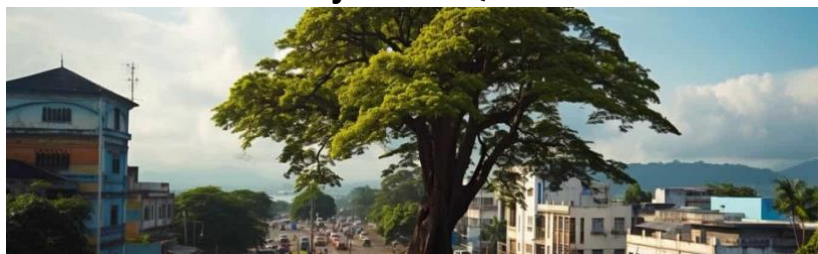# Project ACQF-II

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Sierra Leone - ACQF-II cooperation on the National Qualifications Framework

**Capacity development Programme and Agenda of Workshop 1
(27 November – 01 December 2023)
Visit the Workshop Webpage**
Draft 3.0 – 17/11/2023

1. Context

The government of Sierra Leone and the key stakeholders are determined to develop a contextualized and effective National Qualifications Framework (NQF), comprehensive and inclusive of all levels and types of qualifications and able to deliver on the objectives of quality, transparency and portability of skills and qualifications for lifelong learning, employability, social justice, and contributing to the green and digital transformation. The NQF development process, carried by parallel projects in Higher education and in TVET, has now reached a fundamental crossroad, when all institutions and partners are ready to take stock of the existing foundations, rethink the way forward and take the required steps to agree the scope, principles, structure, and governance of this important policy instrument.

The national institutions agree to the importance of capacity development on NQF-related content, seen as an indispensable premise for national ownership and leadership of the NQF development process. This new phase builds on the lessons learned from the first NQF reflection phase, on the African experiences shared in the ACQF context, and the new national debate around the revised roadmap for the NQF Technical Commission.

Representatives of NCTVA have continuously participated in the webinars, conferences, and training workshops of the ACQF project since July 2020. Cooperation and exchanges with ACQF were reinforced from the ACQF-Training Week in September 2020 in Johannesburg. The participation of Sierra Leone at the Addis Conference which validated the ACQF Policy Document shed light on the NQF development process in Sierra Leone, with a presentation by NCTVA for a wide audience of representatives from 33 African countries and the leadership of the African Union Commission (Education). More recently, Sierra Leone participated in the 1st Training Workshop of the ACQF-II, in Nairobi (9-11/Oct), with two delegates representing the Ministry of Higher Education and Technical Education and NCTVA. This cooperation laid the foundations for mutual trust and a contextualized work plan for the period until end 2026, encompassing aspects of development of the comprehensive

and inclusive NQF, and of other related policies and instruments such as RPL, Credit Accumulation and Transfer System and Register / database of qualifications.

This organisation of this Capacity Development Programme with a country-specific focus and objectives is a result of this growing collaboration. ACQF-II project contributes with the expertise, (trainers and experts), the knowledge base (ACQF Training Modules, Technical Notes and Thematic Briefs) and the networking possibilities with other countries and institutions. Sierra Leone organises the two workshops according to national orientations and with support of the World Bank. This combination of resources for a common objective is a token of mutual trust between ACQF-II and the national NQF institutions and stakeholders.

2. Capacity development program 2023-2024

The combination of themes on the agenda of the program reflects the preliminary exchanges of ACQF-II coordination with the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education and the NCTVA. The themes are proposed in the technical note "Draft SLNQF Stages and Activities", shared in October 2023 by NCTVA.

Main features of the SLNQF Capacity Development Program

1. **Objectives and outcomes**
    a. Introduction and deepening on the concepts, implementation methods and instruments and practices related to NQF in a systemic view. The themes of this Program are listed below.
    b. Application and debate: brainstorming and strategic reflection on the NQF for Sierra Leone.
    c. The agenda combines key thematic presentations with discussion, practical exercises, and contextualised application. Participation certificates will be awarded to participants who complete the program.

