



Workshop: Developing NQF-RPL-CATS Policies Somalia

Session 13

RPL: Overview of concepts, policies, requirements, examples

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- RPL is at the heart of the ACQF II
- RPL has links with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS)
- This presentation is an attempt at providing an overview of the key issues. It is based on the RPL Handbook for RPL Practitioners of the ACQF

Abridged Definition of RPL

- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process by which all the learning outcomes of an individual applicant are assessed against predefined standards, and a document is awarded to successful applicants

Unabridged Definition of RPL

- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process by which any set of consistent learning outcomes of an individual, however acquired (i.e. formally, non-formally and/or informally) are given currency through the awarding of an officially recognised document clearly stating what the applicant knows and is able to do (a qualification typically, but not necessarily), and the extent to which they are mastered by the applicant (level); after a thorough quality assured assessment process against predefined [preferably widely agreed] standards that provide a set of criteria, and a norm, for assessing these learning outcomes

- Validation
- Recognition
- Assessment
- Learning outcomes
- Formal learning
- Non-formal learning
- Informal learning
- National qualifications framework
- National qualifications system
- Credits
- Qualification
- Certification
- Competence
- Skill
- Career guidance

- Validation
- **Recognition**
- **Assessment**
- **Learning outcomes**
- Formal learning
- Non-formal learning
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- **National qualifications framework**
- **National qualifications system**
- Credits
- **Qualification**
- Certification
- Competence
- Skill
- Career guidance

- *Reconhecimento de competências adquiridas*, RCA (Mozambique)
- Recognition of current competences, RCC (Lesotho).
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, PLAR (Canada)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, APEL (England)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning or Experience (Ireland)
- Recognition of Acquired Skills, RAS (Flemish Belgium)
- Recognition of learning outcomes and competences, RAC (Quebec)
- Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes, RNFIL (OECD, 2010)
- Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences, RVCC (Portugal)
- Validation of experiential learning outcomes, VAE (France)
- Validation of experiential occupational outcomes, VAEP (Morocco)
- Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, VNFIL (Azerbaijan)
- Review/assessment of actual competences, *realkompetansevurdering*, Norway

Countries that have established and will start, or are implementing RPL

- **Cabo Verde**
- Eswatini
- Ghana
- Kenya
- **Mauritius**
- Mozambique
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

- Promote Lifelong learning
- Consistent with the NQF
- Consistent with CATS (Session 5)
- Consistent with micro-credentials

- At the individual level: employability, self-esteem, confidence

- At the enterprise level: job matching, application for “bigger” contracts (public bids, international contracts)

- **Qualifications standards**
- **Approach based on learning outcomes**
- **Process of different phases** (Information and guidance, Identification of learning outcomes, Documentation of learning outcomes, Assessment of learning outcomes, Certification of learning outcomes)

Initial information and guidance



- Greeting learners (potential applicants)
- Information and guidance to the potential applicant (comprehensive, with information about the benefits, the process and its potential duration)
- Identification of the evidence to substantiate claim for application (partly with RPL practitioners)
- Decision of the individual to apply

The Different Phases in Detail (cont'd)

- Provision of the administrative form
- Guidance 1 (light)
- Handover of the administrative form by the applicant
- Waiting time (Decision to accept the application by the RPL practitioners)

Administrative registration



The Different Phases in Detail (cont'd)

Application screening and eligibility



- Guidance 2 (intermediate, including advice about evidence gathering)
- Handover of the eligibility portfolio
- Eligibility interview
- Waiting time (Decision to send the applicant to the assessment by RPL practitioners)

The Different Phases in Detail (cont'd)

- Understanding what the final assessment is about
- Elaborating a portfolio of competences, and/or documenting learning outcomes

Preparation of the final assessment



The Different Phases in Detail (cont'd)

Final assessment (of learning outcomes)



