

Overview of NQFs in Africa: a wider picture

This overview distributes National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) in Africa by stage of development and implementation. This overview has as a wider country coverage than the data collected via the survey to be discussed in the remainder of the summary. The results presented in the table below are the responsibility of ACQF-II project coordination.

Our most sincere acknowledgements to all NQF institutions and working groups, experts and the respondents of this survey for the generous information-sharing, valuable clarifications and forward-looking analysis.

▶ Summary

- This overview is based on the results of the survey, complemented by information from countries, which did not participate in the survey.
- This overview includes data on 42 countries, while the survey covers the 29 countries, which kindly submitted responses.
- Complementary information sources used in this overview: ACQF Mapping Study Reports; NQF policy documents shared with ACQF-II project coordination by countries not included in the survey; countries' specific information collected by ACQF-II project coordination in the context of capacity development and policy workshops and activities; updates shared by the Regional Economic Communities.
- Differences in classification by stages of development and implementation exist between this overview and Table 2 of this report. These differences are explained by the higher number of countries included in this overview and the interpretation by the coordination of the ACQF-II project.
- Explanatory notes on the colour codes used in the table below: a) In black font: countries' classification by stage of NQF development aligned to the survey data; b) In red font: classification by stage of NQF development modified by ACQF-II coordination, based on complementary information; c) In green font: additional countries, which did not submit responses to the survey.

▶ Overview of NQFs in Africa – a wider coverage of countries

Stage of NQF development and implementation	NQFs in Africa	Countries
Stage 1: NQF development not started	4	Burkina Faso Chad, Gabon, S. Tomé and Príncipe
Stage 2: NQF in early thinking	4	Senegal, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan
Stage 3: NQF in development and consultation	14	Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Madagascar, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Morocco, Republic of Congo
Stage 4: NQF in place (fully developed, approved as a legal act, started implementation)	12	Angola, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Egypt, Lesotho, Rwanda
Stage 5: NQF operational and reviewed	8	Cabo Verde, Kenya, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia Botswana, Mauritius
TOTAL number of countries in this overview	42	

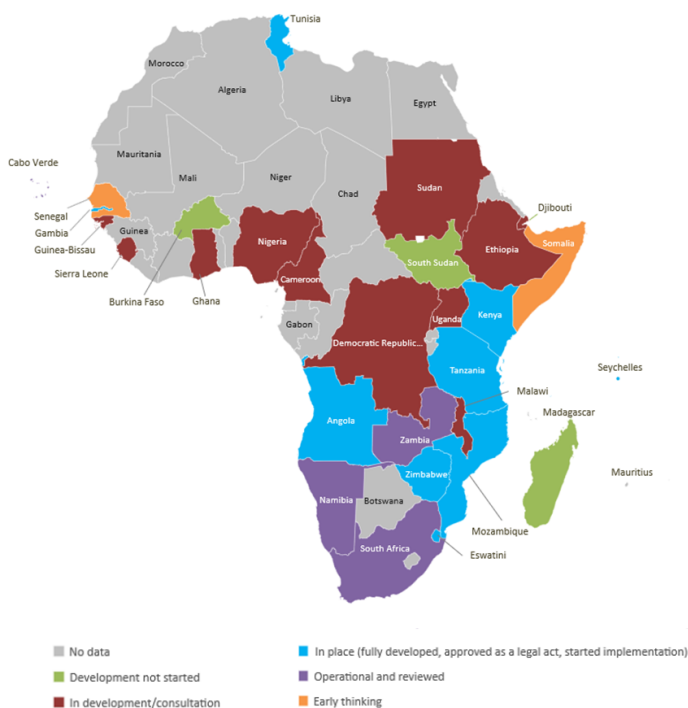
NQF Survey Report

► Main objectives of the National Qualifications Frameworks Survey

The project African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF-II), implemented in partnership with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the African Union (AU) continues the regular mapping of qualifications frameworks and related policies across the continent. The present report **summarises the state-of-play and main features of current NQFs**.

