Agenda 29/Nov 2023

- Opening

- Sierra Leone: education and training system, policy and strategy

- Qualifications Frameworks: main concepts, functions, objectives, architecture, tools.

- Regional Qualifications Frameworks. The case of EQF

- Practical exercice: brainstorming.

01

1. ACQF is born

AU Political and legal basis

- Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan

- CESA 16-25

- AfCFTA

- AU Free Movement Protocol

- PAQAF

Focus on CESA 16-25

The ACQF is mentioned in strategic objective 4 of CESA 16-25. (African Union. CESA 16-25. pg 23).

- Strategic objective 4 c) and d) explicitly refer to the establishment of qualifications frameworks, notably a continental qualifications framework linked with national and regional qualifications frameworks:

- Strategic objective 4: "*Ensure acquisition of requisite knowledge and skills as well as improved completion rates at all levels and groups through harmonization processes across all levels for national and regional integration*".

a) **Set up national qualification frameworks (NQFs) and regional qualification frameworks (RQFs) to facilitate the creation of multiple pathways to acquisition of skills and competencies as well as mobility across the sub-sectors**

b) **Develop continental qualifications framework linked to regional qualifications and national qualification frameworks to facilitate regional integration and mobility of graduates**
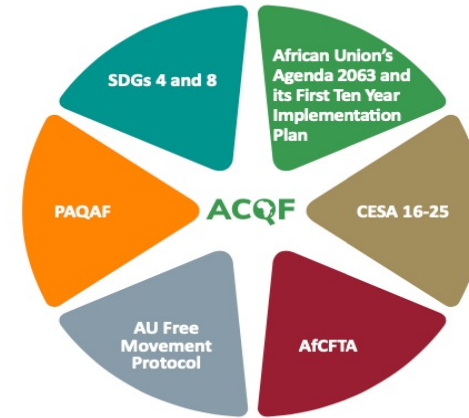
ACQF: underpinnings, purposes, principles

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.

UNDERPINNINGS

- SDGs 4 and 8
- African Union's Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan
- CESA 16-25
- AfCFTA
- AU Free Movement Protocol
- PAQAF

ACQF

PURPOSES OF ACQF

1 Enhance — Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications of all types and levels, support people's lifelong learning outcomes.

2 Facilitate — Facilitate validation of learning, recognition of skills, diplomas and certificates and mobility of learners and workers

3 Cooperate — Work in cooperation and complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks and support African continental integration and creation of African common space of trusted qualifications.

4 Promote — Promote cooperation and referencing between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

PRINCIPLES

Inclusiveness: all levels and types of qualifications, all modes of lifelong learning

Innovation: future-proof, new demands - emerging skills, green skills, transversal skills

Openness: to participation of all stakeholders, good practice, lessons learned (African, global)

Main areas of activity of the ACQF

1.Referencing of national qualifications frameworks and systems to the ACQF, following agreed criteria and procedures.

2. Support recognition of prior learning – for example, the development of common guidelines and approaches, updated inventory of RPL systems on the continent, a wide information and support campaign

3. ACQF Qualifications Platform (database) and management information system

4. Qualifications: Development of qualifications profiles adequate for common continental use (e.g.: related with economic integration / AfCFTA).

5. Capacity development in relevant areas. Online, onsite, hybrid.

6. Advocacy, communication, networking and cooperation: African stakeholders (education and training, employment, social partners) and other RQFs globally

7. Analysis, monitoring and evaluation: for continuous improvement.

The project ACQF-II (2023-2026)

Objectives, outputs, activities

African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)

Inaugural workshop of the project ACQF-II (2023-2026)

11-13 July 2023 • Addis Ababa, Headquarters of the African Union

ACQF
African Continental Qualifications Framework

Supporting and connecting Qualifications Frameworks
Transparency and Mutual Trust in qualifications
Facilitating lifelong learning and mobility

ACQF-II is:
1. Capacity development.
2. Support countries and regions: NQF development and implementation.
3. Governance. ACQF Qualifications Platform. RPL Campaign. Referencing NQF-ACQF. Common profiles of qualifications

www.acqf.africa

ACQF-II project: overview

- **Scope**: Comprehensive, wide, holistic strategy
- **Designed to support the 7 main areas of activity of the ACQF Policy document**
- **Builds upon the outputs of ACQF-I (esp. 10 Guidelines and TM)**
- **Geography**: Continental, regional, national
- Oriented to action – at all levels (national, regional, continental)
- **Research and analysis**: support effectiveness and quality of the activities
- Work together with national and regional authorities and stakeholders
- **Technical Implementation Team** – mix of professional experiences in relevant thematic domains, countries, languages
- **Managed by ETF**: EU Agency. Longstanding experience and expertise in NQF-RQF, skills development, TVET, recognition of qualifications, LMIs

Main outputs


```
                        ACQF-II

    1.1 Capacity        2.1 NQFs and related      3. Operationalisation
    development,        policies – increased      of ACQF
    advocacy, awareness number in
                        development and
                        implementation stage

    3.1 Governance      3.2. Referencing of   3.3 RPL Campaign   3.4 Common profiles
    partnership, ACQF   NQFs and ACQF                            of qualifications
    Qualifications and
    Credentials Platform
```

1.1 Capacity development

> **3 main delivery types:**
> - Training workshops (onsite, streaming)
> - Webinars
> - Conferences

> **3 geographies:**
> - Multicountry
> - Regional
> - National

> **Thematic areas:**
> - NQF – NQS: wide area
> - RPL, credit systems
> - New developments and innovation in the domain of qualifications and credentials
> - Digitalisation

2.1 NQFs and related policies and instruments: support to development and implementation – country level, regions

- Methodology - common approach

- Baseline analysis - Activity Plan

- Implementation at country level / supported by the regional level

- Action-oriented output: policies, guidelines, methods, technical proposals

- Inventory: information gathering, analysis: NQF, RPL, micro-credentials

- Monitor, collect feedback, analysis disseminate lessons at ACQF conferences
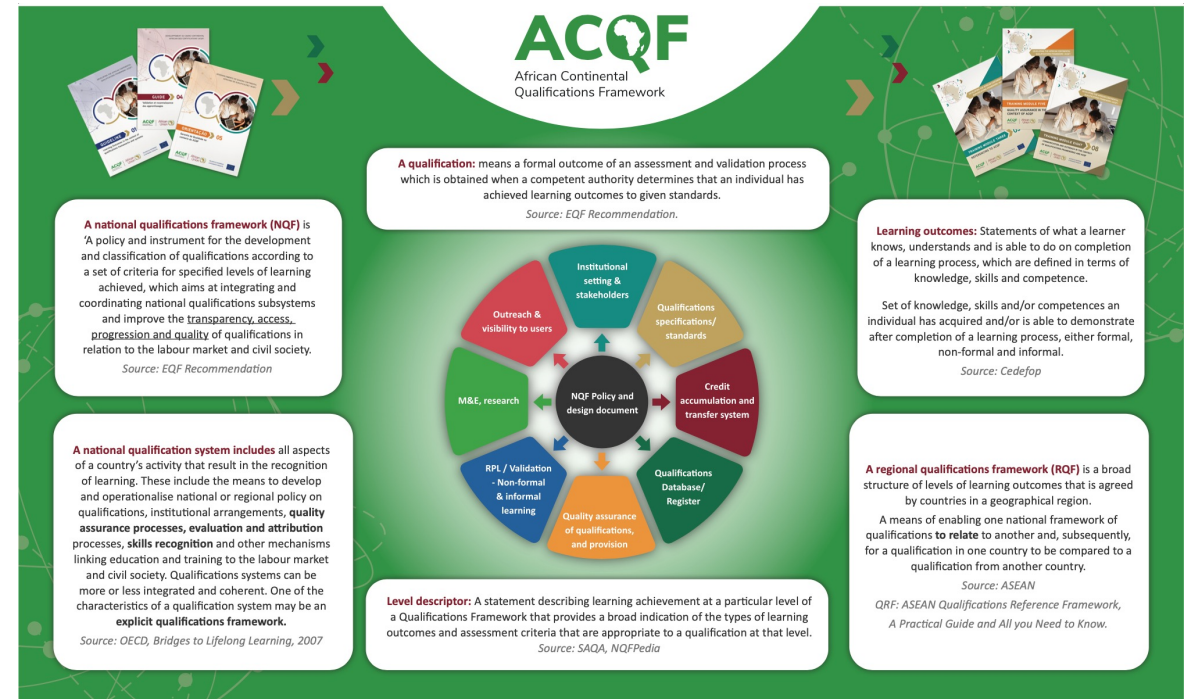
3.1 Governance: 3 areas

Governance partnership	Qualifications and credentials Platform	Cooperation with Conventions and Frameworks
• ACQF AG • Support establishment Network NQF agencies • Focal points	• National databases (common type tool) • Integrated database • Platform for end-users	• Addis Recognition Convention: links NQFs and recognition of qualifications • EQF and other regional frameworks

3.2 Referencing NQF(S) - ACQF

- A process of comparison, mutual understanding and trust: good for countries, regions, continent
- Referencing Group
- Finetune current technical basis (Guideline & TM3, Self-assessment tool)
- Plan referencing with countries, support and start
- Follow-up steps
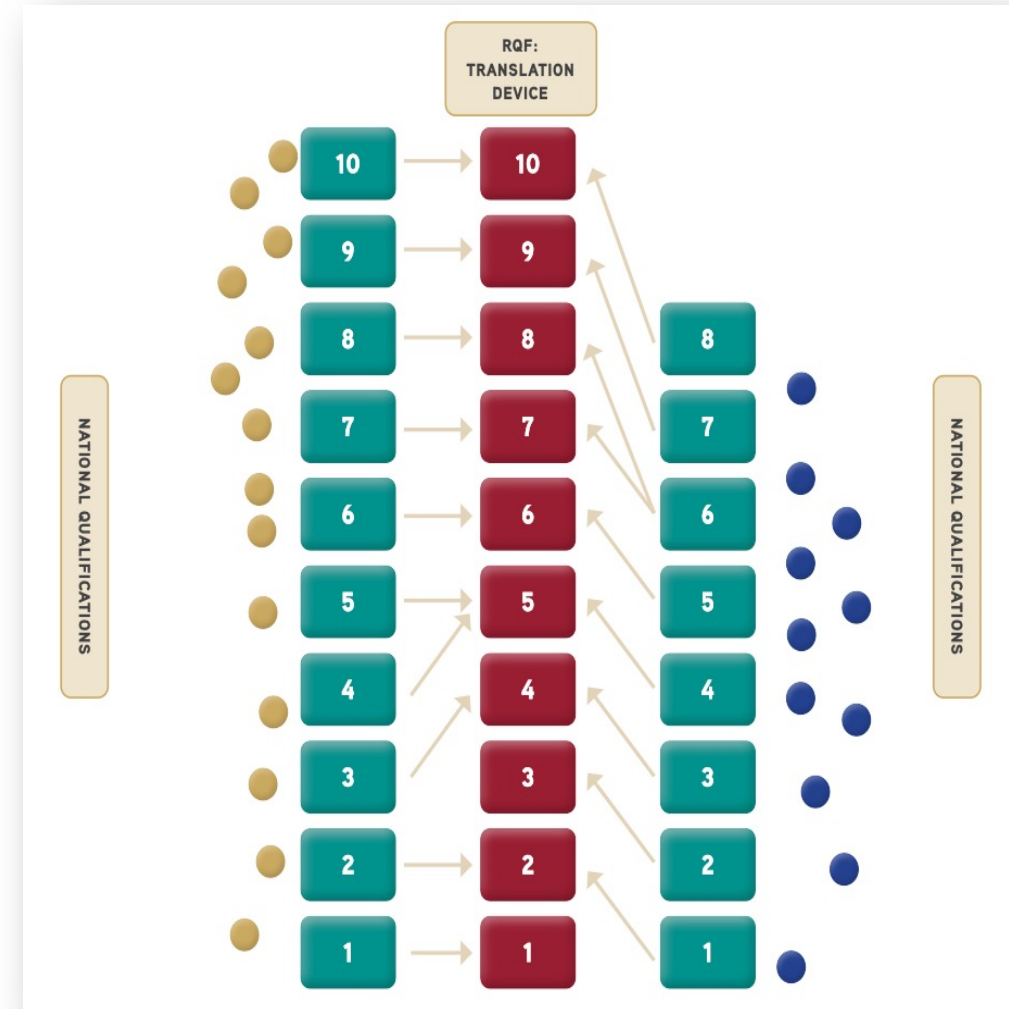
3.3 RPL Campaign

- **Making visible learning outputs from all contexts; support people's LLL and social inclusion; integration of migrants and refugees**

- <u>**Campaign**</u>**:**
  - Information and encouragement
  - New Handbook RPL Practitioners
  - Training of practitioners
  - Call: good practices
  - New developments and innovation
  - Pilot projects

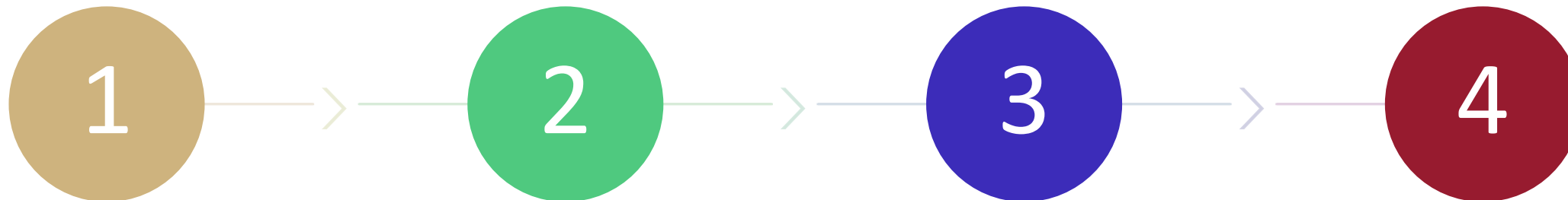RPL: LEGAL BASIS ADOPTED AND REVISED

More information: session 13

3.4 Common profiles of qualifications

1

Commonalities of work tasks / job roles or functions of the corresponding occupations across borders, mainly due to technological standards and the organisation of business processes.

The typical (existing and emerging) skills and competences to carry out these tasks are consequently also similar; as are the learning outcomes to be acquired by learners for these common work tasks.

2

Common profiles are a way of making visible the commonalities of learning outcomes across borders that prepare learners for similar work tasks and processes.

They can be developed based on the combination of comparing learning outcomes of national qualifications and the identification of emerging skills.

Comparability – not standardisation

3

The learning outcomes do not necessarily need to relate exclusively to **occupational skills and competences but should also relate to transversal skills relevant to work and society in general.**

4

Common references: occupational and skills classifications; regional qualifications frameworks

ACQF-II Training programme 2023

- Welcome
- Benvinda(o)s
- Bienvenu(e)s

Nairobi: 9-11/Oct

161,58

Accra: 7-8/Nov

Maputo: 5-6/Dec

Country-specific capacity development activities directly linked to NQF dialogue (2023-24)

Guinea-Bissau

Sierra Leone

Senegal

D.R Congo

Somalia

South Sudan

The Nairobi workshop

The Accra Workshop

Freetown workshop - Session 2-3

South-South dialogue and sharing: ACQF among the good practices 2023

https://www.southsouth-galaxy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Good-Practices-in-SSTC-Transforming-Education-and-Delivering-on-SDG4.pdf
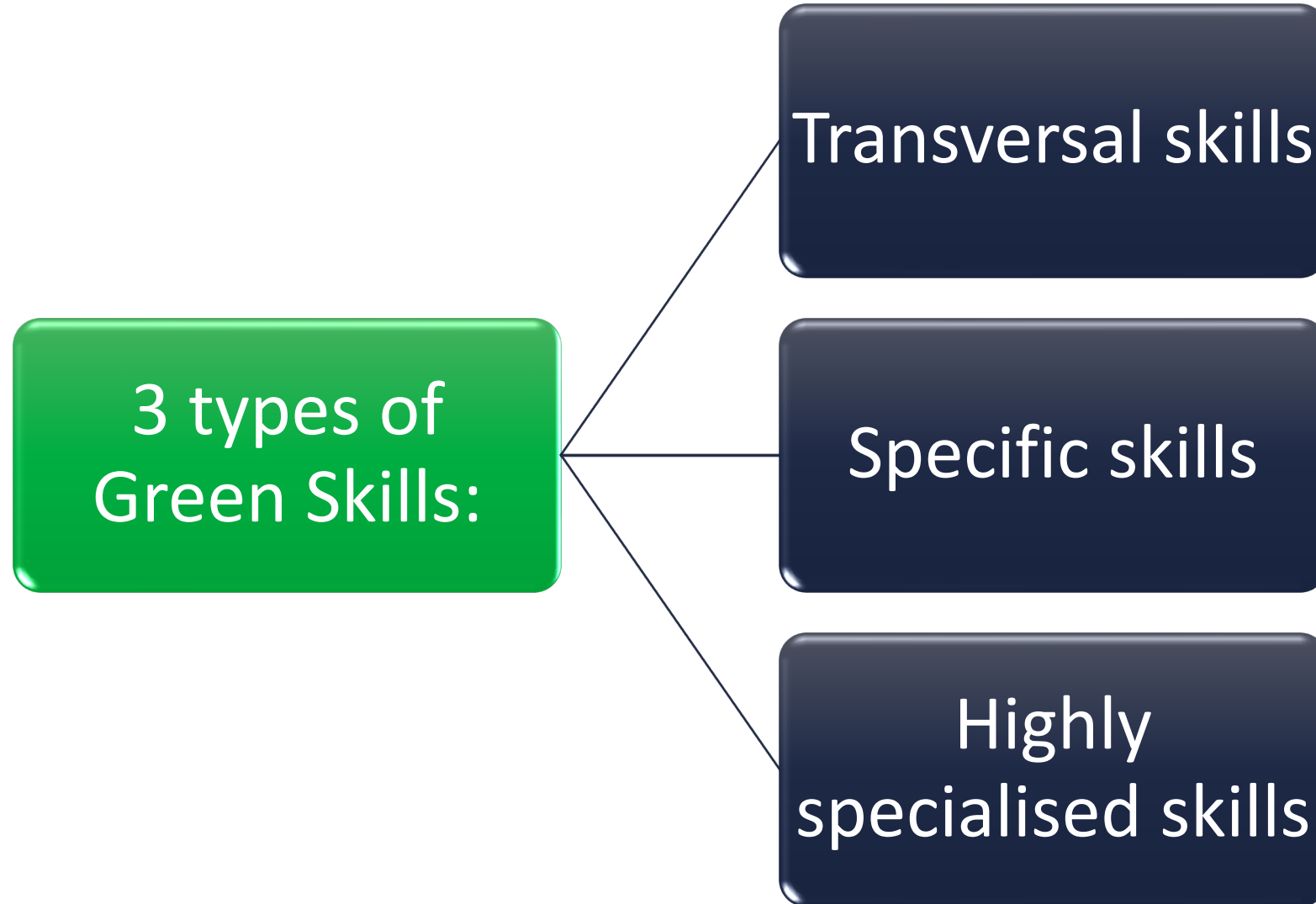
Green skills: the new imperative

3 types of Green Skills:

- Transversal skills
- Specific skills
- Highly specialised skills

Freetown workshop - Session 2-3

Greener jobs future

- To compensate for expected job losses, global efforts to decarbonize in response to the climate crisis are giving rise to a wealth of green jobs across sectors and industries.

