



Comparison of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and SADCQF

TCCA SADC meeting 09-10 May 2024

Session 5

Speakers: Fiona Ernesta and Eduarda Castel-Branco

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Members of the Working Group

EQF side:

- European Commission, DG EMPL – Skills Agenda Unit
- Germany
- Ireland
- Latvia
- European Students Union

Thank
you!

SADC side:

- SADC Secretariat
- Angola
- Botswana
- DR Congo
- Eswatini
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Seychelles
- South Africa
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

EQF: organisation, technical support, evidence collection, drafting of the report, follow-up with questions and complementary information collection

Comparison meetings

1) 28/Nov 2023	Comparison teams, approach, topics, working modalities, tasks, plan
2) 15/Jan 2024	Comparison dialogue: Topics 1-3
3) 30/Jan 2024	Comparison dialogue: Topics 4-6
4) 20/Feb 2024	Comparison dialogue: Topics 7-9
5) 19 Mar 2024	Comparison dialogue: Topics 10-11. Full overview
6) 08/Apr 2024	Comparison dialogue: discussion of report – complete draft 1
7) 29/Apr 2024	Comparison dialogue: discussion of report – complete draft 2. Report, Draft 2 for TCCA meeting 2nd week May – with Prefaces. To be presented to SADC ESTI Ministerial meeting Jun/2024. EQF AG meeting 10-11 June 2024. Comments from EQF AG to be integrated later.

Images of the comparison dialogue

Recap of 7t hand last meeting: 29/04/2024

- Discussed Version 1.3 of Comparison report
- Conclusions and Recommendations

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting grid with 16 participants. The participants are arranged in a 4x4 grid. The first row includes Tiina POLO EC DG EMPL, ETF Zoom4, Isabelle Le Mouillour (BIBB; DE), and Olavo Delgado Correia. The second row includes Guilhermina Samunda/INQ-ANGOLA, Fiona Ernesta, Micole, and Noella Baker-Albert (Seychelles). The third row includes Dulcinea Mayinguilá, James Mwewa, odisang, and Nhlapo. The fourth row includes Julia (BIBB), Erika - ZOOM Support, Tech Support, and Tech support. The bottom row shows INT PT RuiCorreia, INT PT - Alexandra Valle F..., INT - EN<>FR - Maria, and INTEN - FR Svetlana Spaic. The Zoom interface includes a recording indicator at the top left, a 'View' button at the top right, and a control bar at the bottom with icons for Mute, Stop Video, Security, Participants (20), Chat, Share Screen, Summary, AI Companion, Show Captions, Reactions, Interpretation, Apps, Whiteboards, Notes, and a red 'Leave' button.

Recap of the 6th meeting, 08/04/2024

- Recap of the comparison process
- Outline of the report
- Detailed discussion of the Executive Summary and main findings
- Roadmap to final report

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface with 34 participants. The main grid shows video thumbnails for participants such as Sindi Kayi (SAQA), ETF Zoom4, Tiina POLO EC DG EMPL, Latvia Baiba Ramina AIC, Isabelle Le Moullour (BIBB; DE), Carlos Mataruca, Dr Gushimana, Fiona Ernesta, odisang, Noella Baker-Albert, Dr R Ramdass, MQA, Annemarie J v Rensburg (SAQA), James Mwewa, Fillemon Iyambo, Olavo Delgado Correia, Guilhermina Samunda/INQ-A..., Privy Mchenga, Fidelis Cheelo, Micole, Nadia Starr (SAQA), Manuel Tabua, Edgarda Sacramento Neto - A..., Laurent NDAYWEL, Dulcinea Mayinguila, and ZOOM Support. The right-hand panel lists all 34 participants with their names and icons for video, audio, and chat. The bottom toolbar includes controls for Mute, Stop Video, Security, Participants (34), Share Screen, Reactions, Interpretation, Apps, Whiteboards, Notes, and a Leave button. The system tray at the bottom shows various application icons and the date/time: Mon 8 Apr 16:33.

Recap of Meeting 5, 19/03/2024

Working Group - comparison EQF-SADCQF at the meeting 5

- Completed cycle of comparison meetings – all 11 topics discussed.
- Survey: your views on conclusions and recommendations
- Discussed and agreed Outline report

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface with a 4x5 grid of participants. The top bar includes a 'Record' indicator, a 'Leave meeting' button, and a 'View' icon. The bottom bar contains various controls: Mute, Stop Video, Participants (28), Chat, Share Screen, Summary, AI Companion, Record, Show Captions, Reactions, Interpretation, Apps, Whiteboards, Notes, and a 'Leave' button. The participants' names and video thumbnails are visible, including Dr R Ramdass, MQA, Carlos Mataruca, and Erika - Zoom support. A '1/2' page indicator is visible on the left and right sides of the grid.

Meeting 4 20/02/2024

**Working Group -
comparison EQF-
SADCQF at the
meeting 4**

**Interpretation is
available in 3
languages: EN-FR-PT**

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface with a grid of 20 participants. The participants are arranged in a 4x5 grid. The top row shows five video thumbnails. The second row shows names: Fiona Ernesta, a video thumbnail of a woman with a European Union flag background, a video thumbnail of a woman, a video thumbnail of a man, and Fillemon Iyambo. The third row shows a video thumbnail of a man in a suit, a video thumbnail of a woman, a video thumbnail of a man, a green square with a white power button icon, and a video thumbnail of a man. The fourth row shows names: Erika - Opinno, Technical Producer, X - INT PT RuiCorreia, INT EN FR Viviane, and INT PT Alexandra Fernand... The bottom control bar includes icons for Mute, Stop Video, Security, Participants (29), Chat, Share Screen, Summary, AI Companion, Show Captions, Reactions, Interpretation, Apps, Whiteboards, Notes, More, and a red Leave button. The top status bar shows a recording icon and the text 'Recording...'. Navigation arrows on the left and right sides of the grid indicate page 1/2.

Recording... View

Ask to Unmute

1/2

1/2

Technical Producer

X - INT PT Rui CORREIA

INT PT - Alexandra FERN...

INT FR EN Viviane

Guilhermina Samunda/IN...

Mute Stop Video Security Participants 27 Chat 9 Share Screen Summary AI Companion Show Captions Reactions Interpretation Apps Whiteboards Notes More Leave

• Working Group - comparison EQF-SADCQF at Meeting 3 (30/01/2024)

Interpretation is available in 3 languages: EN-FR-PT

Today we will have the 3 languages in action

Section 1. EQF-SADCQF comparison: objectives, value-added

- Transparency
- Mutual trust
- Learning and understanding the “other’s” NQFs and systems

Context

This is the third exercise of comparison implemented under the umbrella of the pilot project of comparison of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) with qualifications frameworks from other countries and regions.

This pilot project is underpinned by the EQF Recommendation (2017), which gave a new impetus to international cooperation with EQF.

Objectives and value-added of comparison

The purpose of comparing qualifications frameworks is not to persuade other frameworks to comply with either the EQF or the SADCQF, but to analyse the commonalities and diversity, and learn with each other.

Comparing the EQF with other national and regional qualifications frameworks will facilitate the mutual understanding of qualifications between other national and regional qualifications frameworks and the EQF. A better understanding of qualifications will make their use and recognition easier.

Objectives and value-added of comparison

- Comparison of qualifications frameworks is a remarkable space for mutual discovery and mutual confidence.
 - Comparison contributes to strengthen links between education and qualifications systems of different contexts / countries.
 - Comparison creates knowledge and evidence on systems and policies, which would otherwise be poorly known outside their regions, and can inspire other countries and systems.
 - This mutual discovery motivates and prompts self-evaluation and self-awareness, and helps rethinking own achievements, new dilemmas, and the longstanding issues.

Section 2. Comparison process: Methodology. Topics

- **Dialogue**
- **Working group**
- **Topics: agreed scope with a degree of flexibility to context**

Topics of comparison

- 1) Objectives;
- 2) Scope;
- 3) Levels and level descriptors;
- 4) Learning outcomes and credit systems;
- 5) Recognition of prior learning / validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- 6) quality assurance;
- 7) Communication;
- 8) Recognition;
- 9) Governance;
- 10) Referencing / alignment.
- The 11th topic is a space for complementary information on the quality and transparency of the comparison process.

Process

Working Group EQF - SADCQF

Dialogue:
structured; series
of meetings
planned from start

Technical report
for each meeting

Joint presentations

Collection of
clarifications and
complements
between meetings

Discussion all
issues during
meetings

Main steps of the comparison

7 meetings with Working Group, from 28 Nov 2023 to 29 April 2024

Technical note for each meeting addressing the topics – into one report

Drafts of the comparison report:

- Comprehensive draft submitted at meeting 5 – without: Executive Summary; Conclusions and Recommendations
- Survey online collected your views and suggestions for Chapter Conclusions and Recommendations. Integration in complete version
- Draft 1.2 complete: Discussed at meeting 6 – focus on the Executive Summary
- Draft 1.3 complete: Integrated all comments of meeting 6 – shared for discussion at meeting 7.

Last round of review and consultation

- **Received**

- ✓ 9 submissions to Survey on Conclusions and Recommendations
- ✓ Comments, inputs and suggestions after 6th meeting from 6 countries
- ✓ Important issues from 6th meeting integrated in Version 1.3: a) Executive Summary = reduced to 5 pages; b) Definition of "Third Countries"; c) Diversity in response to context and historical path; d) Country cases – better designed and framed in the text.
- ✓ From these comments - many new inputs on country specific information. The integration generated additional country cases: South Africa and Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Improved chapter on Bologna Process – sharper focus on the QF EHEA

Final steps

- Collect more comments at last meeting (29 April)
- Present and discuss, validate the Version 1.3 at TCCA meeting on 09 May 2024
- **Prefaces!**
- Send to Tiina the report V1.4 – for EQF AG 9 – 10 June (version in EN, if possible edited)
- EQF AG 65: 10-11 June. In presence, not hybrid. SADC Representative: CEO of SQA and SADC Secretariat.
- Tiina: 2-3 weeks for comments from EQF AG. Integration in report – V.1.5 for final editing and translation. Steps for publication
- Wider webinar for all SADC, African countries, ACQF stakeholders.

Section 3. Comparison report

- It is ready for discussion
- Focuses on the 2 meta-frameworks and is backed by country cases
- Robust set of cases related to the SADCQF and the related NQFs

Report outline

1. Executive
Summary (6 pg)

2. Introduction to
the comparison

3. Overview of
the SADC and EU

4. Overview of
EQF and SADCQF

5. Comparison
results – 11 topics
(71 pg)

6. Conclusions
and
recommendations

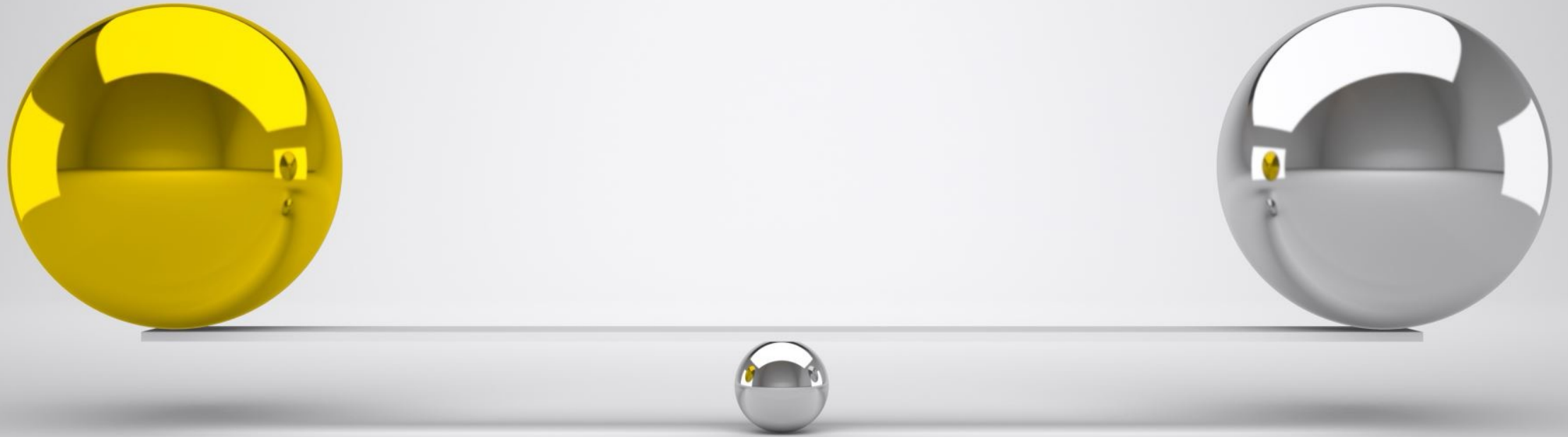
Glossary, Sources,
Annexes

Comparison backed by evidence

- Robust information and evidence on relevant concepts, policies, legal basis, application
- **Country cases** illustrating the status of implementation, review and innovation
- Concept of “**non-substantial difference**” adapted to the domain of comparison - from the area of recognition of qualifications
- Content related to SADCQF context along all **11 topics – sources**:
 - ✓ Report: Review of implementation of the SADCQF. Approved by Joint ESTI Ministerial Meeting in June 2022.
 - ✓ Annex to the Review report: Inventory of NQF in the SADC.
 - ✓ Specific inputs and updates from SADC Member States

Section 4. Results of the comparison











- All members of the Comparison Working Group agreed: the 2 meta-frameworks are comparable.
- The identified differences are non-substantial



Comparison

Transparency and mutual trust

Summary of comparison

Topic	Higher similarity	Greater diversity	Comments
1. Objectives			Similarity high; main difference: Learning Outcomes as an objective of EQF
2. Scope			Identical scope: inclusive, all modes of learning and levels
3. Levels and descriptors			Differences in level structure. Similar domains of descriptors.
4. Learning outcomes			SADCQF less explicit; at NQF level: promoted, developed, implemented
5. RPL			High similarity – regional and national
6. Quality assurance			Similar reference principles – regional; ESG-QA; SADCQF QA Guidelines and ASG-QA
7. Communication			Difference: in implementation
8. Recognition			Recognition Conventions (Addis, Lisbon): similar concepts and principles.
9. Governance			Coordination entity; differences: role of MS; implementation
10. Referencing			Similar objectives, criteria and procedures. Difference: in implementation

Similarities and differences

Similarities: concepts, principles,
objectives

Differences: esp. in implementation

Some discussed issues

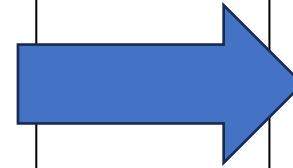
- On Harmonisation
- On Differences vs Diversity

“Harmonisation”

- **EQF: no “harmonisation” objective**
- **SADC: yes**
 - 8 times mentioned in the SADCQF Booklet
 - “The SADCQF and the NQFs should be well linked and co-ordinated as a critical component of the harmonisation process”.
 - **But** this is done in full respect of the national legislative context, and maintaining autonomy of national institutions (pg 8)
- In the case of the SADCQF no legislation at regional level is envisaged. The focus will rather be on respect for the legislation already in place in Member States. The intention of the SADCQF is to allow for more flexible arrangements, based on agreements, protocols, conventions or specific guidelines. The Protocol on Education and Training is already based on the principle of Member States agreeing on specific areas of co-operation. Institutions in SADC are urged to comply and honour the spirit of the Protocol without any enforcement and while maintaining the necessary autonomy.
- This is also in line with the Addis Recognition Convention calling for respect of the national character and the cultures of the education and training systems in the member countries in Africa.

