

# ACQF

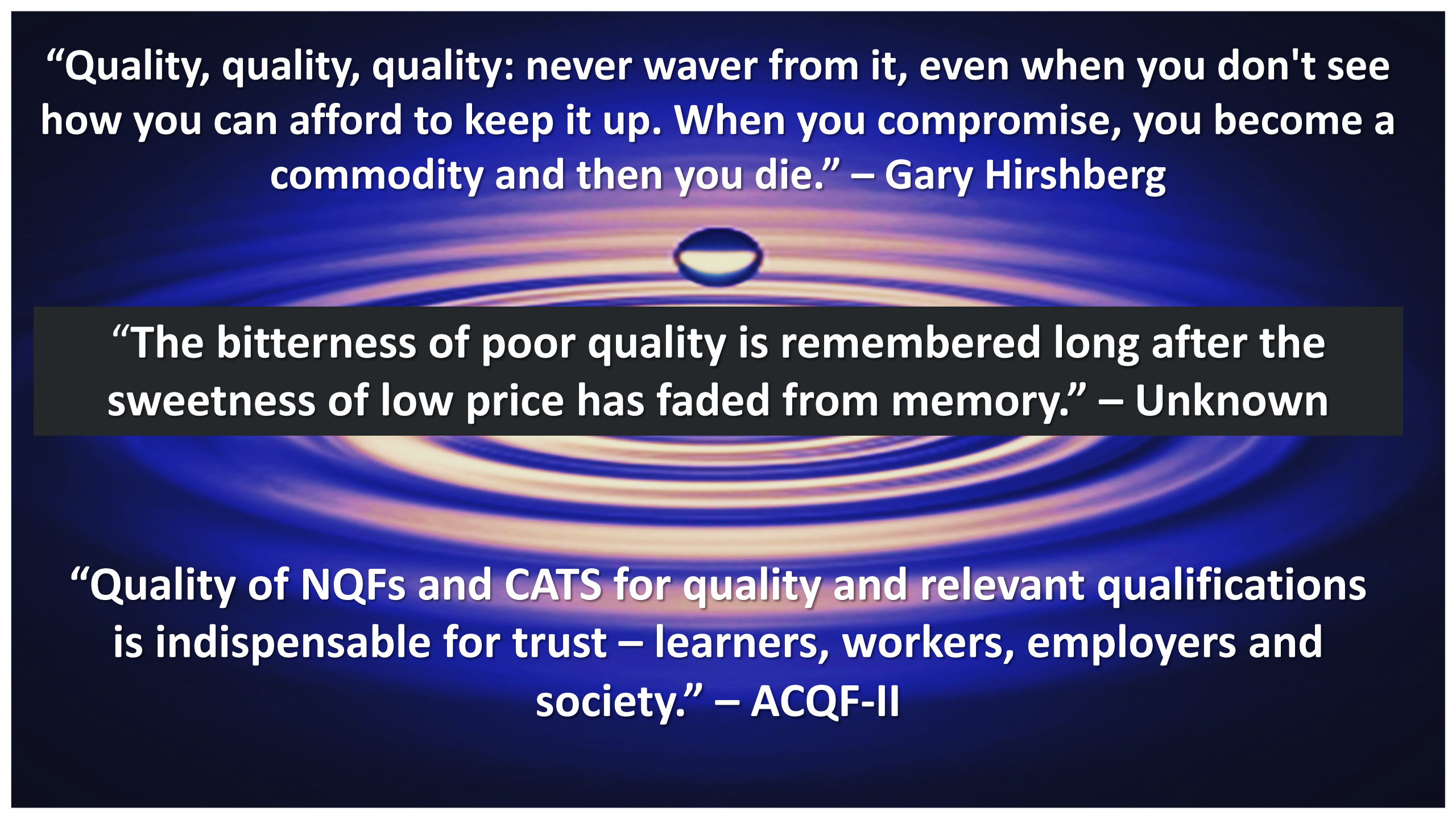
African Continental  
Qualifications Framework

