

DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (ACQF)



TRAINING MODULE SEVEN

07

MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS OR SYSTEMS

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ACRONYMS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ASG-QA	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance for vocational education and training
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
MS	Member States
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
RVCC	Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1 GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE TRAINING MODULE

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is a policy initiative of the African Union, underpinned by continental cooperation and integration policies ranging from education to free movement of persons and free trade. Development of the ACQF is underway (2019-2022), and includes analysis and research, elaboration of the ACQF policy and Guidelines, networking and stakeholders' outreach and the capacity development programme. The ACQF website contains information on all components, activities and outputs of the ACQF development project.

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Objective and scope

The package of ten ACQF Training Modules supports the dissemination and application of the ten ACQF Guidelines and addresses the same themes relevant in the domain of qualifications and qualifications frameworks. The list of training modules is as follows:

- Training Module 1: Learning Outcomes
- Training Module 2: Level descriptors
- Training Module 3: Referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to ACQF
- Training Module 4: Validation of learning
- Training Module 5: Quality assurance in the context of ACQF
- Training Module 6: Registers / databases of qualifications
- Training Module 7: Monitoring and evaluation in the context of qualifications frameworks or systems
- Training Module 8: Communication and outreach
- Training Module 9: Innovation and Technology in the context of qualifications frameworks or systems
- Training Module 10: Qualification and qualifications frameworks – the systemic view

This Training Module expands the content of the ACQF Guideline 7 on *“Monitoring and Evaluation in the context of National Qualifications Frameworks and the ACQF”*.

The structure of this Training Module is as follows:

- Chapter 1 introduces the aims of the Training Module, how the module can be used and includes information on learning outcomes and assessment requirements.
- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Training Module.
- Chapter 3 presents the rationale for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of qualifications frameworks or systems and introduces key concepts.
- Chapter 4 presents considerations when establishing an M&E system.
- Chapter 5 presents each of the key stages of creating an M&E system.
- Chapter 6 gives guidance for trainers and learners.
- Chapter 7 outlines the assessment approach.
- Appendices A B and C present: references for further reading, case examples of regional (continental) approaches to monitoring and evaluation and useful M&E templates and tools respectively.

1.1.2 Utilisation of the Training Module

The Training Modules are designed for:

- Self-paced learning (individual)
- Teacher / trainer / facilitator directed learning – which may include group learning
- A combination of the above.

The Training Modules are freely accessible in several formats for flexible adaptation to different contexts and to learners' needs and possibilities: as PDF files to download from ACQF Website and disseminate; as digital content accessible via ACQF digital Learning Management System, accessible online or offline, including via an App for Mobile phones.

Interested users (learners, teachers / trainers and organisations) may use the full set of Modules or focus on those of interest.

ACQF Training Modules can be used in a variety of situations, e.g.:

- Ministries and departments dealing with the development and coordination of qualifications frameworks and systems, especially in early stages of the development process, or when operationalisation starts and more staff, stakeholders and technical resource persons are involved.
- Quality councils, quality assurance agencies - for their staff, members and technical resource persons.
- Technical projects designing or reviewing national qualifications frameworks with national task forces and working groups.
- Education and training providers, e.g., as optional or regular training modules on the themes and issues related with qualifications frameworks and systems: teacher training institutes, higher education institutions, departments of education, training centres for staff of public sector institutions, training centres of employers' associations and professional bodies, sector skills councils involved in development of qualifications.
- International organisations' training centres and capacity development activities.

1.1.3 Concept and structure

The Training Modules

- Are based on the content elaborated in the Technical Guideline, and expand it, exploring the literature, recent research, and experiences.
- Raise questions and issues in debate that could not be expressed in the Technical Guideline.
- Provide examples and cases illustrating the main concepts, issues and application of the approaches and methods.
- Examples and cases are taken from relevant practices and developments in Africa and worldwide, with a focus on frameworks and systems with substantial and relevant experience for the different themes.

The Training Modules include

- Reflective questions that could be addressed as an individual or as a group (e.g., workshop group, work group)
- Learning activities that could be addressed as an individual or as a group (e.g., class/lecture group, work group)
- Access to case studies or examples, readings, disparate views (if relevant)
- Assessment tasks

2 OVERVIEW OF TRAINING MANUAL 7: MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND SYSTEMS

2.1 Abstract

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provides the basis for establishing progress in implementation and outcomes and towards impact of a specific policy or other type of intervention. The process begins by developing a shared understanding of the overall goal and objectives of a particular policy, and then agreeing what needs to be in place to be able to achieve the articulated outcomes.

These form part of a larger process towards the development of an M&E system, comprised of practical steps to design and implement an M&E system. The complexity of an M&E system is influenced by the nature of monitoring and evaluation required, the complexity of the policy or other type of intervention and the capacity to be able to implement it.

There are a range of conditions that will influence the effectiveness of M&E which include aspects such as organisational capacity, the existence of a learning culture, sufficient human and material resources and a commitment to use information to inform decision-making.

This module provides an introduction to key concepts, considerations when establishing an M&E system and detail on the process to be followed to create an M&E system for the ACQF or national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) or systems.

2.2 Expected learning outcomes

1. Understand the concepts of monitoring and evaluation
2. Understand monitoring and evaluation in the context of a qualifications framework or system
3. Understand a results framework in the context of NQFs and the ACQF.
4. Be able to identify indicators in line with expected outcomes in the context of monitoring and evaluating qualification frameworks and systems.
5. Understand the relationship between indicators and sources of data.
6. Be able to develop an evaluation plan outlining the steps to be undertaken to conduct an evaluation.

2.3 Key definitions

Our focus in this manual is on M&E-related terms not included in the [ACQF thematic brief](#) on qualifications and qualifications frameworks, to avoid duplication.

Evaluation is a periodic assessment which aims to answer specific questions about the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of a programme. Evaluation can also measure the impact both expected and unexpected – and identify effects that can be attributed to a programme. (SADC 2011, 8).

Impacts are positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. (US EPA, 2007)

Indicators are signposts of change along the path of implementation. They describe the way to track intended results and are critical for monitoring and evaluation. (UNDP 2009, 61).

Monitoring is the regular collection and analysis of information to determine whether progress is being made towards an intended result. (SADC 2011, 8).

Objectives are specific activities that must be achieved in pursuing the programmes ultimate goals (US EPA, 2007). These goals are usually outcomes, which translate into longer-term results (impact).

Outcomes are changes or benefits resulting from activities or outputs. Short-term outcomes produce changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills or understanding. Intermediate outcomes generate changes in behaviour, practice or decisions (US EPA, 2007).

Project monitoring provides information that is used for project management purposes and can include factors such as budget, timelines, staffing, resource allocation.

Results monitoring focuses specifically on what is happening in a project that has direct bearing on the objectives of the project and implications for achieving the intended outcomes and impact.

Targets are specific goals established indicating if a program or service has been implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.

3 RATIONALE FOR M&E AND KEY CONCEPTS

3.1 Monitoring and evaluation: rationale and concepts

Monitoring and Evaluation are two distinct and related sets of activities that support the design and implementation of projects, programmes or policies, with the intention of creating feedback and learning loops that inform revisions. Monitoring should be considered from the outset. It is undertaken to keep the initiative on track and provides information to enable decision making about design and implementation. Monitoring data is crucial for evaluation and provides the basis for assessing what a project has achieved or delivered relative to its cost, scale, or duration.

3.1.1 What is monitoring?

‘Monitoring is the regular collection and analysis of information to determine whether or not progress is being made towards an intended result’ (SADC 2011, 8). Monitoring begins with developing a results framework which articulates how a project, programme or policy will achieve the desired impact. After developing the results framework, indicators are identified to monitor the evolution of the project, programme or policy. This entails identifying signposts that are indicative of change along the path of implementation (indicators). The next step is to collect information about the indicators.

Monitoring takes two forms - project monitoring and results monitoring. Indicators provide yardsticks to measure progress and can demonstrate whether there has or has not been progress. Progress can be measured quantitatively, using a numeric target. Policies and programmes can also use qualitative indicators as indicators of progress. The Results Framework developed to support this guideline and training manual is structured according to inputs/activities, outputs, outcome and proposes an overall impact.

Table 1: Definition of each of the types of indicators included in an M&E system

Types of Indicators	Purpose
Impact (Results)	Measure the extent to which the overall goals are being met
Outcome (Results)	Measure the extent to which objectives are being achieved
Output (Results)	Measure project deliverables
Input (Project)	Measure the extent to which resources are being used and activities developed.

