Inaugural Workshop

Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework

2 – 3 September 2019

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Workshop Report

Table of contents

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2

1. Overview[1]

The African Union (AU) and its Member States have decided to equip the continent with the necessary conditions and mechanisms to facilitate mobility and transparency of skills and qualifications, in support of the AU Agenda 2063. The African Continental Qualifications Framework is a vital policy that will contribute to this closer African integration.

More than 75 representatives of relevant authorities from 35 African Union Member States, three Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the regional associations responsible for higher education and quality assurance, ACA, ADEA, AFTRA, CAPA, FEWA, Business Africa, OATUU, All-Africa Students Union, UNESCO, ILO, the ACQF project management team (representatives of AUC-HRST, ETF, European Union Delegation to the African Union and GIZ), met on 2-3 September 2019 for the inaugural workshop to begin the development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). See: list of participants and list of acronyms - Annex 2 and 4 of this report.

The two-day workshop covered a range of topics, including the policy context wherein the ACQF is being conceptualised, the scope of work and the activities and roadmap for the period 2019-2022. Three sessions were dedicated to discuss African experiences in developing and implementing qualifications frameworks and stakeholders' views on the future ACQF. Seven African national qualifications frameworks (NQF) and two regional qualifications frameworks (RQF) were presented, showing diversity of level structures and in stage of implementation, but a number of commonalities in terms of objectives. African social partners, students union and association of polytechnics shared their aspirations on the role and value added of the future ACQF. The workshop created an interactive opportunity for stakeholders to present their views on the future vision of an ACQF. See: workshop programme - annex 1 of this report.

New developments, mega trends, and global perspectives on the evolution of qualifications frameworks; diversification of modes of learning and acquisition of qualifications; as well as the impact of digitisation and new technologies in qualifications frameworks were also explored. Discussed the experience of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), its implementation among the 39 participating countries, its catalyst role in supporting development of NQFs and their comparison.

Skills mismatch across the continent can be addressed if skills move across regions and countries – and the ACQF has an important role to play.

Mobility of students and learners as well as recognition of qualifications are seriously constrained in Africa due to limitations in the actual application of instruments supporting cross-border cooperation and comparison of qualifications (diplomas, certificates), such as: Addis Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States 2014 (not yet ratified for application), harmonised education quality assurance systems, well-functioning national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs) across the continent.

---

[1] On the first day of the workshop each participant has received a USB flash disk containing the full set of workshop materials (agenda, presentations, project technical documents, sources for further reading).

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

3

At present part of these instruments exist and function in some regional economic communities, and in a number of African Union Member States, but parts of the continent are not yet equipped with the necessary conditions and instruments that underpin and support mutual trust, transparency and recognition of qualifications.

Discussion of the approach to carry out the mapping study was initiated with contribution of JET Education Services, the organisation selected to undertake this first key activity of the ACQF-development roadmap.

The workshop concluded with delegates having departed with a sense of anticipation for the vision of an ACQF that will be simultaneously African and world class, representing the Africa We Want.

2. Workshop proceedings

2.1 Opening session, welcome statements.
The ACQF in the context of the AU strategic objectives and Agenda 2063 and of AU-EU cooperation.

Speakers: Deputy Head of EU Delegation to African Union, Ms Anna Burylo; H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union;

Dr Mahama Ouedraogo, Director of AUC Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST), chaired the opening session and welcomed the participants to the inaugural workshop of the ACQF development project.

The **Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the AU, Ms Anna Burylo** thanked the AUC for the excellent cooperation in the domain of education and training. With almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24, Africa has the youngest population in the world. Creating opportunities today for these young people is crucial as they will be the drivers of the economic development and social change of tomorrow. Under the joint AU-EU Strategic Cooperation priority area 'Investing in people – education, science, technology and skills development', Africa and the EU acknowledge the importance of youth, especially girls and young women, and those living in disadvantaged or vulnerable environments. The key objectives of cooperation in this area are to: increase access to knowledge and skills; better link education and skills to employment; and unlock the potential offered by research, technology and innovation and the digital economy.

Convinced that mobility will facilitate knowledge and technology transfers and strengthen ties between the two continents, the Africa-EU Partnership supports initiatives through recognition of qualifications, partnerships between institutions and mobility of young students, staff and researchers, in particular women and girls. The ACQF project is part of the multi-annual programme, AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability, which is aimed at improving occupational prospect of young Africans through the provision of innovative market oriented skills development and supporting measures to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among African countries.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

4

This cooperation is one of the milestone deliverables of the commitments made at the 5th AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, and is expected to complement the other ongoing and newly initiated actions in the area of higher education and youth cooperation hubs. This initiative is also part of the renewed commitments as explicit in Action 4 of the *Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs* (adopted on 12/09/2018) [2].

The AU-EU project Skills for Youth Employability supports development of the ACQF, a key AU policy initiative contributing to African integration under the AU Agenda 2063. The ACQF aims to enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications, to support an African common education area, free movement of persons and better alignment of qualifications with labour market needs. The ACQF is expected to benefit all end-users, including learners, workers and employers. Mentioned the 10-years experience of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and its recent evolution to meet new challenges and objectives. The EQF contributed to qualifications framework development through voluntary cooperation across the 39 involved countries.

The ETF, a specialised EU agency, is the new partner coming with extensive technical expertise and will assist the development of the ACQF greatly, working in close cooperation with the AUC and the ACQF stakeholders. The ACQF project shall engage with diverse stakeholders, and their buy-in and support is fundamental for the sustainability and success of the ACQF, beyond the period of project support.

H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union, welcomed all participants to the headquarters of AUC. She noted that the workshop brought together representatives of several education ministries and national and regional quality assurance agencies to discuss the overarching framework of the ACQF and share experiences and critically examine the development of the framework.

The Commissioner highlighted that the development of the ACQF will be an important milestone in reorienting Africa's education and training systems to meet the human resource needs of Agenda 2063. She emphasised the important role that science and technology plays as a driver for economic growth and development in Africa. The development and retention of highly qualified human capital is of utmost importance to ensure the African Union's vision of a peaceful, integrated and prosperous Africa. The youth of the African continent are a demographic asset, as long as they are equipped with skills that enable them to become active and responsible citizens. By equipping them with the correct skills, they will be enabled to take charge of Africa's development. Without this, they will become a demographic liability.

The Commissioner noted that the ACQF aims to promote the free movement of individuals and ensure that human resource and intellectual capacity gaps are filled. Furthermore, through the implementation of the ACQF, skills portability and transferability as well as the mutual recognition of qualifications will be realised. The transparency of skills was also identified as an important contribution of the ACQF.

---

[2] Action 4 of the Communication (12.09.2018) on a *New Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs* at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-africa-europe-jobs-alliance-communication-643_en.pdf

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

5

She reiterated the importance of regional and continental organisations in executing the AU's strategy for harmonisation of higher education. Because higher education systems are structured differently throughout Africa, continental harmonisation is important to ensure comparability and the mutual recognition of academic qualifications. The ACQF reinforces the concept of harmonisation of educational programmes across Africa as it supports the integration of existing national and regional qualification frameworks. This will result in an African-wide structure that can act as a reference framework for comparability and equivalence of qualifications.

The Commissioner reminded participants that the Addis Ababa Convention still awaits ratification from three more African governments in order to become operational. She encouraged members to advocate for the ratification of the Convention in their respective countries so that it can progress in being implemented. She raised the importance of quality education in Africa as identified in the strategic objectives of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025 to ensure human resource and intellectual capacity gaps are filled. It is unacceptable to have institutions award certificates and qualifications that do not lead to employment. Therefore, a well-functioning quality assurance system is essential so that the educational programmes and training offered by institutions are continuously improved. In addressing these gaps, the continued progress towards sustainable and equitable development across the continent will be made possible.

The AUC together with the Association of African Universities (AAU) and EU is implementing the Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) which promotes the quality and harmonisation of higher education programmes in Africa.

The Commissioner thanked all AU Member States, agencies, experts for attending, and thanked EU, ETF and GIZ for their support of the ACQF and for making this workshop a reality. She stated that the outcomes of the workshop would be presented to Ministers at the Specialised Technical Committee on education, science and technology (STC-EST) to be held in November 2019 in Addis Ababa. In conclusion, the Commissioner extended sincere gratitude to all partners and stakeholders for making themselves available and participating in the development of the ACQF. Through this joint work, the African dream can be realised.

2.2 Developing the ACQF: objectives, scope of work and roadmap

Mr Joe Samuels, CEO of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) chaired the first day and contributed to productive interactions and good time management throughout the day.
Mr Samuels started by asking all participants to introduce themselves.

