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Project “Support to the implementation of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF-II)”

www.acqf.africa

Somalia National Qualifications Framework

Concept and policy paper

For comments and discussion

Version 2 (30/12/2024)



Preamble

This Concept and Policy Paper on the Somalia National Qualifications Framework (SOMALIA-NQF) is jointly elaborated in partnership between the Ministry of Education Culture and Higher Education (MoECHE) of Somalia and the Project “Supporting Implementation of the African Continental Qualifications Framework” (ACQF-II). Development of the SOMALIA-NQF is fully grounded on MoECHE’s leadership and ownership.

This Concept and Policy Document is anchored by the outputs of the NQF Policy Planning and Capacity Building Workshop held in Nairobi on 8-10 November 2024, with a working group of sixteen representatives of key ministries and education and training providers. The results of the structured debates of all national participants inform the objectives, principles, qualifications map and components of this Policy and Concept Document.

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Abbreviations

ACQF:	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AU:	African Union
CATS:	Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
EAC :	East Africa Community
EMIS:	Education Management Information System
ETF:	European Training Foundation
GIZ :	Society for International Cooperation (Germany)
MoECHE:	Ministry of Education Science and Higher Education
MoLSA:	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoC:	Ministry of Commerce
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
QCP:	Qualifications and Credentials Platform
RPL:	Recognition of Prior Learning
SOMALIA-NQF:	Somalia NQF

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1 Introduction

Vision and Aims of the National Education Policy of Somalia

The Ministry of Education Culture and Higher Education of Somalia has developed the National Education Policy¹. The Vision and Aims are quoted literally from the official text:

“Vision

Access to high-quality education, easily accessible to all Somalis, and full of flavour, and meaningful and leading to sustainable development.

Aims:

Create a high-quality education system that inspires, promotes and cultivates students’ culture, spirit, knowledge, skill and ability and ultimately provide prosperous future to students and nation at large.”

In general terms the vision and goals of the National Education Policy are compatible with the objectives defined by the national stakeholders for the Somalia-NQF (chapter 4)

Education Management Information System (EMIS)

*“Improving the education system is crucial for Somalia's development, and it is encouraging to see the government's commitment to this goal. Ensuring access to quality education for all, improving infrastructure, and implementing data-driven planning and decision-making is necessary to improve the education system's coverage, quality, and efficiency”.*²

Somalia-NQF is a beacon of progress and hope

“For Somalia, the NQF is a beacon of progress and hope. The development of Somalia’s National Qualifications Framework with ACQF support is a testament to the country’s commitment to building a brighter future for its people. The Somalia-NQF is the result of strong commitment of the government and key stakeholders, working in a productive partnership with the ACQF-II project team. The NQF will contribute to the enhancing of the Somalia education space, facilitating seamless movement of learners and workers across borders. The NQF will promote lifelong learning outcomes, empowering individuals to adapt to a rapidly changing world. The NQF will be a foundation for sustainable development: improved quality of education and training, economic growth and social progress (inclusivity, equity, access). The NQF will empower individuals, contributing to a stronger Somalia. The NQF is an incentive to better implementation of all related policies, requires capacity building to ensure sustainability and regular monitoring and evaluation to help track progress and identify areas for improvement. Finally, the Somalia-NQF represents a shared vision for a brighter future, based on collaboration, innovation and sustainability: continued collaboration between the Government of Somalia and ACQF is essential; embracing innovation and adapting to changing needs will ensure the NQF remains relevant; creating a sustainable NQF requires long-term commitment and investment”³

¹ MoECHE (2020). National Education Policy. <https://moe.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/National-Education-Policy-Eng-Version-Final-DG-copy.pdf>.

² MoECHE (2023). Annual Statistical Yearbook 2021-2022. Pg 5. <https://moe.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FGS-Annual-Statistics-yearbook-2022.pdf>

³ M. Muktar, Director General TVET Somalia. 2024. Presentation at the ACQF-2024 webinar, 20/12/2024. https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/webinars/acqf-2024-celebrating-progress-acqf-network-launch-qualifications-and-credentials-platform-qcp/ppt_session-3-panel_nqf-somalia_dg-tvet_acqf-webinar-20122024.pdf/@@display-file/file/ppt_session-3-panel_nqf-somalia_dg-tvet_acqf-webinar-20122024.pdf.pdf

Skills, qualifications and National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) – key for Africa’s renaissance

The demographic dividend of all African countries can only be achieved through generalised access to knowledge, skills, qualifications and credentials relevant for employment and social life. Access to effective lifelong learning policies for agile upskilling and reskilling is fundamental for inclusivity, adaptability to green and digital transition, creation of decent and productive jobs, fair mobility, skills matching and strengthening of values for better societies.

The comprehensive and inclusive National Qualifications Framework (NQF), operating in synergy with the relevant national policies and institutions related to education, training, employment, job creation and innovation policies, can play a substantial role in contributing to change.

NQFs represent a common language across countries and continents, despite the diversity of education and training systems.

The experiences and research on NQFs, especially in the last two decades, generates a robust knowledge basis highly pertinent to inform development of new NQFs. The range of useful resources is wide and mostly shared online in specialised and general platforms and networks, notably:

- [ACQF website](#) and specific resources: on [NQFs](#), [RPL](#), [micro-credentials](#), [Guidelines](#), [Thematic Briefs](#) and [Capacity Development](#)
- [Cedefop Online Tool on NQFs in Europe](#): this advanced platform offers comparison tools and rich information on all NQFs cooperating with EQF
- [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\) website](#)

National Qualifications Frameworks are a global phenomenon, and African countries demonstrate growing interest and commitment to equip their education and skills development systems with operational NQF to improve harmonisation, transparency, responsiveness and articulation of all qualifications types at all levels, and articulating all sub-sectors of the education and training system.

Figure 1: NQFs in Africa in 2024 – by status of development and implementation

Overview of NQFs in Africa – a wider coverage of countries		
Stage of NQF development and implementation	NQFs in Africa	Countries
Stage 1: NQF development not started	4	Burkina Faso Chad, Gabon, S. Tomé and Príncipe
Stage 2: NQF in early thinking	4	Senegal, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan
Stage 3: NQF in development and consultation	14	Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Madagascar, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Morocco, Republic of Congo
Stage 4: NQF in place (fully developed, approved as a legal act, started implementation)	12	Angola, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Egypt, Lesotho, Rwanda
Stage 5: NQF operational and reviewed	8	Cabo Verde, Kenya, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia Botswana, Mauritius
TOTAL number of countries in this overview	42	

Source: ACQF. Overview of NQFs, Summary of ACQF Survey report. Pg 1.

https://acqf.africa/resources/surveys-acqf-ii-nqf-rpl-micro-credentials/nqf-survey-2024-summary-report-infographic/@@display-file/file/ACQF%20-%20Infographic%20NQF%20Survey_WEB.pdf

By starting concrete actions to develop the comprehensive QNF, Somalia has joined the Stage 3 countries (NQFs in development and consultation).

The inclusive and comprehensive NQFs equipped with key instruments and governance set-up are game changers and contribute to improve and renew education and training programmes and curricula, application of the learning outcomes approach, matching with labour market skills needs, adopt innovation such as micro-credentials and digital qualifications platforms and eventually to support the adaptability of learners and qualified people to the multiple and fast transformations of jobs and learning.

In the context of the transformation of the society, labour market and the skills mix of most occupations, qualifications frameworks ought to be future-proof and open to change. Greening and digitalisation of NQFs and of skills development systems is no longer a call for the future, but a current imperative for all countries, institutions and stakeholders.

2 Somalia country profile

2.1 Somalia's economic outlook

Somalia's outlook of ongoing policy reforms is positive and can benefit of the enhanced opportunities of the recent country's membership of the East African Community⁴ (EAC).

Somalia has made significant macroeconomic strides in recent years, but these gains have yet to translate into poverty reduction, with over half of the population still living below the national poverty line, says a new World Bank report, titled "[Somalia Poverty and Equity Assessment](#)"⁵.

The [World Bank's country profile](#)⁶ is the main source of information and data used in this section. The country profile indicates that Somalia is progressing its policy reform agenda while leveraging the momentum created by the [Heavily Indebted Poor Countries \(HIPC\) Initiative](#). Despite multiple climatic shocks and a complicated security situation, Somalia maintained progress on structural reforms. In addition, Somalia maintained a track record of sound macroeconomic management.

Political relations in the region are experiencing dynamic change, with new opportunities for Somalia to benefit from regional trade integration as it became the eighth member of the East African Community in March 2024. As Somalia moves out of fragility, it needs to gradually transition from relying on humanitarian aid to sustainable development approaches.

As Somalia continues to rebuild economic governance institutions, it has several opportunities—rapid urbanization, the growing use of digital technologies, planned investments in energy, ports, education, and health—so building resilience to shocks is a priority to support economic growth and job creation.

The real GDP growth outlook shows signs of improvement, although it has been low and volatile, averaging only 2.1% per year in 2019–23 with an average negative real GDP per capita growth of 0.7%. In 2024, sustained favourable rains improved agricultural production and led to better food security and higher private consumption, accelerating economic growth to an estimated 4.4% from 4.2% in 2023. Exports recovered faster than imports, as livestock exports rebounded. Private sector credit

⁴ East African Community: <https://www.eac.int/>

⁵ Kotikula, Aphichoke; Haynes, Alastair Peter Francis; Rouyer, Matthieu Guillaume Emmanuel; Mabeu Yangamen, Marie Christelle; Takamatsu, Shinya; Masaki, Takaaki.

