

T6 Policy Benefits and Use Cases

OF QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS PLATFORMS

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Introduction & Learning Outcomes

This module provides an overview of the policy benefits of Qualifications and Credentials Platforms (QCP). It emphasises the importance of QCP in enhancing transparency, comparability, and recognition of qualifications across Africa. The module discusses how QCP can improve educational systems by addressing challenges such as data quality, validation, and educational mobility. Furthermore, it explores the typical use cases of Qualifications and Credentials Platforms (QCP) in various educational and professional contexts. It highlights practical examples of how QCP can be utilised to make informed decisions, support educational reforms, and enhance workforce development.

Key topics covered

- · Policy benefits of QCP
- Typical use cases of QCP
- Vision for improving education systems in Africa through QCP
- Practical examples of decision-making

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this training module, you will:

1. Understand QCP

- Identify the key policy advantages of implementing QCP, as well as its main challenges
- Understand how QCP can support policy-making using qualifications data
- Develop a vision for how QCP can address current educational challenges in your country
- Identify and articulate the specific benefits of QCP for each stakeholder group.
- Recognise the challenges faced by different stakeholders and propose potential solutions.

2. Develop Stakeholder Engagement

 Develop skills in engaging with various stakeholders, including policymakers, educational institutions, and international organisations, to ensure coherent and collaborative policy implementation.

3. Collaborate Effectively

 Collaborate effectively to develop strategic plans for QCP implementation.

Policy Advantages and Challenges of Qualifications and Credentials Platforms

To help you get a better understanding of the various policy advantages and possible challenges the QCPs carry, we present below some of the most notable characteristics of qualifications and credentials

platforms. However, please note that this list is not exhaustive, in fact, part of the exercises in this training unit will be about whether there are any specific advantages or challenges relevant to your country.

Benefits



Enhancing Transparency and Comparability



Supporting Educational and Workforce Planning



Promoting Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning



Facilitating Cross-Border Recognition of Qualifications



Reducing Credential Fraud and Improving Quality Assurance



Fostering Innovation



Institutional Accountability

Challenges



Data Quality and Standardisation



Technical and Infrastructure Requirements



Stakeholder Engagement and Buy-In



User Adoption

Benefits

Enhancing transparency and comparability

- **Transparency:** QCP provides a centralised platform for storing and accessing qualifications data, enhancing transparency across the educational system. This transparency helps policymakers, educational institutions, and employers verify the authenticity of qualifications.
- Comparability: by standardising qualifications data according to international standards (e.g., ISCED, Linked Data), QCP facilitates the comparison of qualifications across different regions and countries. This comparability is crucial for a wide set of applications, as well as for the wider objectives of mutual recognition of qualifications and for supporting student and labour mobility.

Supporting educational and workforce planning

- Data-driven decision-making: QCP can enable policymakers to access accurate and comprehensive data on educational outcomes. This data-driven approach supports more effective, evidence-based planning and policy development.
- Alignment with labour market needs: QCP provides insights into qualifications, expected learning outcomes and skills, thus users can obtain an up-to-date picture of the training and teaching provision of various providers. This information can subsequently be used to align educational programmes with labour market demands, addressing skills gaps and improving employability.
- Efficient resource allocation: QCP helps decision-makers and institutions allocate resources more efficiently based on accurate data, ensuring funds are directed to areas of greatest need and impact.
- Policy development with learning outcomes:
 Well-crafted learning outcomes offer clear benchmarks for educational success, aiding policymakers in developing targeted and effective educational policies. These outcomes help align education with job market requirements, ensuring policies are responsive to economic needs.

Promoting lifelong learning and recognition of prior learning

 Lifelong learning: QCP supports a wide range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning. The recognition of prior learning promotes lifelong learning opportunities and helps individuals gain credit for skills acquired previously in formal settings but also outside traditional education systems.

The platform can also support the issuance and **recognition** of various novel types of credentials (e.g. micro-credentials), which are becoming increasingly important in a rapidly changing job market.