- A green-recovery scenario could generate around 3.5% of additional global GDP growth and a net employment gain of 9 million new jobs each year, according to International Energy Agency data.

- The green transition could **create 30 million jobs globally in clean energy, efficiency and low-emissions technologies by 2030.**

- But while there has been continued growth in green jobs for the past four years, **reskilling and upskilling towards green skills is not keeping pace.**

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

A defined and central place for green skills

Green Qualifications Framerworks?

Conceptual Framework for Africa?

Reflection and dialogue in the education and training system

Review and adjust curricula, modules, certifications

Integrating green skills into the level descriptors of NQF (skills, attitudes…)

Contextualized Best Practices: Identify, Analyse, Compare, Disclose and Assess

Cooperate: Top-down and bottom-up

ACQF surveys

- On NQF
- On Micro-Credentials
- On RPL

Results presented at Maputo workshop

ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform: a gamer changer

Qualifications Databases Network

- National Qualifications Databases – with users Platform
- Continental Qualifications Database – with users Platform

Enhance qualifications management

Improve information-sharing

Interoperability (African and beyond)

Sustainability: new African Qualifications Network

- Result of 1st TVET Round Table 10-14 November 2023, Kinshasa

- Package of Recommendations – to AUC

- Key features and proposals on mission and governance of the Network

ACQF
African Continental
Qualifications Framework

Qualifications Frameworks: concepts, components, practices, new perspectives

29/November 2023

Qualifications frameworks are a global phenomenon. More than 150 countries have developed NQFs and many have advanced their implementation. But NQFs do not work in isolation, or without partnerships and resources. A broad overview of characteristics and trends.

Speaker: Eduarda Castel-Branco

Main topics of this session

Qualifications Frameworks

1. Introduction: starting notes, concepts

2. Main components of an NQF

3. Lifecycle of the NQF

4. NQFs in Africa: trends

5. NQFs in Europe: trends

6. Closing remarks

7. PANEL

02

Qualifications and frameworks – main concepts

People, society, economy...needs

- Social justice
- Planet
- Peace and stability
- Jobs
- Investments
- Livelihoods
- Skills and qualifications
- Lifelong learning
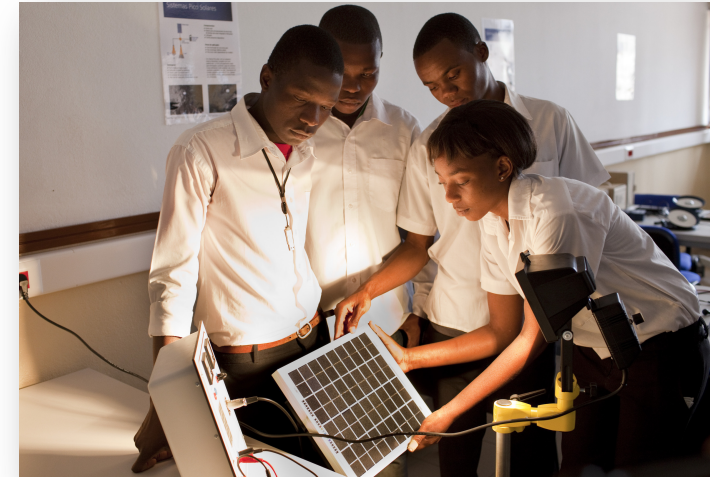- Access & Quality education

Qualifications frameworks…

> ➢ Are effective and impactful if they work with the wider eco-system of education and training and contribute to national goals and strategies
> ➢ Need to be open to innovation and adaptation to remain relevant

- Qualifications frameworks' **(digital) tools** – important for information-sharing between institutions and for end-users' guidance

- Governance of QF: participative, inclusive, based on technical competence. "***The NQF belongs to everybody***"

- ***There is much information, research, sources, tools on NQFs and RQFs***

Important trends related to qualifications frameworks:

> ➢ Growing openness to qualifications and credentials of different types
> ➢ Support access, inclusion, progression, transparency and comparability
> ➢ Comprehensive and inclusive of qualifications and credentials of all sub-sectors (NQFs – RQFs for LLL) and all modes of learning (F-NF-I)
> ➢ Digitalisation: of qualifications and credentials; registers and catalogues of qualifications

ACQF
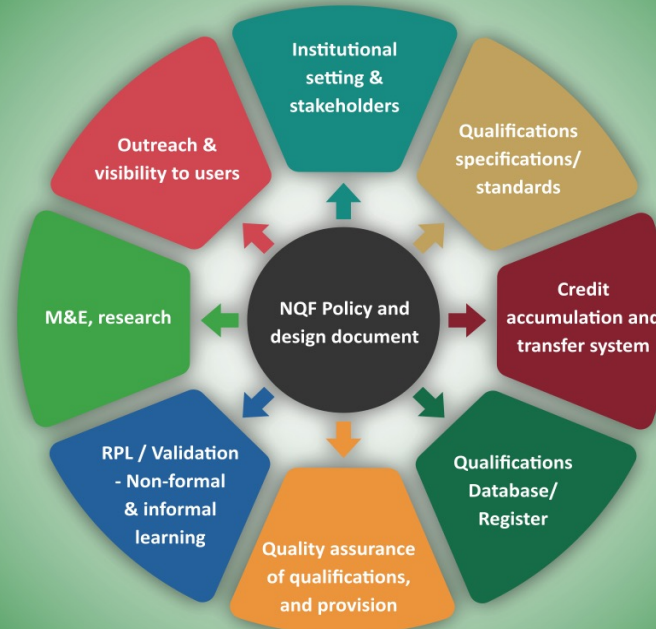## African Continental Qualifications Framework

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

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

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

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

A national qualification system includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These include the means to develop and operationalise national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, **quality assurance processes, evaluation and attribution** processes, **skills recognition** and other mechanisms linking education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems can be more or less integrated and coherent. One of the characteristics of a qualification system may be an **explicit qualifications framework.**
Source: OECD, Bridges to Lifelong Learning, 2007

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

A means of enabling one national framework of qualifications **to relate** to another and, subsequently, for a qualification in one country to be compared to a qualification from another country.
Source: ASEAN
QRF: ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework,
A Practical Guide and All you Need to Know.

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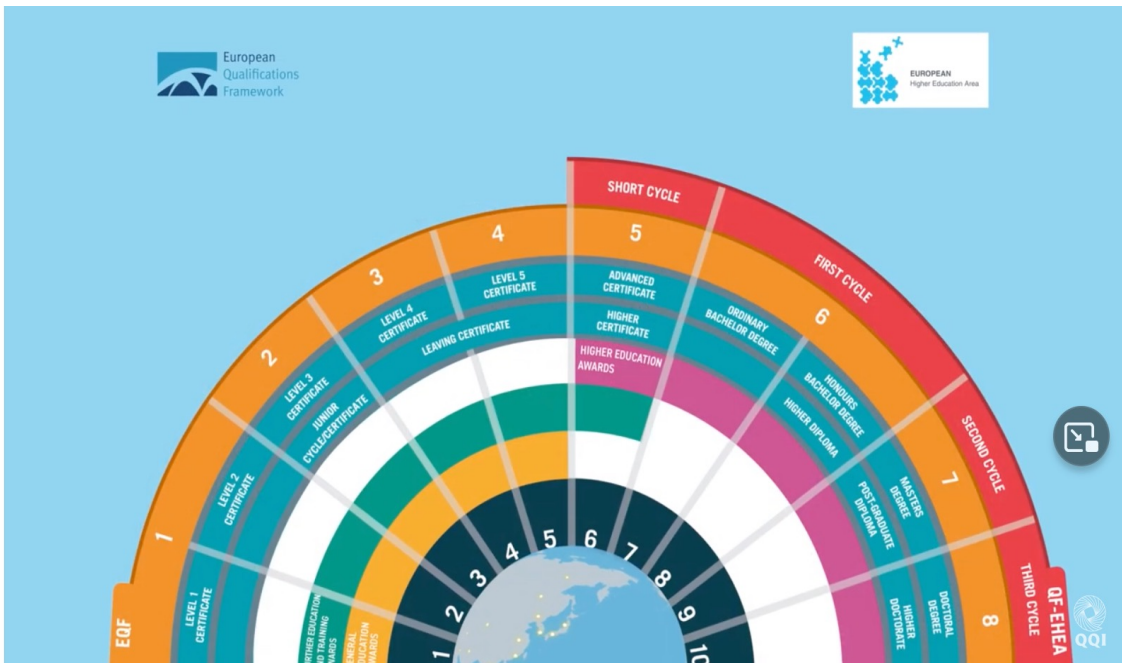*Source: SAQA, NQFPedia*

Institutional setting & stakeholders

Qualifications specifications/ standards

Outreach & visibility to users

Credit accumulation and transfer system

M&E, research

NQF Policy and design document

RPL / Validation - Non-formal & informal learning

Qualifications Database/ Register

Quality assurance of qualifications, and provision
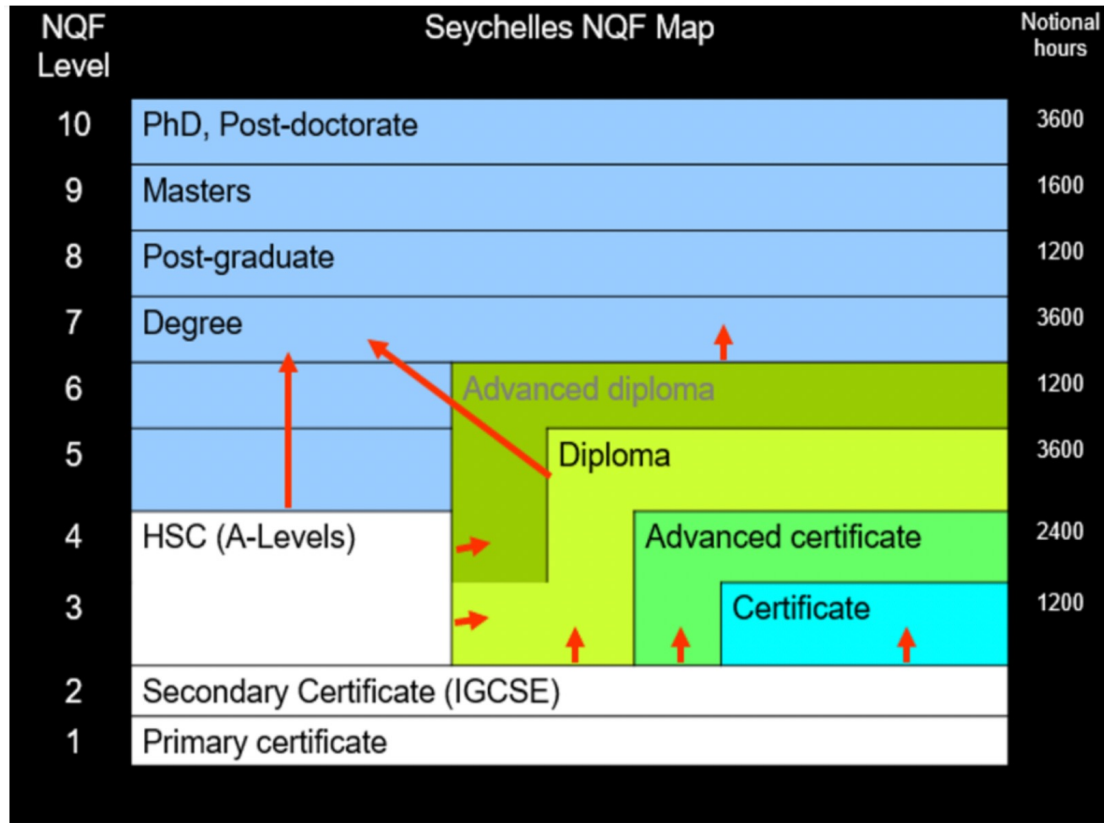
National qualifications frameworks

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) help

- To make qualifications easier to understand and compare.
- They can also encourage countries to rethink and reform national policy and practice on education, training and lifelong learning.

Learning outcomes: a fundamental principle

- NQFs classify qualifications by level, based on learning outcomes - that is, what the holder of a certificate or diploma is expected to know, understand, and be able to do.
- This classification reflects the content and profile of qualifications.
- The learning outcomes approach also ensures that education and training subsystems are open to one another.
- Thus, it allows people to move more easily between education and training institutions and sectors.
- Learning outcomes-based qualifications: essential for RPL

What is an NQF? (1)

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

  Source: EQF Recommendation 2017

What is an NQF (2)

- An **instrument for the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies along a continuum of agreed levels**.

- It is a way of **structuring existing and new qualifications**, which are defined by **learning outcomes** – clear statements of what the learner must know or be able to do, whether learned in a classroom, on the job, or less formally.

- The qualifications framework indicates the **comparability** of different qualifications and how one can **progress** from one level to another, within and across occupations or industrial sectors (and even across vocational and academic fields if the NQF is designed to include both vocational and academic qualifications in a single framework).

Source:
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_103623.pdf

Lesotho NQF (3): contextualised

The LQF consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across borders in the SADC region, in order to: facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States; harmonise qualifications wherever possible; and to contribute to the creation of acceptable regional standards where appropriate. The main role is to make qualifications more accessible and understandable across different country systems for the purpose of advancing human and economic development in the region.

The structure of the LQF consists of level descriptors that explain what learners should know (knowledge), understand, and be able to do (capabilities and competencies), having graduated and been awarded a qualification. The credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) mechanisms built into the framework facilitates the horizontal and vertical progression of learners, and offers entry points for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and the recognition of current competencies (RCC).

Procedures Manual of LQF. https://www.che.ac.ls/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Procedures-Manual_LQF-Approved-1.pdf

Qualifications frameworks: types

National (currently over 150 in the world)

- Comprehensive, inclusive scope – large majority
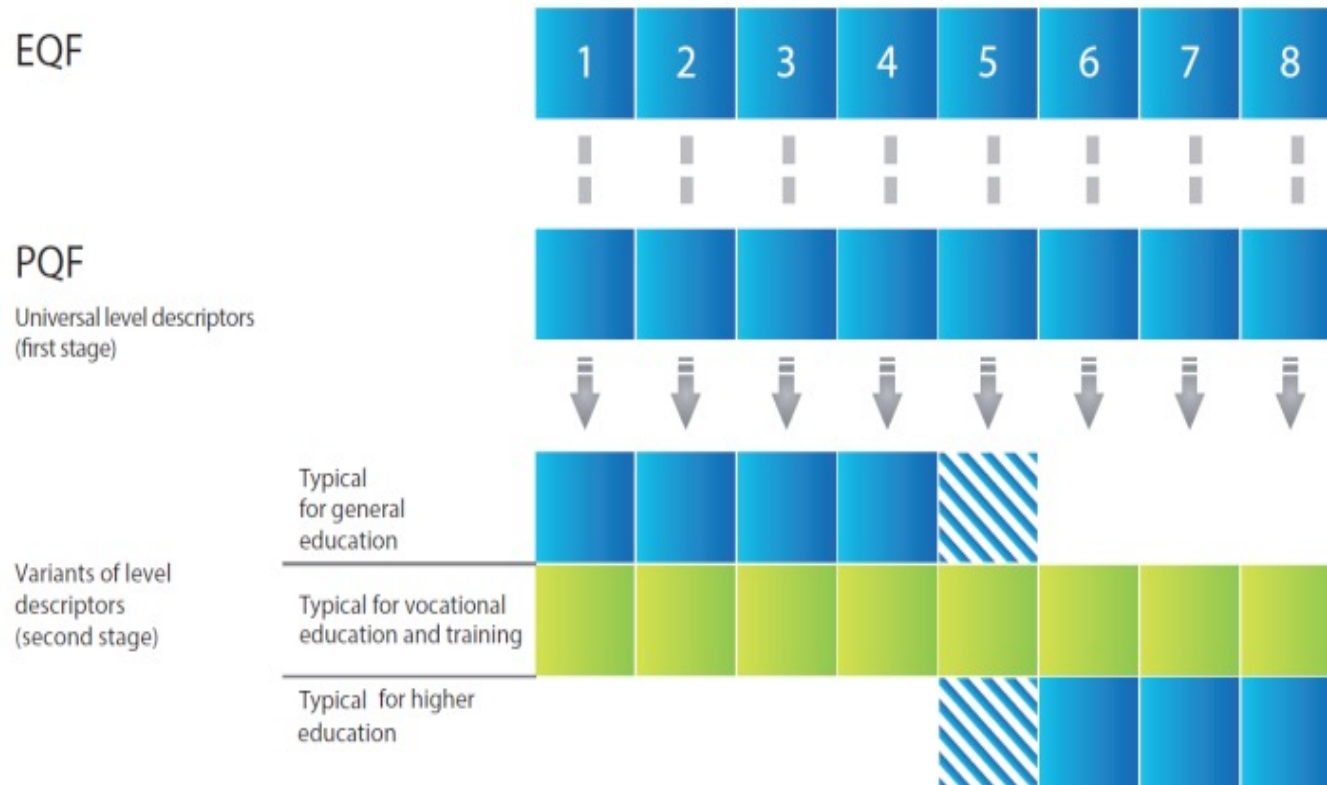- Partial: sub-sector – TVET, HE

Sectoral

- Economic or professional scope: welding, banking, energy industry...