“Harmonisation”

- **SADC:** the key strategic documents identified **development and harmonisation of qualification and accreditation systems and frameworks** as a key strategy for addressing the lack of comparable standards and qualifications across the region. This was also informed by the accelerating trend towards development of qualifications frameworks as instruments to develop, classify and recognise formal learning across the African continent, as is also the case across Europe, the Caribbean and the Asia-Pacific region. As more and more countries and regions across the world develop qualifications frameworks to improve **harmonisation of education and training systems** and **comparability of qualifications**, it is becoming increasingly evident that Africa has not remained unaffected.



- **Harmonisation as...**
 - Development
 - Comparability at regional level of standards and qualifications
 - Participation in global and continental African trends and dynamics

Sum-up: The concept of “harmonisation” in the context of SADCQF does not show a substantial different in relation to the concept and practice of voluntary cooperation in the EQF context supporting comparability, transparency and mutual trust between NQFs / systems.

In EQF / EU level context of education and training

Harmonisation between MS – not part of language and legal basis

But voluntary cooperation on a range of initiatives and processes – contribute to approximation, comparability. Ex.: Bologna process

Topic 1

Objectives



Topic 1: Objectives

Tiina,
Mboni

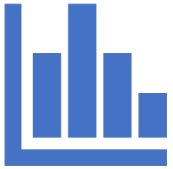
1. WIDER OBJECTIVES

- **SADCQF**

The SADCQF is a regional mechanism for **comparability and recognition** of full qualifications, credit transfer, **creation of regional standards and facilitation of Quality assurance**. It consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures, and standardised terminology intended to meet the purposes of the SADCQF.

- **EQF**

- The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning created a common reference framework of eight levels of qualifications, expressed as learning outcomes with increasing levels of proficiency. They serve as a **translation device** between different qualifications systems and their levels. **The purpose of the EQF is to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications.**
- EQF Recommendation of 2017: the wider objectives of the EQF are: to contribute to **modernising education and training systems and to increase the employability, mobility and social integration of workers and learners**. It further aims at better **linking formal, non-formal and informal learning and supporting the validation of learning outcomes acquired in different settings**.
- EQF contributes to recognition of skills and qualifications, by supporting comparability and transparency of qualifications.
- Support links and comparison with qualifications frameworks of countries and regions beyond the EQF area, which aspire to mutual learning and cooperation with the EQF.



Topic 1: Objectives

Tiina,
Mboni

2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

• SADCQF

- Providing a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC
- Facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications in all Member States
- Harmonising qualifications wherever possible,
- Promoting the transfer of credits within and among Member States and even beyond
- Creating SADC regional standards where appropriate.
- SADCQF will contribute to the:
 - Development and implementation of NQFs in the Member States
 - Harmonisation between NQFs in Member States,
 - Review and strengthening of national assessment and accreditation systems, and
 - Facilitation of agreement on entrance requirements to higher education and training .

• EQF

- Referencing of NQFs to EQF; update and renewal of referencing, as NQFs evolve and change over time.
- Use of EQF levels on newly issued qualifications and databases of qualifications of countries with NQFs referenced to EQF.
- Promote links between credit accumulation and transfer systems and NQFs, helping individuals to progress in learning by facilitating flexible learning pathways and transfer across different levels and types of education and training and across national borders, enabling learners to accumulate and transfer different learning outcomes acquired in different learning contexts, including online, non-formal and informal learning. The learning outcomes approach can also facilitate the design, delivery and assessment of full qualifications or components of qualifications.



Topic 1: Objectives (3)

Tiina,
Mboni

3. SUM-UP

• SIMILARITIES

Both frameworks share a number of purposes and expected benefits, notably:

- Comparability of qualifications
- Quality of education and training and qualifications
- Trust in qualifications
- Learning progression, use of credit systems linked to NQFs
- Facilitate recognition of qualifications
- Support employability, mobility and social integration of learners and workers
- Dialogue and mutual understanding
- Improve education and training systems

• DIFFERENCES / SPECIFICITIES

- Learning outcomes:
 - EQF places a major emphasis on the primacy of learning outcomes in developing and implementing NQFs, for comparability, transparency, progression, mobility. The SADCQF Booklet does not explicitly mention learning outcomes among the objectives, benefits, and underlying principles of the framework. Learning outcomes are mentioned in two main sections: a) Design features: SADC qualifications portal will include qualifications described through outcome statements; b) QA Guidelines: the 11th point of the Guidelines mentions learning outcomes.
- Harmonising qualifications and creation of regional standards:
 - These concepts feature among the five key objectives of SADCQF. In the context of the Treaty on Functioning of the EU (TFEU, Art 165) any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States is excluded in the areas of education and training. Therefore, the EU and the EQF have no competence to harmonise and standardise qualifications. Instead, the TFEU encourages cooperation between Member States and if necessary, supports and supplements their action while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and organisation of their education systems.



Topic 1: Objectives

Tiina,
Mboni

Conclusions on Topic 1:

- The analysis and dialogue have identified important similarities in the nature and objectives of the SADCQF and the EQF and it is legitimate to consider that both frameworks are comparable.
- Both are meta-frameworks – for comparison, linking and referencing of NQFs

Topic 2

Scope



Topic 2: Scope

- **Both the SADCQF and the EQF are comprehensive and inclusive:** they cover qualifications from all education and training subsystems, of all levels and types. Both consider and support learning in different contexts: formal, non-formal and informal.
- **Both are meta-frameworks – conceived to be translation devices for comparison, linking and referencing between NQFs**
 - They do not directly contain qualifications
 - The qualifications are national and registered in national databases / catalogues / registers
 - But EQF supports countries with the necessary infrastructure and technical means to publish information on national learning opportunities and qualifications through the Europass Platform.



Topic 2: Scope – Sum-up

Tiina, Mercy

- The scope of the two frameworks is identical: both are comprehensive, inclusive of all forms of learning and levels of qualifications. **From the point of view of scope, both frameworks are comparable.**
- The large majority of NQFs in the SADC and EQF contexts are comprehensive in scope (all levels and sub-systems of education and training, and acknowledge all forms of learning (formal, non-formal, informal)).
- Registers of qualifications in SADC countries are at different levels of development.
 - Some countries have comprehensive and unified databases of qualifications, accessible online, and based on harmonised structure of qualifications (South Africa – [SAQA](#) and Botswana – [BQA](#)).
 - Other countries have developed and updated online qualifications databases of a sectoral scope, which include qualifications of a few levels of the NQF. Examples: Mauritius – MQA manages the [National Qualifications and Unit Standards](#) (levels 1-6); in Mozambique, ANEP manages the [National Catalogue](#) of professional / vocational qualifications – levels 1 to 5.

Topic 3

Levels and
descriptors



Topic 3: Levels and level descriptors

- A **level descriptor** is a statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the type of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate for a qualification at that level. (SAQA)



Topic 3: Levels and level descriptors

Tiina, Sindi

Dimension	SADCQF	EQF
Structure	10 levels	8 levels
Domains of learning of descriptors	<p>Knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility.</p> <p>There is no explicit definition of the domains of learning.</p>	<p>Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.</p> <p><u>Domains</u>: Knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy</p> <p><u>EQF level descriptors</u>: domains of learning are defined in Annex II to the EQF Recommendation, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Knowledge: Within the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.- Skills: Within the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (including the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practices (implying manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);- Responsibility and autonomy: Within the EQF, responsibility and autonomy are described as the learner's ability to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and responsibly.



Topic 3: Levels and level descriptors – examples from SADC

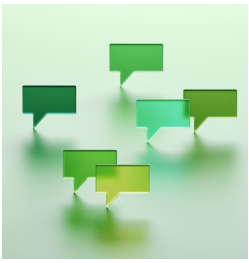
Sindi

- Knowledge, skills and competence (Botswana)
- Knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility (Mozambique, Angola)
- Areas of knowledge; nature of skills; agency and context (Lesotho)
- Learning demand and processes (Mauritius)
- Knowledge, skills, competences (Zambia – ***NEW in adoption***)
- Applied competencies: Scope of knowledge; knowledge literacy; method and procedure; problem solving; ethics and professional practice; accessing, processing, and managing information; producing and communicating information; context and systems; management of learning; accountability (South Africa).



Topic 3: SADCQF Level descriptors

Domains of learning				
Framework	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
SADCQF	1	Demonstrates basic general knowledge and numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes	Can follow simple instructions and perform actions required to carry out simple concrete tasks requiring no special skills	Works under close supervision in familiar situations and structured contexts
SADCQF	5	Demonstrates a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas, ability to analyse information and construct a coherent argument	Applies a wide range of technical and/or scholastic skills in variable contexts using standard and non-standard procedures, often in combination	Works independently under broad guidance and can take some responsibility for supervising the work of others and group outcomes
SADCQF	10	Makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship	Conducts original research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards. Demonstrates problem-solving ability and critical evaluation of research findings for academic discussion	Demonstrates full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of advanced research work



Topic 3: Levels and level descriptors

Tiina, Sindi

Conclusions on Topic 3:

Similarities

- Domains of learning of level descriptors: KSAR – KSRA
- Concept and formulation: high level, less detailed than level descriptors of NQFs – this is usual for meta-frameworks.

Conclusions on Topic 3:

Differences

- Structure: 8 (EQF) and 10 levels (SADCQF)
- All NQFs in SADC: 10 levels
- Large majority of NQFs in EQF context: 8 levels. Some exceptions: Ireland, Iceland, Slovenia.

Semantic comparison of level descriptors

Semantic
comparison level
descriptors

Mapping of
levels

Semantic comparison level descriptors

Euarda, Baiba,
Ramesh

- As agreed at meeting 2: created sub-group to reflect and do the semantic comparison of level descriptors EQF-SADCQF
- Template used for this comparison – similar to referencing practices
- Added: comparison of levels / map of 3 NQFs on each side.

Main conclusion

- No substantial differences. Frameworks are comparable.
- Differences: formulations SADCQF more detailed, wordy and comprehensive than EQF's
- Vertical logic level descriptors: certain terms partially match – ex.: scholastic skills and cognitive skills
- Proposed mapping of levels of EQF-SADCQF - accepted

On substantial differences

- From the UNESCO Global convention on recognition of qualifications:
“**Substantial differences:** significant differences between the foreign qualification and the qualification of the State Party which would most likely prevent the applicant from succeeding in a desired activity, such as, but not limited to, further study, research activities, or employment opportunities.”
- Based on this definition, the sub-group proposes an adaptation to the purposes of the comparison EQF-SADCQF as follows:
 - “Substantial differences mean significant differences between the qualifications and the level descriptors of the Frameworks which would most likely prevent the framework from succeeding in alignment and comparability.”

Mapping of levels EQF-SADCQF

SADCQF	EQF
Level 10	Level 8
Level 9	Level 7
Level 8	Level 6
Level 7	
Level 6	Level 5
Level 5	Level 4
Level 4	Level 3
Level 3	Level 2
Level 2	Level 1
Level 1	

SADCQF

EQF

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
10	Makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship.	Conducts original research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards. Demonstrates problem solving ability and critical evaluation of research findings for academic discussion.	Demonstrates full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of advanced research work.	Level 8 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are	knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research
9	Demonstrates mastery in theoretically sophisticated subject matter, showing critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline area.	Conducts original research deploying appropriate research methods and processes primary and secondary source information using rigorous intellectual analysis and independent thinking and applies knowledge in new situations; and demonstrates independent thinking, problem solving, critical evaluation of research findings and ability to make judgements based on knowledge and evidence.	Shows independence, initiative and originality and the ability to manage own and group outcomes in complex and unpredictable situations.	Level 7 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are	highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
8	Demonstrates critical understanding of the principles, theories, methodologies, current research and literature of the discipline.	Demonstrates capacity to use a coherent and critical understanding of the principles, theories and methodologies of a particular discipline. Selects and applies appropriate research methods and techniques, and critical analysis and independent evaluation of information.	Operates within the context of a strategic plan with complete accountability for management of resources and supervision of others.	Level 6 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are	advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
7	Demonstrates knowledge of a major discipline with possible areas of specialisation, including command of the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of the recognised discipline	Demonstrates intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytical rigor, and advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable contexts.	Designs and manages processes and works with broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and group outcomes.				

