Introduction

This session elaborates on <u>referencing</u> of NQFs and systems to the ACQF as a core function of the ACQF as meta-QF for Africa.

To learn more:

✓ **ACQF Guideline 3 and Training Module 3**

At: https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/training-modules/training-modules-1-to-10-english

At: https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-guidelines/acqf-guideline-1-referencing-to-acqf/acqf-guideline-3-referecing-to-acqf-english
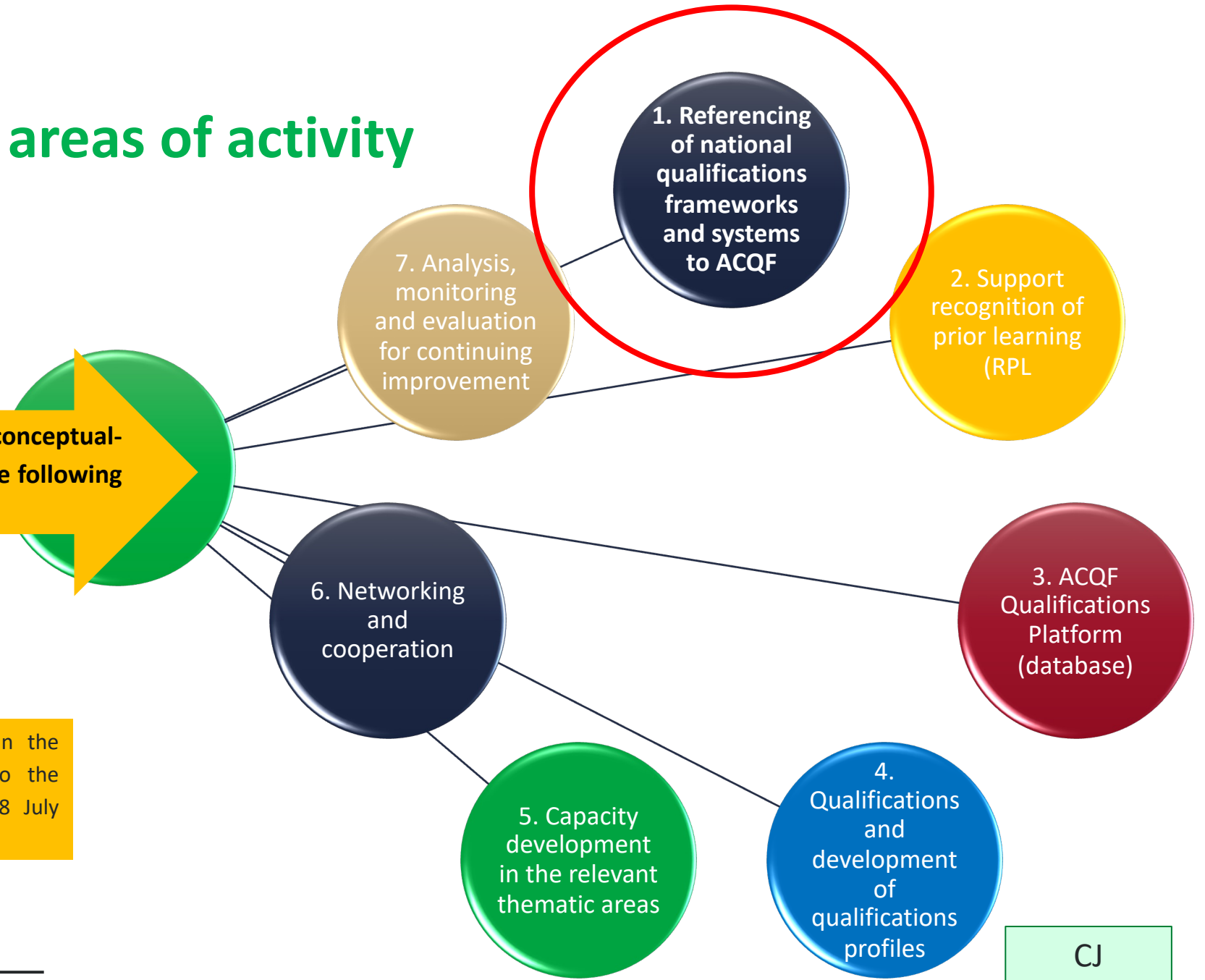