Somalia - Poverty and Equity Assessment (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank

Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099091824030521946/P500465195a18d08518a8c166461ccd0d10>

⁶ World Bank – Somalia Country Profile. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/somalia/overview>

growth contributed to strengthening investment, particularly in construction and real estate. Remittances increased significantly, bolstered by the moderation of global inflation and the uptick in economic growth in several host countries. The trade deficit is estimated to slightly narrow to 60.2% of GDP in 2024 compared to 62.6% in 2023, as livestock exports improved.

Repeated shocks have eroded households' assets and purchasing power, increasing the risk of more people falling into poverty. In 2022, an estimated 54% of the Somali population lived below the national poverty line.

Labour force participation rates are exceptionally low, with significant gender gaps. Only one-third of men and 12% of women participate in the labour market. Almost half of those employed are living below the poverty line, indicating that jobs are of low productivity. Therefore, accelerated momentum in building institutions and developing resilience is fundamental for growth, poverty reduction, and transition from fragility.⁷

2.2 Education system and key indicators

The Statistical Yearbook 2021-2022 of MoECHE⁸ is the key source used in this sub-chapter. The Yearbook analyses the key indicators of the entire education and training system, by sectors.

Table 1:

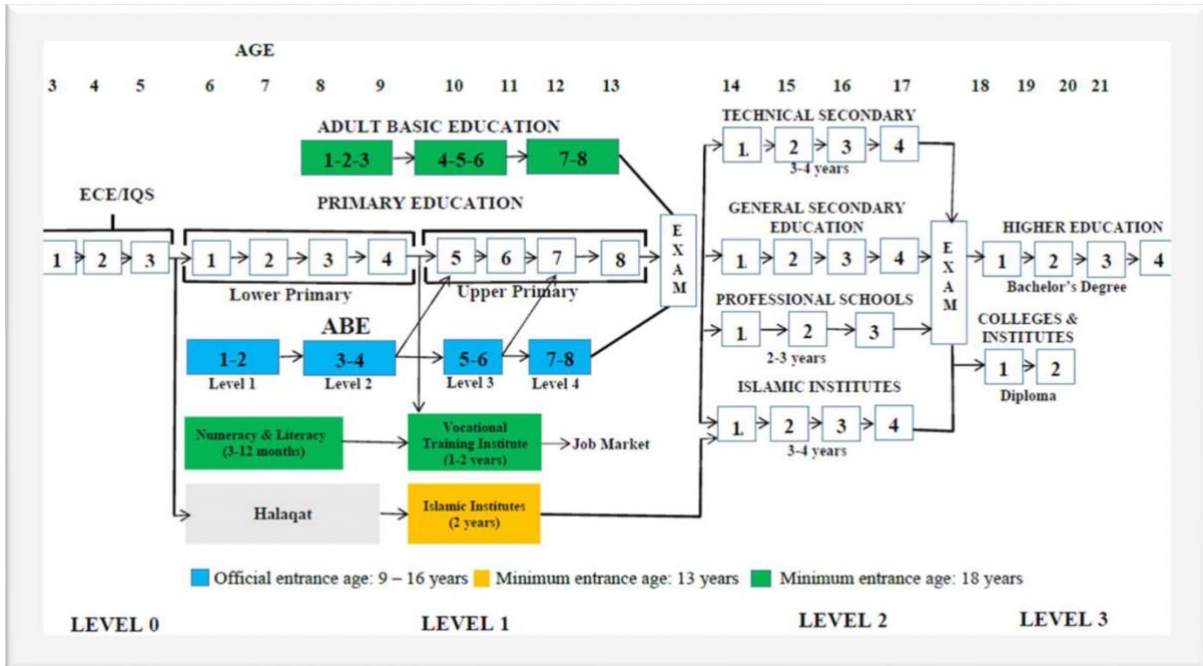
Level	Education	Duration (years)	Pathway / outcome
Level 0	• ECE /IQS	3	• To year 1 lower primary
Level 1	<p>Primary education</p> <p>1) Lower primary 2) Upper primary</p> <p>Adult Basic education</p> <p>1) 9-16 years entrance age 2) 18 years minimum entrance age 3) Numeracy & literacy 4) Vocational training institute</p> <p>Halaqat ⇒ Islamic Institutes</p>	<p>Primary - Total: 8 years</p> <p>1) 4 2) 4</p> <p>Adult Basic education</p> <p>1) 4 levels of 2 years duration each = 8 years 2) 3 cycles (1-3; 4-6; 7-8 years duration) 3) 3-12 months 4) 1-2 years</p> <p>2 years</p>	<p>Upper primary</p> <p>2) Exam at completion 8th year learning. Pass to Secondary (technical and general)</p> <p>Adult Basic education</p> <p>1) and 2) Exam at completion 8th year learning. Pass to Secondary (technical and general); to professional schools 4) Job market</p> <p>Pass to Islamic Institutes</p>
Level 2	<p>Secondary education</p> <p>1) General 2) Technical 3) Professional 4) Islamic Institutes</p>	<p>Secondary education</p> <p>1) 4 2) 3-4 3) 3 4) 3-4</p>	<p>Secondary education</p> <p>1) Exam – pass to Higher education 2) Exam – pass to Higher education 3) Exam – Colleges and institutes. 4) Exam – Colleges and institutes.</p>
Level 3	<p>Higher education</p> <p>1) Bachelors' 2) Colleges and institutes</p>	<p>Higher education</p> <p>1) 5 years (1 year foundation + 4 years)</p>	<p>Higher education</p> <p>1) Bachelors' degree 2) Diploma</p>

⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/somalia/overview>

⁸ MoECHE (2023). Annual Statistical Handbook. <https://moe.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FGS-Annual-Statistics-yearbook-2022.pdf>

		2) 2 years	
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Figure 2: Structure of the education system



Source: MoECHE (2023). Pg 7. Annual Statistical Handbook. <https://moe.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FGS-Annual-Statistics-yearbook-2022.pdf>

Access to secondary education in Somalia is a significant challenge due to various factors, including accessibility, infrastructure, affordability, and availability of schools in certain locations. Accessibility is a significant issue, particularly in rural and remote areas, where secondary schools are scarce, and students may have to travel long distances to attend school. This can be a significant barrier, particularly for girls, whose families may be reluctant to allow them to travel far from home. Additionally, students with disabilities may face accessibility issues due to the lack of appropriate facilities and support.

Somalia has been facing significant challenges in its higher education sector since the collapse of the central government in 1991. However, there have been some recent developments that indicate progress towards rebuilding the country's higher education system. In the past few years, several new universities have been established, and these universities are scattered around the country. These universities offer a range of academic programs and are working to improve educational standards and research capabilities in the country. However, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed in Somalia's higher education sector. These include limited data and higher education policies and standards. Despite these challenges, there is optimism that, with the continued support of the Somali community and the government of Somalia, Somalia's higher education sector can be rebuilt and contribute to the country's economic and social development.

Statistical overview on education

Tables 1A and 1B: 1A: Indicators on access to education (2021); 1B: Enrolment trends 2019-2022

1. Access and Coverage Indicators %		%
1.1. Primary-Grade 1 Gross Intake Rate (GIR)		12
1.1.1. Female		11
1.1.2. Male		14
1.2. Primary-Grade 1 Net Intake Rate (NIR)		3
1.2.1 Female		2
1.2.2 Male		3
1.3. Primary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)		31
1.3.1. Female		28
1.3.2. Male		34
1.4. Primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER)		24
1.4.1. Female		22
1.4.2 Male		25
1.5. Secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)		24
1.5.1 Female		19
1.5.2 Male		28
1.6. Secondary Net Enrolment Rate (NER)		17
1.6.1 Female		15
1.6.2 Male		19

School type	Year 2019	Increase % 2020	Year 2020	Increase % 2021	Year 2021	Increase% 2022	Year 2022
Primary	260586	18%	317881	20%	399738	24%	526594
Secondary	109056	14%	126620	12%	143101	12%	161835
Total	369642	17%	444501	18%	542839	21%	688429

Enrolment in primary and secondary education has substantially increased between 2019 and 2022. However, the net enrolment rates in primary and secondary education remain low.

Data (2022) of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), Somalia SDG Country Profile, confirm high out-of-school rates in primary (73.8%), lower-secondary (54.2%) and higher-secondary education (54.2%)⁹.

Table 2: Primary and Secondary education: efficiency indicators

2. Efficiency Indicators	
2.1 Promotion rate	94
2.1.1 Female	95
2.1.1 Male	92
2.1 Repeaters rate	4
2.1.1 Female	5
2.1.1 Male	3
2.1 Primary dropout rate	1.6
2.1.1 Female	1.6
2.1.1 Male	1.6
2.1 Survival rate to grade 5	88.0
2.1.1 Female	88.5
2.1.1 Male	87.5

Table 3: Higher education: enrolment by qualifications types

Sno.	State	Female	Fem%	Male	Mal%	Total
1	Advanced Diploma	296	51%	287	49%	583
2	Certificate	462	37%	789	63%	1251
3	Diploma	1910	40%	2873	60%	4783
4	Bachelors	46768	39%	72340	61%	119108
5	Post-graduate Diploma	264	29%	646	71%	910
6	Masters	1315	26%	3746	74%	5061
7	Grand Total	51015	39%	80681	61%	131696

2.3 Somalia-ACQF-II roadmap 2024

The roadmap 2024 ACQF-II – Somalia for development of Somalia National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was defined in July 2024 between the MoECHE and the coordination of the ACQF-II project. The milestones for development of the three agreed policies (NQF, RPL, CATS) were agreed at the Workshop of 8-10/11/2024 in Nairobi. This plan is integrated in the overall Implementation Plan of ACQF-II, under the Output 2.1 focused on support to national authorities in developing and implementing NQFs and related policies.