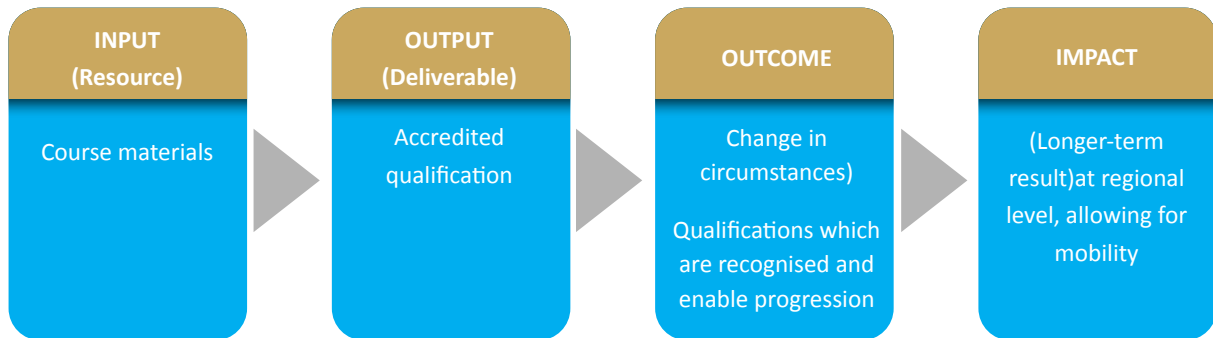
Project monitoring provides information that is used for project management purposes and can include factors such as budget, timelines, staffing, resource allocation.

Results monitoring focuses specifically on what is happening in a policy or initiative that has direct bearing on the objectives of the project and implications for achieving the intended outcomes and impact.

For example, in the context of NQFs or RQFs, results monitoring indicators could include:

- Existence of a legal and policy framework for an NQF at the national / regional level
- Number of qualifications that have been incorporated into the NQF per country

Figure 1: M&E results chain (Adapted from Morra Imas and Rist, 2009)



Monitoring is the collection of routine data on specific indicators on a regular basis. This data can be captured manually or electronically per organisation or per country and can then be aggregated for each monitoring period to be able to assess progress towards desired results.

The data that is collected can also be used for different purposes, such as accountability for time and resources (inputs), for results or deliverables produced such as the development of a qualifications framework (output) or as an outcome which is a desired result (such as mutual recognition of qualifications across the region or articulation of qualifications across both vocational and academic streams). By way of example, the longer-term result could be greater skills mobility and employment in targeted sectors on the continent. NQFs and RQFs can contribute to longer-term results of improved mobility and alignment between vocational and academic qualifications, but there are also a range of other factors that may influence this.

Outcomes are expected/anticipated changes or benefits for target groups and can focus on different aspects of a project, programme or policy and can include:

- **Behaviour:** NQF policies, qualifications and unit standards may contribute to a change in how people perceive different qualifications and how these are treated.
- **Attitude:** For instance, how the creation of an NQF has changed attitudes towards enabling continuous and life-long learning.
- **Knowledge:** This could be increased knowledge pertaining to how an NQF can facilitate shared learning and open opportunities across sectors.
- **Skills:** Where different education or skills training programmes are being aligned based on qualifications and unit standards, changes in skills could refer to addressing gaps which may have existed in one qualification which may now be addressed in another.

Time from implementation to outcomes and impact

Outcomes may be referred to as short-term or immediate (occurring soon after implementation), medium-term or intermediate (occurring 1-3 years after implementation) and long-term (occurring 3+ years after implementation). Impact may occur 3-5 years or longer after implementation and is usually the culmination of a variety of interventions and factors, and not just attributable to one intervention.

3.1.2 What is evaluation?

Evaluation is a periodic assessment which aims to answer specific questions about the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of a project, programme or policy. Evaluation can also measure the impact both expected and unexpected – and identify effects that can be attributed to an intervention or which the intervention contributes to (SADC 2011, 8).

Evaluation is often undertaken to measure the outcomes or results of an intervention; and can include a focus on implementation (process evaluation) and measuring the contribution to results or extent to which results can be attributed to an intervention. The latter is described as an outcomes or impact evaluation and includes a specific focus on understanding change that may have happened since the inception of a project, programme or policy and tries to establish the extent to which a particular intervention may have caused or contributed to that change (causation).

All evaluations can include the collection of both quantitative (statistics and numerical) data and qualitative (narrative) data.

Quantitative data is usually closed-ended and should provide a snapshot of the situation. This data can be collected through surveys or a review of reports that may be released by national or regional bodies. Where quantitative targets have been set, this data can be used to establish the extent of progress towards these targets. Collecting quantitative data provides a high-level demonstration of progress but is not typically able to provide any kind of contextual explanation or reasoning as to why something may/ may not have happened.

Qualitative data is more detailed and can provide more depth to a research or evaluation process and can provide the information to answer 'why' something did or did not happen. It is not generalisable and should usually be considered alongside quantitative data to get a balanced view of how an initiative is progressing.

Qualitative data provides a means of collecting additional in-depth information that can provide some additional context or explanation as to possible reasons for why something may/ may not have happened.

Evaluation can be done both internally by an organisation implementing a project, programme or policy, or externally by an independent organisation or via a hybrid method (i.e., an internal process supported by an external facilitator). External evaluation can be more costly, and may not lead to skills transfer, unless capacity-building is an explicit objective.

Evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful to identify corrective measures and inform decision-making.

Different types of evaluation are used at different points of an initiative and can include:

1. **Baseline Study** undertaken at the point of beginning an intervention and used to determine the level of change, from the baseline, over a specific time period.
2. **Formative (Interim) Evaluation** is undertaken during implementation to assess progress and assist managers to make decisions about implementation and strategy going forward.

3. **Mid-term (Process/Implementation) Evaluation** which considers implementation to date and looks to identify obstacles that may need to be reconsidered or reviewed. This evaluation will generate a set of recommendations to be considered for implementation in the latter phase of the funding period. This can include a review of processes, project activities or target audiences. In the case of the NQFs, it could include reviewing which qualifications should be prioritised, based on the current needs of the labour market in a respective country, or where qualifications should be placed along a continuum of knowledge. Processes that could be reviewed may include who is involved in the qualifications review process, which institutions are engaged and how often individuals or organisations are convening (among others).
4. **Summative or Final Evaluation** is an evaluation that may be calculated at the end of a funding period or implementation cycle. The Summative Evaluation will consider implementation of the project, programme or policy since inception, whether the NQF or RQF is fit-for-purpose and the extent to which recommendations identified in the mid-term evaluation have been incorporated into implementation. This would also include assessing the extent of progress that has been made towards the intended results, any unintended effects, if results are sufficient given the funding that has been made available and the extent to which establishing an NQF or RQF may have contributed to the results.

4 CONSIDERATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A M&E SYSTEM

4.1 Establish the need and demand for an M&E system

Effective M&E systems need to be fit-for-purpose and there needs to be clarity as to why it is necessary to establish one and what it will be used for. This will require ensuring that there is a shared understanding of the need and value of M&E from the early stages of developing an NQF or RQF, and how the information will be used. This also includes ensuring that monitoring activities are routine in nature, and form part of the culture of developing and implementing an NQF or an RQF.

Reflective exercise 1: to be completed individually

1. What are some of the reasons why it is important to collect monitoring data?
2. Who needs to be engaged and what needs to be done to ensure buy-in to monitoring the development and implementation of an NQF or RQF?
3. Who will use the monitoring information?
4. What will the monitoring information be used for?

Once individuals can answer these questions, they will be on the way to establishing the need for an M&E system and embedding a culture of M&E within their organisation.

4.2 Identify users of the data and roles and responsibilities of individuals undertaking data collection

Within an M&E system, there may be a range of people involved in the collection, collation, and analysis of data. These individuals may have a different role in the design and implementation of an NQF or RQF and use the data for different purposes. It is crucial that the roles and responsibilities of individuals are clearly understood, and that possibilities for error in the collation and analysis of data are avoided, as this has a risk to implementation, if the data is not used effectively.

Users may require information for different purposes - but are predominantly NQF committees/entities, accreditation bodies, those responsible for the implementation of the NQF and education sub-system representatives.

Accreditation bodies need to know what progress is being made in accrediting materials and trainers, sub-system representatives need to know what may be required to enable articulation between education sub-systems.

Identifying who will use the data and confirming the roles and responsibilities for collecting and using monitoring data will help to ensure data use. Where monitoring and reporting may form part of a broader job description, it will become very important to confirm roles and responsibilities for these additional tasks.

By identifying the users, it will also become easier to ensure that the data collected is fit-for-purpose, is serving the needs of those who use it, and to remove any redundancies from the data collection process.

In a small organisation or programme, the same person is responsible for collecting and using the data. In others, this may be the responsibility of different people. Either way, it is important for data collection to happen routinely, and for information to be used.