Facilitating Cross-Border Recognition of Qualifications

- International mobility: QCP enhances the portability of qualifications, making it easier for individuals to have their qualifications recognised across borders. This facilitates international student and labour mobility, contributing to global economic integration.
- Mutual recognition: by providing a standardised framework for qualifications, QCP supports the establishment of mutual recognition agreements between countries and regions.
- Common vocabulary: QCP, together with its agreed taxonomies and ontologies will create the basis for a common vocabulary to be used among various stakeholders internationally.

Fostering innovation

QCP encourages the development and adoption of **new educational technologies** and **methodologies** and provides an **open**, **researchable database**.

Fostering innovation

Educational institutions can be held accountable

for the accuracy and integrity of the issued qualifications to a greater degree, promoting higher standards and greater trust in the education system.

Challenges

In the following, you will find a list of challenge areas that you will most likely encounter when implementing a Qualifications Database (QDB) or when utilising the African Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP).

Data quality and standardisation



Challenge: Ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and completeness of data from various sources can be challenging. Different countries and institutions may have varying standards and formats for qualification data.



Solution: Implement robust data validation techniques and quality assurance processes to maintain high standards of data integrity. Establish clear guidelines and provide training for data contributors to ensure compliance with standardised data formats.

Technical and infrastructure requirements



Challenge: Implementing QCP requires technical expertise. Therefore, it must be ensured that the technical personnel are appropriately prepared to make use of QCP.



Solution: Ensure the participation of technical support personnel in training to ensure that all users can effectively utilise the platform.

Stakeholder engagement and buy-in



Challenge: Gaining the support and engagement of key stakeholders, including policymakers, educational institutions, and employers, is essential for the successful implementation of QCP.



Solution: Develop a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy, including clear communication of the benefits of QCP and opportunities for collaboration. Involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation process to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.

User adoption



Challenge: Encouraging all stakeholders, including institutions and individuals, to adopt and effectively use the QCP via awareness-raising campaigns and highlighting the QCP on their own platforms.



Solution: Provide training and support to users at all levels. Highlight the benefits and provide incentives for adoption. Address concerns and resistance through engagement and dialogue.

USE CASES

Policy Related Use Cases of QCPs

Qualifications and credentials platforms have various policy-related use-cases. Below, we present some of the key scenarios for utilising information of QCPs across various user groups that are directly or indirectly involved in policy-making. As discussed in the section on challenges with implementing the QCP, please note that policy-related use-cases rely heavily on the adoption level and quality of data provided by participating countries.

Policy-Makers

- **Example:** A Ministry of Education needs to reform the national education system to better align with labour market demands.
- **Scenario:** Policy-makers use data from the QCP to identify skill gaps and trends in the labour market based on the currently offered qualifications. They analyse the data to develop policies that encourage the development of programmes addressing these gaps. The data also helps in setting national standards for qualifications and ensuring they meet international benchmarks.
- **Example:** Government needs to track educational outcomes and the impact of policies.
- **Scenario:** Policy-makers use QCP data to monitor educational outcomes across different regions. This helps them evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and make data-driven decisions for future reforms.
- **Example:** Policy-makers would like to understand best practices regarding a new and developing profession and understand how regulation could support it best.
- **Scenario:** Policy-makers use QCP to find regional or continental examples on the database. They use the various information fields there (e.g. learning outcomes) and also contact the national institution to obtain further background information. The information is provided in a comparable and clear manner to the decision-makers, which fosters the development of national qualification as well. With the information, the authorities can clearly connect pathways to specific qualifications and help their citizens in providing clear information on educational requirements and options.
- **Example:** There is a need to better understand regional trends within Africa and discover qualifications provided across various regions that prepare a specific occupation.
- **Scenario:** The policy-maker filters the database for various regions and identifies applicable qualifications with a keyword search. Then, the qualifications are compared to better understand various trends.
- **Example:** Policy-makers would like to strengthen flexible learning pathways in order to increase employability and help target groups obtain formal qualifications.
- Scenario: Policy-makers identify short courses and other micro-credentials that develop common areas of competencies. With the information, they design better frameworks for stackability, providing full qualifications.