The workshop agenda was action-oriented and supported a dynamic start of ACQF-development activities. On the first day, the agenda included two panel discussions on regional and national qualifications frameworks in Africa and one session with stakeholders (social partners, students, association of technical universities and polytechnics) in which the aspirations regarding the ACQF were debated. On the second day the agenda included one session dedicate to global trends and two in-depth discussions through interactive working group sessions.

Session 2: Policy context and objectives of the ACQF Inaugural workshop

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

6

Speaker: Dr Yohannes Woldetensae, Senior expert AUC HRST

Dr Yohannes introduced the scope and purpose of the two days of consultation and exchanges with the stakeholders (2-3 September 2019), and a third day dedicated to the convening of the first ACQF Advisory Group (AG) meeting on the 4 September 2019. The workshop aims at setting out the fundamentals for a coherent and participatory ACQF development process, under the political leadership of the AUC, and involvement of ACQF stakeholders. An overview of the proposed ACQF scope of work and roadmap (2019-2022) was presented and participants agreed on the next steps of the process.

Dr Yohannes welcomed and recognised the many institutions participating in the inaugural workshop, including AU member states (ministry officials and representatives of relevant agencies); RECs; organisations: AUDA-NEPAD, AFTRA, UNESCO, IICBA, AASU, ACA, ADEA, Business Africa, CAPA, FAWE, ILO, OATUU; higher education associations: AAU, AARU, AWAU, IUCEA, SARUA; ACQF project team: AUC, ETF, EU delegation, GIZ as well as a number of international experts. Dr Yohannes confirmed that the major analytical and policy documents developed throughout the ACQF-development process would be translated into the official languages of the AU.

It was noted that the ACQF is embedded in the context of the AU policies, in particular:

- African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want;
- Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA);
- Continental Strategy for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment;
- Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment; and
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA – PAQAF);

Session 3: Scope and objectives of the ACQF
Speaker: Dr Yohannes Woldetensae, Senior expert AUC HRST

The implementation of the ACQF is expected to contribute to one of the outcomes of Agenda 2063 – an integrated Africa. The ACQF is also expected to contribute to harmonisation of higher education, implementation of PAQAF and to facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates between countries. ACQF will facilitate intra-Africa mobility of learners, skills portability, labour migration, as well as promote the AU TVET Strategy to foster youth employment. These processes contribute to create an African education space.

The ACQF will be a policy instrument contributing to:

- Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications from all sub-sectors of education and training;
- Facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates;

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

7

- Promote a common African education space, and support people's lifelong learning outcomes.
- Promote cooperation and alignment between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide

Qualifications frameworks make a difference within systems but not as stand-alone instruments. Improved mobility of learners and workers, recognition of qualifications and portability of skills cross borders depends on the right mix of policy instruments – of which qualifications frameworks are important components. Other instruments and policies are essential and need to be considered: quality assurance, recognition memoranda and conventions, viable processes of validation and certification of skills acquired in life and at work, bilateral and multilateral agreements on labour migration, integration of migrant workers.

The operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area builds on the premise that education will be harmonised and diplomas recognised. The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment" (2018) specifies: "The States Parties shall establish a continental qualifications framework to encourage and promote the free movement of persons" (Art 18).

ACQF development: scope of work of the project

The planned output of the project is a comprehensive ACQF policy and technical document and action plan developed on the basis of analysis and stakeholder's consultation, technically validated and submitted for decision-making at AU. The ACQF project outline is described in the technical working document "Developing the ACQF - Scope of work and roadmap 2019-2022".

The ACQF-development project has a holistic approach and builds on a combination of: a) evidence and analysis (mapping and feasibility studies); b) AUC political leadership, stakeholder's involvement and systematic consultation; c) awareness raising and capacity development, communication to the wider public.

It was emphasised that the ACQF-development process combines an interconnected succession of steps: a) mapping study (2019-2020); b) feasibility analysis, options and scenarios for the ACQF (2020-2021); c) ACQF policy and technical document and action plan (2021-2022).

Eight key stakeholder consultation workshops are foreseen (2019-2022), and additonal focused workshops can be added to respond to specific objectives. Peer learning and capacity development activities commensurate with the project scope of work and resources will be included in all ACQF workshops. The ACQF Advisory Group (ACQF AG) will be the main modality for well-structured consultation with stakeholders.

Governance of the ACQF development process

The AUC is the political lead of the process. ETF and GIZ have shared responsibility for the project implementation: ETF assures thematic and technical steering (working in close cooperation with the AUC), while GIZ will oversee overall project coordination and financial administration.

The ACQF Advisory Group (ACQF AG) represents the core modality and instrument for systematic stakeholders' consultation and involvement throughout the ACQF-development process. The ACQF AG consists of national, regional and continental stakeholders who will

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

8

advise, support and contribute through review of key deliverables of the ACQF-development process. Dr Yohannes clearly presented the wide range of stakeholders involved in the AG, and underlined that most RECs (EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC) are AG members.

Participants raised questions on the future sustainability of the ACQF, and its future operationalization at all levels (national, regional and continental), emphasising that the national authorities and the AUC should plan the necessary resources to support operationalization.

2.3 African experiences: regional qualifications frameworks

Session 4: East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)
Speaker: Dr Joseph Cosam, IUCEA

Harmonisation of education is one of the integration principles of the East African Community (EAC). The EAC Common Market Protocol calls for the free movement of persons; mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications; and the promotion of cross-border education in the region.

The EAC Council of Ministers adopted the EAQFHE on 30/04/2015. EAQFHE is a generic instrument, covering all levels of qualifications (8 levels), from basic education to doctorate degrees, to which the national qualifications frameworks of the EAC states have to be anchored for the purpose of comparability, compatibility and synchronisation of education and training systems. It is also a platform that facilitates the mutual recognition of qualifications.

In the EAC the *regional quality assurance system* co-exists with the EAQFHE. The regional quality assurance system was developed to promote comparability of education systems, enhance quality education and maintain international standards that would render the system competitive regionally and internationally.

The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is an intergovernmental institution of the Eastern African Community (EAC) responsible for coordinating the development of higher education and research. In undertaking its roles IUCEA works in close collaboration with the national commissions or councils for higher education in the EAC partner states (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan). IUCEA was entrusted with the coordination of implementation of the part of EAQFHE that concerns higher education.

During the section dedicated to questions and answers, the speaker clarified: the EAQFHE level descriptors are generic, not sector-specific. The sectoral level descriptors are left to the national level. The development of the framework was informed by a participative study involving many entities, including students. Buy-in of the national authorities is essential for the consolidation and operationalization of the regional framework as well as for its contribution to developments at national level. The EAQFHE is coherent with the underlying NQFs. A number of AU Member States have overlapping memberships in two RECs, and are thus exposed to two different regimes of qualification frameworks – this situation has peculiar implications, but also a number of advantages, such as cross-regional experience-sharing.

Session 4 (continuation): Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)
Speaker: Mr Franz Gertze, Chief Executive Office Of Namibia Qualifications Authority

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

9

The SADCQF was developed in 2011 and received a new impetus in 2017. SADCQF aims to enable easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region, and internationally and to promote lifelong learning – building trust for better mobility. SADCQF is structured in ten levels.

The framework implementation model consists of six programme areas supported by the Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification (TCCA):

1. Governance (SADC Secretariat)
2. Development and alignment of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) to SADC QF (lead: South Africa)
3. Verification of Qualifications (lead: Eswatini)
4. Quality Assurance (lead: Botswana)
5. Articulation and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS) (lead: Namibia)
6. Communication and Advocacy (lead: Zambia)

People have been central to the process of developing the SADCQF, and they are also critical for the envisioned prosperity. Capacity development to support implementation is an important objective and serious challenge, as it concerns not only central institutions at national and regional level, but also the education and training communities, teachers and professionals at grassroots level. Time and space constraints can be bridged thanks to technology to facilitate capacity development across the region.

Data received from eight SADC member states found that in 2018-2019:

- Overall number of evaluated qualifications decreased by 19% compared with the previous financial year.
- 50% of countries reported an increase in number of qualifications evaluated
- 59% of qualifications coming into SADC are from within Africa. Of these, 42% are from other SADC countries; 17% from other African (non-SADC countries)
- 50% drop in overall number of misrepresented qualifications from previous year
- 80% of misrepresented qualifications purportedly from within Africa.

Questions from the audience concerned: better using African resources and expertise to develop capacity at all levels; to what extent are education quality assurance agencies functional in all AU countries. It was also noted that South Africa might be challenged with an influx of students, and therefore be on the receiving end of far too many students. Movement of people needs to be better harnessed by linking qualifications and education policies with other policy areas, including industrialisation and job creation strategies.