Regional: overarching, meta-frameworks (currently: some 17 initiatives at different stage of development and implementation)

NQF with several layers

The structure of the Polish Qualifications Framework

Source: IBE.

NQF

First and second stage descriptors constitute a coherent whole. They should be read together to fully understand the uniqueness of each level.

Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF)

Next to the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF), sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQF), maybe established SQF: typical for TVET qualifications

Sectoral qualifications frameworks translate the assumptions of the Integrated Qualification System (IQS) into an industry/sector realities, highlighting their specificity and development directions.

4 sectoral frameworks included in the IQS:

- sport,
- tourism,
- construction,
- development services.

Draft sectoral frameworks developed for further nine areas:

- Banking
- information technology,
- telecommunications,
- fashion industry,
- public health,
- trade,\agriculture,
- chemical industry,
- energy industry,
- automotive industry.

Development of the following sectoral frameworks is planned:

- Mining
- education,
- real estate.

Functions of NQF

1. Communication: disseminate and clarify – goals, qualifications, structures; transparency.

2. Reform: contributes to change, improvements, innovation.

3. Regulation: part of regulatory framework of qualifications.
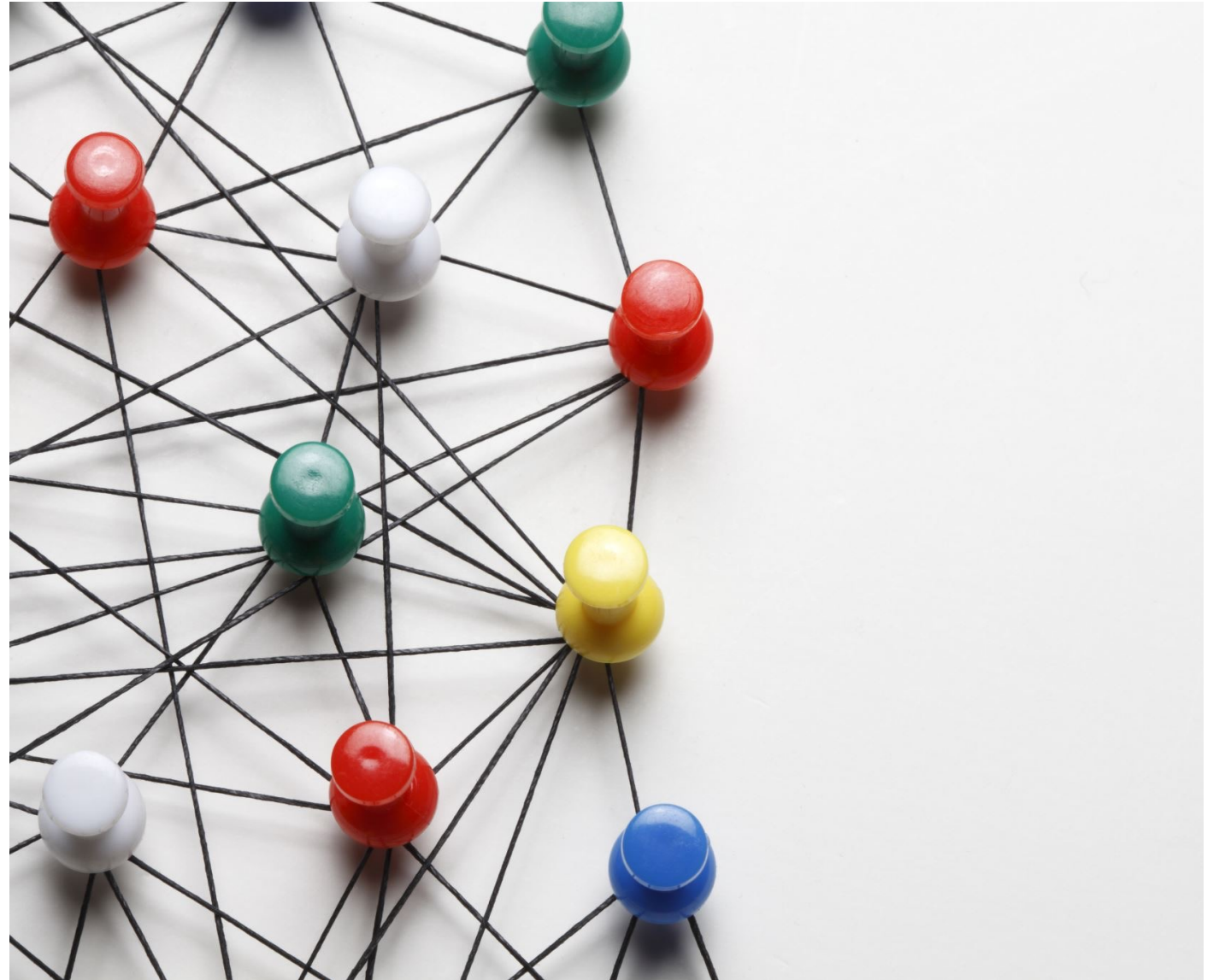
In Europe: mostly 1 and 2

In Africa: 1, 2 and 3

1. Communication

2. Reform

3. Regulation

Regional qualifications frameworks

- European Qualifications Framework (41 countries)

- SADC (16 countries)

- IGADQF (8 countries)

- EAQFHE (7 countries)

- ASEAN QRF (10 countries)

- ...ACQF (55 countries)

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.

ASEAN QRF: ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, A Practical Guide and All you Need to Know. Page 33.

- Regional Qualifications Framework: consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective **comparability** of qualifications and credits across countries in a region
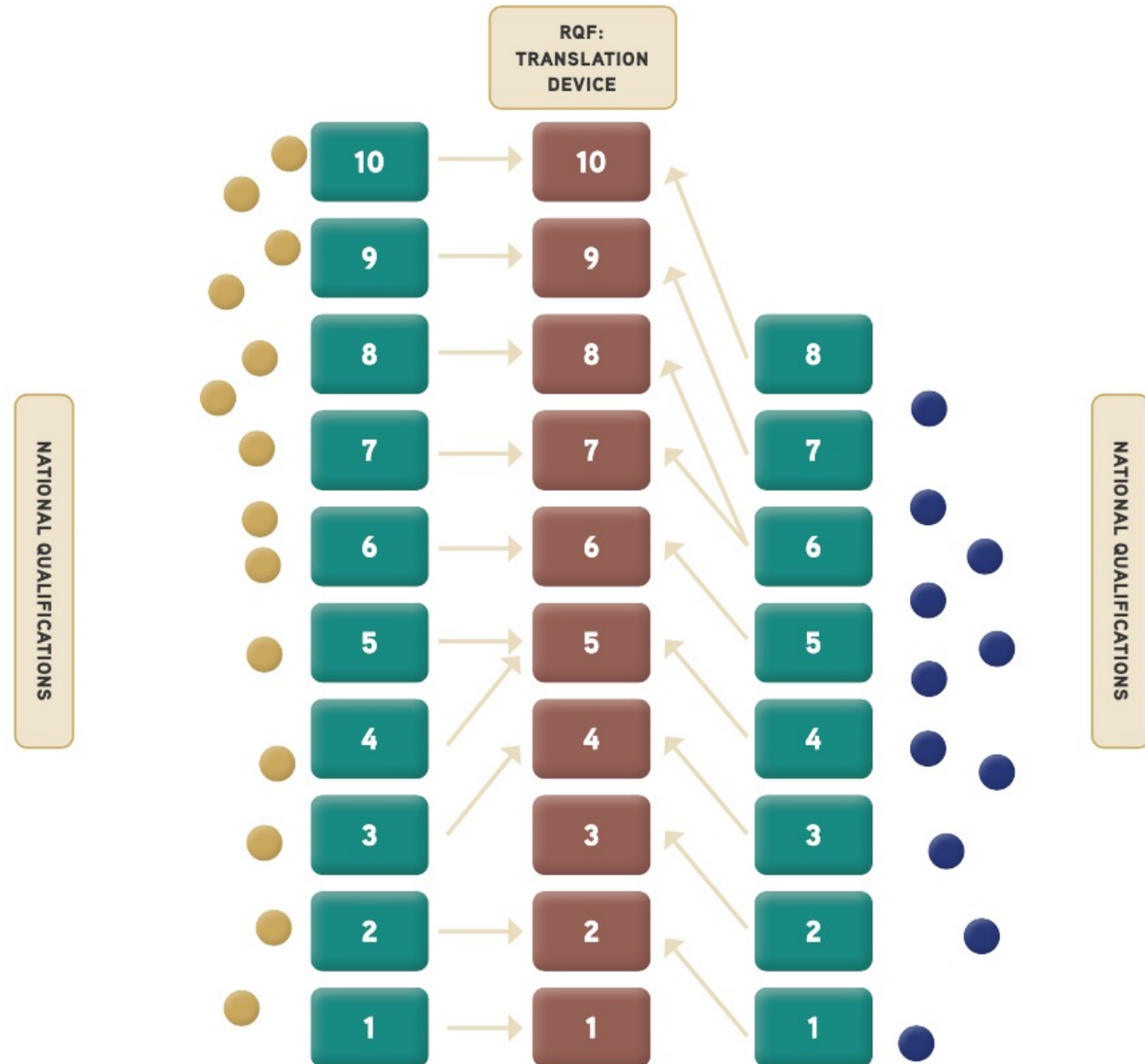
Tuck R. 2007. An Introductory Guide to NQF

Regional Qualifications Framework

RQF:
- Metaframework
- Translator / comparator / common language

Linkage NQF-RQF:
- criteria and procedures for referencing;
- peer learning;
- common database of qualifications

ACQF

Example:

EQF – Tool to compare NQFs with EQF

German NQF: 8 levels

Irish NQF: 10 levels

Here: levels 5 to 8 EQF

Germany (2020)	EQF	Ireland (2020)
NQF 8 📄 **Doctorate and equivalent arts degrees** *(Doktorat und äquivalente künstlerische Abschlüsse)*	**EQF 8** ℹ️	**NQF 10** 📄 **Doctoral degree** 📄 **Higher Doctorate**
NQF 7 📄 **Master degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (traditional German courses of higher education study such as the first degrees of Diplom or Magister, State examinations)** *(Master und gleichgestellte Abschlüsse (Diplom, Magister, Staatsexamen)))* 📄 **Strategic professional (IT) (certified)** *(Strategische/r IT Professional (Geprüfte/r))* 📄 **Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 7)** *(Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 7))*	**EQF 7** ℹ️	**NQF 9** 📄 **Master degree** 📄 **Postgraduate diploma** 📄 **Level 9 Professional award**
NQF 6 📄 **Bachelor degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications** *(Bachelor und gleichgestellte Hochschulabschlüsse)* 📄 **Specialist commercial clerk (certified)** *(Fachkaufmann/-frau (Geprüfte/r))* 📄 **Business management specialist (certified)** *(Fachwirt (Geprüfter))* 📄 **Master craftsman (certified)** *(Meister (Geprüfter))* 📄 **Operative professional (IT) (certified)** *(Operative/r Professional (IT) (Geprüfte/r))* 📄 **Trade and technical school (advanced vocational training governed by federal State law)** *(Fachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte berufliche Weiterbildungen))* 📄 **Advanced vocational training pursuant to § 54 of the Vocational Training Act (level 6)** *(Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach 54 BBiG (Niveau 6))* 📄 **Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 6)** *(Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 6))*	**EQF 6** ℹ️	**NQF 8** 📄 **Honours bachelor degree** 📄 **Higher diploma** 📄 **Level 8 Professional award** **NQF 7** 📄 **Ordinary bachelor degree** 📄 **Level 7 Professional award**
NQF 5 📄 **IT specialist (certified)** *(IT-Spezialist (Zertifizierter))* 📄 **Service technician (certified)** *(Servicetechniker/in (Geprüfte/r))* 📄 **Advanced vocational training pursuant to § 54 of the Vocational Training Act** *(Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach § 54 BBiG (Niveau 5))* 📄 **Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 5)** *(Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 5))*	**EQF 5** ℹ️	**NQF 6** 📄 **Advanced certificate** Show details ⌄ 📄 **Higher certificate** 📄 **Level 6 Professional award**

◉ Compare frameworks for the selected countries ›

Example:

EQF – Tool to compare NQFs with EQF

German NQF: 8 levels
Irish NQF: 10 levels

Here: levels 1 to 4 EQF

NQF 4

- Upper secondary general education school leaving certificate – General higher education entrance qualification *(Allgemeine Hochschulreife (AHR))* Subject-linked higher education entrance qualification *(Fachgebundene Hochschulreife (FgbHR))*

- Higher education entrance qualification for university of applied sciences *(Fachhochschulreife (FHR))*

- Dual VET (three-year and three-and-a-half-year training courses) *(Duale Berufsausbildung (3- und 3 ½-jährige Ausbildungen))*

- Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal State law) *(Berufsfachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte Berufsausbildungen))*

- Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal law in healthcare and elderly care) *(Berufsfachschule (Bundesrechtliche Ausbildungsregelungen für Berufe im Gesundheitswesen und in der Altenpflege))*

- Full-time vocational school (fully qualifying vocational education and training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and trades regulation Code) *(Berufsfachschule (vollqualifizierende Berufsausbildung nach BBiG/HwO))*

- Retraining qualification pursuant to the Vocational Training Act (level 4) *(Berufliche Umschulung nach BBiG (Niveau 4))*

NQF 3

- Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate – General education, 10 years *(Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA))*

- Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate – Full-time vocational school *(Berufsfachschule (Mittlerer Schulabschluss))*

- Dual VET (two-year training courses) *(Duale Berufsausbildung (2-jährige Ausbildung))*

NQF 2

- Lower secondary school leaving certificate – General education, 9 years *(Erster Schulabschluss (ESA))*

- Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year, introductory training) *(Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 2; BvB, BvB-Reha, BVJ, EQ))*

- Basic vocational training – Full-time vocational school *(Berufliche Grundbildung))*

NQF 1

- Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year) *(Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 1; BvB, BvB-Reha, BVJ))*

EQF 4 ⓘ

EQF 3 ⓘ

EQF 2 ⓘ

EQF 1 ⓘ

NQF 5

- Level 5 certificate
  Show details ⌄

- Leaving certificate

- Level 5 Professional award

NQF 4

- Level 4 certificate
  Show details ⌄

- Leaving certificate

NQF 3

- Level 3 certificate
  Show details ⌄

- Junior certificate / Cycle
  Show details ⌄

NQF 2

- Level 2 certificate
  Show details ⌄

NQF 1

- Level 1 certificate
  Show details ⌄

Compare NQF Türkiye and North Macedonia

Source: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/nqfs-online-tool/qualifications-comparison?country_1=MK&year_1=5338&country_2=TR&year_2=5338

North Macedonia (2020)	EQF	Turkey (2020)
NQF 8 📄 Doctorate diploma Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 8 ⓘ	**NQF 8** 📄 Doctoral diploma (PhD, proficiency in arts, specialty in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary) Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system
NQF 7 - 7 A 📄 Second cycle master of science diploma (from 60 to 120 ECTS) Category: Educational qualifications (formal) **NQF 7 - 7 B** 📄 Second cycle diploma for specialist studies (60 ECTS) Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 7 ⓘ	**NQF 7** 📄 Master diploma (with thesis) Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Master diploma (without thesis) Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system
NQF 6 - 6 A 📄 First cycle university diploma (240 ECTS) Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 First cycle vocational diploma (240 ECTS) Category: Educational qualifications (formal) **NQF 6 - 6 B** 📄 First cycle university diploma (180 ECTS) Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 First cycle vocational diploma (180 ECTS) Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 6 ⓘ	**NQF 6** 📄 Bachelor diploma Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 6 vocational qualification certificate Category: NVQ
NQF 5 - 5 A 📄 Short cycle higher education (vocational) diploma *(uverenie)* Category: Educational qualifications (formal) **NQF 5 - 5B** 📄 Post-secondary diploma for specialist education *(diploma za specijalistichko obrazovanie)* Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 Craftsman diploma *(diploma za majstorski ispit)* Category: Educational qualifications (formal)	EQF 5 ⓘ	**NQF 5** 📄 Associate diploma (academic) Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Associate diploma (general) Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 5 vocational qualification certificate Category: NVQ
NQF 4 📄 Upper secondary general education diploma Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 Upper secondary technical diploma Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 Upper secondary arts diploma Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 Vocational certificate (CVET) Category: Vocational qualifications Show details ⌄	EQF 4 ⓘ	**NQF 4** 📄 High school diploma Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 High school diploma (VET, fine arts and sports) Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Mastership certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 4 course completion certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 4 vocational qualification certificate Category: NVQ
NQF 3 📄 Vocational diploma (three years) *(diploma)* Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 Vocational certificate (CVET) Category: Vocational qualifications Show details ⌄	EQF 3 ⓘ	**NQF 3** 📄 Journeyman certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 3 course completion certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 3 vocational qualification certificate Category: NVQ
NQF 2 📄 Vocational certificate (two years) Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 Vocational certificate (CVET) Category: Vocational qualifications Show details ⌄	EQF 2 ⓘ	**NQF 2** 📄 Level 2 adult learning certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 2 course completion certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system 📄 Level 2 vocational qualification certificate Category: NVQ
NQF 1 📄 Certificate of primary education Category: Educational qualifications (formal) 📄 State certificate for adult education (literacy and numeracy skills) Category: Vocational qualifications Show details ⌄	EQF 1 ⓘ	**NQF 1** 📄 Literacy certificate Category: Qualification types awarded in formal education and training system

What is a qualification 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, QA 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**.