⁹ UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Somalia: SDG County Profile. <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/country-profile/Somalia.pdf>

ACQF-II is a project of the African Union-European Union partnership, implemented by the European Training Foundation, in close cooperation with countries, regions and the African Union Commission. For more information on ACQF-II: www.acqf.africa

Under the roadmap ACQF-II – Somalia 2024, three interconnected deliverables are to be completed in the period December 2024 to March 2025: a) The Concept Paper on the Somalia comprehensive NQF; b) The Policy Paper on Recognition of Prior Learning; c) The Policy and Guidelines on Credit Accumulation and Transfer System. These deliverables are to be drafted between 01/12/2024 and 30/January 2025 by the experts' team of the ACQF-II, working in close collaboration with MoECHE. The stakeholders consultation will be led by MoECHE in February 2025, and the policies will be finalised in March 2025.

In addition, Somalia participates in other wider activities of the ACQF-II, in particular: a) Integration in the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP), which provides all interested countries with a national qualifications database on virtual space, interconnected with the overarching ACQF QCP; b) Capacity development and networking in the context of multi-country workshops and conferences hosted in different African capitals and focused on the themes of qualifications frameworks and related policies and instruments, including innovative dimensions of skills development, digitalisation and lifelong learning instruments; c) Participation in the RPL Campaign, notably in the specific training programme for RPL practitioners in 2024; e) Participation in development and strengthening of the ACQF Network.

2.4 Phase 1 of the roadmap: workshop Somalia Developing NQF, RPL and CATS policies (8-10/11/2024)

The first phase of engagement with the national institutions and stakeholders leading the policy development of the three above mentioned deliverables took place in Nairobi, in form of a 3-day workshop (8-10/11/2024). GIZ Somalia funded the organisation and logistics of the workshop.

The agenda, and all presentations are accessible on the [event webpage](#). The [workshop report](#) comprehensively presents all results emanating from the working groups debates by Policy area (NQF-RPL-CATS).

The range of institutions and stakeholders which participated in the consultation week reflect the inclusive and wide scope of the new NQF, notably:

- MoECHE (Basic education, TVET, Higher education)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Commerce
- Somalia National University
- ASU

3 Rationale for development of Somalia NQF

3.1 Supportive policy and institutional underpinnings

The roadmap of the MoCHE (07/2024) guiding development of the SOMALIA-NQF states:

“The following are the advantages to be associated with the implementation of the Somalia National Qualification Frameworks: The primary way it benefitted the country most is by improving the quality of education through standardization, accessibility and quality assurance of qualifications in compliance with the international benchmarks. This alignment enhances the mobility of the learners and workers both at the national and the international level as the

qualifications turn to be more recognizable and comparable. Further, the NQF encourages learners to incline themselves towards continual learning because it maps out career paths with regards to the NQF aligned qualifications. For employers, it provides a standard measure against which employee's skill and competence can be measured hence enhancing the quality and production of the workforce. Concisely, the NQF contributes to the national economic growth by putting in place human capital that is competent and innovative to strengthen competitiveness of Somalia in the international market."

3.2 Ambitious agenda

The new comprehensive SOMALIA-NQF will enable a virtuous circle of events and effects, of both domestic / national and of international dimensions.

It will work in close synergy with the RPL and CATS policies, forming an "eco-system" enabling and supporting lifelong learning, progression, mobility, social inclusion and employability.

Parity of esteem of all modes and contexts of learning will be ensured through this eco-system of lifelong learning for a dynamic vibrant society and labour market, leveraging the green and digital transformation, and contributing to social inclusion.

Somalia has substantial flows of labour migration and learner mobility, especially with neighbouring countries. Efficiency of recognition of full qualifications and outcomes of periods of learning requires that national qualifications awarded across levels and sub-systems are internationally comparable. The new comprehensive SOMALIA-NQF will contribute to this imperative of comparability, transparency, portability of national qualifications of all levels, notably pre-tertiary and tertiary where the flows of learner mobility are sizeable.

Once the new comprehensive SOMALIA-NQF is approved and implementation is stabilised and delivers the relevant technical tools and outputs, it can be referenced to ACQF. One of the follow-up steps upon successful referencing is that national qualifications can bear both the relevant NQF level as well as the ACQF level. The advantages of this achievement are far-reaching, especially for international recognition of full qualifications, of credits related to study periods in mobility and of micro-credentials linked to the quality hallmarks of the NQF.

4 Overview of the SOMALIA-NQF

4.1 Definitions

For the purposes of the SOMALIA-NQF, the following definitions apply. This list of definitions is not exhaustive, but can be enriched with reference to [ACQF Thematic Brief 1. Concepts and definitions](#) and other sources listed in this document.

Main terms:

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.

International qualifications

International qualifications are awarded by a legally established international body (association, organisation, professional sector, or company) or by a national body acting on behalf of an

international body, are used in more than one country and include learning outcomes assessed with reference to standards established by an international body.

National Qualifications Framework

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.

National Qualifications System

This includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. One feature of a qualifications system may be an explicit framework of qualifications.

Regional qualifications framework

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.

Credit

'Credit' means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes.

'Credit transfer' means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context.

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.

Level descriptors

A statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the National Qualifications Framework that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Knowledge

In the context of ACQF 'Knowledge' includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles and theories in various areas.

Skills

In the context of ACQF 'Skills' refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills.

Autonomy and responsibility

In the context of ACQF 'Autonomy and responsibility' refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility.

Informal learning

Learning resulting from daily activities and experiences which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learners' perspective.

Micro-credentials

Micro-credential means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or stackable / combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

Non-formal learning

Learning which takes place outside formal education and training through planned activities in terms of learning objectives and learning time and where some form of learning support is present.

Recognition of prior learning

Confirmation by a competent authority that the learning outcomes, that an individual has acquired in all learning settings, including non-formal and informal, has been assessed against a relevant standard.

Recognition of foreign qualifications

A formal acknowledgment by a competent recognition authority of the validity and academic level of a foreign education qualification, of partial studies, or of prior learning for the purpose of providing an applicant with outcomes including, but not limited to: (a) the right to apply for admission to higher education; and/or (b) the possibility to seek employment opportunities.

4.2 Vision, Objectives and Functions of the SOMALIA-NQF for Lifelong Learning

4.2.1 The issues addressed by SOMALIA-NQF

Somalia is in a path of policy reforms aiming to strengthen the institutions, national cohesion, delivery of public services such as wider access to education and skills development and facilitate job creation and access to employment.

The SOMALIA-NQF will help addressing important issues and gaps of the education and training system, in particular related to:

- Quality and transparency of education, learning outcomes and qualifications
- Renewal of education and training programmes and content of qualifications
- Relevance for labour market and societal needs

- Access to lifelong learning
- Recognition of skills and competences acquired through all modes of learning, including in short periods of learning, in formal and informal employment and social activities.
- Harmonisation and coherence of standards, capacities and practices across Somalia
- Comparability and recognition of qualifications internationally, facilitating mobility

4.2.2 The vision and objectives of SOMALIA-NQF

The vision of the SOMALIA-NQF is to create a robust, flexible, transformative and transparent qualification system that supports social equity and inclusiveness, guarantees both national and global recognition of qualification, and encourages lifelong learning for up- and reskilling, social inclusion, employability and adaptability to the transformation of jobs and skills.

This vision encompasses:

- A cohesive and globally recognised education and training system that aligns with regional and international standards.
- Structured pathways for learners to progress across various educational and professional levels, enhancing both access and mobility within the system.
- Supporting Somalia's socio-economic development by building a skilled and competent workforce equipped to meet the demands of a growing and evolving economy.

The SOMALIA-NQF will be planned, equipped with instruments and technical capacities and implemented to reach the following specific objectives:

- **Systemic coherence, transparency:** Established a unified, transparent, and coherent qualifications system that enhances educational standards and fosters lifelong learning. By aligning qualifications with regional and global standards, the SOMALIA-NQF seeks to improve the employability of learners, facilitate academic and professional mobility, and support national socio-economic development.
- **Alignment of all qualifications with SOMALIA-NQF:** The qualifications of all sectors and levels of education and training system are harmonised, coherent and aligned with the SOMALIA-NQF.
- **Standardisation and Quality Assurance:** Developed and implemented standardized qualifications criteria to ensure consistency in educational quality across institutions and sectors.
- **Recognition of Skills and Competencies:** Enable clear pathways for recognising prior learning and competencies gained through formal, informal, and non-formal education, promoting inclusivity and accessibility across Somalia for all population groups, especially the main target groups defined in the RPL Policy document.
- **Alignment with Market Needs:** Align educational outcomes with the current and future needs of the labour market, enhancing graduates' readiness for employment and supporting economic growth in Somalia.
- **Facilitating Educational Mobility:** Enable learners to progress smoothly through different levels of education, promoting lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

The coherence of SOMALIA-NQF's objectives, principles, level descriptors, and types and specifications of qualifications determine their value and applicability.

SOMALIA-NQF is the product of, and operates within, complex and everchanging qualifications system. SOMALIA-NQF is influenced by the domestic historical and current context in which it is designed and is also influenced by regional and international developments.

Qualifications described in terms of learning outcomes will strengthen transparency of learning and trust in qualifications and their outcomes and benefit the country stakeholders as well as those outside the country who are interested in understanding the qualifications system and framework of Somalia.

4.2.3 Functions of SOMALIA-NQF

SOMALIA-NQF will fulfil three fundamental functions:

- **Communication:** Facilitates the sharing of information about qualifications and pathways within Somalia and with other countries.
- **Reform:** Supports educational reforms by providing a structured framework that promotes consistency and alignment in qualifications.
- **Regulation:** Establishes standards and criteria for qualifications, ensuring they meet quality requirements and are fit for purpose.