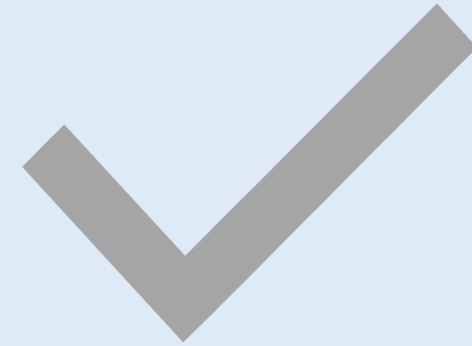
SADCQF

EQF

6	Demonstrates specialist knowledge in more than one area and ability to collate, analyse and synthesise a wide range of technical information.	Demonstrate ability to apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts and formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems.	Manages processes and works with complete accountability for personal and group outcomes.	Level 5 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others
5	Demonstrates a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas, ability to analyse information and construct a coherent argument.	Applies a wide range of technical and/or scholastic skills in variable contexts using standard and non-standard procedures, often in combination.	Works independently under broad guidance and can take some responsibility for supervising the work of others and group outcomes.	Level 4 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
4	Demonstrates a broad knowledge base, incorporating some abstract and technical concepts, and ability to analyse information and make informed judgements.	Applies a moderate range of technical and/or scholastic skills which are transferable in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, using routine and non-routine procedures.	Shows ability for self-direction, requiring little supervision, and complete responsibility for own outcomes and some responsibility for group outcomes.	Level 3 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
3	Demonstrates basic operational and theoretical knowledge and ability to interpret information.	Demonstrates a range of well-developed skills and ability to apply known solutions to familiar problems.	Works under general supervision with some responsibility for quality and quantity of output.	Level 2 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are	basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	work or study under supervision with some autonomy
2	Demonstrates recall and a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills.	Can carry out processes that are limited in range, repetitive and familiar.	Applied in directed activity under close supervision.	Level 1 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are	basic general knowledge	basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
1	Demonstrates basic general knowledge and numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes.	Can follow simple instructions and perform actions required to carry out simple concrete tasks requiring no special skills.	Works under close supervision in familiar situations and structured contexts.		Comment: EQF Level descriptors of level 1 are formulated in short and generic terms; they are closer to SADFQF level 1		



Topic 4



Learning Outcomes

Credit systems

In the EQF context (1)

- The EQF promotes the use of learning outcomes and the shift to learning outcomes.
- The Annex I of the [EQF Recommendation](#) (2017) defines:
 - *‘Learning outcomes’* means statements regarding what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy;
- Learning outcomes are mentioned among the **key objectives of the EQF**, notably:
 - Recommendation 10 addressed to the European Commission and the EQF countries and stakeholders, states: “With due regard to national contexts, **support the development of methodologies for the description, use and application of learning outcomes** to increase transparency and the understanding and comparability of qualifications.”
- Learning outcomes are the heart of **criterion 3 of referencing of NQFs to EQF**:
 - “The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of **learning outcomes** and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to **credit systems**.”

In the EQF context (2)

- The [EQF Recommendation](#) (2017) frequently mentions “learning outcomes”, as a major principle and instrument for a diversity of situations of NQF and EQF implementation, especially:

A. In the wider context of NQF implementation:

- The learning outcomes approach is implemented widely in most EQF countries.
- For the key purposes of qualifications in the labour market, lifelong learning, and mobility
- Assessment and validation of learning achievement to given standards.
- Modernisation of education and training systems, inclusion. All forms of learning (formal, non-formal, informal)
- For implementation of credit accumulation and transfer systems

B. In the specific context of EQF implementation:

- Formulation of level descriptors
- Referencing NQF-EQF (criterion 3)
- Transparency of qualifications documents, especially when they indicate EQF levels
- Make the results of referencing widely known and publish information on qualifications and their learning outcomes.

In the context of SADCQF (1)

The [SADCQF Booklet \(2017\)](#) mentions 'learning outcomes' at two instances:

- **Firstly, In the design features (pp 5):**

“The SADCQF will be a reference framework. It consists of:

- Ten levels described by SADC level descriptors as contained in Annexure 1,
- A SADC qualifications portal that includes part-qualifications and full qualifications, described through **outcome statements** and including credits where applicable, that are formally recognised in SADC Member States, and SADC QA guidelines as contained in Annexure 2.”

- **Secondly, in the Annexure 2: SADC quality assurance guidelines:**

- “xi. Develop, induce and, where necessary, enforce adherence to defined and regionally agreed education quality and performance standards and indicators, **learning outcomes** and programme monitoring criteria and procedures.”
- In other documents, SADCQF provided orientations to Member States on the criteria for alignment of NQFs to SADCQF. Criterion 3 is very similar to the relevant criterion in the EQF context and states:
 - “The **NQF/ NQS is based on learning outcomes** and links to non-formal and informal learning and credit systems (where these exist);”

In the context of SADCQF (2)

At national level,

- The principles of learning outcomes are part of the concepts, goals, and instruments of most NQFs and education and training systems. The extent and depth of implementation of learning outcomes approach(es) varies between countries, and within countries (between sub-sectors and sub-frameworks).
- **Learning outcomes are a structuring feature of many NQFs and National Qualifications Authorities' regulations, and are used for / as:**
 - Design and renewal of qualifications (full and part qualifications)
 - Requirement of registration procedures in national qualifications databases
 - Part of internal and external quality assurance (accreditation)
 - Outcomes-based / competence-based standards and qualifications are used in recognition of prior learning
 - Credit accumulation and transfer systems
 - Recognition of foreign qualifications

In the context of SADCQF (3)

Nadia, Sindy

2 USE CASES / EXAMPLES – National level

- **Lesotho Qualifications Framework (LQF)**
 - The [Procedures Manual of the LQF](#) contains specific guidance on the role and use of learning outcomes in qualifications design and management and a chapter specifically dedicated to the methodology of writing learning outcomes.
 - The LQF Procedures Manual states: “Learning Outcomes (LOs) are central in the specification of qualifications for the LQF”
- **Registration of qualifications in national qualifications register / Database: comparison of three cases (Botswana, South Africa, Zambia)**
 - A comparative analysis of qualifications registration procedures in three countries with advanced NQF experience (Botswana, South Africa, and Zambia) was summarized in the ACQF Technical Note 2 (2023). There are main common requirements for development, registration, re-registration, and de-registration of qualifications, including learning outcomes approach (ACQF Technical Note 2, 2023. <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/technical-notes/technical-note-2-registration-of-qualifications-comparison>)
- There are main common requirements for development, registration, re-registration, and de-registration of qualifications, including learning outcomes approach:
 - Stakeholder endorsements: Quality Council/ Provider/ Qualification developer; Sub-Framework and related qualification descriptors/ naming of qualifications/ Qualification Title/; Organising Field and Sub-Field; Alignment with NQF levels and level descriptors/ learning domains; **Learning outcomes approach (purpose, rationale, alignment with levels and descriptors, exit level outcomes and assessment)**; Credits, duration of programmes/ exit level credits, credit accumulation and transfer; Entry requirements; Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); Qualification structure/ Rules of Combination; Exit Level Outcomes, Delivery and learning modes, Associated Assessment Criteria, Integrated; Assessment; International/ regional comparability; Articulation requirements/ progression/ education and employment pathways; Registration period and related expiry periods/ status of qualifications; Protected terms

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – EQF Context (1)

- The Annex I of the [EQF Recommendation](#) (2017) defines:
 - *'Credit'* means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes;
 - *'Credit systems'* means a transparency tool for facilitating the recognition of credit(s). These systems can comprise, inter alia, equivalences, exemptions, units/modules that can be accumulated and transferred, the autonomy of providers who can individualise pathways, and the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
 - *'Credit transfer'* means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – EQF Context (2)

- References to credit systems are fundamental in two main instances of the [EQF Recommendation](#) (2017):
 - Referencing criterion 3
 - In the Annex V, which defines principles for credit systems.
- EQF countries implement ECTS

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – EQF Context (3)

- From Annex V EQF Recommendation: “Principles for credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)”

(...) credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems where appropriate, should respect the following principles:

- Credit systems should support flexible learning pathways, for the benefit of individual learners.
- When designing and developing qualifications, the **learning outcomes approach should be systematically used** to facilitate the transfer of (components of) qualifications and progression in learning.
- Credit systems should facilitate **transfer of learning outcomes** and progression of learners across institutional and national borders.
- Credit systems should be underpinned by explicit and transparent quality assurance.
- The credit acquired by an individual should be **documented, expressing the acquired learning outcomes**, the name of the competent credit awarding institution and, where relevant, the related credit value.
- Systems for credit transfer and accumulation should seek synergies with arrangements for validation of prior learning, working together to facilitate and promote transfer and progression.
- Credit systems should be developed and improved through cooperation between stakeholders at the appropriate national and Union levels.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – SADCQF Context (1)

- SADC has adopted **GUIDELINES FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER SYSTEMS (SADC-CATS)** as a recommendation for the region.
- These Guidelines contain chapters on the scope and principles of SADC-CATS; their key features; use in the context of programme design, delivery, and monitoring; use in lifelong learning; and relations with quality assurance.
- “The implementation of the Southern African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SADC-CATS) is a critical point of departure toward full implementation of the SADCQF. Against this background, SADC has developed the CATS Guidelines to facilitate greater student mobility in the region, providing a framework for establishing credit transfer arrangements and, in this way, expanding opportunities for mobility for SADC citizens, not only between countries but also between various institutions and education levels. All SADC Member States are therefore encouraged to adopt these Guidelines and develop national CATS policies, principles and guidelines. The adoption of CATS at national level will serve as a valuable reference for education and training providers in developing and implementing their own CATS at institutional level.” (pp 2).

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – SADCQF Context (2)

The scope of SADC-CATS Guidelines is defined as follows:

- a) all sectors of education and training systems in SADC capable of articulating with other educational sectors such as general education, TVET and higher education;
- b) all public and private education institutions and skills development providers, assessment bodies, professional bodies and workplaces in SADC Member States that are recognised and/or accredited in the home countries;
- c) any organisation that provides formal, non-formal or informal learning, such as universities, education institutions, continuing education units, training providers, enterprises, companies, professional bodies and labour unions, and others;
- d) all forms and modes of learning, including face-to-face, open and distance learning (ODL), e-learning, blended or mixed-mode learning; and
- e) all education and training systems in SADC Member States.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – SADCQF Context (3)

SADC Credits

- SADC-CATS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated SADCQF level and workload. On average, 120 SADCQF credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated level and workload of a full-time study year or its equivalent. SADC-CATS credits are generally expressed in whole numbers.
- A course may be divided into Learning Units:
 - 1 Credit = 10 hours of learning
 - A semester module is typically 14 -16 weeks and a year module is typically 28 – 32 weeks
 - This translates to about 60 credits per semester
 - 1 academic year = 120 credits

Credit Accumulation and Transfer – SADCQF Context (4)

National level

- Countries with specific CAT legislation and guidelines: Mozambique (SNATCA for higher education and SATCEP for TVET), Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. In Mauritius the CAT Guidelines are waiting for approval (National Credit Value and Transfer System – NCVTS).
- Most SADC countries adhere to the principle and notion that:
 - “Credits” means the amount of learning contained in a qualification whereby one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning.
 - Countries explicitly adopting this principle are Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique (in TVET qualifications framework), Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- Several countries are developing national CATS Policies and Guidelines (Mauritius, Seychelles) or have recently adopted such national guidelines (Lesotho).
- But there are some exceptions, which reflect the specifics of the national context and education system, and established relations with other communities of countries. In this context the following definitions are in application:
 - Angola: in higher education – one (1) credit is equated to 15 notional hours of learning. Curriculum units may have a credit value of 1 to 20 credits. (Source: Presidential decree 198/18.)
 - Madagascar: in higher education – some diversity of definitions varying from 10 to 16 hours of notional learning for 1 credit, depending on the field of learning.
 - Mozambique: in higher education (SNATCA) - 1 credit equates to 25-30 notional hours.

Topic 5

Recognition of
prior learning

Validation of
non-formal and
informal learning

In the SADCQF context – regional level (1)

SADC adopted in 2016 Guidelines for RPL as recommendation for the member states.

- These Guidelines propose a six-stage process, as follows:

1. Information and Guidance
2. Administrative registration
3. Eligibility
4. Assessment
5. Appeal
6. Certification

In the SADCQF context – at national level (2)

- In the SADC many countries have or are adopting RPL policies and guidelines and most importantly, advancing with delivery of RPL services. RPL systems and experiences are at different stages of development and consolidation, and a few examples can be mentioned:
 - South Africa has amended the Policy and Criteria for RPL and has substantial and long-standing experience, technical expertise and data to be shared.
 - Zambia has put in place the Policy and Criteria for RPL (ZAQA, 2016). In TVET implementation is led by TEVETA for several sectors, such as in mining, tourism, agriculture and construction sector. In higher education RPL is applied to provide exemptions for further studies
 - Malawi has adopted in 2018 a set of RPL documents to facilitate implementation, including Guidelines, Procedure Manual, Assessors Guide, Candidate Guidelines and Application Form. RPL is more active in TVET.
 - Mauritius (MQA) amended the RPL Guidelines in 2016 and RPL services for individuals are accessible free of charge.
 - Mozambique (ANEP) adopted the RPL legal act and the RPL Regulations in 2021 and started implementation with pilot actions to train and certify RPL professionals, certify RPL centres and deploy RPL processes for individuals.
 - Namibia is one the first SADC countries to adopt the RPL Policy, in 2010.
 - Seychelles approved and implements the [National Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning](#) (2017), supported by [National Guidelines for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning](#) (2017).
 - Eswatini is developing its national RPL Policy and Guidelines

In the SADCQF context (3)

- Country examples in the working note – good overview of RPL policies and guidelines, objectives, scope, process, challenges
 - Lesotho
 - Mauritius
 - Mozambique
 - Seychelles
 - South Africa
 - Zambia

In the EQF context (1)

- The EQF Recommendation (2017) states that NQFs and their qualifications should be based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and **related to arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning** and, where appropriate, to credit systems.
- The EQF Recommendation describes the **‘validation of non-formal and informal learning’ as the process of confirmation by a competent authority that an individual has achieved learning outcomes in non-formal or informal learning settings and that can be measured against a relevant standard.**
- Validation of non-formal and informal learning is also addressed by a **separate recommendation**. **The 2012 Council Recommendation on validation encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018.** These arrangements will enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities. Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012H1222%2801%29>
- **Validation – a process of 4 phases:**
 - Identification – Documentation – Assessment - Certification

In the EQF context – instruments (2)

- The **European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (3rd edition of May 2023)** are written for individuals and institutions responsible for the initiation, development, implementation, and operation of validation arrangements. The ambition of the guidelines is to clarify the conditions for implementation, highlighting the critical choices to be made by stakeholders at different stages of the process. The third edition of the European guidelines is the result of a long-standing collaboration of Cedefop with the European Commission. The 2023 version addresses new and emerging issues, such as cost and financing, standards and reference points, outreach strategies, digital certification and micro-credentials. The Guidelines provide a valuable tool for reflection and advancement in the field, contributing to making up- and reskilling a reality for everyone. Cedefop (2023). *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 124. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3093>
- Validation inventory (2 years)
 - Rich information and data on all involved countries
 - Country specific reports
 - Thematic reports
- Evaluation of the Recommendation: report and recommendations

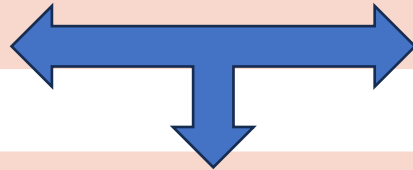
Topic 6

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance in Referencing / Alignment



Criterion 5 of both EQF and SADCQF – focused on Quality Assurance



This has implications for national level - NQFs

In the EQF context (1)

- Trust in the quality and level of qualifications is essential to support the recognition of learning as well as the mobility of both learners and workers within and across sectors and countries. Countries are responsible for quality assurance arrangements regarding qualifications in their National Qualifications Frameworks or systems.