Source: OECD, Bridges to Lifelong Learning, 2007. https://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/qualificationssystemsbridgestolifelonglearning.htm

What is a qualification?

Means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.
Source: EQF 2017

Therefore, a qualification is a specification of learning outcomes that is approved by an authority (accrediting body) as meeting the requirements of the NQF.

Between the world of work and the world of education and training

ACQF

Qualifications

Work

Employment

Production

Skills development (education, initial training, LLL)

| Information on demand in labour market | Professional standards | Qualifications standards | Develop Training Programmes | Delivery training | Assessment and certification | M&E - performance |

Abundant literature and sources on qualifications frameworks

- ACQF website: library - https://acqf.africa/resources/library/publications-from-international-sources
- ACQF Training Modules: https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules
- ACQF Thematic briefs: https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/thematic-briefs
- ACQF Mapping study: https://acqf.africa/resources/mapping-study
- Cedefop: Library of publications on NQF
- Cedefop: Online tool on NQFs Europe
- Cedefop: European Database of VNFIL ("RPL")
- Global Inventory NQF-RQF – ETF, Cedefop, Unesco
- EQF: webpage at Europass
- EQF: comparison - https://europa.eu/europass/en/compare-qualifications
- EQF: evaluation (2 + new in 2022-2023)
- Agencies, authorities in charge of NQFs
- ILO (Tuck, R.), 2007, An Introductory Guide to NQF. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_103623.pdf

03

Main elements of the NQF

The systemic view of NQF

Eco-system

The NQF includes...
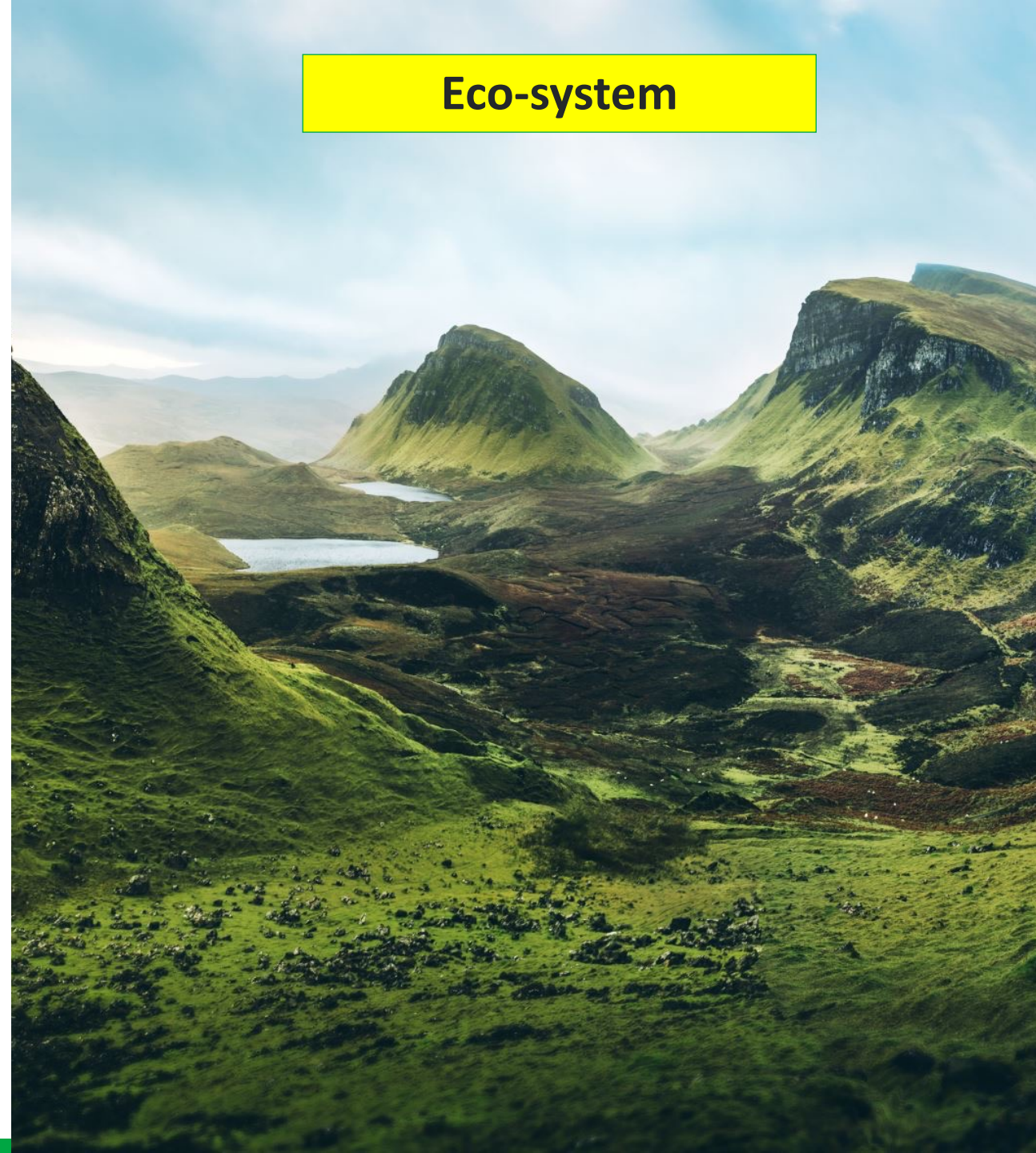
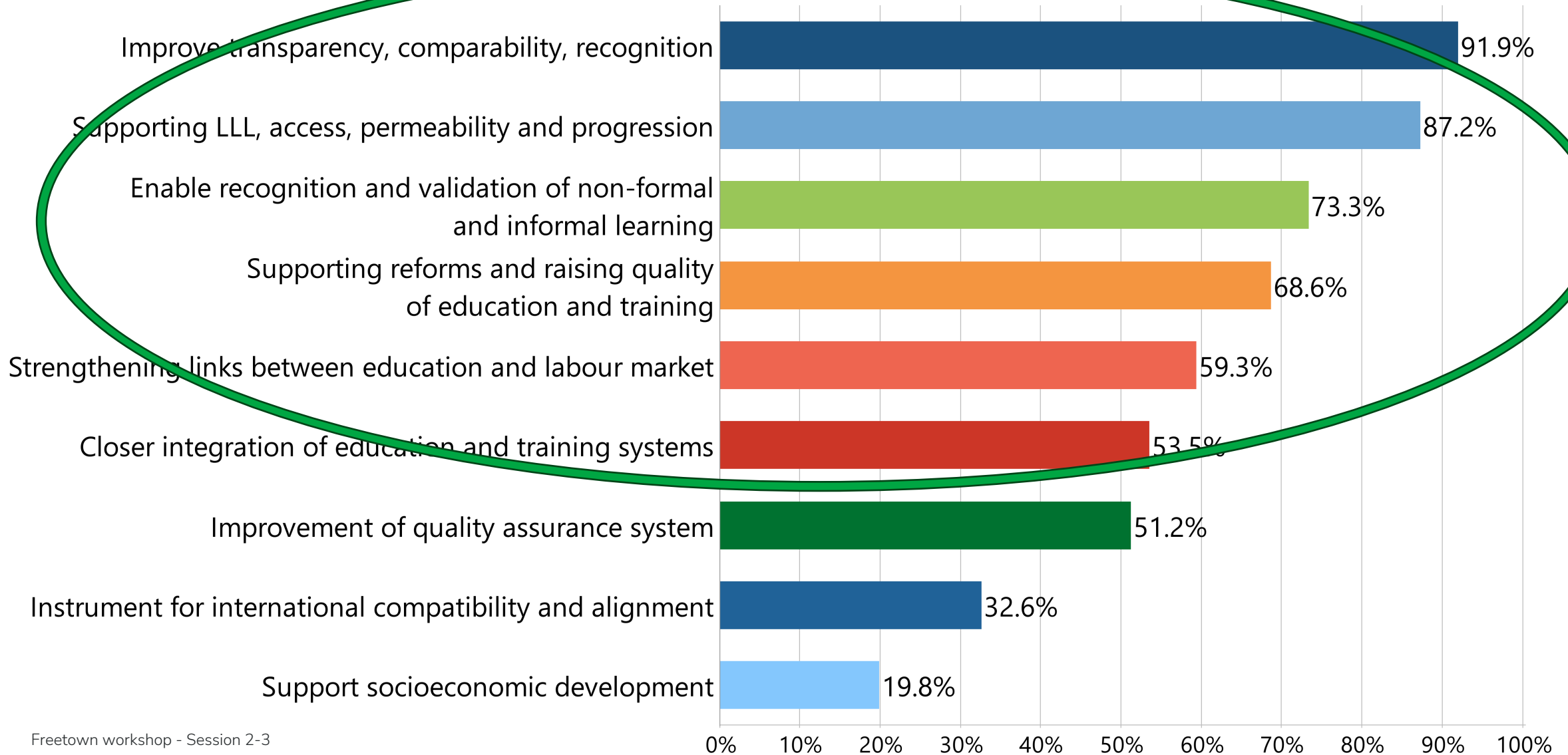| Vision	Legal basis: diverse	Implementation tools
• Concept, policy document • Rationale, objectives, scope, functions, principles, level structure, qualifications types • Governance	• Law, Acts • Decrees • Ministerial decisions, ordinances • Resolution • Regulations • No specific NQF legal act, but reference in several documents	• Policies and regulations: on qualifications development; on classification; on registration; on registers; on QA; on credit system; on recognition of qualifications • NQF implementation entity: statute, internal procedures, tools and website • Information and support packages for implementers • Tools, registers, MIS, data analysis

Scope and purpose of the NQF

- Scope, purpose and governance set-up need to logically align, and inform the further development of the technical aspects of the NQF

- **Scope:**
    - To support LLL, articulation and progression: the large majority of NQFs are comprehensive and inclusive in scope – include qualifications from the whole continuum of the education and training system.
        - ✓ Note: however, the NQF classifies and contains qualifications. If certain parts of the education system do not issue qualifications – not concerned by the NQF.

- **Purpose:**
    - Analysis of African NQFs indicates that the purpose or objectives vary; some NQFs have highly detailed lists and others less so; some have varied over time e.g. Rwanda
    - Purpose or objectives need to be clear, relevant for the context.
    - Objectives needs to be…monitored!

Freetown workshop - Session 2-3

Objectives of NQFs (study: 87 countries)

- Improve transparency, comparability, recognition — 91.9%
- Supporting LLL, access, permeability and progression — 87.2%
- Enable recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning — 73.3%
- Supporting reforms and raising quality of education and training — 68.6%
- Strengthening links between education and labour market — 59.3%
- Closer integration of education and training systems — 53.5%
- Improvement of quality assurance system — 51.2%
- Instrument for international compatibility and alignment — 32.6%
- Support socioeconomic development — 19.8%

In the EQF countries: survey 2022

NQF objectives

Objective	Value
Improve transparency and comparability of qualifications	36
Support education progression and LLL	22
Foster international comparability of qualifications and mobility of individuals	18
Raise quality of qualifications	17
Enable validation of non-formal and informal learning	15
Promote permeability, reducing barriers between sectors and institutions	14
Support introduction to and mobility within the labour market	13
Strengthen cooperation between stakeholders	12
Promote the use of learning outcomes	11
Support recognition of qualifications	11
Support socioeconomic development	9

© Cedefop/Sakis Gioumpasis

What does this mean? Easier said than done?

Transparency?

= Not opaque

- Clarity: learning outcomes
- Coherence: linkages btw qualifications

Permeability and progression?

= Not deadend

- Recognition of all types learning / outcomes
- Qualifications different types & volume
- Closer integration btw sub-systems

Strengthen links btw education & LM

= Not flying blind

- Skills needs and occupations - anticipation & monitoring qualifications
- Systematic involvement sectors, professional bodies
- Data, analysis, LMI

Levels of NQF / RQF

Level descriptors

More definitions...

Level Descriptor – means a statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Learning Outcomes – mean 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.

Note: expected and achieved learning outcomes!

Levels and level descriptors

- Number of levels of **learning complexity**
  - Influenced by the implicit levels of learning complexity of various qualification types
  - And by international/regional trends and consideration
- Purpose of levels is to be able to **locate a qualification** on the NQF
- Needs to have a **vertical and horizontal logic**

Level descriptors and domains

- Written as **learning outcomes**

- Need to agree on the definitions of **each domain**, and the principles for drafting

Level descriptors and domains	Pros and Cons
Separate multiple domains	Provides clarity for reader and ability to compare the 'build' of each domain. Assists in horizontal and vertical logic.
Merged statement with domains embedded	May be difficult to compare the different levels of complexity, and harder to determine the horizontal and vertical logic.

Overview — situation in Africa

QF	Number	Comments
NQF of 10 levels	16	13 in SADC, 1 in Kenya, 1 in Rwanda, 1 in The Gambia,
NQF of 8 levels	6	West, East and North Africa
NQF of 7 levels	1	Tunisia
6-level sectoral NQF	1	Nigeria (NSQF — TVET)
5-level sectoral NQF	1	Senegal (TVET)

African NQFs: LEVEL DESCRIPTORS (sample)

Country	Domains of learning — level descriptors
Angola	Knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility
Botswana	Knowledge, skills and competence
Eswatini	Knowledge, skills, personal attributes
Lesotho	Areas of knowledge; nature of competences; Agency and context
Mauritius	Demand; learning processes
Mozambique	Knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility
South Africa	"Applied competence" has **10 categories**, used across all 10 levels: Scope of knowledge; knowledge literacy; method and procedure; problem solving; ethics and professional practice; accessing, processing and managing information; producing and communicating of information; context and systems; management of learning; accountability. And **3 constituent elements**: a) foundational competence (intellectual / academic skills of knowledge together with analysis, synthesis and evaluation; b) practical competence (operational context); c) reflexive competence (learner autonomy).
Seychelles	The degree of complexity of the tasks; reasoning and problem solving; knowledge; autonomy and responsibility
Zambia	Foundational competence; practical competence; reflexive competence. Changed to: KSC

EQF context: levels

NQF Level structure	Nr of NQF
7	2
8	**36**
10	2
TOTAL	40

- Strong predominance of 8-level NQFs.
- Some NQFs have levels and sub-levels to better accommodate the qualifications of different national systems

EQF Context – level descriptors

EQF Context: Domains of learning NQF

Databases, registers, catalogues, repertoires

Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações

Qualifications and management tools

"Objects"

- Full qualifications – "Metacredentials"
- Part qualifications
- Micro-credentials
- Units
- Standards

"Tools"

- Classification(s), taxonomy: international, national
- Register of qualifications
- Other registers

What is the Qualifications Register?

The Registration of Qualifications is a process whereby national quality-assured qualifications are placed in the NQF qualifications register/database

It is a process and tool for transparency and quality assurance.

The content of the logs may vary between countries; and the formats, access, and digital platforms as well.

