



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Contribution to the Development of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs/RQF) in ECOWAS Sub-Region: Regional Analysis and Perspectives

December 2013

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Foreword



Globalization, technological advances, demographic pressures, social inequalities and the quest for sustainable development are creating rising demand for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Today, we know that a well-skilled population is key to a country's competitiveness and inclusive and sustainable development.

As a consequence, Member States are looking for more upstream policy advice, knowledge and understanding about TVET and effective policies and strategies. They need policies and programmes that respond to labour market demands and support the important transition between education and the world of work.

This is why, at the request of ECOWAS Member States, the "Abuja Process" was initiated in 2009 by the ECOWAS Commission, UNESCO and UNDP. This led to the launch, in 2010, of the "Inter Agency Task Team" (IATT) for the revitalization of TVET in the ECOWAS Sub-Region.

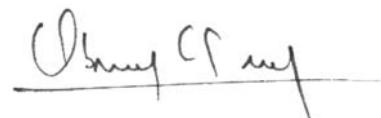
The IATT aims at providing operational support to countries in the Sub-Region and at becoming a powerful driver of skills development initiatives and innovative partnerships that combine training with job creation, and by supporting the translation of TVET policy development to the implementation of strategies and concrete action plans for employment and poverty reduction.

In this framework, the IATT is glad to offer this contribution to the development of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs/RQF) in ECOWAS Sub-Region. This publication summarizes the results of a technical, strategic and political process carried in 2011-2012 by the IATT. It notably proposes policy guidelines and a road map for future intervention in this area.

We are convinced that this publication will be a useful tool for stakeholders at all levels who are interested in developing NQFs/RQF (in the ECOWAS Sub-Region and beyond). We believe that this analysis will contribute to enhance the quality and efficiency of TVET systems, hereby promoting better linkages between TVET and the world of work, as well as fostering regional integration.



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List of Acronyms

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AfDB	African Development Bank
APEL	Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
AU	African Union
BAC	Baccalauréat
BEAP	Basic Education in Africa Programme
BEP	Brevet d'Études Professionnelles
BFEM	Brevet de Fin d'Études Moyennes
BP	Brevet Professionnel
BSC	Brevet Supérieur Comptable
BT	Brevet de Technicien
BTS	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur
CAMES	Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education)
CAP	Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CEAP	Certificat Élémentaire d'Aptitude Pédagogique
CBE	Competency Based Education
CIEFFA	Centre International pour l'Éducation des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique (International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa)
CFEE	Certificat de Fin d'Études Élémentaires
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
DESS	Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées
DEXCO	Direction des Examens et Concours
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTS	Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur
DUT	Diplôme Universitaire Technologique
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECB	École Communautaire de Base
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation

GSQF	Gambia Skills Qualification Framework
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
HE	Higher Education
IATT	Inter Agency Task Team
IBE	International Bureau of Education
INQAAHE	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
IU	Implementation Unit
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LO	Learning Outcome
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MQA	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
NA	Non Available
NBTE	National Board for Technical Education
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFILO	Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQFs	National Qualifications Frameworks
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIF-CONFEMEN	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie – Conférence des Ministres de l'Éducation des Pays ayant le français en partage
PLAR	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
QC	Quality Councils
QF	Qualifications Framework
RNFILO	Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
RQFs	Regional Qualifications Frameworks
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQA	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Agency
SADCQF	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SQFs	Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks
TQF	Transnational Qualifications Framework

TQFMC	Transnational Qualifications Framework Management Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations and AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-BREDA	UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa
UNEVOC	UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-WACA	United Nations Development Programme for West Africa and Central Africa
UNDP-YERP	United Nations Development Programme - Youth Employment Regional Programme
VAE	Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VQF	Vocational Qualifications Framework
VUSSC	Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
YERP	Youth Employment Regional Programme

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PART I



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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (NQFs/RQF) IN ECOWAS COUNTRIES AND SUB-REGION

This report was mainly elaborated in 2011 within the framework of the thematic work of the Inter Agency Task Team (IATT). It was then the object of sharing, reviews and consolidation on several occasions with Partners, Countries and a specific Thematic Committee. It was finally validated by the Experts and Ministers of Education of ECOWAS in Abuja in October 2012.

Summary

Background

The objective of this study is to shed light on the main principles for the establishment of National (NQF) and Regional (RQF) Qualifications Frameworks and to reflect on support for it. This study is also aiming at promoting the use of qualifications, and therefore qualifications frameworks, for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

During their conference in March 2009 in Abuja (Nigeria), ECOWAS Education Ministers, among other things, committed to engage into actions permitting the achievement of these objectives. After the conference, a seminar was set up in Abuja again, in August 2009, aiming at implementing the ECOWAS priorities defined in March 2009. In this context, UNDP and UNESCO-BREDA set up a task force entitled **“Inter Agency Task Team”** (IATT) with the purpose of coordinating the partnerships among the different stakeholders, whether technical or financial, involved in the implementation of TVET policies. The different initial partners involved in the IATT are: ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNESCO (BREDA and UNEVOC). Additional organisations were then invited to join: AfDB, ADEA... This document aims at providing such technical help about qualifications frameworks.

The origin of implementation of NQFs and RQF in the ECOWAS Countries and Sub-Region

Different events and documents related to the ECOWAS Policy Agenda for TVET create an emerging need for Qualifications Frameworks (Chapter 1). A focus was made on the assessment of knowledge, skills and competences and their recognition; for (re-)entering the formal education and training system and/or the labour market. This approach aims also at facilitating geographical, occupational and social mobility.

The last ECOWAS conference in Abuja (Nigeria), in 2009 mentioned the establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) as a priority. In the

same time, UNESCO-BREDA confirmed its involvement to support the ECOWAS Member States in their efforts to improve the quality of education with different actions and especially help to develop NQFs, using network strategies.

When working with the ECOWAS Sub-Region, UNESCO-BREDA is considering all other existing action plans in the other sub-regions for Southern, Central and Eastern Africa (ECCAS, SADC, EAC) and in the other international organizations (ADEA, ILO, UNDP). Nevertheless, UNESCO-BREDA insists on starting and building from existing local initiatives that often differ from country to country.

Objectives clearly related to TVET development

More specifically with the ECOWAS, a regional workshop was organised in Abuja, in August 2009, in order to define concrete actions for the revitalization of TVET. The main aim was to create a platform for sharing experience and best practices concerning TVET reforms focused on youth employability. The Inter Agency Task Team (IATT) was created to support the implementation of such a platform. It is a task force that gathers the different UN agencies (ILO, UNDP and UNIDO) with the aim of creating synergies around themes previously addressed in the different agencies in a non-coordinated way. The invitation was then extended to other international organisations (AfDB, ADEA, AFD). An UNESCO inter-regional seminar was organized in Zanzibar in September 2010 with the same purpose.

As a matter of fact, countries have understood that there is no single Qualifications Framework that meets all their expectations. According to their needs and experiences, some have established National Qualifications Frameworks; some have established vocational qualifications frameworks and there are also regional qualifications frameworks... It is the reason why promoters of Qualifications Frameworks should always be clear about the objectives of the

qualifications framework(s) they mean to promote and establish: all are possible and relevant but the objectives have to be known for more adequate choices. Extreme vigilance is necessary about the objectives of the qualifications framework and its objects.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the impact of the emergence of TVET is a challenge for African countries and the beginning of NQFs needs. As a matter of fact, TVET systems barely exist in ECOWAS, at least formal TVET systems. Nevertheless, simply because the economy is mostly informal doesn't mean that (young) workers do not learn at all. This learning however is mostly on-the-job learning and therefore non-formal – somewhat organised in the best-case scenario for artisanic handicraft for instance – or informal (purely learning by doing). In the formal education and training initial system, TVET barely exists: In 2005, for two thirds of Sub Saharan countries, the total enrolment rate in formal technical and vocational programmes at secondary level was five percent or less (AfDB and OECD, 2008). In short, if it is clear that individuals, young people in particular, have very few incentives to engage in formal TVET. What is even truer is that they have no opportunities whatsoever to do so.

