01

Credit Accumulation and Transfer in the Context of the ACQF

Objectives of ACQF Guideline 4 on Validation and Recognition of Learning

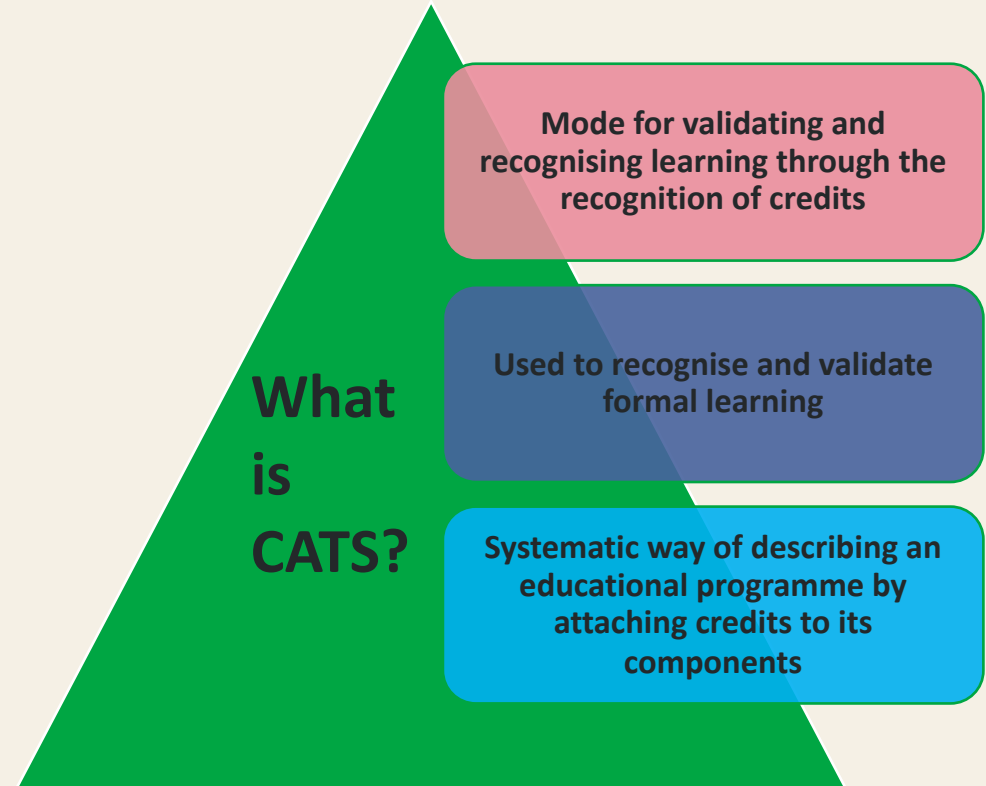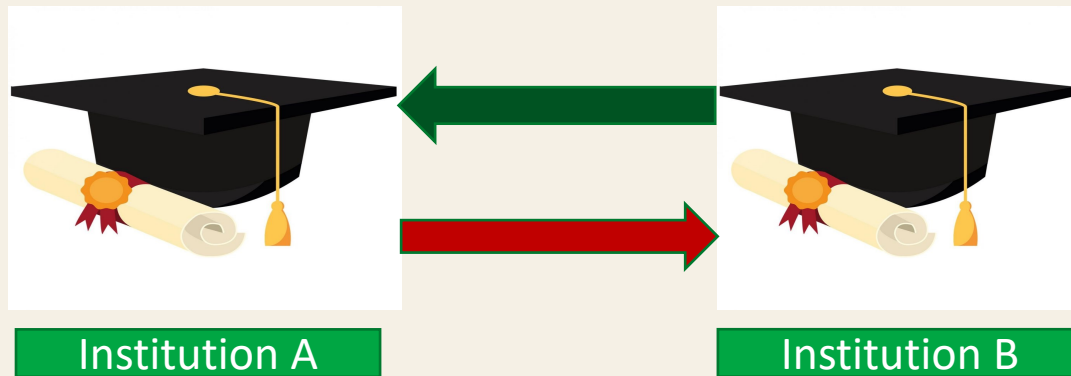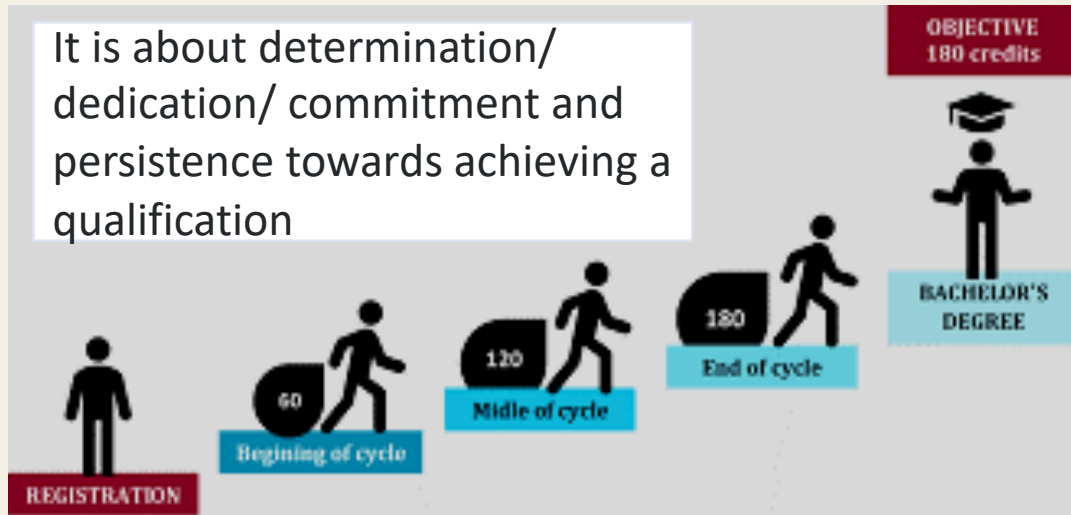Facilitate Recognition of qualifications among African States