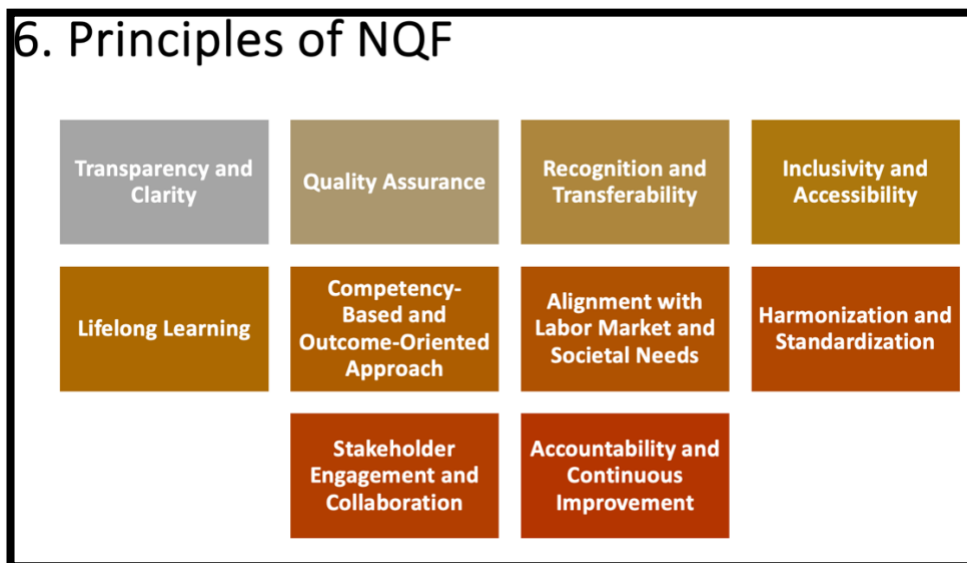
The Communication function of the SOMALIA-NQF will contribute to enhancing clarity and transparency on the main features of the qualifications system: types of qualifications, mobility and progression pathways (vertical, horizontal), full and part qualifications, application of recognition of prior learning for different purposes, hallmarks of quality assurance, recognition of foreign qualifications, roles and interactions of existing institutions in respect to qualifications and SOMALIA-NQF.

The Reform function of the SOMALIA-NQF will support and contribute to review, adjust and reform policies and mechanisms indispensable for improved internal and external performance of the education and training system, and to achieve the objectives set for the SOMALIA-NQF. The establishment of the comprehensive and systemic SOMALIA-NQF is per se an important reform in the landscape of education and training.

To ensure sustainability and impact of the SOMALIA-NQF, the **regulatory function** will contribute to normalise aspects related to a range of innovative components and new policies, in particular

- Financing of the SOMALIA-NQF and related policies
- The mechanisms to enhance lifelong learning
- The structure and data model of new and renewed qualifications.
- Introduce the policy, guidelines and quality assurance hallmarks for micro-credentials linked to SOMALIA-NQF.
- Mapping, referencing and recognition of micro-credentials in relation of SOMALIA-NQF.
- Processes, procedures and new mechanisms for implementation of the new harmonised RPL and CATS policies related to SOMALIA-NQF and applicable to all sub-sectors of education and training.

4.3 Guiding principles



These ten principles can be grouped in four main clusters:

1. **Systemic scope and approach:** The SOMALIA-NQF is aligned to national priorities and is holistic.
2. **Transparency flexibility, innovation and lifelong learning:** Ensures clarity and openness in the processes, criteria, and standards used within the framework; is based on quality assurance; is linked to harmonisation and standardisation. Allows for adaptability to accommodate diverse learning pathways and evolving skills demands. Recognition and transferability.
3. **Accountability and continuous improvement:** Holds institutions and stakeholders responsible for maintaining the credibility, efficiency and relevance of qualifications.
4. **Inclusivity and accessibility:** Embraces a broad range of qualifications and learning modes to cater to a diverse population of learners.

The explanation of each of the four Principles of the SOMALIA-NQF is valuable for policy makers and NQF implementation institutions at all levels (government, and providers of education and training) and other stakeholders active in domains and policies related to the NQF:

Principle 1: Systemic scope and approach of the SOMALIA-NQF

- Aligned with national development goals and strategies
- Comprehensive and inclusive: all types of qualifications and micro-credentials, at all levels and sub-sectors of the education and training continuum
- Composed of vision, principles, complementary policies and operational instruments
- Embedded and interacting with the institutions and mechanisms of the education and training system
- Open to review and reforms

Principle 2: Transparency, flexibility, innovation and lifelong learning

- Quality Assurance, trust and credibility
- Clarity and flexibility of pathways
- Harmonisation and standardisation
- Comparability
- Articulation and progression
- Recognition
- Mobility
- Needs-based

- Outcomes-focused
- Promotes anticipation of trends and emerging demands on skills, micro-credentials and qualifications
- Supports innovation and adaptation of qualifications, policies and instruments
- Supports greening, digitalisation and adequate and ethical use of AI

Principle 3: Accountability and continuous improvement

- Collaboration and participation of stakeholders
- Monitoring and evaluation; research and data analysis
- Evidence-based implementation

Principle 4: Inclusivity and accessibility

- Equality
- Supports access of people of all social groups
- Supports up- and re-skilling of people of all demographics for social inclusion and employment

4.4 Scope of SOMALIA-NQF

The SOMALIA-NQF encompasses all sectors and levels of education and training in Somalia, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning, as well as micro-credentials. It spans a 10-level framework that accommodates diverse learning modalities and credentials, thereby supporting a comprehensive approach to lifelong learning.

SOMALIA-NQF is a qualifications and micro-credentials framework of a wide and open scope:

- Comprehensive of all types of qualifications, at all levels of the education and training continuum; of technical-professional as well as academic orientation and purpose.
- Openness: SOMALIA-NQF is open to full and part qualifications and to micro-credentials.
- Inclusive in respect to the different modes and contexts of learning: formal, non-formal and informal, digital and online learning.
- National: SOMALIA-NQF applies in equal and transparent manner to all institutions and sub-sectors of the education and training system
- Quality assurance: SOMALIA-NQF's qualifications and micro-credentials meet the requirements of quality assurance according to national legislation.
- International comparability: SOMALIA-NQF to be referenced to regional and continental qualifications frameworks to support comparability and credibility of national qualifications, mobility of learners, and recognition of foreign qualifications.

4.5 Key components of SOMALIA-NQF

4.5.1 Systemic view

The effectiveness and visibility of SOMALIA-NQF depend on its systemic construction, that is the linkages with the components, initiatives, and strategies, which together form the wider eco-system of education, lifelong learning, qualifications, employment, research and innovation.

The strength of SOMALIA-NQF is derived from its systemic view, based on linkages with policies and elements such as:

- Levels descriptors and qualifications map
- Clear and robust processes, methods and guidelines for development and renewal of qualifications and micro-credentials

- Registers/databases of qualifications approved onto the SOMALIA-NQF, providing learners and other users with transparent information on courses and qualifications.
- Quality assurance: of qualifications and their standards; and of providers and their programmes leading to a qualification.
- Credit accumulation and transfer systems.
- Recognition of prior learning (formal, non-formal, informal), outcomes from work and life experience
- Recognition of foreign qualifications
- Communication and outreach to target users and stakeholders, and capacity development easing understanding and implementation of the SOMALIA-NQF.
- Review and continuous improvement of SOMALIA-NQF, based on feedback, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Competent governance and social dialogue.
- Involvement of stakeholders from the world of work, employers, professional bodies and experts in key and relevant dimensions and components of SOMALIA-NQF

Design, development, implementation, and review of SOMALIA-NQF is a process of successive stages, which requires national ownership, resources, partnerships for governance, and application of the above-mentioned systemic view and linkages.

4.5.2 Level descriptors and qualifications map

The structure of the SOMALIA-NQF is defined through the combination of:

- 10 levels: from level 1 (lower learning complexity) to 10 (higher learning complexity)
- Map of level descriptors, which defines the vertical logic of learning complexity (depth) and the horizontal logic of the combination of the 3 domains of learning (breadth)
- The level descriptors are formulated as learning outcomes and are built as a combination of three domains of learning: a) Knowledge; b) Skills; c) Autonomy and responsibility

The working group participating at the dialogue and consultation week in Nairobi (8-10/11/2024) agreed to adopt the ACQF level descriptors as the key reference for SOMALIA-NQF level descriptors. This approach has the benefit of ensuring high level of compatibility of SOMALIA-NQF and ACQF and ease future referencing.

Main concepts

Level descriptors are statements describing learning achievement at a particular level of a qualifications framework. Level descriptors provide a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Learning outcomes-based level descriptors are essential to any qualifications framework, whether sectoral, national, or regional. These level descriptors relate to a specific level and signal the learning outcomes orientation of the qualifications framework.

Definition and scope of the three domains of learning of SOMALIA-NQF level descriptors

Knowledge

Includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles, and theories in various areas. The learning outcomes at the ten levels relate to formal, non-formal and informal learning. The knowledge domain comprises two sub-domains or elements:

- Type of knowledge
- Scope of knowledge

Skills

Refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems/ issues. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills. The learning outcomes at the levels relate to formal, non-formal and informal learning. The skills domain comprises three sub-domains:

- Type of skills required
- How the skills are used to respond to information
- How skills are used to address types of problems

Autonomy and responsibility

Refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility. The learning outcomes at all the levels relate to formal, non-formal and informal learning. The autonomy and responsibility domain comprises 3 sub-domains:

- the context in which autonomy and responsibility is applied
- the extent to which autonomy is applied
- the extent to which responsibility is applied.

Responsibility as a domain of level descriptors has three elements: self, group outcomes and resources.