These uses can include

- Reviewing progress against targets.
- Identifying gaps or delays in implementation.
- Reviewing timelines if activities have not happened as planned.
- Informing decisions about expenditure and accountability.

4.3 Organisational capacity to implement an M&E system

While there may be individuals who recognise the importance of M&E, it is important to establish what capacity exists to design and implement the M&E system. This includes understanding whether there are any other relevant M&E systems in use and how these are currently being utilised. This includes identifying any barriers that may exist to developing and implementing the system. The credibility of an M&E system is also influenced by the quality of data that it can generate, and that it is regarded as credible and trustworthy. Trustworthy information means that it can be tracked back to the source and verified, that collation and analysis processes are clear and that there are quality checks in place to identify possible capturing or analysis errors.

In addition to the technical capacity that is needed to effectively implement an M&E system, there needs to be a supportive culture to collecting and using monitoring data and undertaking evaluation to inform decision-making.

Organisational capacity includes knowledge and buy-in to the purpose of collecting information, sufficient staff to be able to monitor progress and the necessary tools and templates to enable monitoring and quality assurance.

4.4 Agree on indicators to monitor outputs and outcomes

Agreeing on verifiable indicators that can be used to monitor and report on the extent of progress towards the desired objectives is the starting point for identifying indicators. This includes indicators that measure delivery of outputs and extends to how the project/programme may contribute to longer-term changes in circumstances. Indicators need to be well-defined to ensure that there is no possibility of misinterpretation of the unit of measurement or its definition.

Indicators provide a means to measure progress and are identified in the project formulation and planning phase. These indicators are accompanied by a definition which provide the basis for reporting.

In the early stages of an initiative, the focus is predominantly on monitoring activities and implementation and then monitoring of outputs (deliverables).

All indicators should be **SMART**:


Table 2: Characteristics of good monitoring indicators

Specific	Definitions need to be clear as to what is being measured, without ambiguity
Measurable	All indicators must have a basis for establishing progress or change
Achievable	The indicators selected must be feasible to achieve
Relevant	Fit for purpose to what is being measured and able to be collected
Time bound	The period in which data is collected, collated and reported must be clear and include a set of targets within the time period.

Indicators need to be carefully selected to ensure that they do not overburden individuals responsible for collecting them, and that they are able to collect information in a systematic manner. It is very important that all indicators are measurable and comparable. The structure of an M&E system will move from inputs (resources) to outputs (deliverables) to outcomes (measurable changes in behaviour, attitude, knowledge and skills) and then to impact (longer-term results or change in context or circumstances).

All indicators should be measurable to be able to track progress and changes and identify where planning or implementation may be emerging differently to what was expected. Indicators should be measured in relation to the targets which are set.

As an NQF or RQF exists within an overall policy framework and strategy, indicators will need to measure progress with policy formulation, implementation, collection and incorporation of feedback based on implementation.



Indicators will focus on compliance with process and implementation (outputs), changes in behaviour, attitude, knowledge and skills (outcomes) and impact - how qualifications frameworks may have enabled lifelong learning, progression, inclusion and mobility.

4.5 Identify sources of data

When identifying indicators, it is essential to ensure that collecting the information is feasible and can be done without too much burden. This includes identifying what is the data source, and then what kind of data collection method can be used.

Data that is collected can be primary or secondary in nature.

- **Primary data** is data that is collected directly from an individual or system. It can be described as raw data that is not yet analysed and has been collected as part of a data collection process which can be manual or electronic in the form of interviews, observations reports, workshop assessments or training questionnaires.
- **Secondary data** is data that already exists and has been analysed for other purposes. This could be data that has been analysed as part of national monitoring surveys or processes such as a Population Census, Education and Training results or reports of other national surveys which collect data related to education and training, employment and highest educational qualifications achieved. This information could be in the public domain or may have to be requested from relevant agencies.

Identifying existing data sources that can be used as part of monitoring activities reduces the burden on individuals responsible for data collection, and the time required to collect information.

4.6 Developing a data collection strategy

After identifying **what** information needs to be collected and **where** it could be found (data sources), it is important to determine **how** you may collect that information. This is your data collection strategy.

The data collection strategy will identify ways to collect information. Examples could be through surveys of a particular sub-group or population, interviews with key stakeholders, observations or through the review of secondary data.

Even with the strategy and data source being identified, it is still necessary to determine the **feasibility** of collecting the information, and how accessible it will be. If it is not easily accessible, alternative data collection strategies will need to be developed.

4.7 Selecting realistic targets

At the beginning stages of a project, programme or policy, it is essential to understand the context in which activities are going to be implemented and the stakeholders involved in development, implementation and feedback. Understanding the context will assist with understanding the likely timelines for implementation. Where there may be a long timeline between project set-up and implementation, it is better to set lower targets in the early stages, and to increase these further on into implementation.

Measurement has two components:

- Baseline measures that reflect the state of a particular programme or activity at the point of beginning a project, programme or policy. This provides the basis for measuring the extent of progress over time.
- Targets which are the improvement that is expected to happen through the development or implementation of a project, programme or policy.

These targets are set at the beginning stages of an intervention and monitored frequently (e.g., quarterly or bi-annually) to establish the extent of change. Where there is limited progress, there is an opportunity to try and gather additional information to understand possible reasons for this.


A good target is one that can demonstrate progress and is feasible to monitor. The target does not need to be high, for it to be regarded as good and should consider how long it may take something to happen. If targets are identified for an activity that may take a long time to complete, targets will need to be lower to demonstrate progress, as compared to an alternative outcome or result that may be achieved sooner.

4.8 Using M&E information to inform decision-making

Monitoring occurs on an ongoing basis as a means of establishing progress, identifying barriers and where course corrections may be required in the development or implementation of a policy or programme.

Evaluation takes place at identified points in design and implementation, with a specific focus on areas of interest such as the extent to which implementation is proceeding as planned, effectiveness of processes and systems and preliminary indications of outcomes etc.

Together, the information collected and analysed as part of monitoring activities and evaluation exercises can equip decision-makers to make evidence-based decisions. Evaluation is most effective if it is designed with use in mind and recommendations are practical and implementable, given the context.



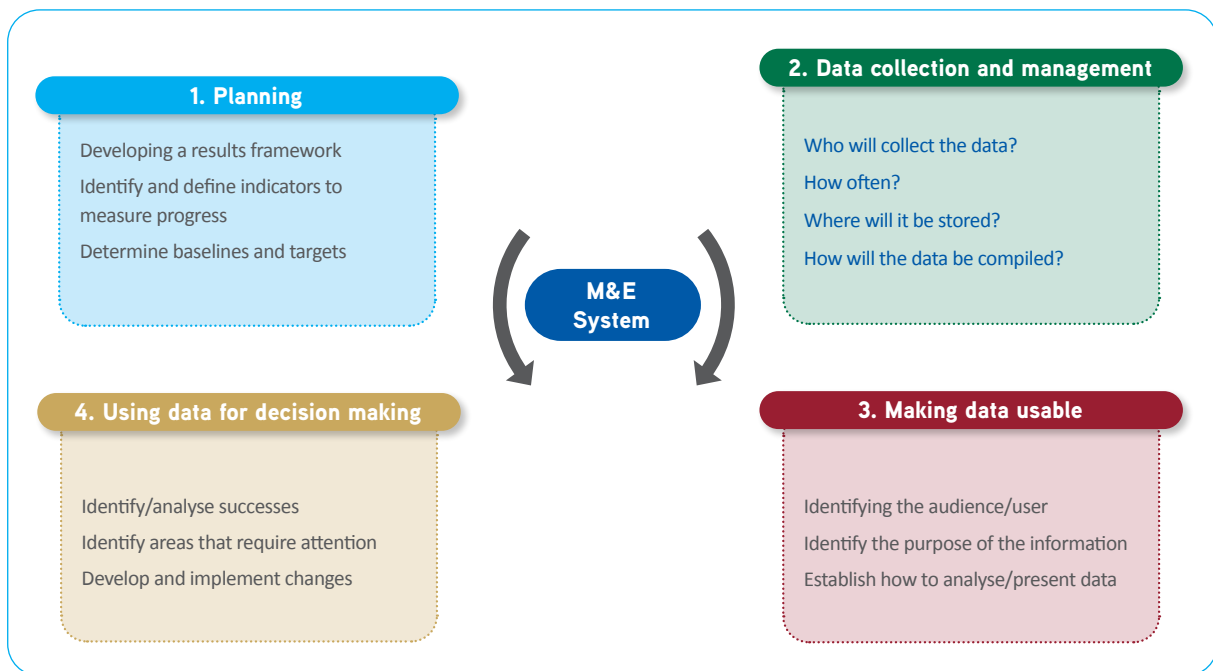
Evaluation is only useful to the extent that the information generated is used and informs decision-making. Evaluation findings could include feedback from users and service providers, barriers to implementation, and capacity needs which can be used as part of a review and re-design process. Evaluation information can also provide guidance as to the extent of review needed to ensure the NQF or RQF continues to meet its objectives or needs to be reviewed.