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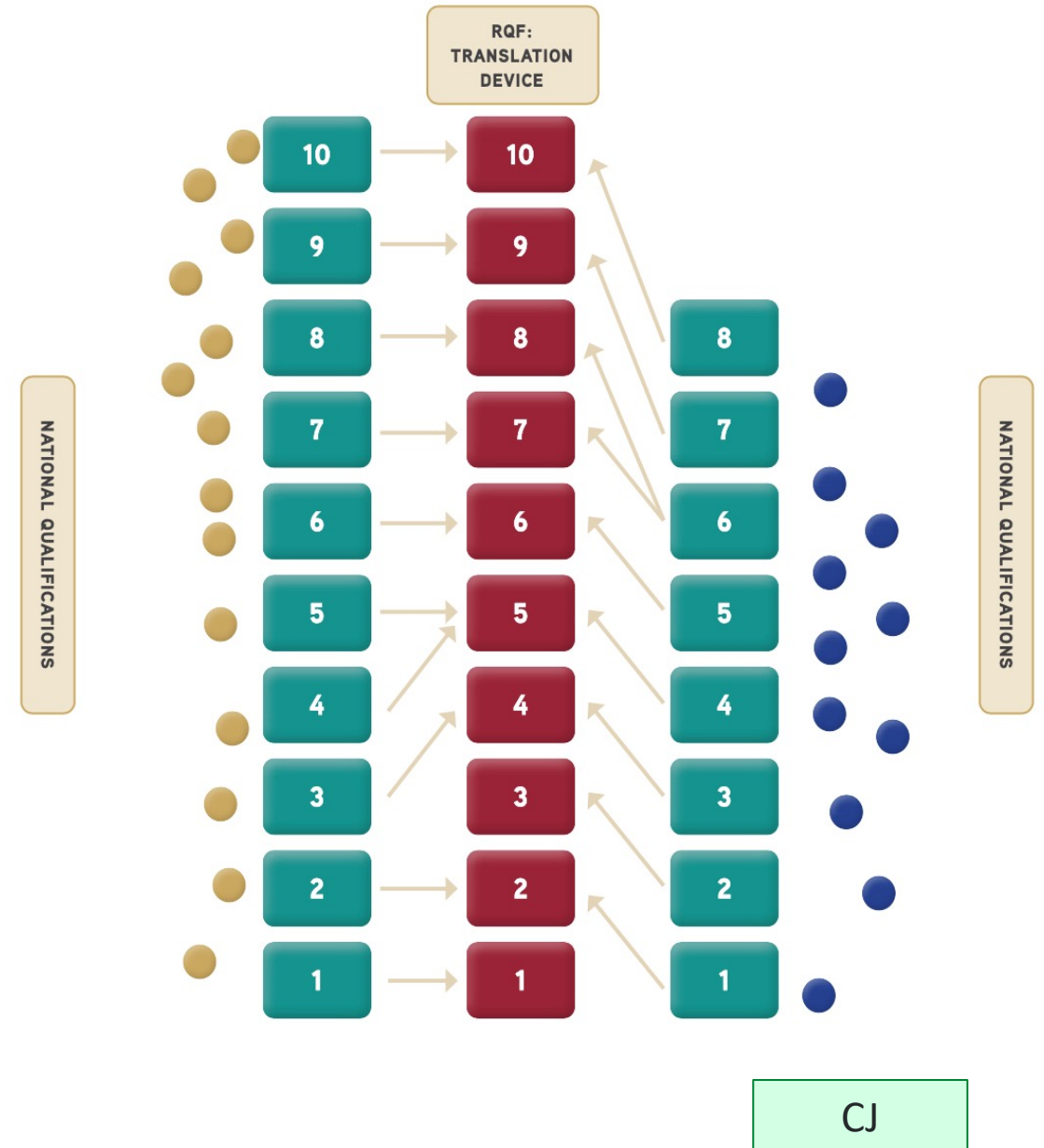
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Referencing: connect, compare, clarify, create trust

Referencing: ACQF areas of activity

"**By virtue of its objectives, principles and conceptual-technical design, the ACQF will deliver on the following main areas**:

These seven areas are developed in the ACQF Feasibility Study presented to the ACQF Advisory Group meeting of 28 July 2021.

