centre Limited	08/2022	02/08/2024	

Final version for signatures for the purposes of section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020

NZQA Board: .... Date: 28 Nov 2022

Minister of Education: .... Date: 15/12/22

Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022

1. **Authority**
1.1 These Rules are made under section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020.
2. **Commencement**
2.1 These Rules commence on the 28th day after the date of approval by the Minister under section 452(5) of the Education and Training Act 2020.

421 micro-credentials in online register. With NQF level (3 to 8). Credits: 5-40…

Example 1: "Excavator Operator" micro-credential – NZQA register

| Excavator Operator (Micro-credential) | 3 | 29 | Besafe Training Limited | | 22/09/2023 | ⌄ |

Aim

The aim of this micro-credential is to train skilled operators to operate and manage hydraulic excavators on construction sites, so that they are able to place materials with minimal spillage, stock-pile and other related activities in accordance with company and industry standards including health and safety legislation.

This micro-credential targets excavators' operators who are employed with no formal training or qualification. It will also enable learners to meet the Construct Safe Tier 2 Health and Safety Competency Test for excavators.

Learners will be assessed against unit standard 17310 and must complete an "WTR" endorsement training (unit standards 16701, 16702, 16703) that is pre-requisite for operating excavator to successfully graduate from this micro-credential.

Outcome

Operate a special-type vehicle safely and legally by obtaining an W, T or R Licence endorsement

Apply excavation health and safety regulations in accordance with company and job requirements

Perform site and excavator checks

Operate excavator to load, unload, stock-pile, strip, and trim materials

Perform special lifting and post-operational procedures

Education Organisations that can deliver this Micro-credential

Besafe Training Limited

Cybersecurity for Risk and Security Management (Micro-credential)	7	30	New Zealand School of Education Limited	10/2023	29/09/2025

Aim

This micro-credential provides graduates within New Zealand and overseas with expertise in information security and risk management. Its relevance spans various stakeholders, enhancing career prospects for learners, empowering Māori communities in digital safety, aiding industries and employers with data protection, meeting the demand for specialists in professions, and bolstering security awareness in communities. Graduates will be able to demonstrate skills in governance, risk management, compliance, and security program development, preparing them to identify and mitigate risks while aligning security with organisational goals. This micro-credential serves as a gateway to advanced internationally recognised certifications such as ISACA CISM and CRISC. Culturally, it promotes diversity, opening cybersecurity roles for Māori learners, while contributing to community well-being and New Zealand's cybersecurity objectives.

Outcome

Graduates of this micro-credentials will be able to:
- Analyse information security governance as it applies to the business environment.
- Apply information security risk management techniques to identify, assess, and mitigate potential threats and vulnerabilities within an organisation's information systems.
- Design and implement an information security program for a business within the context of industry standards and frameworks.
- Evaluate incident management best practice as applicable in a business setting.
- Apply information technology and security principles to strengthen an organisation's security posture.

Education Organisations that can deliver this Micro-credential

New Zealand Skills and Education College

ACQF

NZQA

Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

February 2024

Stacking Micro-credentials

This document guides qualification and programme developers on stacking micro-credentials within a programme.

What is stacking?

Stacking, in the context of this document, means including *one or more* approved standalone micro-credentials within a programme that NZQA formally recognises.

Micro-credentials can form part of a programme that leads to a qualification if:

- the micro-credential aligns with and contributes to the qualification's outcomes and strategic purpose, and
- the overall design of the programme is coherent.

NZQA approval is required to stack micro-credential(s) in a programme.

Why stack micro-credentials in a programme?

A programme that includes micro-credentials can offer learners

- a meaningful learning pathway for accumulating relevant and necessary skills
- the opportunity to gain valuable skills in a shorter time
- the opportunity to check interest and aptitude before committing to a whole programme.

Six considerations

 Rationale

 Structure

 Enrolment

 Alignment to the programme

 Credit Recognition Transfer (CRT)

 Ongoing review

https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Tertiary/Resources-for-tertiary-providers/Stacking-micro-credentials.pdf

NZQF: Stacking of micro-credentials (2)

There are six key areas to consider. Questions and answers follow:

Rationale

What is the rationale for stacking a micro-credential in a programme?	The rationale for including a micro-credential in a programme should be clear to establish meaningful learning pathways for the learners. Stakeholders' support for including a micro-credential in the programme should be evident.

Structure

How will the micro-credential function as a programme component?	The micro-credential must fit precisely into the programme as either <u>a compulsory or elective component.</u> This means the following should remain the same as the approved standalone micro-credential: • Title • Level • Credit • Learning outcomes • Indicative Content – learning materials/resources/activities • Assessment method(s) • Unit or Skill standard(s) • Related Regulations. The learning outcomes of the component (micro-credential) should align with the graduate profile outcomes (GPOs) of the qualification to which the programme leads.
Can the programme consist entirely of stacked micro-credentials?	Programmes at levels 1-6 can be comprised entirely of stacked micro-credentials. For programmes at the degree level, components at the end or in the last year are based on augmentation and scaffolding of the knowledge and skills learned initially in the programme. Therefore, having micro-credentials stacked at the end of the programme will not enable the learner to achieve the analytical rigour and mastery required at high-level qualifications.

Enrolment

Do students have to enrol in both micro-credential(s) and the programme?	If the student is enrolled in a programme that includes micro-credentials as components, the enrollment system should be set up to ensure the student is enrolled on the micro-credentials and the programme simultaneously. As for achievement of the micro-credential and qualification (programme), these must be reported to NZQA and included on the learner's academic record. If the learner has already completed/achieved a micro-credential, which is part of a programme, simulatenous enrolment in the micro-credential and programme is not required.

Alignment to the Programme

What is the impact of stacking micro-credentials in a programme?	The learning outcomes of the component (micro-credential) should align with the graduate profile outcomes (GPOs) of the qualification to which the programme leads. Programme coherence should be checked to ensure alignment with the qualification, its conditions and requirements. Micro-credential entry requirements should be appropriate for the learner to enrol in the programme. The programme regulations should have been reviewed and confirmed to include each micro-credential. There should be no monitoring/moderation issues related to the existing programme in which stacking is proposed.
What more must be considered when stacking micro-credentials in a degree level 7 or above programme?	The intended delivery staff should be research-active if the stackable micro-credential is in a degree programme.

NZQF: Stacking of micro-credentials (4)

Credit recognition transfer (CRT)

| What if the student has already completed the micro-credential before enrolling in the programme? | Clear and robust policies and procedures relating to CRT are essential when considering the stacking of micro-credentials to recognise the learner's achievement of the micro-credential if achieved before enrolling in the programme.

Credit recognition transfer (CRT) is where one institution recognises credit gained at another institution towards a qualification or micro-credential. CRT generally describes credit from formal learning provided and credentialed by a tertiary provider. |
|---|---|

Ongoing review (after stacking is approved)

| How is ongoing alignment between the micro-credentials and the programme ensured? | Changes made to the component (stacked micro-credentials) in the programme (via a change application) do not mean an automatic change to the standalone micro-credential will be applied by NZQA and vice versa.

If a micro-credential is discontinued or set to an expiring status, this will have an impact on the programme in which the micro-credential is stacked. The programme must be updated before the standalone micro-credential is discontinued.

Education organisations should note:

- changing a micro-credential included in a programme requires confirming the alignment of the changes within the programme.
- the programme change application (if reviewed) should be submitted at the same time as the micro-credential change application. |
|---|---|

Microcredencial Observatory

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.

- NIDL Activities
- NIDL Research
- Major Policy Initiatives
- National & International Reports
- Useful Reading: Articles, Books & Papers
- Events, Conferences and Webinars
- Microcredentials *Sans Frontières* Network

National Institute for Digital Learning

Home About Units People Research Resources Get in touch

- 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:** Guideline to design, issue and recognise Micro-Credentials. https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/Micro-Credential%20Guidelines%20Final%20Delivery.pdf

- EU Recommendation 2022: A European Approach to Micro-Credentials: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.243.01.0010.01.ENG

- **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

Reflection Sierra Leone

Micro-credentials and / or proxies: please mention some current examples.

How will the NQF incorporate them? Some ideas?

What is the future of micro-credentials in Sierra Leone? What sectors, occupations will likely need micro-credentials?

What changes to policy and legislation will be required for micro-credentials to have a space?

What about dissemination, information and guidance for all stakeholders and potential users of microcredentials?

NCTVA: role. SLQCF…?