Each of the ten SOMALIA-NQF levels represents learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at that level. The level descriptors capture how the three domains of knowledge, skills and autonomy and responsibility increase in breadth, depth and complexity when moving from lower to higher levels and are supported by a glossary explaining the terms.

Level descriptors

Level	Domains of learning		
	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
Definition of the domains of learning	<i>“Knowledge” includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles, and theories in various areas</i>	<i>“Skills” refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills.</i>	<i>“Autonomy and responsibility” refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility</i>
Level 1: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy	simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions, and use simple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems	highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self
Level 2: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	basic knowledge incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas	basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straight forward problems	structured contexts under limited supervision and guidance taking limited responsibility for self and group outcomes
Level 3: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	factual and operational knowledge incorporating some theoretical aspects in some areas	a range of communication, cognitive, practical and technical skills required to interpret and communicate ideas and detailed information and select and use known solutions to address familiar problems	predictable contexts under routine supervision and guidance, with initiative for self-responsibility and some responsibility for group outcomes

Level	Domains of learning		
	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 4:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mainly factual, operational or technical knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects in one or more areas	well-developed technical skills required to analyse information and new ideas, make informed judgements, communicate outcomes and apply varied solutions to varied (familiar and unfamiliar) problems	varied (predictable and unpredictable) contexts with adaptability and initiative for self-direction under general guidance, taking full responsibility for self, some planning and responsibility for group outcomes and initiative for responsibility for others
<u>Level 5:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mainly technical or theoretical knowledge with substantial depth in a discipline/ area	a range of well-developed technical skills, with some specialisation, required to analyse information and new ideas, construct and communicate a coherent argument, and apply a range of solutions, often in combination, to address unfamiliar problems	unpredictable contexts with full autonomy and full responsibility for self and group outcomes, and some responsibility for others
<u>Level 6:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with specialisation in a discipline/ area	highly technical and specialised skills required to collate, analyse, synthesise and communicate a range of information and new ideas, and formulate or adapt different solutions to address complex and sometimes abstract problems	highly variable contexts with well-developed autonomy and responsibility for self and group outcomes and responsibility for resources and processes
<u>Level 7:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	advanced analytical and/ or specialised knowledge of a discipline/ area	advanced, specialised skills required to demonstrate advanced analysis and initiative for new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate advanced solutions to address complex and abstract problems	complex and variable contexts with advanced autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 8:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly advanced, complex knowledge of a discipline/ area	highly advanced, complex skills required to demonstrate highly advanced analysis, communicate new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate highly advanced solutions to address highly complex and abstract problems	highly complex contexts with some specialisation demonstrating highly advanced autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 9:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mastery of a complex body of knowledge at the forefront of a discipline/ area	skills mastery required to demonstrate originality and new insights in research and/ or innovation and formulate and test theories to show mastery of highly complex, abstract problems	highly specialised contexts demonstrating mastery in autonomy and responsibility
<u>Level 10:</u> the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	substantial and original knowledge contribution that extends the forefront of a discipline/ area and/ or at the interface between disciplines/ areas	expert skills and techniques that demonstrate innovation, interpretation and creation of new ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate, and test theories to address emergent, new and critical problems	emergent new contexts demonstrating expertise in management of new ideas

Source: ACQF Policy Document. 2023. <https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-policy-document-upon-validation-by-au-member-states-en-fr-pt/acqf-policy-document-en>

4.5.3 SOMALIA-NQF qualifications map

The SOMALIA-NQF Qualifications Map results from the discussions at the workshop “Somalia Developing the NQF-RPL-CATS policies” (8-10/11/2024), complemented by further in-depth analysis

among the national experts aiming to stabilise a coherent and well-grounded levelling of all existing qualifications from general and higher education, and technical-vocational education (TVET and crafts training). Following ACQF coordinator’s recommendation for a third round of review of the levelling decisions, the qualifications map reflects the inclusive and comprehensive scope of the NQF and is consistent with the depth and breadth of the NQF level descriptors.

The qualifications map features:

- 10 levels
- Each level includes qualifications of different nature, albeit aligned with the relevant level descriptors: a) general and higher education; b) TVET (TVET and Crafts); c) Micro-credentials
- Crafts qualifications span from level 2 to level 8
- Micro-credentials are included in the map from level 3 to level 10

The qualifications map

This version of the draft qualifications map does not contain minimum credit value by level. This information will be inserted once the CATS Policy document is validated.

Levels	Qualifications				
SNQF level	Higher education, general education	TVET		Qualifications not in NQF	Micro-credentials
		TVET	Crafts		
10	Doctoral degree or equivalent, emphasizing original research, advanced expertise, and the highest level of academic qualification.	Focuses on advanced research and innovation. Prepares individuals for leadership roles in academia, research, or industry. 3 years		Doctorate	Micro-credential
9	Master’s degree or equivalent postgraduate qualification, focusing on advanced theoretical and practical knowledge in specialized areas.	Advanced specialization in technical or managerial fields. Often includes a research component. 1 - 2 years			Micro-credentials
8	Post - graduate Diploma.	Specialized training for professionals aiming to upskill or change career paths. Does not typically require a research component. 12 months	Professional Master Craft Person 12 months		Micro-credentials
7	Bachelor’s degree or equivalent, representing full professional qualifications in specific fields or sectors.	Professional Bachelor’s degree or equivalent, representing full professional qualifications in specific fields or sectors. 3 - 4 years	Master Craft Person 2 3 - 4 years		Micro-credentials
6	Diploma	TVET Diploma - prepares individuals for	Master Craft Person 1		Micro-credentials

		mid-level technical and professional roles. Offers both theoretical and practical training. 3 years	3 years		
5		National Vocational Certificate level 3 Provides specialized training for skilled trades or technical roles. Prepares learners for jobs requiring a higher level of technical expertise. 6 - 12 months	National Professional Certificate level 3 Provides specialized training for skilled trades roles. Prepares learners for jobs requiring a higher level of technical expertise. 6 - 12 months		Micro-credentials
4	Secondary education Form 3 – 4	National Vocational Certificate level 2, which includes basic vocational training or foundational tertiary education that prepares learners for technical or semi-skilled roles. 2 years	National Professional Certificate level 2, which includes basic Skill training that prepares learners for semi-skilled roles. 2 years	Diploma	Micro-credentials
3	Secondary education Form 1 – 2	National Vocational Certificate 1, equivalent to junior secondary or basic secondary schooling: Form 1 – 2. 2 years	National Professional Certificate 1, equivalent to junior secondary or basic secondary schooling: Form 1 – 2. 2 years		
2	Primary education and basic skills, extending fundamental education and laying the groundwork for secondary education – Grade 5 – 8	Entry Level Certificate – 1 year	Entry Level Certificate – 1 year		
1	Primary education and basic skills, extending fundamental education and laying the groundwork for secondary education – Grade 1 – 4				

At this stage of the NQF conceptualisation, it is suggested that the NQF Unit and the stakeholders with technical guidance of the ACQF-II will discuss and address the following issues:

1. **Specifications or Descriptions of Qualifications in the New Qualifications Map:** Currently, the qualifications outlined in the new Qualifications Map are under development and do not yet include detailed specifications or descriptions. The ongoing NQF policy process will provide the necessary foundation to standardize these descriptions, ensuring alignment with both industry requirements and educational objectives.

2. **Legal Acts Defining Qualification Types:** There are no existing legal acts that define or regulate emerging qualification types, including master craft certifications or micro-credentials. The NQF policy is intended to fill this gap by serving as a foundational framework for the eventual development of legislation. Once the NQF policy is operationalized, it will guide the formulation of specific legal provisions to formalize and regulate these qualifications, ensuring consistency and recognition at all levels.
3. **Micro-Credentials and Legislative Definitions:** Micro-credentials are a new area within the qualifications framework and are not yet defined in existing legislation. Titles or designations for these credentials have not been formalized. The NQF policy aims to establish a structured approach to micro-credentials, creating clear definitions, purposes, and designations that align with national education and training priorities.
4. **Updated Scheme of the Education System in MoECHE:** The latest available scheme of the education system remains the one included in the draft NQF policy document, specifically on page 8 of the Report on Education Statistics of MoECHE. As of now, there is no updated version. If updates are made, we will ensure they are communicated and shared promptly to support the NQF development work.

4.5.4 National register of qualifications

In the last decade, many countries have established digital qualifications databases accessible online, usually on the websites of the NQF Authorities and Agencies. This trend at national level is combined and complemented by initiatives to connect these national databases, using interoperability tools, Linked Open Data, and internationally accepted standards for the structure and fields of the used data model. EQF has promoted and technically supported development of national qualifications databases and fostered and financed development of the Qualifications Database Register, and the related platforms such as Learning Opportunities in Europe – accessible through EUROPASS and providing harmonised and reliable information on qualifications of all types, levels and fields of study.

This experience of EQF-EUROPASS provides a useful reference for development of the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP), which is developing its own data model and technical solutions for interoperability and to support development of national qualifications databases. Somalia is one of the countries involved in the QCP, in which the own national qualifications database will be created. The QCP-Somalia will be managed by the SOMALIA-NQF institution. Launch of the QCP curators' interface took place on 20 December 2024, and Somalia can start mapping the qualifications data to the QCP data model in preparation to registration of the qualifications in the national virtual space (database) provided by the QCP.

4.5.4.1 Brief overview on the purposes, benefits and types of qualifications databases

In general terms, qualifications databases offer multiple advantages for transparency, systematisation, harmonisation of qualifications in the NQF, promoting easier and wider dissemination of information to all users, for diverse purposes, e.g. for career guidance and choices, for lifelong learning, for matching demand and supply, for companies' recruitment processes, for career progression strategies and for analysis and data science.