5 ESTABLISHING AN M&E SYSTEM

Establishing an M&E system is a process of co-creation and should consider the available resources to implement the system, in order that it can serve its intended purpose.

The Figure below summarises the key steps involved in developing an M&E system.

Figure 2: Adapted from USAID M&E Training Curriculum (2009)



5.1 Planning

5.1.1 Developing a results framework

The first planning activity is to develop a **Results Framework**, which outlines the various steps to be followed to achieve the intended outcomes and impact. The results frameworks developed to accompany this training module include a set of core activities and outputs undertaken for the development of an NQF and the ACQF. Some of the results and indicators which apply to an NQF may be able to be aggregated upwards for RQFs including the ACQF.

A **results framework** is a visual representation of how a project, programme or policy will achieve its desired impact. It is a step-by-step process that articulates how each activity and result contributes to cumulative change and ultimately the impact that a project, programme or policy is aspiring towards. Guideline 7 includes the Results Framework for establishing an NQF and an ACQF and provides an indication of how an NQF can reference to RQFs, including the ACQF.

The process of developing a Results Framework can be done collaboratively within a team and provides the basis for developing a common understanding of the objectives of a project, programme or policy and the steps to be followed to achieve the intended outcomes and impact. The visual representation identifies how each of the activities and subsequent results relate to each other and contribute towards a set of changes (outcomes). The results framework consists of a set of activities, outputs, outcomes and long-term impact. This long-term impact statement may be beyond the scope of the NQF or the ACQF and provides an aspiration to aim towards.

5.1.2 Identifying Indicators

A results framework can provide the basis for identifying indicators which are a key component of a M&E system. The table below summarises how different types of indicators link to the various levels in a results framework.

Table 3: Indicators linked to a results framework

Types of indicators	Definition	Purpose
Impact (Results)	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (OECD, 2019).	Measure the extent to which the overall goals are being met.
Outcome (Results)	Changes or benefits resulting from activities or outputs. Short-term outcomes produce changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills or understanding. Intermediate outcomes generate changes in behaviour, practice or decisions. Long-term outcomes produce changes in condition (US EPA, 2007).	Measure the extent to which objectives are being achieved.
Output (Results)	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD,2002).	Measure policy deliverables.
Activity	Tasks that are undertaken that contribute to the output.	Development of an NQF.

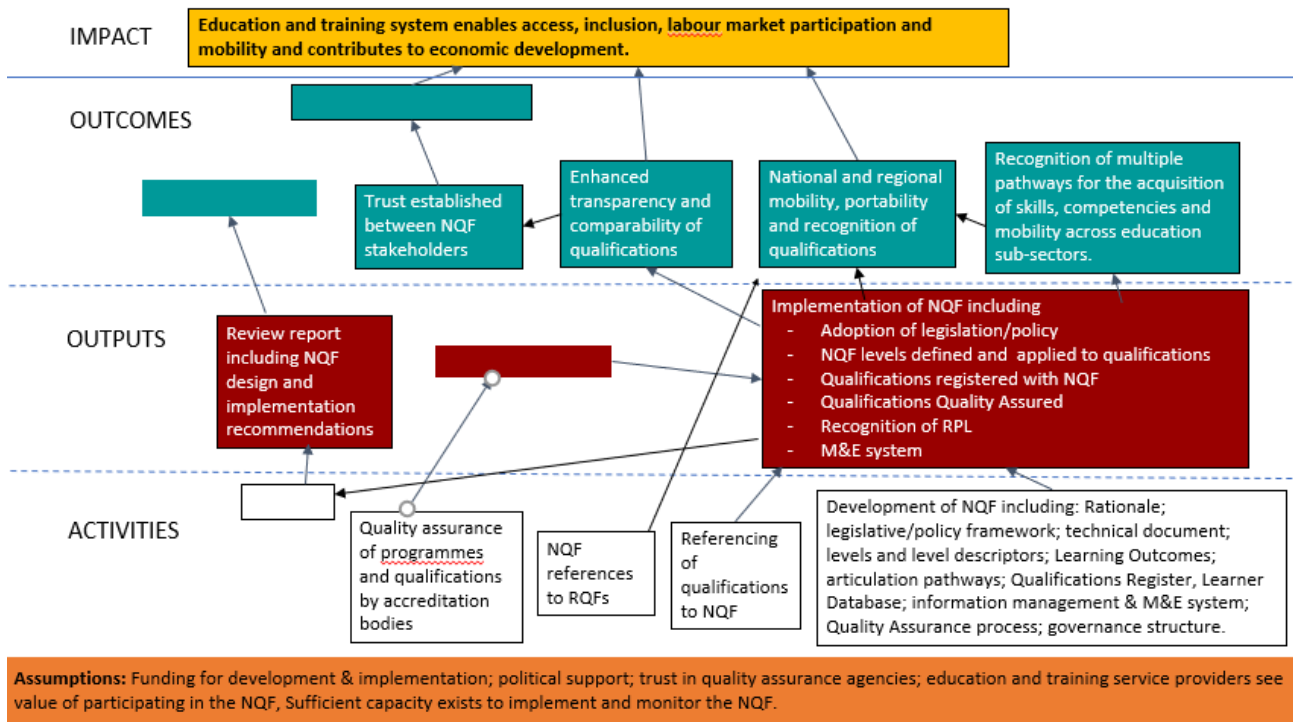
Information collected as part of monitoring should be able to be disaggregated to provide more detail about change that has happened for a particular sub-group such as men, women, individuals from specific geographical areas. In the context of an NQF or the ACQF, disaggregation could be at the country level or at the level of different education sub-systems.

The M&E guideline proposes a set of indicators that can be collected at NQF (country level), some of which can be aggregated upwards to the ACQF. These are referred to as core indicators and would be reported on by all Member States using the ACQF. After agreeing on these core indicators, it is necessary to define how they will be measured, which includes what information needs to be collected to be able to do so. These definitions include what is to be collected, the data source, who is responsible and how often it is collected, collated and reported.

Reflective exercise 2: to be completed in groups

1. The results framework overleaf has some empty blocks, can you complete these based on what you have learnt about how the levels of the results framework relate to each other?
2. After having reviewed the results framework, identify at least three SMART indicators that you would include in monitoring the development or implementation of the NQF.
3. Can you begin to develop outcome indicators based on what you have developed in Question 2 above?
4. Begin to populate the Indicator Reference Sheet (Appendix C).

Figure 3: Results framework for an NQF



5.2 Data collection and management

5.2.1 Secondary data sources

Monitoring data can be collected from a range of sources to assess progress in the development and implementation of an NQF or RQF. At an NQF level, this data can include information from the higher education and training system, sub-system (i.e., TVET) and trade representative bodies, statistical agencies as to the nature of qualifications, demographic data and levels of education within the general population. Where information may already be collected or reported elsewhere, those responsible for reporting should obtain information through the already existing data source to avoid duplication of effort.

At ACQF level, secondary data sources could include those responsible for the various transversal themes (i.e., conceptual, policy and legal base; governance; vision, scope and structure; quality assurance; learning outcomes; credit systems; alignment and referencing; searchable databases/ registers of qualifications; costs and financing; dissemination, communication and end-users; and role and place of RQFs in supporting development at a national level). Other examples could be documents - for instance written motivations and meeting minutes - pertaining to any activities that have been undertaken to advocate for the comparability of qualifications to enable mobility in the labour market or across education sub-systems.

Reflective exercise 3: to be done by individuals

1. Propose sources of primary and secondary data that could be collected to monitor the indicators you have identified.
2. List what data collection strategies you could use to collect data on the indicators you have identified.
3. Identify any constraints that you may face to collecting this information and propose potential ways to address these constraints.
4. Complete the remaining fields in the Indicator Sheet (Appendix C)

5.2.2 Data Collection Instruments

The ACQF will constitute a policy framework with a range of guidelines that may have different purposes, thus the monitoring data to be collected will vary based on the guidelines, and the progress towards design, implementation and ultimately review.

Data Collection instruments can be developed to collect specific information which has not previously been collected (such as record of visits to web portal) or can be extracted from existing data sources (secondary data). Establishing standardised data collection tools across contexts will also support the collection of similar data, which can contribute to ensuring the data analysis process happens smoothly.