1. Referencing of national qualifications frameworks and systems to ACQF

2. Support recognition of prior learning (RPL

3. ACQF Qualifications Platform (database)

4. Qualifications and development of qualifications profiles

5. Capacity development in the relevant thematic areas

6. Networking and cooperation

7. Analysis, monitoring and evaluation for continuing improvement

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Referencing

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Issues, which referencing addresses

Diversity of qualifications systems and frameworks	Levels and descriptors – interpret, use and understand	Underlying QA – how are qualifications designed, approved, renewed?	Use of learning outcomes?
Pathways and articulation?	"Invisible" learning outcomes of individuals?	Inclusion, progression	Value of national qualifications?

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Connect and create mutual trust

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

NQFs are above all about **people**'s skills, knowledge, competences, qualifications – in the national and international contexts.

Connect, link - to better understand each other, support development and generate mutual trust – the essence of a policy instrument **such as ACQF in the context of the African continent** and in relations with other parts of the world.

The process of referencing NQFs to ACQF is one of the main functions and tools to support this goal! It is **about mutual understanding, transparency, comparability.**

The referencing approach elaborated by the ACQF project is based on international practice and instruments – but is streamlined, simplified.

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Benefits of referencing

1. At **national levels**, referencing contributes to self-assessment of the status of the national qualifications framework and system to identify areas for reform and improvement and to draw attention to the NQF among national policy institutions and stakeholders. **Report = comprehensive description of the NQF (useful for information-sharing, recognition, mobility…)**

2. 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**.

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Referencing in brief

- Comparison, linking of frameworks (national and regional) – **documented in a report**

- Based on agreed criteria and procedures – for a **trusted** process and outcome

- **Self-assessment** – identification of areas for improvement

- **Peer review and dialogue**

- **Follow-up steps**: use of ACQF levels on qualifications documents and databases

- **Referencing can be updated** as the NQF evolves and embraces new demands, and types of qualifications

- Referencing is **not** a tool for ranking or competitive purposes

- Referencing – does **not** lead to automatic mutual recognition of qualifications

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Key elements of referencing

Referencing: ownership and demand orientation

- Countries and regions expressed interest to reference to ACQF during the inaugural event ACQF-II
  - ➢ Cabo Verde
  - ➢ Kenya
  - ➢ Mauritius
  - ➢ Seychelles
  - ➢ EAQFHE (East Africa Community – IUCEA)
  - ➢ Others

Guideline and TM 3: main topics – to help your referencing process

Conceptual and technical basis of referencing

- Definitions, objectives, benefits
- Referencing facilitates portability, recognition
- Post-referencing: ACQF levels on new qualifications documents, registers

Referencing model for ACQF referencing

- Criteria
- Report
- Workflow

Annexes

- Draft ToRs for national referencing team
- Self-assessment tool: 4 criteria and guidance

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ACQF

Step 1: Self-assessment and decision → **Step 2: Short training and roadmap** → **Step 3: Referencing report: state of play presentation**

Step 4: Referencing report, advanced draft → **Step 5: Referencing report, final draft. Sharing, presentation, debate.**

Comments and finalisation. Publication online

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Referencing requires capacity

ACQF implementation setting and ACQF Advisory Group (AG):

- In a transparent and participative approach, ACQF implementation setting will have the function and technical capacity to provide guidance and support to national referencing processes, to promote a participative and efficient model of referencing, to support information-sharing with all African Union countries, to endorse the completed countries' referencing reports, and ensure their publication on the ACQF website.

The **ACQF implementation setting and AG** will have the capacity to:
- Plan and prepare referencing
- Encourage countries to initiate referencing,
- Provide information, technical and methodological support to countries
- Support and provide guidance in referencing processes and consult with the countries / AG
- Organise the presentation, validation and publication of finalised referencing reports.

