ACQF | African Continental Qualifications Framework

African Union

THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

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AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (ACQF): CREATING MUTUAL TRUST. A SNAPSHOT

WHAT IS THE

ACQF

an overarching referencing qualifications framework of continental scope to deliver on the objectives of ...

enhanced transparency and comparability of qualifications

mutual trust between qualifications frameworks and systems for lifelong learning in Africa

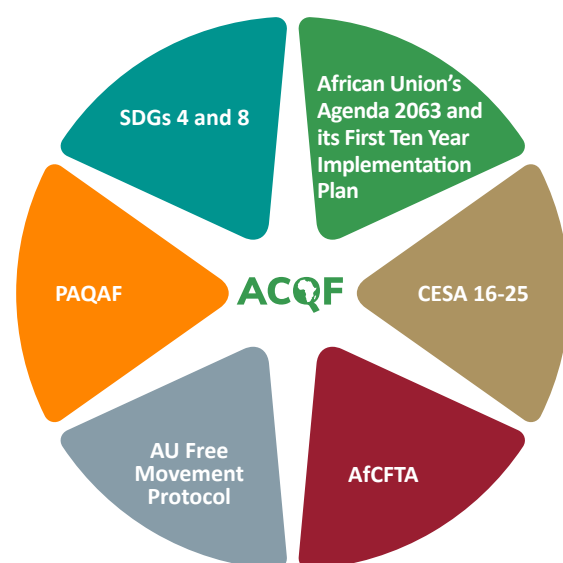common reference framework – translation device between qualifications and their levels

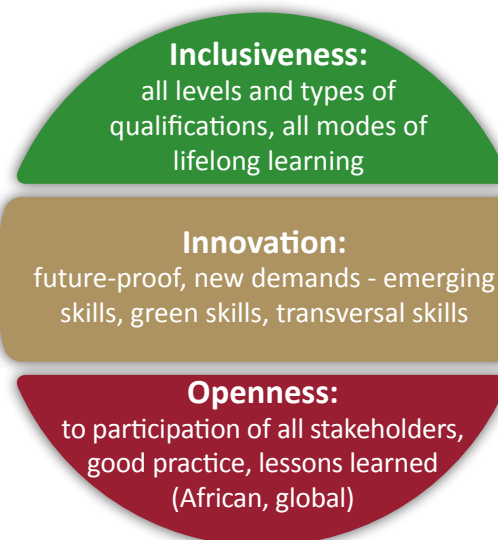# AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.

ACQF

UNDERPINNINGS

- SDGs 4 and 8
- African Union's Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan
- CESA 16-25
- AfCFTA
- AU Free Movement Protocol
- PAQAF

ACQF

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 skills, 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 common space of trusted qualifications.

4 Promote — Promote cooperation and referencing between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

PRINCIPLES

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

Innovation: future-proof, new demands - emerging skills, green skills, transversal skills

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

CONCEPTUAL TECHNICAL DESIGN OF ACQF

ACQF is underpinned by Quality Assurance

Transparency and Trust in Qualifications
Includes processes and procedures to ensure qualifications, assessment and programme delivery meet high standards

› **Metaframework:** translation device for referencing, comparison, cooperation between different NQFs

› **Comprehensive scope:** all levels, modes of learning

› **10 levels:** whole continuum of education and training

› **Level descriptors** expressed as learning outcomes

› **Domains of learning:** Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility

› **Learning outcomes orientation** supports:

- 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*

CONCEPTUAL-TECHNICAL DESIGN OF ACQF

Underpinned by quality assurance

As an overarching qualifications framework and a catalyst for NQF development, the ACQF is underpinned by quality assurance.

Transparency and trust in qualifications is key in a context of widespread international learner and labour mobility, and rapid transformation of types of qualifications and credentials for different needs and contexts of lifelong learning.

Quality assurance is fundamental for trust in qualifications, and for their currency and mobility.

Quality assurance includes the processes and procedures for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and programme delivery meet certain standards.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF ACQF

Criterion 4:
The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

To clarify the interplay between quality assurance and referencing, the following principles are recommended:

Quality assurance – a criterion for ACQF referencing: the referencing to the ACQF of national qualifications frameworks or systems demonstrates the degree to which quality assurance of national qualifications:

❯ addresses the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification;

❯ addresses the application of the learning outcomes approach;

❯ includes feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement;

❯ addresses internal and external quality assurance, and the regular review of quality assurance agencies;

❯ is based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance;

❯ is supported by resources; and

❯ provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation.

❯ takes account of African Union policy orientations such as African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.