05

Micro-credentials survey ACQF: preliminary results

ACQF survey on micro-credentials

Dia 2 Sessão 10: novos tipos de qualificações? Microcredenciais
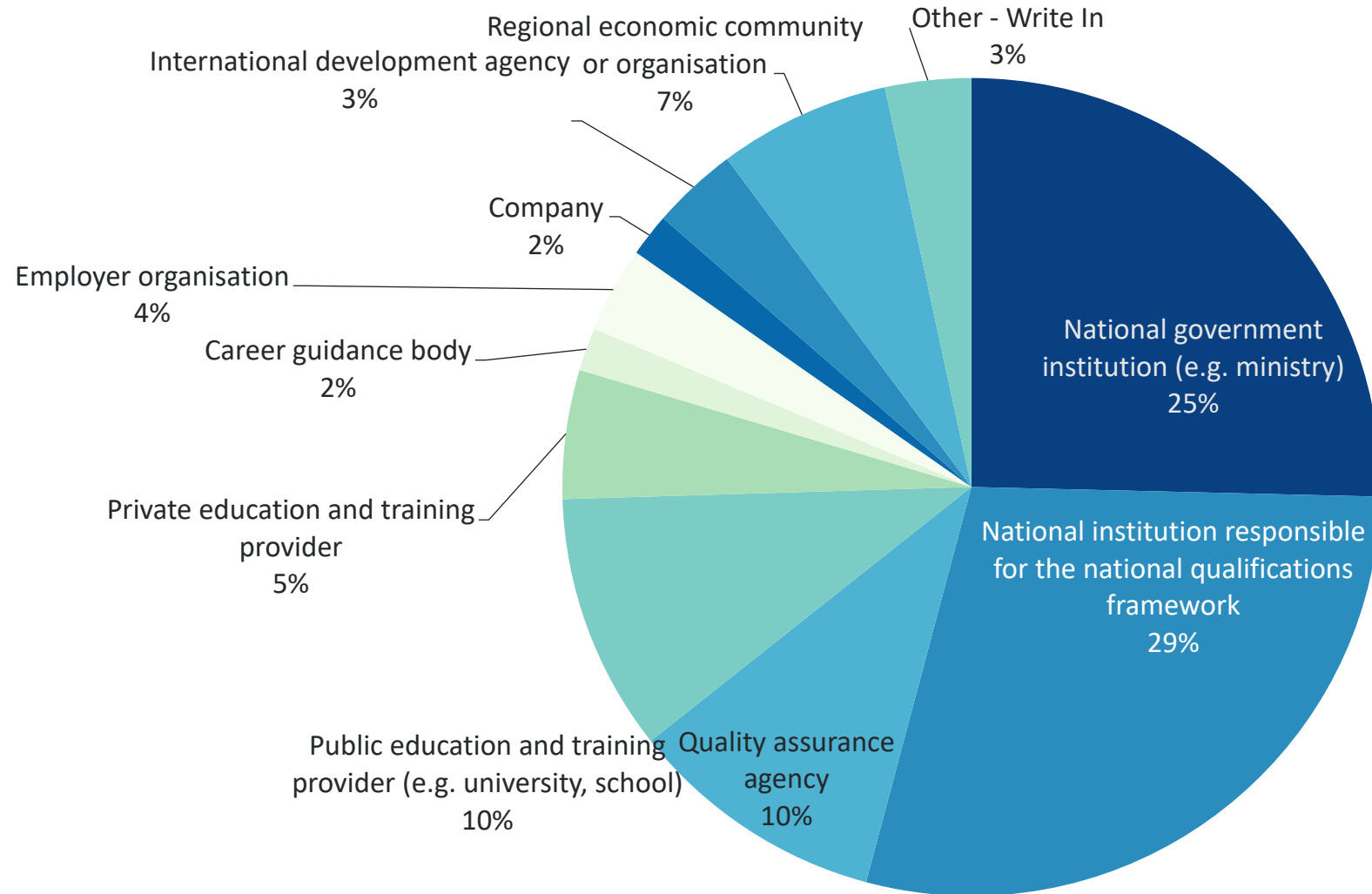
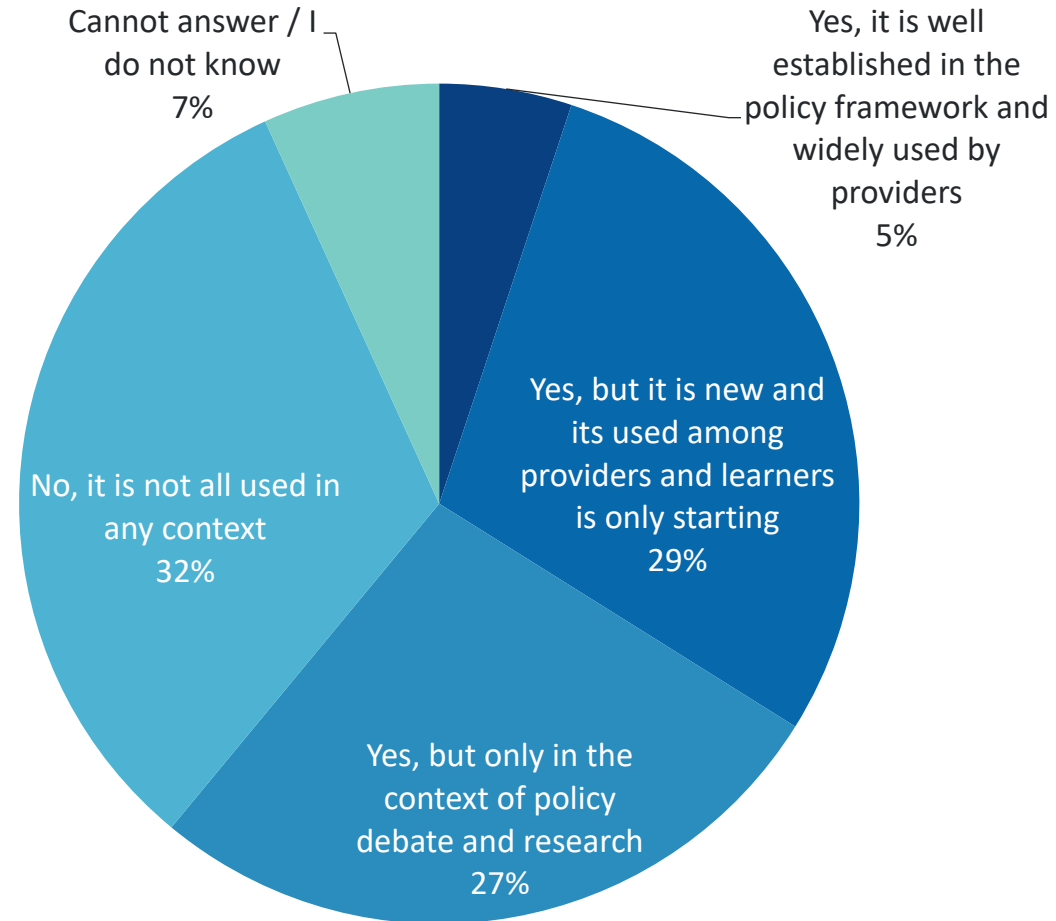Page 50
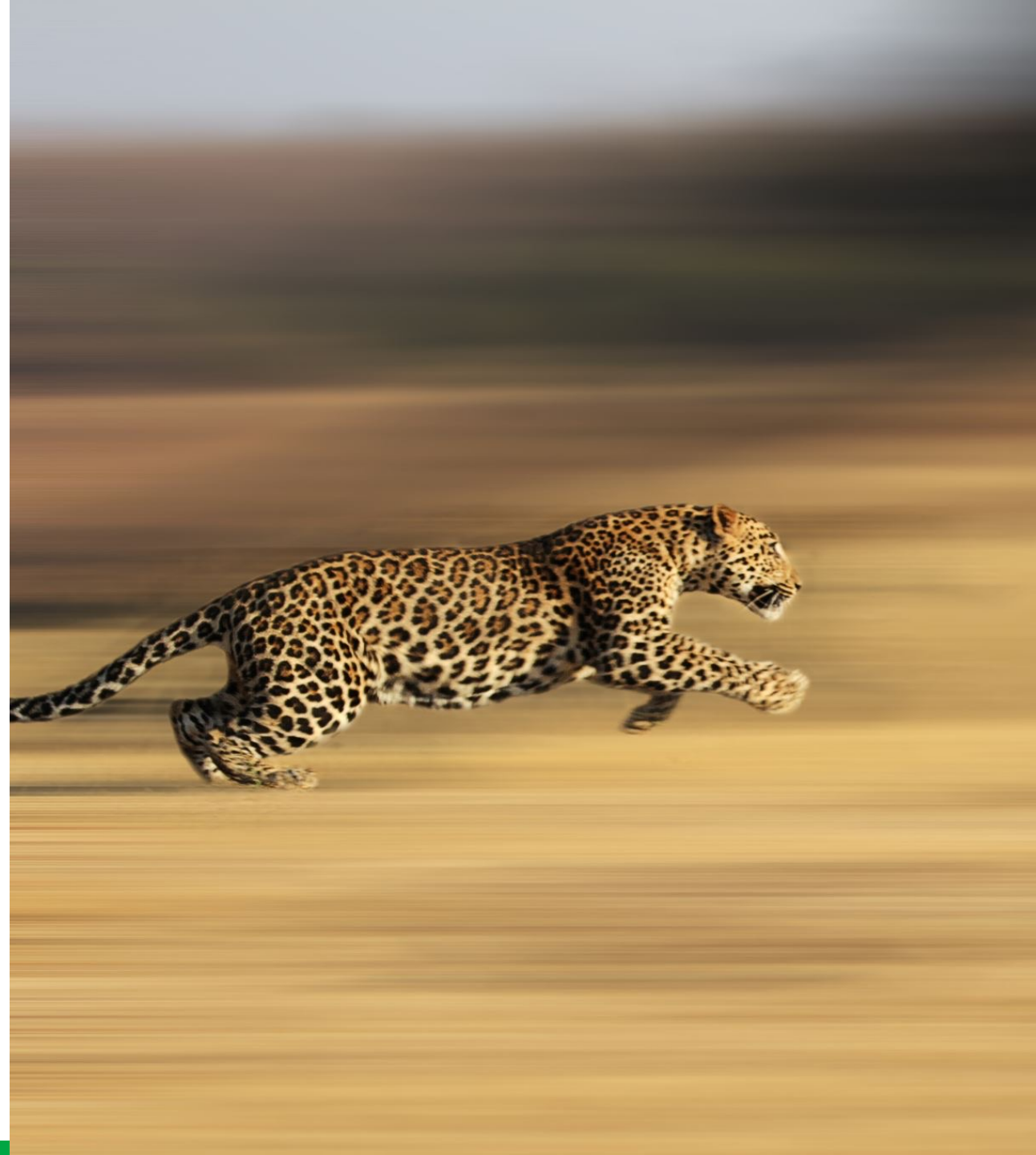
ACQF-II MC Survey respondents

SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Eswatini, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia

Value	Percent	Count
Angola	5.1%	3
Botswana	1.7%	1
Burkina Faso	6.8%	4
Cabo Verde	1.7%	1
Chad	1.7%	1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1.7%	1
Djibouti	1.7%	1
Egypt	1.7%	1
Eswatini (formerly Swaziland)	6.8%	4
Ethiopia	1.7%	1
Ghana	1.7%	1
Guinea-Bissau	6.8%	4
Kenya	5.1%	3
Malawi	1.7%	1
Mauritius	1.7%	1
Morocco	5.1%	3
Mozambique	6.8%	4
Namibia	1.7%	1
Nigeria	1.7%	1
Rwanda	1.7%	1
Senegal	1.7%	1
Seychelles	6.8%	4
Somalia	1.7%	1
South Africa	3.4%	2
Sudan	1.7%	1
Tunisia	5.1%	3
Uganda	3.4%	2
Zambia	11.9%	7
Totals		59

What type of organisation do you represent?