Qualifications Agencies and Database Curators

🔍 **Example:** The national agency wants to develop or revise learning outcomes for a qualification.

Scenario: Curators access the QCP to review qualifications data and compare it to other international examples as well. The platform allows them to efficiently manage the accreditation process, track compliance with standards, and provide feedback to institutions.

Example: An accreditation body wants to streamline the accreditation process.

Scenario: Curators access the QCP to review qualifications data submitted by educational institutions. The platform allows them to efficiently manage the accreditation process, track compliance with standards, and provide feedback to institutions.

Example: QCP provides quick access to qualifications and increases trust in these.

Scenario: An employer contacts a national qualifications agency to verify the credentials of a job applicant who claims to have obtained a degree from a university. The database curators use the QCP to quickly verify the applicant's qualifications, checking for authenticity and ensuring that the degree was awarded by an accredited institution.

International Organisations and Accrediting Bodies

Example: An international accrediting body wants to ensure the global recognition of qualifications. Scenario: The accrediting body uses the QCP to compare and align qualifications across various regional or international frameworks. The platform helps them develop mutual recognition agree-

ments and standards, facilitating cross-border recognition of qualifications.

Guiding Question

Naturally, the examples above do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible use-cases for the QCP in policy-making. However, they highlight the main ways you could utilise the platform. Can you think of any additional use-cases that would assist you in policy-making?

Summary

The table below provides a further summary, where we present different use-cases in shorter form, across various target groups that are connected to policy-making more closely.

Use cases

Policy formulation, education policy planning, data-driven decision-making, aligning qualifications with labour market needs, monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes

Target group

Policy-makers

Benefits

- Data-driven policy-making,
- transparency,
- better alignment with labour market needs,
- enhanced monitoring and
- evaluation capabilities

Potential challenges

- Data standardisation,
- privacy issues,
- integration with existing policies

Quality assurance, accreditation processes, validation and verification of qualifications, maintaining up-to-date qualifications data, streamlining qualifications recognition Qualifications agencies, database curators

- Improved data accuracy, validation,
- streamlined processes,
- enhanced credibility of qualifications
- Technical infrastructure,
- data security,
- ensuring data integrity

Facilitating cross-border recognition of qualifications, supporting international educational collaborations, monitoring compliance with international standards, promoting best practices

International organisations and accrediting bodies

- Enhanced international mobility for students and professionals,
- increased opportunities for international educational partnerships,
- better alignment of qualifications with global standards,
- improved quality and consistency in education across borders
- Harmonising different national qualifications frameworks,
- navigating varying legal and regulatory environments,
- ensuring data privacy and security across borders,
- building consensus among diverse international stakeholders

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

Training Activity 1



Objective of **Vision Development Exercise**: Analyse and understand the key policy advantages of implementing a Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) and to identify its main challenges;

Develop a personal vision for the impact of QCP on your education system.



Instructions: This activity is designed to be completed individually and consists of six steps, culminating in the creation of your personal vision statement.

First, you will review the materials presented earlier in this unit on the policy benefits and challenges of QCP. Next, we will evaluate these advantages and challenges in the context of your own country. After this, you will be guided to conduct a PESTLE analysis to identify the factors affecting QCP implementation in your country. Based on this analysis, you will then develop your personal vision. Finally, you can share your vision statement with a colleague for feedback and discussion to complete the exercise of this Training Unit. The

Exercise Steps

1. Read Through Learning Materials

Please study first the provided materials on the policy benefits and challenges of QCP.

2. Analyse Key Policy Advantages

After having studied the various policy benefits, please think about which of these policy advantages are most relevant for your country.



Guiding Question

Are there any other benefits that were not covered in the provided material that would be particularly relevant in your case (national or regional context)?

3. Identify Main Challenges in Your Context

Please identify the main challenges associated with the implementation of QCP and propose potential solutions that are relevant for your country. You may make use of the challenges we discussed earlier or think of any other potential challenges that are relevant for your country.