Country	Register / database of qualifications	Number of Qualifications and levels included	Key features
Botswana	Botswana Qualifications Authority – Register of qualifications	822 full qualifications All levels of NCQF	The register is searchable by title of qualification (search by key word tool). Qualifications documents can be viewed and downloaded.
Mauritius	National Qualifications and Unit Standards Maintained and managed by MQA	167 qualifications distributed in 22 sectors. As of 21/03/2022: 98 qualifications are published, 67 under review. Includes: qualifications of Levels 1 to 6 of NQF	The digital online database of National Qualifications and Unit Standards is accessible as a repository of qualifications files in PDF format. Qualifications at all levels (1—6) are structured in unit standards – in learning outcomes. Harmonized format.
Mozambique	National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications Managed and maintained by ANEP	164 qualifications registered, at levels 2 to 5. 149 published in the online catalogue (21/03/2022) 19 independent modules	The digital online National Catalogue is accessible as a repository of qualification files in PDF format. All qualifications - standardised format, which includes: general information, units of general competencies, units of vocational competencies, training modules (general and vocational)

Country	Register / database of qualifications	Qualifications included	Key features
Cape Verde	National Catalogue of Qualifications UC-SNQ	64 full qualifications (levels 2 to 5 of the NQF) Standards RPL	The digital online Catalogue is accessible as a repository of PDFs. All qualifications are structured based on a standardised format, including: professional profile, units of competence (learning outcomes and assessment criteria), training programme (modules) and training module for work context. The qualifications in the Catalogue are distributed in 15 professional families. The Catalogue includes also a new Transversal Training Module of 3 units (entrepreneurial competences).
South Africa	SAQA: register of qualifications and part-qualifications Managed and maintained by SAQA	Large number of qualifications All NQF levels	The SAQA online register contains searchable databases: 1. All qualifications and unit standards (no matter their status) 2. Registered qualifications and unit standards (NQF qualifications) 3. Qualifications and unit standards that have passed their registration end date 4. Professional Bodies and Professional Designations

Exemples from EU

ACQF

Portugal

The Netherlands

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

https://database.nlqf.nl/

Exemples from EU

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

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

All learning matters
RPL and NQF (in-depth content – session 5)

RPL

Make the invisible - visible

Make the invisible - visible: recognise skills acquired by experience/informal, non-formal learning

Non-formal and informal learning are key parts of lifelong learning

People learn at anytime, anywhere throughout their lives, not only in formal education and training systems and pathways, but also in non-formal and informal learning settings.

Knowledge, skills and competences acquired in all contexts and modalities of learning (incl. experience) can be identified, documented, assessed and certified.

NQFs support and need RPL

Freetown workshop - Session 2-3

What connection with NQF?

NQF

Qualification standards (outcomes)

Assessment based on qualifications standards / outcomes/ not on schooling

Parity of value of certificates: obtained by formal training and by PRL

Quality assurance

RPL

RPL: legal framework in African countries

78

RPL – implementation

RPL is not only assessment! It is process…

Mozambique
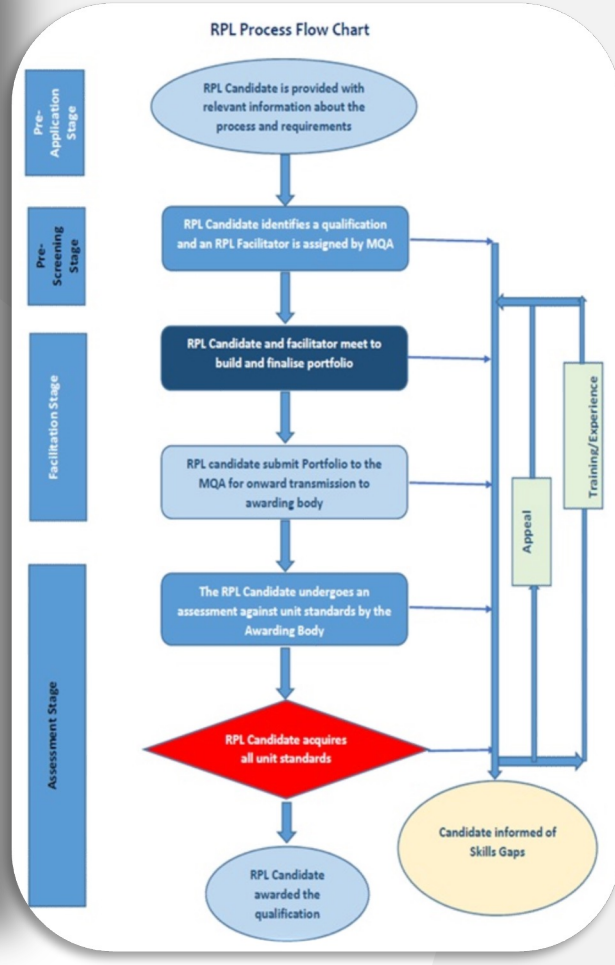
Mauritius
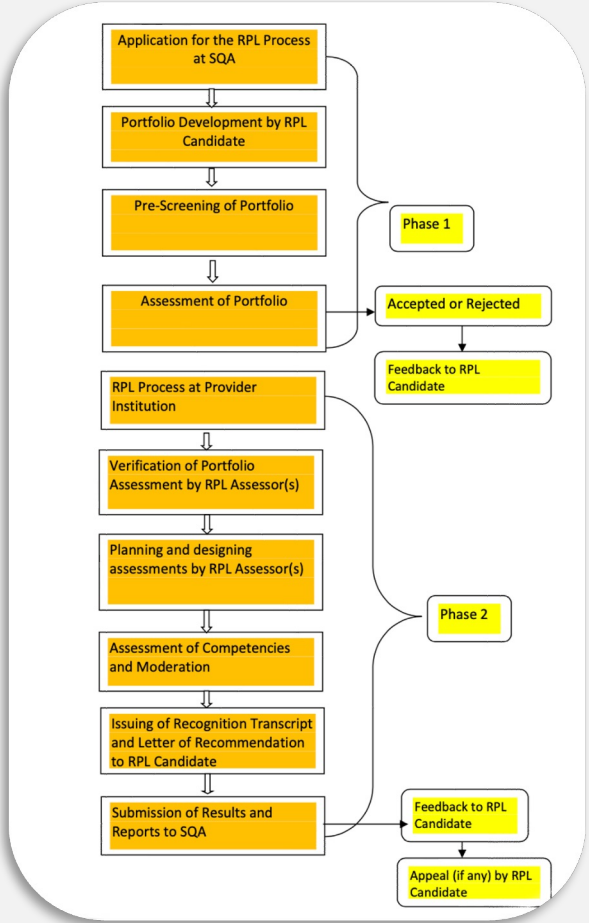
Seychelles

ACQF
Regional RPL policies and guidelines

EU - Cedefop:

- https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning

- https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3093

ACQF: https://acqf.africa/resources/recognition-of-prior-learning

SADCQF

EAC
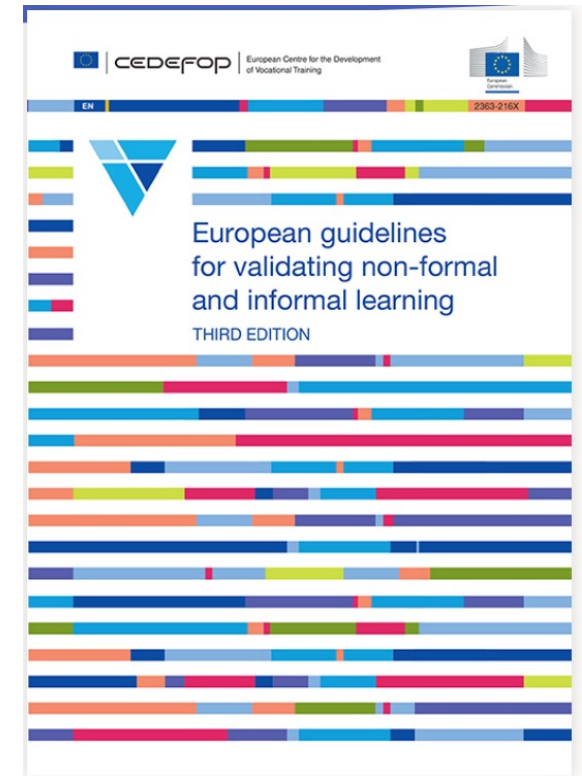
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Lifecycle of an NQF

Lifecycle of an NQF

Design & consultation

Implementation

Review
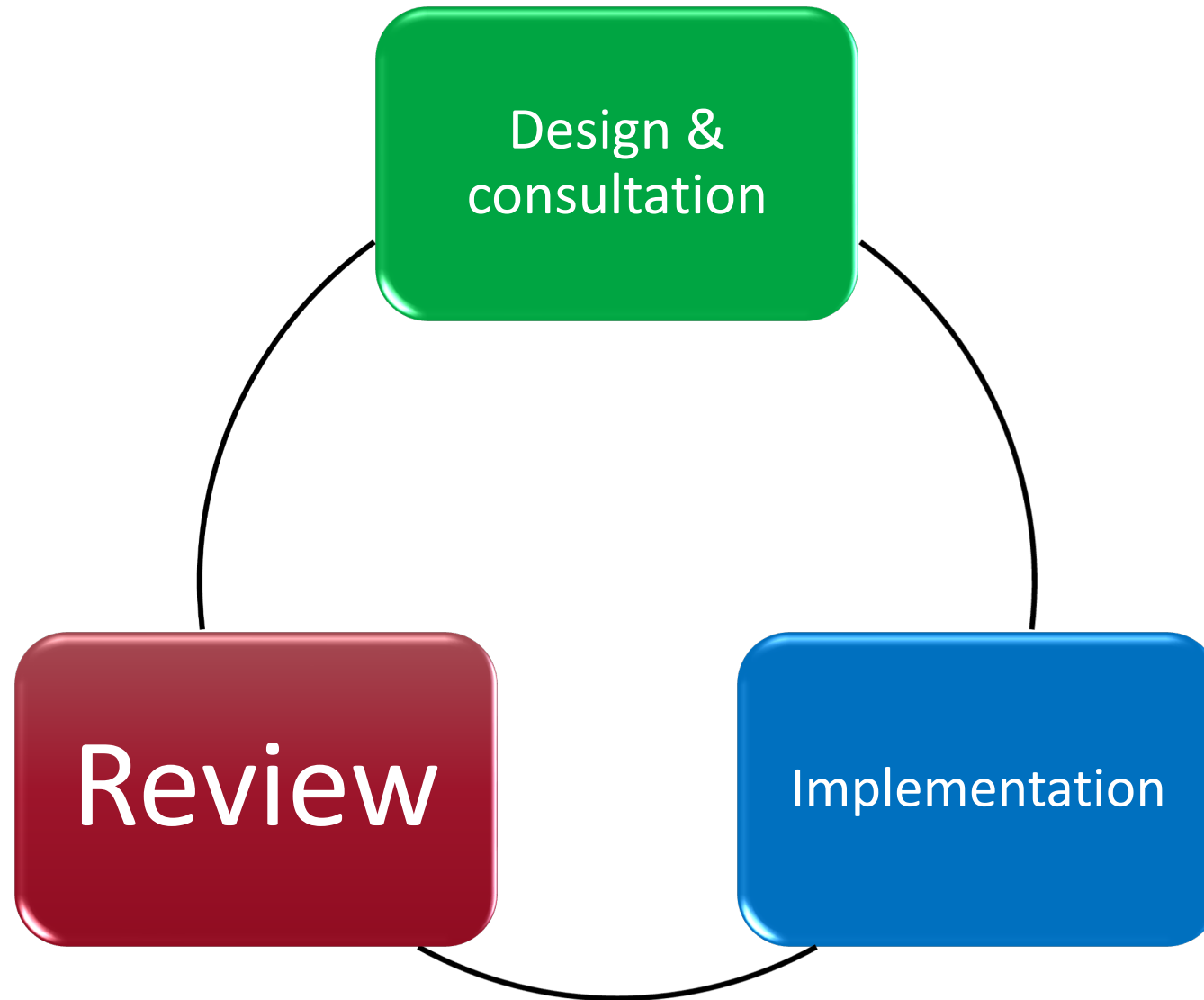
03a

Phase 1 - NQF design and development

What is included in this phase?

1. Conceptualisation and design of the NQF during which countries analyse and define the "why, what for, what, how, with whom, when" of the NQF - rationale and main objectives of the future NQF. Results in:

   - Outline of the NQF providing the basis for wider dissemination and discussion within a smaller group of key stakeholders.

   - Key architectural features, such as purpose, scope and structures, are drafted.

2. Consultation and testing stage. Future NQF proposal is presented to and discussed within a broader group of stakeholders, normally as part of a public consultation process. Countries may choose to test the proposed NQF levels and qualification types through projects or targeted consultations.

3. Official establishment/adoption stage. NQF is formally documented and agreed to through a decree/law or a formal agreement between stakeholders.

Critical questions for proposed NQF

Focus	Questions
Plan for development	'Why, what for, what, how, with whom, when?' Overall approach to development? Who will manage development? Stakeholder engagement? Tested or trialled?
NQF design: Purpose and scope	What are the goals to be achieved? Scope of NQF? How will it link to other QFs within the country?
NQF design: Structures	Levels and descriptors: Number of levels, domains? Volume of learning measure: What will measure? How will it be used? Qualification type descriptors: How will be documented? Map/table or text based?
NQF general queries	Does design of NQF promote use of learning outcomes, lifelong learning, learning pathways, and access and equity principles? Does the structure reflect 'common sense'?
Legal basis	How will the NQF be formalise, e.g. decree, regulations, agreed in policy?
Governance and funding	How will the NQF be managed and governed? How will the NQF be 'owned' by stakeholders? How will it be funded? How will it be staffed?

Critical questions for proposed NQF: Linkages

Focus - Linkages	Questions
Recognition of NF and IF learning	How will the NQF provide the policy basis and support access to the validation of nonformal and informal learning? What policy linkages need to be made with the quality assurance strategies, e.g. embedded in quality standards for qualification specifications and for provider provision?
Credit transfer	How will the NQF provide the policy basis and support access to the validation of formal learning? Will it be only policy advice or will it link to a credit accumulation and transfer system?
Registers	What registers need to be established for those qualification located and accepted onto the NQF? Who will be responsible for these registers, e.g. centralised NQF body or sectoral QA body?
Quality assurance	How will the NQF be linked to QA strategies? Especially: development, design and approval of qualification specifications; and approval of providers and approval of programmes leading to a NQF qualification? How will policy coherence of QA strategies be achieved?
Other legal acts	Other laws and regulations will be affected by the proposed NQF? Who will be responsible for ensuring coherence across laws and regulations?
Microcredentials	How will microcredentials be recognised within the qualifications system?
Recognition of foreign qualifications	What information needs to be made available to support the country's citizens as a sending country? What linkages with other frameworks would be made? What information needs to be made available as a receiving country?

What is usually in NQF texts (suggested)

On NQF

- Background: wider issues addressed, benefits for people, LLL

- Objectives, principles, scope, NFIL

- Technical design: levels and descriptors, qualifications types, NQF map/table, volume of learning measure, e.g. credits

- Quality assurance linkages

- Components / instruments (register / database, monitoring & evaluation, standards, classifications)

On NQF governance

- NQF lead entity: different models apply

- Roles, responsibilities and key functions

- Interactions sub-sectors education and training – on NQF

- Interplay between stakeholders

- Resources

NQF policy / legal act is supported by regulations, guidelines **developed over time.**

03b

Phase 2: NQF implementation

Implementation phase

- Move from initial policy design and legal framework of the NQF to the operationalisation of the framework, focusing on:

  - ✓Consolidating governance and associated legal acts
  - ✓Establishing and practically applying the linkages to associated structures and the quality assurance arrangements, and moving to full practical implementation
  - ✓Consolidating administrative and technical capacity and expertise.

- Full implementation requires time and not all strategies and capacities will be available at the same time.

Critical questions of the implementation phase

Focus	Questions
Design to full implementation	How will aspirations and vision for the qualifications system be articulated? Who will develop an implementation plan? Who needs to agree to it? How funded, resourced, and monitored?
QA of qualifications	How will the link be made between NQF and the requirements for development and approval of qualifications?
QA of provider provision	How will the link be made between NQF, qualifications and the programmes leading to them? Who will approve and monitor? What sanctions and rewards will be applied?
Assessment	Who is responsible for assessment of individual achievement? How will assessment decisions be validate/moderated?
Certification	Who will issue NQF documentation? Who will monitor?
Data collection	Who is responsible for setting data standard? Who will collect and retain data?
Registers	How will registers be made public? What information should be public?
Credit transfer system	How will system be negotiated? Will it be part of or separate to the NQF?
Visibility of the NQF	How will NQF be communicated? How will dialogue with stakeholders be facilitated?
Technical capability	How will QA agency staff and provider staff capability and expertise be developed?

03c

Phase 3: NQF monitoring and review

➢ **Learn much more at Session 3: M&E**

Monitoring of NQF implementation

How will implementation be monitored?

What data exists that can be used to monitor implementation?

Regional examples for monitoring NQF implementation within the qualifications system:

ACQF Guideline and TM on M&E (№ 7)

Aspects M&E within quality assurance frameworks or guidelines:

- UNESCO for the Asia Pacific TVET sector, https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/guidelines-quality-assurance-tvet-qualifications-asia-pacific-region
- EQAVET framework for TVET sector, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01)&from=EN

Review of NQF

- Major reviews can occur at any time, can draw on monitoring activities

- Qualifications frameworks are used to promote the trust and transparency of individual qualifications and the qualifications systems to which they belong. In doing so, they:

  1. Act as a classification device to organise qualifications according to type and/or level

  2. Set down (or link to) the quality measures for qualifications to be entered or accepted onto the qualifications framework

  3. Act as an official bridge to international users of domestic qualifications and holders of international qualifications.

Source: Quality and Qualifications Ireland 2017.