- Regional economic community or organisation 7%
- Other - Write In 3%
- International development agency 3%
- Company 2%
- Employer organisation 4%
- Career guidance body 2%
- Private education and training provider 5%
- Public education and training provider (e.g. university, school) 10%
- Quality assurance agency 10%
- National government institution (e.g. ministry) 25%
- National institution responsible for the national qualifications framework 29%

Is the term "micro-credential" used in the context of your organisation / country?

Cannot answer / I do not know
7%

Yes, it is well established in the policy framework and widely used by providers
5%

Yes, but it is new and its used among providers and learners is only starting
29%

No, it is not all used in any context
32%

Yes, but only in the context of policy debate and research
27%

Is there a formal definition for micro-credentials in your country?

- Cannot answer / I do not know 6%
- Yes 8%
- No 36%
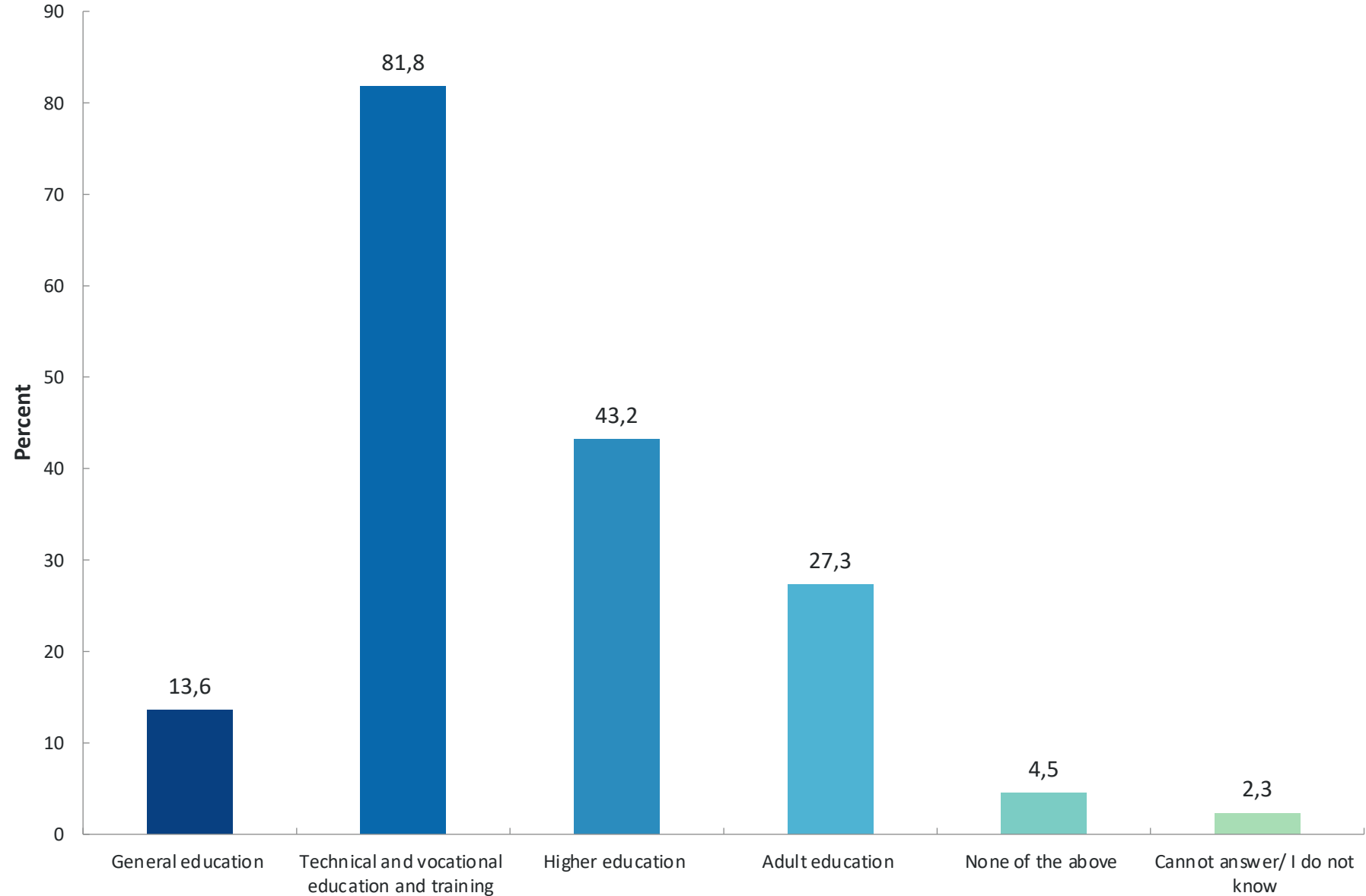- It is being developed 50%
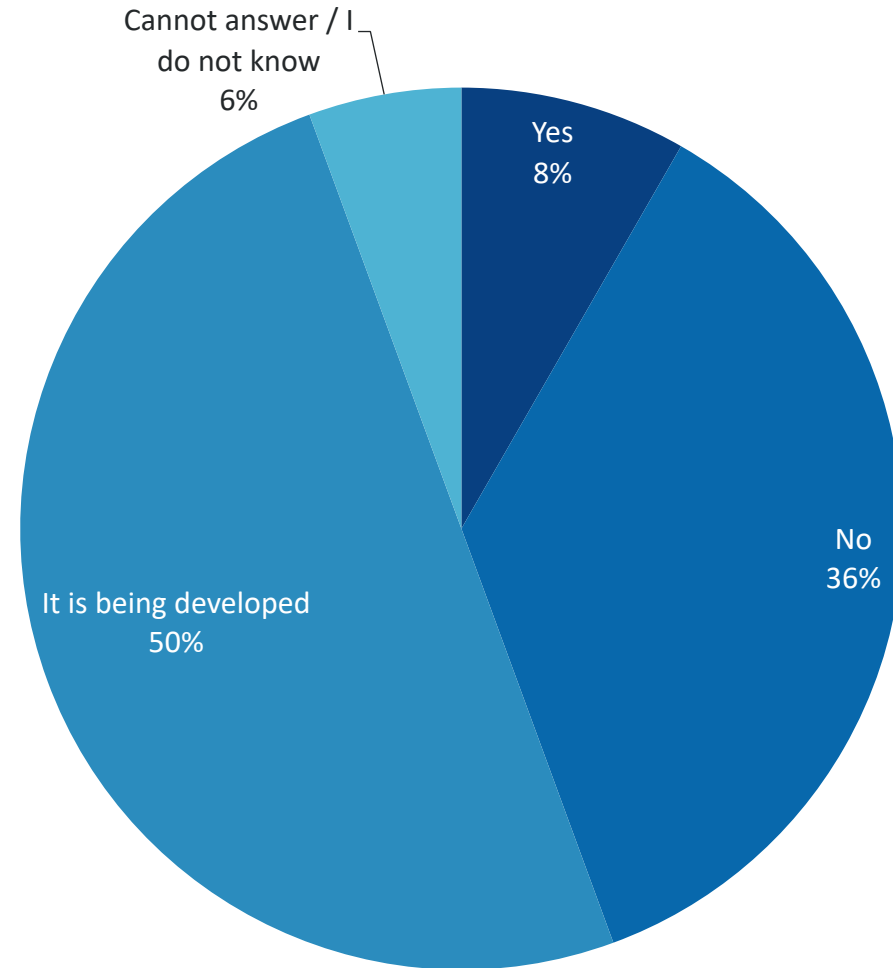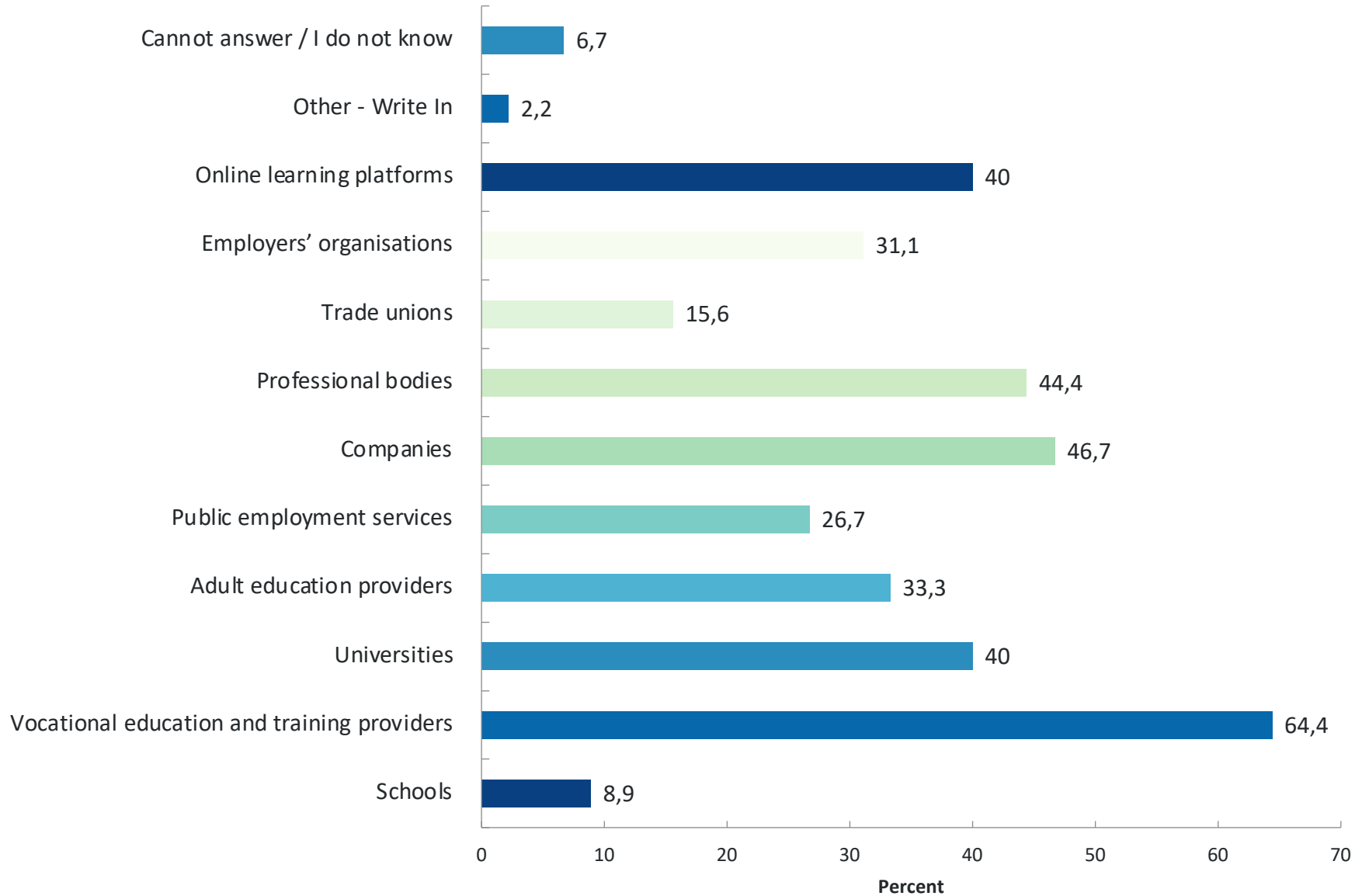
Are micro-credentials referred to in any official policy documents ?
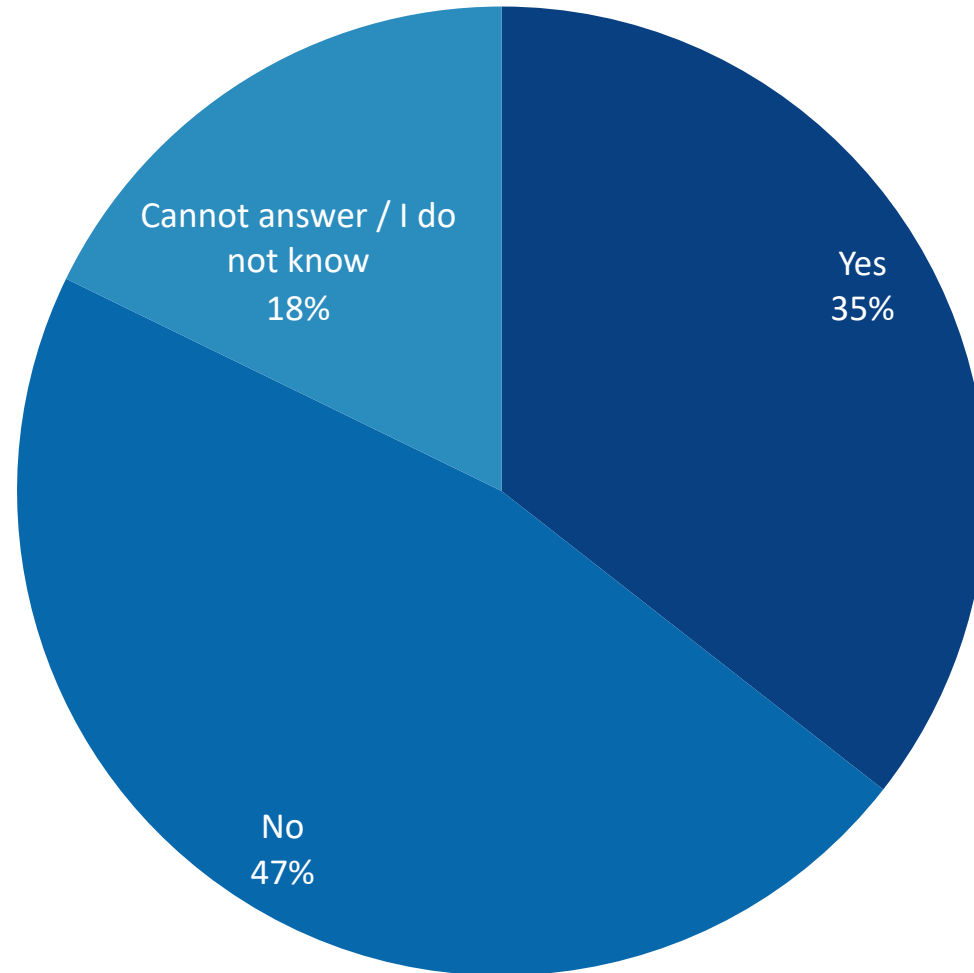
To what extent are micro-credentials (or the term specified by you) referred to in national and regional policy discussions?
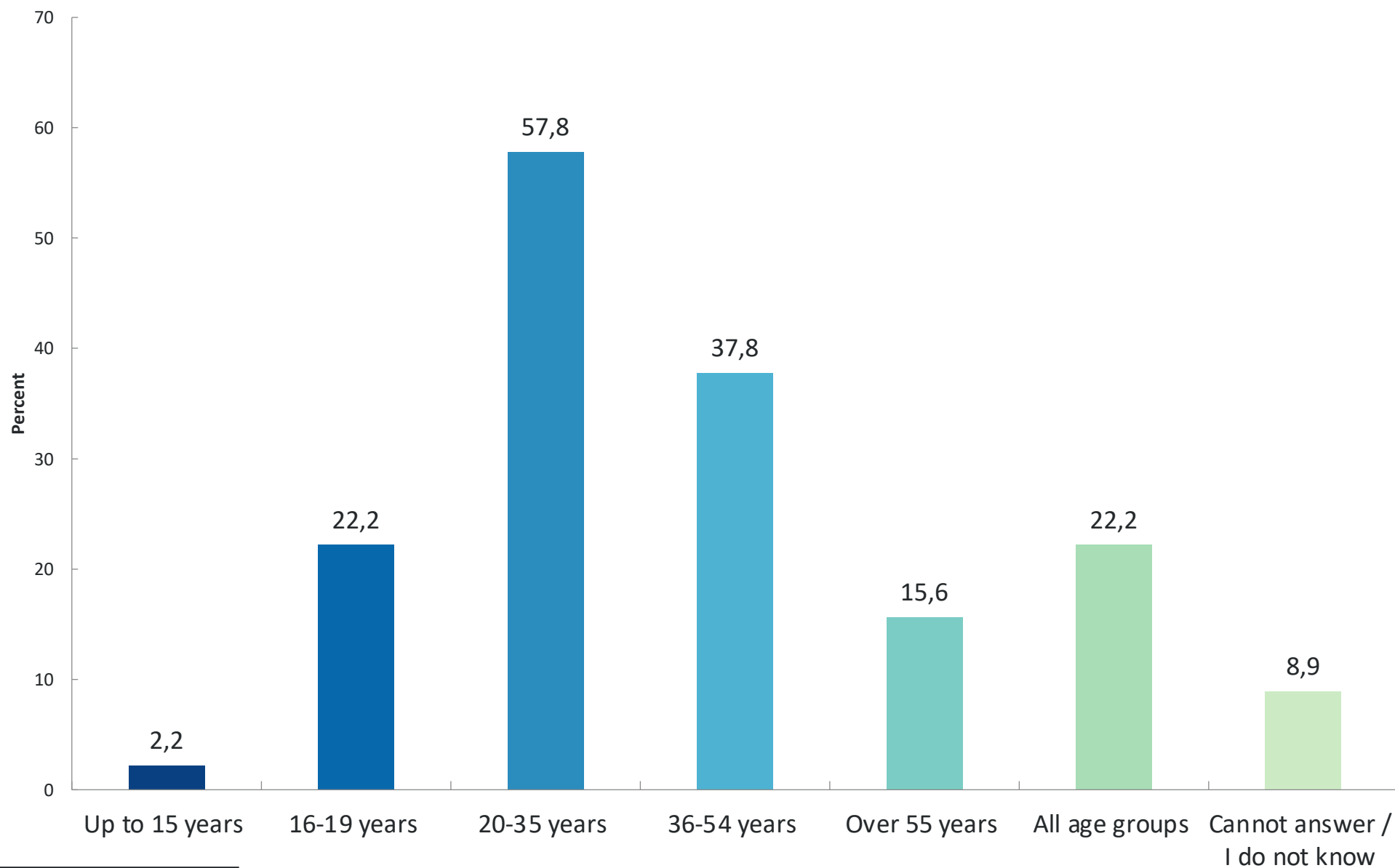
Cannot answer / I do not know 2%