One assumption however is that awarding qualifications to young people could make the labour market evolves toward its formalisation and the formalisation of the economy. It is on this assumption that the ECOWAS regional policy, in accordance with the African Union, is aiming at the “revitalisation” of TVET by making it as a priority for action. To that extent, they are encouraged by international organisations – such as the United Nations – to do so, hence the policy papers published that put TVET at the forefront of their reflection (UNESCO, 2009).

One of the issues precisely is that initiatives taken by for example ministries of labour, agriculture and tourism or by artisans themselves in order to organise vocational training and qualifications process are

considered as non-formal and informal training and so are not valued by the society and, in particular, by the labour market. These actions must be identified as formal training and therefore fully recognised. However, they were not organised under the auspices the Ministry of Education and therefore were not recognised by the society.

The education and training systems in ECOWAS are fragmented. Independence left the countries with rather stable systems imported from the colonizing countries. Since then, provision has been organized by waves over the years, and there has been little or no harmonisation among the different sub-systems, which remain watertight. There is little possibility to compare a qualification to another and therefore, learners functioning in such a fragmented system cannot provide recognized evidence of their qualification when they move from a sector of education and training to another, as well as from an economic sector to another within the labour market. The possibilities of social or occupational promotion are scarce, and this is clearly an issue.

Qualifications Frameworks design: Methods and Examples of practices

A qualifications framework makes sense in this context because the education and training systems are fragmented. Such a framework provides visibility through identifying all sub-systems and serves as the tool for building coherence among the systems.

There is not a single way to shape a qualifications framework. There are different sorts of qualifications frameworks. They correspond to different roles. The first step in deciding on shaping a qualifications framework is therefore to precisely identify the issues the qualifications framework is meant to respond to. The most usual types of qualifications frameworks are National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) and Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (SQFs). In this context,

“national” refers to a country, “regional” to a group of countries such as the ECOWAS Sub-Region and “sectoral” to a trade or a group of trades. The latter can be also called a Vocational Qualifications Framework (VQF) or a Skills Qualifications Framework.

There is a typology of qualifications frameworks that can be considered, in particular in a national context. These qualifications frameworks may concern all the qualifications in the system or a fraction of the qualifications, as in a sectoral qualifications framework.

The wish to work at the regional level around TVET became a reality through two approaches. The first one was a regional harmonisation of the currency of a qualification based on a common design of the curriculum related to this qualification. The second one was to describe and classify vocational/skills qualifications to permit legibility and comparability with other countries qualifications for the mobility of individuals. The former is known as the Kaduna experience. The second took place in the Gambia.

The elaboration of qualifications framework implies a focus on the qualification value and use as a signal for the society. However, traditionally the action of assessment and delivering qualification is integrated in the process of teaching as a specific dimension of training and generally it is seen as the signal of the achievement of a curriculum as it is illustrated by the Kaduna and Gambian examples. Most investments and efforts are made on the design of this training through the elaboration of curricula. But the need to provide a linkage between training and labour market is very strong and their design are more and more developed in collaboration with representatives of what is called “the economic private sector” by opposition to the education sector which is under the responsibility of the State.

Qualifications frameworks imply to separate the training process from the certification process in order to give legibility and describe the content and the value of the learning outcomes of the owner of a qualification. It is the reason why it can be said the elaboration of a qualification frameworks means a paradigm change that is not usual for the education and labour market stakeholders. If common bases

for dialogue could be easily found about training field, it is not the case for qualification field. Qualification concept is more complex because learning outcomes reflect the representation of what a society defined as what is expected from a qualified individual. Some qualifications are related to the demonstration of performance on a specific and single work situation. Other may cover a largest scope related to a whole occupation and transferable to another occupation.

Harmonization of those two approaches of qualification could not be possible and even considered. Diversity is a source of richness and innovation. The qualifications framework challenge is to provide sufficient legibility to understand and respect each approach according to the context of the systems and the countries.

The development of NQF and RQF can be observed all over the world (chapter 3). Three generations of such frameworks have been identified since the beginning of the 2000's. Each NQF is designed according to each national context. Historical, cultural and sometimes religious dimensions intersect with one another, therefore shaping qualifications contents, systems and currencies along the years. There is a need for a framework to provide legibility and visibility within and between the different sub-systems in place. The introduction of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems among traditional academic education systems is often at the origin of a NQF initiative. The objective is to achieve official visibility and generate currency.

A recent study (The implementation and impact of NQF – Report of a study in 16 countries – ILO – June 2010) indicates that *“some 100 countries are now involved in some way in designing or implementing qualifications frameworks. Whether the emphasis is on increasing the relevance and flexibility of education and training programmes, easing recognition of prior learning, enhancing lifelong learning, improving the transparency of qualifications systems, creating possibilities for credit accumulation and transfer, or developing quality assurance systems, governments are increasingly turning to qualifications frameworks as a policy tool for reform”*.

Whatever is the target of the NQF, its establishment supposes to address the issues related to the institutions and the stakeholders that will be in charge of elaborating the qualifications framework, of its development and of its publication through different supports (generally a web site). The elaboration process is generally long and it supposes the existence of a coordinator with sufficient legitimacy and technical competence to be accepted by all the stakeholders involved.

Formal legislation and regulations are important tools to create, manage and govern NQFs. Qualifications and their classification are related to societal values and can be considered as rules for a society and even legal rights in some countries.

It may well be that the most important concept making NQFs so successful is related to the qualifications as the objects of classification and their classification through levels of the learning outcomes they attest. “Learning Outcomes” (LO) are often associated with “competences”.

Implementation of Qualifications Frameworks in the ECOWAS countries

The examples of two countries, South Africa and Senegal, illustrate the approach which may be done according to an English speaking country and French speaking one. The ILO study provides evidence that francophone countries are clearly out of the international NQF mapping. That does not mean that francophone countries are resistant to NQF or RQF. Some regional examples (European, Mauritius, French speaking Universities with the

CAMES network and SADC) developed in the chapter 4 demonstrate that they are involved. Otherwise even if the norms and rules used by Anglophone countries are better known and disseminated in many publications, they may differ from those existing or to be implemented in francophone countries. But it does not mean that those countries are out of the movement.

It is demonstrated in chapter 5 that the ECOWAS countries have already assets to develop qualifications frameworks. Most of them have adopted a competence based approach which permits to describe easier qualifications in terms of learning outcomes. It could be said also that the different actors involved in the design of training and qualifications have the capacity to give information about qualifications delivered permitting description, organization, classification and comparisons in order to build or integrate a framework whose objective consists of providing support for labour market mobility.

Such an approach is also essential in order to develop recognition of non-formal and informal learning related to job situation whatever the context of the activity (in a formal or informal economy). Though the settlement of such procedure is not easy to do, it is generally mentioned as a priority in most of the TVET policies and already even in some legal texts.

This chapter concludes with a proposal of a road map based on double move with regional exchanges and national workshops. Their reflection will follow the same draft about qualifications and clarification of the existing offer in order to structure an NQF with a concrete use adapted to the national need.

Background of the study

Over the past decade, many countries in the ECOWAS sub-region have developed policies and strategies aimed at strengthening their TVET institutions and skills development programmes. The acquisition of employable skills, particularly by the youths, is seen as a pre-requisite for entry into gainful employment and achievement of sustainable livelihoods. At the national level, a skilled workforce is an important driver of economic growth. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has therefore assumed some prominence on the human resource and economic development agenda of many countries in the region and in Africa as a whole.