Critical questions of the review phase

Classification device	Sets out (or links to) quality measures	Bridge between domestic and international qualifications
Is the NQF helping to raise aspirations to learn? Do citizens use the NQF to use progression opportunities? Does the NQF assist in overcoming barriers to qualifications, including through the validation of nonformal and informal learning? Are valuable qualifications sitting outside the NQF that should be brought in?	Is the NQF raising the standard of qualifications in terms of the use of learning outcomes, content, assessment, and certification processes? Is the NQF applying the right kinds of pressures to qualification owners to describe and operate their qualification appropriately? Is the NQF helping to increase the potential of qualifications to provide social and economic returns to holders?	Do people abroad use the NQF to appreciate elements of specific domestic qualifications? Is it easy to make comparisons between the domestic qualifications and international qualifications? Are the links to international qualifications clear? Is the quality assurance functions of the NQF inspiring confidence among international application to domestic education and training programmes?

04

NQFs in Africa: trends

African trends

➢Growing number of NQFs approved and implementation started

DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (ACQF)

NQF in Africa by stage of development

Stage of NQF development and implementation	Number of NQFs Africa	Countries
NQF development to be started	2	Chad, Republic of Congo
NQF in early thinking	9	Burkina Faso, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, São Tomé e Príncipe, South Sudan,Togo
NQF in development and consultation	10	Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan
NQF legal act approved, implementation started	17	Angola, Burundi, Djibouti, Eswatini, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe
NQF in advanced implementation and reviewed	7	Cape Verde, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia
Total	45	

NQFs in Africa: 5 stages of development & implementation Number: 45 countries

- 4%
- 20%
- 16%
- 38%
- 22%

1. NQF to be started
2. NQF in early thinking
3. In devel & consultation
4. Approved & implem started
5. Advanced implement & reviewed
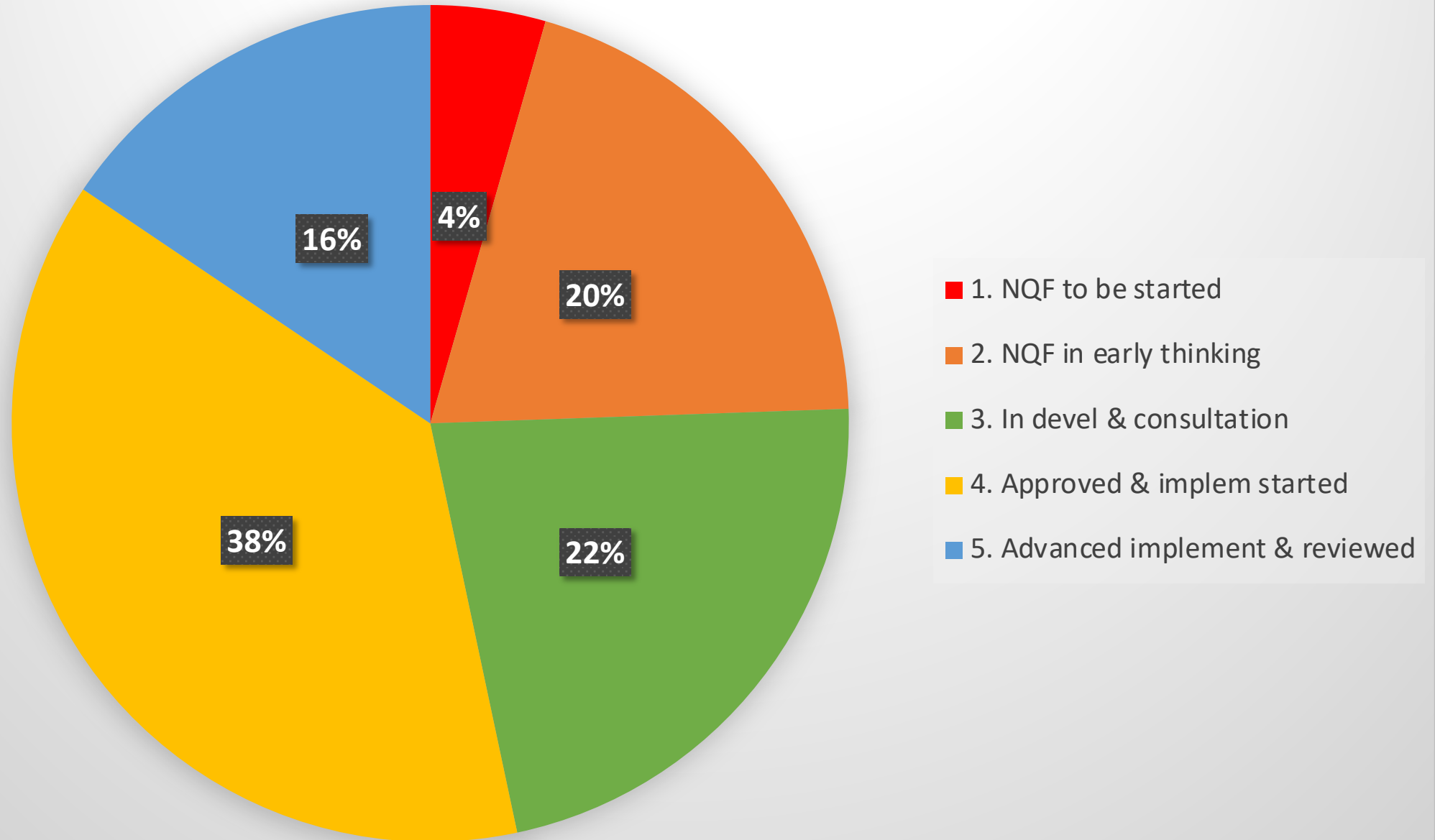
African Continental Qualifications Framework

A very large Regional Qualifications Framework

- African Union Policy Initiative
- Based on AU policies (CESA-25, AU Free Movement Protocol, AfCFTA)
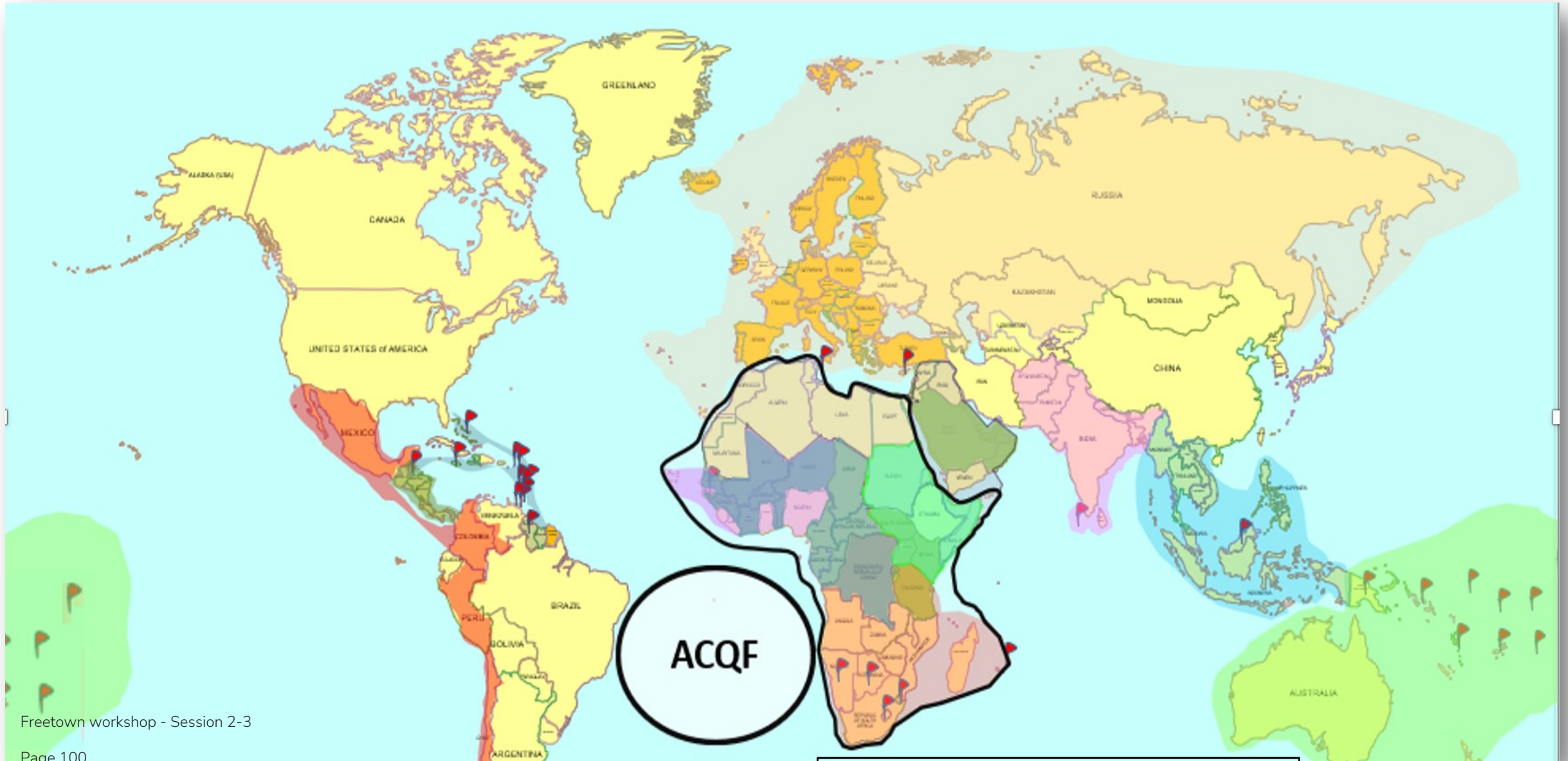
ACQF Policy Document validated at the Addis conference 11-13 July 2023: underpinnings, purposes, principles

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.

UNDERPINNINGS

- SDGs 4 and 8
- African Union's Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan
- PAQAF
- ACQF
- CESA 16-25
- AU Free Movement Protocol
- AfCFTA

PURPOSES OF ACQF

1. **Enhance** — Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications of all types and levels, support people's lifelong learning outcomes.

2. **Facilitate** — Facilitate validation of learning, recognition of skills, diplomas and certificates and mobility of learners and workers

3. **Cooperate** — Work in cooperation and complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks and support African continental integration and creation of African common space of trusted qualifications.

4. **Promote** — Promote cooperation and referencing between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

PRINCIPLES

- **Inclusiveness:** all levels and types of qualifications, all modes of lifelong learning
- **Innovation:** future-proof, new demands - emerging skills, green skills, transversal skills
- **Openness:** to participation of all stakeholders, good practice, lessons learned (African, global)

7 main areas of activity

"ACQF creates mutual trust"

Areas - as per ACQF Policy Document

Referencing NQF / NQS to ACQF

Support **Recognition of Prior Learning**

ACQF **Qualifications Platform and MIS**

Qualifications: common profiles for priority sectors AfCFTA / continental integration

Capacity development

Networking and cooperation

Analysis, monitoring and evaluation

Conceptual technical design

Meta-qualifications framework

Comprehensive and inclusive scope: all levels, modes of learning

10 levels: whole continuum of qualifications of education and training systems

Level descriptors expressed as **learning outcomes**

Domains of learning: Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility

Supported by Quality Assurance

Learning outcomes orientation supports:

✓ Improve **transparency and comparability** of qualifications of different national systems

✓ **Transparency and credibility of RPL** and validation of outcomes from experience, access to quality RPL

✓ **Application of credit accumulation and transfer systems** in different academic and vocational pathways.

- Access, learning progression, lifelong learning, flexibility,
- In design of qualifications: facilitate transfer of components of qualifications

CONCEPTUAL TECHNICAL DESIGN OF ACQF

ACQF is underpinned by Quality Assurance

Transparency and Trust in Qualifications
Includes processes and procedures to ensure qualifications, assessment and programme delivery meet high standards

> **Metaframework:** translation device for referencing, comparison, cooperation between different NQFs

> **Comprehensive scope:** all levels, modes of learning

> **10 levels:** whole continuum of education and training

> **Level descriptors** expressed as learning outcomes

> **Domains of learning:** Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility

> **Learning outcomes orientation** supports:

- Improve **transparency and comparability** of qualifications of different national systems

- **Transparency and credibility of RPL** and validation of outcomes from experience, access to quality RPL

- **Application of credit accumulation and transfer systems** in different academic and vocational pathways.

  - *Access, learning progression, lifelong learning, flexibility,*

  - *In design of qualifications: facilitate transfer of components of qualifications*

Conceptual-technical design

Contribution to facilitate recognition of foreign qualifications

- The transparency, information-sharing and mutual trust resulting from referencing levels of NQFs to ACQF levels contribute to transparency of recognition of foreign qualifications in the context of Africa and other continents.
- The ACQF and the national information bodies involved in the recognition of qualifications will share information on learning outcomes, levels and other characteristics of qualifications frameworks referenced to the ACQF.

Underpinned by quality assurance

- The ACQF as an overarching qualifications framework and a catalyst for NQF development is underpinned by quality assurance. Quality assurance is fundamental for trust in qualifications, and for their currency and mobility.
- **Quality assurance is the subject of Criterion 4 of referencing to the ACQF**, which states that the national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the ACQF.

Referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to ACQF

- ➢ ACQF aims at **connecting** the African national (and regional) qualifications frameworks. This core function is based on the process of **referencing to ACQF**.

- ➢ Referencing: process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF following criteria and procedures (**ACQF Guideline 3**)

- ➢ At **national level**, referencing contributes to self-assessment of the status of the national qualifications framework or system, and to self-improvement.

- ➢ At **continental level and between countries**, referencing to the ACQF of a significant and increasing number of national qualifications or systems leads to the <u>creation of a common area of trusted qualifications</u> and enables the transformative potential of the ACQF for the continent.

- ➢ Following referencing to ACQF: countries use ACQF levels on newly issued documents related to qualifications and in registers / databases of qualifications.
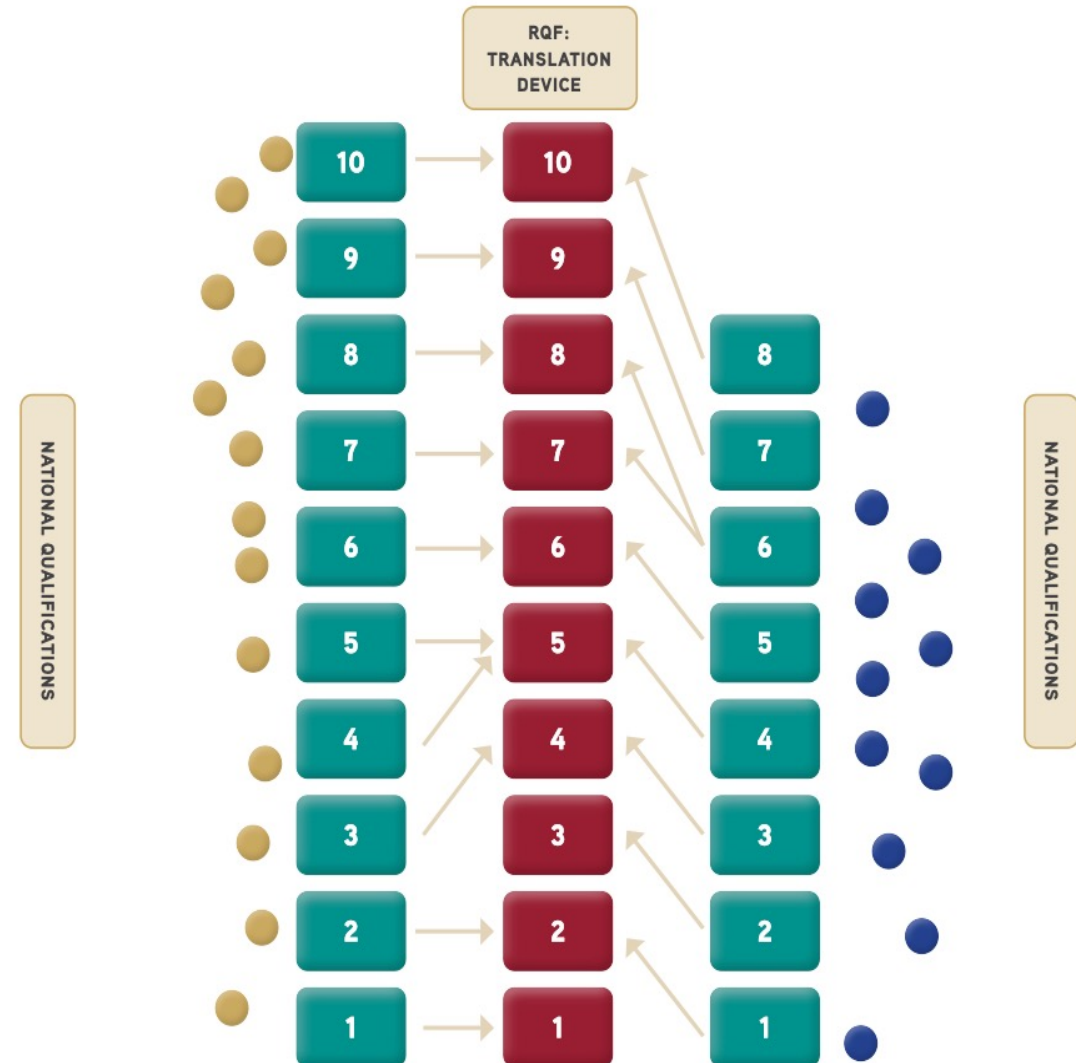
REFERENCING NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS OR SYSTEMS TO ACQF

ACQF aims at **connecting** the national (and regional) qualifications frameworks of the community of African Union (AU) member states. This core function is based on the process of **referencing to ACQF.**

Referencing: process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF following criteria and procedures.