To a very large extent 4%

Not at all 9%

To a large extent 40%

To small extent 45%
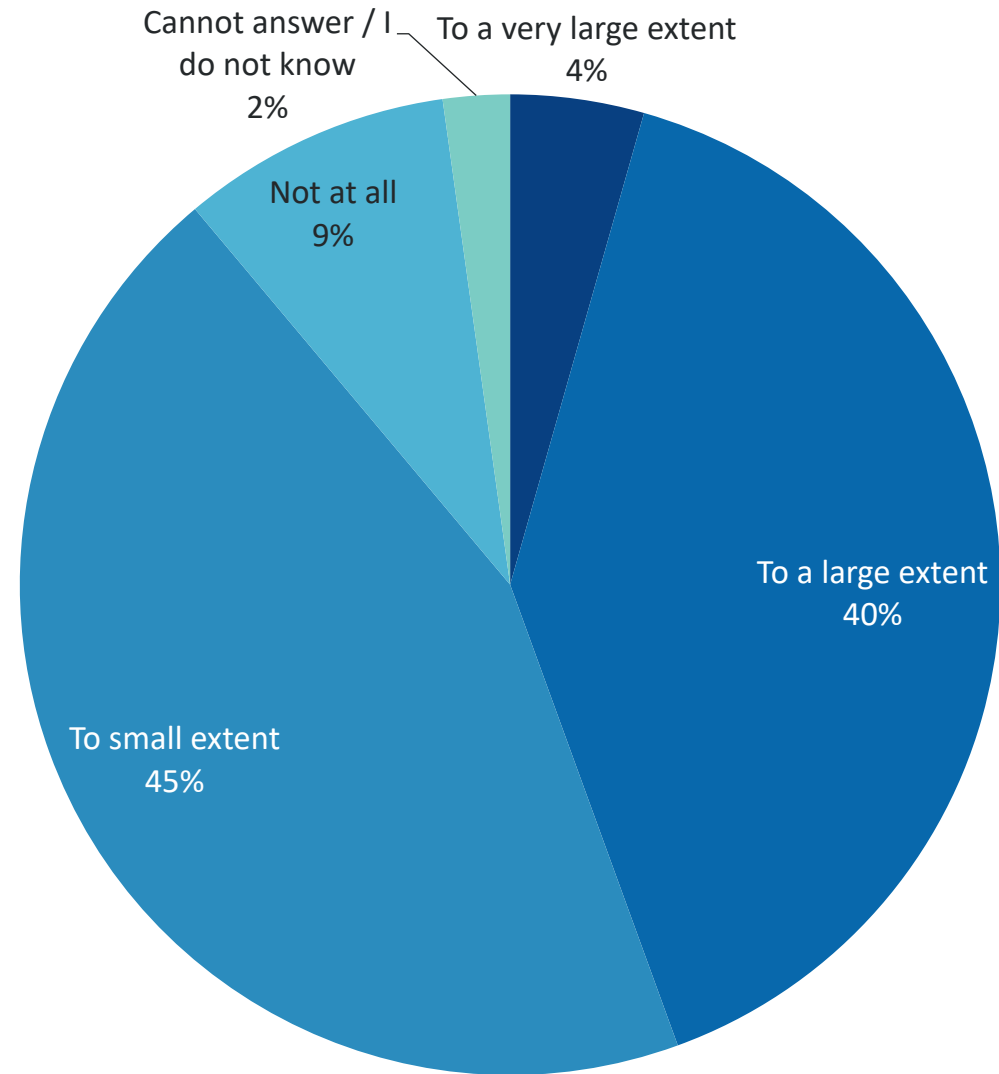
Which education and training sectors are offering micro-credentials?

Who are the main providers of micro-credentials ?

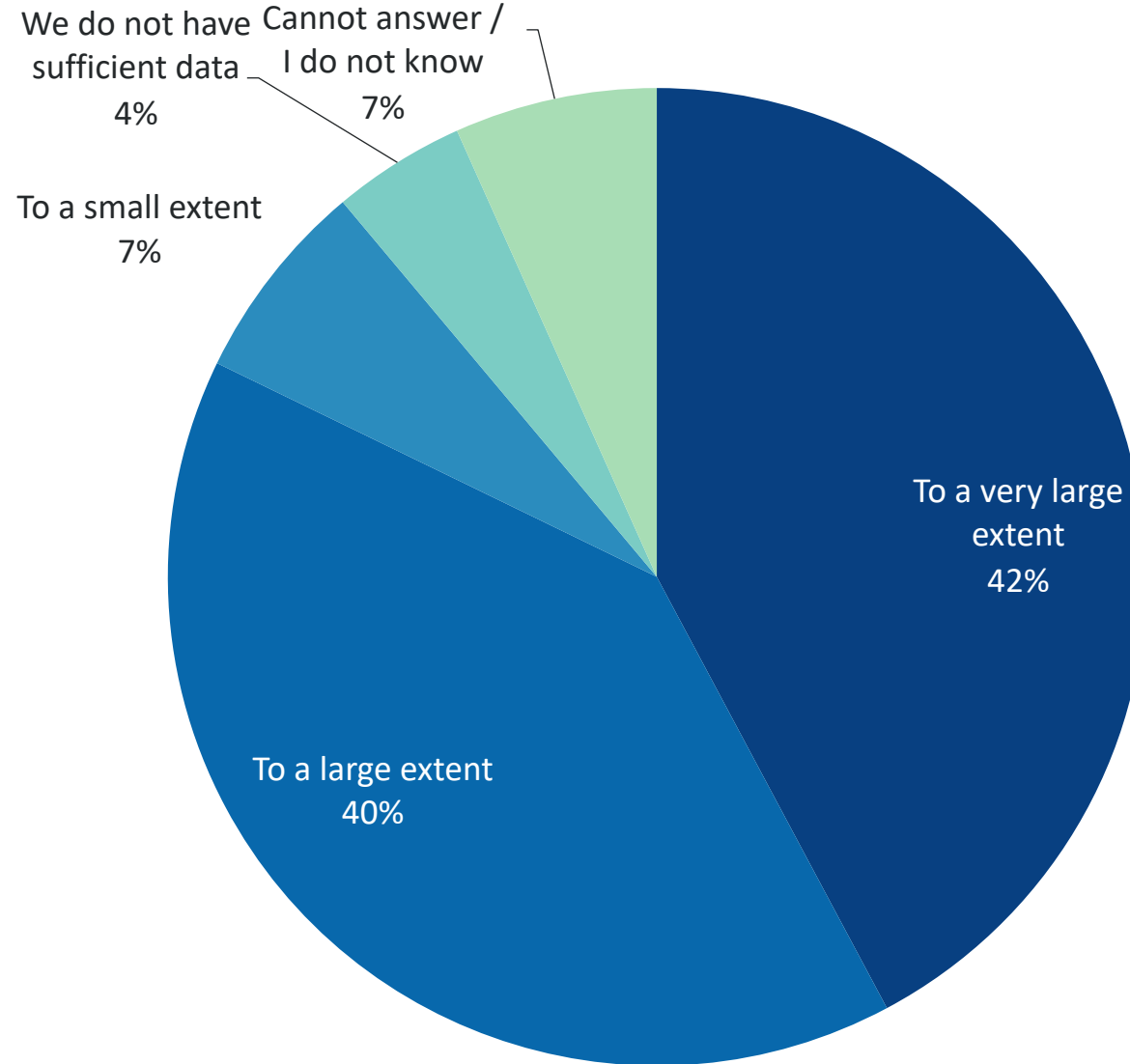| Category	Percent
Cannot answer / I do not know	6,7
Other - Write In	2,2
Online learning platforms	40
Employers' organisations	31,1
Trade unions	15,6
Professional bodies	44,4
Companies	46,7
Public employment services	26,7
Adult education providers	33,3
Universities	40
Vocational education and training providers	64,4
Schools	8,9

Percent

What groups of learners are the main recipients of micro-credentials in terms of age ?