Purpose

- Central repository for storing and managing qualification information
- Facilitates recognition and comparison of qualifications
- Supports educational and workforce planning

Functions

- Storing qualifications data

- Providing access to reliable and up-to-date information
- Enabling data analysis for policy making

Benefits

- Easy access to **reliable and up-to-date information** for learners, employers, and policymakers
- Streamlines the process of **verifying and validating** qualifications
- Enables **data-driven decision-making** through comprehensive data analytics
- Supports the **mobility** of learners and professionals by providing transparent and comparable qualifications data
- Enhances the integration of national qualifications frameworks **with regional and international standards**

User groups

1. **General Public (Job Seekers and Learners)** - Find and verify qualifications for educational and career planning.
2. **Employers and Industry** - Verify the credentials of potential employees and ensure they meet industry standards.
3. **Education Institutions (e.g. Schools and Universities)** - Design curriculum and align educational programs with industry standards.
4. **Administrators** - Manage and update national qualifications databases and QCP.
5. **Policy-Makers and Governance Bodies/Agencies** - Develop and implement educational policies based on reliable qualifications data.
6. **Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies** - Ensure qualifications meet established standards and maintain quality assurance.

Role and Importance of qualifications databases in the International Context

- Facilitates cross-border recognition of qualifications
- Enhances mobility of students and professionals
- Information-sharing real time - comparability, transparency, harmonisation
- Supports international collaboration,

Examples and cases of importance of qualifications databases in the context of Africa and Europe

- Referencing of NQFs to RQFs / ACQF
- Use of RQF / ACQF levels on newly issued qualifications (upon referencing)
- Recognition of qualifications within the African Union
- Cross-border education programmes and learning & labour mobility

4.5.4.2 Brief overview on the data model associated with the database

Contribution to enhanced transparency, quality and comparability of qualifications is a major objective of the SOMALIA-NQF and ACQF. Across the continent, the information described in existing qualifications documents and databases varies in terms of structure, data fields and format of the main learning outcomes. The rich diversity of qualifications systems on the continent is not an impediment on the way towards comparability and readability of qualifications, but this recommendation will contribute to harmonise the information and data fields used by different countries in structuring their qualifications and registers or databases of qualifications. Such harmonisation will contribute to ease recognition of qualifications of all levels, and consequently mobility of learners and workers, and access to employment in jobs matching the acquired qualification.

ACQF countries are invited to consider the following elements in structuring the information on qualifications included in the NQF/NQS referenced to the ACQF, and in the national qualifications

registers. The ACQF will provide practical guidance to national qualifications institutions on the implementation of this recommendation.

4.5.4.3 Harmonised methodology / process to design and register qualifications

The SOMALIA-NQF will for the first time in Somalia establish a harmonised system to design, approve and register qualifications.

This harmonisation is indispensable for comparability, transparency and quality assurance of the SOMALIA-NQF and its qualifications. Specific and distinguishing characteristics of the different sub-sectors (general education, TVET and higher education) will be considered.

The key qualifications' design principles and tools entail:

1. All qualifications in the SOMALIA-NQF are based on learning outcomes and are aligned with the level descriptors.
2. Valid accreditation is indispensable for qualifications registration.
3. The registration workflow, rules and criteria shall be published and communicated to all providers and other interested bodies.
4. Registration allocated a unique code / reference all qualifications
5. The elements for structuring the qualifications are recommended / or mandatory for all registered qualifications. These elements are aligned with the data fields of the ACQF QCP data model, presented hereafter.
6. Registration of qualifications has a maximum validity period (3-5 years depending on level); all expired qualifications shall be updated and the registration renewed.

4.5.4.4 Elements for structuring the qualifications – aligned with the ACQF QCP data model

1. Title of qualification
2. Reference ID
3. Type: full qualification; part qualification; micro-credential
4. NQF and ACQF level
5. Thematic area: Field of education and training (according to ISCED-2013, fields of education and training – ISCED-F 2013)¹⁰
6. Related occupation
7. Home page URL
8. Description of the qualification: statements on the learning outcomes – what the learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do at completion of learning and assessment
9. Assessment criteria
10. Accreditation: type, accrediting organisation
11. Credit points
12. Awarding body or competent authority
13. Provider
14. Information on RPL: if the qualification can be obtained via RPL
15. Date of registration and date of future renewal

¹⁰ ISCED-F 2013, at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-en.pdf>

4.5.5 Quality assurance system

Transparency and trust in qualifications is key in a context of widespread international learner and labour mobility, and rapid transformation of types of qualifications and credentials for different needs and contexts of lifelong learning.

Quality assurance – as part of a range of measures by governments and institutions – increases transparency and should contribute to trust in the relevance and quality of learning outcomes (that is, learners’ knowledge, skills, autonomy, and responsibility, as certified by qualifications). Such trust in learning outcomes is, in turn, based on trust in the quality of the institutions and providers of education and training at all levels and in all subsectors. Consequently, quality assurance in the context of education and training comprises principles, procedures and mechanisms addressing:

- External and internal quality assurance.
- Learning (programmes, processes, assessment) and the providers alike.

SOMALIA-NQF as a new generation comprehensive qualifications framework and a catalyst for innovation and lifelong learning is underpinned by quality assurance. Quality assurance is fundamental for trust in qualifications and micro-credentials, and for their currency and mobility.

Quality assurance of qualifications is based on the legislation, principles, procedures and governance put in place to enhance and maintain quality of processes and outputs of education and training at all levels and sectors of education and training in Somalia. In addition, the upcoming establishment of the NQF will emphasise aspects and procedures of quality assurance contributing to:

- Clarify and strengthen the links between learning outcomes of qualifications and credentials with occupational profiles, demand from employers and the adaptation to the green and digital transformation.
- Transparency and comparability with qualifications and NQFs from other countries and regions in Africa, and with the ACQF. This important aspect will require, amongst others, the adoption of a harmonised structure and data model of qualifications, taking into account the publication of qualifications in digital database, such as the QCP.
- Lifelong learning principles and policies: qualifications in the NQF shall be coherent with the legislation, principles and practices enhancing mobility, articulation and recognition underpinned by the policies and guidelines of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS).

Quality Assurance Principles of SOMALIA-NQF

Considering that SOMALIA-NQF is committed to reference to ACQF and other Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQF), it adopts the Quality Assurance principles defined by criterion 4 of referencing to ACQF¹¹.

The Quality Assurance of SOMALIA-NQF contributes to trust, credibility, relevance and international transparency of all qualifications of SOMALIA-NQF through the application of the principles:

1. Address the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification.
2. Support the application of the learning outcomes approach.
3. Include feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement.

¹¹ ACQF Policy Document. 2023. <https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-policy-document-upon-validation-by-au-member-states-en-fr-pt/acqf-policy-document-en>. Pp 13-14.

4. Depend on internal and external quality assurance, and the regular review of quality assurance agencies.
5. Are based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance.
6. Is supported by resources.
7. Provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation.
8. Takes account of African Union policy orientations such as African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.

4.5.6 Monitoring and evaluation system

The Monitoring and Evaluation system will include the SOMALIA-NQF Results Framework (Impact, Outcomes, Outputs, Activities) with relevant indicators to follow and measure progress in implementation, identify gaps and obstacles and propose reorientation measures as adequate to support the governance body in steering and driving the process.

The detailed implementation plan (3-5 years) will be aligned with the Results Framework and guide implementation on the ground.

M&E will require relevant and reliable data, capacity to analyse and produce adequate reports and insights for policy making bodies and the SOMALIA-NQF implementation structure.

Education and training institutions, employment agencies, socio-economic actors and the learner's community will be important users of M&E.

Evaluation will be planned and conducted at a significant milestone of the SOMALIA-NQF Implementation Plan, and be guided by the Results Framework and indicators, and analyse efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, and propose adjustments or more significant review of certain measures of the Implementation Plan and components of the SOMALIA-NQF.

Indicators

The Results Framework of the SOMALIA-NQF will be structured following state-of-the-art concepts and practices, and will include four essential levels: activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Indicators supporting each of the levels can consider international experiences, notably the ACQF Guideline 7 on Monitoring and Evaluation¹².

4.5.7 Communication, visibility and buy-in

SOMALIA-NQF Implementation Plan will include measures supporting the buy-in, outreach and application of the SOMALIA-NQF principles by the relevant stakeholders and users at all levels.

To ensure the SOMALIA-NQF is widely accessible and understood, it is essential to:

- **Engage Stakeholders:** Actively involve educational institutions, employers, and communities to build support and understanding of the SOMALIA-NQF.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Launch information dissemination and marketing campaigns to promote the benefits of the SOMALIA-NQF.

¹² ACQF (2022), Guideline 7 on Monitoring and Evaluation in the context of NQF / ACQF.

<https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-guidelines/acqf-guideline-7-monitoring-and-evaluation-in-the-context-of-national-qualifications-frameworks-and-acqf>

- **Political Support:** Garner strong political commitment to ensure sustained backing for the SOMALIA-NQF's implementation and integration across Somalia's education and employment sectors.

NQF accessible, visible and understood

- Ensuring accessibility means that the framework is inclusive and readily available to a diverse range of users, allowing individuals from various backgrounds to understand their options for educational pathways and qualifications.
- Visibility within the NQF is about promoting awareness and recognition of the framework across educational institutions and industries, ensuring that qualifications are standardized and recognized across sectors. This helps in fostering trust in the quality and consistency of the education system, enabling stakeholders to clearly see the levels and progression routes available.
- To be truly understood, the NQF must be transparent, with clear guidelines and descriptions for each qualification level. This clarity allows learners to make informed choices about their education and career paths, as well as enables employers to assess and compare qualifications easily.