At **national level,** referencing contributes to self-assessment of the status of the national qualifications framework or system to identify areas for reform and improvement

At **continental level and between countries,** referencing to the ACQF of a significant and increasing number of national qualifications or systems leads to the creation of a common area of trusted qualifications and enables the transformative potential of the ACQF for the continent.

And much more on ACQF website for stakeholders, policy makers, education and training providers, learners and experts interested in themes and issues related to national and regional qualifications frameworks and their related systems, tools and governawnce.
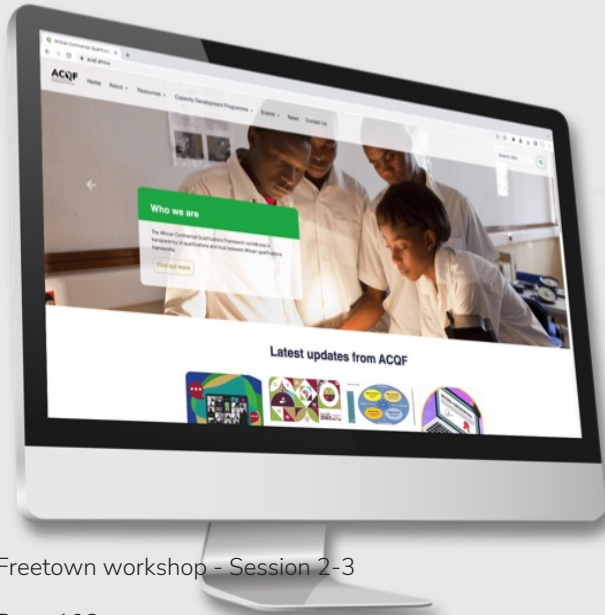
Want to know more about ACQF?

Visit our website:

https://acqf.africa/

05

Trends in Europe: EQF

What is the EQF?

- A **translation grid** for qualifications across countries

- Defined in terms of **learning outcomes** (knowledge, skills, responsibility & autonomy)

- 8-Level reference framework, covering **all types and all levels of qualifications**

- **41 countries**

EQF Objectives

Transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications

Employability, mobility and social integration of workers and learners

Linking formal, non-formal and informal learning

Supporting the validation of learning outcomes acquired in different settings

Contributing to modernising education and training systems

Main milestones (as June 2023, 39 countries reporting)

Objective	Reached by countries (number)
Referencing to EQF	41 (92% of all involved countries)
Renewed referencing to EQF	6 countries
EQF levels on certificates, diplomas, and supplements	34 (87%)
EQF levels on databases or registers of qualifications	25 (64%)
Transparency of information: **Publication of referencing reports**	32 (82%)
Transparency of information – inclusion in the **Tool to compare NQFs on Europass portal**	29 (74%)
Transparency of information and use of the Annex VI of EQF Recommendation: connection of national databases / registers with the QDR and publication of qualifications in Europass (Learning Opportunities in Europass). Accessed: 27/03/2023)	19 (49%)

EQF Levels on the Irish Register of Qualifications

https://irq.ie/

NQF Online Tool

Overview of all NQFs in Europe

Use of information on NQF-EQF in recognition

- EAR Manual: http://ear.enic-naric.net/emanual/

- This manual has been developed as part of the European Area of Recognition Project (EAR).

- It contains standards and guidelines on all aspects of the recognition of foreign qualifications and aims to provide the credential evaluators from the European National Information Centres network and National Academic Recognition and Information Centres network (www.enic-naric.net) with a practical tool to assist them in their daily recognition work.

FLOWCHART
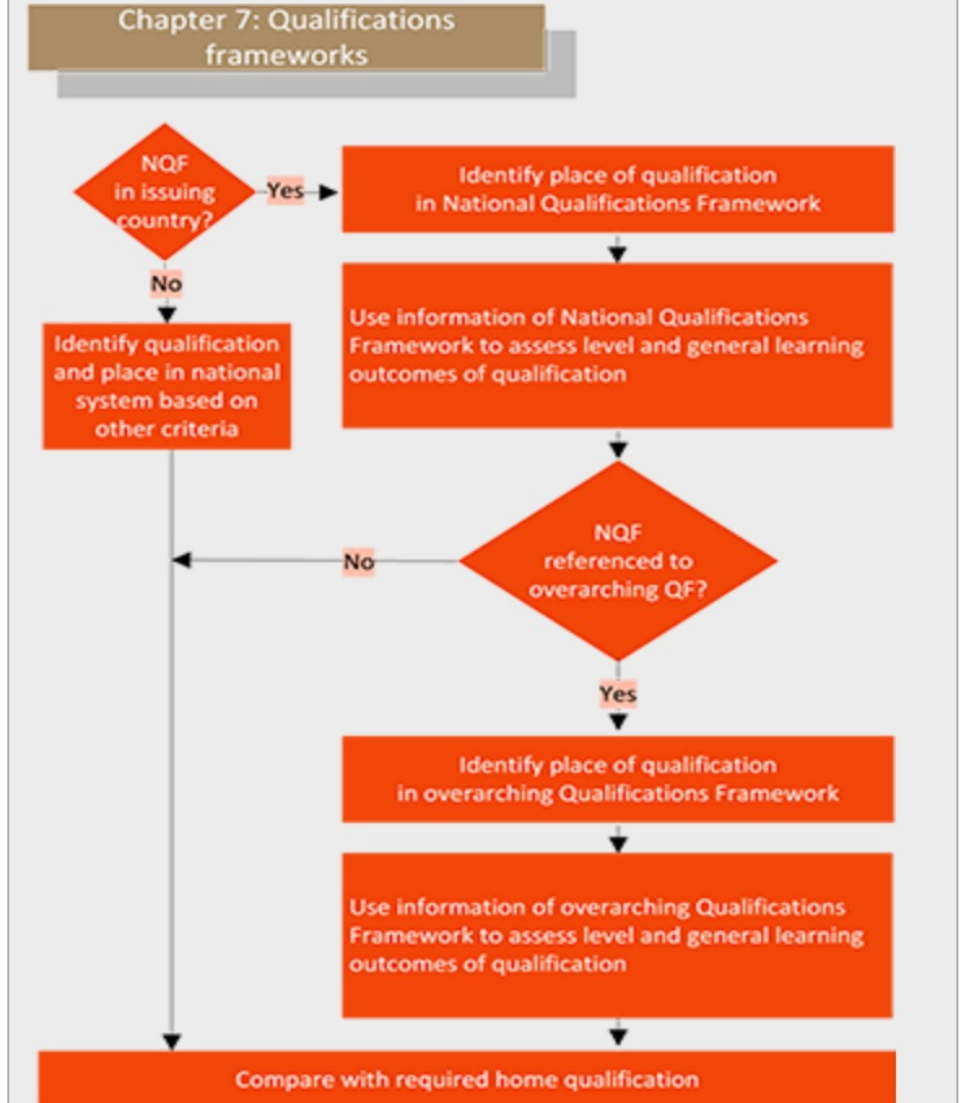
06

Closing remarks

Closing comments

- As a policy instrument, an NQF does not function in isolation but is part of a broader ecosystem, the qualifications system. It is intrinsically linked to its **quality assurance** arrangements and a range of **associated structures (e.g. registers) and strategies (e.g. RPL**), And needs to be part of a coherent response within the system.

- Qualifications frameworks should have at their core:

  - Accessibility for all citizens

  - Formal recognition regardless of how or where the learning was gained; formal, nonformal and informal learning

  - Transparency of learning outcomes as well as of quality assurance arrangements

  - Relevance to the needs of the country and citizens; not just limited to labour needs but relevant to the broader social and community needs

  - Quality assurance arrangements so that qualifications are recognised and accepted as an accurate reflection of what an individual knows, understands and can do.

Linkages

- **Strength of an NQF is derived by its linkages and strategies deployed.**

- **National initiatives**, e.g., lifelong learning, facilitation of learning pathways, validation of formal learning (credit transfer), validation of nonformal and informal learning (recognition of prior learning)

- **Strategies and functions** of a responsible body:

  - Recognition of foreign qualifications

  - Making connections with other NQFs and RQFs

- **Quality assurance arrangements**:

  - Registers/databases of qualifications approved onto the NQF

  - Quality assurance of qualifications (utilising qualification quality standards, policies, guidelines)

  - Quality assurance of provider sand their programmes leading to a qualification (utilising quality standards, policies, guidelines).

07
PANEL DISCUSSION

Panel discussion

- Kenya
- Somalia
- Democratic Republic of Congo

- Dr Alice Kande Gakio, KNQA
- Mr Adbifitah Abdi Mohammed, Ministry of Education Culture and Higher Educattion
- Mr Laurent Ndaywel Mbosele, Ministry of TVET and Occupations

Panel debate: questions

1. **NQF in your country context and strategies**:
   - How does the NQF fit in and contribute to the national policies, strategies and goals related to education and skills, employment, youth, social policies, economic growth, and others?
2. **NQF and change in the education and training system:**
   - What are your plans (or concrete observations) about the key elements of change and innovation fostered (or built in) by the NQF in the wider education and training system?
   - What are the key conditions / factors to make that change happen, overcoming resistance and vulnerabilities?

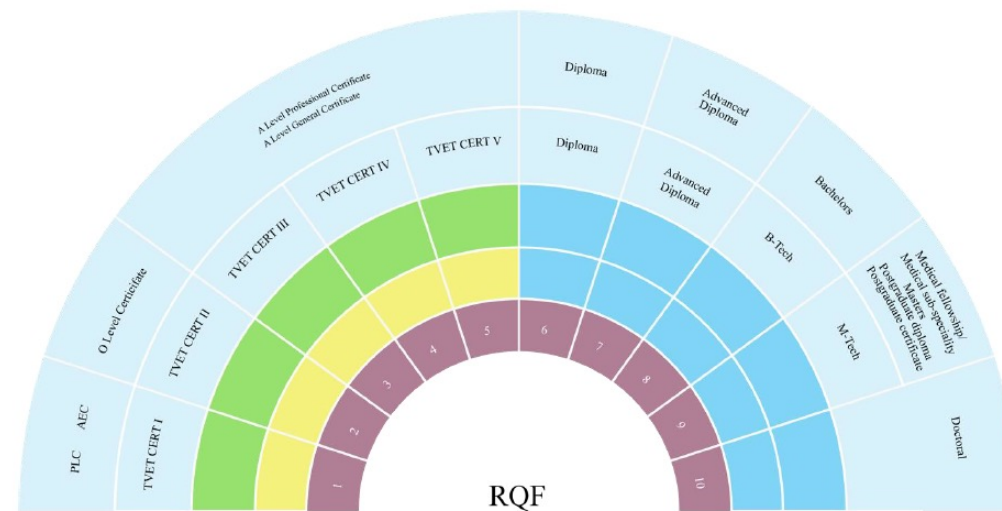# End of presentation References

01

Logic and coherence of NQF

Overarching considerations

- Key purpose is to reflect the needs of the country's qualification system, or be a catalyst for change of the system

- NQFs function within a regional context and the influence of RQFs cannot be ignored. RQFs can aspire to have a neutral influence, e.g. EQF, AQRF; whereas others aim to directly influence the NQF

- Consider:
  - What stakeholders need to be involved in the development?
  - How will the design be negotiated and agreed?
  - How will the NQF be tested and trialled?

Logic and coherence of the NQF

- The NQF specifications need to have logic and coherence. Do all the component parts align?

- Do the diagrams promote a range of pathways or articulation, or do they reinforce current barriers and perceptions?
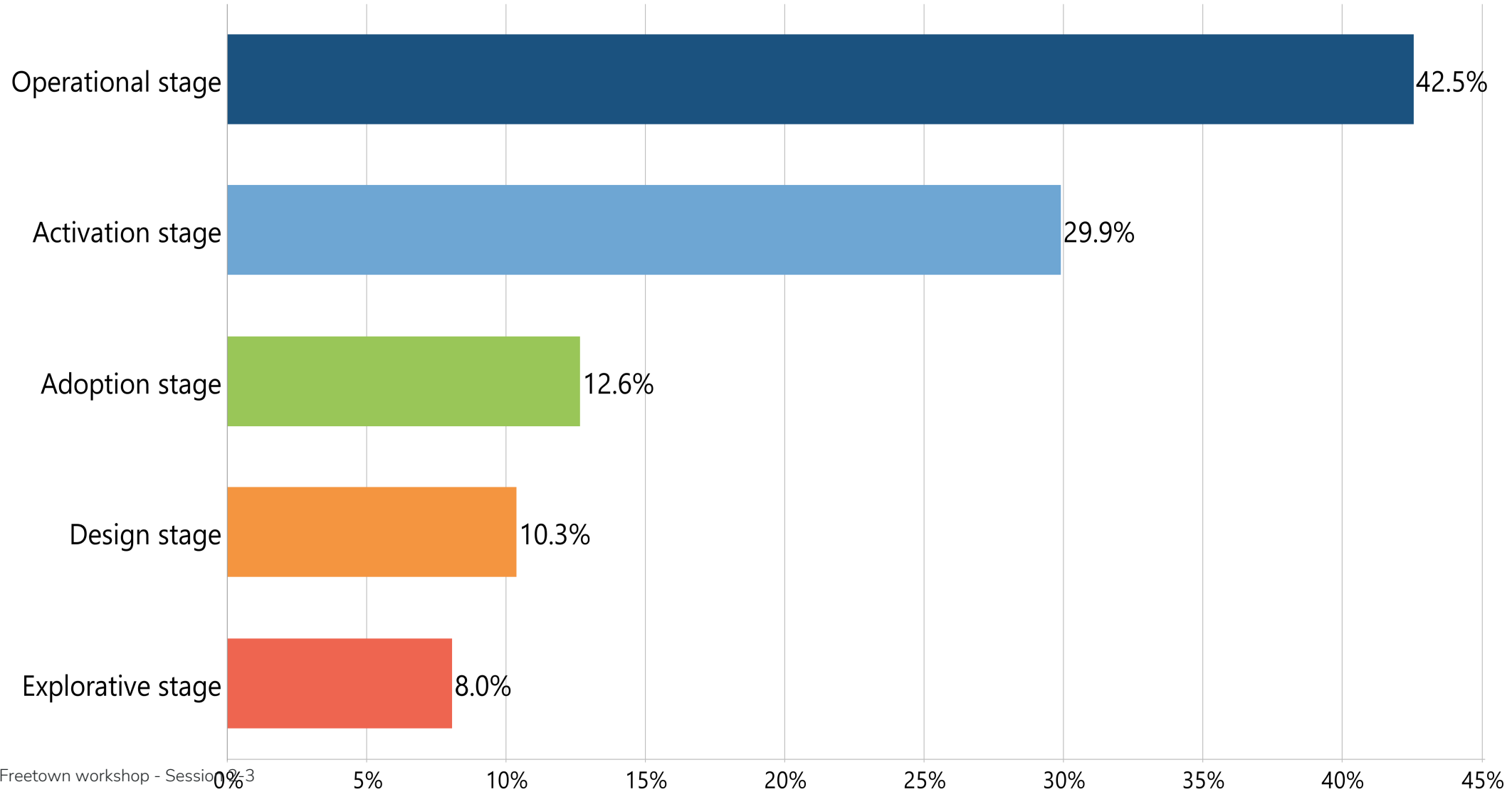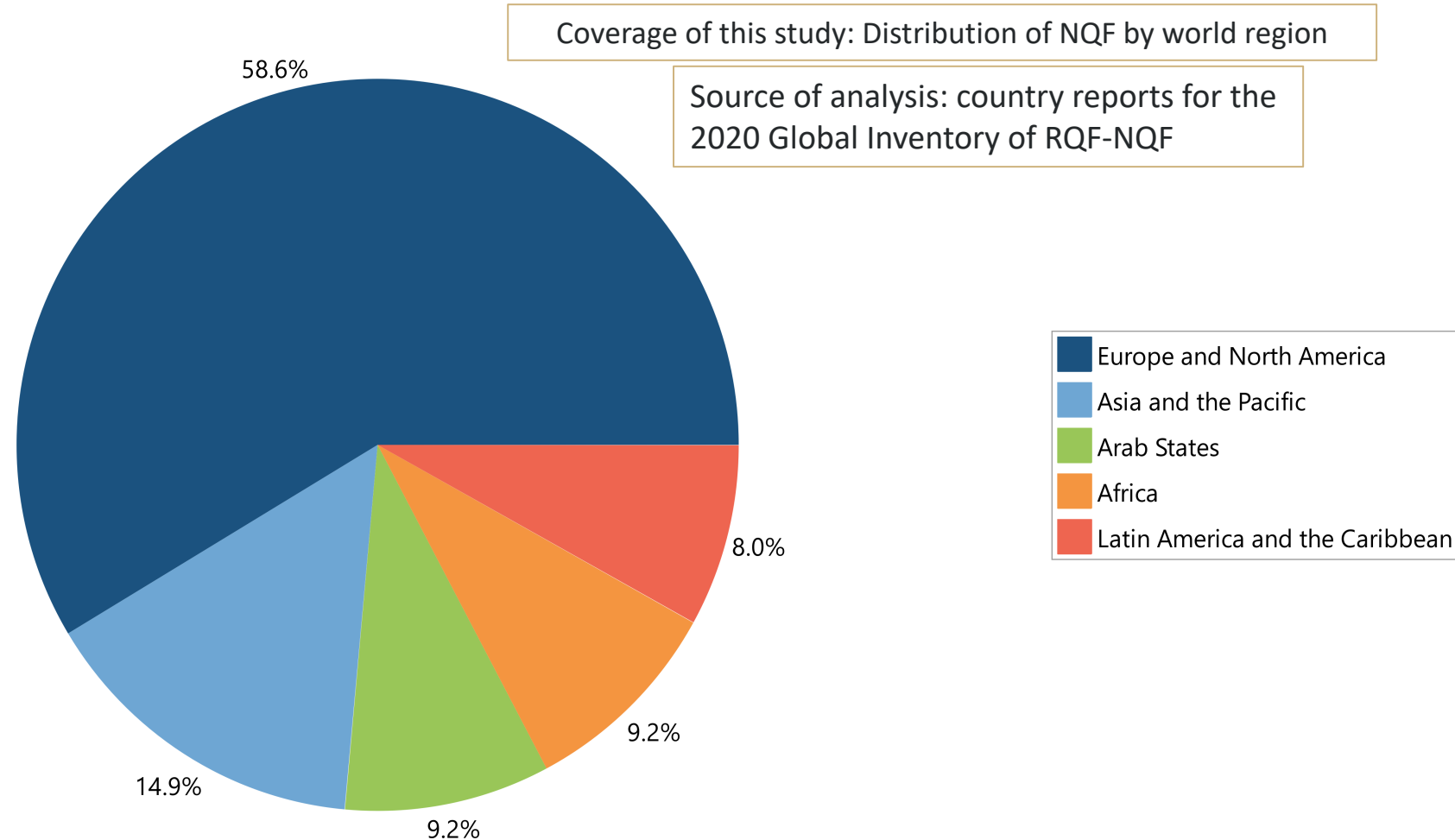