Data that is collected should be captured on and reported in standardised tools to reduce the risk of errors. These standardised tools could be electronic or paper-based and should include all fields that may need to be reported on.

The tools will need to also include fields such as a date, the details of the person completing the tool, the site where the information is being collected, and include fields for quality control and verification.

Where standardised tools are used, there is greater assurance that information will be captured in the correct fields. Tools should also be structured to collect only information that will be used for analysis and reporting. This will reduce the burden of collecting data which may not be used as part of reporting and dissemination.

These tools will need to include all fields that are required for reporting, and data will need to be captured in line with the indicator definitions. Once data collection tools have been developed, individuals responsible for collecting and capturing information should be trained in the use of the tools to ensure there is a clear understanding of each field, and the potential for errors.

Summative assessment task 1: to be done individually

1. Using the case study of the South African NQF, identify ways to monitor progress towards each of the immediate and intermediate outcomes.
2. Identify possible data sources for the information to be collected.

5.3 Making data useable

5.3.1 Analysis methods

Data that is collected can be analysed for different purposes, and this will inform the nature of analysis that is undertaken.

This can include thematic analysis of qualitative data (interviews, focus group discussions and reports) which entails the identification of themes emerging in the data, to answer research and evaluation questions. This analysis method can be used with primary data that has been collected, or through a review of secondary data sources.

Additionally, there are possibilities for quantitative analysis i.e., descriptive (count, percentage, minimum, maximum and range) and inferential. Descriptive statistics provide high level information about the data set and seek to establish possible associations between each of the indicators/variables. In the NQF or RQF context, this could be the percentage of qualifications with learning outcomes at an NQF level, and the number of countries that have referred to an RQF (RQF/ACQF level).

Descriptive statistics may be followed by inferential statistics. Inferential statistics entails establishing the predictions about what the data shows and the probability that the data could be generalisable to the broader population. (Monsen, 2017)

Inferential statistics are undertaken using a random sample of the population to gather information. This can be undertaken using survey data and existing secondary data sources that may exist in the higher education and training system or national statistical agencies.

Reflective exercise 4: to be done individually or in groups

1. Identify 3 indicators that can be monitored and analysed quantitatively.
2. Propose whether these would be analysed descriptively or inferentially.
3. Give reasons for your answer.
4. Prepare for a discussion in the plenary about the choices that you have made.

If different data collection methods are used, there is value in combining and triangulating data sources to provide an overall and comprehensive view of a particular situation.

Triangulation

Triangulation involves the process of combining various data sources with a view to verify the evidence collected, identify any gaps in the data set and areas of inconsistency. These data sources can be both quantitative and qualitative. Combining and comparing data sources also assists with developing a more comprehensive evidence base, where the quantitative data can provide a snapshot of the situation but is not able to describe why these results will have occurred.

Qualitative data can provide additional detail as to why something may have happened but is not generalisable. By triangulating these data sources, one can get a deeper understanding of the specific situation/context.

5.3.2 Reporting and dissemination

After collecting and analysing data, information should be collated and reported to the agencies or individuals involved in the development or implementation of the NQF, and the ACQF when in place.

This reporting process should be in line with agreed upon reporting timelines, and reports prepared so that they are easy to use.

This includes identifying those stakeholders who may be affected by the NQF or ACQF and will be users of the information reported.

5.4 Using data for decision making

Accurate and up-to-date monitoring data enables individuals to track progress, manage activities and provides the basis for making decisions about ongoing policy or programme development and implementation. Establishing organisational buy-in to monitoring will also be influenced by whether individuals see the purpose of information being collected, and how it is used.

Data is only valuable if it is used after analysis and the formulation of recommendations. This takes the form of using data to inform or justify decisions, or to review the data considering the implications of the results, and to make decisions based on what the data is showing. This confirms the value of collecting the data and ensures that decisions are evidence-based.

A body of monitoring data can be supplemented by evaluations at predetermined intervals.

5.5 Evaluation

Evaluation can be undertaken to gather feedback on implementation, with the intention to review the NQF or ACQF. This feedback can be collected from policy makers, implementers of the NQF/ACQF, institutions and accreditation bodies among others.

Evaluating policy requires considering whether the policy is being used as intended, and whether it is achieving its intended outcomes and impact (labour market mobility, shared African education and training space, inclusive life-long learning)

In its early stages, where the ACQF has been recently established, it would be more appropriate to undertake a formative evaluation which is intended to assess progress in implementation and feed into the need for review.

5.5.1 Planning for an evaluation

Evaluation should be planned from the inception stages of developing a project, programme or policy and identifying indicators. This includes identifying when an evaluation will be undertaken, what questions will be answered and what methods will be used.

Developing and agreeing on a Results Framework, and the indicators to be monitored will also assist with planning for an evaluation. This will include deciding how the evaluation will be done, the kinds of data to be collected and who will undertake the evaluation.

Evaluations can be undertaken internally from within an organisation or accreditation body to monitor progress, or by an independent team that is external to the organisation, or in some instances, an internal team may work alongside an external team (hybrid).

It is ideal to establish an evaluation plan at the inception of a policy process, to ensure that the evaluation design is fit-for-purpose and will generate the information necessary to establish progress and outcomes of policy design and implementation. A template for an evaluation plan is included as part of Appendix C to this Training Manual.

To start with, it will be important to

1. Clarify your programme objectives and goals (what is relevant to the evaluation).
2. Identify suitable evaluation questions that are aligned with the policy objectives or activities.
3. Identify data collection methods and sources.
4. Establish workplans and timelines (when the evaluation will be undertaken).

These can be written up into an evaluation plan, which can also be recast into a Terms of Reference if there is an intention to engage an independent evaluation team. A template for developing a Terms of Reference is included as part of Appendix C to this Training Manual.

5.5.2 *Strategies for evaluating the impact of an NQF*

The impact of developing and implementing an NQF cannot be easily measured, as it is not possible to remove the influence of other factors within the education and training system. By way of example, more graduates may complete qualifications for a variety of reasons, including because there has been a tuition subsidy introduced.

While the objective of an NQF may be to increase the number of people with formal qualifications, and the number of people graduating with qualifications may increase following the development of an NQF, it may be because of a wide range of factors. This means we cannot attribute the increase in qualified people to the NQF, but we may be able to say that the development and implementation of an NQF contributed - among other factors - to this result.

Contribution analysis provides one means of establishing how a policy or programme may have played a role in achieving the intended result. It is a process which includes inferring causality and how and why changes may have occurred. Contribution analysis can be used at three levels (INTRAC, 2017)

- Minimalist contribution analysis which has a focus on outputs and involves confirming that activities included in the results framework have happened and the outputs have been delivered (such as development of NQF).
- Contribution analysis of direct influence is focussed on confirming that activities within the direct influence of the policy have happened, but it is not necessary to establish whether this influence may have contributed to any further indirect change (such as advocacy for the recognition of qualifications across education sub-systems).
- Contribution analysis of wider influence which is focussed on establishing how indirect influence may have contributed to further wider changes in the education and training system (such as referencing of qualifications on the continent contributing to increased mobility).

Outcome Harvesting is another possible means to determine the impact of an NQF or RQF. This approach begins by looking at the end point after implementation of a policy or programme and working backwards to identify the outcomes of that policy or programme. It is not rooted in measuring against a predetermined set of objectives but is rather focussed on determining whether the NQF or RQF may have contributed to changes which have occurred. It is recognised as well-suited to a dynamic initiative where the outcomes and impacts are not yet clear (Better Evaluation website, undated) .

Summative assessment task 2: to be done as a group

1. Drawing on the Irish case example, develop an evaluation plan for the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of an NQF in your context
2. Identify any risks to the evaluation, and propose ways to address these

6 GUIDANCE FOR TRAINERS AND LEARNERS

This training manual focussed on how to develop an M&E system, the respective considerations before developing and implementing an M&E system, and steps to follow to create an M&E system. This includes suggestions and examples to apply in the context of the development and implementation of the ACQF and an NQF.

It is directed at individuals working within a qualifications framework or system that may have responsibilities related to M&E.

The activities presented are a combination of reflection - which can be done alone and does not form part of formal assessment - and practical tasks which can be used as part of a formal assessment process.

Group discussions can take place in person or online, and tasks can be done offline, and then submitted to the relevant trainers or training authority.

Trainers will need to work from the premise that participants are unlikely to have formal training in M&E but may have practical experience of undertaking monitoring in the context of NQFs and RQFs in their respective countries and regions. Sharing and using case examples should be encouraged as part of the training programme.

Additional references and resources are included at the end of the document for supplementary information.

7 ASSESSMENT

Approach

The approach to assessment includes assessment of learning (theoretical) and of the practical application of learning (drawing on theory and case examples) in context.