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Referencing criteria

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Referencing criteria: in different RQFs

EQF	ASEAN QRF	SADCQF	ACQF
10 criteria	11 criteria	10 criteria	**4 main criteria** + 1 block steps
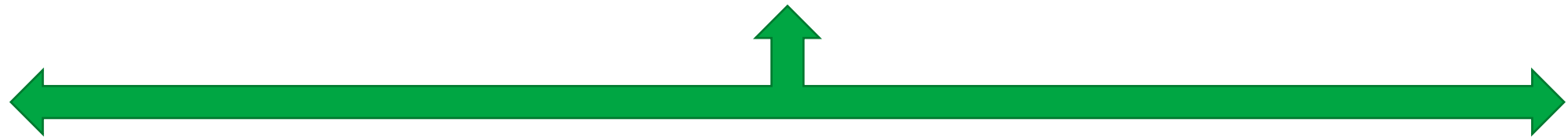
Similar, comparable

ACQF focuses:
- Level descriptors
- Learning outcomes
- Transparency - inclusion qualifications in NQF and **register**
- Quality assurance

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ACQF model

Takes account and is compatible with experience of other relevant RQFs: EQF, ASEAN QRF, SADCQF and goes beyond

Streamlined process and focus on major criteria

Enhances the self-assessment and peer learning aspects

Proposes elements of digitalisation of the process

Proposes support and capacity development to national referencing teams

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Referencing criteria: why and what for?

Apply = to all countries / regions

Essence of referencing
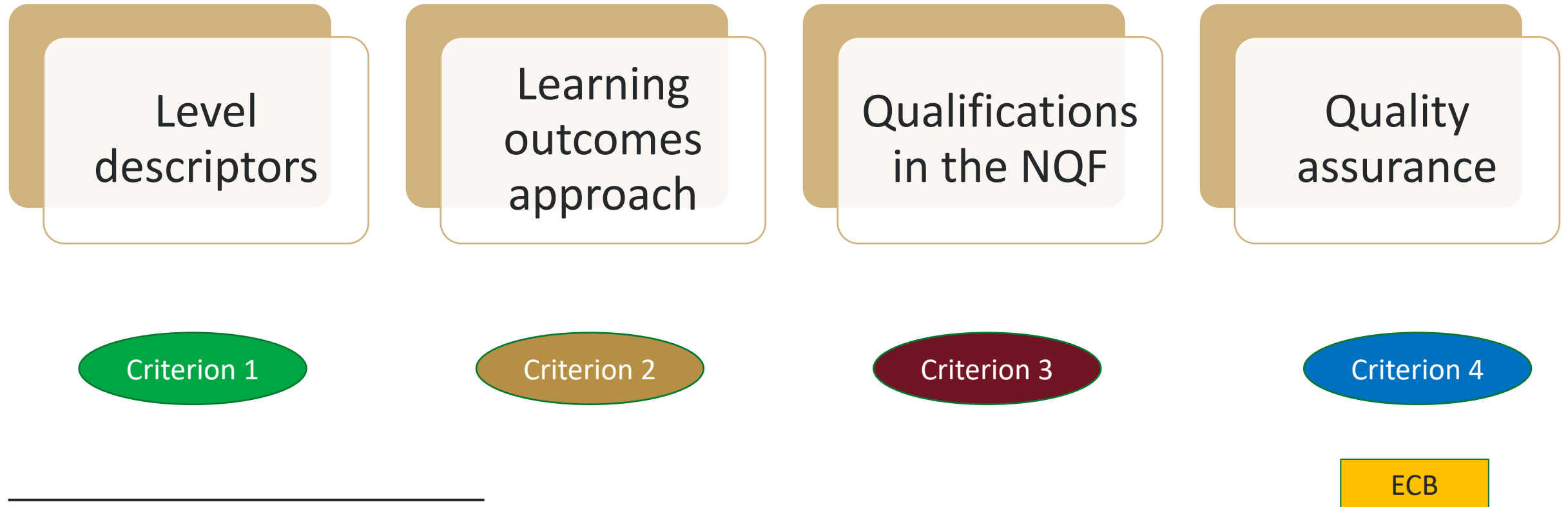
Guide national referencing teams

Comparability and transparency of process and outcomes of referencing

Global comparability of referencing

Quality assurance of referencing

Trust

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4 main criteria – focused on essential elements of any NQF

ACQF

Level descriptors

Learning outcomes approach

Qualifications in the NQF

Quality assurance

Criterion 1

Criterion 2

Criterion 3

Criterion 4

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Four criteria: Interplay between ACQF-NQF/NQS

ACQF Referencing Criterion 1:

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the **qualifications levels in the NQF or NQS and the level descriptors of the ACQF.**

ACQF Referencing Criterion 2:

The NQF or NQS are based on **learning outcomes** principles and related to arrangements for **RPL (incl non-formal and informal)** and, where appropriate, to **credit systems.**

ACQF Referencing Criterion 3:

There are transparent processes and procedures for **including qualifications** in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and **information on qualifications** is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in a national register(s) of qualifications.