Guiding Question

What are the main challenges associated with the implementation of QCP in your country, and what potential solutions can you propose to address these challenges?

4. PESTLE Analysis

Conduct a PESTLE analysis to identify the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors affecting the implementation of QCP in your country.

PESTLE Analysis

PESTLE is a strategic tool used to understand and evaluate the macro-environmental factors (**P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ociological, **T**echnological, **L**egal and **E**nvironmental or Contextual) facing an organisation, a policy or an intervention. It can be used in a range of different scenarios, and can guide professionals and/or managers in strategic decision-making. The PESTLE analysis will allow for a structured look on the macro-conditions for QCP and will feed into creating your own vision statement of QCP and its role in your national system.

Please use this conceptual framework to reflect upon the circumstances in your country. Below, we present each of the different factors that you should consider:



Political Factors

These factors are related to government policies, political stability, other relevant regulations and governmental actions that can affect the project. Consider government support for education and technology initiatives, stability of the political environment, policies promoting transparency and data sharing, and potential changes in leadership or policy directions. Understanding the political landscape will help identify opportunities for government support and potential political risks.



Guiding Question

What are labour market needs and demands?
How do economic policies impact the

funding of the education sector?



Economic Factors

These factors include economic conditions and trends such as the availability of financial resources, expected growth in certain sectors, and the apparition of new professions. Evaluate the availability of funding for educational technology and infrastructure, economic stability and growth prospects, labour market needs and demands, and economic policies that could impact education funding.



Guiding Question

What are the public attitudes towards education and technology?
How do digital skills impact the usage of QCP? What are the preferred methods for accessing QCP?
How do demographic changes impact educational needs?



Technological or Technical Factors

These factors involve technological solutions, innovations, research and development, the necessary technical capacities as well as any relevant processes. Assess the availability of technical infrastructure and expertise, advancements in data management and security technologies, integration capabilities with existing educational systems, and technological trends in education, such as e-learning and digital credentials.



Guiding Question
How can QCP integrate with existing educational (digital) systems?
Which user groups do not have the sufficient technical skills to operate or



Legal Factors

These factors pertain to the laws, regulations and frameworks that could affect the project. Take account of data protection and privacy law, regulatory requirements for educational institutions, and legal standards for qualifications and credentials.



Guiding Question

What are the data protection and privacy laws in your country?

Are there regulatory requirements for educational institutions that must be considered?

What legal standarda apply to qualifications and credentials?



Contextual or Environmental Factors

Traditionally, PESTLE analysis considers factors that relate to the ecological and environmental aspects that could influence the project. However, please understand this factor or category as a placeholder for any factors not captured above, including wider contextual factors and trends.

Steps for a PESTLE Analysis



Identify relevant factors: for each PESTLE category, brainstorm and list all the relevant factors that could impact the implementation and success of the QCP. If you need some help, we have listed some questions and ideas above, where we presented each factor.



Gather data: collect data and information on each factor. You may use your own judgement and the information you are already aware of. If you would like to delve deeper, you may consider researching other credible sources such as government reports, market research, academic studies, and expert opinions.



Analyse the impact: assess how each of factors you consider could affect the implementation and success of QCP. Do not forget that both negative and positive effects should be considered.



Prioritise factors: determine which factors are most critical to the success of the project. You may rank these according to your judgement on which aspect has the largest negative and positive impact on QCP. Later on, you may put focus on the high-priority aspects during the planning and the vision development.



Develop strategies: based on your analysis, develop strategies to leverage opportunities and mitigate risks in case of the aspects you identified. Consider how you can use this information to enhance the QCP's implementation and effectiveness.



Document findings: create a summary of your PESTLE analysis. This report should include a description of each factor, the potential impacts, and the proposed strategies to mitigate or leverage the factor. You may summarise your results in a table as shown in this document.

Structuring the Information

Now that you have a better understanding of these factors, please think about how they apply to developing and implementing QCP in your country. You can include the already mentioned or any other new factors.