The first category of assessment is based on the information included in the training manual, and the latter on the ability to apply information to ones' own context. The latter is structured as group work and may be summative in nature.

Case examples included as an Appendix can be used in each of the reflective activities, with requirements that individuals use the additional readings to deepen their understanding of the application of learning in context.

Tasks

Formative assessment tasks are included in text boxes throughout the training manual and are each related to the learning outcomes and assessment tasks indicated in Chapter 1. These are a combination of tasks that can be done individually and as a group. They are described as reflective exercises which consolidate information from the manual.

The intention is that summative tasks are done offline asynchronously and uploaded. However, individual tasks could be done concurrently online, followed by facilitated sharing and feedback.

7.1 Formative exercises

▶▶▶▶ Reflective exercise 1: to be completed individually

1. What are some of the reasons why it is important to collect monitoring data?
2. Who needs to be engaged and what needs to be done to ensure buy-in to monitoring the development and implementation of an NQF or RQF?
3. Who will use the monitoring information?
4. What will the monitoring information be used for?

▶▶▶▶ Reflective exercise 2: to be completed in groups

1. The results framework overleaf has some empty blocks, can you complete these based on what you have learnt about how the levels of the results framework relate to each other?
2. After having reviewed the results framework, identify at least three SMART indicators that you would include in monitoring the development or implementation of the NQF.
3. Can you begin to develop outcome indicators based on what you have developed in Question 2 above?
4. Begin to populate the Indicator Reference Sheet (Appendix C).

▶▶▶▶ Reflective exercise 3: to be completed individually or in groups

1. Propose sources of primary and secondary data that could be collected to monitor the indicators you have identified.
2. List what data collection strategies you could use to collect data on the indicators you have identified.
3. Identify any constraints that you may face to collecting this information and propose potential ways to address these constraints.
4. Complete the remaining fields in the Indicator Sheet (Appendix C)

▶▶▶▶ Reflective exercise 4: to be completed individually or in groups

1. Identify 3 indicators that can be monitored and analysed quantitatively
2. Propose whether these would be analysed descriptively or inferentially
3. Give reasons for your answer
4. Prepare for a discussion in the plenary about the choices that you have made.

7.2 Summative assessment

Summative assessment task 1: to be done individually

1. Using the case study of the South African NQF contained in Appendix B, identify ways to monitor progress towards each of the immediate and intermediate outcomes.
2. Complete the Indicator Reference Sheet (Appendix C) based on the immediate and intermediate outcomes.

The first summative assessment task is focussed on monitoring as the basis of an M&E system, and the building blocks which need to be in place. It also requires participants to apply theoretical knowledge contained in the training manual into a practical scenario.

Chapter 3 will provide some guidance as to how to approach this assessment task.

Summative assessment task 2: to be done as a group

1. Drawing on the Irish case example, develop an evaluation plan for the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of an NQF in your context (in the format included in Appendix C).
2. Identify any risks to the evaluation, and propose ways to address these.

The second summative assessment task requires learners to consider and apply knowledge and skills to their own context. This provides an opportunity for learners to translate their knowledge into a practical example.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain information which will assist you to complete this task.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: References - for further reading

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Appendix B: Case examples of M&E in different contexts

This Appendix contains case examples of four countries: two in Africa (South Africa and Cape Verde) and two in Europe (Ireland and Slovenia). All the case examples were selected to demonstrate the complexity of evaluating NQFs, but also to illustrate the use value of considering the evaluation of aims and objectives as early as possible, and the potential implications they might have on monitoring activities that relate to those objectives. Together the cases are expected to be useful examples that users could learn from, particularly countries considering commissioning/undertaking an NQF review or evaluation. Further guidance in this regard can be accessed in evaluations of NQFs globally discussed in two ILO reports (Allais 2010, 2017).

Example 1:

Implementation Evaluation of the National Qualification Framework Act (2008) [South Africa] Evaluation Framework and Analytical Plan

To change the skewed and largely dysfunctional system that disadvantaged many at the benefit of a few, the [South African] NQF was seen as a pivotal framework wherein transformation could take place.

The overarching vision for the NQF was a contribution to the full personal development of each learner and the social-economic development of the country.

The NQF Act (2008) defines the NQF as “a comprehensive system approved by the Minister for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications”, and sets out the objectives of the NQF as to:

- Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements.
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.
- Enhance the quality of education and training.
- Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

[Change [brought about by the South African NQF] is based on the fundamental logic that if “a comprehensive system for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications” is established, **then** it will lead to:

- Functioning single national integrated national framework for learning achievements,
- Improved access to, mobility and progression within education, training and career paths, and
- Enhanced the quality of education and training.

These outcomes collectively contribute to the longer-term impacts of:

- Full personal development of all learners;
- Social and economic development of the nation at large; and
- Accelerated redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

[I]t is hard to isolate the contribution of the NQF to these impacts from that of the broader education and training system. In describing the impact of the NQF, policymakers have used the term “contribution”. This may imply that policymakers see the NQF as broader and enabling framework that could benefit learners and society without necessarily thinking of the causal mechanisms through which these changes are achieved.

These objectives have been broken down in seven immediate and three intermediate outcomes. The intermediate outcomes focus on the medium-term benefits of the NQF. These are:

- Enhanced quality of education and training
- Public credibility of the NQF system
- Improved access to a pool of skilled foreign labour

The seven immediate outcomes identified in the theory of change are:

- Policy coherence and alignment
- A functioning single integrated qualifications system that is context-appropriate
- Improved country capacity for the classification, development, registration & publication of national qualifications
- South African qualifications achieved by the learner are of acceptable quality and internationally comparable
- Improved learner access, portability, progression, articulation of qualifications
- Informed choices about qualifications, providers and career paths
- Public credibility of professions

An indicator matrix, including data sources, linked to all ten outcomes as well as evaluation questions are developed in this plan.

DNA Economics. 2017. Implementation Evaluation of the National Qualification Framework Act (2008) Evaluation Framework and Analytical Plan (pp 6, 9, 11, 18-26)



Example 2:

Monitoring and Evaluation and the National Qualification Framework in Cape Verde

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Cabo Verde has 10 years of experience and has been operationalised as an instrument of the National Qualifications System (SNQ). This is a fundamental characteristic that marks the nature and functions of the NQF and its interconnection with the other instruments of the SNQ.

The SNQ comprises the instruments necessary for the promotion, development and integration of training offer and qualifications, and the evaluation and certification of competences enabling professional, human, and social development of the individuals and responding to the needs of the economic system. The SNQ is operationalised by the combined action of the following instruments:

- **The NQF (in Portuguese: QNQ)**
- The CNQ
- The credit system
- The individual register of qualifications and competences
- The system of monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement of the SNQ
- The system of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC)

By legislation (Decree-Law 4/2018), the NQF is monitored, as part of the system of monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement of the SNQ. Monitoring and evaluation of the SNQ and NQF is a competence of the public institutions in charge of education and training policies. The social partners, in articulation with the public organs, shall participate in monitoring and evaluation of the NQF/SNQ.

Drawn from Castel-Branco, E. 2021. African Continental Qualifications Framework Mapping Study. Country report- Cabo Verde. (pp 5, 6)

Castel-Branco (2021) does not outline the methodology that is used to monitor and evaluate – further details can however be accessed from the following:

Republica de Capo Verde. 2018. Boletim Oficial. http://snq.cv/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/1.-Novo-RJG-SNQ_BO-N.%C2%BA-04-l-Se%CC%81rie-JAN-2018.pdf

Republica de Capo Verde. 2017. PLANO ESTRATÉGICO DA EDUCAÇÃO CABO VERDE. https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/plano_estrategico_da_educacao_cv-vfinal.pdf

Example 3:

Evaluation of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The NFQ was launched in 2003, and established a ten-level system of knowledge, skill and competence for the recognition of all types of learning. This ranges from Level 1 Certificates which recognise basic learning, to Level 10 for Doctoral Degrees and Higher Doctorates. The NFQ provides an objective basis to specify the breadth and depth of knowledge required to achieve awards at each level, as well as mapping out the relationships between the different levels.

Scope and Terms of Reference

The review provided an initial policy impact assessment of the NFQ. This review was designed to inform future NFQ policy development, implementation and evaluation, and address the following aspects of the impact of the NFQ, and the role of QQI [Quality and Qualifications Ireland] in this context:

- Awareness of the NFQ and its contribution to transparency of the system and of qualifications more generally;
- Quality of teaching and learning – contribution of the NFQ to ensuring that qualifications are responsive to the needs of the economy, society and the individual, including the quality of awards, and the facilitation of recognition of national and international qualifications;
- Promoting qualification progression – role of the NFQ in the development of integrated pathways between qualifications and facilitation of learner progression;
- International mobility – contribution of the NFQ to improving the international mobility of qualifications;
- Employability and employment – including the extent to which the NFQ has impacted the optimal matching of learners with employment opportunities, as well as the extent to which the NFQ has contributed to the development of labour market policy; and,
- The role that QQI plays in promotion and implementation of the NFQ and future policy priorities for the NFQ.