## Quality Assurance of the SNQF and SNCATS



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**“Quality, quality, quality: never waver from it, even when you don't see how you can afford to keep it up. When you compromise, you become a commodity and then you die.” – Gary Hirshberg**

**“The bitterness of poor quality is remembered long after the sweetness of low price has faded from memory.” – Unknown**

**“Quality of NQFs and CATS for quality and relevant qualifications is indispensable for trust – learners, workers, employers and society.” – ACQF-II**

# What is quality?

Quality has different definitions some of which are:

- Fitness for purpose
- Meeting/ conformance to specified standards/ requirements
- A product or service free of deficiencies
- **For stakeholders, it is less about what you do behind the scenes, but more about what they can see or feel – perception matters.**



## What is quality assurance?

Definitions of quality assurance emphasise different dimensions of the concept.

- Some definitions highlight the **complementarity between quality assurance at system level (wider scope: NQF, NQS and related policies) and at education providers' level.**
- Other definitions focus specifically on **procedures for internal and external quality assurance at providers' level and at the level of quality assurance agencies.**

# What is quality assurance?...

- The [African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance \(ASG-QA\)](#) define quality assurance as a ‘*general term for procedures in **internal or external** quality assurance procedures including accreditation, evaluation, audit both on programme and institutional levels and also **concerning quality assurance agencies***’.

[UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#) takes into account three levels of quality assurance: **systemic, providers and programmes**.

➤ Quality assurance is ‘*an ongoing process by which the quality of a higher-education system, institution, or programme is assessed by the competent authority/authorities to assure stakeholders that acceptable educational standards are continuously being maintained and enhanced*’ (UNESCO 2019).

# What is quality assurance?...

Asia-Pacific, UNESCO: [Guideline for the quality assurance of technical vocational education and training](#)

- Quality assurance is defined as:- **planned** and **systematic processes** that provide **confidence** in services provided by TVET institutions under the remit of responsible bodies. Quality assurance of the assessment and qualification processes allows stakeholders in TVET qualifications (e.g., graduates and employers) to have **confidence and trust** in those qualifications’.

# ACQF What is quality assurance?...

## Quality assurance in TVET: wider definition - as a multi-dimensional perspective

Quality assurance can be viewed as the 'composite measures established to verify that processes and procedures are in place, which, when effective, ensure the quality and **quality improvement** of education and training [... and] guide **quality assurance in VET policies and approaches** so that they:

- are **fit for purpose and context** with emphasis on relevance and cost-effectiveness
- acknowledge that quality assurance is a dependent variable (on **context and other policy themes**)
- address **education and training inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes**
- apply the **quality cycle: plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate, review and renew**
- make **visible strengths, weaknesses, and improvement successes**
- promote quality improvement through a pervasive **quality culture**
- take into account internationally accepted quality assurance concepts and models' (ETF, 2015).

## Linkages between NQFs, CATS and QA

- NQFs and related policies are used as quality assurance tools in the education and training systems.
- The admission (registration) of a qualification to the national qualifications framework is seen as the highest benchmark of quality: awarding organisations that seek this position aim to meet the criteria laid down for admission to the framework (Coles 2016: 24).



# Linkages between NQFs, CATS and QA...cont'd

**NQFs and related policies provide the initial basis for quality assuring qualifications through:**

- Describing levels of qualifications and of learning inputs or outcomes across these levels or qualification types, or both;
- Criteria that define the quality of qualifications included in the NQF (accreditation);
- Criteria that define the minimum standards of quality assurance operated by bodies issuing qualifications in the NQF;
- Regulations or guidelines for linking qualifications, either at the same level or between different levels;
- Regulations or guidelines for accepting validated non-formal and informal learning for part or full qualifications; and
- Rules or guidelines for the volume of learning that contribute towards a qualification.