2. **Duration and schedule**
    a. Duration: two weeks
        - Part I: week of 27/Nov 2023
        - Part II: Quarter I 2024

3. **Training modules and literature:**

    Accessible on ACQF website at the following pages:
        - [ACQF Training Modules and Handbooks](#)
        - [Thematic Briefs](#)
        - [Capacity Development Programme](#): all materials, videos, case studies.
        - Other useful resources: [International literature](#)

4. **Team of trainers and experts**
        - ACQF project coordinator and key expert: Eduarda Castel-Branco
        - Expert on NQF, registration, level descriptors: Coleen Jaftha
        - Expert on RPL: Patrick Werquin
        - Expert on NQF, Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems, Recognition: James Mwewa

5. **Themes and issues on the agenda**

Part I (27 Nov – 01 Dec 2023)

Focus: NQF – rationale, goals, operations, governance, main instruments

Day 1: NQF – from A to Z: concepts, goals, principles, types, trends, examples. ACQF – a meta-framework. *Brainstorming.*

Day 2: NQF structures. Focus on learning outcomes and level descriptors. Uses in the context of qualifications development and renewal. *Self-assessment on state of play.*

Day 3: Registration and classification of qualifications. Classifications: ESCO, ISCED, ISCO-08. *Practical exercise.*

Day 4: NQF governance (I): models, legislation, institutions, stakeholders involvement. Quality Assurance of qualifications and of the NQF. *Debate.*

Day 5: NQF governance (II): monitoring and evaluation. Labour market intelligence for relevant qualifications. *Brainstorming*. *Final learners' assessment.*

Part II (Quarter I 2024)

Focus: NQF and related policies

Day 1: Assessment of learning outcomes. Certification. Recognition of prior learning – from A to Z: concepts, goals, principles, types, trends, examples. Simulation. *Self-assessment on state of play.*

Day 2: Credit accumulation and transfer systems. Concepts, principles, uses. Examples from Africa, Europe, and the US. Practical application. Simulation. *Self-assessment on state of play*

Day 3: Qualifications: types, development, implementation, renewal. Adaptation to new demands from labour market, and society. Articulation – types, measures, examples.

Day 4: Digitalisation in the context of education and qualifications. Micro-credentials – a new player. Green and digital skills and the role of NQF. *Debate.*

Day 5: ACQF: referencing. ACQF Database of qualifications – national and continental layers, interoperability. ACQF common profiles of qualifications. *Brainstorming. Final assessment.*

Working Agenda of Workshop 1

Dates: 27 November to 01 December 2023

Day 1:	27 November	
Time	**Main theme – issues; working method**	**Speaker / moderators**
09.00-10.00	Opening. Welcome remarks. Introduction of participants. Overview of expectations and key questions.	Ministry of Higher and Technical Education. NCTVA
10.00-10.45 **Session 1**	Sierra Leone: education and training system. Strategy. Government Plan. State-of-play of NQF development *Presentation*	Ministry of Higher and Technical Education. NCTVA
10.45-11.00	Coffee break	
11.00-13.00 **Session 2**	Qualifications Frameworks: main concepts; functions; objectives; architecture. Tools. Levels and qualifications. *Presentation. Discussion*	Eduarda Castel-Branco (ECB)
13.00-14.00	Lunch break	
14.00-15.30 **Session 3**	Regional frameworks. European Qualifications Framework. ACQF. Main objectives, benefits, activities. Comparison. *Presentation. Discussion*	ECB
15.30-16.00	Questions and answers	
16.00-17.00	Practical exercise. *Brainstorming.* *Working Groups – tasks*	NCTVA, Ministry of Higher and Technical Education, ECB

Day 2:	28 November	
Time	**Main theme – issues; working method**	**Speaker / moderators**
09.00-11.00 **Session 4**	Learning outcomes: concepts, uses in key contexts of education and qualifications. Defining, writing, and renewing learning outcomes. *Presentation*	Coleen Jaftha (CJ)
11.00-11.15	Coffee break	
11.15-13.00 Session 5	Learning outcomes: practical exercise. Writing short learning outcomes for up to 3 qualifications. *Guided exercise.*	CJ
13.00-14.00	Lunch break	
14.00-16.00 Session 6	Levels and level descriptors. Concepts. Writing level descriptors. Using level descriptors in different contexts: qualifications, curricula. *Presentation. Discussion*	CJ
16.00-17.00	Practical exercise related to Level Descriptors. *Working Groups – tasks*	