Given the importance of TVET in economic development and poverty reduction, UNESCO-BREDA, UNDP and ECOWAS have been spearheading a number of initiatives to revitalize TVET provision in the ECOWAS Member States. The first of these recent initiatives was the TVET revitalization workshop that was held in August 2009 in Abuja-Nigeria as a follow up to the meeting of ECOWAS Education Ministers and TVET experts of ECOWAS Member States held in March 2009 in Abuja. The workshop also underscored the need to move up from problem identification to the actual implementation of good practices founded on innovative partnerships for effective TVET delivery.

The second initiative was the implementation of one of the key recommendations of the Abuja Workshop on the creation of an Inter Agency Task Team (IATT) to coordinate the activities of the technical and financial partners in the area of TVET policy development, reforms, and implementation. To this end, UNDP-WACA and UNESCO funded a consultancy to provide technical and intellectual support for the launching of the IATT. The consultancy report formed the basis for the inaugural meeting of the IATT held in Dakar-Senegal in April 2010 which was attended by a number of agencies, including ILO, UNDP, UNIDO and UNESCO (BREDA and UNEVOC).

In order to establish a firm basis for the IATT to carry out its multi-pronged programmes and effectively coordinate the activities of the IATT member agencies, two jointed studies were needed to first identify and document on-going TVET projects and programmes aimed at addressing the issues of skills development and youth employment in the sub-region and also to advice for the development of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks in the ECOWAS sub-region. This present document is related to the second area of concern (NQF/RQF development).

List of ECOWAS Member States



The Republic of BENIN



BURKINA FASSO



The Republic of CABO VERDE



The Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE



The Republic of GAMBIA



The Republic of GHANA



The Republic of GUINEE



The Republic of GUINEE BISSAU



The Republic of LIBERIA



The Republic of MALI



The Republic of NIGER



The Federal Republic of NIGERIA



The Republic of SENEGAL



The Republic of SIERRA LEONE



TOGOLESE Republic

Introduction

The objective of this study is to shed light on the main principles for the establishment of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks and to reflect on support for it. This approach through qualifications frameworks is only one component of a broader research programme on the development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the countries covered by the study, the ECOWAS member states. This study is also aiming at promoting the use of qualifications, and therefore qualifications frameworks, for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Finally, the study is aiming at promoting the use of qualifications frameworks for planning TVET provision in relation to the economic demand.

These three objectives suppose a considerable investment from National institutions. They are promoted by institutions such as ILO, UNDP and UNESCO, which strongly encourage the implementation of Qualifications Frameworks and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Other international organisations such as ADEA, the African Union and ECOWAS also put these objectives at the top of their agenda.

As part of the context, in September 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as part of their Millennium Declaration. Later in the process, the Goal 1B – *Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people* – was added to the list of MDGs as a sub-objective of MDG1. This is highly relevant for Sub Saharan African (SSA) countries, especially in the context of this study. The establishment of qualifications frameworks, whether national or regional, is a typical response to some of the MDGs.

The African Union, through the Action Plan for the Second Decade for Education in Africa (2006-2015) launched in January 2005 in Khartoum (Sudan), mentioned the establishment of NQFs and RQFs as suitable actions.

During their conference in March 2009 in Abuja (Nigeria), ECOWAS Education Ministers, among

other things, committed to engage into actions permitting the achievement of these three objectives. After the conference, a seminar was set up in Abuja again, in August 2009, aiming at implementing the ECOWAS priorities defined in March 2009. In this context, UNDP and UNESCO-BREDA set up a task force entitled “Inter Agency Task Team” (IATT) with the purpose of coordinating the partnerships among the different stakeholders, whether technical or financial, involved in the implementation of TVET policies. The different initial partners involved in the IATT are: ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNESCO (BREDA and UNEVOC). Additional organisations were then invited to join: AfDB, ADEA... A first IATT workshop took place in Dakar in April 2010 for its official launching.

During this first IATT working party, the group called for a technical support in order to advise on the development of National and Regional Qualifications Framework in the ECOWAS Sub-Region. This document aims at providing such technical help about Qualifications Frameworks. It comprises five chapters:

Chapter 1. Background

Background leading to the establishment of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks in ECOWAS countries and Sub-Region.

Chapter 2. Emerging Issues

Issues around Technical and Vocational Education and Training in relation with other education systems and current initiatives as a response to economic demand.

Chapter 3. Definitions and Methods

Definitions of National Qualifications Frameworks and Regional Qualifications Frameworks existing practices and examples in the African context and beyond. Methods used and issues seen in the context of initiatives launched in Sub Saharan Africa.

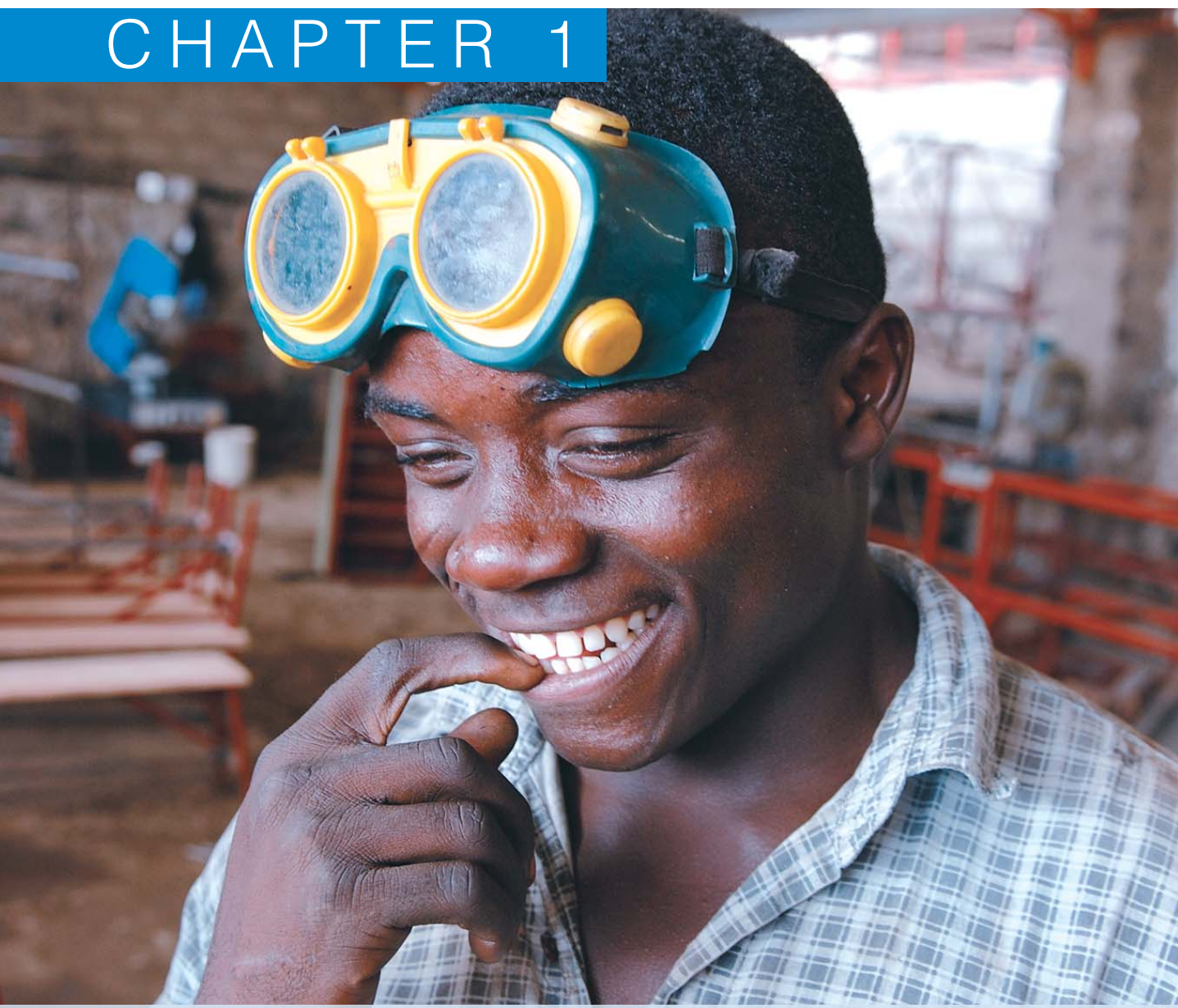
Chapter 4. The Regional Approach

Examples of Regional Qualifications Frameworks.