Rwanda QF 2021

Stages of the NQF (study: 87 countries)

ETF analysis based on reports from 87 countries

- More than 150 countries: developments/evolution of NQF

- The analysis takes into account **5 stages of development**: explorative, design, adoption, activation, operational

Coverage of this study: Distribution of NQF by world region

Source of analysis: country reports for the 2020 Global Inventory of RQF-NQF

58.6%

8.0%

9.2%

9.2%

14.9%

Legend:
- Europe and North America
- Asia and the Pacific
- Arab States
- Africa
- Latin America and the Caribbean

RQF in the world: 15 initiatives (+ EQF)

RQF initiatives identified and investigated	
1. African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)	9. Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa
2. Arab Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (AQF; ANQAHE Model)	10. Marco de cualificaciones Alianza del Pacífico (Pacific Alliance) (MCAP)
3. ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)	11. Marco de Cualificaciones para la Educación superior centroamericana (MCESCA)
4. CARICOM Qualifications Framework (CQF)	12. Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards/Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF)
5. Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement supérieur (CAMES)[3]	13. Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework
6. ECOWAS Regional Qualifications Framework of West Africa	14. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Regional Qualifications Framework
7. East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)	15. Transnational Qualifications Framework for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (TQF VUSSC)
8. Gulf Qualifications Framework (GQF)	

02

Trends: NQFs in Europe EQF (ECB)

Europe

EQF

What is the current institutional basis of the EQF?

Legal base

[Council recommendation](#) of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

Governance

- EU level: EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG)
- National level: EQF National Coordination Points (NCP)

EQF is established with a Council recommendation

Evaluation of the 2008 EQF Council recommendation

Review of the 2008 EQF Council recommendation

Evaluation of the 2017 EQF Council recommendation

| 2008 | …. | 2013 | …. | 2017 | ….. | 2022 |

Status of referencing to EQF

Legend:
- Referenced to EQF
- Updated referencing
- Not yet referenced
- Comparison with EQF (pilot)
- Not EQF participants

38 countries

Other international comparisons EQF
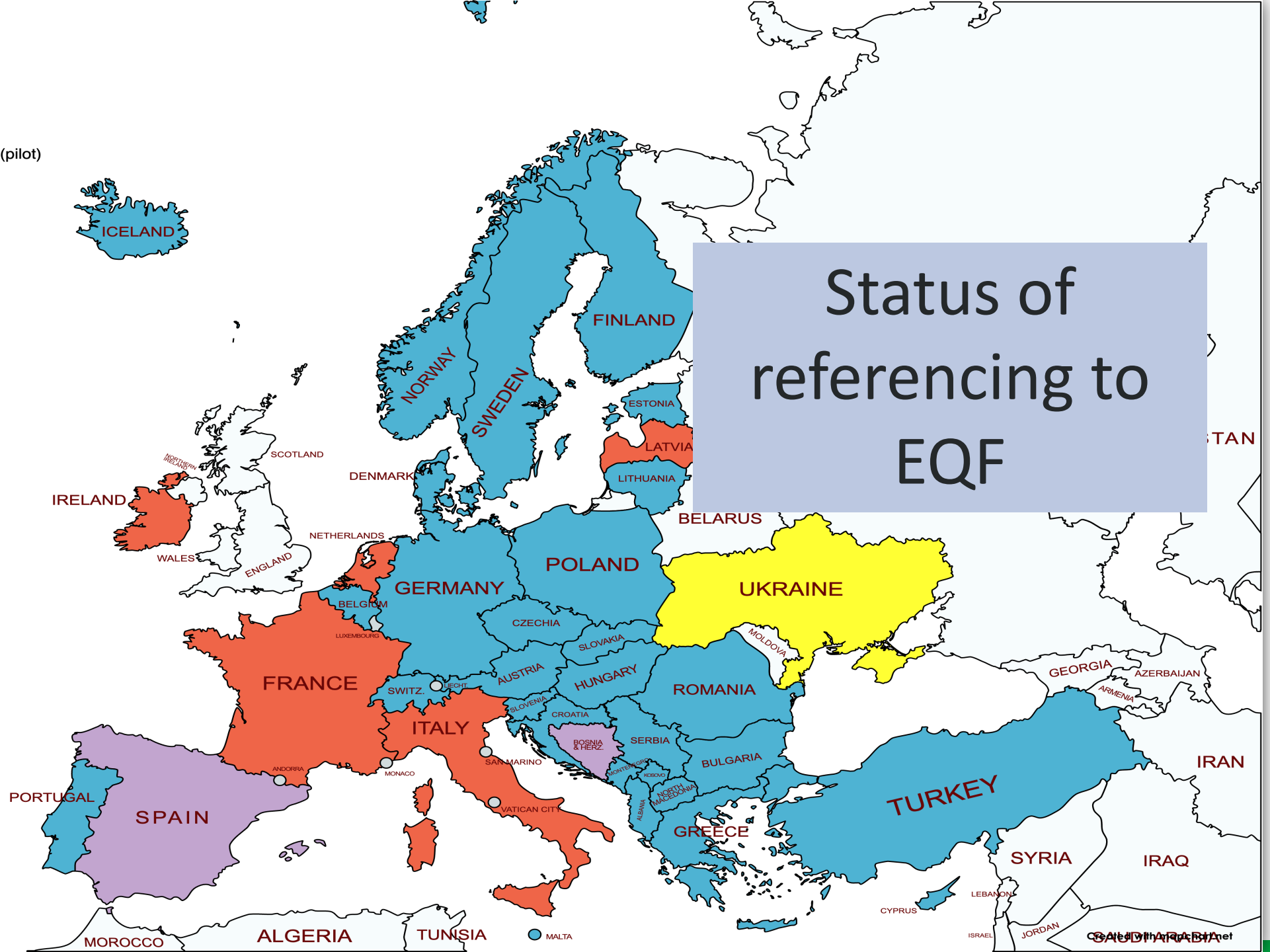
- Technical comparison with NQFs of:
  - ➢ Australia
  - ➢ New Zealand
  - ➢ Hong-Kong

- **New approach to comparison:**
  - ➢ Basis: Article 13 of the EQF Recommendation 2017
  - ➢ Pilot phase (2021-2022): Ukraine (almost completed), Cape Verde (preparatory steps), SADCQF (agreed with SADC Secretariat)
  - ➢ After analysis of lessons from pilot phase: more countries and RQFs

Article 13
Explore possibilities for the development and application of criteria and procedures to enable, in accordance with international agreements, the comparison of third countries' national and regional qualifications frameworks with the EQF

Milestones - reached

Objective	Achievement	Countries
EQF levels on qualifications documents (upon referencing to EQF)	33 countries on diplomas, certificates (out of 36 referenced countries)	BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, FR, IE, IT, CY, FI, LT, LV, MT, NL, HU, PL, PT, SI, SK, SE
EQF levels on qualifications databases	23 countries	
Transparency of information on NQF: inclusion in the tool to compare NQFs / EQF	30 countries	
Transparency of information on NQF: connecton of national registers to publication of qualifications in Europass platform	18 countries	BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FR, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, HU, PL, PT, SI, SE

EQF: tool to compare NQFs referenced to EQF

https://europa.eu/europass/en/compare-qualifications

Contribution of the EQF

Validation NFIL

Inter-connected qualifications DBs

Catalyst develop NQFs

Shift to learning outcomes

Opening-up to private, NF qualifica-tions

Stakeholder involvement

Vocationally oriented qualifications higher levels

Digitalisation: registers, certificates

Supports common language labour market-education and training

Review & renewal qualifications

03

Structures of an NQF

Qualification type descriptors

- How qualification types are described within NQFs vary
- Bring together the two metrics of:
  - Level of complexity
  - Volume of learning measure
- If text based descriptors, will include additional fields:
  - Purpose
  - Admission requirements
  - Progression or pathways

Levels and level descriptors

Approaches to design of level descriptors	Pros and Cons
Qualifications types are aligned to level descriptors [using map/table or text based descriptor]	Allows for: • Multiple qualification types to be ascribed to a level of learning complexity • Levels to be interpreted holistically as a qualification type outcome, and that the levels build on the level below • The knowledge, skills and other domains at one level include those at the lower levels.
Level descriptors are written for each qualification type	• May potentially limit the descriptor to only one qualification type per level descriptor • May force the levels to be read independently of each other, and ascribes only information in this level to the qualification type • May be a confusion as to what is a qualification type descriptor • Usually only used in NQFs that have a limited number of qualification types

Poll #1: Level descriptors

Volume of learning

- Is amount of learning required to successfully complete the qualification
- May be described as a duration or hours measure (often translated into a credit value). Can assist in:
  - Consistency of size of qualification
  - Credit transfer processes
- A review of the definitions indicates that the volume of learning across the following examples are based on:

  - **Notional hours** or estimated hours and are not a 'fixed' figure

  - **An average learner**. Within this notion of an average learner is also a consideration that the learner has limited knowledge and skills of the field of study/practice. Some frameworks indicate that the average learner has 'no underpinning knowledge and skills in the field of study'.

Overview – status in Africa (sample)

Country	Definition	Volume
Cape Verde	All forms of academic work	HE: 25-30 notional hours of workload. 1 curricular year = 60 credits (aligned with ECTS)
Mozambique	Notional hours: contact hours (theoretical, practical, laboratory), individual learning, projects, preparation for exams, exams	HE: 1 credit = 25-30 hours; 1500 h year TVET: 1 credit = 10 hours
Namibia	Directed and self-directed learning and assessment	1 credit = 10 notional hours
Rwanda	Notional learning hours include direct contact time with teachers or trainers ('directed learning'), time spent in studying, doing assignments, and undertaking practical tasks ('self-directed') as well as time spent in assessment	1 credit = 10 notional hours, 1200 hours for an academic year
South Africa	Notional hours includes contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, individual learning, group work, projects and others	1 credit = 10 notional hours

Qualification type descriptors

- Bring together the two metrics: level of complexity and volume of learning.

- May be dealt with as:
    - Simply the level descriptor specifically for a qualification type
    - A map/table that brings together the two metrics
    - A text based descriptor [e.g. Botswana, Namibia]. Proposed headings:
        - ❖ Entry requirements (only for Bachelor and above to promote access into qualifications)
        - ❖ Purpose as this assist especially in distinguishing between two qualification types at the same level
        - ❖ Linkages to other qualification types as this promotes pathways discussions
        - ❖ Level
        - ❖ Credit value.

04

Recognition of prior learning

RPL gives us wings

Recognition, validation and certification of competence (RPL, RVCC/RCA, VAE)

05

Micro-credentials

Lifelong learning is essential

An effective culture of lifelong learning is key to ensuring that everyone has the knowledge, skills and competences they need to thrive in society, the labour market and their personal lives.

It is essential that people can access **quality and relevant education and training, upskilling and reskilling throughout their lives**. Lifelong learning opportunities should be part of the long-term strategy of education and training institutions to improve their responsiveness to the fast-changing needs of employers and learners. This would enable a more diverse body of learners to upskill and reskill.

Higher education institutions, vocational education and training (VET) institutions, adult learning providers and other providers of micro-credentials, including employers – need to cooperate and integrate the latest research findings in the design and update of learning opportunities.

Potentialities of micro-credentials

Micro-credentials can help **certify the outcomes of small, tailored learning experiences**.

They make possible the **targeted, flexible acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences** to meet new and emerging needs in society and the labour market and make it possible for individuals to fill the skill gaps they need to succeed in a fast-changing environment, while not replacing traditional qualifications.

They can, where appropriate, complement existing qualifications, providing added value while not undermining the core principle of full degree programmes in initial education and training.

Micro-credentials could be designed and issued by a variety of providers in different learning settings (formal, non-formal and informal learning settings)


Access the video

Micro-credentials: elements of a definition

The number and diversity of micro-credential offerings have expanded substantially in recent years, accelerated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Micro-credentials hold promises and challenges.

- Existing definitions (from OECD, European Commission, UNESCO, Australian Government) point to key characteristics of micro-credentials:
    - ✓ **Referring to learning over a limited time and/or in a specific area**
    - ✓ **May form part of or add to formal qualifications**
    - ✓ **Potentially 'stackable' over time, adding to individual learning careers**
    - ✓ **Given their limited size and focus, more flexible than traditional qualifications**
    - ✓ **Based on assessed learning**
    - ✓ **Frequently delivered in a digital form**.

Australia National MC framework
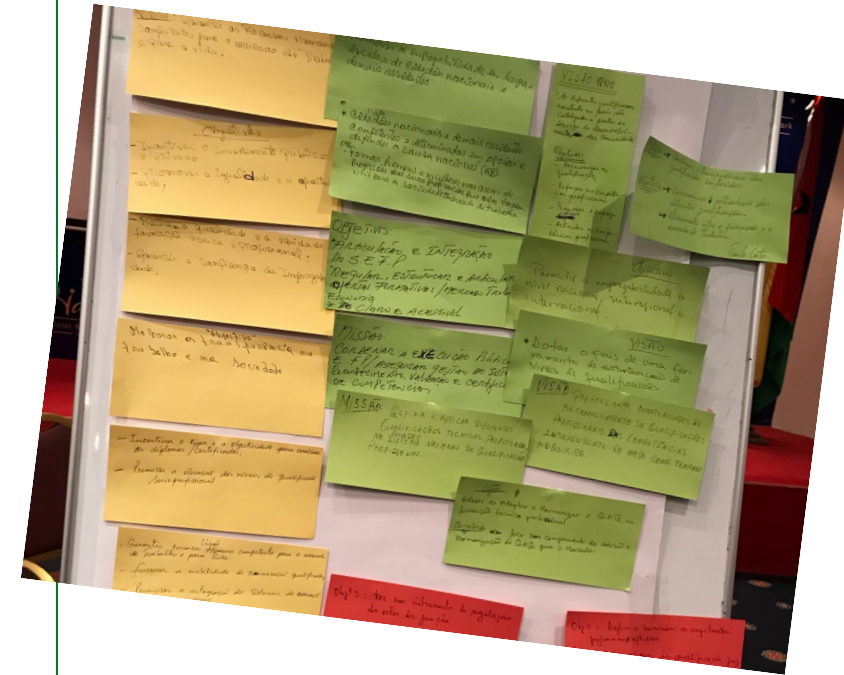
The Australian Government (2021) adopted the National Micro-Credentials Framework, which uses the following definition:

- A micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning or competency, with a minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) award qualification, that is additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of an AQF award qualification.

What can constitute a micro-credential?

- TVET skill sets or units of competency.
- Modularised, assessed components of existing higher education curriculum or subjects.
- Industry learning that is assessed (such as vendor certifications, professional learning).
- Other forms of assessed learning or competencies (e.g. Vocational Education/Higher Education /Industry courses not currently accredited by a regulatory authority, and those by other providers).

What does not constitute a micro-credential?

- Unassessed learning or courses, including work-integrated learning without an assessment.
- Badges which are obtained through participation only (i.e. without an assessment).
- Formal qualifications within the AQF and macro-credentials, including diplomas, certificates and master's degrees.

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

"Use micro-credentials, where appropriate, as a tool to <u>strengthen and complement</u> existing learning opportunities, increase participation in lifelong learning"

1. Quality
2. Transparency
3. Relevance
4. Valid assessment
5. Learning pathways

6. Recognition
7. Portability
8. Learner-centred
9. Authentic
10. Information and guidance

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

Micro-credential Observatory

The Research Observatory on Micro-credentials (ROM) is a NIDL initiative in partnership with the ECIU University. The aim is to provide a curated and regularly updated collection of major reports, policy initiatives and research-related publications on the growth of micro-credentials in higher education and lifelong learning more generally.

- NIDL Activities

- NIDL Research

- Major Policy Initiatives

- National & International Reports

- Useful Reading: Articles, Books & Papers

- Events, Conferences and Webinars

- Microcredentials *Sans Frontières* Network

National Institute for Digital Learning

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- Many articles published in 2022: https://www.dcu.ie/nidl/micro-credential-observatory