- Guidance 3 (comprehensive, especially concerning the preparation to the assessment)
- Handover of the portfolio of [self-analysed] learning outcomes.
- Waiting time (Analysis of the portfolio of competences by assessor(s))
- Waiting time (Convening notice send to applicants)
- Supplementary assessment (see Box 11)
- Interview with the panel of assessors

The Different Phases in Detail (cont'd)

- Waiting time (Validation of the learning outcomes)
- Waiting time (Making and stamping of the qualification) –
Recording of outcome
- Awarding of a qualification to successful applicants.
- Explaining the reasons for failure to unsuccessful applicants.
- Suggestions for further practice, or formal education and training (top up learning).

Certification (of learning outcomes)



A Possible System (the Supply)

1 Identify the strategic issue or the need that necessitates the development of the RPL Policy together with the statement of purpose or justification

Develop the Legal and Policy Framework for RPL while ensuring stakeholder involvement, validation and Gazettement and publishing

3 Integrate the RPL Policy framework into the existing education and training policies, e.g. the NOE if available, social economic and employment policies

Develop guidelines for the implementation of RPL

5 Establish a communication policy/strategy, inform about objectives and benefits, and reach out to the most in need stakeholders, whether they be individuals, employers, or organisations

Prepare, create or adapt tools, resources, materials and processes (e.g., information leaflets, assessor's manual or guidance procedures, applicants' booklets, assessment procedures and tools, assessment standards)

2

4

6

A Possible System (the Supply) cont'd

7 Carry out publicity and advocacy campaign on RPL

Organise the social dialogue, influence stakeholders and organise a sense of ownership (for further commitment to accept the qualifications that will be awarded to future successful RPL applicants).

8

9 Design the institutional/Governance structures for RPL

Establish a quality assurance Framework for RPL

10

11 Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Establish a sustainable financing model for RPL

12

A Possible System (the Supply) cont'd

13 Carry out a survey to determine the sectors of the economy and occupations with potential for RPL

Train staff and RPL practitioners, guidance officers and assessors in the first place

14

15 Develop an assessment and certification framework

Develop RPL assessment tools and methods

16

17 Organise [vertical] pilots for the Policy Framework and the instruments, either sector targeted or holistic according to the priority needs

Carry out skills gap identification and training for unsuccessful RPL applicants who need additional learning to meet the qualification standards

18

19 Compile results from Monitoring and Evaluation of the pilots

A Possible System (the Supply) cont'd

Refine the RPL Policy and instruments based on the findings of the Pilot exercise

20

21 Organising the debate among key stakeholders for improving the RPL system

Execute mass implementation/ rollout

22

23 Conduct post RPL assessment follow up for successful candidates

Carry out impact assessment

24

25 Policy Review after the agreed review period, e.g. 5 years to align to the dynamic labour market and society needs

ACQF Possible Outcomes of the RPL Individual Process



Exemption of academic prerequisite to access the formal education and training system and resume studies in the lifelong learning formal system, for example to access tertiary education without any upper secondary qualification.



Exemption of all or part of the curriculum in a formal programme.



Credits toward a qualification, or partial validation or microcredential.



Certificate of labour market skills, with currency in a region, an industry sector, or even a company; therefore with limited currency, oftentimes based on bilateral agreement between the certifying body and a sector or an employer organisation (e.g., for applying for a job in a particular industry sector or region).



Any document stating what the owner knows and is able to do (skills).

RPL is...

RPL is a coordinated and integrated approach to education, employment and social policies.

RPL is cheaper than formal education and training alternatives, because it makes visible what RPL applicants already know or can do.

RPL is not...

RPL is not a standalone initiative

RPL is not free and not necessarily cheap.