2.4 Country experiences: National Qualifications Frameworks

<u>Speakers</u>: Joe Samuels (South Africa), Arafat Atmoun and Laila El-Rhilassi (Morocco), Maria Madalena Chimpolo (Angola), Eusebius Mukhwana (Kenya), Lamine Gueye (Senegal), Robin Phoolchund (Mauritius) and Alemshet Berhane (Ethiopia).

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

10

Session 5 combined a key presentation with a panel discussion, and was moderated by Dr Jeffy Mukora, who steered the debates and made final conclusions.

Joe Samuels presented "Celebrating 21 years of an NQF that works for the people: the South African case". The presentation emphasised the role of the NQF as a social construct, requiring intellectual scrutiny, democratic participation and adequate resourcing. The NQF was made by walking reflectively, accountably and boldly. Focus on the NQF agreed objectives was key to be able to make progress, even at times when progress seemed slow. The NQF has evolved to improve governance, public positioning and visibility and effective contribution to society. Among the services to end-users noted the role of the NQF Advisory Service's feedback mechanism to enable the public to navigate the NQF with ease. The NQF serves as a benchmark, pilots digital certificates, and works towards mutual recognition agreements with other countries globally. SAQA adopted in 2019 an addendum on the recognition of qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers. Underscored also the NQF is not a quick fix, and achievements should not be overestimated. The way forward offers many opportunities, and the choice of the directions ahead should be responsive to the aspirations and needs of Africa.

Main conclusions from the debate with the six countries:

● The discussed NQFs are diverse in structure and stage of implementation. Development of NQFs need to be embedded in the wider policy context of education and training systems, and add value to the qualifications system. The representative from Angola highlighted the importance of the integration of a new NQF into the wider qualifications system. The shift to the learning outcomes approach for all types of qualifications adds clarity, transparency and coherence to qualifications – benefiting policy and end-users. The new Angolan NQF is currently in the consultation stage before official adoption.

● Development of NQFs is a complex process requiring political will, resources and capacity development. Moving from the adoption of legal acts to practical implementation requires partnership with different stakeholders, coordinated efforts and advocacy, but also instruments and methods fit for purpose and commanding trust of stakeholders and users. Capacity development at all levels is a key component of the NQF implementation plans. The representatives of Morocco and Kenya presented their roadmaps focusing on practical implementation of the national qualifications framework.

● Implementation of sector-specific (TVET) qualifications framework (case: Ethiopia) was essential to reform the whole TVET system and enhance quality, transparency of learning outcomes and links with jobs and occupations. This experience shows the contribution of learning outcomes-based qualifications linked to occupational profiles and employer's demand. This opens ways for objective assessment of learning outcomes irrespectively of the learning path or modality, and contributes to quality assured qualifications. This experience shows opportunities to share common principles with other parts of the education and training system and to build common ground for the national qualification framework.

● The representative of Senegal presented another sector specific framework (higher education). Major ongoing reforms of the Higher Education quality assurance system have been directly linked with the qualifications framework. The transparency of qualifications is based on the two pillars: level descriptors and quality assurance of programmes and institutions. Moving towards a comprehensive national qualifications framework is on the

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

11

agenda of the country, but this road will require coordination and inter-institutional approximation to move forward.

● Mauritius is one of the African Union countries with longer NQF experience: it was first mooted in 2000 following preliminary feasibility studies in view of the wide variety of programmes of study available locally especially in the technical and vocational sector to bring an order into what was referred to as a 'jungle' of qualifications. In addition, many Mauritians who had studied abroad came back holding various qualifications, which required recognition or equivalence. Thus, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) was set up in 2003 with prime objectives to establish and maintain a National Qualifications Framework and its associated quality assurance functions with a view to ensure that the qualifications were internationally comparable. The NQF took some time to get off the ground and gain acceptance over the years but it became gradually accepted and utilized by stakeholders in the first instance by learning providers and subsequently the public and private employers namely the Public Service Commission and Business Mauritius (main private sector association). Success factors behind the implementation of the NQF: communication to all stakeholders; strong collaboration and public-private partnership at all levels. MQA values peer learning from relevant international practices.

Some points raised by the plenary included:

● Diplomas do not always assure the holder has the expected skills and competences. How to make qualifications more transparent for all?

● Countries that have large refugee populations need to ensure such populations have fair access to recognition of their qualifications and are given decent work opportunities.

● Some participants mentioned the disconnect between labour market demand and supply in their specific countries. Therefore, when the qualification framework was being developed, all stakeholders including TVET, universities, employers and unions were invited to participate. The national skills council, made up of nine sector skills committees, develop occupational skills and thus qualifications are aligned accordingly.

Dr Jeffy Mukora summarised the key messages:

● Conceptualisation and development of NQFs needs to be anchored on national needs and strategies, and based on policy learning rather than on policy borrowing.

● Legislation, technical capacity, adequate resourcing, time for development and review are essential for NQFs to consolidate as policy instruments that make a difference.

● NQFs are not quick fixes and alone cannot solve the wide range of important issues in qualifications systems. But NQF facilitate reforms, the shift to learning outcomes and better articulation between levels and sub-systems.

● The key interested stakeholders and parties ought be involved in the process

● NQFs shall be communicated to all so that end-users are knowledgeable of its benefits. The terms and language of NQFs should be clear and understandable for all users' groups, especially for learners, education practitioners, and employers.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

12

2.5 Stakeholders' views on the role and added value of the ACQF
Speakers: Peter Kwasi-Kodjie (All-Africa Students Union), Jahou Fall (CAPA), Valentine Udeh (OATUU) and Jacqueline Mugo (Business Africa).

Prof Youhansen Eid, President of the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (Egypt) moderated the panel debate of session 6. Prof Eid noted that the ACQF will be a large continental-wide endeavour that will contribute to youth and learners' mobility across the continent. The value-added of the ACQF was explored through questions tailored to the profile of each of the four organisations. The main reflections and comments from this debate are summarised below.

The ACQF will address a multiplicity of issues faced by students in their mobility experiences, and the challenges of recognition of periods of study abroad and diplomas. The ACQF should contribute to the free movement of persons and to portability of skills and qualifications. Thanks to such future improved mobility, skills will move freely, and this will contribute to reduce skills gaps and shortages across the African labour markets. Fair mobility of skills reduces waste and underutilisation of human resources, caused by different types of skills mismatch - gaps and shortages in some parts of the continent, oversupply in others.

Moreover, improved and smoother recognition of diplomas across African countries will strengthen the attractiveness of African education and training and the value of qualifications awarded by African institutions. But a range of other factors needs to be put in place to reach this expected integration and free mobility of persons and skills. The African passport should become a reality that will contribute to the free movement of Africans across the continent.

Fair mobility and lifelong learning are essential premises for employment and job security of workers. Reskilling and upskilling are essential strategies in workers' life – to adapt to technological change and new demands. And the ACQF, working with national and regional frameworks should contribute to these fundamental objectives.

All the subsectors of education, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) should be included in the ACQF. The pathway and progression route for learners should be clear and allow for learners to move seamlessly, horizontally or vertically. Youth mobility is vertical and horizontal.

Africa has an important role to play in world economic growth, at condition that the demographic dividend and the availability of right skills mix become a reality. Africa needs to attract talent to companies of all types.

The interplay between the ACQF and AfCFTA needs to be further explored: the AU MS need to agree on the end game; it is not enough to sign and ratify agreements and protocols. These will work if countries are ready to give and take, compromise and cooperate. Trust building is essential.

The ACQF will contribute to the mobility of workers and learners, by supporting transparency of qualifications; but other complementary policies and instruments need to be operational for fair and smooth learner and workers' mobility to happen across the continent.

Morocco – statement

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

13

The Secretary General of Vocational Education and Training, Mr Arafat Atmoun, representing the Ministry of Education TVET Higher Education and Scientific Research asked to read a statement, in which he reiterated the country's interest to participate in the ACQF-development process. The statement recalled the final declaration of the international TVET Forum of December 2018 organised by Morocco inviting all AU Member States to cooperate with the AUC in developing the ACQF and later on - to reference to ACQF. The ACQF development process can be a common reflection space, for knowledge sharing, supporting development of NQFs and linking all sub-sectors of education and training under a common objective. NQF stakeholders and lead bodies can learn from networking and peer learning, compare qualifications. Morocco is committed to cooperate in this joint process.