Methodology

In examining the above areas of impact, this review encompassed the following tasks:

1. Development and administration of an online survey of national stakeholder views on both the impact of the NFQ to date and future policy priorities for the NFQ.
2. A series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders were conducted to examine the role and contribution of the NFQ to policy objectives.
3. Data collected were analysed and a written report of findings concerning the initial impact of the NFQ to date and policy priorities for future NFQ development was prepared.

A four-phased methodology and work programme was applied by the Indecon team in to complete the review as detailed above. The approach was designed to rigorously address each aspect of the terms of reference.

Caveat re limitations of review

It is important to note that there are limitations to the determination of the precise impacts of a framework such as the NFQ, which essentially plays a facilitative role in the context of a wider education and training system. In particular, the effects of the NFQ are indirect in nature, and the NFQ is understood as an enabler rather than a driver of change. These features mean that determining the causal relationship between the NFQ and its impacts on society and the economy is challenging. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the emerging body of knowledge about the impact of qualifications frameworks in Europe and beyond.

Overall, through the extensive inputs provided via the survey research and based on bilateral semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, this impact assessment has found a generally high level of support for the NFQ and a positive assessment of the NFQ's contribution under several headings.

Indecon. 2017. Policy Impact Assessment of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. Ireland: QQI (pp ii-ix, 8-11)



Example 4:

Evaluation of the Slovenian qualifications' framework and the register of qualifications of the SQF

The Slovenian Qualifications Framework (SQF) is a unified system of qualifications in the Republic of Slovenia for the classification of qualification into levels based on learning outcomes. The SQF includes all types of qualifications that can be gained in Slovenia. The purpose of the SQF is to achieve transparency and recognition of qualifications in Slovenia and the EU.

[T]he first large-scale evaluation carried out among a diverse range of users who use the SQF and SQF Register for various purposes ... show that the SQF is positively accepted among users and that they positively evaluate its contribution to the transparency and orderliness of the education system, together with the transparency of qualifications. At the same time, ... the SQF has contributed to the systematic organisation of the education system in those areas that were properly developed before its introduction.

The aim of the evaluation is to determine how different stakeholders assess the utility, recognition and visibility of the SQF and their understanding of the framework.

There are four main objectives of the evaluation:

1. We want to find out how stakeholders understand the SQF.
2. We want to find out how stakeholders use the SQF.
3. We want to find out to what extent the SQF is recognised among the stakeholders.
4. We want to find out whether the SQF has an influence on the educational system and what this influence is.

Areas of the evaluation and research questions

Based on the identified purpose and objectives, we defined four areas of evaluation:

Table 1: Areas of the evaluation

Objectives of the evaluation	Areas of the evaluation
1. Determine how the stakeholders understand the SQF.	P1. UNDERSTANDING THE FRAMEWORK AMONG THE STAKEHOLDERS
2. Determine how the stakeholders use the SQF.	P2. USE OF THE FRAMEWORK AMONG THE STAKEHOLDERS
3. Determine the extent of recognition of the SQF among the stakeholders.	P3. RECOGNITION OF THE FRAMEWORK AMONG THE STAKEHOLDERS
4. Determine whether the SQF has an influence on the educational system and what this influence is.	P4. ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SQF ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Within each field of evaluation, the following research questions were identified

1. UNDERSTANDING: We want to find out how stakeholders understand the SQF, namely:

- How do they understand the underlying logic, purpose and goals of the framework?
- How do they understand each type of qualification?
- How do they understand the relationships between types of qualifications?

2. APPLICATION: We want to find out how stakeholders use the SQF, namely:

- How and for what purposes the SQF is used in the various subsystems; education (general, vocational, higher education, adult education) and the labour market?
- To what extent is the SQF used in national education policies?
- Is and how is the SQF used in the transition between different qualification subsystems?
- Is the SQF being used and how is it being used to meet the mobility needs of students, students and staff?
- Is and how is the SQF used in the recognition of qualifications?

3. RECOGNITION: We want to find out how the SQF is recognized among different stakeholders, namely:

- Is the SQF recognized among individuals (high-school students, students, job seekers)?
- Is the SQF recognized by representatives of the key stakeholders: representatives of ministries, representatives of student organizations, representatives of high-school school student organizations, high-school representatives, representatives of faculties, representatives of career advisers of the Employment Service of Slovenia?
- How high is the visibility of the current activities of NCP in promoting SQF?

4. ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SQF ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: We want to determine whether the SQF descriptors are used in the creation of programming documents, namely:

- How do SQF descriptors affect the format of learning outcomes (updated vocational standards, catalogues for practical training, selected PUD (on-the-job training) plans)?

Research methods and techniques:

- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Qualitative analysis of national documents

KEY FINDINGS

RECOGNITION OF THE SQF REGISTER BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

From the data obtained, it can be concluded that the level of awareness of the SQF Register among the studied general public is low five years after its establishment, as four-fifths of the Slovenian respondents are not yet familiar with it.

USE OF THE SQF REGISTER BY THE GENERAL AND PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC

From the data obtained, it can be concluded that the level of awareness of the SQF Register among the studied general public is relatively low.

The SQF Register is primarily used to provide information on existing qualifications, for the needs of one's own education and training and for the needs of work practise and, to a lesser extent, for mobility purposes.

[T]he SQF Register is widespread among the professional public, but is rare, as it is most frequently used by the latter only once a year or several times a year.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE SQF REGISTER BY THE PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC

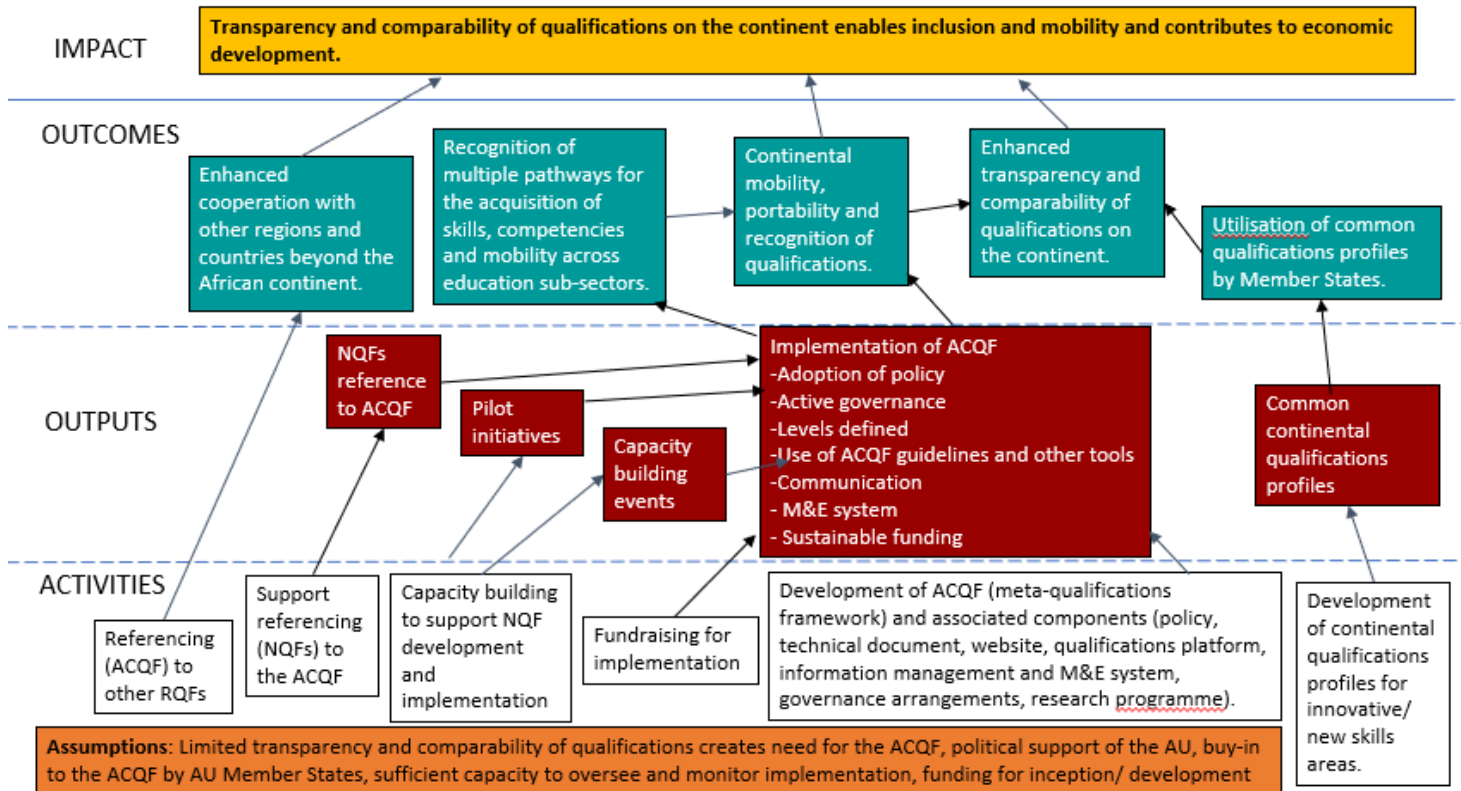
The understanding of the SQF Register among the professional public is good: The SQF Register is assessed as a transparent system, the components of the description of qualifications are generally well understood and the descriptions of learning outcomes are usually sufficient to represent the qualification.

