ACQF
African Continental
Qualifications Framework

Session 3: ACQF creates mutual trust
18/04/2022

What is the ACQF?

ACQF: policy instrument to deliver on the objectives of enhanced transparency and comparability of qualifications and mutual trust between qualifications frameworks and systems for LLL in Africa.

Common reference framework – translation device between qualifications and their levels

Speakers: Eduarda Castel-Branco and E. J Mukhwana

01

Africa needs skills and qualifications

ACQF

What is the AfCFTA?

How many countries have ratified?

20?
28?
36?
42?

ACQF

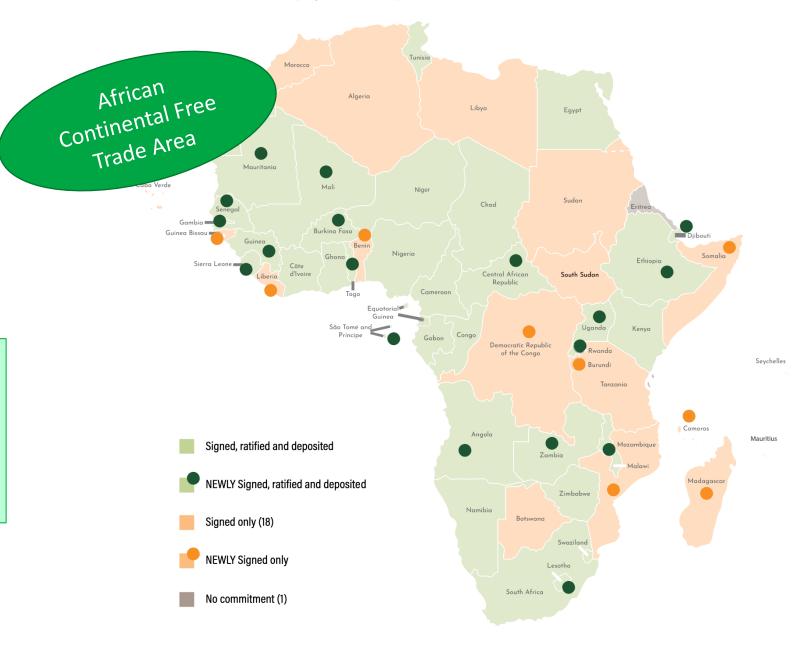**African Continental Free Trade Area**

- 55 countries: diversity!
- 1,4 billion population

The youngest continent
- 65% younger than 25 years
- Almost a billion < 35 years
- 541 million < than 14 and 455 million 15-34 years old

Legend:
- Signed, ratified and deposited
- NEWLY Signed, ratified and deposited
- Signed only (18)
- NEWLY Signed only
- No commitment (1)

AfCFTA sets new demands on skills and qualifications

- National industrial policies need to adapt to the **new environment provided by the AfCFTA**.

- Tailoring skills policies to technical needs and emerging trends is crucial for attracting investment and increasing linkages with lead firms. Talent and skills rank among the top four determinants driving foreign direct investment to developing economies (World Bank).

- Upskilling and re-skilling will be crucial to meet sector-specific needs and new requirements for **Africa's digital and green transformation**.

➤ Enhancing policy dialogue between policy makers, the private sector and training institutions will help to **identify skills needs and design appropriate training programmes** at the sectoral level.

➤ National governments and the private sector can also pool resources into regional centres of excellence, such as the African Masters in Machine Intelligence, to train **African researchers and engineers**.

➤ Supporting **intra-regional skills mobility** can help alleviate skill shortages in some sectors.

Africa's Development Dynamics 2022. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1127_1127899-pk0g8ydolw&title=Africa-s-Development-Dynamics-Overview

Information on skills and qualifications

Whose concerns are these?

What qualifications for growing sectors and occupations are offered by education and training systems across the continent?

Where can we get updated and comparable information about qualifications framewoks / systems in Africa?

Is this diploma from country **A** comparable with diplomas in country **B**?

How can my HR Department get this information to support our new staff recruitment for the new *"Battery Cell production plant"* in country C?

AU Political and legal basis

- Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan
- CESA 16-25
- AfCFTA
- AU Free Movement Protocol
- PAQAF

Agenda 2063

- **Vision**: "Building an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a "
  - ➤ **7 Aspirations**

- <u>Aspiration 1</u>: '**A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development'** (includes targets related to education and skills)

7 aspirations of Agenda 2063

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development

2. An integrated continent politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance

3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law

4. A peaceful and secure Africa

5. Africa with a strong cultural identity common heritage, values and ethics

6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by the African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children

7. An Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner

First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063

- Education and skills are addressed in **Goal 2 of Aspiration 1**:
  - 'Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation'.
- Goal 2 of the first aspiration includes, amongst others, the following target for 2023, which underpins the ACQF initiative:
  - ➤ **'Common continental education qualification system is in place**'.