Wrap-up of day 1

The ACQF will be developed with a focus on the defined objectives but with flexibility based on stakeholders' consultation. Students and social partners are included from the start of the process because the AU values the voice of these constituencies. The ratification of the Addis Convention by member states is crucial to moving forward as a continent. Ownership of the ACQF, including processes and outcomes, by all 55 member states is vital for the success of the ACQF.

2.6 Workshop agenda of the second day

Professor Ana Maria Nhampule, President of the of the National Council of Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education (Mozambique) was introduced as the Chair for the second day of the workshop and thanked the AUC for the opportunity. Prof Nhampule expressed satisfaction with the fact that this workshop has an inclusive approach to languages, and she has the possibility to work at an AU event in her country's official language (Portuguese). Newly arrived participants were welcomed to the workshop. Prof Nhampule noted the wealth of the debates and relevance of the various comments and suggestions for all levels: national, regional and continental.

Brief recapitulation of day 1

The first session of day 2 briefly recapitulated the main messages from the discussions of day 1. The presenter, Eduarda Castel-Branco from ETF, recalled the continental policy context in which the ACQF is embedded, and some of the most important messages, organised in four key groups. The messages were summarised as follows:

I) Overall discussion on ACQF: expectations, role and interactions	II) Discussion on qualifications frameworks (QFs) in Africa
1. ACQF: based on today's realities but accent on forward looking vision	1. Objectives (wider and specific) vary, but there are some important similarities
2. ACQF: comprehensive scope, inclusive of different social needs	2. NQF as tools in the NQS – part of wider Human resources development policy
3. ACQF – RECs: synergy and opportunity, but challenges exist; more debate, more trust-building with national and regional levels	3. QFs development – complex, takes time, debate, political will, communication to people: walk reflectively
4. Sustainability: role / funding at national and continental level	4. QFs: social construct, agreement
5. ACQF: unifying framework - across sub-sectors / levels education & training + across dimensions	5. Stakeholders' involvement, critical views, work together (state and private actors)
	6. Legislation is key to operationalise
	7. Intellectual scrutiny

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

14

AU: national, REC, continental + international cooperation / comparison 6. ACQF: very high expectations on its role and contribution to…mobility (learners, workers), skills matching, recognition and credibility of African qualifications, social inclusion, free movement 7. ACQF alone will not solve issues and dismantle all barriers affecting mobility - other factors to be considered too. 8. Capacity development is key!	8. Adequate resourcing 9. Evaluation of NQF 10. Capacity at all levels: from policy-makers to education and training providers 11. Reach out to users…example: South Africa NQF Advisory Service's feedback mechanism = service to help users navigate the NQF 12. NQF – disentangle the " jungle of qualifications" 13. NQF - Not a quick fix 14. Skills mix: occupational but also transversal, citizenship 15. Roadmaps for NQF implementation: governance, analysis and testing, methodological fine-tuning, tools, register qualifications
III) Debate of stakeholders 1. Importance of fair and clear conditions for mobility of youth, learners and workers 2. Students', learners' informed decisions 3. ACQF supporting LLL: job security for workers 4. All-inclusive mobility: African Passport 5. ACQF: address skills mismatch – by supporting skills mobility (skills shortages / gaps in LM / countries). Move skills around the continent 6. TVET mobility - upskilling 7. ACQF: address issue of skills / HR under-utilisation in the LM (mobility) 8. Attract talent 9. Scale up initiatives already happening at workplace – to align skills, qualifications with workplace 10. Reskilling, upskilling – LLL in quickly changing society, digitization of work and jobs 11. New types of qualifications – place in QFs 12. Continental echo to assure transparency 13. Embrace all sub-sectors, modalities and pathways of learning 14. Youth mobility – horizontal and vertical 15. ACQF – AfCFTA: AU MS to agree on the end game, not enough to sign and ratify; will work if countries are ready to give and take, compromise and cooperate. Trust building 16. One vision one common goal	**IV) Participants' questions and suggestions** 1. Capacity in Africa is available – but needs to be better tapped. 2. Improve Curriculum!! How are Competences taught and assessed for a qualification. Linking profiles / standards to curriculum and training. 3. Align curriculum framework Africa with ACQF 4. How to harmonise aspects of curriculum in the diverse landscape of education systems in Africa 5. Include needs of refugees and migrant workers – training, recognition prior learning. 6. Level descriptors differentiated: generic (RQF), sector specific (health, accounting, tourism…) 7. ACQF – supporting NQFs: develop and revise? 8. Shift the discourse, rethink the way we think, redefine our problems 9. Language! Important in mobility 10. Languages of AU – important in ACQF-development! 11. Having NQF alone…fair mobility does not happen – enforcement needed. 12. Addis recognition convention: not yet ratified by minimum number of countries (only 7 did). Solution? 13. South Africa announced: ratified Addis Convention - information just sent.

2.7 Qualification frameworks in the world: global trends and future developments

Speakers: Borhene Chakroun (UNESCO) and Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF)

Session 7 provided an overview of important global trends influencing development of education and training, qualifications frameworks, modes of learning.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

15

Borhene Chakroun opened-up a wide range of perspectives and challenges happening across economies and societies of the world. The SDGs are relevant anchors and reference points for wide reforms and the ACQF is one of such developments. Although SDG 4 is essential, other SDGs too need to be given due consideration. SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Projections 2030 for Africa point to rapidly growing youth population, but poor education achievements; less routine work and shift to digital economy; growing informal economy / less decent work.

The world faces a "Global learning crisis" – companies and the economy (and thus economic growth) is negatively impacted by the poor skills which learners gain from our education systems. A major challenge is how to offer lifelong learning to all types of workers and effectively expand participation.

Job polarisation shows no signs of abating: less middle skill jobs, more low- and high-end jobs. This impacts on the scope of qualifications: less demand for narrow qualifications, more demand for broader ones. In this changing labour market the question is not only migration, but transitions.

UNESCO Qualification Passport: an offering to migrants and refugees, giving them an opportunity to have their skills and qualifications recognised better. Currently being piloted in Zambia.

Digital credentialing is an emerging area of the qualifications landscape. It can be a challenge for education quality assurance, but can also be beneficial in skills development and promoting lifelong learning. Digital learning is evolving, and the scale of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is marking the landscape.

Globally, qualifications frameworks continue to be developed and reviewed: over 150 countries developed / are developing and reviewing their qualifications frameworks, including quality assurance mechanisms. The interplay between NQFs and RQFs is important, and RQFs trigger national developments.

Qualifications and educations reforms cannot only be driven by economic rationale only, as they need to provide citizens and societies with the wide range of skills and competences for personal development and citizenship, alongside technical and transversal skills required for employment.

The direction of travel can be disruptive: digital credentialing, new types of qualifications frameworks, world reference levels.

In her presentation on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), prepared with an important input by the most recognised EQF expert (Mr Jens Bjornavold - Cedefop), Eduarda Castel-Branco focused on key features of the EQF and its contribution to reforms, comparability and transparency between QFs in the 39 involved countries.

The EQF is operational 10 years, involving now 39 countries actively deepening their cooperation. 35 countries have referenced their national frameworks to EQF, 31 are using EQF levels in their qualifications documents and 23 use EQF levels in their qualifications databases. A number of countries are updating and deepening the referencing. This is an important contribution to mutual

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

16

understanding and comparability of systems and qualifications between these countries. Referencing of NQFs to EQF is based on 10 criteria, a peer-review process and debate steered by the EQF AG and the European Commission. Upon final review and validation the referencing reports are published – for transparency.

A major contribution of the EQF includes the shift to learning outcomes – supporting a common language between education and labour market and underpinning quality-assured validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning. The EQF has been a catalyst for development of NQFs in most involved countries; to map and clarify links between qualifications; and to double efforts to move towards the definition and application of common principles.

The EQF is not a tool for recognition of qualifications, but facilitates recognition. This role of QFs in the context of recognition is supported by the 2013 Subsidiary text of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

As other qualifications frameworks open to changing societal drivers and new demands on learning, the EQF has been evaluated and reviewed - it evolves. The initial EQF legal base was revised in 2017 - to strengthen EQF implementation across countries, systems and institutions, with a view of raising people's employability, mobility and access to further education.

EQF guidance notes, inventories, analysis and studies and structured peer learning activities contribute to deepen understanding of key themes and policy issues (ex.: learning outcomes approach, comparison of qualifications, cooperation with non-EQF countries and regions, digital registers of qualifications).

EQF governance is multidimensional, based on steering role of EQF AG, the policy and technical role of European Commission and EU Agencies (ETF and Cedefop). EU support to EQF countries includes technical support and grants for EQF national coordination points.

The experience of the EQF is appealing and relevant also for countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy, notably Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Their Association Agreements with the EU are far-reaching and mention possibility of cooperation with the EQF.