You may collect and structure the information you developed as part of this individual activity in a table, as shown in the template below.

Factor category	Analysis (you may list multiple factors)	Impact	Strategies
Political	Example: Government support for connected policies, stability, the likelihood of a shift in policy focus		
Economic	Example: Funding availability, economic stability, benefits, labour market needs		
Social	Example: Educational priorities, user needs, societal needs, likeliness to use the platform		
Technological Technical	Example: Technological infrastructure, availability of technical expertise, state of qualifications data repositories		
Legal	Example: Legal framework, data protection laws, regulatory requirements, processes		
Contextual (other)	Example: Consider any other factor as applicable		

5. Develop Personal Vision

Based on the PESTLE analysis, you may start developing a vision for the implementation and impact of QCP in your country's education system.

First, synthesise the insights from the PESTLE analysis to draft a vision statement for QCP in your country. Consider how QCP can address challenges and leverage opportunities identified in your analysis.

In your vision statement you should cover the following:

- Core vision: state the envisioned impact of QCP in your country
- Strategic focus: outline the strategies areas QCP will address
- Short- and long-term goals: describe the expected outcomes from the QCP implementation on the short- and long-term
- Action plan: Draw up an action plan detailing the steps to achieve the vision. This could cover how QCP could be developed further, support actions taken by national authorities etc.

Please write up the vision statement, having these four distinct sections outlined above.

6. Peer Review

Exchange your vision statement with a peer for feedback and provide constructive feedback.

Gaining insights from peers can provide different perspectives and highlight factos and aspects you may have overlooked. Exchange the PESTLE analysis, vision statement, and action plan with a peer for feedback.

- Provide and receive constructive feedback.
- Revise the work based on the feedback received.

Through this iterative step of receiving and incorporating feedback, you will be able to develop a more refined and robust statement.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Training Activity 2



Objective of **Collaborate to discuss the potential policy impacts of QCP**: To collaborate and discuss how the implementation of a Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) can influence educational policy reforms in your country, in the region and in the continent, with special focus on the international and regional aspect of the project.



Instruction: This group activity will involve four distinct steps. First, you will familiarise yourselves with the task. Next, discuss the influence of QCP on international and regional educational policy reform. After the discussion, prepare a summary of your key thoughts and points. Finally, present and discuss your summary with the wider group.

Introduction and Task Explanation

In this activity, you will collaborate with your peers to discuss the potential policy impacts of QCP on international and regional educational reforms. We will explore how QCP can facilitate cross-border recognition of qualifications, enhance mobility, and support regional integration.

Form groups of 3-5 participants, ideally from within the same region. Each group will have a facilitator or moderator from the training team.

Discuss How QCP can Influence International and regional

In this task, you will identify the key international and regional policy benefits of QCP, the potential challenges associated with sharing qualifications data internationally or regionally.

Discuss in your group the various ways QCP can influence international and regional educational policy reforms. Consider how it can improve cross-border recognition of qualifications, ensure compliance with international standards, promote data sharing, and enhance regional integration.

Please take the following aspects outlined below as a general guide. You may also bring up other points and observations as well.

International/regional education policies and reforms

- Improved cross-border recognition: facilitates mutual recognition of qualifications across countries, promoting student and labour mobility.
- International standards compliance: ensures that qualifications meet international standards, improving global employability and educational opportunities.
- Data sharing and collaboration: promotes data sharing and collaboration between countries, enhancing the quality and comparability of educational data

• Regional Integration: QCP facilitates the harmonisation of educational policies and standards across neighbouring countries, promoting regional integration.

Key international policy benefits:

- Enhanced mobility: eases the process for students and professionals to move across borders with recognized qualifications.
- Increased collaboration: encourages international collaboration in education and training, leading to higher standards and innovation.
- Global competitiveness: helps countries improve their global competitiveness by ensuring their qualifications are internationally recognised and valued.
- Resource optimisation: enables sharing of best practices and resources across countries, improving the overall quality of education systems.
- Collaborative projects: encourages collaborative projects and research initiatives that address regional educational challenges.