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.**
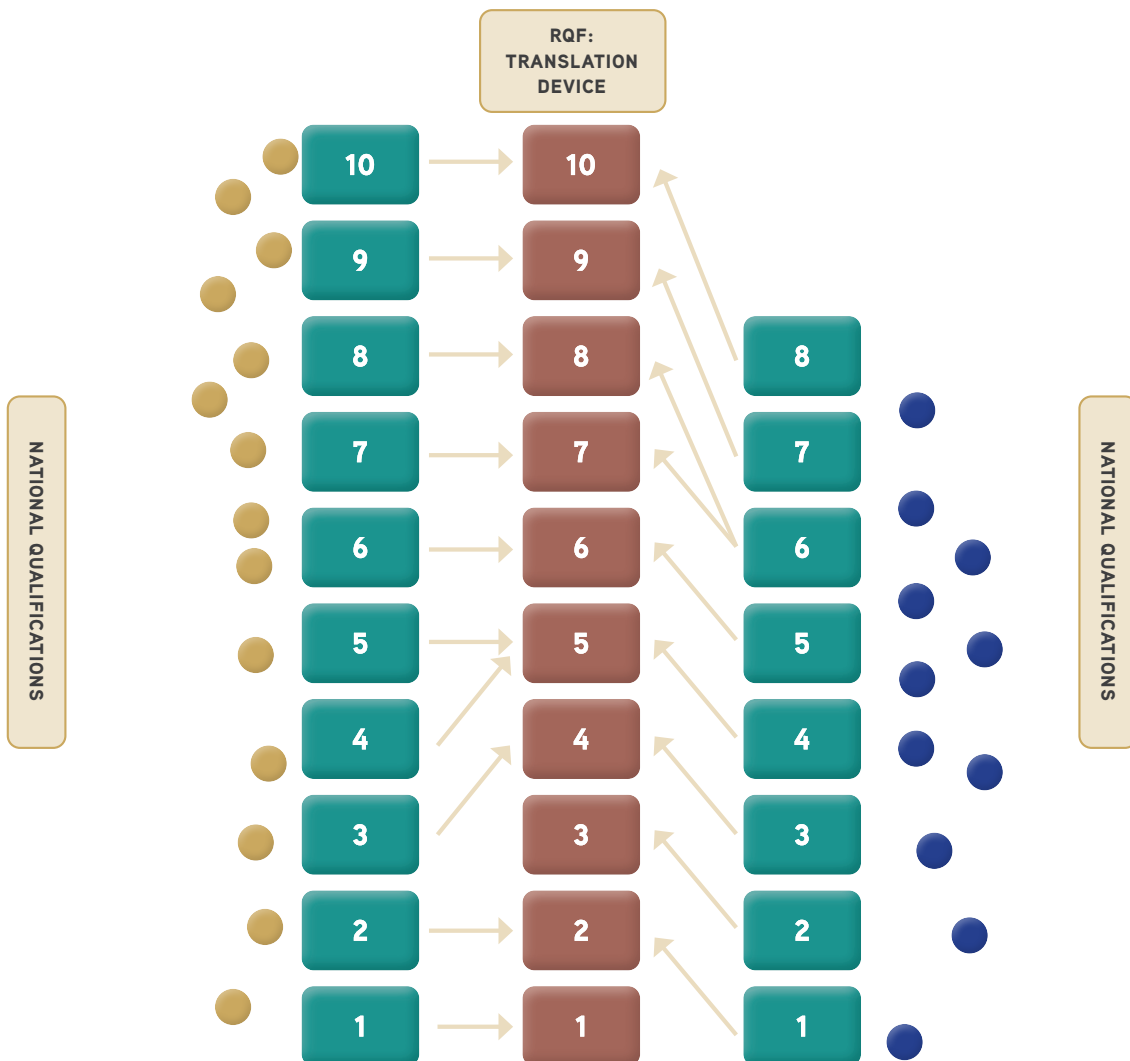
Referencing: process aimed at comparing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF following criteria and procedures.

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.

ACQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

	DOMAINS OF LEARNING		
Level	**Knowledge**	**Skills**	**Autonomy and responsibility**
Definition of the domains of learning	In the context of ACQF "Knowledge" includes various kinds of knowledge such as facts, principles, and theories in various areas	In the context of ACQF "Skills" refer to the ability to use knowledge to respond to information and address problems. Skills include cognitive, communication, digital, green, innovation, practical and social skills.	In the context of ACQF "Autonomy and responsibility" refers to the context and extent of the application of autonomy and responsibility
Level 1: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy	simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions, and use simple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems	highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self
Level 2: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	basic knowledge incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas	basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straight forward problems	structured contexts under limited supervision and guidance taking limited responsibility for self and group outcomes
Level 3: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	factual and operational knowledge incorporating some theoretical aspects in some areas	a range of communication, cognitive, practical and technical skills required to interpret and communicate ideas and detailed information and select and use known solutions to address familiar problems	predictable contexts under routine supervision and guidance, with initiative for self-responsibility and some responsibility for group outcomes
Level 4: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mainly factual, operational or technical knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects in one or more areas	well-developed technical skills required to analyse information and new ideas, make informed judgements, communicate outcomes and apply varied solutions to varied (familiar and unfamiliar) problems	varied (predictable and unpredictable) contexts with adaptability and initiative for self-direction under general guidance, taking full responsibility for self, some planning and responsibility for group outcomes and initiative for responsibility for others
Level 5: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mainly technical or theoretical knowledge with substantial depth in a discipline/ area	a range of well-developed technical skills, with some specialisation, required to analyse information and new ideas, construct and communicate a coherent argument, and apply a range of solutions, often in combination, to address unfamiliar problems	unpredictable contexts with full autonomy and full responsibility for self and group outcomes, and some responsibility for others
Level 6: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with specialisation in a discipline/ area	highly technical and specialised skills required to collate, analyse, synthesise and communicate a range of information and new ideas, and formulate or adapt different solutions to address complex and sometimes abstract problems	highly variable contexts with well-developed autonomy and responsibility for self and group outcomes and responsibility for resources and processes
Level 7: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	advanced analytical and/ or specialised knowledge of a discipline/ area	advanced, specialised skills required to demonstrate advanced analysis and initiative for new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate advanced solutions to address complex and abstract problems	complex and variable contexts with advanced autonomy and responsibility
Level 8: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	highly advanced, complex knowledge of a discipline/ area	highly advanced, complex skills required to demonstrate highly advanced analysis, communicate new insights and ideas in research and/ or innovation, and formulate highly advanced solutions to address highly complex and abstract problems	highly complex contexts with some specialisation demonstrating highly advanced autonomy and responsibility
Level 9: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	mastery of a complex body of knowledge at the forefront of a discipline/ area	skills mastery required to demonstrate originality and new insights in research and/ or innovation and formulate and test theories to show mastery of highly complex, abstract problems	highly specialised contexts demonstrating mastery in autonomy and responsibility
Level 10: the learning outcomes related to formal, non-formal and informal learning at this level include:	substantial and original knowledge contribution that extends the forefront of a discipline/ area and/ or at the interface between disciplines/ areas	expert skills and techniques that demonstrate innovation, interpretation and creation of new ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate and test theories to address emergent, new and critical problems	emergent new contexts demonstrating expertise in management of new ideas

ACQF AREAS OF ACTIVITY

❯ Referencing - Connecting African qualifications Frameworks and Systems

❯ Support Recognition of Prior Learning - Developing common guidelines and approaches

❯ ACQF Qualifications Platform and Management Information System - Supporting systemised information sharing

❯ Qualifications - Developing qualifications profiles for common continental use

❯ Capacity Development - Training programmes, peer learning activities, e-learning, technical support

❯ Networking and cooperation - of African stakeholders including recognition bodies, education and training providers, social partners, sector associations etc.

❯ Analysis, Monitoring, and Evaluation

ACQF MUTUAL LEARNING, MUTUAL TRUST

ACQF Website	Webinars **15**	Peer learning webinars (PLW) in 2020-2022
LMS Moodle	Duration **2**	Training Weeks
Newsletter	Modules **10**	Training Modules
Continental Mapping NQFs	Guidelines **10**	Technical Guidelines
Support to countries in NQF development path	Briefs **12**	Thematic Briefs
Contribution to international conferences and experts' meetings	Mapping Reports **13**	Country and regional mapping reports on NQFs
ACQF Policy and Technical Document	African Mapping Reports **1**	Mapping report on African school curriculum
	Report Review **1**	report review implementation SADCQF + 1 NQF inventory SADC
	Training Presentations **30**	Over 30 training presentations on all NQF themes
	PLW **40**	Over 40 country cases presented in PLW

Want to know more about ACQF?

Visit our website:

https://acqf.africa/

Learn more on qualifications frameworks and systems - view and download:

ACQF Mapping Study collection and updates: https://acqf.africa/resources/mapping-study

Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF): https://acqf.africa/resources/nqf-inventory

ACQF Guidelines: https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-guidelines

ACQF Training Modules: https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules

Training Webinars and Workshops: https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/webinars

Webinars with AQVN on recognition of qualifications https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/networks/networking-with-african-qualifications-verification-framework

Support to countries: https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/support-to-countries

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

Library of international literature: https://acqf.africa/resources/library

And much more on ACQF website for stakeholders, policy makers, education and training providers, learners and experts interested in themes and issues related to national and regional qualifications frameworks and their related systems, tools and governawnce.