Comments and questions from audience included:

- Africa is developing the ACQF much later than others. Some tools have become obsolete and overtaken by digitisation. What effect does this have on the development of the ACQF?
- Should NQFs be revised once the ACQF is developed?
- Labour market impact of the EQF: how is it evaluated?
- What is your recommendation for the construct and architecture of the ACQF?
- Mobility of learning: more dynamism of training providers, rather than learners.
- How much will be borrowed from the EQF while keeping our context in mind. Our ecosystem has to be updated too.
- What are the articulation lessons from the two presenters? TVET vs academic pathways.
- Referencing in the EQF: what kind of support do the countries have in terms of referencing/aligning?

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

17

- Will inequality not increase rather than decrease through the ACQF?

- Are lower income/less developed countries benefiting from the EQF?

- How to improve donor harmonisation?

- Refugee passport: who issues?

- Digitalisation and accreditation: legal authority and legal framework?

Borhene Chakroun noted that changing global trends have an impact on the continent. Policy learning and not policy borrowing should be the base of ACQF development. African countries can leapfrog and develop according to their context. The regulation of a "global campus" (digital credentials) can be done through incentivising, e.g. funding will become available for qualifications included in NQFs.

Ms Castel-Branco added that the EQF does not stand alone and always formed part of an ecosystem of EU transparency tools and Skills Agendas (since 2008). The EQF revision in 2017 part of a wider integrated EU initiative: the "New Skills Agenda for Europe" (2016). The Agenda integrates 10 priorities grouped in 3 strands: a) Quality and relevance of skills; b) Visibility and comparability of qualifications; c) Skills Intelligence. The potential impact of the EQF on employment / labour market cannot be attributed, as a separate factor, and in such a short implementation period, but the EQF Advisory Group reflects further on impact measurement indicators and adequate approach. New EU initiatives are in implementation related with the EQF, notably the new Europass with a range of new functions, including digital credentialing, e-portfolio and interoperability with EURES, Skills Panorama and ESCO. More in-depth work is being done on the comparison of qualifications between EQF countries – this generates trust and better understanding of similarities and differences.

Further comments/reflections from the audience included:

- It is important to take what has been presented and we learnt important ideas around mapping.

- Presentations have been valuable in reminding us to be forward-orienting and to take into account new trends

- The needs of Africans should form the core of the ACQF, and not focus on globalisation first. We should take a decolonised outlook. Dr Yohannes reiterated that there is more than one objective for the ACQF, and not solely focusing on globalisation.

- Policy borrowing is widespread in many reform efforts throughout Africa. It is important to learn from other experiences, and understand under which conditions this or the other solution or reform have worked best. Peer learning can inform policy learning, but this is not a synonym of importing ready-made solutions out of context. NQFs are not quick fixes, but under good stakeholder involvement and analysis of contextual conditions, some quick wins can be configurated.

- The ACQF should be future oriented, although based on the realities of the African context(s).

- We need to develop in a manner that will move us from the periphery, keeping in mind our contexts but also learning from major trends globally.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

18

- UNESCO promotes multilateralism and not just globalisation. The ACQF shall be forward looking, address challenges on the continent and take account of global trends.

- The EQF could learn from the ACQF in the future. Qualifications frameworks are not static, they learn from each other, evolve and adapt to new challenges and objectives, as did the EQF and many of the most experienced NQFs (France, Ireland, Australia).

- Dr Beatrice Njenga: Education is not pursued to only secure employment, but also to improve the quality of life, promote citizenship and living together in harmony.

2.8 Getting started: the ACQF mapping study
Speakers: Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF) and James Keevy (JET Education Services

Session 8 aimed to introduce the ACQF mapping study approach, research questions and working modalities.

Ms Castel-Branco introduced the role of JET Education Services in carrying out the Mapping study. Contextualised the mapping study in the overall ACQF-development process, recalling the links with the ACQF feasibility study, with capacity development and sustained stakeholders' engagement and consultation. The 11 thematic blocks for the mapping study proposed in the Terms of Reference and in the ACQF Scope of Work working document were briefly presented, as well as the roadmap for all key activities 2019-2022. Mentioned the plan of eight ACQF workshops (2019-2022), of which three relate directly with the mapping study.

James Keevy, leader of JET Education Services expert team, provided a brief overview of the mapping study, as well as reflections on the development of qualifications frameworks internationally. In annex 3 of this report: brief introduction to the mapping study experts' team composed by: Lomthie Mavimbela; Jean Adotevi; Lee Sutherland; Maria Overeem; Andrea Bateman; Zaahehad Vally, and Eleanor Hazell.

Qualifications frameworks are instruments to develop, classify and recognise formal learning. They have increasingly been introduced across the African continent, as is also the case across most of Europe, Australasia and the Asia-Pacific region. More and more countries and regions across the world develop qualifications frameworks to improve harmonisation of education and training systems and comparability of qualifications, and Africa has not remained unaffected. Education in Africa was influenced by Western and European ideas long before the advent of qualifications frameworks.

The education and training systems of most of the African countries are in a state of transition, especially under the influence of international and regional harmonisation initiatives, and through the development of national and sectoral qualifications frameworks. The introduction of NQFs is relevant and attractive to implementers in Africa, as well as in Europe and Asia, as it responds to challenges common for many states in an inter-connected world, where the existing systems are seen insufficient to the challenges that mechanisms of globalization pose on education systems.

Diffusion of NQFs to Africa did not just happen, as it had to be actively brought about by individuals and governments in the respective states. The adoption of qualifications frameworks to Africa was no isolated phenomenon and it can be assumed that early implementing states in the West-, East- and Southern African Communities, have been of inspiration to others to follow suit.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

19

A view of interplay between national, regional and continental levels in the context of ACQF development was discussed:

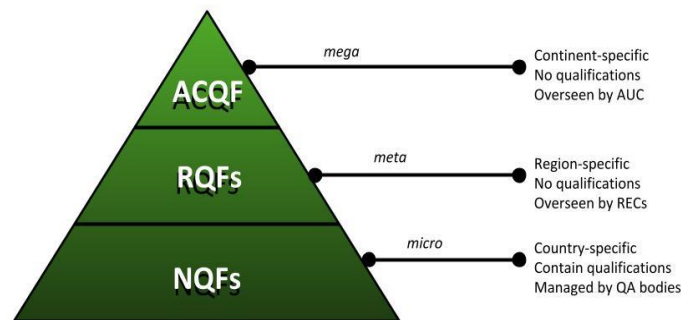|		
ACQF	*mega*	Continent-specific / No qualifications / Overseen by AUC
RQFs	*meta*	Region-specific / No qualifications / Overseen by RECs
NQFs	*micro*	Country-specific / Contain qualifications / Managed by QA bodies

Figure 2: Different levels of qualifications frameworks

James Keevy provided a brief overview of the approach and methodology of the mapping study, which are aligned to the three pillars of the ACQF-development project already mentioned in this report. The approach is designed around a set of work packages, as outlined in the Terms of Reference:

- Work Package 1 (WP1): mapping study methodology, based on the Terms of Reference, the technical proposal and the insights and recommendations of the ACQF workshop.

- WP2 starts with the analysis of the data from the online survey, followed by the field visits to countries and RECs. The team members have been allocated different regions and responsibilities, drawing on their experience. Structured interview questionnaires will be designed and finalised in consultation with the AUC HRST-ETF and GIZ. This set of questions will be used for consistency across all field visits.

  A strong emphasis will be placed on the collection of key documents in a central repository. All hard copies will be scanned and added to the repository. The repository will be updated and the limited access folders will be shared as appropriate.

  WP2 will include analysis of a set of qualifications. Drawing on recent comparisons of this nature conducted by Cedefop and others, a number of common qualifications will be selected, with some rudimentary representation from different types of qualifications, including but not limited to vocational, technical, academic and professional qualifications (where possible).

  The mapping study report will be supplemented by a synthesis report and infographics, for easier dissemination of important findings.

- Stakeholder consultations will take place through ACQF AG workshops, other specialised meetings and webinars for discussion of findings and validation of the complete report.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

20

JET proposes the inclusion of a capacity building component for young unemployed postgraduate researchers – work modalities to be discussed with the interested RECs.

3. Working groups sessions: main ideas and expectations on the ACQF

Session 9 was conceived as an interactive space to engage all participants in debating their views and expectations regarding the ACQF. To structure the discussion two tools were prepared: a) a template for analysis based on Theory of Change and b) an online survey addressing specific questions related with qualifications frameworks in Africa. This digital survey should have been administered during the session, but time was short. This survey will be tested with a group of stakeholders at a later opportunity.