Day 3	29 November	
Time	**Main theme – issues; working method**	**Speaker / moderators**
09.00-11.00 Session 7	Registration and classification of qualifications: the value chain. Concepts. Goals and benefits. Digital processes. Workflow. Resources. Quality assurance. *Presentation. Discussion*	CJ
10.45-11.00	Coffee break	
11.00-13.00 Session 8	Comparison of 3 countries' registration processes. *Presentation. Discussion*	CJ James Mwewa (JM)
13.00-14.00	Lunch break	
14.00-15.30 Session 9	International taxonomies and classifications of occupations and skills – a major reference for NQFs. Cases: ESCO, ISCED, ISCO-08. *Presentation. Examples*	ECB
15.30-16.00	Questions and answers	
16.00-16.45	Practical exercise: use of ESCO skills and occupations. *Demonstration in working groups.*	ECB facilitates

Day 4:	30 November	
Time	**Main theme – issues; working method**	**Speaker / moderators**
09.00-11.00 *Session 10*	NQF governance: concepts, principles, models. *Presentation. Examples*	ECB
11.00-11.15	Coffee break	
11.15-13.00 *Session 11*	NQF legal basis. Cascade of legal instruments. *Presentation. Examples*	ECB – James Mwewa (JM)
13.00-14.00	Lunch break	
14.00-16.30 *Session 12*	Quality assurance of qualification and NQFs.	JM

	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS) – a brief overview. *Presentation. Examples*	
16.30-17.00	Questions and answers	

Day 5:	01 December	
Time	**Main theme – issues; working method**	**Speaker / moderators**
09.00-11.00 Session 13	NQF governance: Monitoring and evaluation of NQFs. Main concepts, principles and applications. ACQF M&E tool. *Presentation. M&E tool. Discussion*	ECB
11.00-11.15	Coffee break	
11.15-13.00 Session 14	Labour market intelligence – key for relevant and high-quality qualifications. Data collection, analysis. Novel approaches. *Presentation. Demonstration online platform*	ECB
13.00-14.00	Lunch break	
14.00-15.30 Session 15	Self-assessment in groups: readiness towards the NQF. Guided exercise based on indicative questions (Annex 1)	Ministry, NCTVA, ECB
15.30-16.00	Free discussion – questions and answers	ECB, CJ, JM
16.00-16.45	Final assessment.	
16.45-17.00	Wrap-up, final remarks. Closure	ACQF, Ministry, NCTVA

Annex 1: Main orientation questions and themes for the self-assessment of the existing situation / state of play

1. Relevant and Enabling Legislation and Regulations for the NQF
2. Reference frameworks: professions, skills, assessment, certification
3. Sierra Leone Qualifications – All Levels and Subsystems
4. Quality Assurance: Tools, Governance, Application, Scope.
5. Important socio-economic stakeholders and partners for the NQF
6. Skills for Vulnerable Groups: Policies, Tools, Programs
7. RPL – state of play
8. Recognition of qualifications, mobility: international conventions, challenges, solutions
9. Labour Market Information System and Skills Needs; Qualifications statistics.
10. Digitalization and AI: policies, tools, application, best practices
11. Sustainable Society, Green Growth and Green Skills: Policies, Tools, Good Practices
12. Cooperation with qualifications frameworks in other countries, regions (Africa and globally) and recognition of qualifications networks.

A comparative grid is proposed, with reference to a simplified scoring system by theme. For example:

Table 1: Self-Assessment Support Tool

Theme and Question	Self-assessment			Tracking & Obs.
Grading in 3 levels	**Well established**	**Partially Established**	**Not existing**	
1. Relevant and Enabling Legislation and Regulations for the NQF				

2. Reference standards: professions, skills, assessment, certification				
…				

List of ACQF Training Modules, Thematic Briefs and Policy Document

ACQF resources and collections

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

ACQF on Recognition of Prior Learning: https://acqf.africa/resources/recognition-of-prior-learning

ACQF News articles: https://acqf.africa/news

ACQF Training Modules

ACQF. 2022. Training module 1: Learning Outcomes in Qualifications Frameworks and Systems. AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme – SIFA Technical Cooperation. Author: C. Jaftha. https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules/training-modules-1-to-10-english/training-module-1-learning-outcomes

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ACQF. 2022. Training module 9: Innovation and technology in the context of qualifications systems. AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme – SIFA Technical Cooperation. Authors: K. Shiohira, P. Molokwane. https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules/training-modules-1-to-10-english/training-module-9-innovation-and-technology-in-the-context-of-qualifications-and-nqfs

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