What RPL is not (cont'd)

<p>RPL is about the already acquired competences.</p>	<p>RPL is not about Education and Training.</p>
<p>RPL, in the most efficient systems, works hand-in-hand with the <u>formal education and training system</u> (e.g., for positioning future learners, for sharing assessment procedures, for sharing qualifications standards, for preparing competent staff, especially assessors).</p>	<p>RPL is <u>not a competitor</u> to the formal education and training system.</p>
<p>RPL assessment is about ascertaining whether applicants <u>already</u> possess required learning outcomes (are competent) which can only be determined via a thorough and quality-assured assessment process, based on <u>authentic assessment</u> (i.e. actually assessing applicants doing or explaining about what they are being assessed on, as opposed to remotely connected assessment).</p>	<p>RPL does not assess the <u>input</u> process nor the context of the learning.</p>
<p>RPL assesses the learning outcomes, which is in line with <u>modern</u> approaches: it is what people know and can do that matters.</p>	<p>RPL does not assess the <u>time</u> for learning nor how much <u>experience</u> a person has (a person may learn or work for ten years and still not possess the required learning outcomes).</p>

What RPL is not (cont'd)

RPL is about providing people who appear to possess the required learning outcomes and who are in need of a qualification.

It provides them with the opportunity to have their learning outcomes assessed, validated and recognised, and potentially receive a qualification.

RPL does not award qualifications to anyone unless they possess the required learning outcomes.

RPL is not about providing qualifications to all individuals in a society regardless of what they know and can do.

RPL is about creating a more equitable system providing a second chance for qualifications for people possessing learning outcomes not yet recognised.

RPL is not about awarding undeserved qualifications, credits or exemptions.

RPL is about assessing and recognising learning outcomes a person already possesses. RPL is a second chance of qualification.

RPL is not a second chance of education and training.

RPL may inform applicants and assessors about additional learning outcomes that an applicant requires to fulfil the requirements of a qualification (e.g., the necessary learning outcomes corresponding to the preparation phase of the assessment: patience, hard work, organisation, articulation).

RPL does not create the learning outcomes that are being assessed.

- Guidance to (Potential) RPL Applicants
- Applicant-centred
- Fair
- Privacy
- Equality, Inclusiveness and Diversity Issues
- Accessible
- Flexible
- Assess Learning Outcomes and Not Just the Duration of the Experience
- Transparent Valid Reliable Fair and Authentic Assessment
- Equal Value (Learning Outcomes and Outcomes of the RPL Process)
- Explain the Decisions of the RPL Assessors
- Formal Assessment of Complaints
- Alternatives for Failed Applicants
- Internal and External Monitoring and Evaluation
- In Line with Any Statutory Legislation

- Cabo Verde
- Mauritius

Decree-Law N^o 54/2014: “People acquire, with their life experience, namely in professional activities, knowledge, and competences relevant for the exercise of many activities. Those competences can and shall be formally certified, and, if necessary, complemented with training adjusted to individual needs, thereby promoting access to higher levels of qualification.”