Participants were divided into four groups, based on language criterion (two Anglophone, one Lusophone and one Francophone) each co-facilitated by a JET expert and ETF expert (Lusophone group). The group deliberations form the basis for an exercise of early design of a theory of change (TOC) for the ACQF. The outcomes are briefly summarised below.

Report on the Theory of Change exercise carried out in session 9

The TOC exercise was explained to all working groups, which had two hours for the debates and formulation of their proposals. The first part of the TOC is a problem statement that articulates the need for the intervention. A description of the challenge/issue, which the overall intervention aims to address / contribute. The problem statement formulated for the exercise by JET experts was as follows (box). Working groups discussed the pertinence of the proposed formulation and presented their discussed revisions.

Step 1: proposed problem statement

> Freedom of movement is a basic human right and amongst the founding principles of the African Union. In order to move freely, students and migrant workers need to have their qualifications recognized in other countries. However, there are barriers to continental co-operation in education which impact on the mobility and employability of students and workers and human capital development.
>
> Africa comprises 55 countries, a handful of which have functional national qualifications frameworks, and eight regional economic communities and some are developing regional qualifications frameworks. These frameworks, which are at different stages of development and complexity, should make qualifications systems easier to understand, and work together towards the continental goals of mobility and employability of students and workers and human capital development. However, at present these frameworks are in many instances underdeveloped and lack sufficient harmonisation to achieve this.
>
> Lack of harmonization of qualifications systems and frameworks (and therefore lack of a holistic approach to recognition of qualifications) creates challenges for **individuals** – who may find that their qualifications are not understood or recognised and their learning and employment opportunities are hindered - **institutions** – who may find that the qualifications they award are not recognised internationally – **employers** – who may have concerns regarding the quality of education and training of their employees – and **countries** – who wish to maximise employment opportunities and lifelong learning.

The proposed **problem statement** for the ACQF is depicted visually below.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

21
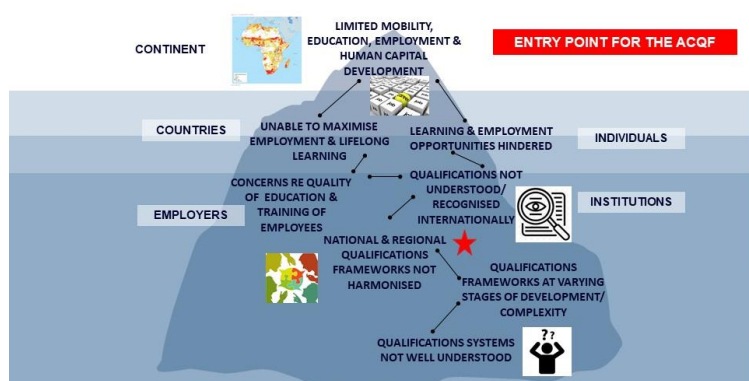
Figure 1: Visual of the Problem Statement for the ACQF

Step 2:
Goal: the overarching purpose of goal formulation - the big picture/long term change, which the intervention is intended to achieve (contribute to) in the long term.

- **Goal** for the **ACQF development**: the ACQF that is endorsed and supported by Member States, which contributes towards enhanced continental **mobility, education, employability** and **human capital development**.

Key activities

The **Theory of Action** depicted below illustrates how key activities identified for the ACQF project are expected to lead to African Union Member States endorsing and supporting the ACQF. The activities match well the project outline and roadmap.
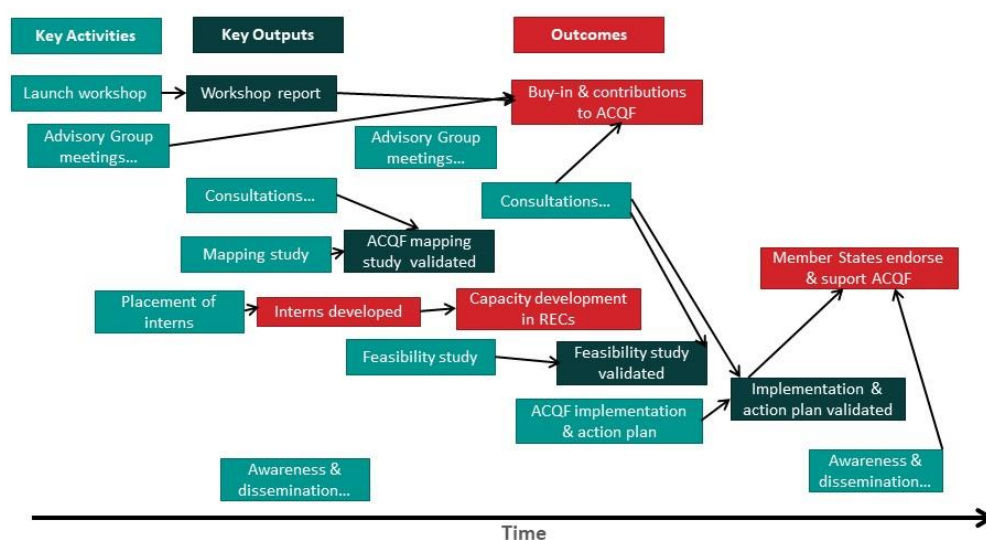
Figure 2: ACQF Theory of Action

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

22
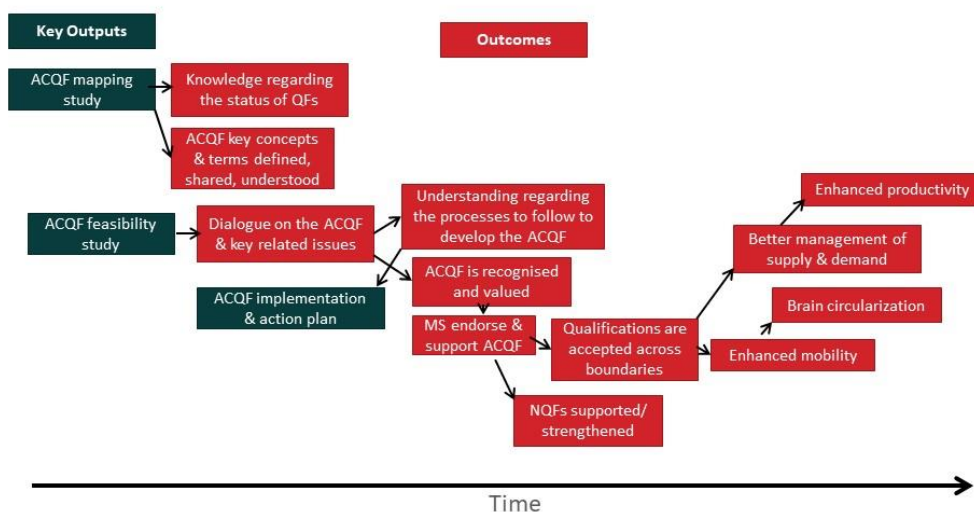
Figure 1: ACQF Theory of Change

In turn, the ACQF TOC depicted above illustrates how the ACQF is expected to contribute towards enhanced continental mobility, education, employability and human capital development.

Activity: What the intervention does.

Outcome: Changes or benefits which we expect/hope will result from activities and outputs. E.g. changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills, understanding, behaviour, practice, decisions or development conditions. Outcomes can occur over short, medium and longer-term timeframes and those which take a longer time to occur may only be evident after short and medium outcomes have emerged, i.e. there may be a hierarchy of outcomes.

Indicators

Indicator: "*Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable basis for assessing achievement, change or performance. A unit of information measured over time that can help show changes in a specific condition" (IFAD, 2002).* Indicators can be identified for inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact (depending on the intervention requirements).

The following indicators are proposed for monitoring the implementation and success of the ACQF initiative:

Year 1 progress indicators:
- ACQF mapping study produced on time;
- ACQF mapping study validated;
- Attendance of Member States (MS) and other key stakeholders at consultations (# MS and other key stakeholders attending);
- STC-EST informed on ACQF development process and roadmap

Output indicators:
- ACQF feasibility study produced on time;

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

23

- ACQF feasibility study validated;
- Attendance of MS and other key stakeholders at consultations (# MS and other key stakeholders attending);
- ACQF policy and technical document and action plan developed on time;
- ACQF policy and technical document and and action plan technically validated.

Outcome indicators:
- # MS endorsing the ACQF (*beyond the responsibility of the ongoing ACQF project)*
- # MS with NQFs or planning to develop / consolidate an NQF
- Media/social media coverage of the ACQF;
- Awareness of the ACQF amongst key stakeholder groups;

Impact indicators (longer term and complex / difficult to attribute to ACQF)
- Inbound mobility ratio (students from other African countries);
- Inbound employment ratio (employees from other African countries).