Communication of SOMALIA-NQF entails:

- Information and awareness raising on the features, policies and tools of the SOMALIA-NQF and their implementation modalities.
- Training for stakeholders with higher degree of involvement and responsibility for correct application of the principles, measures and tools of the SOMALIA-NQF. This concerns the quality assurance teams and units of education and training institutions, the RPL implementation centres, curriculum and standards development teams and experts, and other technical stakeholders.
- Dissemination of information supporting documents at events, regular meetings, social media, TV and other communication platforms.
- Public information channels, such as posters on the SOMALIA-NQF at all schools, training centres, institutes and universities.
- Specific in-depth training of staff at key implementation bodies, such as MOECHE, other Ministries, stakeholders of the private sector and civil society
- Information booklets and infographics accessible online and in printed format, explaining the key goals, benefits, components and functioning of the SOMALIA-NQF.
- SOMALIA-NQF website to be used widely for communication and outreach
- Communicating the SOMALIA-NQF should be sensitive to different target groups' needs.

4.5.8 Related policies

SOMALIA-NQF works in synergy and coordination with a range of policies, especially:

- The new harmonised RPL Policy – developed within the same cooperation package with ACQF-II
- The new harmonised CATS Policy - developed within the same cooperation package with ACQF-II
- Other policies and procedures to be reviewed or developed, as adequate, considering the existing legislation and regulations:
 - Handbook and tools to support harmonised development of qualifications based on learning outcomes
 - Handbook and digitalised process to support accreditation of qualifications

- QCP handbook – provided by ACQF-II
- Qualification types specifications – to support the SOMALIA-NQF qualifications map
- Qualifications and micro-credentials development and review policy and procedures
- Pathways policy
- Qualifications issuance policy
- Policy for the registration of qualifications and micro-credentials

4.6 Governance of SOMALIA-NQF

The importance of competent governance of the SOMALIA-NQF cannot be overestimated, and many examples prove that well designed NQFs fail their entry into force due to administrative obstacles, lack of institutional leadership, lengthy approval processes, lack of financial and human resources and insufficient advocacy and communication to decision makers.

In the current institutional context of Somalia, it was decided that MoECHE will be entrusted with the role and responsibility to lead and coordinate implementation of the SOMALIA-NQF as a whole, working in cooperation with other relevant institutions.

- This new function is demanding, both in human competence and technical and financial resources. A specific SOMALIA-NQF Unit in MoECHE will be established, as appropriate and agreed the relevant bodies.
- In addition, the role of employers, professional bodies, sector councils, workers organisations cannot be underestimated, and their strategic involvement might require a flexible approach to be agreed with the involved institutions.

SOMALIA-NQF Unit at MoECHE

The main functions of the SOMALIA-NQF Unit will be defined by the relevant bodies, entailing in general terms the following aspects:

1. SOMALIA-NQF Coordination: development and approval of the medium-term SOMALIA-NQF roadmap; annual planning and monitoring of implementation; coherence and linkages with all sub-sectors and other relevant ministries and stakeholders; analysis of feedback and data, and reporting on progress
2. Registration of qualifications: support for appropriate and harmonised design of qualifications; information and advocacy for registration; analysis of applications; registration; management of digital tool supporting registration and management of qualifications (QCP).
3. RPL and CATS: coordination, public information and dissemination, training of professionals, accreditation of RPL centres, supervision of key aspects of the RPL process, data collection, awarding, communication.
4. Communication and advocacy, training of stakeholders and users, website.

This governance setting will be tested during the consultation and first phase of implementation. Feedback and results from monitoring, and observations from the governing bodies will provide relevant information towards any future review of this initial governance setting, and proposal of alternative options.

African and European experiences related to governance, leadership and coordination of NQF implementation are rich and well documented and can be complemented by benchmarking exercises to support decision-making on the matter of governance options.

SOMALIA-NQF Roadmap

The short and medium-term actions supporting approval, start of implementation and wider generalisation of the SOMALIA-NQF can be planned in phases, e.g.:

1. Phase 1: 2025 – Approval of the SOMALIA-NQF and start of implementation

- a. Widen and complete the consultation among all key stakeholders and institutions of the three new policies: SOMALIA-NQF, RPL and CATS
- b. Establish the SOMALIA-NQF Unit at MoECHE
- c. Conduct the inventory of all existing qualifications (all levels and sectors)
- d. Map and align the existing qualifications with the data model of the QCP
- e. Map the existing qualifications with the new CATS
- f. Update and approve the revised qualifications map linked to the SOMALIA-NQF
- g. Develop the first draft of the Monitoring and Evaluation system and the Results Framework of SOMALIA-NQF, RPL and CATS; consultation of key institutions and preparation for approval and start of implementation.
- h. Develop capacities related to SOMALIA-NQF, RPL and CATS - at SOMALIA-NQF Unit and all key institutions
- i. Develop the essential texts of the legal and regulatory framework of the SOMALIA-NQF, RPL, CATS for approval and entry into force.
- j. Disseminate information on the SOMALIA-NQF, RPL and CATS, through events and workshops, user-friendly leaflets, website, social media and other channels
- k. Engage with the world of work and start creation of sectoral councils supporting the linkages with SOMALIA-NQF: employers' associations and professional bodies, trade unions, recruitment agencies, entrepreneurship, youth and women organisations

2. Phase 2: 2026-2027 – Operationalisation

- a. Launch the QCP Somalia
- b. Launch operations of RPL and CATS in complementarity with SOMALIA-NQF
- c. Develop new qualifications aligned to the SOMALIA-NQF and taking account of labour market trends
- d. Establish and launch the Monitoring and Evaluation system supporting SOMALIA-NQF and aligned with the wider M&E of MoECHE
- e. Conduct stakeholders' surveys, and analyse feedback
- f. Elaborate proposals for further development of instruments supporting the SOMALIA-NQF-RPL-CATS.

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[Cedefop Online Tool on NQFs in Europe](#): this advanced platform offers comparison tools and rich information on all NQFs cooperating with EQF.

[European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\) website](#)

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ACQF website: <https://acqf.africa/>

ACQF Guidelines: <https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-guidelines>

ACQF Training Modules: <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules>

ACQF Peer Learning Webinars: <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/webinars>

ACQF Thematic Briefs: <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/thematic-briefs>

ACQF Mapping study collection: <https://acqf.africa/resources/mapping-study>

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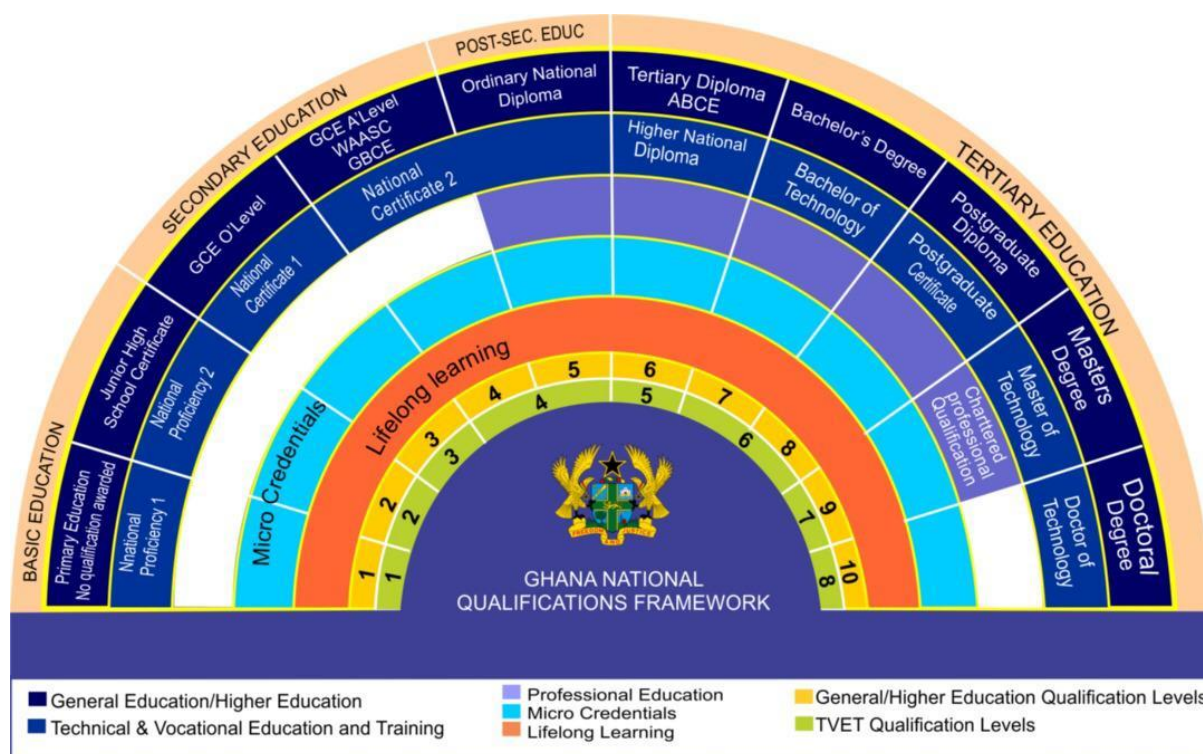
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6 Annexes

6.1 Annex 1: Example of a comprehensive qualifications map in fan-shape

Ghana NQF - Qualifications Map – new design (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission – Council TVET)



6.2 Annex 2: NQFs in Africa – shared language across countries (8 countries)

The experiences and research on NQFs, especially in the last two decades, generates a robust knowledge basis highly pertinent to inform development of new NQFs. The range of useful resources is wide and mostly shared online in specialised and general platforms and networks, notably:

- [ACQF website](#) and specific resources: on [NQFs](#), [RPL](#), [micro-credentials](#), [Guidelines](#), [Thematic Briefs](#) and [Capacity Development](#)
- [Cedefop Online Tool on NQFs in Europe](#): this advanced platform offers comparison tools and rich information on all NQFs cooperating with EQF
- [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\) website](#)

Referring to the [final report](#) of the 1st NQF Forum organised by ACQF-II in Kinshasa (18-20 June 2024), the NQF experiences shared by representatives of the Qualifications Frameworks Authorities listed below, show that common characteristics can be identified between NQFs from different countries and education and training systems. These similarities are the result of the common language and principles of NQFs globally and promote comparability and transparency among NQFs across the continent.