Guiding Question

Can you think of other ways in which QCP can enforce international and regional cooperation or provide other types of benefits? How about the potential challenges or barriers to QCP's impact on regional and continental education policies?

Summary Preparation

Synthesise your main discussion points and takeaways. Please nominate a person within your group who will summarise your observations and will present it to the wider group of participants.

Tools: You may use various tools and equipment, based on availability, such as Flipcharts, markers in case of in-person events or digital collaboration tools (e.g. Miro, Mural.) in case of online meetings.

Group Presentations and Q&A Session

Each group presents their summary briefly to the larger group (5 minutes per group). Then, within a short Q&A session, other participants may ask questions or make comments on the presented summary.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Training Activity 3



Instruction: In this group activity, after having formed groups, you will be assigned to specific stakeholder groups. Then you will be asked to discuss a specific user group's needs and various ways of QCP, which then should be summarised in a profile and presented to other participants.

Form Groups

Please form groups of 3-4 members. Optimally, there should be three groups for each stakeholder group. If the groups are over 5 members, please form additional groups and allocate one of the three profiles.

Discuss How QCP can Influence International and Regional

Each group will be assigned a specific user group that is directly or indirectly connected to policy-making. Please form three groups and wait for the instructor to allocate you one of the groups. These groups will be:

- · policy-makers,
- qualifications agencies and database curator, as well as
- international organisation and accrediting bodies.

Stakeholder Groups and typical use-cases



International Organisations and Accrediting Bodies



Global Recognition of Qualifications

Compare and align qualifications across frameworks for mutual recognition agreements.

Discussion

Once the groups are formed and you have been allocated a user group, discuss with your group how the assigned stakeholder might use QCP and what are the various ways they could benefit.

More specifically, please cover at least the topics below. You may also think of other topics and ques-



Guiding Questions

- How can the stakeholder utilise QCP to address their specific needs?
 Explore the different ways the stakeholder can utilise QCP, considering the specific needs of the group and how QCP can effectively address them.
- 2. In what ways can QCP support the policy-making process for this stakeholder group? Examine how QCP can support the policy-making process or the specific role the stakeholder group plays within this process.
- 3. What specific tasks or processes related to policy-making could be improved or facilitated by OCP?
 - Highlight the specific tasks or processes related to policy-making that could be improved or facilitated by QCP, including how QCP can enhance data-driven decision-making.
- 4. What are the key benefits QCP offers to this stakeholder group? Identify and explain the key benefits QCP offers to the stakeholder group, focusing on the direct and indirect advantages.
- 5. What are the direct and indirect benefits for using QCP?

 Discuss how QCP can improve efficiency, transparency, and decision-making, and outline the long- and short-term benefits for the education system.
- 6. What potential challenges might the stakeholder face with QCP implementation? Identify the barriers to adopting QCP for these stakeholders and propose potential solutions to address these challenges.

Prepare a Profile of the User Group Synthesising Your

By engaging in the following detailed and structured activity, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of how different stakeholders can use QCP, the benefits it offers, and the challenges they may face. This will support informed decision-making and strategic planning in their respective contexts, ensuring successful QCP implementation.

Please use the template provided to create a comprehensive profile for your assigned stakeholder group. This profile should capture the key use cases, benefits, and challenges.

Template for user group profile:

- Name of the user group
- Describe the role of the stakeholder profile in relation to QCP
- List of typical use cases/scenarios for the group
- List the key benefits QCP provides to this group
- List of challenges identified specific to the group
- · Conclusions and solutions as to improve the user experience of the group

Group Presentations and Q&A Session

Present the summary to the larger group and engage in a Q&A session.

Based on the prepared profile of your user group, please allocate a member of your group who will present this to the larger group of participants. After each presentation, hold a quick Q&A session where other participants can ask questions and provide feedback.

During the presentation, you may take use of various tools, such as: projectors, flip charts, markers, digital collaboration tools (e.g., Google Docs or Miro).

Additional Sources