CESA INDICATORS

The ACQF can be related to the following objectives of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA):

- SO 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.
- SO 9: Revitalize and expand tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness.

In turn, the following CESA indicators are relevant:

- **4.2 Existence of a National Qualifications Framework**
  - **Definition:** A structure which allows Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Academic certifications to be significantly broadened, harmonized in line with industry requirements, unified and streamlined.
  - **Purpose:** This indicator gives an indication of whether a country can catalogue the skills that are being produced and whether these skills can easily be compared across institutions and countries. A National Qualifications Framework which is aligned to a Regional Qualifications Framework presents opportunities for regional integration.

- **9.4 Inbound Mobility Ratio**
  - **Definition:** The number of students from abroad studying in a given country, as a percentage of the total tertiary enrolment in that country.
  - **Purpose:** To gauge the extent of the number of students studying in the country from abroad. This may give an indication of the value attached to the quality of a country's tertiary institutions by other countries.

- **9.5 Outbound Mobility Ratio**
  - **Definition:** The number of students in higher and tertiary education from any given country studying abroad as a percentage of the total tertiary enrolment in that country.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

24

o **Purpose:** To gauge the extent of student outflow to other countries. It may indicate the perceived gaps and weaknesses of a country's tertiary sector.

Conclusion of Session 9 through a Polling exercise

The interactive polling exercise facilitated by JET provided interesting insights on the views of participants. The key outcomes are summarised below. The first two activities showed a strong preference increased for **harmonisation and transparency**.

What is the problem the ACQF should address?		
Option	No of votes	Percentage of votes *rounded
Multiplicity of qualifications	13	16
Lack of harmonisation	25	30
Limited mobility of students and workers	20	24
Recognition of non-formal and informal learning	10	12
Intra-African mobility is limited	8	10
Predictability, uniformity and transparency of skills are lacking	7	8

Option	Rank
Improve transparency of qualifications	1
Automatic recognition of qualifications	7
Improved intra-African mobility	3
Transparency of skills	6
Continental integration	4
Harmonise qualifications	2
Global competitiveness of Africa	5
Continental access to higher education	9
More jobs	10
Linking supply and demand across the continent	8

When asked about the order of priorities, participants seemed to be divided, but with a slight preference towards developments at national level first. However the combination of the share of those considering the ACQF as first development with the share of those who consider that the order does not matter (because this is an iterative process) largely exceeds the share of those supporting national developments first.

What needs to be done first?
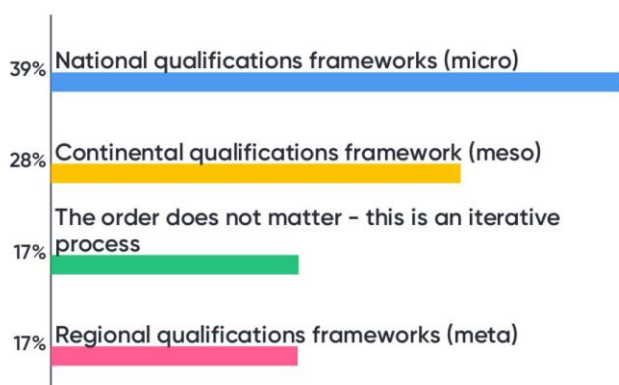
39% National qualifications frameworks (micro)

28% Continental qualifications framework (meso)

17% The order does not matter – this is an iterative process

17% Regional qualifications frameworks (meta)

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

25

A wide range of additional comments were collated and are available in the shared ACQF folder that can be accessed by all participants.

Participants requested in the coming weeks a detailed presentation of the methodology and work plan for the mapping study and some argued this could have been better done in the dedicated session 8.

4. Closing of workshop

The chairperson, Dr Beatrice Njenga, listed the next steps and actions:

- The first meeting of the ACQF AG will take place on 4 September as scheduled.

- The comprehensive workshop report and a short Communiqué will be ready for AUC review and validation. The report and the Communiqué distributed to all in the official AU languages.

- The outcome of this workshop will be presented to the STC-EST and can be followed up.

- The ACQF stakeholders' database will need to be updated and extended to include all AU member states and relevant stakeholders. RECs and regional higher education associations are invited to support this effort in updating the ACQF contacts.

- The inception report of the mapping study will include and focus on the methodology and work plan for all key steps, field visits and milestones. Submission to AUC and ACQF AG: in October 2019.

- The ACQF is embedded in the eco-system of continental initiatives in the domain of education and training. Synergy and information sharing with these initiatives will be sought throughout the process to assure coherence. Dialogue with the AUC experts in charge of AfCFTA activities will be further organised by AUC HRST.

Dr Njenga closed the workshop, welcoming the effort and commitment of the ACQF project team working with Dr Yohannes Woldetensae, to move forward with the necessary thematic expertise and organisational inputs that led to this inaugural workshop, the effective start of the mapping study, and the first gathering of the ACQF AG.

The idea ACQF has been discussed in previous years, but with very limited concrete follow-up steps. Now the AUC has started concrete actions and measures with the support of the AU Member States, stakeholders and the ACQF project partners. Raising awareness about the ACQF is the responsibility of all here present. It is crucial that all attendees contribute to the activities towards the ACQF. The efforts put in during this workshop will not be wasted and ownership of this project is vital for its success.

The vision underlying the ACQF will remain the same: the Africa We Want.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

26

ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Monday, 02 September 2019

Chairperson: Mr Joseph Samuels, CEO SAQA

Time	Session	Speakers

	Session 1: Opening Session	
09.00-09.45	**Welcome and Opening Statements** The ACQF in the context of the African Union strategic objectives of Agenda 2063. The ACQF in the context of AU-EU cooperation	Commissioner HRST Deputy Head of EU Delegation to AU, Ms Anna Burylo

	Session 2: Policy Context and Objectives of the ACQF Inaugural Workshop	
09.45-10.30	Qualifications for lifelong learning, Harmonisation and Quality Assurance of education in Africa Main objectives and programme of the workshop and overview of participating institutions.	AUC HRST Education Dr Beatrice Njenga Dr Yohannes Woldetensae
10.30-11.00	**Coffee Break**	

	Session 3: Developing the ACQF - Scope of Work and Roadmap 2019-2022	
11.00-12.00	Overview of ACQF: objectives, and activities Governance of the ACQF development project, involved institutions, stakeholders.	AUC-ETF Dr Yohannes Woldetensae Eduarda Castel-Branco

	Session 4: African Experiences: Regional Qualifications Frameworks	
12.00-12.45	East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAC) Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADC)	Dr Joseph Cosam (IUCEA on behalf of EAC) Mr Franz Gertze, SADCQF
12.45-14.00	**Lunch Break**	

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

27

Session 5: African Experiences: National Qualifications Frameworks		
14.00-15.30	• South Africa (SAQA) • Mauritius (MQA) • Ethiopia (Federal TVET Agency) • Kenya (KNQA) • Morocco (Ministry of Education) • Angola (INAAREES) • Senegal (ANAQ-Sup)	Mr Joe Samuels Mr Robin Phoolchund Mr Alemshet Berhane Mr Juma Mukhwana Mr Arafat Atmoun Ms Maria Chimpolo Mr Lamine Gueye
15.30-16.00	**Coffee Break**	

Session 6: ACQF Stakeholders' Views on the Future ACQF		
16.00-16.45	Stakeholders' views: expectations on the ambition, role and added value of the ACQF in a lifelong learning perspective *Panel discussion*	All Africa Students Union Business Africa Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities & Polytechnics in Africa
16.45-17.00	Wrap-up of day 1	AUC-ETF

Tuesday, 03 September 2019

Chairperson: Prof. Ana Maria Nhampule, President of Mozambique National Council on Evaluation of Quality of Higher Education

Time	Session	Speakers / facilitators
09.00-09.15	Welcome and Main Messages from day 1	AUC-ETF

Session7: Qualifications Frameworks in the World		
09.15-10.00	New developments and mega trends. Global perspectives: evolution of qualifications frameworks; diversification of modes of learning and acquisition of qualifications; impact of digitisation and new technologies in qualifications frameworks; stronger user orientation; evaluating the contributions of qualifications frameworks.	UNESCO, Mr Borhene Chakroun European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF)

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

28

10.00-10.30	**Coffee Break**	

Session 8: Getting Started: ACQF Mapping Study – The Approach

10.30-11.30	Overview of objectives, approach, methods and timeline. Study outline. Main research questions. Sources of information and data. Interactions with the stakeholders at national and regional levels. Communicating and tailoring the ACQF mapping study to users. Getting started with the ACQF mapping study: methodology for session 9 *Presentation. Discussion*	Ms Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF) JET Education Services – ACQF mapping study experts