What groups of learners are the main recipients of micro-credentials ?

| Group	Value
Individuals in non-formal and informal learning	51,1
Employed individuals	42,2
Workers of the informal sector	35,6
Self-employed individuals	33,3
Unemployed individuals	28,9
Individuals in formal education	24,4
All groups	22,2
Employers	13,3
Cannot answer / I do not know	8,9
Retired individuals	4,4

ACQF
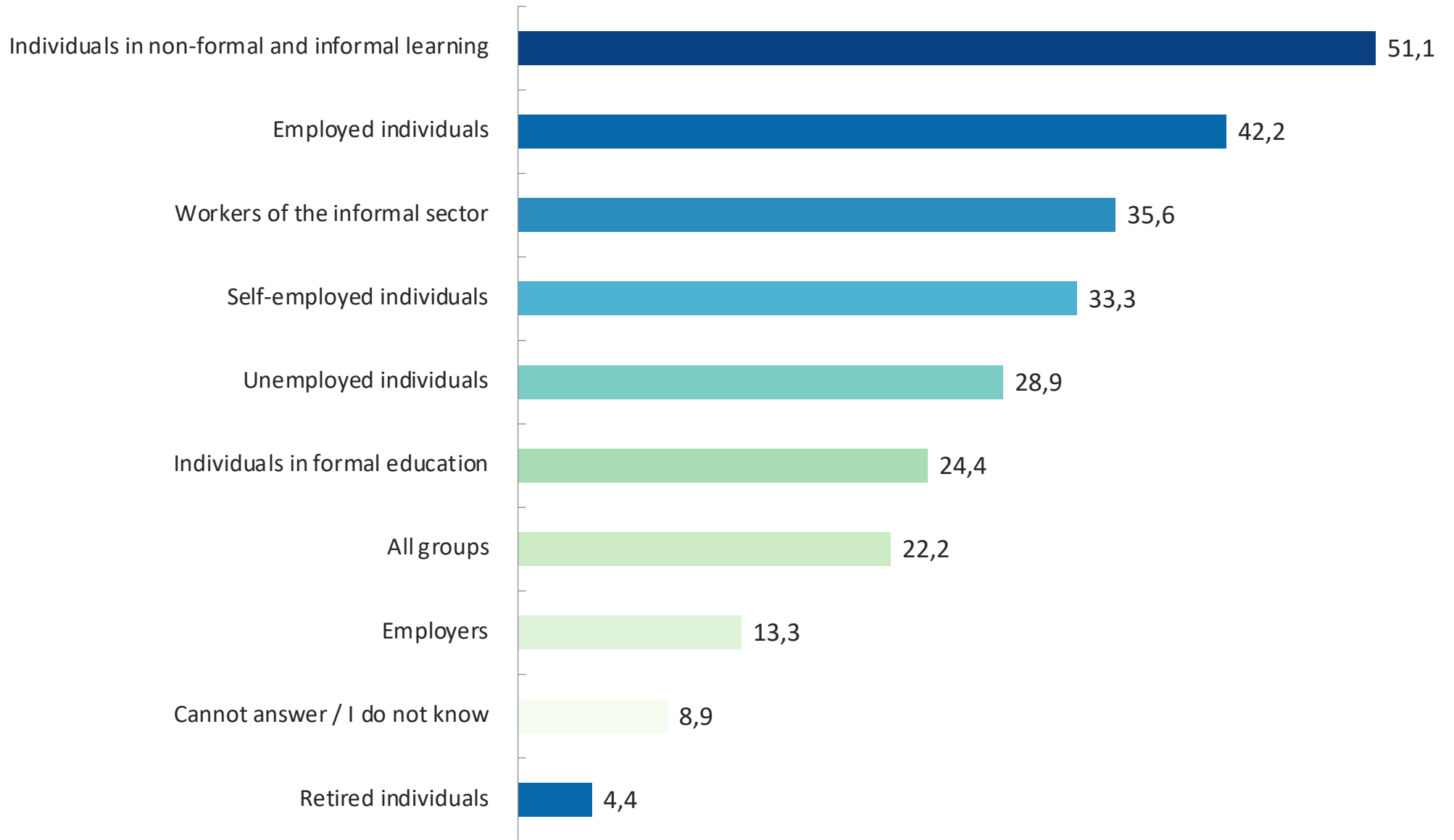
To what extent do you expect the offer of micro-credentials to grow in your country's education and training offering in the next couple of years ?

We do not have sufficient data
4%

Cannot answer / I do not know
7%

To a small extent
7%

To a large extent
40%

To a very large extent
42%

What types of micro-credentials are the most common in your country?
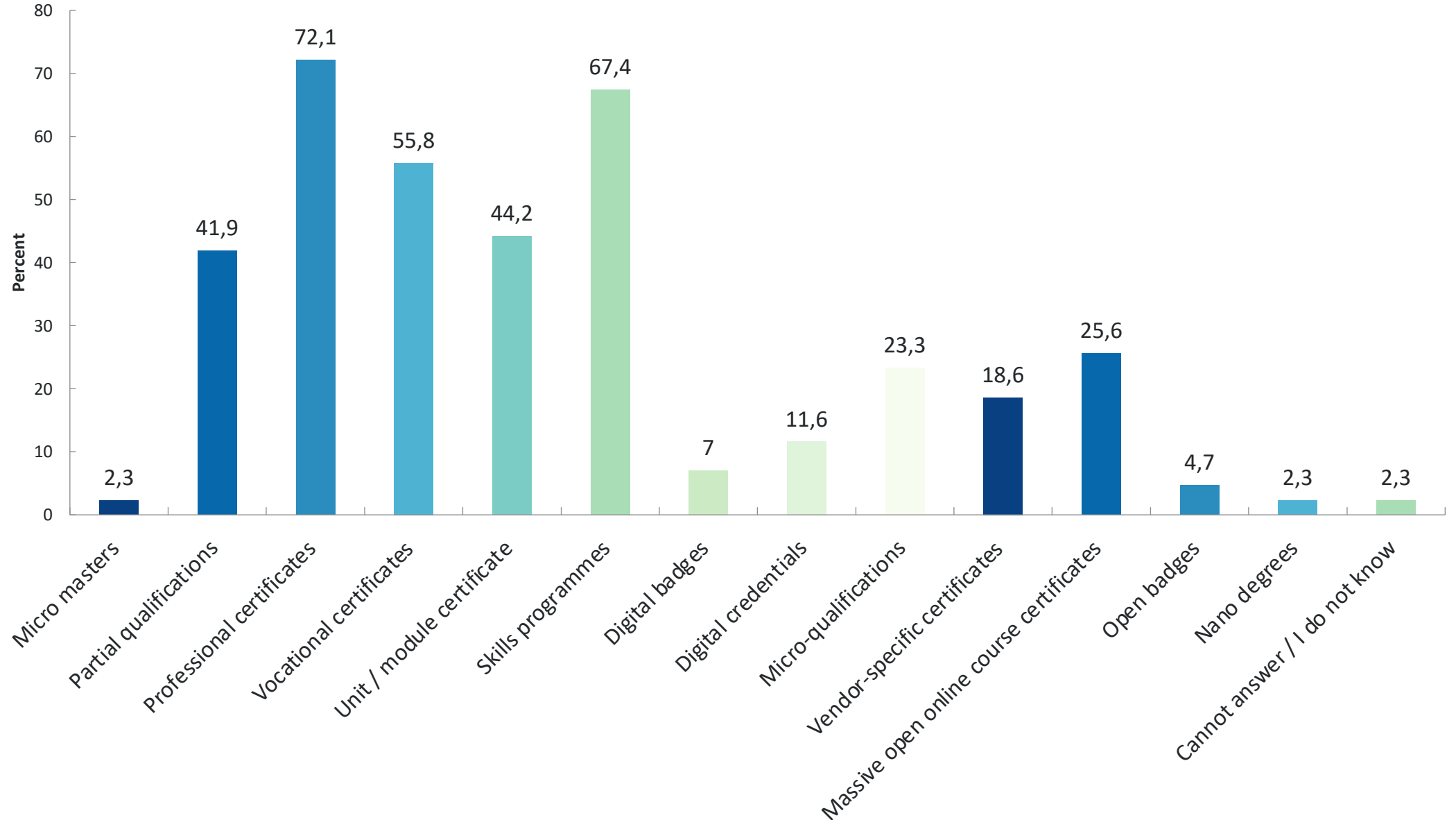
Please consider micro-credentials offered by your organisation. Which of the following information elements do they have?
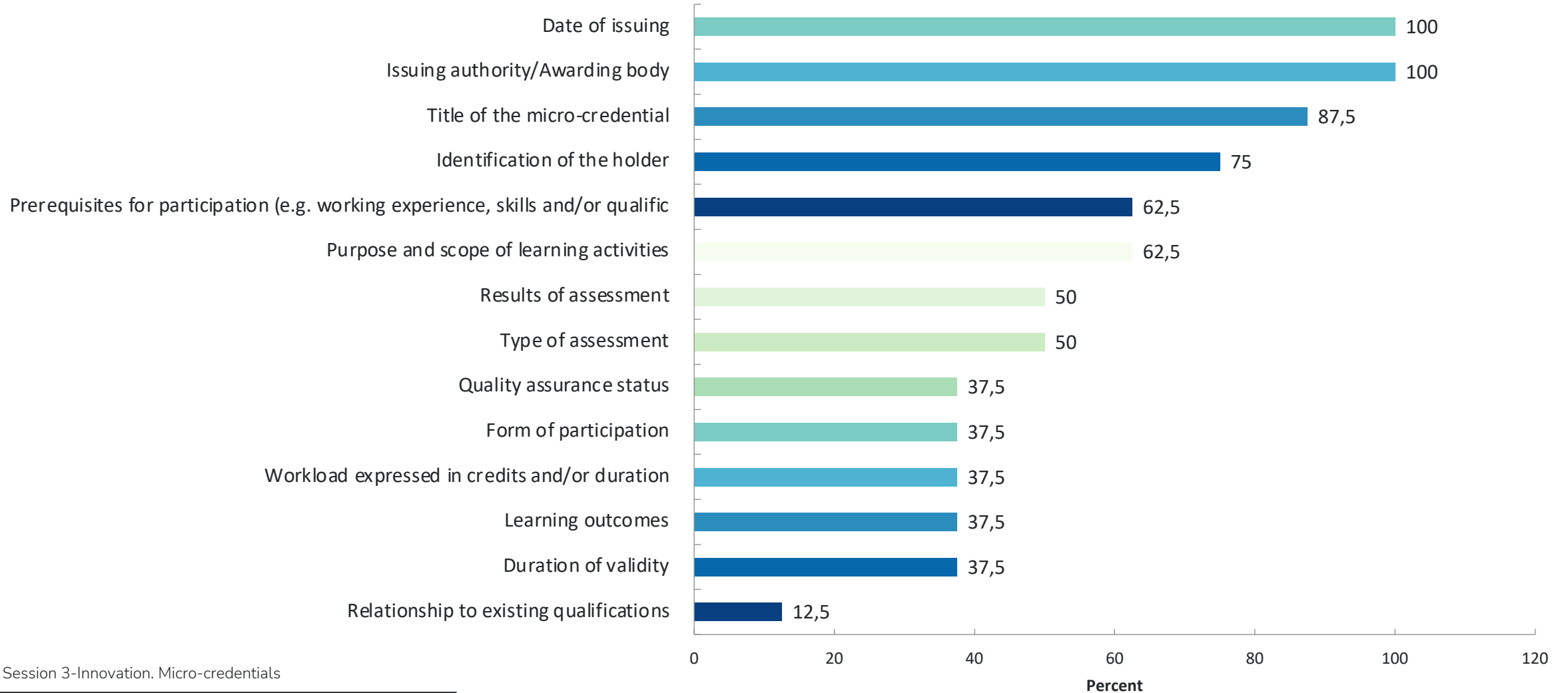
Are there any plans to include micro-credentials in your NQF / register or database of qualifications?