► Key findings of the survey

► Stage of development



Survey responses point to varying levels of NQF development across African countries, with countries in Southern Africa having more developed systems.

- **Most of the responding countries have either started developing their NQFs** (reported in 11 cases) or have **adopted at least an NQF legal act** (9 cases).
- As of the time of the survey, four countries reported to have an advanced NQF implemented or reviewed their framework: Cabo Verde, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia.

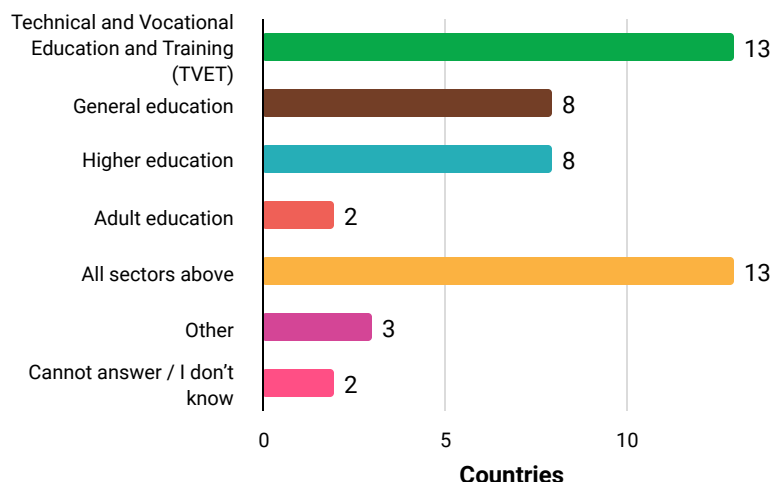
► Resources for NQF operations

In most cases, there are **various financial channels secured for the development, implementation or operations of NQFs**. Resources are most frequently provided from **the state budget** (selected in 33 cases or by 73.3% of the respondents). Many indicated that resources are partly funded as via international cooperation (33.3%). Other types of funding are less common, while in some cases (6), no stable funds were secured for NQF operations.

► NQF coverage of education and training sectors

Most **NQFs** were reported to **have a wide coverage**, including all stages of learning and development.

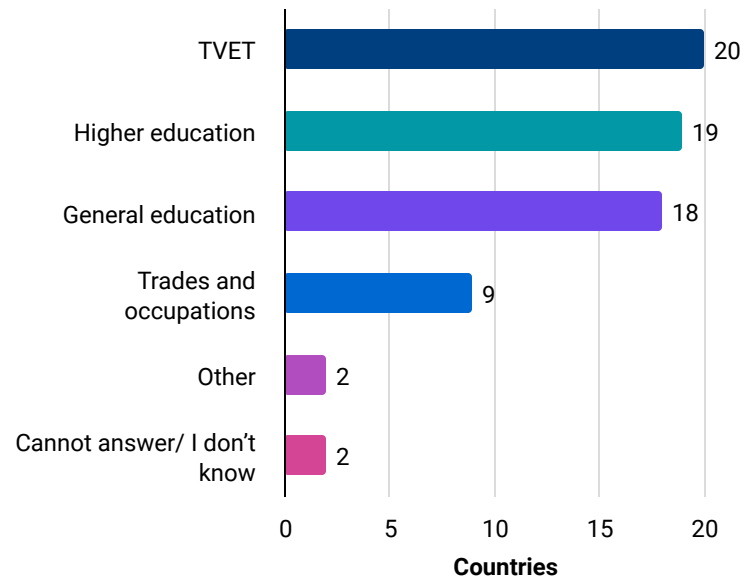
- A large portion of the countries have comprehensive NQFs, covering all the listed sectors (13 countries)
- In the case of other countries, the TVET sector is covered most often (13 countries), followed by general (8) and higher education (8).