At EQF level

- Quality assurance is a fundamental underlying principle of the EQF. It is considered as the foundation for mutual trust between countries and systems, which in turn is a decisive factor for the success of the EQF referencing process. The quality assurance principles linked to the EQF are set out in Annex IV to the Council Recommendation on the EQF (2017).

At national level

- EQF countries implement European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

In the EQF context (2)

- **Quality assurance principles for qualifications that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**
- All qualifications with an EQF level should be quality assured to enhance trust in their quality and level.
- In accordance with national circumstances and taking into account sectoral differences quality assurance of qualifications with an EQF level should [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#):
 - 1) Address the design of qualifications as well as application of the learning outcomes approach.
 - 2) Ensure valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and address the process of certification.
 - 3) Consist of feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement.
 - 4) Involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process.
 - 5) Be composed of consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review.
 - 6) Be an integral part of the internal management, including sub-contracted activities, of bodies issuing qualifications with an EQF level.
 - 7) Be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines.
 - 8) Be supported by appropriate resources.
 - 9) Include a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance.
 - 10) Include the electronic accessibility of evaluation results.
- [\(1\)](#) These common principles are fully compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and with European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET).
- [\(2\)](#) Depending on national circumstances, these principles may not apply to general education.

In the SADCQF context (1)

- **Annex 2 of the SADCQF Booklet (2017) presents the Quality Assurance Guidelines recommended to the Member States in the context of their NQFs.**
- The Government and relevant institutions in every member state shall:
 - i. Participate in initiatives intended to lead to the **harmonisation and quality assurance (QA) of education structures**, frameworks for content selection and organisation, teacher training and quality, teaching and learning resources, course delivery systems, students' achievement and performance standards, nomenclature and framework of certification and governance and management of institutions. This harmonization should include recognition of the three-tier degree structure in higher education – namely, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees, and the diploma supplement to add labour market value to credentials held,
 - ii. Ensure the **planning for and provision of adequate financial resources** for the provision of high-quality education and training at all levels in the region,
 - iii. Ensure **improved designs, scopes, quality and adequacy of programmes, courses, and curricula** at all levels of education and training and hold those programmes and courses accountable for the results realised by the learners,
 - iv. Ensure **ideal standards of infrastructures, facilities, teaching and learning resources** and generally conducive environments for the different forms and levels of education and training within the region,
 - v. Promote **quality and relevance of education** to the needs and expectations of individual learners, member states, the region and international community as a whole and hence facilitate staff and brain retention as well as competitiveness of qualifications earned in the SADC region,

In the SADCQF context (2)

- vi. **Ensure improved, safe, secure environments for the delivery of education and training** through assured high quality, learner friendly infrastructure and facilities including water, sanitation facilities, arrangements for good nutrition and health support, accountable institutional leadership and management, and general cohesion of students and staff,
- vii. **Promote improved and effective teaching and learning across the region** through better training, re-training, remuneration and retention schemes for committed teachers and university lecturers, appropriate and relevant curricula, suitable teaching and learning resources, use of learner-centred course delivery methods, appropriate class sizes, sufficient learning time, and student learning support,
- viii. **Ensure periodic reviews and improvement of policies, plans and programmes for training, re-training and induction of education personnel** including supporting initiatives for the establishment of a regional centre for professional training of education personnel for the region,
- ix. **Promote and ensure the sharing and exchange of information and best practices** on all issues pertaining to education and training for purposes of achieving high standards of achievement and mastery while enabling students in the region to promote interpersonal understanding, peace and conflict resolution and to cope with change, diversity, promoting intra-state and inter-state relationships and enhancing their abilities to learn throughout life
- x. **Promote an understanding of quality and the establishment and enhancement of a quality culture** as an ideal, and characterising standards of education and training outcomes throughout the SADC Region
- xi. **Develop, induce and, where necessary, enforce adherence to defined and regionally agreed education quality and performance standards and indicators**, learning outcomes and programme monitoring criteria and procedures,
- xii. **Promote and support education quality research and evaluation** efforts that lead to improved regional mechanisms and performance,

In the SADCQF context (3)

- xiii. Participate in **sponsoring, hosting and or attending periodic regional meetings** to facilitate reaffirmed collaboration, sharing information and experiences, solving common problems, considering and adopting new plans, criteria and procedures and removing obstacles to further collaboration, and planning for the future,
- xiv. Foster strategic approaches for **stronger partnerships for education development** and promotion, maximum use of available facilities and resources in the region, dissemination of information on successful collaboration arrangements and provide on-site technical assistance for QA where it is needed and requested for.
- xv. Solicit and **encourage international organs and institutions** to:
- support regional initiatives for an integrated and harmonised education and training system for the realisation of regional human ideals, ideas and values that build sustainable futures in which individuals and communities develop in unity and in full respect of each other,
 - support cultural and linguistic diversity of the region in building a common education system based on the richness of those diverse cultures and languages while giving due recognition and focus on the development and use of African languages as a means of delivery and acquisition of education, and
- xvi. Participate in the **development of a database, linkages and networking systems** through e-mails, websites, telephone contacts to facilitate prompt advice and information on matters of regional importance in education development and quality assurance.

In the SADC context – regional organisations

At regional level - [Southern African Quality Assurance Network \(SAQAN\)](#)

- SAQAN is a non-profit voluntary member-based organisation of National Higher Education Quality Assurance Bodies and higher education institutions from Southern Africa. The main aims of SAQAN are to promote quality in higher education, foster harmonisation of quality assurance systems in the region and beyond; and facilitate international recognition of higher education qualifications from Southern Africa to enhance mobility of staff and students.
- The key functions of SAQAN are to promote the creation of effective and efficient quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms in higher education within Southern Africa; support the development of quality assurance through capacity building, seminars, workshops and conferences; disseminate information through newsletters, journals, books and other documents, in print and electronic forms; participate and collaborate in continental and international training and research programmes within Southern Africa; mobilise resources to sustain the Network's projects and programmes; and develop and maintain a database of quality assurance bodies and experts.
- SAQAN provides services related to quality assurance in three areas: a) capacity building; b) exchange programme; c) research.

SARUA: <https://sarua.africa/>

- Another relevant institution of regional scope for quality of higher education is SARUA. The Southern African Universities Association (SARUA) is a membership-based association of public and private higher education institutions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Serving as a pivotal hub for higher education in the region, we are committed to driving change and fostering collaboration among the higher education community within the SADC. Our mission is to be an agile, impactful, and responsive regional network that champions policy advocacy, advances innovation, and builds resilient academic ecosystems.
- SARUA works on four strategic areas:
 - Knowledge co-creation
 - Leadership and professional development
 - Institutional Quality Management
 - Digital Transformation

In the SADC context - national organisations

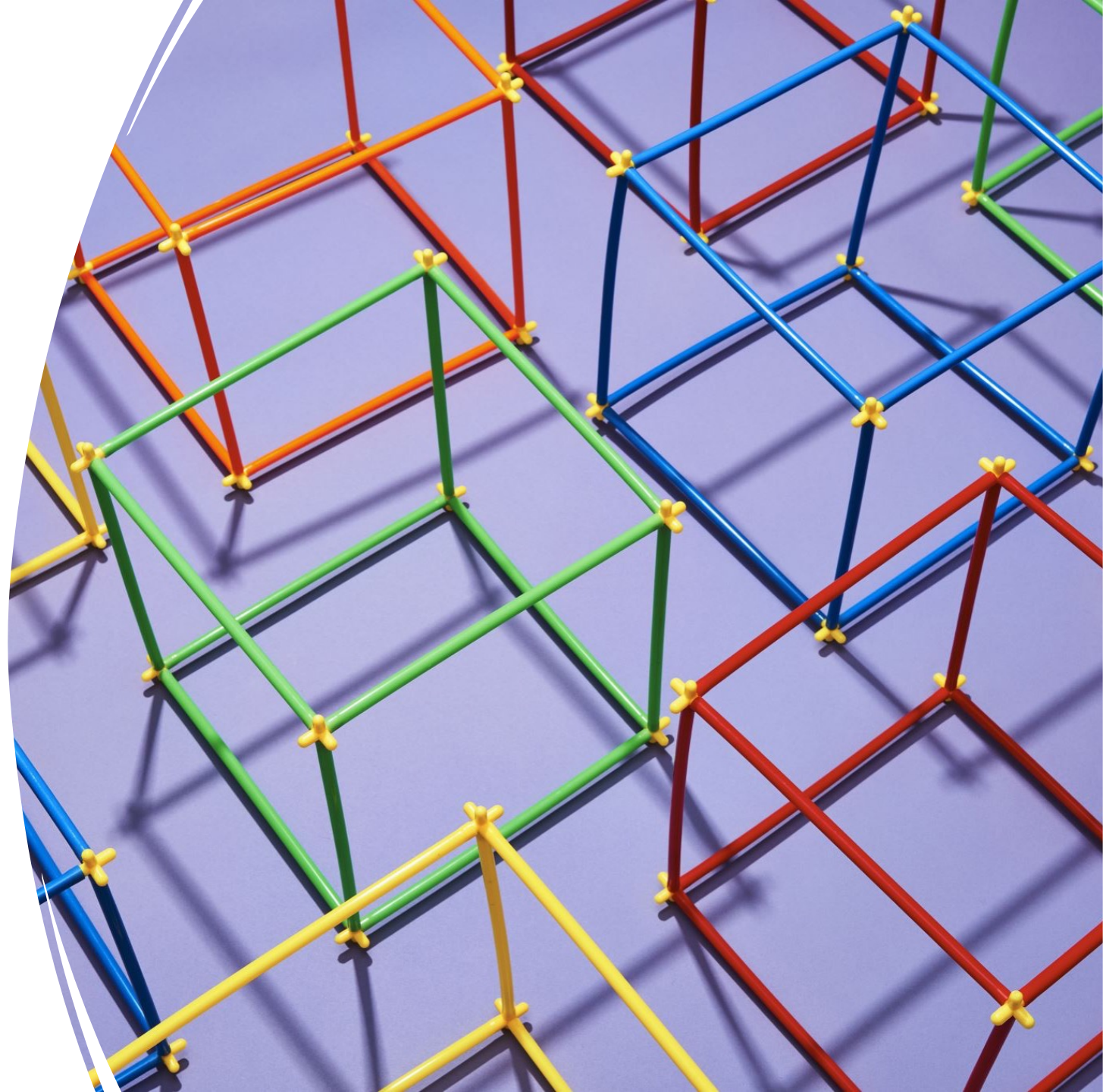
- The majority of SADC countries have established quality assurance institutions, in charge of developing, implementing and coordinating the set of policies, obligations and procedures related to quality assurance of education and training and qualifications of the different sub-sectors and sub-frameworks, according to national contexts.
- In most SADC countries quality assurance of education and training entails internal and external dimensions, and addresses programmes and qualifications, as well as providers.

Examples:

- CNAQ (Mozambique), CHE (Lesotho).
- In the case of **South Africa**, a specific type of interaction has been developed between the quality councils in charge of the sub-frameworks and SAQA, the key guardian of the South African NQF. The **Council for Higher Education** is responsible for the higher education sub-framework and interacts with SAQA for the registration process (analysis and decision). **UMALUSI** is the quality council in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and interacts with SAQA on matters related with the registration of qualifications of this domain. Finally, the **Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)** is entrusted with the qualifications of vocational and occupational nature.

Topic 7: Communication, visibility, transparency, access to information

- Fillemon Iyambo, Namibia
- Tiina Polo
- Isabelle Le Mouillour



Topic 7: in the EQF context

- **Communication, visibility, transparency**, access to information is essential, especially, when considering the different ways in which the EQF and the NQFs have been developing and are used, such as:
 - To improve the education and training system by using the learning outcome approach;
 - To increase transparency between formal, non-formal and informal learning;
 - To allow education/training providers outside formal education/training systems to have their qualifications included in NQFs and thus the EQF.
 - To reform education and training systems.
- The EQF Council Recommendation defines actions linked to awareness raising and communication of the added value of NQFs and the EQFs, clearly recognizing communication as key for the future take up and implementation of NQFs and the EQF.

Topic 7: in the EQF context

Tiina

- The EQF Council Recommendation defines actions linked to awareness raising and communication of the added value of NQFs and the EQFs, clearly recognizing communication as key for the future take up and implementation of NQFs and the EQF.
- The EQF Council Recommendation of May 2017:
 - Invites countries to include a reference to an EQF level on documents and/or registers of qualifications, to ensure results of the referencing are publicly available and to encourage the use of EQF by relevant stakeholders.
 - Defines a key task of EQF NCPs as providing support to national authorities to bring the EQF closer to individuals and organisations.
 - Recommends that the Commission, in cooperation with Member States and stakeholders within the EQF Advisory Group, develop guidance for communicating the EQF.

Topic 7: in the EQF context

- Important initiatives and instruments contributing to communication and visibility of the EQF :
 - EQF AG Peer Learning Activities, and other events related to EQF main areas of work such as VNFIL conferences and stakeholders' meetings.
 - The new [Europass Platform](#), in which is included the [webpages of the EQF](#)
 - Information and reports on [EQF referencing](#) accessible in the EQF webpages.
 - Online tools and platforms for [comparison of NQFs and EQF](#), especially [Cedefop online tool](#) on the status of NQFs in all NQF countries.