Chapter 5. Ways Forward

Proposition for a road map and technical support.

CHAPTER 1



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BACKGROUND

Background

1.1. The ECOWAS Policy Agenda for TVET: The Emergence of Qualifications Frameworks

The implementation of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks is one of the priorities of the Education Ministers of the ECOWAS. After a first conference that took place in Dakar in 2002, two reference documents were published in 2003: *the Protocol on Education and Training* and its annex on *the Equivalence of Certificates*. From the Protocol, it became clear that the main interest of Ministers was to have a holistic approach concerning the whole range of provision from basic to higher education and to adult learning. In the Annex on *Equivalence of Certificates*, a focus was made on the assessment of knowledge, skills and competences and their recognition; for (re-)entering the formal education and training system and/or the labour market. This approach aimed also at facilitating geographical, occupational and social mobility.

The *Protocol* also translated the African Union priorities of the First Decade for Education (1997-2006) into five objectives:

1. Distance education of teachers based on new technologies;
2. Support programme on HIV/AIDS preventive education;
3. Support Programme on Girls' Education;
4. Support Programme for the Teaching of Science and Technology; and
5. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

After defining the priorities during the first conference in Dakar, the Conference of Accra (Ghana), in January 2004 decided on the action plan for implementation. In January 2005, in Khartoum (Sudan), the Africa Union published a new action plan for the Second Decade for Education in Africa (2006-15).

A third conference of the Ministers of Education took place in Abuja (Nigeria), on 17-20 March 2009. It was dedicated to the adaptation of this new action plan for implementation in the ECOWAS. On this occasion, Ministers insisted on the setting up of partnerships among international stakeholders. An additional extraordinary conference was held in Maputo (Mozambique) for organising this international cooperation. Bodies such as ADEA, CIEFFA, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank were involved.

In Abuja (Nigeria), in 2009, two main themes were identified as main priorities for action:

- Creating Labour Market Information System (LMIS); and
- Establishing National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs).

The former, through the availability of better data, is presented as one of the key factors contributing to an efficient TVET provision. The latter is a framework that classifies all certifications according to a set of descriptors based on learning outcomes (competences...) instead of input (duration...). These objectives have been identified for the ECOWAS Sub-Region but also have a lot of value for every single country in the region, whatever the level of implementation of TVET.

This report concerns the second priority identified above, namely the establishment of qualifications frameworks.

1.2. The Actions¹ by UNESCO-BREDA Regarding Qualifications Frameworks

During the Abuja Conference in March 2009, UNESCO-BREDA confirmed its involvement to support the ECOWAS Member States in their efforts to improve the quality of education; especially with:

1. See also example of preliminary work in Appendix 1

- The adoption of the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP);
- The promotion of primary, secondary and tertiary education to provide good quality human resources to Africa for its development; and
- The establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks with certification and validation of experience and competences.

In the same vein, UNESCO-BREDA has based its strategy on the priorities identified for TVET by the African Union action plan for the Second Decade for Education in Africa (2006-15):

- Equitable access to TVET for all;
- Quality and relevance of national TVET systems and programmes;
- Non-formal learning: literacy and TVET; and vulnerable groups;
- Capacity building;
- Financing TVET; and
- Using network strategies.

When working with the ECOWAS Sub-Region, UNESCO-BREDA is considering all other existing action plans in the other sub-regions (ECCAS, SADC, EAC) and in the other international organisations (ADEA, ILO, UNDP). Nevertheless, UNESCO-BREDA insists on starting and building from existing local initiatives that often differ from country to country.

More specifically with the ECOWAS, a regional workshop was organised in Abuja in August 2009, in order to define concrete actions for the revitalization of TVET. The main aim was to create a platform for sharing experience and best practices concerning TVET reforms focused on youth employability. The Inter Agency Task Team (IATT) was created to support the implementation of such a platform. It is a Task Force that gathers the different UN agencies (ILO, UNDP and UNIDO) with the aim of creating synergies around themes previously addressed in the different agencies in a non-coordinated way. The invitation was then extended to other international organisations (AfDB, ADEA, AFD).

Specifically on the issue of qualifications frameworks, for many years, UNESCO-BREDA had been involved in different initiatives such as the Gambia Skills Qualification Framework (2006). It has also participated in all the workshops organised by the SADC and involving 15 countries. It has monitored all ECOWAS actions since 2007. It organised an inter-regional seminar in Zanzibar in September 2010.

1.3. Qualifications Frameworks: A Rationale

The general understanding, within UNESCO, of a National Qualifications Framework is that it separates qualifications from educational and training institutions, so that it can also validate non-formal and informal learning outcomes. The levels in the qualifications frameworks reflect the learning achievements, not the time spent in education and training programmes. The shift from institution-based and programme-based assessment to learner-based and competence-based assessment, which results from this approach, is a major challenge. It is demanding in terms of capacity building requirements (Second Decade Action Plan, UNESCO Framework for action in TVET, 2009).

There is an interest and a real determination to establish qualifications frameworks from all African sub-regions and from most international African institutions (AU, ECOWAS, UNESCO-BREDA). The rationale for doing so is manifold. It is also somewhat ambitious. It seems that one-size fits all frameworks do not exist and that a single qualifications framework will not be able to address all the objectives often put forward:

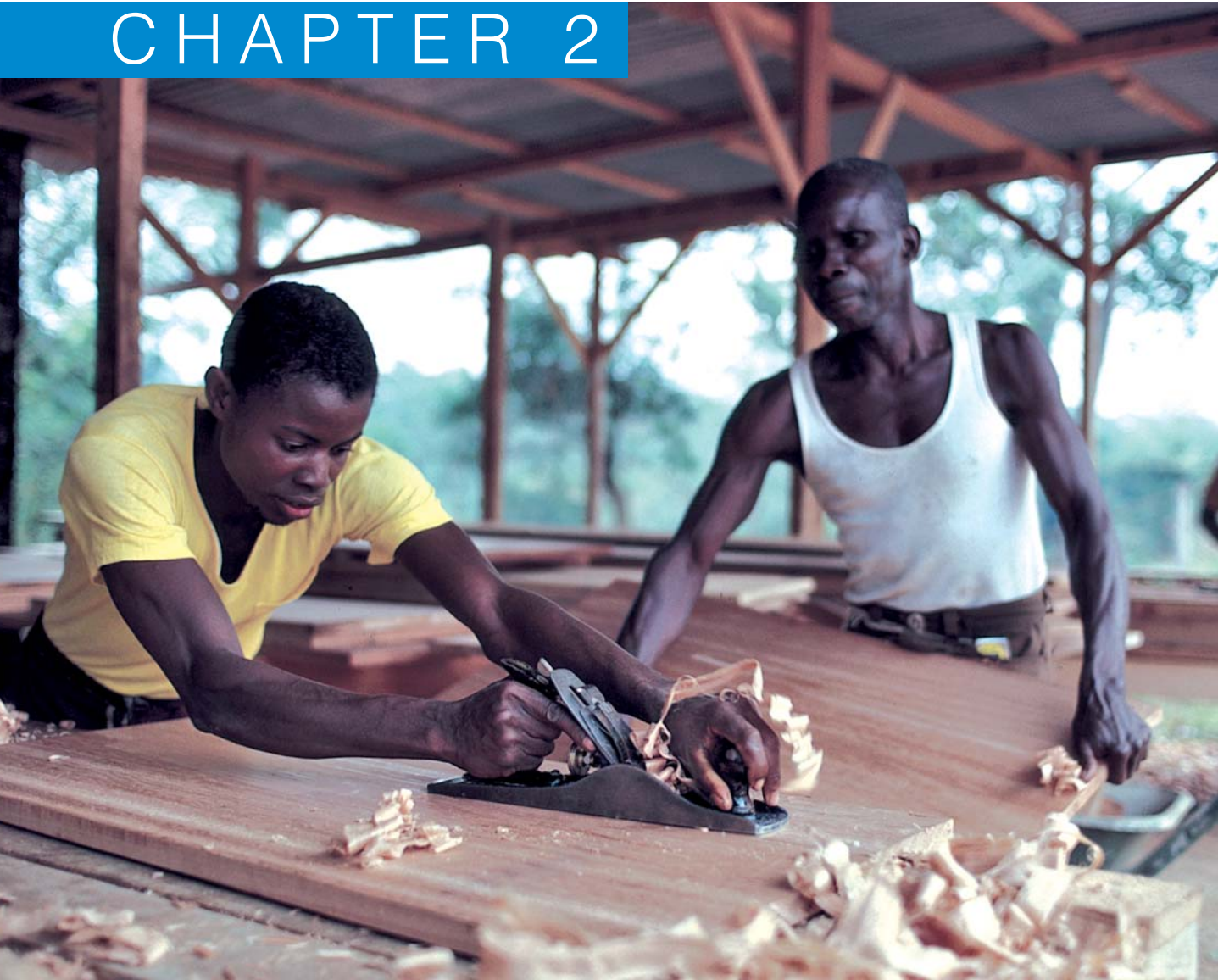
- To facilitate the mobility of trainees and trainers;
- To harmonise the content of qualifications;
- To harmonise the content of curricula; and
- To solve the issue of the match between supply of and demand for qualifications.

As a matter of fact, countries have understood that there is no such a thing as a single qualifications framework that meets all their expectations. According to their needs and experiences, some have established National Qualifications Framework (NQF); some have established Vocational Qualifications Framework (VQF) and there are also Regional Qualifications Frameworks... It is the reason why promoters of qualifications frameworks should always be clear about the objectives of the qualifications framework(s) they mean to promote and establish: all

are possible and relevant but the objectives have to be known for more adequate choices. Extreme vigilance is necessary about the objectives of the qualifications framework and its objects.

The UNESCO understanding of a qualifications framework, provided above, reflects this complexity in the objectives to achieve and this document will start from there. It will attempt at providing principles and tools to permit choices for establishing qualifications frameworks that are relevant.

CHAPTER 2



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EMERGING ISSUES

Emerging issues

2.1. The TVET Challenges

Traditional agriculture and the informal economic sector employ most of the labour in Sub-Saharan Africa, up to 90% in Senegal or 95% in Benin (AfDB and OECD 2008). The informal economy therefore absorbs most of the individuals, mostly young people, entering the labour market. For them, owning a vocational qualification is not necessarily the primary requirement. Therefore, there is no pressure on the TVET system for it to develop. Any policy aiming at developing the TVET sector must take into account this reality.

As a matter of fact, TVET systems barely exist in ECOWAS, at least formal TVET systems. Nevertheless, it is not because the economy is mostly informal that (young) workers do not learn at all. This learning however is mostly on-the-job learning and therefore non-formal – somewhat organised in the best-case scenario for artisanic handicraft for instance – or informal (purely learning by doing). In the formal education and training initial system, TVET barely exists: In 2005, for two thirds of Sub Saharan countries, the total enrolment rate in formal technical and vocational programmes at secondary level was five percent or less (AfDB and OECD, 2008). In short, if it is clear that individuals, young people in particular, have no incentives to engage in TVET. What is even truer is that they have no opportunities whatsoever to do so.

One assumption however is that awarding qualifications to young people could make the labour market evolve toward its formalisation and the formalisation of the economy. It is on this assumption that the ECOWAS regional policy, in coherence with the African Union rhetoric, is aiming at the “revitalisation” of TVET by putting it as a priority for action. To that extent, they are encouraged by international organisations – such as United Nations – to do so, hence the policy papers published that put TVET at the forefront of their reflection (UNESCO, 2009).

Along these lines, some countries have started to make reforms. Benin, the Gambia, Ivory Coast and Senegal are examples of countries where ministries of Vocational Training have been created and/or where steps have been taken to introduce competency-based approach. Actual impacts remain to be seen but there is a progress toward the development of TVET.

One of the issues precisely is that initiatives taken by for example ministries of labour, agriculture and tourism or by artisans themselves in order to organise vocational training and qualifications process are considered as non-formal and informal training and so are not valued by the society and, in particular, by the labour market. These actions must be identified as formal training and therefore fully recognised. However, they were not organised under the auspices the ministry of Education and therefore were not recognised by the society.

By the same token, there is no system to award qualification, whether recognised or not, on the basis of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. A possible reason for the lack of existence of such a system is that there is probably no social recognition of such processes for validating knowledge, skills and competences acquired non-formally and informally, let alone the social recognition of the qualifications themselves.

However, by promoting vocational qualifications as a route to work through employability, such processes are a typical solution to promote a vocational preparation to facilitate entry into the labour market. Indirectly, this will raise the value of TVET.

To this end – promoting the use of learning outcomes, however acquired – the establishment of a qualifications framework is often presented as a possible solution. Qualifications frameworks are indeed based – in their most recent version – on learning outcomes, whether knowledge, skills and/or competences, rather than on input.

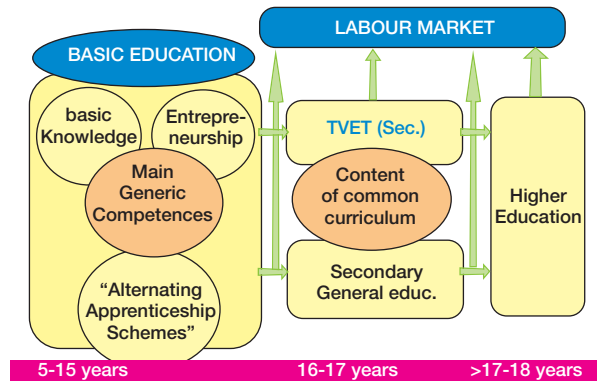
2.2. Qualifications Frameworks as Tools for Reform in TVET

The education and training systems in ECOWAS are fragmented. The independence left the countries with rather stable systems imported from the colonising countries. Since then, provision has been organised by waves over the years, and there has been little or no harmonisation among the different sub-systems, which remain watertight. One of the reasons for the fragmentation is that the provision has been supply-driven and decided bottom-down without coordination and without any holistic analysis of the needs. The education and training current systems are the result of different initiatives inspired and supported by imported systems, whether coming from new countries or new models from the colonising countries. The current systems are the result of a juxtaposition of systems built on competing approaches. As a consequence, there has been little or no possibility for linkages.

This fragmentation makes it difficult for people to exercise choice. There are little possibilities to transfer from a system to another, for young people and adults. It is also detrimental to the functioning of the education and training systems in the sense that high drop out rates are likely to take place. Finally, there is little possibility to compare a qualification to another and therefore, learners functioning in such a fragmented system cannot provide recognised evidence of their qualification when they move from a sector of education and training to another, as well as from an economic sector to another within the labour market. The possibilities of social or occupational promotion are scarce, and this is clearly an issue.