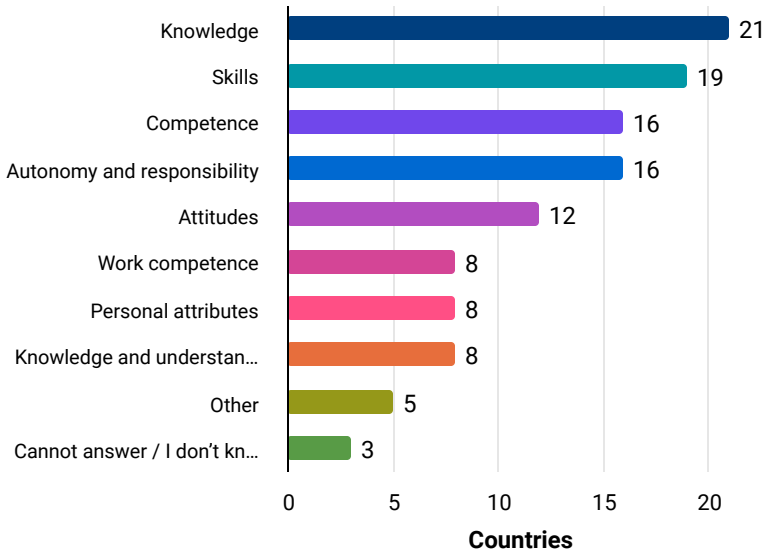
▷ NQF sub-frameworks

NQF sub-frameworks are frequently adopted in countries.

- In case of countries where thinking has begun on NQFs, most have specific sub-frameworks for higher education (19 countries), general education (18), and TVET (20).
- Fewer have specific sub-frameworks for trades and occupations (9).
- Moreover, Angola, Gambia, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe include non-formal and informal learning as well.



▷ Domains of level descriptors



Level descriptor domains are used to differentiate types of learning and learning outcomes captured in NQFs,

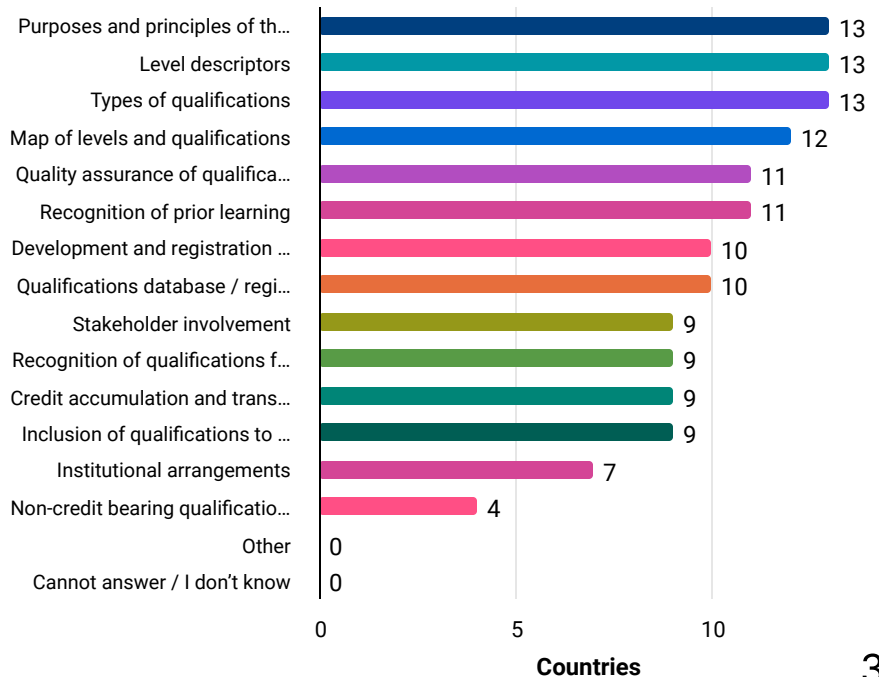
- Results show that the **four most frequently used descriptors** are **knowledge** (21), **skills** (19), **competence** (16) and **autonomy and responsibility** (16)
- Other types of level descriptors are used to a lesser extent, but nonetheless strongly present.
- Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Sierra Leone and South Africa stand out to be using the highest number of level descriptors.