ACQF Referencing Criterion 4:

The national quality assurance **(QA) system** for education and training refers to the NQF or NQS and is consistent with the principles of QA of the ACQF.

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Governance, procedures and follow-up

1. **Responsibilities and/or legal competence of relevant national bodies** involved in the ACQF referencing process are clearly defined and published by the relevant competent authorities.

2. The relevant national **quality assurance bodies state their agreement** with the referencing outcome and referencing report.

3. People from other countries who are experienced in the field of qualifications are involved in certain aspects and steps of the referencing process. Their role is advisory and supports transparency, improvement and credibility. The national referencing committee informs the ACQF implementation setting and AG on the involved **international experts.**

4. Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish **one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report,** which addresses all referencing criteria.

5. The **referencing outcome is published** by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF implementation setting and AG, on the dedicated ACQF website.

6. Following the completion of referencing, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g.: certificates, diplomas, supplements) and qualifications registers issued by the competent national authorities will contain a clear reference to the **appropriate ACQF level**, based on national legislation and procedures.

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Referencing report

ACQF

Referencing report structure defined by country's referencing team. However, few (4 suggested) minimum elements:

1 **Description of whole education and training system:**
Including adult learning, literacy and basic skills, continuing training; pathways for learners; QA; main institutions & stakeholders & their roles in the system; main legislative acts, regulatory texts

2 **The NQF:**
• Goals, principles, legal & regulatory acts, levels & descriptors, governance, registers / databases of qualifications, Status of implementation, Main challenges & plans for further development

3 **Country response to ACQF referencing criteria- sections elaborated by criterion:**
• Each criterion addressed in a dedicated section. Examples and evidence by criterion – in the Annexes.
• Brief overview of referencing process, stakeholders' involvement, endorsement by national competence bodies, follow-up measures; builds (refers to) on chapters describing education & training & NQF; use of examples & references to sources contributes to robustness & credibility of argumentation in this chapter, & is recommended

4 **Sources and annexes with relevant evidence**
• Relevant legislative-regulatory framework, guidelines, standards, important databases / registers, descriptions of qualifications types and examples
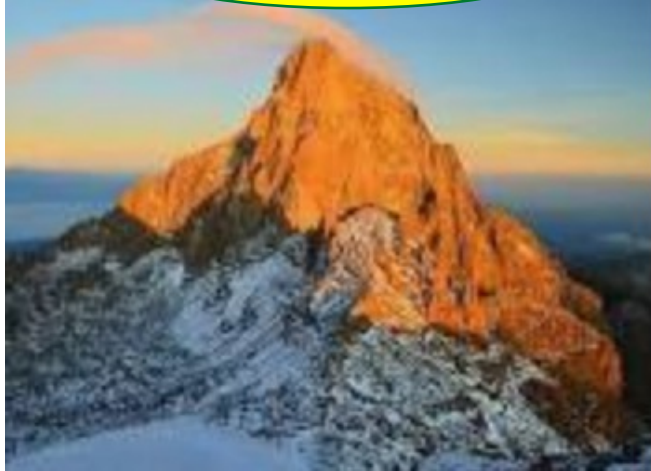
To ensure report is easy to read & understand, it should be structured in comprehensive & integrated way, make use of cross-referencing between chapters, use examples, & user-friendly layout