An ideal approach would provide bridges from one education and training sector to another, as proposed in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. PATHWAYS FOR TVET



Source: UNESCO-BREDA

A qualifications framework makes sense in this context because the education and training systems are fragmented. Such a framework provides visibility through identifying all sub-systems and serves as the tool for building coherence among the systems.

2.3. Multiple Objectives – Multiples Qualifications Frameworks

There is not a single way to shape a qualifications framework. There are different sorts of qualifications frameworks too. They correspond to different roles. The first step in deciding on shaping a qualifications framework is therefore to precisely identify the issues the qualifications framework is meant to respond to.

The most usual types of qualifications frameworks are National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) and Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (SQFs). In this context, "national" refers to a country, "regional" to a group of countries such as the ECOWAS Sub-Region and "sectoral" to a trade or a group of trades. The latter can be also called a Vocational Qualifications Framework (VQF) or a Skills Qualifications Framework.

There is a typology of qualifications frameworks that can be considered, in particular in a national context. These qualifications frameworks may concern all the qualifications in the system or a fraction of the qualifications, as in a Sectoral Qualifications Framework.

TABLE 1. Typology of Frameworks

Objectives for individuals	Supports	Role
Visibility of the qualifications	Description of the qualifications	Classification of qualifications
Legibility of the qualifications systems	Comparability of qualifications	Classification of qualifications and pathways between the systems
Currency of qualifications	Recognition of qualifications by labour market and/or education institutions	Return to formal education and training system or labour market (re-)entry

Table 1 shows that there are three main objectives for qualifications framework. The choice will impact and depend on the use, and the actors that vary according to objectives and use. The stakeholders involved in the design of different frameworks will be different.

In the case of a visibility objective (Row 1 – Table 1), the stakeholders in charge of the design of the qualifications framework do not need additional stakeholders. Their objective is to describe all qualifications according to the same descriptors, and with the same format. Stakeholders in charge of the design will do the classification.

In the case of a legibility objective (Row 2 – Table 1), the same tasks (description and classification) will be done to design the qualifications framework. However, it supposes a consensus beforehand among the different stakeholders in charge of the design and involved in the different qualifications systems, which will be covered by the framework. Most of time, there is a problem about classification in the sense that this classification must be done against specific aims that suppose a choice between legibility for the labour market or eligibility for the education system. They cannot be addressed all at the same time.

In the case of currency of qualifications (Row 3 – Table 1), other stakeholders must be involved together with the designers of the qualifications framework. The users of the qualifications framework must contribute to its design so that the qualifications are recognised by them. Typical users are representatives of social partners or the labour market, and representatives of individuals and families. This representation could be direct or not. The qualifications framework could be experimented with these representatives. Although not all contribute to its design, they should be involved in the experimentation of the qualifications framework.

Occupational, social and geographical mobility

In the perspective of a qualifications framework aiming at fostering individual mobility, the last row of Table 1 is highly relevant. The recognition of a qualification for education stakeholders and labour market stakeholders must guarantee its currency. It is not the quality of the curriculum that guarantees its currency: it is only a building block of it. There are also the standards of competences and the way they are designed, the standards for assessment and the assessment modalities, and the quality assurance of the full process.

TABLE 2. Role of Frameworks according to Mobility Purposes

Objectives in terms of mobility	Approaches	Use
Individual mobility within systems; access to qualification	Currency of the knowledge, skills and competences assessed (learning outcomes)	Qualification as a signal for the labour market
Individual mobility between systems	Currency of the curriculum	Building education and training pathways (further studies, bridges among systems...)
International mobility	Currency of qualifications in a regional system	Recognition of qualifications achieved abroad

The regional frameworks are generally designed to facilitate mobility and recognition of individual qualification(s) across countries. To reach a regional level, it is necessary that the currency of the qualifications be defined at the national level. Setting up a regional framework supposes a network of peer stakeholders sharing the same objectives and same principles to communicate. The network could design a specific virtual device in order to produce this communication. In some cases, the networking actors could adopt the pattern provided by one of them. The others would then follow the same approach.

2.4. Addressing the Issue of the Value of TVET: Two Case studies

The wish to work at the regional level around TVET became a reality through two approaches. The first one was a regional harmonisation of the currency of a qualification based on a common design of the curriculum related to this qualification. The second one was to describe and classify vocational/skills qualifications to permit legibility and comparability with other countries qualifications for the mobility of individuals. The former is known as the Kaduna experience. The second took place in the Gambia.

2.4.1. The Kaduna Experience: A Regional Approach to Curricula

The Kaduna experience is embedded in the “Abuja Process” defined in August 2009. It aims at revitalizing TVET, by strengthening its provision, in the ECOWAS Member States.

The idea is to establish a network of regional TVET centres of excellence for sharing curriculum and information, as well as teaching and learning material. In addition, it is planned to organise staff development (Centre directors, inspectors) and build TVET databases.

The experience could aim at developing a Regional Vocational Qualifications Framework through the exchange of experts and information among the Member States. The project aims at identifying Centres of excellence where these experts will be.

The implementation of this project started in January 2010 and led to a series of workshops. They permitted to create the Diploma in Computer Science under the responsibility of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) of Nigeria. Five countries were involved in this endeavour: Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. A common curriculum emerged, with information on the objectives of the training programme in terms of competences, the entry requirements (here related to post Secondary Candidates with relevant credits in the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) or National Equivalents) and the content of courses for duration of two years. A common pedagogy was developed and learning, teaching and training materials were designed for use by Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology.

The last UNESCO-BREDA report related to the last workshop organised in September 2010 mentioned that *“indications on the prospects for the implementation of the proposed Curriculum was given by the participants as follows:*

- **Nigeria:** *Once NBTE adopts the new curriculum, all Computer Science departments at Polytechnics and Monotechnics in Nigeria will commence their implementation.*
- **Ghana:** *Will have to submit the curricula to the Academic Board for approval and thereafter to the Accrediting body. It hopes to run the programme first on Sandwich basis because of the large number of students and limited facilities and computer systems available.*
- **Sierra Leone:** *Had some reservation about the possibilities for running the programme because of the required resources,*
- **Gambia:** *The University of Gambia is committed to ensuring that the programme runs since the School of Gambia Technical Training Institute, GTTI is under the University”.*

A real effort was made in this project to set up a regional approach that will be extended to other countries and may be adapted to the French speaking ECOWAS countries interested in this “diploma in computer science”.

In this case, legibility of such a qualification is granted through two features: the position of the level of this curriculum in the education systems through the entry requirements and the duration of training. Its currency makes sense only for stakeholders in the world of education. The indication of the competences targeted by the programme permits a potential legibility for employers but they need more evidence for this qualification to be credible in the labour market. The participation of employers should be more explicit during the process of design of learning outcomes and of assessment criteria, which should both be more precise to ensure the same quality of reference at a regional level.

Nevertheless, the design of common references such as the curriculum is a real progress towards qualifications frameworks and may aim at a real recognition of qualifications at a regional level for education stakeholders. This will be strengthened by the development of a network of experts and of Centres of excellence in order to maintain the sustainability of the process. Recognition of the qualifications by the labour market supposes, in many cases, that there is more investment on other aspects as it has been observed in the Gambia case study.

2.4.2. The Gambia Initiative: A Case Study

The Gambia initiative is part of their global skills development strategy. It aims at providing skills for employability in the Gambian labour force. This objective is the starting point of an important TVET reform at the end of the 90's, with the creation of a new institution, called the National Training Authority, in 2002. The Gambia Skills Qualification Framework (GSQF) was launched in 2006. It contains 30 skills

standards and qualifications organised according to four priority fields and several other Key Skills:

- Agriculture (Horticulture);
- Hospitality (Customer Care, Food Hygiene and Safety);
- Construction (Domestic House Wiring);
- Engineering (Motor Mechanic); and
- Key Skills (Literacy; Numeracy, ICT (User); English Communication; Work skills and Life Skills).