▷ Legal basis of NQFs and regulated areas

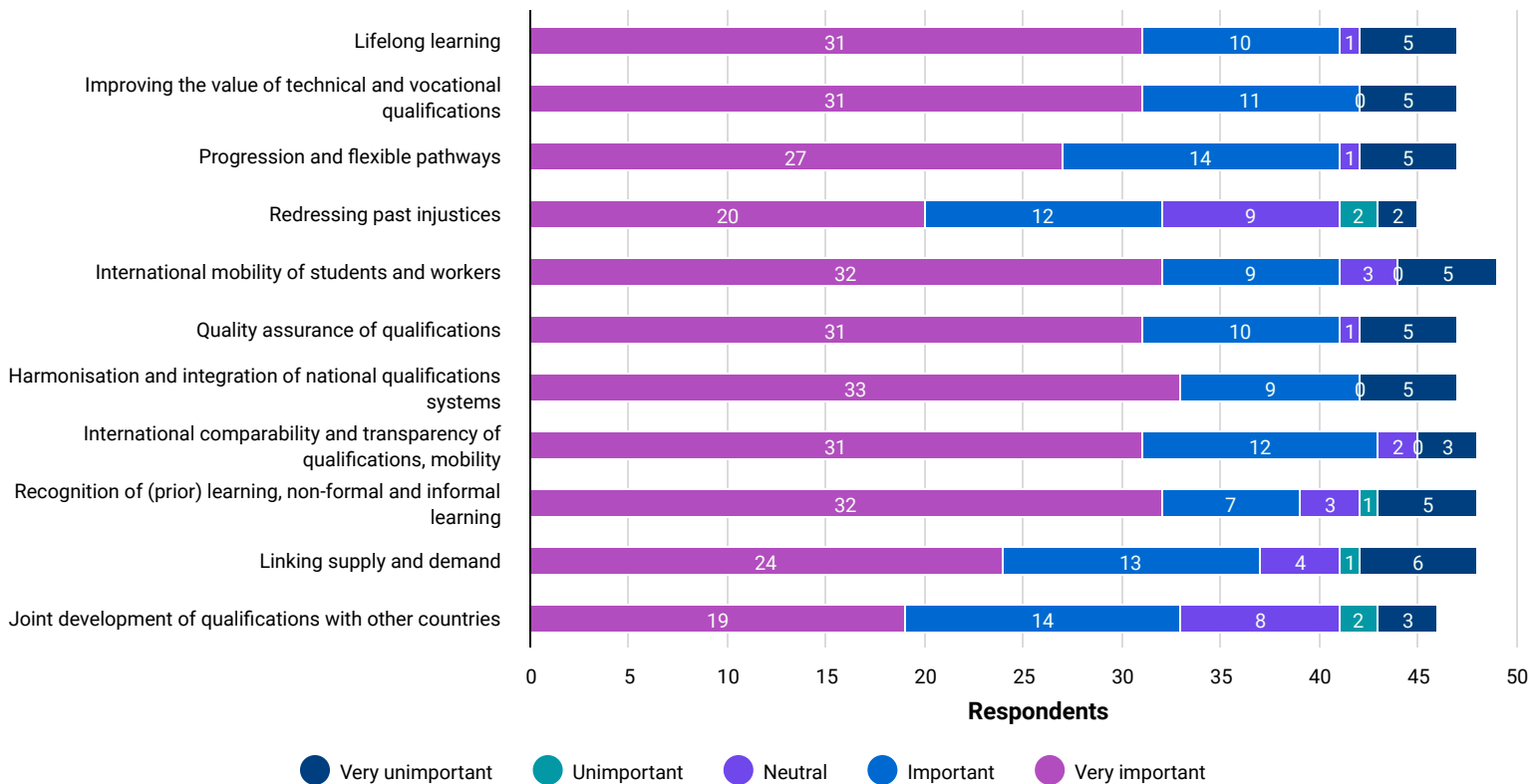
In most countries with an established NQF, **a law or act is the main regulatory document** (8 cases), while a decree is also frequently used (5 countries).