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Getting practical

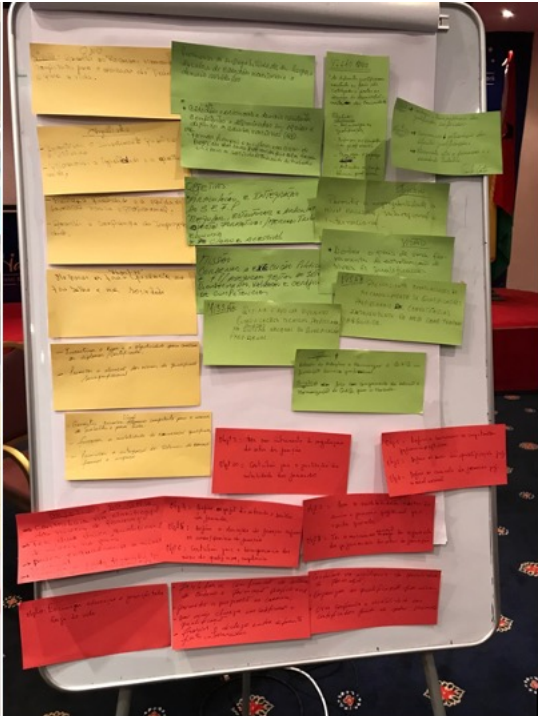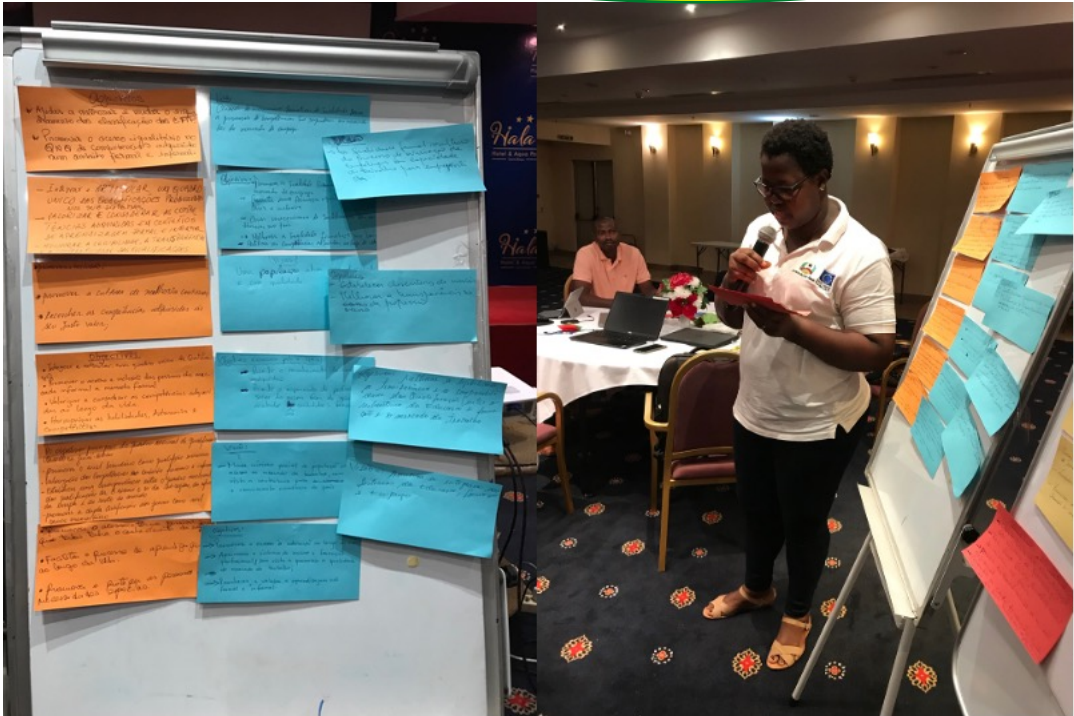ECB

Preparing to referencing: What is essential...

1. Goal, plan

2. Determination, capacity

3. Analysis, dialogue, drafting, support

Essential information on the working table of the referencing team

- Overview of education and training system for LLL. Diagrammes.

- NQF legal and regulatory basis, different acts and texts

- NQF level descriptors

- Register, catalogue of qualifications

- Qualifications description

- Qualifications development, approval, levelling tools (technical-methodological)

- Learning outcomes, standards: competence, occupational

- Main components of Quality Assurance

ACQF

Thank you!

- Coleen Jaftha
- Eduarda Castel-Branco