# Quality Assurance Functions in Education and Training

According to Bateman, Keating, Gillis et. al. (2012: 9-10) quality assurance of NQFs and CATS should include:

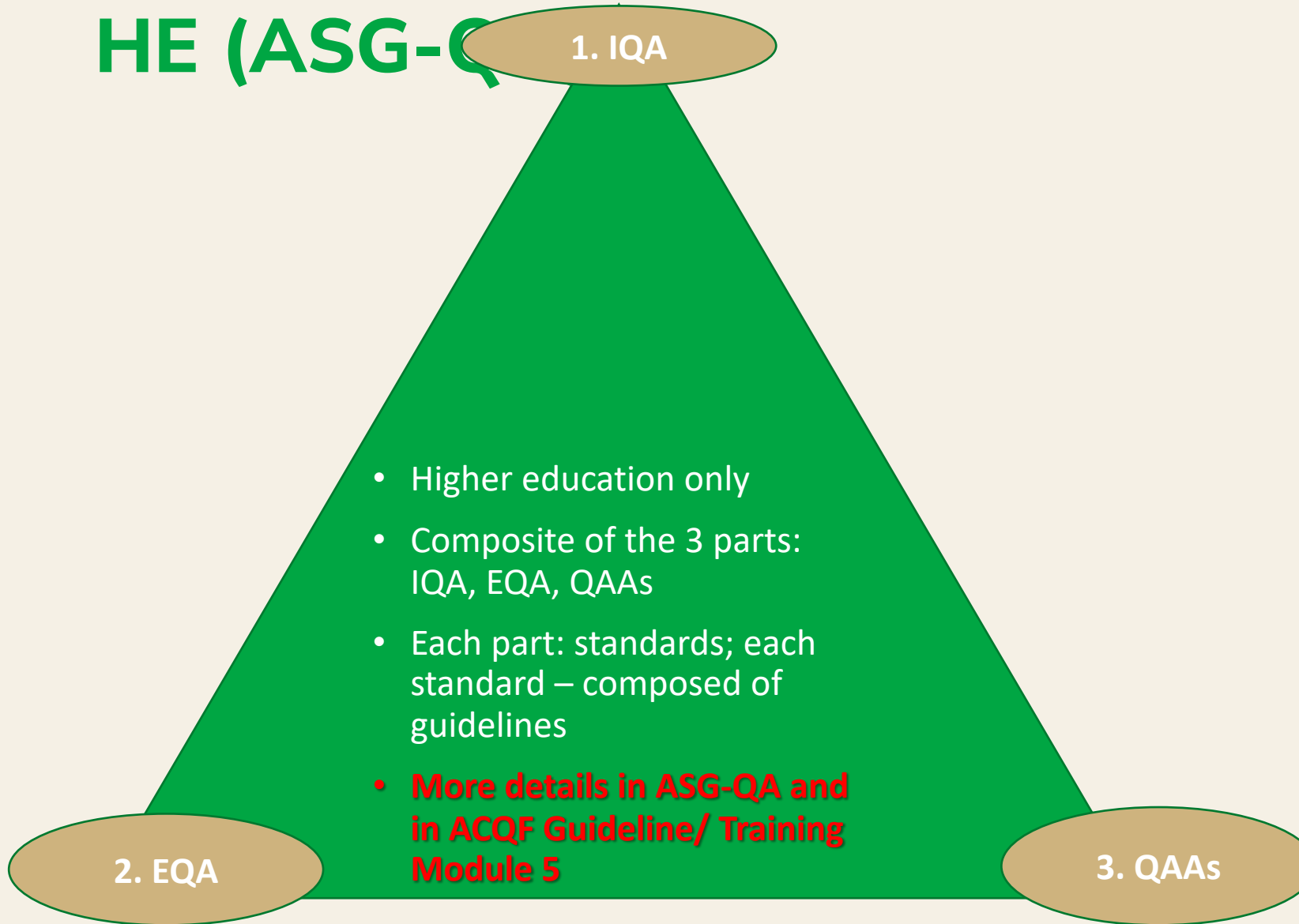
- The accreditation of learning programmes - and registration of qualifications;
- The registration of education and training providers through evaluation of their infrastructure, financial probity and health, staff qualifications and experience, management systems, delivery systems, research and student support systems;
- The monitoring and auditing of provider processes and outcomes, including student learning (also RPL – non-formal, informal/ life experiences) and employment outcomes, and student and employer satisfaction levels;
- The control, supervision or monitoring of assessment, certification and graduation processes and outcomes;
- Provider or system wide evaluations, including evaluations by external agencies; and
- The provision of public information on the performance of providers such as program completions, employment outcomes, and student and employer satisfaction.