Topic 7: in the EQF context

Tiina

- Out of 36 countries that have referenced their NQF to the EQF, **34 indicate EQF levels on certificates, diplomas or supplements**. Further, 25 have started indicating EQF levels on databases or registers of qualifications.
- **Progress towards more accessible information on qualifications** has been made within the **project group on short descriptions of learning outcomes** and with an increasing number of countries **connecting their national qualifications registers or databases with Europass**. Guidelines to create short descriptions of learning outcomes was developed in dedicated project group which presented its final output in December 2023.
- The Europass platform provides a repository of qualifications and learning opportunities at European level, using the Qualifications Datasets Register (QDR) as the interface for updating and retrieving data on qualifications. Substantial progress was made in the linking of national databases to Europass via QDR. **As of 1 January 2024, 11 countries publish qualifications on Europass and 1 is testing, and 10 are still working on upgrading their data to the newest format. A total of 31 countries present information allowing a comparison of national qualifications frameworks on the Europass platform in the comparison tool.**
- While the EQF appears well-known to experts working with qualifications, **the evaluation** of the EQF found that awareness among the **broader public and end users is limited**.



Topic 8: Recognition processes

Mercy Ngoma, Dr Molise Nhlapo, Tiina Polo

Topic 8: in the EQF context...

Tiina

- The EQF can support existing recognition practices thanks to strengthened trust, understanding and comparability of qualifications. This can make the process of recognition for learning and working easier. The EQF is first and foremost a transparency tool; the EQF Recommendation mentions the term recognition of qualifications several times, but in a context of support to recognition processes. The use of the EQF or of the NQFs referenced to it for recognition, is not part of the referencing criteria of NQFs to the EQF.
- There are two procedures for recognition of qualifications: a) recognition for access to employment, including recognition of professional qualifications in Europe; b) and recognition for further education and training (academic recognition). In addition, with validation of skills you can make visible the skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
- Bodies involved in the recognition of academic and professional qualification can use the EQF, NQFs and other transparency tools such as QA mechanisms, credit systems, etc. to support recognition practices as they establish trust, understanding and the comparability of qualifications, making the process of recognition for learning and working purposes easier. Qualifications frameworks and other transparency tools can facilitate recognition through the comparison and combination of qualifications and learning outcomes including partial recognition, the recognition of micro-credentials and stacked learning.
- The EQF works together with the other European and international instruments supporting the recognition of qualifications.

Topic 8: in the EQF context...

- The EQF is compatible with the [Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area](#) and its cycle descriptors. The framework was agreed by education ministers of the intergovernmental [Bologna Process in 2005](#).
- The [Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018](#) on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad refers to the EQF as a way to foster transparency and build trust between national education and training systems.
- EU level work on the recognition of qualifications primarily addresses higher education qualifications and qualifications that give access to higher education. EU cooperation on the recognition of qualifications in the VET, adult learning, but also of micro-credentials, partial qualifications is less developed. Digital credentials add new tools for recognition processes.
- New development: Commission Recommendation of 15/11/2023 on the recognition of 3rd country nationals: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202302611

Topic 8: in the EQF context...

- The large majority of EQF countries are states parties of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#).
- Countries are using in the recognition advices from the Lisbon Recognition Convention subsidiary text “Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications”.
- Part of EQF countries already joined Global convention or are in the process to join.

Topic 8: in the SADCQF context

- SADC adopted the **“Guidelines for Recognition of Qualifications”** (2020). This publication is a result of cooperation with the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) and the Technical Committee of Certification and Accreditation (TCCA).
- This manual contains **standards and guidelines on all aspects of the recognition of qualifications and aims to provide credential evaluators from SADC Member states with general guidelines to assist them to develop member country specific recognition manuals.**
- Further, the manual provides general guidelines that make the **recognition procedures transparent to all stakeholders** directly or indirectly involved in recognition such as; credential evaluators, education and training institutions, learners, employers and policy makers. In general, this manual aims to create more clarity regarding recognition practices in all SADC countries and to **contribute to a joint qualifications recognition area**, in which all SADC countries follow the same procedure in the recognition of qualifications, based on commonly agreed standards and guidelines.

Topic 8: in the SADCQF context

- The SADC Recognition Guidelines **endorse and explain the notions of substantial and non-substantial differences defined in the Addis Recognition Convention.**
- The Addis Convention (2014) declares that qualification recognition should be granted, unless there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that is being compared with.
- **Substantial differences** are differences between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that are so significant, that they would most likely prevent the holder of the foreign qualification from succeeding in the sought after activity such as further study or employment. The responsibility of proof of a substantial difference lies with the recognition authority and the following should be taken into consideration:
 - not every difference should be considered to be “substantial”;
 - the difference should be substantial in relation to the function (purpose) of the qualification

Topic 8: in the SADCQF context

Dr Molise Nhlapo

- SADC countries are at different stages of ratification of the UNESCO Addis Recognition Convention. Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia are state parties of the Addis Recognition Convention. To date no SADC country has ratified the [Global Recognition Convention](#).
- The [Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States](#), known as the Addis Convention, establishes a legal framework for the fair and transparent recognition of higher education qualifications in the African region to facilitate mobility and inter-university cooperation. Supporting academic mobility and exchange among African States strengthens trust in the quality enhancement of institutions and systems, while also providing a pivotal network for advancing the SDG targets for equitable access in the region.
- The Convention was adopted on 12 December 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and entered into force on 15 December 2019. It is open to UNESCO Member States belonging to the [Africa Region](#) and as of September 2023 has [14 States Parties](#).

Comparison discussion topic 8

- Similarities
- Differences
- Main conclusions



Comparability of recognition of qualifications

- Recognition approaches and procedures **are comparable** as they are based on **UNESCO regional recognition conventions** requirements, which are comparable.





- **Topic 9: Governance**

Tiina Polo

Maria Luísa Chicote

Laurent Ndaywel

Topic 9: Governance – EQF Context (1)

- **Legal basis: Council Recommendation (2008, 2017). This is not a legally binding act, but supports voluntary actions and cooperation between the member countries.**
 - Given its non-binding nature, the EQF recommendation conforms to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality by supporting and supplementing Member States' activities through facilitating further cooperation between them to increase the transparency, comparability, and portability of people's qualifications. It should be implemented in accordance with national law and practice.
 - The EQF Recommendation facilitates further cooperation between countries to increase transparency and to promote mobility and lifelong learning. It fosters change by supporting and informing reform. Although not legally binding, its adoption by EU Member States reflects the commitment to use the EQF to reference national qualifications frameworks or systems and to compare all types and levels of qualifications in the European Union.
- **Governance at EU level: EQF Advisory Group; 15 years history , 64 meetings (5-6 March 2024)**
- **Chaired: European Commission** (Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit Skills Agenda)
- **Membership of the EQF AG: 2 representatives per country (1 for the EQF proper, and 1 for the Recommendation on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning);**
 - Representatives of Business Europe, EUPME Association, European Youth Forum, and by other civil society, students, and educational associations of European dimension. Council of Europe.
- **Geography: 27 EU MS + EEA countries + Candidate countries. Newcomers: Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia. Total = 41**

Topic 9: Governance (2)

- Working groups, project groups: to explore, discuss and elaborate work of technical nature.
 - Examples: sub-groups elaborated on sector international qualifications; horizontal comparisons of qualifications; comparisons with NQFs / RQFs of non-EQF countries / regions; short descriptions of learning outcomes of qualifications to facilitate electronic publication in qualifications databases.
- Two EU agencies (Cedefop and ETF) support the work of EQF through analyses, elaboration of technical proposals and guides, and facilitation of activities in certain themes and issues.
- Evaluations are mandatory in line with the terms of the EQF Recommendation. The first EQF Recommendation (2008) was evaluated twice. The evaluation of the 2017 Recommendation was completed.

Topic 9: Governance (3)

- **Role of the European Commission:**

- Ensure that the implementation of this recommendation is supported through actions funded by relevant Union programmes.
- Ensure an effective governance of the EQF implementation by maintaining and fully supporting the EQF Advisory Group established in 2009 composed of representatives of the Member States and other participating countries, the social partners, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The EQF Advisory Group should ensure overall coherence and promote transparency and trust in the process of referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the EQF.
- Report on progress following the adoption of this recommendation, as appropriate, in the context of relevant education, training and employment policy frameworks.
- Assess and evaluate, in cooperation with the Member States and after consulting the stakeholders concerned, action taken in response to this recommendation and by 2022 report to the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future.

- **At national level:** National coordination points (NCP). The main tasks of the EQF NCP are to support national authorities in referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the EQF, provide information on national developments, and to bring the EQF closer to individuals and organisations.

- **Funding:**

- EU budget for the work carried out by the European Commission, Cedefop and ETF;
- EU budget / EU programmes to support the EQF NCPs, and developments at national level (for ex.: dedicated grant programme for development of national qualifications databases).

Topic 9: Governação SADCQF (PT)

Maria Luísa
Chicote

Fundações

O Conselho de Ministros da SADC, os ministros responsáveis pela Educação e Formação, o TCCA, o Comité Executivo do TCCA e uma Unidade de Implementação são as principais estruturas governativas para a implementação do SADCQF.

A Unidade de Implementação ainda não foi criada, pelo que o seu papel é assegurado por um acordo de responsabilidade partilhada entre os Estados membros da SADC e o Secretariado da SADC para os seis programas de implementação

1. Programa 1: Alinhamento dos QNQ com a SADCQF – África do Sul
2. Programa 2: Garantia de qualidade – Botsuana
3. Programa 3: Verificação – Eswatini
4. Programa 4: Articulação, RPL e acumulação e transferência de créditos – Namíbia
5. Programa 5: Advocacia e comunicação – Zâmbia; e ainda
6. Programa 6: Governação – TCCA e Secretariado da SADC.

Na ausência de uma Unidade de Implementação para conduzir a implementação dos programas do SADCQF, os Estados - Membros ofereceram-se para aumentar a capacidade do Secretariado da SADC, prestando apoio administrativo numa base rotativa, utilizando as suas capacidades (competências humanas, técnicas e de financiamento).

Novo roteiro de implementação do SADCQF (2023-2026)

Maria Luísa
Chicote

- Em 2023, os Estados-Membros desenvolveram conjuntamente um novo Roteiro para a implementação do SADCQF na reunião do TCCA de 11 e 12 de maio de 2023, em Joanesburgo. Esta reflexão baseia-se nas recomendações do relatório de revisão da implementação do SADCQF, elaborado em cooperação com o projeto ACQF. Este novo roteiro foi aprovado na reunião conjunta dos ministros da ESTI (Kinshasa, 20 de junho de 2023). A próxima reunião estatutária do TCCA está agendada para 9 e 10 de maio de 2024, em Joanesburgo, e discutirá os progressos na implementação do roteiro. Este roteiro baseia-se em oito áreas principais de trabalho:
 1. Orientações e Manuais do SADCQF sobre RPL, CAT, Reconhecimento (e outros temas) – divulgação, formação, apoio à aplicação/transposição a nível nacional.
 2. Racionalizar e reativar o alinhamento/referenciação ao SADCQF: apoiar e convidar todos os Estados membros da SACD a planear e participar no processo. Rever e atualizar a brochura (2017).
 3. Seguimento do alinhamento: Utilização dos níveis do SADCQF nos documentos de qualificação recém-emitidos do QNQ alinhados/referenciados com o QADQF: desenvolver o conceito e a orientação, submetê-los à aprovação dos ministros.
 4. Novos desenvolvimentos relacionados com a digitalização da gestão das qualificações, microcredenciais, perfis comuns (profissões, qualificações e novas competências): desenvolver o documento de síntese, constituir um grupo de trabalho específico, angariar financiamento, parcerias e roteiro.
 5. Desenvolvimento de capacidades e partilha entre pares: nível nacional, nível da SADC e nível internacional mais vasto
 6. Reforço da cooperação com o QAQ e o QEQ
 7. Monitorização e avaliação de sistemas e instrumentos para apoiar uma abordagem de planeamento-do-monitorização-revisão para a implementação do SADCQF.
 8. Sobre a melhoria da governação, da organização e dos recursos para a implementação do SADCQF

Revisão da implementação do SADCQF

Maria Luísa
Chicote

- Os principais desafios dos instrumentos jurídicos do SADCQF são:
 - Pouca sensibilização das partes interessadas em alguns países, especialmente organismos reguladores académicos, devido a uma comunicação insuficiente.
 - Participação limitada das partes interessadas e dos utilizadores, tais como empregadores, instituições de ensino superior e institutos de ensino e formação profissionais.
 - Implementação: enfrenta desafios relacionados com restrições orçamentais; situação da execução dos QNQ em vários países; rotação frequente dos membros do TCCA e limitada divulgação das informações.

Niveau national – modèles de gouvernance

1. Modèle 1: Autorités nationales de certification. Personnes morales dotées d'une autonomie managériale et budgétaire, chargées d'assurer l'intégrité du CNC et exerçant un large éventail de fonctions. Pays utilisant ce modèle : Angola, Botswana, République démocratique du Congo, Eswatini, Maurice, Seychelles, Afrique du Sud, Zambie.

- [Eswatini Qualifications Authority \(EQA\)](#)
- [Mauritius Qualifications Authority \(MQA\)](#)
- [Namibia Qualifications Authority \(NQA\)](#)
- [Seychelles Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#)
- [South Africa Qualifications Authority \(SAQA\)](#)
- [Zambia Qualifications Authority \(ZAQA\)](#)
- Nouveau dans ce modèle: Autorité Congolaise de Régulation des Certifications et Qualifications Professionnelles (ACRCQP) – décret approuvé en déc 2023 par le Premier Ministre; tutelle: MFPM ; démarré le processus de mise en place des équipes, capacités, bureaux, réglementation et la formation.

Niveau national – modèles de gouvernance (2)

Laurent Ndaywel

2. Modèle 2 : Commission technique (CT) du CNC : le cas du Mozambique

Solution temporaire – pour commencer la mise en œuvre du CNC. CT réunit tous les ministères et department liés à l'éducation (tous niveaux), formation, emploi.

Responsable: compte rendu à un ministère transversel (Admin Publique)

Site web : début de la construction.