There is somewhat more variation with regard the **regulated areas**:

- Purposes and principles of NQFs, level descriptors and types of qualifications are the areas regulated by most countries (13).
- To a lesser extent, but most other areas are also regulated by the majority of the surveyed countries.
- Institutional arrangements (7) and non-credit-bearing qualifications or partial qualifications (4) tend to be less often regulated.



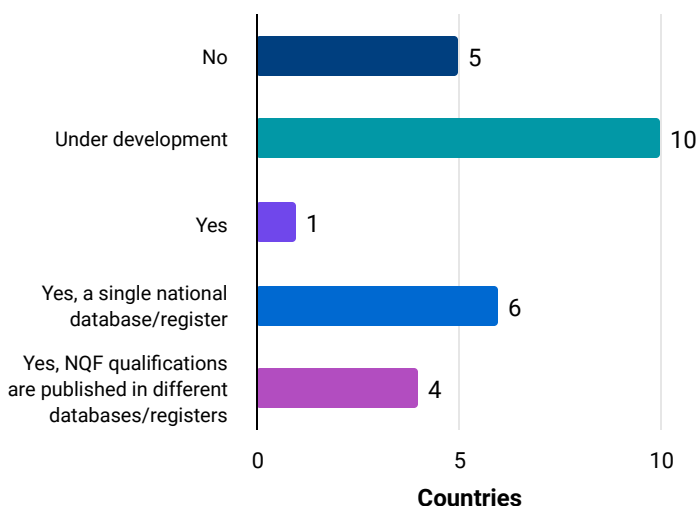
► Possible objectives of NQFs



The survey has asked respondents to rank different types of possible objectives of NQFs. Results show that some objectives enjoy more priority while a few possible aims of NQFs have also been ranked lower.

- **Three objectives** have been consistently ranked high: the **harmonisation and integration of national qualifications systems** (89.4% or 42 respondents indicated to be at least important or very important), the **international comparability and transparency of qualifications and mobility** (89.6% or 43 respondents) and **improving the value of technical and vocational qualifications** (89.4% or 42).
- Five other objectives received a rating of 80-90% if 'Important' and 'Very important' answers were summed together.
- Three other possible objectives were less frequently rated as important as the others, receiving around 70%. These are linking supply and demand (37 responses or 77.1%), the joint development of qualifications with other countries (33, 71.7%) and redressing past injustices (32, 71.1%).

► National databases or registers of NQFs



Most surveyed countries have already **developed a qualifications database** (11 cases) or **are currently developing it** (10 cases).

- Among countries that submitted a response, in many cases, all of the education and training sectors are covered by the database (4 countries). Furthermore, in cases where the database only covers a part of the sectors, TVET (5 countries) and higher education (4) are the most frequent target sectors. General education (3), qualifications from outside the formal qualifications system (3) and adult education (2) tend to be included somewhat less often.