Facilitate RPL within and among African States

Facilitate Systematic exchange of information between ACQF, NQFs and recognition structures (ARC)

Facilitate Implementation of CATS in Africa

Main Concepts of CATS

It is about determination/ dedication/ commitment and persistence towards achieving a qualification

OBJECTIVE 180 credits

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

180 End of cycle

120 Midle of cycle

60 Begining of cycle

REGISTRATION

Institution A

Institution B

What is CATS?

Mode for validating and recognising learning through the recognition of credits

Used to recognise and validate formal learning

Systematic way of describing an educational programme by attaching credits to its components

It is about saving for the future

Main Concepts of CATS...cont'd

Credit
- Estimated measure/ numerical value of workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes

Credit rating
- Process of determining a numerical value/ credit of a learning programme, course/ module

Credit accumulation
- Process of acquiring credits for learning towards a qualification

Credit transfer
- Process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credits in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context

Main Concepts of CATS...cont'd

- Credits should comprise all the learning activities of the student, inclusive of contact time, private study, research, assignment writing, industrial visits and attachments, assessment, etc.

- It is common practice for institutions to accept the transfer of credit from other institutions up to a ceiling of 50% of the total credits required for the award of a qualification.

Types of credit transfers: vertical, horizontal and diagonal

- **Block Credit Transfer:** entails reducing the total credit of the receiving programme by the amount of credits from the completed programme.

- **Course Exemption:** An individual may be exempted from taking a specific course or module of a programme based on the learning achieved in previous studies. This is applicable to both completed and uncompleted programmes.

Principles of CATS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Promotes Learner Mobility –do not duplicate learning	Systems and Procedures – Transparent, fair, Flexible & easy to use	Decisions are timely, academically defensible, equitable and based on learning outcomes	Credits for non formal or informal learning equal to credits for formal learning	Promotes Institutional Autonomy	Academic Rigour and Integrity of Qualifications Not Undermined	Institutional Commitment and Cooperation is Key	Subject to Rigorous Quality Assurance

Purpose of CATS

CATS provides a methodical and systematic approach to validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies previously acquired in a formal learning setting for purposes of facilitating lifelong learning and labour mobility