# Governance of Quality Assurance Functions in Education and Training

Not all functions necessarily fall under the remit of one agency. Bateman, Keating, Gillis et. al. (2012: 10) indicate that countries typically divide these functions across different types of agencies. The types of agencies noted include:

- Accreditation/ QA agencies;
- Qualifications agencies and awarding bodies;
- Self-accrediting and/or awarding providers – through Acts, Charters, Decrees;
- Provider registration and monitoring agencies;
- Licensing agencies and professional bodies; and

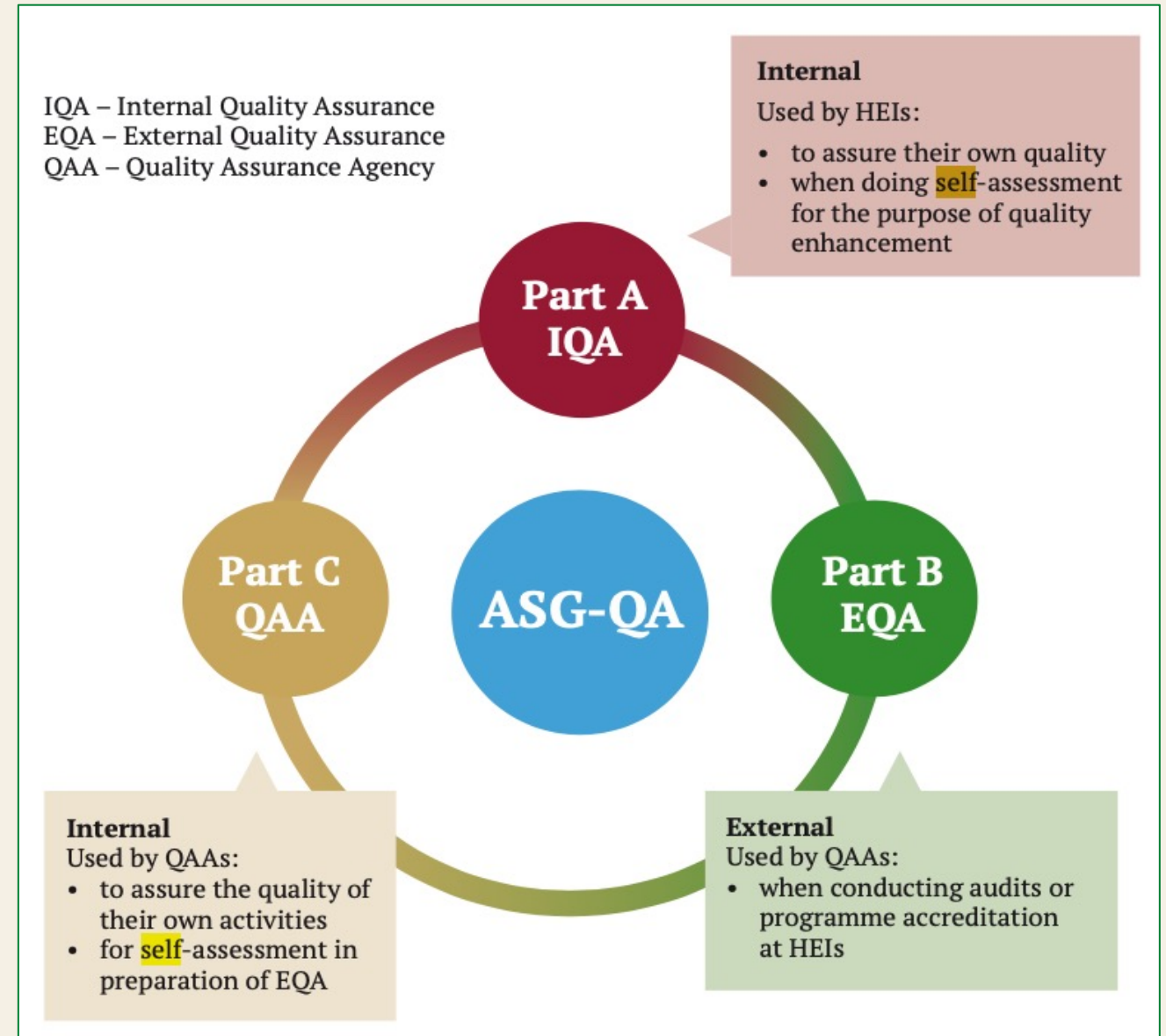
# African Standards and Guidelines for QA in HE (ASG-Q)