Session 9: Making Sense of ACQF Development - Working Groups

11.30-12.45	Working Group Sessions (part 1) 1. What do we expect from the future ACQF: synergy and added value for the national, regional and continental objectives? Views of the countries and stakeholders' groups.	Moderation: ETF Team ACQF mapping study experts
12.45-14.00	**Lunch Break**	
14.00-15.45	Working Group Sessions (part 2) 2. ACQF Mapping study: information collection (supported by a short questionnaire).	Moderation: ETF Team ACQF mapping study experts
15.45 – 16.15	**Coffee Break**	
16.15- 17.00	Plenary Session Report back from each working group Discussion	
17.00-17.30	Main conclusions and lessons from the inaugural ACQF development workshop. Next steps. Acknowledgements and closing remarks	AUC HRST

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

29

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ACQF Inaugural workshop – 2-3 September 2019
List of participants

Name	Institution	Country
Dr Abdallah Baguma	Higher Education Council (HEC)	Rwanda
Prof Adbullahi Yusufu Ribadu	Association of West African Universities (AWAU)	Nigeria
Alejandro Martin Owono	Ministry of Education	Guinea Equatorial
Alemshet Berhane	Federal TVET Agency	Ethiopia
Prof Amr Ezzat Salama	Association Arab Universities	Jordan
Prof Ana Maria Nhampule	National Council for Evaluation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ)	Mozambique
Ms Anastasie Gasogo	Higher and Post-Secondary Professional Education	Burundi
Prof Andualem Admassie	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency	Ethiopia
Ms Anna Burylo	EU Delegation to AU	Ethiopia
Mr Anzaf Abdou Ali	National Ministry of Education	Union des Comores
Prof Aquilino Varela	Ministry of Education	Cape Verde
Mr Arafat Atmoun	Ministry of Education VET Higher Education and Scientific Research	Morocco
Mr Arc. Samuel S. Ikani	National Universities Commission	Nigeria
Mr Augusto Gomes Barreto	Ministry of Education	Guinea Bissau
Ms Ayele Adubra	TVET Cluster CESA	Togo
Mr Bashir Mohammed	Ministry of Education	Somalia
Prof Bertrand Mbatchi	Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES)	Burkina Faso
Dr Beatrice Njenga	AUC HRST Education Division – head of division	Ethiopia
Dr Bintou Sessouma	MESRI	Burkina Faso
Ms Bleizy Costa	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	São Tomé e Príncipe
Mr Borhene Chakroun	UNESCO	France
Ms Caroline Mutepfa	AUDA-NEPAD	South Africa
Mr Charles Kihampa	Tanzania Commission for Universities	Tanzania
Ms Coleen Jaftha	SAQA	South Africa
Prof Damtew Teferra	International Network for Higher Education in Africa – Durban and Boston	South Africa
Dr David Blaise Ossene	Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	Gabon
Dr Emmanuel Crezoit	Ministry of National Education Technical Education and Professional Training	Ivory Coast
Mr Emmanuel Thinka Kamara	Tertiary Education Commission	Sierra Leone
Prof Ethienne Ehile	Association of African Universities (AAU)	Ghana
Dr Eusebius J. Mukhwana	Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)	Kenya
Ms Fiona Ernesta	Seychelles Qualifications Authority	Seychelles
Mr Franz E. Gertze	Namibia Qualifications Authority	Namibia
Dr Gertrude Namubiru	CESA Cluster Curriculum – African Curriculum Association (ACA)	Uganda

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

30

Mr Gibril Jaw	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority	Gambia
Ms Jacqueline Mugo	Business Africa	Kenya
Ms Jahou S. Faal	Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa	Kenya
Dr James Otieno Jowi	East African Community (EAC)	Kenya
Dr Jeffy Mukora	CNAQ	Mozambique
Mr Jimu Ignasio	National Council for Higher Education	Malawi
Mr Joe Samuels	SAQA	South Africa
Dr Joseph Cosam	Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)	Uganda
Mr Kebede Tsegaye	IGAD	Djibouti
Mr Khobotlo Motlalepula Shardack	Council of Higher Education	Lesotho
Mr Kilemi Mwiria	Regional qualifications framework	Kenya
Mr Kuzvinetsa Dzvimbo	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education	Zimbabwe
Ms Laila EL-Rhilassi	Ministry of Education VET Higher Education and Scientific Research	Morocco
Prof Lamine Gueye	Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur (ANAQ-Sup)	Sénégal
Mr Marc Kokou Assogba	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Benin
Ms Maria Madalena Chimpolo	INAAREES	Angola
Ms Marta Muhwezi	FAWE	Zimbabwe
Prof Martin Oosthuizen	South African Regional Universities Association	South Africa
Mr Mboni Dlamini	Eswatini Higher Education Council (SHEC)	Eswatini
Ms Miriam Chiyaba	African Qualifications Verification Network	Zambia
Mr Mirzak Najib	National Authority for Evaluation Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education	Tunisia
Mr Momo Bangoura	Ministry of Higher Education	Guinea
Mr Nicholas Ouma	AUC HRST	Ethiopia
Mr Nkiama Ekisawa Constant	National Agency Quality Assurance Higher Education	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr Paul Comyn	ILO	Switzerland
Mr Peter Kwasi Kodjie	All Africa Students Union (AASU)	Ghana
Mr Robin Phoolchund	Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)	Mauritius
Ms Rodolphine Sylvie Wamba	Direction of University Accreditation and Quality	Camerooun
Mr Shem Okore Bodo	Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)	Ivory Coast
Steve Nwokeocha	Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (AFTRA)	Nigeria
Mr Valentine Udeh	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)	Ghana
Prof Youhansen Eid	Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE)	Egypt
Prof Yumiko Yokozeki	CESA Cluster Teacher Development – UNESCO IICBA	Ethiopia
ACQF project team		
Dr Yohannes Woldetensae	AUC HRST Education Division – senior expert	Ethiopia
Ms Eduarda Castel-Branco	ETF (ACQF project team)	Italy

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

31

Mr Fabian Jaekel	GIZ (ACQF project team)	Ethiopia
Mr Aklilu Desta	EU Delegation to AU (ACQF project team)	Ethiopia
Mr James Keevy	JET Education Services	South Africa
Ms Zaahedah Vally	JET Education Services	South Africa
Ms Eleanor Hazell	JET Education Services	South Africa
Ms Maria Overeem	JET Education Services	South Africa
Mr Adote-Bah Adotevi	JET Education Services	South Africa

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

32

ANNEX 3: JET Education Services experts' team - ACQF mapping study

Team leader is Dr James Keevy who holds a doctorate in education, more than 25 years of experience in qualifications framework implementation, policy development and research in Africa and also internationally. He also has many years of experience as project team leader in Anglophone and Francophone Africa and with a wide range of development cooperation agencies.

The other team members have also have extensive experience working across Africa for many decades:

- Lomthie Mavimbela has worked SADC Secretariat and also oversaw the work of the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA);

- Jean Adotevi is a French speaking expert who worked at UNESCO in Dakar on the West African Qualifications Framework for Basic Education Teachers, and in many other parts of Africa;

- Lee Sutherland has worked in Africa and Gulf States and as a result, has wide NQF-related experience working in Arabic speaking countries;

- Maria Overeem is a Dutch national who has worked in Africa for most of her life and provides very strong experience in NQF development across the continent.

- Andrea Bateman is an international expert with wide experience in Australasia and Asia who joins the team as technical advisor with an external perspective.

The members of this team have all worked together in different combinations on various projects across Africa and are well familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses. The team is supported by the infrastructure of JET Education Services, an African non-profit organisation with 27 years of experience in research, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

33

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

AArU	Association of Arab Universities
AASU	All-Africa Students Union
AAU	Association of African Universities
ACA	African Curriculum Development
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AFTRA	Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities
AG	Advisory Group
ANAQ-Sup	Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur (Sénégal)
ANQAHE	Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
AQVN	African Qualifications Verification Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUC HRST	African Union Commission Human Resources, Science and Technology
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency
AWAU	Association of West African Universities
CAMES	Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur
CAPA	Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CNAQ	National Council on Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education (Mozambique)
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority on Development
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
MQA	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
MS	Member States
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OATUU	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity
REC	Regional Economic Community
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
SIFA	Skills Initiative for Africa
TVET	Technical-Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

34

Workshop Report:
Inaugural Workshop on developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, 2nd – 3rd September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

35