3. Modèle 3 : Mise en œuvre du CNC : dans le cadre du mandat d'une institution existante. Cas du Conseil de l'enseignement supérieur du Lesotho. [Lesotho Council on Higher Education](#) and [LQF webpage](#)

➤ ***Consulter Annex 4 du rapport – synthèse des principales caractéristiques de la gouvernance par pays SADC.***

Exemples de fonctions des Autorités Nationales des Certifications Qualifications – Maurice (MQA)

• Mauritius - Fonctions de la MQA

- a) formuler et publier des politiques et des critères dans le secteur de la formation technique et professionnelle (modifié par la loi de 2005 sur l'éducation et la formation (dispositions div) - loi n° 18 de 2005) afin de
- (i) l'enregistrement des organismes chargés d'établir les normes et les qualifications nationales ;
- (ii) l'accréditation des organismes chargés du suivi et de l'audit de ces normes et qualifications ;
- (iii) l'enregistrement et l'accréditation des établissements de formation;
- (b) d'élaborer et d'enregistrer des normes nationales pour toute profession ;
- (c) d'enregistrer les qualifications autres que celles obtenues dans les secteurs de l'enseignement primaire, secondaire et postsecondaire (modifiée par la loi de 2005 sur l'éducation et la formation (dispositions diverses) - loi n° 18 de 2005) ;
- (d) d'enregistrer et d'accréditer les établissements de formation à Maurice ;
- (e) reconnaître et valider les compétences à des fins de certification obtenues en dehors des systèmes formels d'éducation et de formation ;

- (f) reconnaître et évaluer les qualifications, autres que celles obtenues dans les secteurs de l'enseignement primaire, secondaire et postsecondaire, aux fins d'établir leur équivalence (modifiée par la loi de 2005 sur l'éducation et la formation (dispositions diverses) - loi n° 18 de 2005) ;
 - (g) pour reconnaître les cours non sanctionnés dispensés par les établissements de formation (modifié par la loi de 2005 sur l'éducation et la formation (dispositions diverses) - loi n° 18 de 2005);
 - (h) tenir une base de données des comptes d'apprentissage des Mauriciens;
 - (i) publier une liste annuelle des normes unitaire, des qualifications et des établissements de formation;
 - (j) conseiller le ministre sur les questions relatives au Cadre national des certifications ;;
 - (k) d'exercer toute autre fonction que le ministre peut lui confier et qui est pertinente au Cadre national des certifications.
- **Principales parties prenantes:**
 - Ministère de l'Éducation
 - Commission de l'enseignement supérieur
 - Conseil de la formation industrielle et professionnelle

Les qualifications sont élaborées par les **Comités consultatifs de formation de l'industrie (ITAC)**. Vingt ITAC représentent des secteurs tels que : la gestion, l'agro-industrie, l'artisanat, l'automatisation et la robotique, les TIC, le génie mécanique, les produits de la mer et l'industrie maritime, entre autres.



Comparison discussion topic 9

- Similarities
- Differences
- Main conclusions

Topic 10

- Referencing
- Alignment



Topic 10: Referencing

- Referencing (alignment) is a fundamental function of a meta / regional qualifications framework. A key for mutual trust between NQFs of a region / community of countries
- Referencing: comparison, compatibility and confirmation of findings by stakeholders in a participative and evidence-based process
- Based on agreed Criteria and procedures addressing all major dimensions: level descriptors, learning outcomes, transparency in placement of qualifications on NQF, Quality assurance, governance of the referencing process.
- Referencing report – addressing each Criterion and Procedure one-by-one
- Supported by a peer review process: international experts; discussion at the EQF AG or at TCCA meetings
- Follow-up steps: publication of final version of report; use of RQF levels on newly issued qualifications documents and databases.
- In SADCQF: alignment started in 2017, with a pilot group of 8 Member States.

Referencing criteria

Common and agreed in the RQF / region

For comparability and transparency – for mutual trust of the results

10 EQF referencing criteria – Annex III of EQF Recommendation 2017. But they were developed, tested and consolidated from the beginning of EQF history (2008).

10 EQF referencing criteria – inspired other RQFs, notably SADCQF and ASEAN QRF (11 criteria). More recently also ACQF- which has a more streamlined set of referencing criteria.

Referencing guidance - EQF / SADCQF

EQF / SADCQF

- “Referencing” in EQF ~ “Alignment” in SADCQF
- Identical set of 10 criteria and procedures in both RQFs
- EQF: technical Notes supporting referencing

SADCQF: guidance and tools to support countries using the criteria and procedures; and managing the alignment process:

- SADCQF Booklet
- Criteria and procedures
- Self-assessment
- ToRs National Alignment Committees
- Training sessions for pilot countries

Referencing / Alignment criteria (1-5 - shortened)

1. Governance: responsibilities of national bodies involved in referencing / alignment are clear
2. Clear and demonstrable link between qualifications levels in the NQF / NQS and level descriptors of RQF (EQF / SADCQF)
3. NQF / NQS is based on learning outcomes and links to non-formal and informal learning and to credit systems (where they exist)
4. Procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQF are transparent
5. The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the NQF / NQS and are consistent the QA guidelines / annex (EQF and SADCQF Booklet 2017)

Referencing criteria (6-10 EQF)

Tiina

6. The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions, and practice.

7. The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.

8. The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.

9. Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.

10. Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

Alignment criteria (6-10 SADCQF)

6. There is a clear indication of the relevant national authorities responsible for the verification of the qualifications obtained in the national system

7. The alignment process shall include a stated agreement of relevant quality assurance bodies

8. Competent national bodies shall certify the alignment of the NQF/NQS with the SADCQF. A comprehensive report on alignment and its evidence must be published by competent national bodies

9. The official platform of the country must provide for a public comment process for the alignment report

10. Clear plans have been made to make changes to legislation and policy supporting alignment to SADCQF levels on new qualification certificates, diplomas and other documents issued by competent authorities

Referencing achievements (EQF context) – date: 05/03/2024

Objective	Reached by countries (number)
Referencing to EQF	36 (87% of all involved countries)
Renewed referencing to EQF	8 countries
EQF levels on certificates, diplomas, and supplements	34 (87%)
EQF levels on databases or registers of qualifications	25 (60%)
Transparency of information: Publication of referencing reports	32 (78%)
Transparency of information – inclusion in the Tool to compare NQFs on Europass portal	29 (70%)

Alignment achievements SADCQF

3 alignment processes completed and reports endorsed: South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius

These 3 NQFs are in process of rethinking and review – in the medium-term: update alignment report

Use of SADCQF levels on newly issued qualifications: to be planned

New SADCQF roadmap (2023-2026): shift to referencing; enhance peer reviews and peer learning

Conclusion on Topic 10

- The concepts underpinning “referencing” in the EQF context and “alignment” in the SADCQF context are comparable and compatible, albeit the higher emphasis given to harmonisation in the later.
- The EQF referencing criteria and procedures are identical to the alignment criteria and procedures used in the SADCQF.
- The status of implementation of referencing and of the follow-up steps is more advanced and tangible in the context of the EQF. This can be illustrated by (i) the larger share of EQF countries having completed referencing; and (ii) the use of EQF levels on newly issued qualifications documents of the referenced NQFs.

ANNEXES

- For reference
- Memory of the comparison process



Congratulations!



To South Africa – for the 30th anniversary of the first Free Elections ! Changed the World!



To D R Congo – for the resilience and courage in addressing the aggression in the East – for blood minerals. And for informing the world. SADC supports!

Agenda of 7th meeting of comparison EQF-SACDQF

Time (CET-SAST)	Topics / speakers
14.00-14.15	Opening, participants, agenda. <i>European Commission (DG EMPL – Tiina Polo) and SADC Secretariat</i>
14.15-16.00	Comparison report EQF-SADCQF: overview. Comments from participants
16.00-16.30	Orientations concerning the presentation to EQF Advisory Group 65, Brussels; and TCCA. Closure

Survey – your views and recommendations for chapter Conclusions and Recommendations

- Thanks for the very pertinent submissions from 6 countries
- Large majority of proposals – incorporated in the report
- We will still finetune the integration of submissions



Objective of meeting 6

- **Discuss draft 1 of the comparison report**
- **Collect all comments and suggestions so far concerning:**
 - Structure
 - Executive Summary
 - Main conclusions by comparison topic
 - Conclusions and recommendations
 - Annexes
 - Any additions, corrections to main text, sources

Table of content: was discussed, validated at Meeting 5. Aligned with 2 first comparison reports

- 1. Executive Summary
- 2. Introduction to the comparison
- 3. Brief overview on SADC and EU: SADC, EU, SADC-EU relations
- 4. Overview of the SADCQF and the EQF
- 5. Comparison of EQF and SADCQF: report – 11 topics / sub-chapters. Each topic: a) in EQF context; b) in SADC context (regional and country cases -~10); c) Conclusions on comparison
- 6. Glossary
- 7. Sources
- 8. Annexes

Additional themes – upon requests of WG members at meeting 2

- In Topic 2 (scope):
 - Bologna process and EHEA
 - Micro-credentials
- In Topic 3 (levels and descriptors): concept of “non-substantial differences” adapted from domain of recognition of qualifications
- In Topic 4 (learning outcomes): Credit accumulation and transfer systems

Main conclusion

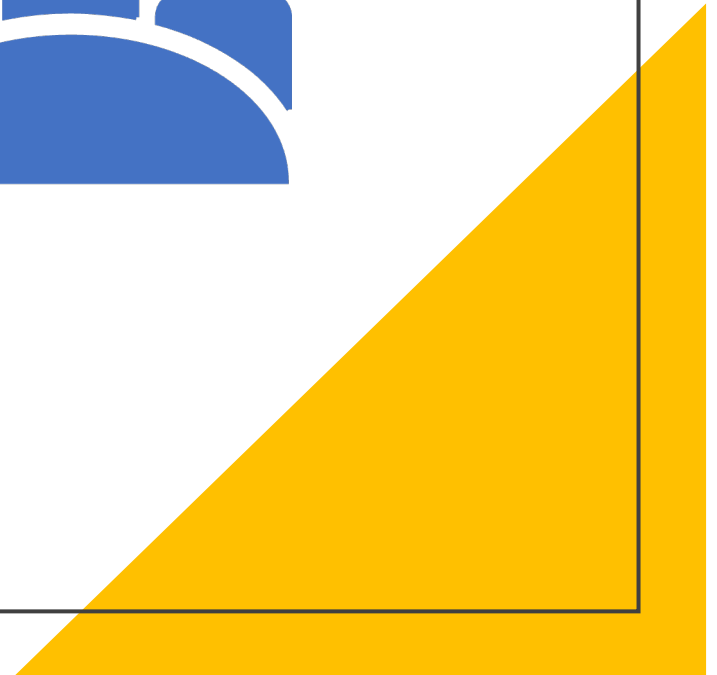
EQF and SADCQF
are comparable
along the 10 main
comparison topics

Identified
differences are
non-substantial

Next steps

- Forewords: EU Commissioner and Executive Secretary SADC (15 April, if possible)
- Version 1.2 of the report will be sent on 9 April for your further comments. It will incorporate the comments agreed at the 6th meeting
- Your comments and suggestions on Version 1.2 : until 18 April (8 working days)
- Draft 2: to be sent to you on 24 April
- Next meeting for final discussion of draft 2: 29 April, 14.00 CET / SAST
- Report completed: 01 May
- Edit, translation
- EQF AG-65, 10-11 June / SADCQF TCCA on 09-10 May
- After these meetings: more comments to be processed

Reference: Meetings 1 to 5



Recap of meeting 4



We completed the discussion of questions from meeting 3, especially: learning outcomes; RPL; Harmonisation.



In-depth discussion of topic 7 (Communication, visibility, transparency) and topic 9 (Governance).



We left topic 8 (Recognition) to meeting 5

Agenda of comparison meeting 5

Time (CET)	Topics / speakers
14.00-14.15	Opening, participants, agenda. European Commission (DG EMPL – Tiina Polo) and SADC Secretariat
14.15-15.30 Session 1	Completion of questions from previous meeting: Learning outcomes; RPL; Harmonisation
14.45-15.45 Session 2	Comparison Topics 8, 10 and 11: synthesis from the working note. Topic 8: Recognition processes; Topic 10: Referencing / alignment (NQFs – RQF); Topic 11: Transparency and quality of the comparison process
15.30-16.00 Session 3	Draft main conclusions and recommendations: discussion and agreement on main points.
16.15-16.20 Session 4	Action points and complementary information for report – draft 1
16.25-16.30 Session 5	Orientations concerning consultation on report draft 1. Next meeting. Closure

Topic 11



Topic 11: transparency of the comparison process

- The process and the comparison report are built based on the exchange of information between the parties, discussion of key points on the concepts, objectives, functioning and visibility of qualifications frameworks, collection, and analysis from various sources on the most relevant policies, approaches, practices, and tools considering the 11 themes of comparison.
- The report focuses firstly on the comparison of two meta-frameworks (EQF and SADCQF) but extends the scope of discovery and analysis to the state of play and developments in the participating countries. This attention to the country level is especially explicit in SADC specific sections of the 10 comparison topics.
- The comparison process was structured in five essential technical dialogue meetings, held between 28 November 2023 and 19 March 2024. These meetings are complemented by two meetings (in April 2024) focused on the discussion of the two draft versions of the comparison report.

Tema 11: transparência do processo de comparação (2)

- Ambas as partes realizaram várias reuniões de sensibilização e informação técnica (2021 a 2023) antes de iniciarem as reuniões de comparação propriamente ditas. Estas reuniões preparatórias foram inseridas na ordem do dia das reuniões regulares do TCCA (novembro de 2021 e abril de 2022) e chegaram a um acordo consensual entre os Estados-Membros da SADC para participarem no projeto-piloto de comparação com o QEQ.
- O grupo de trabalho sobre comparação demonstrou um empenhamento e uma coesão substanciais durante o processo de comparação. Os peritos de ambas as partes envolveram-se em discussão e reflexão abertas sobre todos os tópicos de comparação, procurando pontos de convergência e esclarecendo as diferenças de conceitos e práticas. Este intercâmbio aberto de informações e de práticas entre os peritos cresceu rapidamente após a segunda reunião de comparação. A participação foi estável e representativa da maioria dos Estados-Membros da SADC, independentemente do estado de desenvolvimento e implementação do QNQ. Os delegados da SADC participaram plenamente na apresentação dos resultados da comparação de todos os tópicos, demonstrando uma notável apropriação do processo. **Os Estados-Membros da SADC representaram plenamente a região neste processo.**
- A atmosfera de confiança mútua foi apoiada por evidências e discussões sobre as questões e diferenças. A utilização do conceito de "**diferença substancial**" adaptado à comparação dos descritores de nível (tópico 2) foi sugerida pelo perito da Letónia e aceite por todo o grupo de trabalho. A aplicação do conceito gerou uma interpretação matizada das diferenças identificadas ao longo de todos os tópicos de comparação, concentrando-se na aceitação da diversidade de questões, abordagens e contextos, em vez de na incompatibilidade emanada da "diferença substancial".