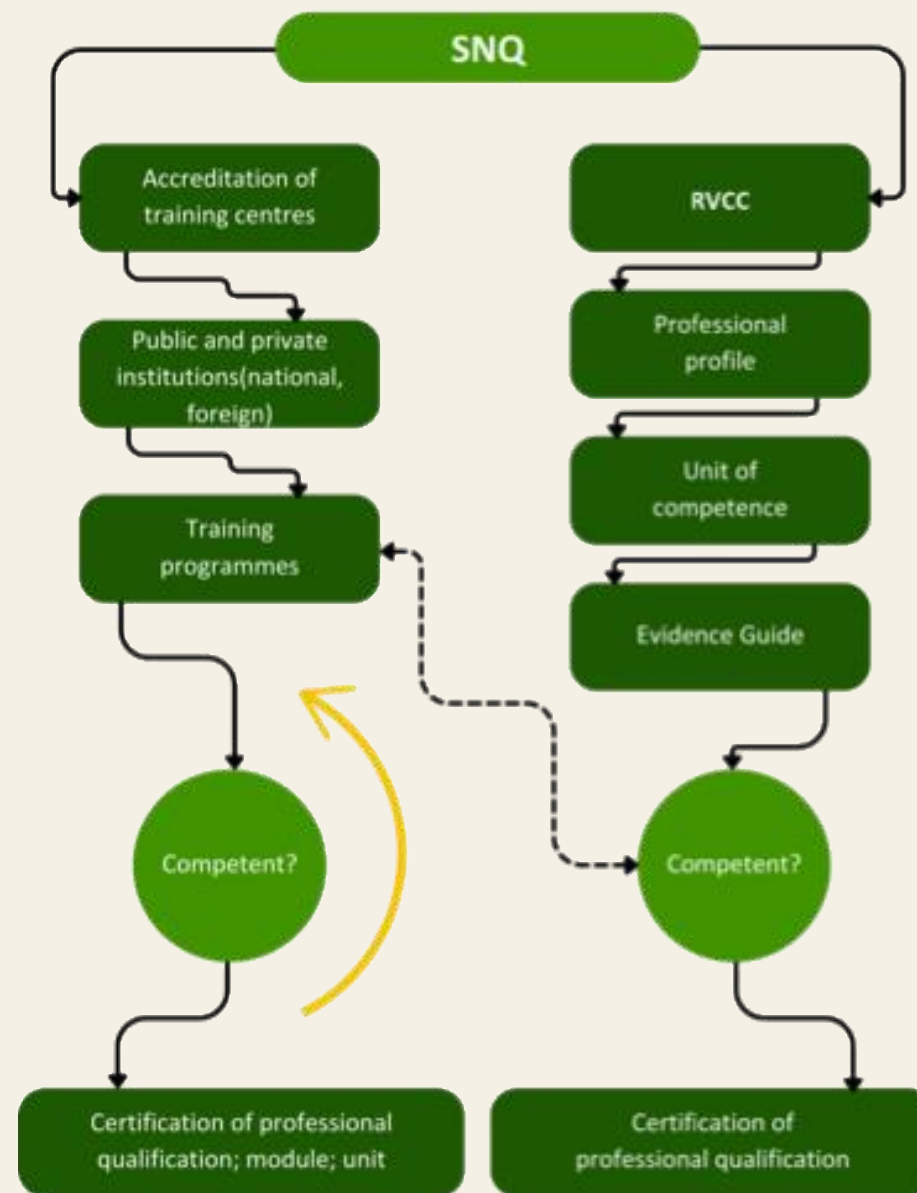
Stages of the RVCC process in Cabo Verde (Article 8 of Decree-Law No. 54/2014):

Phase 1: Information and guidance – first orientation to the candidates on the RVCC process and its instruments, and the candidate is advised on the feasibility in each case. This step starts directly at the certifying entity.

Phase 2: Recognition of competences – candidates identify the knowledge and competences acquired throughout life, applying a methodology of *Bilan de competences* (Skills Audit). Main outputs: Individual professional portfolio, assessor’s report identifying the candidates’ competences by units of competence and the professional activities to be validated from the provided evidence.

Phase 3: Validation of competences – evaluation of the competences in correspondence with the professional profiles of the CNQ. Based on evaluation instruments adapted to the nature of the competence, for example, technical interview, practical examination. The jury comprises an assessor, an evaluator, and a representative of the enterprise sector (independent evaluator). Output: Deliberation of the jury on the validation process.

Phase 4: Certification of competences – the jury certifies that the assessed and validated competences have a formal value in relation to a predefined referential. In case of partial certification, the assessor and the evaluator propose a personal qualification plan, encompassing the units of competence, which were not certified. With this personal plan, the candidate has access to an adequate modality of training or of self-training in the frame of the SNQ. At the conclusion of the training programme, the candidate resumes the RVCC process.