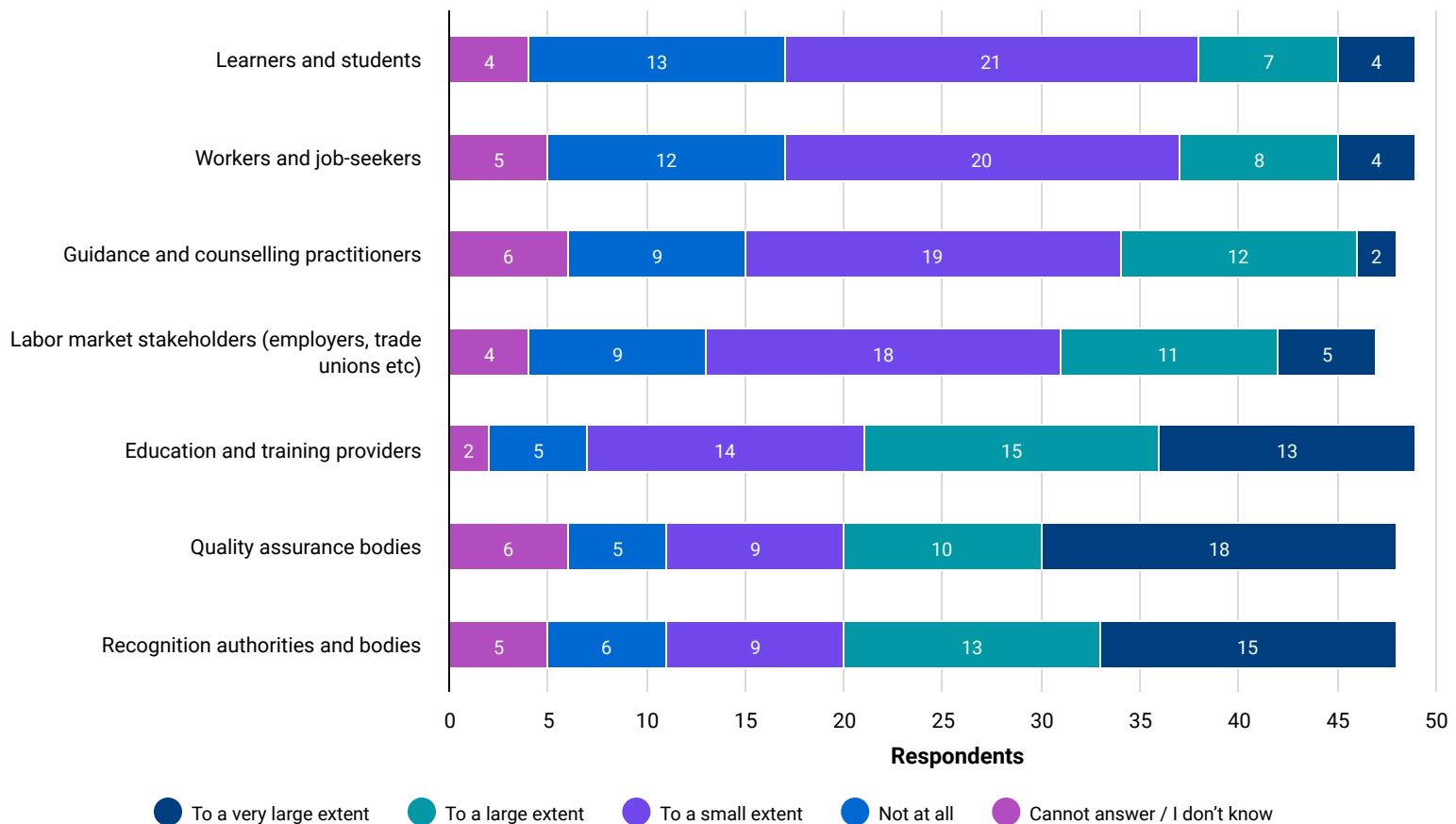
▶ CATS

- 13 countries have reported to have a policy or unified national legislation in place on a Credit Accumulation and Transfer System. Another 13 have reported not to have a CATS policy.
- Generally, countries with a CATS policy tend to cover all of the sectors (8 countries). If only a part of the education and training sectors are covered, higher education is the clear priority sector.
- Credit definitions are almost exclusively developed via a measure of volume of learning required, whereby 1 credit was usually defined as 10 hours. However, exceptions were noted where 1 credit was equivalent to different hours (e.g. 15, 25 or a variation across sectors).