# African Standards and Guidelines for QA (ASG-QA)



QA of the SNQF and SNCATS





# Can QA frameworks be user-friendly and also robust?



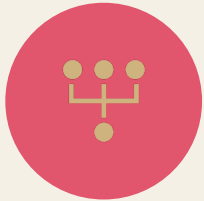
Balanced approaches – avoid over-regulation, over-bureaucratisation



Measure effectiveness of QA arrangements using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and data



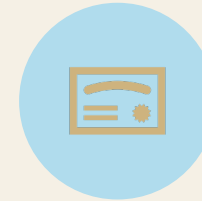
What is the cost of implementing vs non-implementing QA



How can QA adapt to change happening in learning and qualifications systems?



QA in LLL systems / LLL arrangements: a space for dialogue and learning across all sub-sectors; sharing of tools and methods; experimenting novel approaches



QA in spaces such: work-based learning, RPL, micro-credentials



And again: stakeholders buy-in and support is essential



Peer reviews

## Example of a QA Architecture – case of Zambia

- QA implemented at all levels – multilayer:
  - Ministry of Education
    - ❖ Department of Standards and Curriculum Development
    - ❖ Examinations Council of Zambia
  - NQF Authority - ZAQA
  - NQF Sub Framework QA Agencies (Appropriate Authorities) – TEVETA and HEA
  - Higher Education Institutions (Trades Institutes, Colleges and Universities).
- **The NQF and related policies on RPL and CATS are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure continued relevance and applicability – bi-annual QA coordination meetings, questionnaires, one-on-one interactions with stakeholders.**

- **Specific QA roles:**

- **Ministry of Education** – overall policy direction, including policies aimed at promoting quality and relevance of education and training in the country, overall oversight.
  - ❖ Department of Standards and Curriculum Development – development of standards for schools, development of curricula framework for general education, and inspection of schools.
  - ❖ Examinations Council of Zambia – Assessing quality of learning outcomes in the general education sub framework through conducting of examinations and awarding qualifications.
- **NQF Authority (ZAQA)** – (1) development and maintenance of the NQF and related standards (level descriptors, duration of qualifications and credits, NOS, etc.) and national policies on CATS and RPL, (2) Registration of qualifications – guidelines, processing and publication of list of registered qualifications, (3) Conducting of compliance audits on appropriate authorities to ensure implementation of the NQF standards and policies, (4) Validation and evaluation of qualifications.

# Example of a QA Architecture – case of Zambia...

- **Specific QA roles:**

- **NQF Sub Framework QA Agencies (Appropriate Authorities) – TEVETA and HEA**

- ❖ Registration of education and training institutions, and trainers/ assessors/ examiners – based on set standards
- ❖ Setting of the curricula framework for TEVET, run exams and award – TEVETA
- ❖ Accreditation of learning programmes – based on prescribed standards
- ❖ Inspection of education and training institutions/ establishments

- **Higher Education Institutions (Trades Institutes, Colleges and Universities)**
  - set up and implement internal QA systems and structures, peer reviews
  - intra-faculty, inter-faculty and inter institutional.

## And now...



- What form of QA architecture do you wish to adopt in Seychelles with regards to the SNQF and SNCATS – multilayer or single layer?
- Which institution(s) would play the key roles in this architecture?



**THANK  
YOU!**