Cannot answer / I do not know
50%

Yes
50%
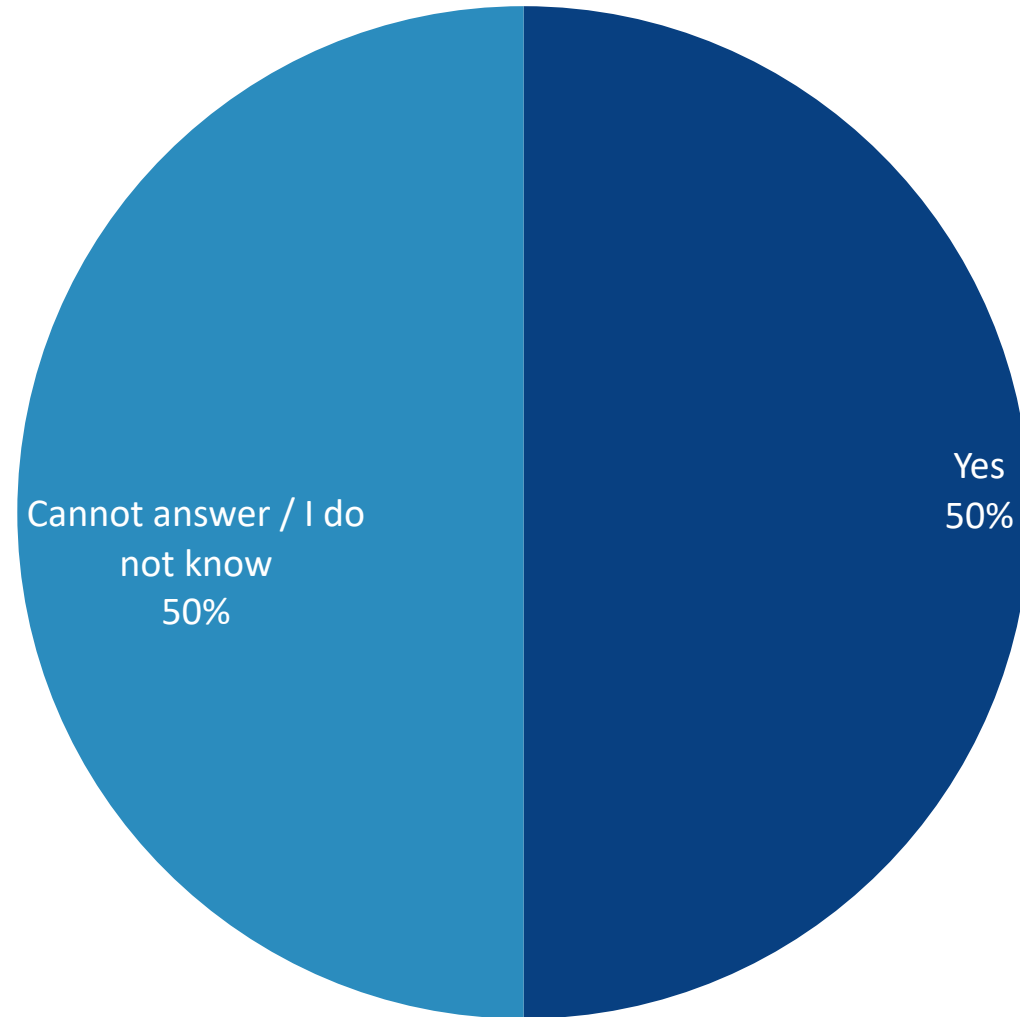
In your opinion, how important would it be to develop a common African approach to micro-credentials?

Very unimportant 2%

Unimportant 2%

Very important 72%

Important 24%
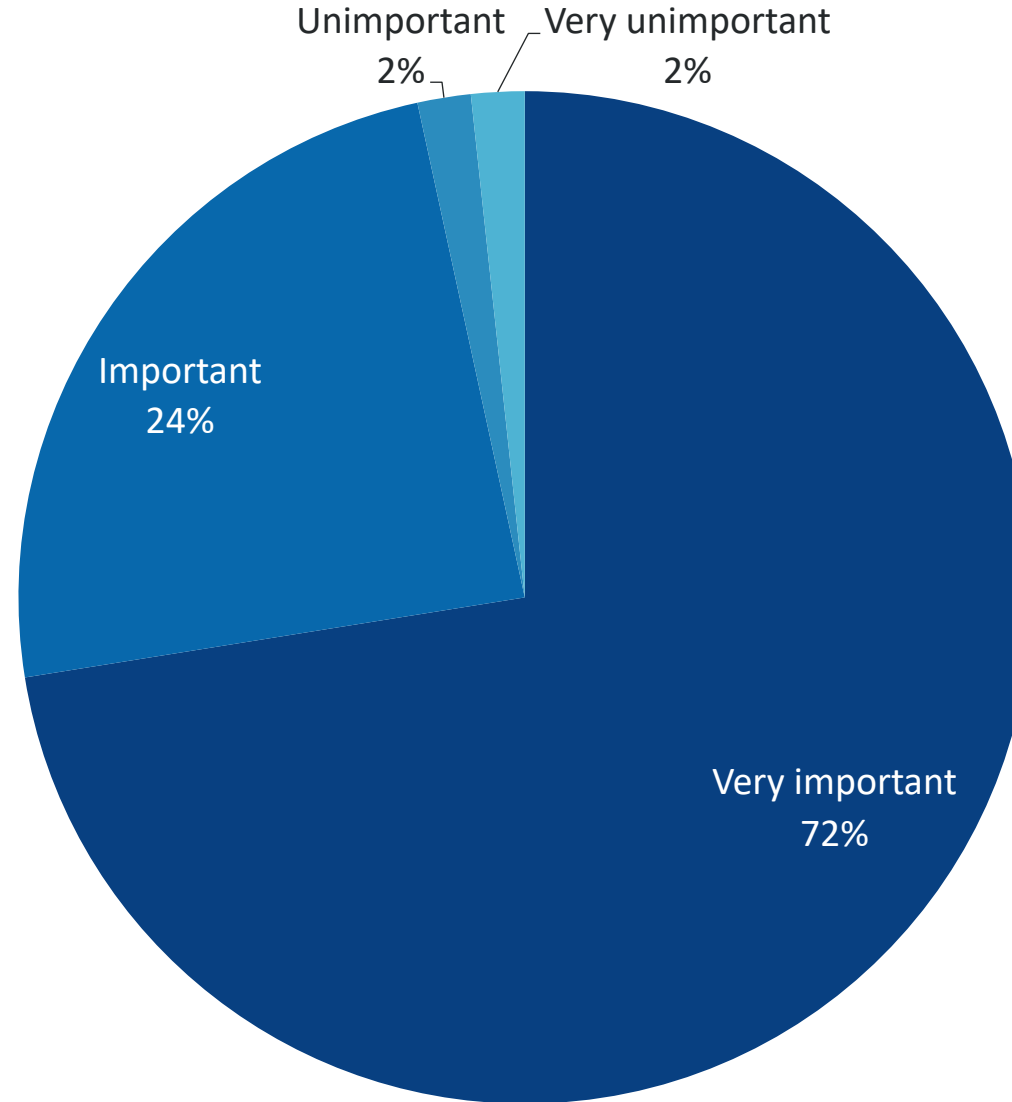
If a common approach was to be developed, how would you imagine the positioning of micro-credentials in the wider qualifications and credentials ecosystem?