Benefits of CATS

Facilitates easy mobility of learners and workers, also knowledge and skills transfer, global citizenship
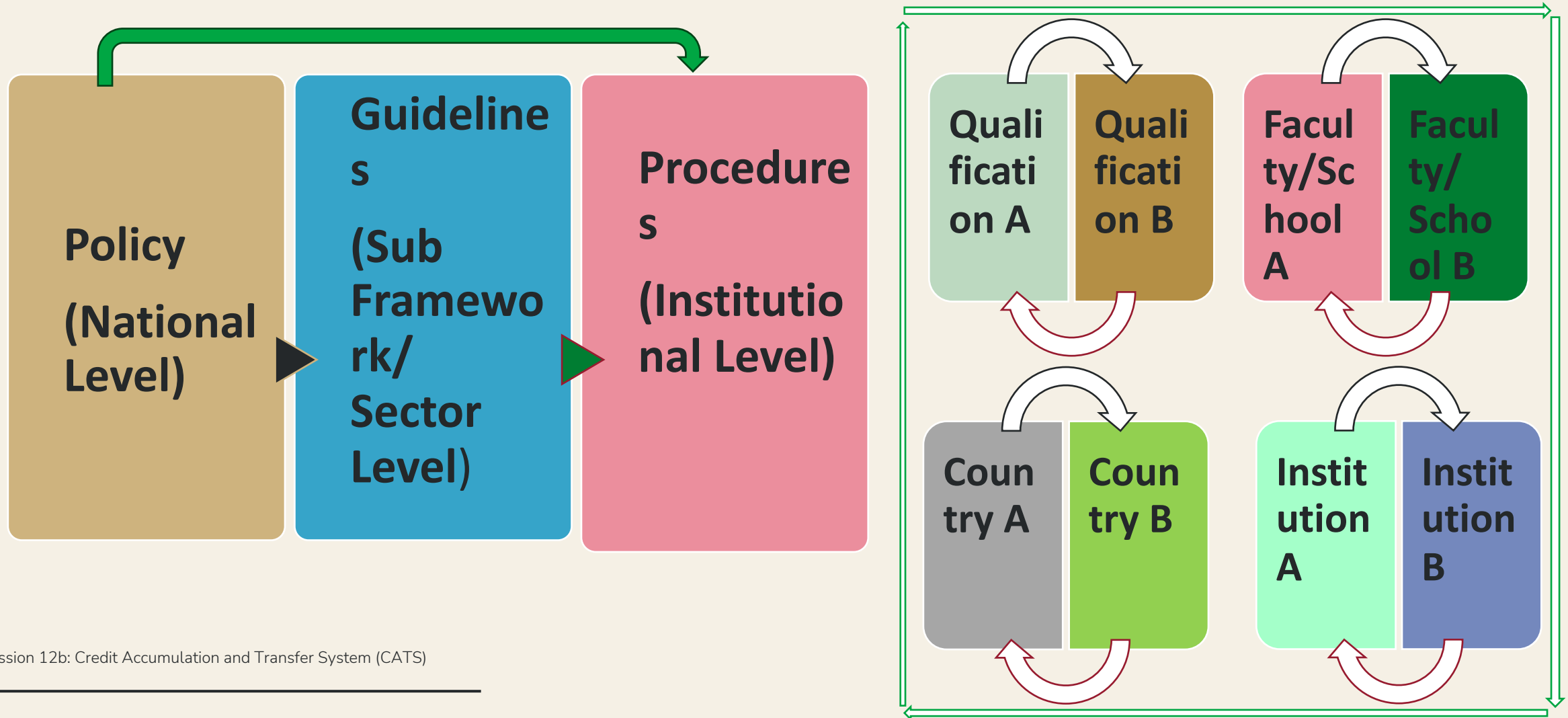
Promotes lifelong learning

NO! Duplication of learning

QUALITY QUALIFICATIONS

02

Development and Implementation of CATS at National Level

CATS Implementation Approaches

Key Elements for Policies and Guidelines

Policy Statement, Objectives and Scope

Key Terms

Principles

Implementation Stages

Quality Assurance

Financing

Session 12b: Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS)

Systems for Translating Study/ Work Hours into Credits

System 1: CATS (Widely used in Africa)

1 Credit = 10 hours, 120 Credits per Year

(e.g. Zambia, South Africa, Kenya)

System 2: ECTS (Europe)

1 ECTS Credit = 25 – 30 hours, 60 ECTS Credits per Year (e.g. Tunisia, Uganda, Algeria)

System 3: AUCS (America)

1 Semester Credit Hour = 15 – 16 Contact Hours, 30 Semester Credit Hours per Year

Challenges to CATS Implementation

Different education systems – e.g. Francophone vs British

Lack of trust among education and training institutions

Differences in structure and content of learning programmes

Absence of clear procedures and QA systems

Learning outcomes approach: differences in understanding and application

Key lessons for a country engaging in the CATS development process

- CATS to be enabled by legislation.
- Structures for CATS implementation to be put in place.
- CATS policy/ guidelines/ procedures a must.
- CATS should be linked to the NQF – determine applicability of CATS to NQF Levels/ Sub frameworks, also NQS as applicable.
- Harmonisation of structure and content of learning programmes is a key enabler of CATS
- Stakeholder involvement key to the success of CATS.
- CATS should not be too prescriptive – institutional autonomy to be respected.
- Synergies between HEIs to be encouraged.
- Quality assurance should form an integral part of CATS. CAT should only be applicable to accredited/ recognised institutions.
- Promotion of learner mobility and life-long learning should always be at the heart of any CATS.