Conclusion on Topic 11

- The comparison process was initiated and conducted based on shared objectives and expectations. The involved national institutions and EQF experts actively engaged in dialogue on all topics of comparison, seeking mutual understanding on similarities and distinctive features between the two frameworks. The openness of the exchanges through the series of five comparison meetings contributed to a higher-level mutual trust, which is a key aspiration of the comparison between meta-qualifications frameworks.
- The comparison showed the importance of context and historical background in understanding the two frameworks.
- The report is based on an extensive and updated inventory and analysis of national policies, legal acts, and methodological frameworks, and provided concrete examples and application cases in all topics. The report is comprehensive, detailed, and updated. It can be used as a trusted information source on related national qualifications frameworks, and disseminated to different networks interested in recognition, referencing, and mobility.
- This comparison report will contribute to implement the new roadmap 2023-2026 of SADCQF, to CESA-25 and to ACQF.

Towards the comparison report



Report Outline

- Preambles: EU Commissioner; SADC / Presidency
- Executive Summary
- Introduction to the comparison
- Overview of the SADCQF and the EQF
- Comparison report: by topic
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Glossary
- Sources
- Annexes

Conclusions

- On comparability by topics
- On mutual trust
- On transparency
- On outstanding issues

Recommendations

- Concerning the outstanding issues
- Concerning further cooperation and synergy with the ACQF
- For EQF
- For SADC

**Thank you!!
Merci!
Obrigada!
Assante!**





Meeting 4 – 20/02/2024

Agenda meeting 4

Time (CET)	Topics / speakers
14.00-14.15	Opening, participants, agenda. European Commission (DG EMPL – Tiina Polo) and SADC Secretariat
14.15-14.45 Session 1	Completion of questions from previous meeting: Learning outcomes; RPL; Harmonisation
14.45-15.45 Session 2	Comparison Topics 7-9: synthesis from the working note. Topic 7: Communication, visibility, transparency, access to information; Topic 8: Recognition processes; Topic 9: Governance structures. (NOTE: start with Topic 9)
15.45-16.15 Session 3	Updates, questions, discussion (all countries, experts)
16.15-16.25 Session 4	Action points to complete discussion on topics 7-9 (complementary information)
16.25-16.30 Session 5	Acknowledgments, closure



Meeting 4
20/02/2024

Recap meeting 3

- **3 comparison topics analysed: regional and national levels**
 - 4: Learning outcomes
 - 5: RPL
 - 6: Quality assurance
- **Questions for further discussion:**
 - Learning outcomes: methodologies, experience-sharing
 - RPL: good cases
 - “Harmonisation” : acceptable in SADC / not in EU context. What scope of “harmonisation”?

Learning outcomes

Conceptual and methodological references

- CEDEFOP Guides:
 - Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes (2017):
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4156>
 - Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes (2nd edition, 2022):
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4209>
- European Guidelines for the development and writing of short, learning outcomes-based descriptions of qualifications (2023) – final draft. **Publication forthcoming.**
- **ACQF Guideline 1:** Learning outcomes in the context of qualifications frameworks and systems: <https://acqf.africa/resources/policy-guidelines/acqf-guidelines/acqf-guideline-1-learning-outcomes-in-the-context-of-qualifications-frameworks-and-systems>

RPL: good practice

- Many countries have established policy frameworks and instruments supporting implementation of VNFIL / RPL policies:
 - EQF context: France, Portugal, Belgium (FR), Turkey...
 - SADC context: South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius, Zambia (TVET); new – Mozambique
- Take-up of RPL:
 - Scarce in several countries
 - Data and analysis needed

Case study: Germany

Isabelle le Mouillour

- **Theme 1 - Communication, visibility, access to information on the NQF and related policies: policies, instruments and practices developed and implemented in this area.**
 - Some examples: use of NQF levels (EQF - SADCQF) in qualifications documents; websites and online databases of qualifications with user-friendly functions; RPL campaigns for different user groups; visual materials on the NQF disseminated in education and training institutions; regular events, conferences, publications, statistical data...

Case study: Germany

Isabelle le Mouillour

- With regard to the German Qualification Framework (DQR), various measures regarding communication and visibility were developed and implemented.
- Information campaigns: Information campaigns were launched to inform companies, educational institutions, employees and the public about the DQR and highlight its importance for vocational education and training and the labour market.
- Training courses and workshops: Training courses and workshops were offered for vocational guidance counsellors, teachers, trainers and other relevant stakeholders to inform them about the DQR and support them in applying it in their daily work.
- Online platforms: Online platforms and resources were created where information about the DQR is easily accessible to help companies, educational institutions and individuals to navigate the education and labour market.
- International cooperation: Cooperation with other countries and international organisations was established or fostered to facilitate the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad in accordance with the DQR and to promote labour mobility.
- Active participation of relevant stakeholders: The active participation of the federal government and the Länder (states), companies, educational institutions, trade unions and other relevant stakeholders supports and strengthens the development and implementation of measures to improve the communication and visibility of the DQR.

Case study: Germany

Isabelle le Mouillour

- Each of the 327 training occupations in industry and the skilled trades, the public sector, home economics, agriculture, maritime shipping and the liberal professions carry the indication of its level in the German Qualifications Framework (DQR). This indication is also part of the description of the training occupation in Europass Certificate Supplement (see part 5 – official basis of the certificate).
- In 2020 the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training issued a recommendation (Official Journal of the German Republic) to inscribe the qualification level in reference to EQF and NQF on each examination certificate. A similar recommendation dating back 2013 was issued concerning all qualifications of initial VET. [Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(BIBB\) - Germany](#)

Case study: Germany

Isabelle le Mouillour

Theme 2 - Good practice: successful communication and information for users

- A central source for information and communication is **the DQR website**. It provides a profound overview on all information concerning the framework (development, structure, aims, etc.) and has a news, service and download section which include links to the DQR handbook and to the DQR database.
- The **DQR handbook** outlines the criteria and procedures for describing qualifications in accordance with the DQR principles, and ensures that the future levelling of newly developed or substantially revised qualifications always takes place according to these criteria. The handbook includes guidelines to providers on how to request the inclusion of qualifications in the DQR. It targets three main groups: competent institutions in the different education sectors, the professional community and citizens.
- All qualifications allocated to the DQR/EQF have been included in the DQR qualifications database (1240, as of August 2022). The database can be found on the DQR website under 'Qualification search' (Qualifikationssuche). It offers users the possibility to identify the DQR level of a specific qualification or to learn which qualifications are allocated to a given level. For each qualification, the database provides information in German and English about the title of the qualification, DQR/EQF level, education field, description (as an open text) of what the learner is expected to know, understand and able to do, awarding body or competent authority, as well as entry requirements and pathways to acquire the qualification. The database and the list of qualifications are updated annually to include newly assigned qualifications and/or changes in the scope of already levelled qualification types. The database is connected to the Europass platform (via the Qualifications Dataset Register), while the DQR website includes links to the Europass portal and the Federal Employment Agency's portal.
- Users of the DQR are the experts working on the **development of training occupations** (either to modernize them or to create new ones). So as to establish a common understanding among the experts (BIBB; Social partners; branch representatives; Federal/Länder Ministries) the BIBB Board developed a recommendation on how to integrate the learning outcomes approach (in German: Kompetenzorientierung) in the training regulations. This recommendation was binding starting 2015 and was completed with manuals used in the committees for the development of single training occupations.

Case study: Germany

Isabelle le Mouillour

- **Where to ask about the DQR?**
 - Citizens regularly contact the Bund-Länder-Koordinierungsstelle (B-L-KS) asking for information about the position of a specific qualification within the DQR, or the requirements for achieving a qualification at a specific DQR level. Such enquiries imply that learners are often aware of the DQR and consider it when deciding which learning opportunity to follow. Workers and jobseekers usually ask for information on whether a qualification is recognised on the labour market and if qualifications assigned to the same DQR level are equivalent. Interest among providers of non-formal and private qualifications which use the DQR descriptors as a competence model when designing qualifications.
 - The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) informs companies and other interested stakeholders about the requirements for specific qualifications and skills under the German Qualifications Framework.
 - The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) provides information on the various qualification levels in the German Qualifications Framework and supports companies in classifying professional qualifications.
 - The Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit) informs jobseekers about the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad according to the German Qualifications Framework and offers support with professional integration.
 - The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) provides information on the recognition of foreign qualifications under the German Qualifications Framework and supports educational institutions, companies and individuals in the assessment of foreign qualifications.

- **Theme 3 - New ideas, plans, challenges related to the topic. Addressing the challenges related to visibility, user outreach, access to relevant information on the NQF.**
- As pointed out before, development and implementation of the DQR is a joint effort which involves a variety of stakeholders from the federal government, the Länder, education and training institutions as well as from the labour market. All of them use their communication channels to inform and promote the DQR within their own institutions as well as to their target groups. The DQR working group which consists of these stakeholders serves as a forum for reaching consensus and it ensures the active involvement, mutual understanding and full support by the stakeholders. At the same time, it can sometimes be a challenge and time-consuming to reach a consensus on decisions for further development and implementation of the DQR.
- Future plans do not particularly focus on further information or specific communication measures. It is rather planned to discuss on criteria and procedures to include qualifications from the non-formal sector and to continue the discussion of whether the legal basis of the DQR needs to be revised or not. Moreover, there has not been an evaluation of the DQR so far. This could also be one aspect to address in the future.
- European Commission and Cedefop, [European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022 – Germany \(europa.eu\)](#), 2022, p. 14

Topic 7: in the SADCQF context (1)

- At SADC level communication and access to information is based on a **standard set of methods and tools**, such as TCCA meetings, reporting and dialogue at SADC Ministerial meetings, articles of analytical and policy nature in websites and journals. Documents of relevance for SADCQF governance are managed by Secretariat and can be accessed via existing procedures.
- The visibility of the SADCQF on newly issued national qualifications documents is not organised yet, as there is no experimentation on the use of SADCQF levels on newly issued qualifications documents (and databases) upon alignment of NQFs to the SADCQF.
- Currently the SADC website does not contain a specific public page for SADCQF activities and news. However, the ACQF contributes to partially fill this gap, through a range of actions and events started in 2021, notably the review of the first 5-year implementation of SADCQF, resulting in a [report and updated inventory](#) of NQFs in the region, presented and approved by the Joint ESTI Ministerial meetings (2022 and 2023). In May 2023, ACQF-II provided technical and financial backing to two relevant events in Johannesburg: the [SADC TVET Symposium](#) and the [TCCA meeting](#). On ACQF website the SADCQF webpage provides public information on analyses and reports, while the details of the SADCQF are synthesized on the [ACQF online tool](#). ACQF published other relevant [news articles](#), such as comparison of level descriptors ACQF-SADCQF. The [Library of international sources](#) on ACQF website contains the SADCQF Booklet and some alignment reports.
- The review of **SADCQF implementation in 2021-2022** revealed that communication and dissemination of information on the SADCQF has room for improvement. The survey and interviews conducted by ACQF for this review, gathered pertinent recommendations on the need to strengthen efforts to inform and update the national authorities and stakeholders on the SADCQF and its benefits, processes, and actions. This communication effort must be continuous, as national representatives to TCCA meetings rotate or change, which affects effective information-sharing between and within countries.

Topic 7: in the SADCQF context (2)

- **At national level**
- Access to information on the NQFs, their functions, services, regulations, instruments, and reform processes is done via national and international events, the official websites of qualifications authorities and ministries, international dialogues and comparison processes.
- The countries with well-established national qualifications authorities have the most advanced and informative websites, **enabling access to legislation and publications, but also to digital services for users, to searchable data bases of qualifications, to qualifications registration information and procedures, and to relevant news**. This is the case of countries such as Botswana, Eswatini, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa. Lesotho's Council on Higher Education website hosts the information on the Lesotho Qualifications Framework.
- Other countries starting implementation of their NQFs are engaging with development of their NQF websites and qualifications databases. This is the case of Angola (Instituto Nacional de Qualificações) and Moçambique (NQF Technical Commission).
- Reference websites of NQF lead institutions in SADC countries:
 - [Eswatini Qualifications Authority \(EQA\)](#)
 - [Lesotho Council on Higher Education](#) and [LQF webpage](#)
 - [Mauritius Qualifications Authority \(MQA\)](#)
 - [Namibia Qualifications Authority \(NQA\)](#)
 - [Seychelles Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#)
 - [South Africa Qualifications Authority \(SAQA\)](#)
 - [Zambia Qualifications Authority \(ZAQA\)](#)

Topic 7: in the SADCQF context (2)

- **At national level**

- All countries acknowledge that information on the NQF and the qualifications database(s) should go beyond the closer circle of institutions and stakeholders (in government, implementation partners and education and training providers) to reach out more effectively to employers, learners, employment agencies, regional and local communities.
- ***“Take the NQF to every village of South Africa”***, said a SAQA manager in 2023 to illustrate the new paradigm of a visible and accepted NQF.

Comparison discussion topic 7

-
- Similarities
 - Differences
 - Main conclusions



This topic will be presented and
discussed at the 5th meeting – on
19/03/2024



Topic 8: Recognition processes

Mercy Ngoma, Dr Molise Nhlapo, Tiina Polo

Topic 8: in the EQF context...