CESA-2025

- **12 strategic objectives**: wide range of dimensions and drivers of change.

- **Strategic objective 4** has 2 goals directly related to NQF-ACQF
  - c) Set up national qualification frameworks (NQFs) and regional qualification frameworks (RQFs) to facilitate the creation of multiple pathways to acquisition of skills and competencies as well as mobility across the sub-sectors
  - d) Develop **continental qualifications framework** linked to regional qualifications and national qualification frameworks to facilitate regional integration and mobility of graduates

02

ACQF is in development – part of the solution

Purposes of ACQF

1. Enhance	Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications of all types and levels, support people's lifelong learning outcomes.
2. Facilitate	Facilitate validation of learning, recognition of diplomas and certificates and mobility of learners and workers
3. Cooperate	Work in cooperation and complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks, and support African continental integration and creation of African Education common space
4. Promote	Promote cooperation and referencing between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide

The ACQF: Objectives and principles

Principles:

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

Innovation: future-proof, new demands, emerging skills /e.g green skills, transversal/

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

Conceptual technical design

- **10 levels:** whole continuum
- **Comprehensive:** not only 1 sector
- **Level descriptors** expressed as **learning outcomes**
- **Domains:** Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility
- **Meta-framework:** translation device for referencing, comparison, cooperation between different NQFs

- **Learning outcomes orientation** support:
- ➢ Improve **transparency and comparability** of qualifications of different national systems
- ➢ **Transparency and credibility of RPL** and validation of outcomes from experience, access to quality RPL
- ➢ **Application of credit accumulation and transfer systems** in different academic and vocational pathways.
  - Access, learning progression, lifelong learning, flexibility,
  - In design of qualifications: facilitate transfer of components of qualifications

Outputs of ACQF development project (2020-2022)

- **ACQF Policy Document**

- **Action Plan**

- **10 Guidelines**

- **10 Training Modules**

- Website

- Analysis, researches

- Capacity development programme and Learning Management System (LMS)

- 15 Peer Learning Webinars

- 5 Advisory Group meetings

- Work together with RECs: SADC, EAC

- Work with countries

- Many participations in international conferences (UNESCO, EAC, SADC)

ACQF

10 ACQF Guidelines
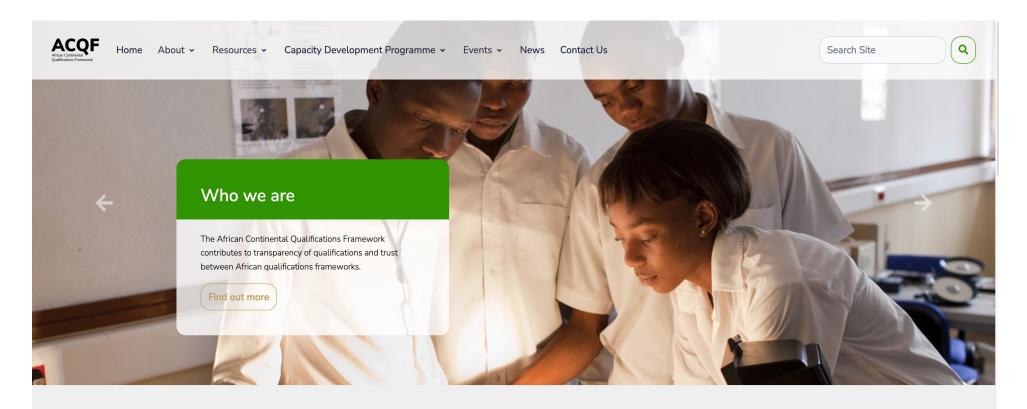
Draft Guidelines discussed at ACQF AG-4 (13/01/2022)

Consultation process

1. Learning outcomes

2. Level descriptors

3. Referencing NQF-ACQF: criteria, process, tools

4. Validation of learning: RPL, CATS, recognition

5. Quality assurance

6. Registration, databases of qualifications

7. Monitoring & evaluation in the context ACQF

8. Communication / users' outreach (draft: Feb/2022)

9. Innovation and technology in NQFs / ACQF

10. Qualifications, NQFs, NQS - systemic view

These are the themes of our Training Week and Training Modules

ACQF Website - Home

7 main areas of activity

"ACQF creates mutual trust"
Areas - as per draft ACQF Policy Document

1. **Referencing** NQF / NQS to ACQF
2. Support **Recognition of Prior Learning**
3. ACQF **Qualifications Platform and MIS**
4. **Qualifications**: common profiles for priority sectors AfCFTA / continental integration
5. Capacity development
6. Networking and cooperation
7. Analysis, monitoring and evaluation

Main areas of activity of the ACQF

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

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

3. **ACQF Qualifications Platform (database) and EMIS**

4. **Qualifications**: a range of activities such as research and design of common approaches and methodologies. Development of qualifications profiles adequate for common continental use (e.g.: related with economic integration / AfCFTA).