TWO PATHS / PROCESSES OF CERTIFICATION

Main features of RVCC as a system:

- RVCC focuses on professional certification (RVCC Pro) and currently applies only to qualifications included in the CNQ. In higher education RVCC processes do not apply; however, reflection has already begun which could lead to decision-making and measures to support an RVCC approach adapted to higher education.
- Target group: Individuals over 25 years of age with at least 5 years of professional/ employment experience.
- Governance of the system: UC-SNQ c(NQF lead body) coordinates the organisation, functioning and elaboration of referential for professional certification and assessment standards. UC-SNQ supervises the certifying entities, monitors, and provides them with technical and methodological support.
- Accreditation: Only accredited certifying entities can provide services of the RVCC system, in accordance with the legal requirements. Substantive experience in professional training and in the targeted professional families are among the key criteria of accreditation of certifying entities. The accreditation can be revoked under circumstances of breach of the legal requirements and obligations, low performance or at request of the entity. Ex.: School of Hospitality, CERMI
- Implementation: a) Training of professionals; b) In few qualifications
- RVCC Standards: in the CNQ

- In 2022, the RVCC trial was launched in three professional qualifications: Plumbing and Building Installation (level 3), Food Services (level 3), Administrative and customer service services and users (level 4).
- The second pilot experience began end 2022, in the professional family of Hospitality Restauration and Tourism, for the professional qualifications: food and beverage services (level 3), confectioner (level 3), kitchen (level 4), tour guide (level 5), hotel receptionist (level 4).

Some challenges and perspectives:

- Demand for RVCC surpasses capacity – resources !
- Analysis of demand – regions / islands
 - Analysis of outcomes of pilots

Phases of RPL

➤ **PRE-APPLICATION**

- Candidate is provided information about the process of RPL

➤ **PRE-SCREENING**

- The candidate submits his/her application and identifies the qualification against which RPL will be claimed.

➤ **FACILITATION**

- The facilitator guides the RPL candidate in the preparation of the portfolio.

➤ **ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATION**

- The candidate is assessed against the unit standards of the selected qualification

2010 - 2024

- **2010-2011: Low intake of RPL Candidates**
 - ❖ **High cost of RPL: Facilitation cost; Assessment cost and Application fee for RPL**
- **2012: Round Table with ILO for RPL Policy review**
- **2013: Change in strategy – individual-based v/s project-based**
- **2014: Project-based with various institutions (e.g. Ministry of Education, NEF)**
- **2015: RPL in new areas (e.g. Special Education Needs) and at higher NQF Levels (Level 6)**
- **2016: Task Team for development of RPL Guidelines for SADC countries**
- **2019: Financial assistance from the HRDC as RPL support scheme**
- **2019: 2nd prize winner for the 3rd VPL Biennale for RPL Policy**
- **2022: Introduction of e-application and portfolio development for RPL**
- **To date: Among 800+ candidates, 65% have acquired either a full or partial awards.**

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LAUNCHING OF RPL AT NATIONAL LEVEL

2009: RPL launched in Mauritius in the following sectors:

- Tourism;
- Construction;
- Printing and
- Plumbing.

2010: RPL opened to all sectors of the Mauritian economy



- The NQF has been the main vehicle through which RPL has been promoted in Mauritius.
- The implementation of RPL rests with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) - Mauritius Qualifications Act 2001: “...to recognise and validate competencies for purposes of certification obtained outside the formal education and training systems”.

RPL: UPCOMING CHALLENGES

TVET SECTOR

RPL carried out for certification

- Inadequate RPL Facilitators
- Lack of motivation by candidates
- Access to evidence limited in many cases
(Validity, Reliability, Currency, Authenticity, Adequacy)
- Resilient Awarding Bodies is crucial
- Massive RPL campaign underway

Higher Education

Entry to University Programmes

Need to harmonise RPL across all sectors of the education and training system in Mauritius

The Higher Education Commission and Mauritius Qualifications Authority working together towards a National Policy Framework for RPL in Mauritius



ACQF

African Continental
Qualifications Framework



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