- Cannot answer / I do not know 2%
- As a supplement to existing qualifications 20%
- Embedded in formal education 12%
- As an entry pathway into formal education 7%
- As a bridge between formal education and non-formal and informal learning 18%
- As an alternative to formal education 7%
- As a combination of several approaches described above 34%
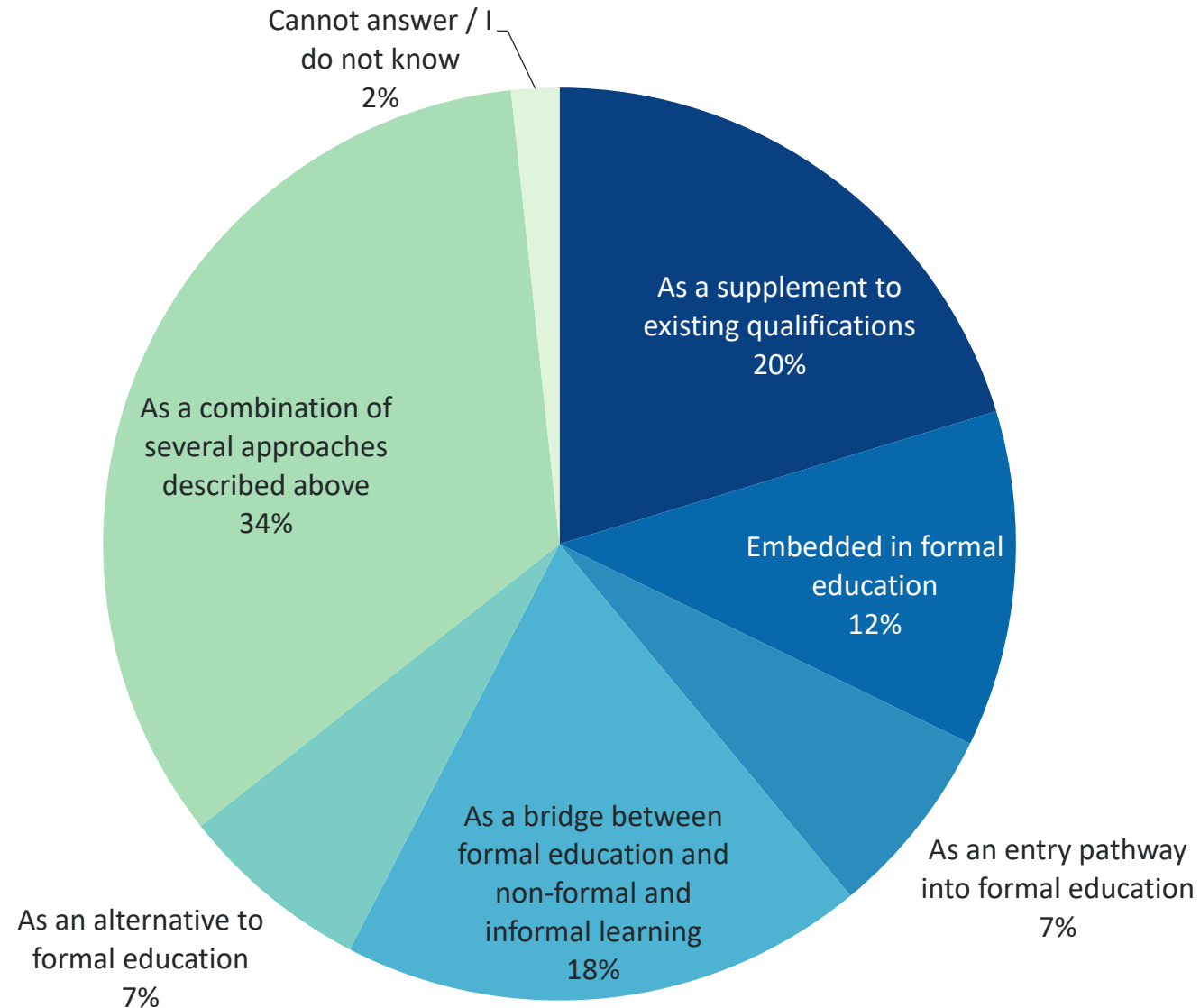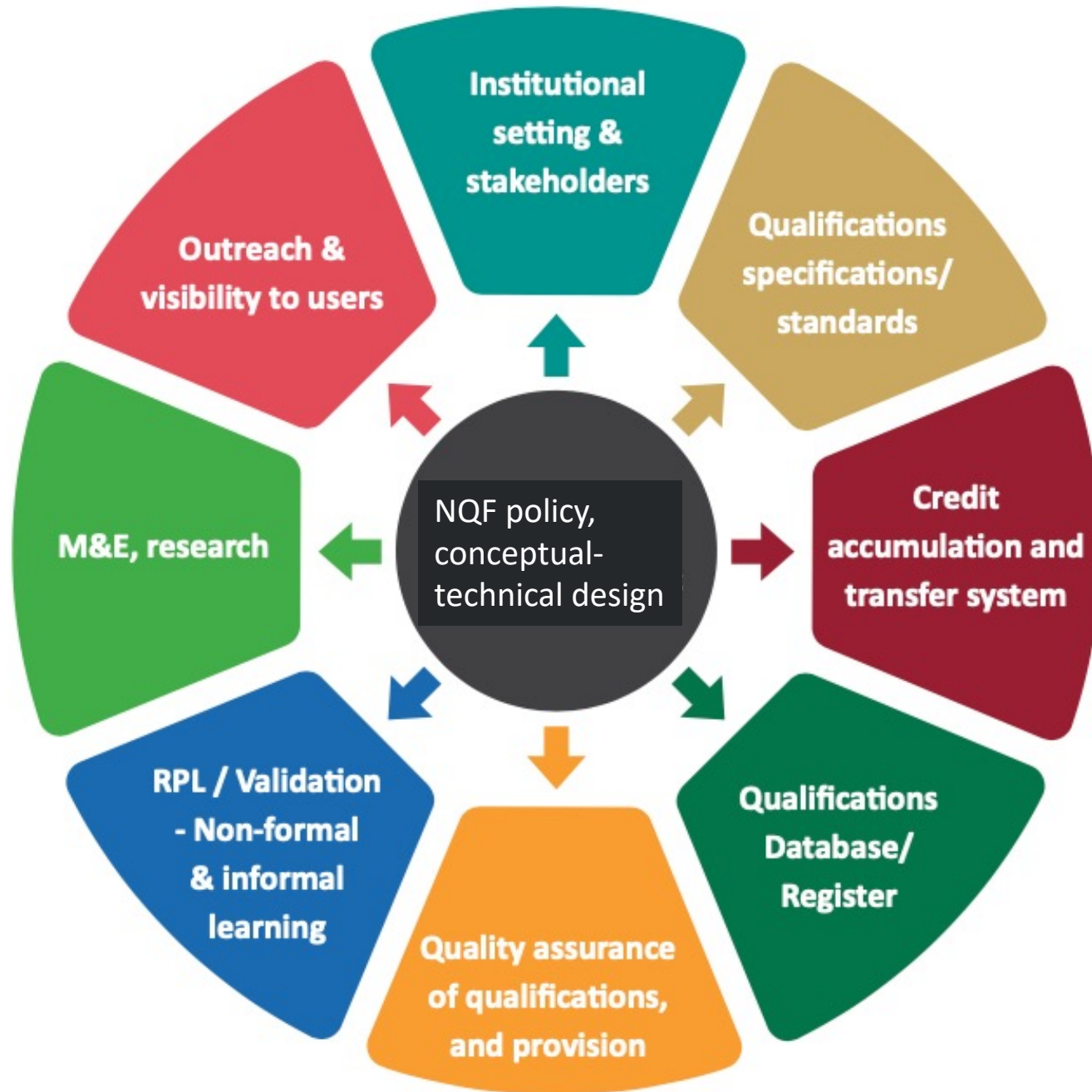
Poll

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

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

ACQF
African Continental Qualifications Framework

A qualification: means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

Source: EQF Recommendation.

A national qualifications framework (NQF) is 'A policy and instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.
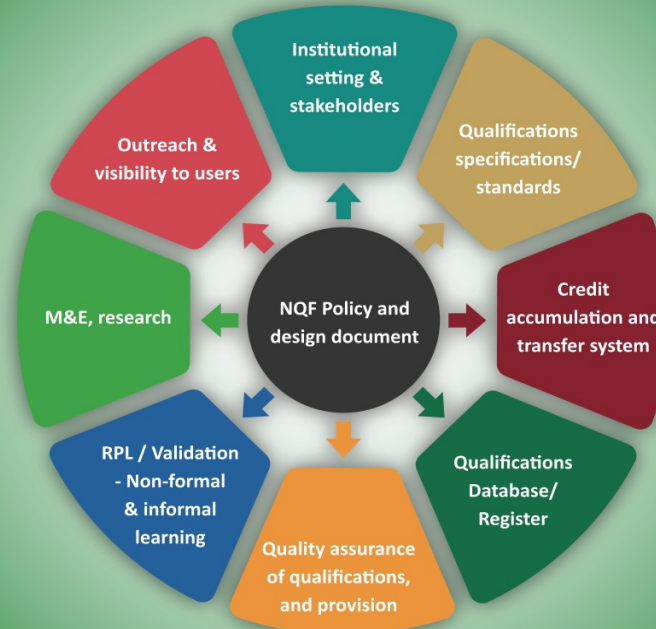
Source: EQF Recommendation

Learning outcomes: Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal and informal.

Source: Cedefop

A national qualification system includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These include the means to develop and operationalise national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, **quality assurance processes, evaluation and attribution** processes, **skills recognition** and other mechanisms linking education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems can be more or less integrated and coherent. One of the characteristics of a qualification system may be an **explicit qualifications framework.**

Source: OECD, Bridges to Lifelong Learning, 2007

A regional qualifications framework (RQF) is a broad structure of levels of learning outcomes that is agreed by countries in a geographical region.

A means of enabling one national framework of qualifications **to relate** to another and, subsequently, for a qualification in one country to be compared to a qualification from another country.

Source: ASEAN

QRF: ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, A Practical Guide and All you Need to Know.

Level descriptor: A statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of a Qualifications Framework that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Source: SAQA, NQFPedia

Diagram (centre): **NQF Policy and design document** surrounded by:
- Institutional setting & stakeholders
- Qualifications specifications/ standards
- Credit accumulation and transfer system
- Qualifications Database/ Register
- Quality assurance of qualifications, and provision
- RPL / Validation - Non-formal & informal learning
- M&E, research
- Outreach & visibility to users

Roadmap