Main areas of activity of the ACQF

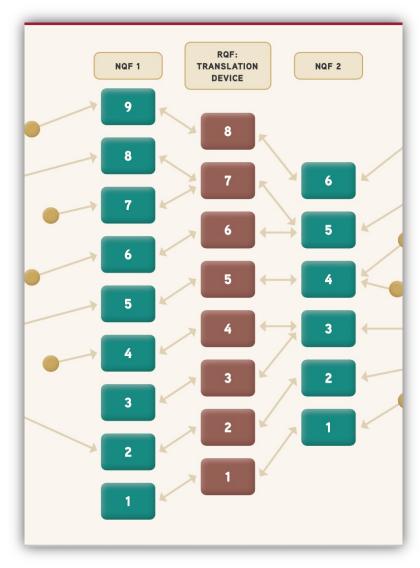**5. Capacity development in the relevant thematic areas:**

- Training programmes in hybrid and digital formats,
- Peer-learning activities
- E-learning platform
- Technical support to countries in developing, implementing and reviewing their national qualifications frameworks and systems and preparing for referencing with ACQF.
- Cooperation and mutual learning across African regions
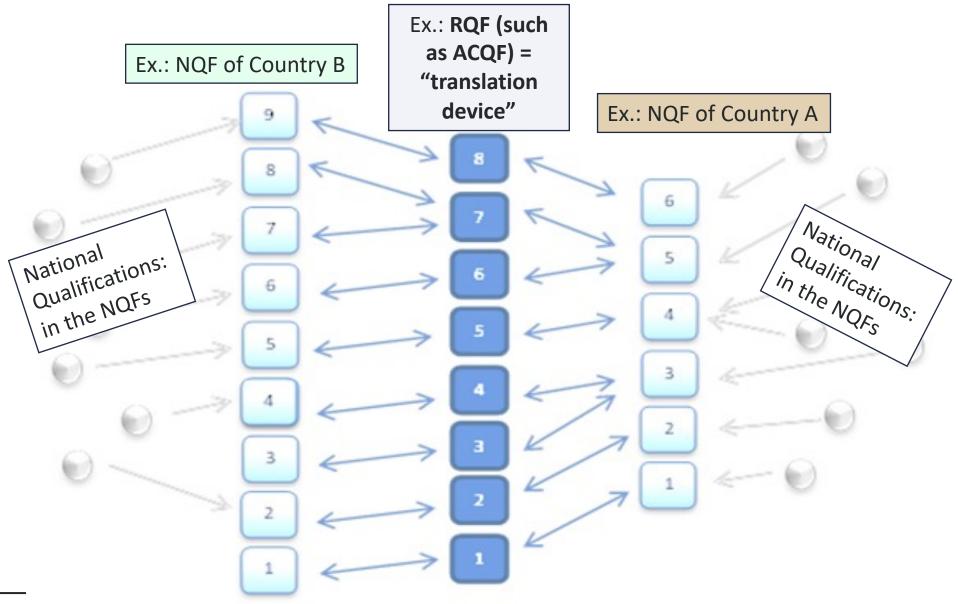
6. Networking and cooperation:

- With African stakeholders: national and regional entities responsible for qualifications frameworks or systems, recognition bodies and committees, education and training providers, social partners, professional and sector associations, employment sector institutions, students' unions.
- International networking and cooperation with regional and national qualifications frameworks on other continents, international organisations active in certification, recognition and research in the domain.

7. Analysis, monitoring and evaluation on ACQF implementation and other themes (continuous improvement)

Referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to ACQF

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

- Referencing: process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF following criteria and procedures (**Session 21, TM 3**)

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

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

Referencing NQFs to a Regional QF (example)

Ex.: **RQF (such as ACQF) = "translation device"**

Ex.: NQF of Country B

Ex.: NQF of Country A

National Qualifications: in the NQFs

National Qualifications: in the NQFs

NQF: enabler of RPL
NQFs in Africa, by stage of development (41 countries)

Stage NQF development & consultation	Number of NQFs Africa	Countries
To be started	2	Chad, Republic of Congo
Early thinking	8	Burkina Faso, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, São Tomé e Príncipe, Togo
In develop & consultation	9	Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique (comprehensive), Sierra Leone, Somalia
NQF approved & implementation	15	Burundi, Eswatini, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe
NQF advanced impl & reviewed	7	Cape Verde, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia

NQFs in Africa

NQFs in Africa: by 5 stages of development and implementation (2022). Number: 41 countries