Tiina

- The EQF can support existing recognition practices thanks to strengthened trust, understanding and comparability of qualifications. This can make the process of recognition for learning and working easier. The EQF is first and foremost a transparency tool; the EQF Recommendation mentions the term recognition of qualifications several times, but in a context of support to recognition processes. The use of the EQF or of the NQFs referenced to it for recognition, is not part of the referencing criteria of NQFs to the EQF.
- There are two procedures for recognition of qualifications: a) recognition for access to employment, including recognition of professional qualifications in Europe; b) and recognition for further education and training (academic recognition). In addition, with validation of skills you can make visible the skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
- Bodies involved in the recognition of academic and professional qualification can use the EQF, NQFs and other transparency tools such as QA mechanisms, credit systems, etc. to support recognition practices as they establish trust, understanding and the comparability of qualifications, making the process of recognition for learning and working purposes easier. Qualifications frameworks and other transparency tools can facilitate recognition through the comparison and combination of qualifications and learning outcomes including partial recognition, the recognition of micro-credentials and stacked learning.
- The EQF works together with the other European and international instruments supporting the recognition of qualifications.

Topic 8: in the EQF context...

- The EQF is compatible with the [Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area](#) and its cycle descriptors. The framework was agreed by education ministers of the intergovernmental [Bologna Process in 2005](#).
- The [Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018](#) on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad refers to the EQF as a way to foster transparency and build trust between national education and training systems.
- EU level work on the recognition of qualifications primarily addresses higher education qualifications and qualifications that give access to higher education. EU cooperation on the recognition of qualifications in the VET, adult learning, but also of micro-credentials, partial qualifications is less developed. Digital credentials add new tools for recognition processes.
- The large majority of EQF countries are states parties of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#).

Topic 8: in the SADCQF context

- SADC adopted the **“Guidelines for Recognition of Qualifications”** (2020). This publication is a result of cooperation with the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) and the Technical Committee of Certification and Accreditation (TCCA).
- This manual contains **standards and guidelines on all aspects of the recognition of qualifications and aims to provide credential evaluators from SADC Member states with general guidelines to assist them to develop member country specific recognition manuals.**
- Further, the manual provides general guidelines that make the **recognition procedures transparent to all stakeholders** directly or indirectly involved in recognition such as; credential evaluators, education and training institutions, learners, employers and policy makers. In general, this manual aims to create more clarity regarding recognition practices in all SADC countries and to **contribute to a joint qualifications recognition area**, in which all SADC countries follow the same procedure in the recognition of qualifications, based on commonly agreed standards and guidelines.

Topic 8: in the SADCQF context

- The SADC Recognition Guidelines **endorse and explain the notions of substantial and non-substantial differences defined in the Addis Recognition Convention.**
- The Addis Convention (2014) declares that qualification recognition should be granted, unless there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that is being compared with.
- **Substantial differences** are differences between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that are so significant, that they would most likely prevent the holder of the foreign qualification from succeeding in the sought after activity such as further study or employment. The responsibility of proof of a substantial difference lies with the recognition authority and the following should be taken into consideration:
 - not every difference should be considered to be “substantial”;
 - the difference should be substantial in relation to the function (purpose) of the qualification

Topic 8: in the SADCQF context

- SADC countries are at different stages of ratification of the UNESCO Addis Recognition Convention. Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia are state parties of the Addis Recognition Convention. To date no SADC country has ratified the [Global Recognition Convention](#).
- The [Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States](#), known as the Addis Convention, establishes a legal framework for the fair and transparent recognition of higher education qualifications in the African region to facilitate mobility and inter-university cooperation. Supporting academic mobility and exchange among African States strengthens trust in the quality enhancement of institutions and systems, while also providing a pivotal network for advancing the SDG targets for equitable access in the region.
- The Convention was adopted on 12 December 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and entered into force on 15 December 2019. It is open to UNESCO Member States belonging to the [Africa Region](#) and as of September 2023 has [14 States Parties](#).

Comparison discussion topic 8

- Similarities
- Differences
- Main conclusions



Summary of the comparison: a possible template

Topic	Key findings on comparison between EQF and NQF of Cabo Verde
1. Objectives	High comparability. Difference: “harmonisation”
2. Scope	High comparability
3. Levels and descriptors	No substantial differences. Medium comparability. Identical domains of learning of level descriptors (KSAR / KSRA). Difference: level structure (8 – 10 levels).
4. Learning outcomes	High comparability
5. RVCC / VNFIL	High comparability
6. Quality assurance	Comparability – no substantial differences
7. Communication	
8. Recognition	
9. Governanace	
10. Referencing	
11. Transparency of comparison	

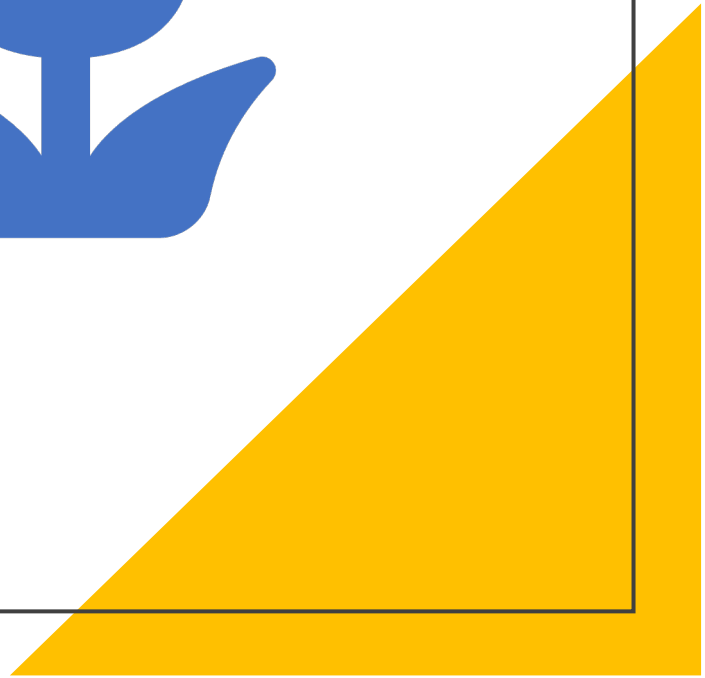
Next steps

- 5th meeting: Topics 8, 10 and 11 – 19 March
 - Topic 10: Seychelles;
 - Topic 11: Angola, Secretariat
- 6th meeting: draft report 1 – 8 April
- 7th meeting: draft report 2 – 24 April
- Final report: discussed at TCCA meeting 9-10/May (Johannesburg) and at 65th EQF AG meeting (June 2024)

Thank you!

Merci!

Obrigado!



ANNEX

Slides of Meeting 3 (30/01/2024)

Meeting 3: Agenda

Tiina

Time (CET)	Topics / speakers
14.00-14.15	Opening, participants, agenda. European Commission (DG EMPL – Tiina Polo) and SADC Secretariat
14.15-14.45 Session 1	Completion of topics from meeting 2: comparison of level descriptors. Sub-group of semantic comparison (Baiba Ramina, Ramesh Ramdass and Eduarda). Very brief: Micro-credentials initiative in Mauritius (By: Prof. Romeela Mohee, Commissioner – Higher Education Council)
14.45-15.45 Session 2	Comparison Topics 4, 5, 6: synthesis from the working note. Topic 4: Learning outcomes; Topic 5: RPL / VNFIL; Topic 6: Quality Assurance. Presenters: Nadia Starr, Sindy Kayi; Fiona Ernesta; Ramesh Ramdass
15.45-16.15 Session 3	Updates, questions, discussion (all countries, experts)
16.15-16.25 Session 4	Action points to complete discussion on topics 4-6 (complementary information)
16.25-16.30	Acknowledgments, closure

Main updates on the Working Note

- In line with participants' interest – we added / expanded
 - Section on Bologna Process – EHEA (Topic 2 on Scope)
 - CATS - ECTS (expanded) – Topic 4 (Learning Outcomes)
- Inserted section on semantic comparison (Topic 3, on levels and descriptors) – and Annex 1
- Discussed and to be inserted: section on micro-credentials and qualifications outside of formal education and training (Topic 2 on Scope)
- To be inserted: information and sources (links) on NQF reviews / reforms in EQF countries (Ireland, Latvia, others)

Next meetings

- Meeting 4: Topics 7, 8, 9 – 20/Feb (to be confirmed)
- Meeting 5: Topics 10, 11 – 19/Mar
- Meeting 6: Draft report Version 1 – 08/Apr
- Meeting 7: Draft report Version 2 – 24/Apr

TOPICS

1. Objectives of both qualifications frameworks
2. Scope of the frameworks
3. Levels and level descriptors
4. Learning outcomes approach
5. RVCC / VNFIL
6. Quality assurance
7. **Communication, visibility, transparency, access to information**
8. **Recognition processes**
9. **Governance structures**
10. **Referencing processes**
11. **Transparency and quality assurance of the comparison process**

SADC Countries contributing to presentations

- **Topic 7: Communication, visibility, transparency, access to information (proposal: Namibia)**
- **Topic 8: Recognition processes (proposal: Zambia, Lesotho)**
- **Topic 9: Governance structures (proposal: Mozambique & RD Congo)**
- **Topic 10: Referencing processes (proposal: Seychelles)**
- **Topic 11: Transparency and quality assurance of the comparison process (Angola, SADC Secretariat)**

ANNEX

Slides of Meeting 2

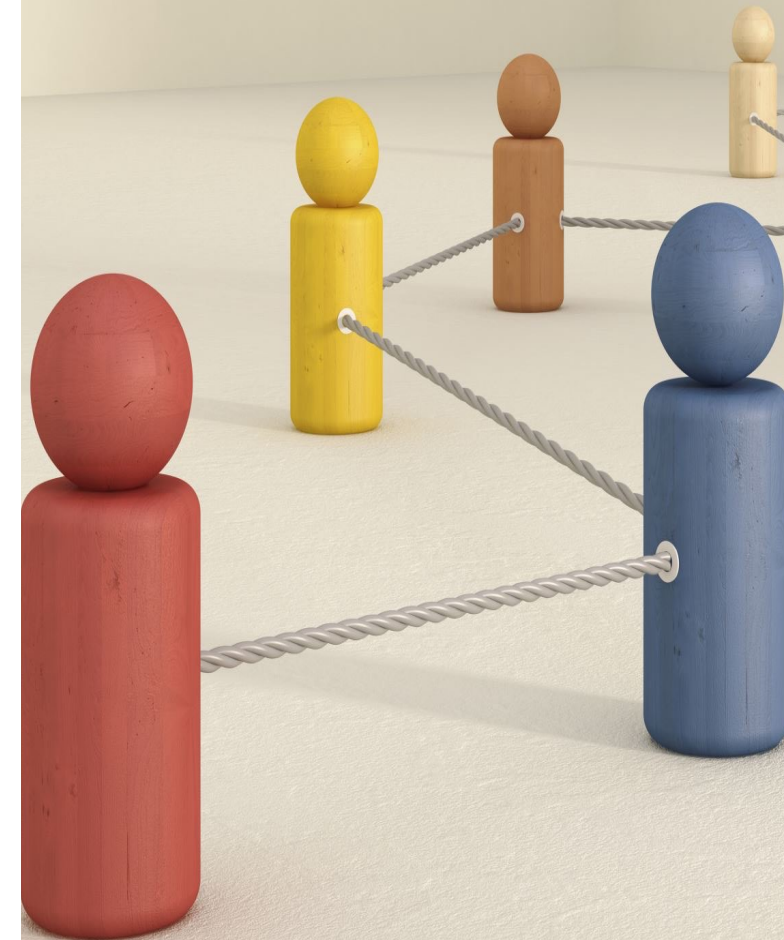
Session 1 - 1: Recap - Comparison EQF-NQF

It is based on the EQF Recommendation (2017), which invites the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to “explore possible avenues for the development and application of criteria and procedures allowing the comparison of third country national and regional qualifications frameworks with the EQF in accordance with international agreements;”.

The comparison is:

- Process that facilitates **confidence in the quality and level** of qualifications, to support the recognition and international mobility of learners and workers.
- It aims to **increase the transparency and comparability of qualifications**.
- It is based on **equal dialogue of a set of mutually agreed topics; Joint report**.
- It can **connect qualifications frameworks around the world** and contribute to international transparency of qualifications.

Tiina



1.2 Comparison approach, topics and working group

Euarda

At least 7 online meetings: from 28/November 2023 to end April 2024
Report to be presented to EQF AG on 20/Jun 2024 and to TCCA meeting 2nd week May 2024
Participatory process, dialogue, sharing of experiences, documented at every step

TOPICS

1. Objectives of both qualifications frameworks
2. Scope of the frameworks
3. Levels and level descriptors
4. Learning outcomes approach
5. RVCC / VNFIL
6. Quality assurance
7. Communication, visibility, transparency, access to information
8. Recognition processes
9. Governance structures
10. Referencing processes
11. Transparency and quality assurance of the comparison process

Comparison Working Group

SADC:

- Secretariat
- Member States: relevant Ministries, National qualifications authorities, institutes and technical commissions

EQF:

- European Commission (Skills Agenda Unit); 3 EU Member States (Ireland, Germany, Latvia, European Students Union); ETF. EU Delegation to SADC: informed

1.4. Methodology

- Gradual construction: for each meeting presented **technical working note** – content, evidence, analysis by comparison **topic**
- Between meetings - updates and complements to the technical notes
- 2 versions of the report: will be discussed and commented in detail in March-April
- Extensive list of sources, documentation, some statistics
- On SADCQF: refer to [Review Report](#) and [Inventory of NQFs in SADC](#) validated in 2022 and 2023 by TCCA and the Ministers (Joint ministerial meeting, June 2023).
- All versions in 3 languages simultaneously

Indicative revised roadmap for the comparison

Date	Comparison Topics
1) 28/Nov 2023 15.15 SAST / 14.15 CET	Comparison teams, approach, topics, working modalities, tasks, plan
2) 15/Jan 2024 14.00 CET / 15.00 SAST	Comparison dialogue: Topics 1-3
3) 30/Jan	Comparison dialogue: Topics 4-6
4) 15/Feb	Comparison dialogue: Topics 7-9
5) 12/Mar	Comparison dialogue: Topics 10-11. Full overview
6) 26/Mar	Comparison dialogue: discussion of report – complete draft 1
7) 16/Apr	Comparison dialogue: discussion of report – complete draft 2. For presentation and validation at TCCA (2 nd week May 2024) and at EQF AG (20/June 2024)



Thank you!
Merci!
Obrigada(o)!
Assante sana!