This national qualifications framework is a partial qualifications framework, dealing with technical, vocational and literacy skills. Nevertheless, it is considered by its designer as integrated *“in the sense that it includes formal and informal learning of skills, post-school college or centre based and on-the-job learning, full-time and part-time learning. It includes provision for illiterate learners, apprentices (both formal and informal) with weak or even no formal education, mature adults as well as new entrants to the workforce.”* (Policy document on GSQF discussed and agreed by NTA senior management, 27th November 2006).

This approach marks a real change against the traditional Gambian TVET school that was input based. In this case, a qualification is clearly focused on the assessment of learning outcomes, however acquired.

The objective of the GSQF is to provide opportunities to permit the recognition of the qualification by labour market stakeholders. So the “economic private sector” is involved during the whole design process related to the building of the standards and the assessment, as well as the certification process.

The NQF or VQF set up by Gambia is organised in 4 levels to which is added a foundation one (See Table 3).

TABLE 3. The GSQF Levels

Qualifications		Level Descriptor – <i>Potential for</i>
Level 4		Competence to perform management and analytical skills and / or specialist skills associated with jobs that are non routine e.g. middle manager / professional worker.
Level 3 Practice	Level 3	Competence to perform tasks associated with skilled jobs of routine and complex nature sometimes with supervisory functions e.g. team leader.
Level 2 Practice	Level 2	Competence to perform routine and some non-routine tasks under minimum guidance and supervision e.g. skilled worker.
Level 1 Practice	Level 1	Competence to perform a limited range of work activities whilst working under supervision e.g. trained worker.
Foundation level		Initial skills - basic skills in English communication, life skills, numeracy and non occupational work skills with literacy in mother tongue as an option.

The only difference between the numerical levels and practical levels is that *practical levels do not include*: English communication and the Use of ICT and numeracy above level 1.

Source: GSQF, November 2006.

The purpose of this framework is clearly focused on legibility of qualifications for entering the labour market. The levels hierarchy is related to the learning outcomes necessary to occupy a position in the hierarchy of a job organisation. So here the qualifications in this framework have been shaped to have currency in the labour market. To help to provide international recognition, the GSQF proposes a system of measure based on credits. The GSQF guide explains their contents as following: “Credits allocated to a unit standard reflect the notional learning time it is expected to take candidates to meet the outcome performance requirements in the unit standard. Notional learning time includes:

- Time spent in structured tuition;
- Self-directed learning and practice;
- Time taken to gather and provide evidence for assessment purposes; and
- Time taken for assessment in all the outcomes and contexts. In the GSQF, one credit represents a notional 10 hours of learning, practice, and assessment time with respect to the outcomes and contexts of the unit standard.”

At this stage, a move toward a regional framework could be done on the basis of a concrete and structured national, even only sectoral, framework. Descriptions provided for each qualification included in the GSQF permits legibility for another country and possible currency abroad due to the quality assurance associated to the assessment process. The Gambian approach permits here to consider the recognition of learning outcomes of the owner of a Gambian Qualification. This may facilitate individual mobility. Networking, benchmarking and references about vocational fields could be developed through NTA, which is a central body in charge of the GSQF, information and communication.

2.5. Changing Paradigm

The elaboration of qualifications framework implies a focus on the qualification value and use as a signal for the society. However, traditionally the action of assessment and delivering qualification is integrated in the process of teaching as a specific dimension of training and generally it is seen as the signal of the achievement of a curriculum. Most investments and

efforts are made on the design of this training through the elaboration of curricula. But the need to provide a linkage between training and labour market is very strong and their design are more and more developed in collaboration with representatives of what is called “the economic private sector” by opposition to the education sector which is under the responsibility of the State.

Qualifications frameworks imply to separate the training process from the certification process in order to give legibility and describe the content and the value of the learning outcomes of the owner of a qualification. Training must be always an important field to maintain with a better quality guarantee but its currency is related to education and training systems descriptors (in terms of types of education sectors, types of learning as e-learning, apprenticeship, duration of training). Speaking in terms of qualification is different because the focus is on the meaning and the value of learning outcomes after the learning process.

It is the reason why it can be said the elaboration of a qualifications framework means a paradigm change that is not usual for the education and labour market stakeholders. If common bases for dialogue could be easily found about training field, it is not the case for qualification field. Qualification concept is more complex because learning outcomes reflect the representation of what a society defined as what is expected from a qualified individual. *Some qualifications are related to the demonstration of performance on a specific and single work situation.* Other may cover a largest scope related to a whole occupation and transferable to another occupation.

Harmonisation of those two approaches of qualification could not be possible and even considered. Diversity is a source of richness and innovation. The qualifications framework challenge is to provide sufficient legibility to understand and respect each approach according to the context of the systems and the countries.

Before describing further NQF or RQF, the definition of a “qualification” must be reminded. The GSQF guide gives a specific definition in accordance with the objects classified and described in the

framework designed by and for Gambia: *“A qualification is a proven ability to perform an occupation at a particular level. It consists of a suite of occupational and key skill standards – often known as unit standards. The standards are formally assessed by an accredited assessor, usually by on-the-job observation and questioning. Qualifications represent the results of learning, regardless of whether learning has been in formal or informal contexts. Qualifications are awarded following formal assessment that the required competences have been attained, not that they have been taught.”*

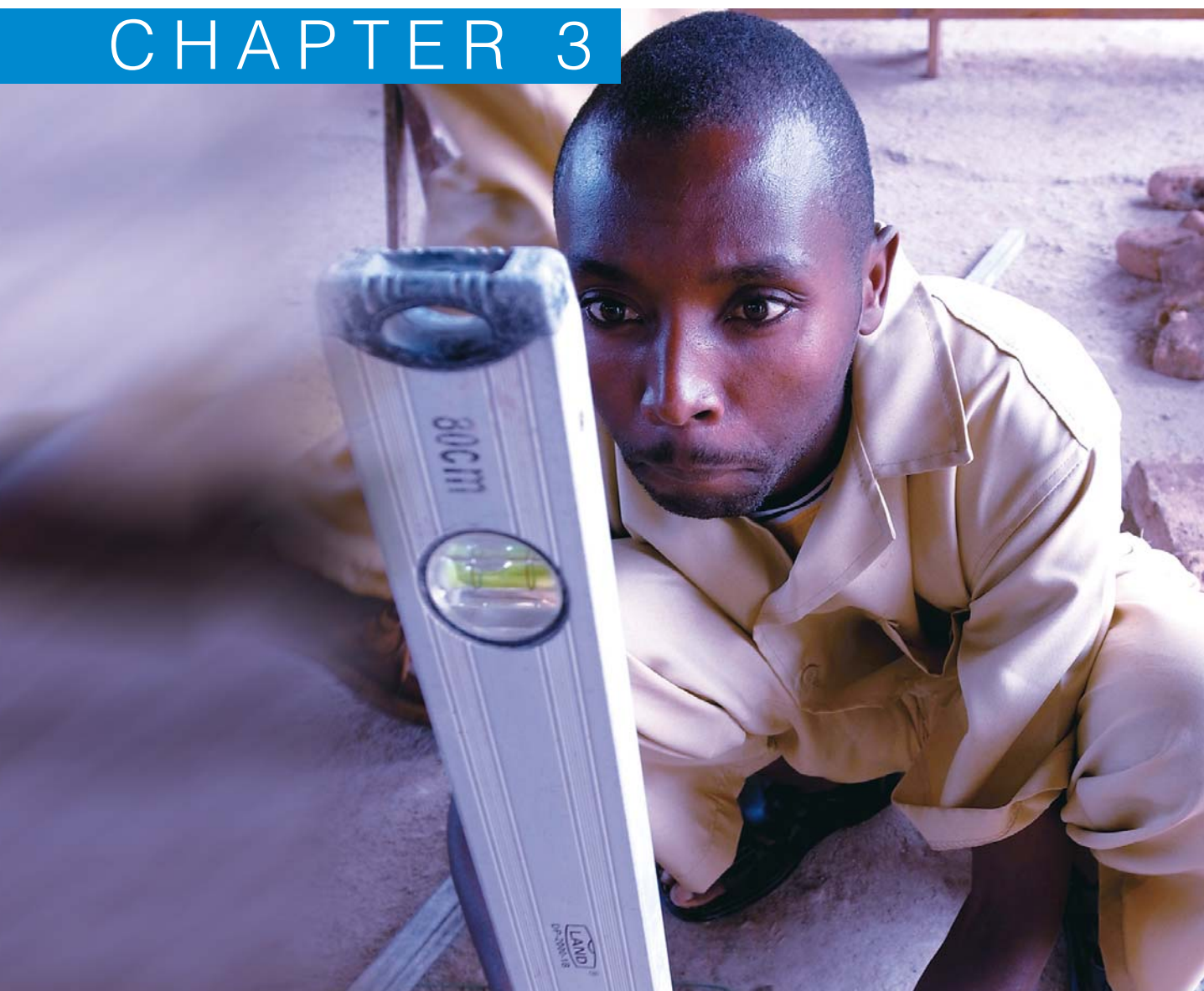
In comparison, the European definition is much broader: *“qualification means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.”* (Coles and Werquin, 2007, and Recommendations for EQF 2008).

