

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (ACQF) - SCENARIOS



ACQF Scenario 1: 'ACQF connects'

Timeframe: 2023

Note: The current ACQF project funds/supports the set-up of certain elements of these features (2022)

1



Main objectives and functions of the ACQF

- Transparency on National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF), Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQF); Recognition of Prior Learning (RQF): accessible online information
- Platform for dialogue, peer learning, capacity development, benchmarking, good practice
- Monitoring NQFs/RQFs in Africa
- Contributes to achieving strategic objectives of CESA 16–25 (especially 4c and 4d)

- ACQF policy and technical document
- ACQF Guidelines, including on: Quality Assurance, Credit Systems, RPL, Learning Outcomes in different contexts, Qualifications development, Referencing / alignment criteria and processes, Technology and innovation in NQFs, Monitoring and review of NQFs, amongst others.
- Website – with database, inventory NQFs and regular updates
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) models: inventory of tools, methodologies, good practice
- E-learning platform
- Capacity-development activities
- Platform ACQF focal points – national, regional
- Network of ACQF coaches/experts
- Network with national recognition bodies
- Network with NQF/RQF institutions (agencies, commissions)

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Instruments, guidelines, policies and networks

3



Architecture of the ACQF:
Levels and descriptors

- ACQF architecture: levels (10, 8 ...levels...) and descriptors
- Descriptors: as reference for reforms – considering new skills – for example, green, digital, social skills and orientations related to beyond Covid-19 recovery
- As guidance for NQFs in development/review

- ACQF Advisory Group (ACQF AG): strategic steering and oversight. Support participation of social partners, students, youth.
- AUC: chairs and supports implementation (with a dedicated unit with resources). Technical implementation unit.
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs): focal points; links with education commissions/principals
- Network of NQF bodies (agencies, commissions, coordination units)
- Network with recognition institutions/bodies
- Labour market players (also in the other Scenarios): and students' organisations

4



Governance of the ACQF



ACQF Scenario 2: 'ACQF creates mutual trust'

Timeframe: 2026

1



Main objectives and functions of the ACQF

- Referencing meta-qualifications framework – working with NQFs and RQFs
- Translation device for comparison/referencing
- Quality and comparability of qualifications of NQFs /NQS referenced to ACQF
- ACQF levels applied on qualifications of NQFs/NQS referenced to ACQF
- ACQF common guidelines disseminated and domesticated
- ACQF levels, descriptors can be used as reference by qualification frameworks at national and regional level
- Common African education and qualifications area
- Analysis: trends in skills and qualifications

- ACQF policy and technical document (upgraded)
- ACQF Handbook: including referencing criteria and procedures, ACQF guidelines, tools, including
- ACQF Digital Referencing – to ease referencing NQFs/RQFs to ACQF, with evidence and milestones Database of all referencing processes and reports – updated
- Database of qualifications of NQFs referenced to ACQF
- Tool comparison referenced NQFs
- Recognition of prior learning: common policy, tools

2



Instruments, guidelines, policies and networks

3



Architecture of the ACQF:
Levels and descriptors

- Cornerstone for referencing ACQF, NQF/RQF

- ACQF AG
- Implementation body – option: Pan-African Accreditation (and Qualifications) Agency (PAQAA) – if inclusive of all levels and types learning^[1]
- RECs: focal points; links with education commissions/principals
- Network of NQF bodies (agencies, commissions)
- Network with recognition institutions/bodies
- Labour market players
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

4



Governance of the ACQF

[1] A feasibility analysis is underway supporting development of the African Accreditation Agency (AAA). To be explored: options for inclusion of a qualifications (ACQF) component in its remit and functions.



ACQF Scenario 3: 'ACQF opens new horizons'

Timeframe: approx. 2028-2030

1



Main objectives and functions of the ACQF

- Qualifications framework with continental qualifications (standards, profiles, units) with ACQF levels
- ACQF contributes to the AfCFTA
- Supports automatic mutual recognition of qualifications
- Issuance of digital certificates
- Common African education and qualifications space
- Analysis: trends in skills and qualifications



- ACQF policy and technical document (upgraded)
- Continental qualifications (common minimum standards, profiles, units, trusted assessment), especially for new fields, new tasks/jobs, and new skills[2]
- Continental agreement on automatic mutual recognition (linked with transparency factors such as: existence of operational NQF, quality assurance, referencing to ACQF)
- Digital certificates infrastructure: for issuers and users
- Data analytics

2



Instruments, guidelines, policies and networks

3



Architecture of the ACQF:
Levels and descriptors

- As reference for development of continental qualifications (standards, profiles)



- ACQF AG
- Implementation body: PAQAA or similar with extended functions and capacities
- RECs: focal points; links with education commissions/principals
- Network with NQF bodies (agencies, commissions)
- Network with recognition institutions/bodies and with QA agencies
- Labour market players and students' organisations
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

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Governance of the ACQF

[2] Continental qualifications – ACQF develops and registers them, but award is carried out by the awarding bodies and institutions at country level, according to applicable regulations.

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