Different stages, different structures

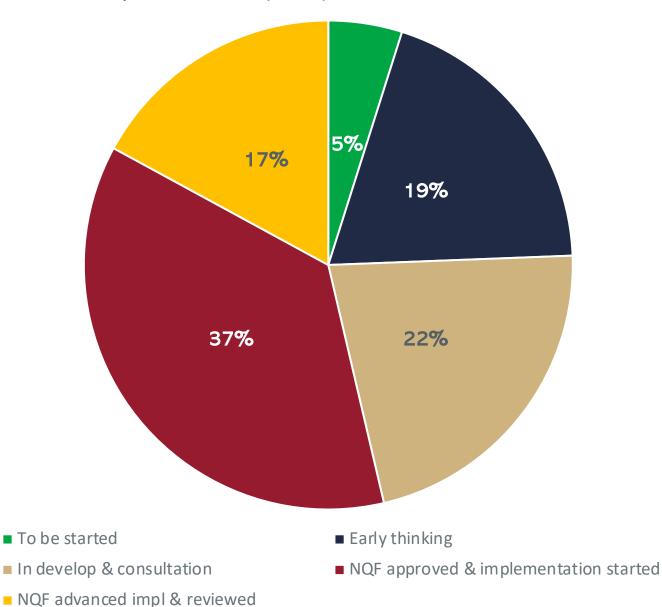Many new approved recently or about to be approved

Several in review and reform

Several establishing qualifications MIS (databases)

Many more to be developed, consolidated, operationalized
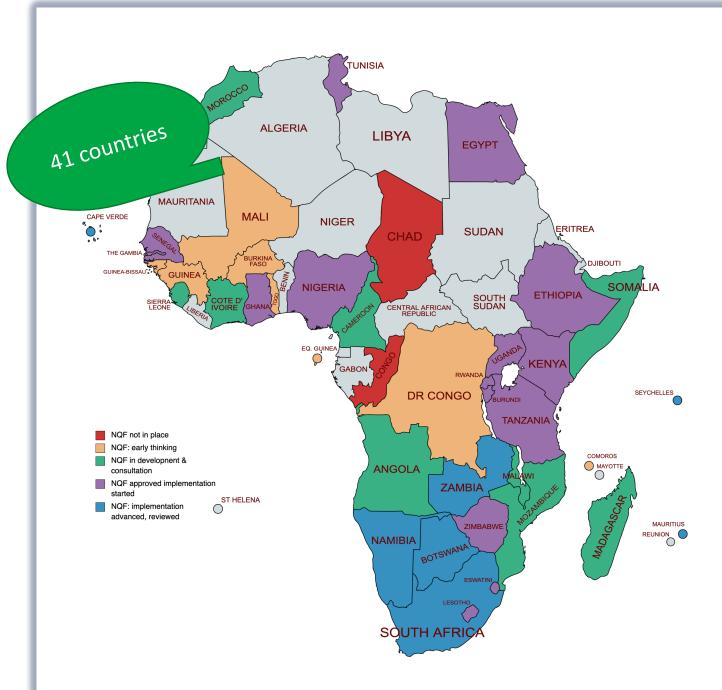
Not enough to adopt a legal act

Pie chart values:
- 5%
- 19%
- 22%
- 37%
- 17%

Legend:
- To be started
- Early thinking
- In develop & consultation
- NQF approved & implementation started
- NQF advanced impl & reviewed

ACQF

- Referencing is envisageable
- Thereafer: ACQF levels on qualifications of all referenced countries (jointly with national levels
- Stay tuned for session 21 on referencing to ACQF (on 22/04/2022

41 countries

Legend:
- NQF not in place
- NQF: early thinking
- NQF in development & consultation
- NQF approved implementation started
- NQF: implementation advanced, reviewed

03

Going forward (2022-2026)

Going forward: 2023-2026

Building on the outputs / outcomes of the current ACQF project

Follow-up: project supporting implementation

Diverse levels of cooperation – national, regional and continental

Action areas 2022-2026

- ACQF Governance and implementation capacities
- ACQF Qualifications Plaform and MIS
- Capacity development – for sustainability at all levels (national, regional, continental)
- Support countries and RECs
- Referencing to ACQF
- Qualifications: common profiles
- Support RPL
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Networking, cooperation with other RQFs, NQF (other continents)

03

Learn, build mutual trust: This is why we are here

Next: Poll S3

Poll S3: What is the ACQF?

Poll S3 (MC question)

What is the ACQF? Please tick all that applies

1. A key policy of the African Union to support NQFs in Africa
2. A qualifications framework for higher education
3. A meta-framework for referencing of all NQFs in Africa
4. Supports transparency and comparability of qualifications
5. Promotes inclusion of all forms of learning
6. The African Qualifications Platform
7. A regional qualifications framework for TVET
8. A creator of mutual trust between all NQFs in Africa

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