Ermenc, K. S., Mikulec, B. & Biloslavo R. 2020. Evaluation of the Slovenian qualifications framework and the register of qualifications of the SQF. Ljubljana : Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (pp 6-7, 21-24, 102-107)

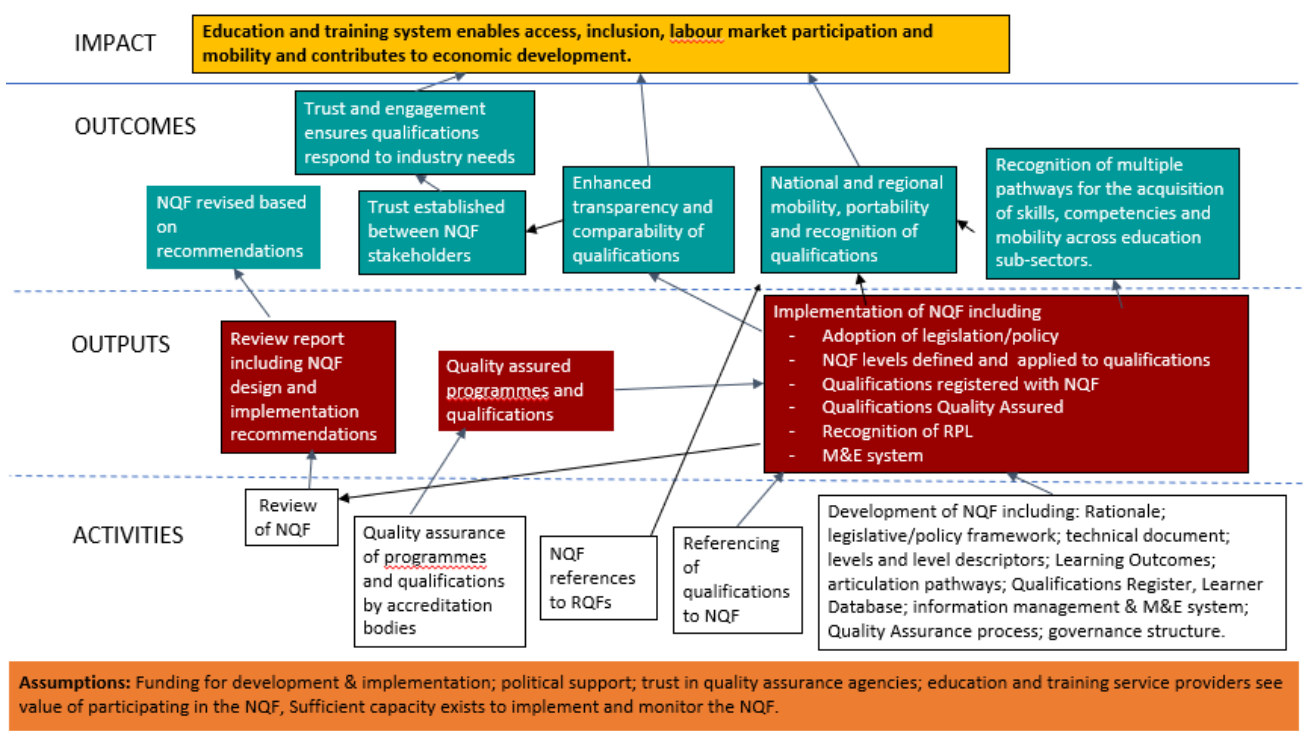
The report of this evaluation also contains a chapter titled, 'Approaches to assessing the impact of National Qualification Frameworks' (pp 15-19)

Appendix C: M&E templates and tools

ACQF results framework



NQF results framework*



**Note: The results framework presented above can be applicable both to a context in which the NQF is at an early stage of development, in which case the main focus would be on the activities and outputs in the middle and on the right AND to a context in which the NQF has been in place for some time and a review is planned/ has been undertaken. In the latter case the focus would be on ALL activities and outputs (including those on the left) AND outcomes and impact.*

Indicator Reference Sheet

Indicator	Definition	Data Collection Tool	Frequency of data collection	Individuals responsible for collecting data	Individuals responsible for quality control	Individuals responsible for use

Evaluation Plan Template

Cite this template as: JET Education Services. (2020). Evaluation Plan. Johannesburg: JET.

An evaluation plan will assist with defining the scope and focus of an evaluation. It assists with building clarity and should be conceptualised from the inception of a policy process, though may be written up in a formal template at the point of undertaking the evaluation. This plan also assists with building consensus as to the purpose and value of evaluation with the individuals involved in planning and managing/undertaking an evaluation.

Background and contextual information

Background to the intervention, focusing on:

- Progress to date
- Context that informs the need for evaluation

Purpose of the evaluation

Describe the overall purpose of the evaluation, focusing on:

- The broad objectives of the evaluation

Evaluation questions

- Evaluation questions that provide structure and are informed by the objectives of the evaluation

Scope of work and activities to be conducted

- Time period to be evaluated
- Recommended evaluation approach

Timelines and deliverables

- Timeframe for the evaluation, including key dates and
- Deliverables such as a report, presentation, revised results framework or tools

Users and uses of the evaluation

- Individuals within accreditation agencies, policy makers, qualifications agencies, ACQF or other RQF bodies

Management arrangements

- Roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in designing, managing and implementing the evaluation.

Evaluation Terms of Reference

Cite this template as: JET Education Services. (2020). Terms of reference for evaluation. Johannesburg: JET.

This document was developed as a resource to assist programme and project managers and other stakeholders in preparing Terms of Reference (ToRs) for an evaluation. It was developed by the JET M&E division, drawing on relevant grey literature and professional experience. A proposed outline for the evaluation ToRs is presented below.

Cover page

Table of contents

Abbreviations

1) Introduction and Background

- Background information about the organization
 - Where is responsibility for the initiative located within the organization?
- Background information about the programme/project being evaluated
 - Alignment with other international/national/provincial/local initiatives
- Rationale for commissioning the evaluation

2) Description of the programme/project being evaluated

- Problem statement
- Geographic location
- Purpose/goal
- Programme theory (theory of action, theory of change, logic model etc, detail can be put in an annexure)
- Description of previous implementation phases (if any) and current implementation plan
- Key stakeholders involved in the programme/project and description of their roles
- Description of internal programme monitoring data (and secondary data) which is being used for monitoring purposes

3) Evaluation scope of work

- Evaluation purpose (developmental, formative, summative, learning etc)
- Primary and secondary evaluation users and their potential uses
- Evaluation criteria (for example: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
- Evaluation questions
- Proposed/suggested methods (if any)

- Expected deliverables including plans, data collection instruments, reports, presentations, data/meta-data, capacity building/skills transfer
- Timelines
- Arrangements for managing the evaluation (reporting lines, steering committee, frequency of meetings etc)
- Required competencies of the evaluator/evaluation team (e.g. knowledge of the context, knowledge of the sector/area, knowledge of research methods, knowledge of evaluation, developmental/capacity building approach, composition of the team including involvement of black researchers, language requirements, interpersonal and communication skills)
- Required structure and contents of the proposal, including page limit, referees and example(s) of work if required.
- Explanation of how proposals will be scored

4) Information regarding how to respond

- Pre-registration required (if any)
- Compliance documentation required (if any)
- Briefing (if any)
- Process and contact person for the submission of technical questions
- Process and contact person for submission of procedural questions
- Process for submission (online, via email, in-hard copy, number of copies required etc)
- Shortlisting (if applicable)
- How shortlisted/successful bidders will be communicated with
- Timelines

References

Annexures

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