▶ Awareness of the NQF

The survey asked respondents about their perception of stakeholders' awareness and usage of NQFs. Results show that **quality assurance bodies and recognition authorities are far more aware of NQFs than other groups**. In more detail:

- The quality assurance bodies (58.3% or 28 responses) and recognition bodies and authorities (58.3% or 28) know and use NQFs to a very large or large extent. Education and training providers are very similar (57.1% or 28 respondents think that they know and use NQFs to at least a large extent).
- Other stakeholder groups have a more limited knowledge and are placed at similar levels of awareness. These are the labour market stakeholders, guidance and counselling practitioners, workers and job-seekers and learners and students.



▶ Open stakeholder feedback

In open comments, respondents had the chance to provide feedback on their various needs, challenges and achievements.

Challenges

Altogether, 21 responses were submitted when asking about respondents' **challenges in developing and implementing NQFs**:

- A lack of financial resources and human capacity was the most often mentioned area.
- A need for more buy-in from the sector or an issue with the appreciation of the importance of NQFs and the need for a unified, comprehensive national framework was also frequently mentioned

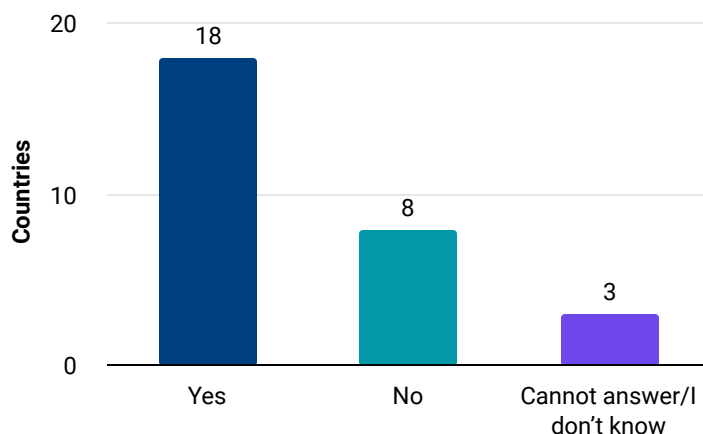
Relating to **challenges to generating impact through NQFs** a wider variety of considerations were mentioned. This included: the relevance of qualifications in the job market, the accessibility and equity of NQFs, communication and awareness among stakeholders, reaching rural communities, the integration of national and regional frameworks, organisational and procedural aspects (e.g. quality assurance, reaching consensus), availability of adequate resources for popularisations and full implementation.

Primary needs

22 responses were registered when asking about respondents' primary needs to successfully design or adopt an NQF. The **most recurrent topic was the need for training, support in development and technical assistance**. Other mentioned aspects were wide consultation and the exploration of synergies, the development or finalisation of legislative and institutional processes as well as financial resources.

▶ Regional qualifications frameworks

Results show that in **18 countries, an RQF is established or is under the process of establishing**. The survey asked about respondents' primary needs to successfully design or adopt an NQF. The **most recurrent topic was the need for training, support in development and technical assistance**. Other mentioned aspects were wide consultation and the exploration of synergies, the development or finalisation of legislative and institutional processes as well as financial resources.



If an RQF is developed, respondents were also asked about whether the NQF was referenced to it.

- 10 countries have referenced their national framework to an RQF.
- 4 countries did not yet reference their NQF

List of countries that submitted responses

Country	Response number
Angola	3
Burkina Faso	2
Cabo Verde	1
Cameroon	1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1
Djibouti	1
Eswatini	2
Ethiopia	1
Gambia	1
Ghana	4
Guinea-Bissau	3
Kenya	4
Madagascar	1
Malawi	1
Mozambique	4
Namibia	1
Nigeria	1
Senegal	2
Seychelles	1
Sierra Leone	3
Somalia	1
South Africa	2
South Sudan	3
Sudan	1
Tanzania	1
Tunisia	1
Uganda	1
Zambia	2
Zimbabwe	1