- Angola, Ms. Edgarda Neto – INQ. [Presentation available on the ACQF website.](#)
- Cabo Verde, Mr. Amílcar Mendes – UC-SNQ. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- Kenya, Dr. Alice Kande – KNQA. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- Lesotho, Dr. Molise Nhlapo – CHE. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)
- South Africa, Mr Japie Nel – SAQA. [Presentation on the ACQF website.](#)

- Zambia, Mr Fidelis Cheelo – ZAQA. [Presentation on the ACQF website](#).
- Presentations on the [CNC from Eswatini](#) and the [CNC du Mozambique](#) are available on the Forum's webpage.

The differences observed between NQFs can be characterized as a "non-substantial difference", i.e., they do not prevent nor limit the mutual understanding and cooperation between NQFs. These differences are often the result of contextualization to socio-political realities and needs and to the national education and training system. Thus, these differences can be referred to as "diversity" of solutions adapted to different contexts and histories.

- **Common characteristics and similarities between the presented NQFs – in summary:**

1. **Objectives:**

- To improve the transparency, clarity and comparability of qualifications of all types and levels.
- To clarify the articulation, pathways and bridges between education-training subsystems.
- To strengthen learners' mobility and lifelong learning, contributing to employability and skills matching.
- To foster parity of esteem for all learning modalities (formal, non-formal and informal), and the validation of learning outcomes contributing to social inclusion and decent work.
- To facilitate the recognition of qualifications between countries and institutions.
- To ensure the credibility and authenticity of the titles and documents of all national qualifications.
- To strengthen the approximation between the qualifications awarded and socio-economic and labour market trends and needs.
- To promote innovation and renew qualifications to meet new demands and the green and digital transformation (new skills, changing occupations);
- To foster regional and global cooperation of qualifications frameworks and referencing with regional and continental qualifications frameworks.

2. **Principles:** application of the learning outcomes approach (competencies); ensure the quality of NQF-referenced qualifications of all types and levels; application of NQF rules and criteria in a comparable and objective manner across the education and training system; involvement of socio-economic stakeholders and partners and the world of education and training, employment, technology, innovation and research.

3. **Scope:** inclusive and broad, promoting lifelong learning and mobility and progression. All NQFs include qualifications of all types and levels of all subsystems: from primary (basic) to higher education. All NQFs facilitate and support the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired in all learning modalities (formal, non-formal and informal).

4. **Structure:** Most NQFs in Africa are structured in 10 levels, and Cabo Verde has adopted an 8-level structure. This difference is non-substantial, as it does not prevent or limit the comparability and referencing between these NQFs.

Certain NQFs join-up 3 sub-frameworks (General education, TVET and Higher education), others have a fully integrated structured. In all cases, the objectives, principles, quality criteria and level descriptors of the comprehensive NQF apply in equal and comparable manner to the sub-frameworks.

5. **Level descriptors define the NQFs' steps of "learning complexity":** levels are defined by descriptors that express the vertical (depth) and horizontal (breadth) logic of the CNC. The 8 indicated countries apply fairly similar descriptor domains, notably in the following combinations: a) knowledge, skills and competences; b) knowledge, skills, autonomy and

responsibility; c) domains of knowledge, nature of skills, context and agency; d) Some of these NQFs are currently undergoing reforms and updates, including the revision of descriptors to better adapt them to changing skills needs and to improve comparability between NQFs in Africa and globally – as is the case in Seychelles and Zambia.

6. **Qualifications in the National qualifications registers and catalogues:**

- The majority of NQFs include full qualifications; some NQFs also include partial qualifications (covering part of units of outcomes defined in the standard) and "micro-credentials".
- In several countries qualifications are registered in the Qualifications Registers or Catalogues, which are accessible to all users on the websites of the national qualifications authorities and councils/commissions. That is the case of South Africa ([SAQA Register](#) – All qualifications and Unit Standards), Botswana ([BQA Qualifications Register](#)), Cabo Verde ([Catálogo Nacional das Qualificações](#)), Mauritius ([MQA - National Qualifications and Unit Standards](#)). Mozambique ([Catálogo Nacional das Qualificações Profissionais – ANEP](#)).

7. **Governance of the NQFs:** The governance structure of the 8 countries can be categorized into 4 models:

1. **Model 1: National Qualifications Authority:** responsible for the implementation, integrity and quality of the NQF and its instruments (such as the qualifications register/catalogue); promotion and management of related policies (such as validation of prior learning and the system of credit accumulation and transfer, innovations such as micro-credentials); monitoring and evaluation and review of the NQF; coordination and collaboration with relevant ministries and public structures, stakeholders and social partners, and regional and continental qualifications NQFs and frameworks. These authorities are registered institutions with legal status, and endowed with technical and financial management autonomy, and accountable for achievements, efficiency and impact to the concerned ministry(s).
This is the case of the NQFs of South Africa (SAQA), Botswana (BQA), Eswatini (EQA), Kenya (KNQA), Zambia (ZAQA). Angola has also adopted this model, but the structure is called the "National Institute of Qualifications" (INQ). Other African countries also have opted for NQF Authorities: Mauritius (MQA), Namibia (NQA), Seychelles (SQA).
2. **Model 2: Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System.** Role and functions similar to those of model 1, defined by decree creating the NQF and its governance. This is the case of the UC-SNQ of Cabo Verde, which is accountable towards the supervising Ministry for achievements and efficiency. The UC-SNQ has its own management and coordination structure that integrates socio-economic stakeholders and other relevant ministries.
3. **Model 3: NQF department within an existing institution (Council on Higher Education).** Role and functions similar to those of model 1. This is the example of Lesotho.
4. **Model 4: NQF Technical Commission** – brings together all key ministries and stakeholders for the planning and implementation of NQF activities. The functions, tasks and coordination of the Technical Commission are defined by the decree approving the NQF and its components and governance structure. The Technical Commission is coordinated by the National Council for Evaluation and Quality of Higher Education (CNAQ) and is accountable for achievements and efficiency towards a transversal ministry responsible for the reform of public administration.

Mozambique has adopted this model, pending the gradual development of a long-term option for the governance of the NQF.

- 8. Achievements of the NQFs:** The 8 countries reported a wide range of achievements, the extent of which depends on the history of implementation of the NQFs, which differs substantially between countries such as South Africa (whose NQF has almost 30 years of history) and Angola and Mozambique (whose NQFs are the youngest – established by decrees published in 2022). Main achievements mentioned by the 8 countries:
- Harmonization, clarification, systematization and structuring of the panorama of training programs and respective qualifications.
 - Transparency of qualifications through databases, registries and platforms for sharing up-to-date and credible information on qualifications at all levels and fields of study.
 - Improvement of the articulation between training programmes and qualifications and the flexibility of courses and bridges between levels, fields of study and sub-sectors.
 - Implementation of the competency-based / learning outcomes approach for the development and registration of qualifications and their referencing to the NQF levels.
 - Implementation of the validation of learning outcomes from all modalities and contexts (formal, non-formal and informal); and parity of esteem and rights of qualifications resulting from RPL– promoting the growth of the proportion of the population with recognised qualifications, and the transition to the formal and formal economy.
 - Harmonized quality assurance for all NQF qualifications.
 - Facilitation of the recognition of qualifications between countries.
 - Better dialogue and purposeful collaboration between actors in the education and training subsystems - to facilitate comparability, mobility, articulation, and lifelong learning.
 - Involvement and awareness raising of employers and workers organisations – on policy and practical questions related to qualifications and the NQF.
 - Established NQF governance structures that are operational and have well-defined functions, specific competencies and technical capabilities for the NQF activities.
 - Monitoring and evaluation, evidence, revision and updating of the NQFs: databases, evaluation studies, participatory initiatives to review the NQFs.
 - Documentation and instruments related to the NQF: websites, legal acts, concept papers, technical user support guides and manuals, related policy documents and guides (RPL, credit systems), occupational and qualification standards, databases/registers and catalogues of qualifications, other specific databases such as learners' achievements and professional bodies.
 - Pooling knowledge on NQFs, sharing of successful practices and experiences, support for the development of NQFs of neighbouring countries in Africa – promoting mutual trust, comparability and recognition between countries.
- 9. NQF success factors:** The 8 countries have identified their success factors, including:
- Implementation of the NQF across the entire education and training system – all levels and fields of study.
 - Alignment of qualifications (existing and new) with the NQF's levels, principles and criteria.
 - Gradual implementation, pilots for the implementation of new policies and instruments – promoting the early effective start as well as the collection of information on the strengths and weaknesses/challenges of new initiatives and methods.
 - Relevance, coherence and clarity of legislation and regulations

- Operational NQF governance structures with specific resources and capabilities
- Dialogue and consultation with relevant government structures and stakeholders.
- Monitoring and evaluation, based on analyses and data on skills needs, quality of training, integration of qualified people into the labour market, and others.
- International cooperation and mutual learning – based on networking and sharing of experiences and successful solutions from other CNCs and Certification Authorities.
- Use of lessons learned from benchmarking and comparison exercises with other NQFs and regional qualifications frameworks.