The OECD, and EQF, definition focuses on the proof of learning outcomes and the process of assessment but not on a specific content or use. It is the reason why the definition of a NQF is mentioned with a referencing to all kind of learning systems: *“national qualifications framework’ means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications sub-systems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society”* (Coles and Werquin, 2007, op. cit., and Recommendations for EQF 2008).

In the context of Higher Education (HE) based on a three-cycle degree system, a qualification is presented as the completion of a HE cycle and is related to a number of transferable credits. The process permits *“fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including non-formal an informal learning”*.

It does not exist a single way to plan and design NQF or RQF. What is important is to clarify before beginning the use of those frameworks and the environment where qualifications could be legible and recognised.

CHAPTER 3



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DEFINITIONS AND METHODS

Definitions and Methods

3.1. The Origins of National Qualifications Frameworks

Qualifications frameworks (QFs) are clearly related to the development of lifelong learning and consequently to the dissemination of a large range of different learning systems. The need for maintaining and increasing individuals' competences in order to follow the economic move make arising new approaches of learning routes and recognition processes emerging. Even if national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) devices appear at the beginning of the 2000's, the concept of NQF is not new. Deij (2009)³ proposes a scenario with three different generations:

- A first generation *"developed from national perceptions, mainly determined by internal drivers, and often using experimental approaches"*, such as in Scotland, South Africa or France.
- A second generation *"has tried to learn from 1st generation experiences, in terms of design and processes. Seeking more communication with other national systems on a bilateral basis, but influence of external drivers is limited"* such as in Mauritius, Malaysia or Jamaica.
- There is a third generation where *"Internal drivers remain important, but external drivers have a significant impact on the technical design of frameworks and the Qualifications Authority arrangements"*, such as in Botswana or Ethiopia.

Each NQF is designed according to each national context. Historical, cultural and sometimes religious dimensions intersect with one another, therefore shaping qualifications contents, systems and currencies along the years. There is a need for a framework to provide legibility and visibility within and between the different sub-systems in place.

The introduction of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems among traditional academic education systems is often at the origin of a NQF initiative. The objective is to achieve official visibility and generate currency. At the

same time, it creates reluctance from the academic world and questions the actors of the academic system about their renewal. The parity of esteem for those two kinds of qualifications and systems (academic and TVET) is far to be a reality despite the issue being addressed for many years. It is the reason why some national qualifications frameworks cover all existing qualifications sub-systems available in the country, whereas some cover only part of the available qualifications (for example TVET qualifications). In some instances, only a part of a sub-system is involved; for example it may happen that only some authorities or awarding bodies are involved.

This brief reminder shows that Africa is not so late in this landscape and surely the approach adopted in ECOWAS crosses internal and external drivers. Internal drivers are related to the implementation of TVET policies to provide linkage between the labour market and training systems. External drivers are related to individual mobilities implying for qualifications owners to be recognised outside their own country. However, at in the same time, education stakeholders and labour market stakeholders need to design adapted policies and innovations that may be inspired from foreign experiences and practices. The numerous influences on this field coming from many different approaches exported in the ECOWAS could be enlightened and clarified through the experiences of designing national and regional qualifications frameworks.

A recent study (The implementation and impact of NQF – Report of a study in 16 countries – ILO – June 2010) indicates that *"some 100 countries are now involved in some way in designing or implementing qualifications frameworks. Whether the emphasis is on increasing the relevance and flexibility of education and training programmes, easing recognition of prior learning, enhancing lifelong learning, improving the transparency of qualifications systems, creating possibilities for credit accumulation and transfer, or developing quality assurance systems, governments are increasingly turning to*

qualifications frameworks as a policy tool for reform". Before exploring the current situation in Africa, and more explicitly in ECOWAS, the different practices observed by practitioners and researchers about the implementation of NQF and RQF will be explored (Section 3.3).

3.2. A Note on the Concepts Beyond the Terms

It is important to note that the English term "*qualification*" translates into "*certification*" in French, which can be used in English too and we use "*formal certification*" as a synonymous for "*qualification*" in English. It is not the case in French where certification and qualification are different concepts. In French, the term "*qualification*" indicates the position of an occupation in a work organisation on the basis of a description of the tasks implied in this occupation (possibly of the required competences) and of the duties attached to this occupation. Typically, this description is the basis for the remuneration. The French "*certification*" is only one of the criteria or indicators leading to the French "*qualification*".

Another important point is that the value of a qualification, and therefore its currency, often comes from a negotiation – sometimes formal and official, often informal – between the authorities that award them and the end users, employers typically. In the field of vocational education and training, the elaboration of the qualifications requires the involvement of the stakeholders of the labour market to achieve the recognition of the individual qualification of the owner upon recruitment.

3.3. Practices and Typologies of National Qualifications Frameworks

A common fact is observed in most of the countries: TVET, workplace based or skills based qualifications have a lower status than school and university qualifications. This cultural aspect creates a paradox that is among the causes of a high dropout rate among young people and the source of uneasy school-to-work transition for young people owning academic qualifications because they do not have a vocational preparation.

Policy makers have understood that the development of TVET and a real push to describe and explain what the owner of a qualification is able to do, could help to address such a paradox. Setting up a NQF appears here as an opportunity to reach those two objectives.

Building a NQF, whatever it covers, supposes to classify qualifications. However, the linkage between a qualification, which is a result of learning, and the route permitting to get this result is actually so strong that classification obtained may be a classification of education and training systems rather than a classification of learning outcomes. A specific classification already exists for that matter: the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) provides a picture of training systems. An appropriate classification of qualifications should deal with other descriptors that would disregard the learning routes and devices and would focus on the use of the learning outcomes.

Looking at existing practices, two methods can be seen for structuring a framework:

- A grid of levels is established according to a consensual approach. A structure is created ex ante and qualifications are referenced against the classification proposed; and
- Alternatively, the grid of levels may emerge from the analysis carried out after a mapping of existing qualifications. The content and the meaning of the grid appears after a collective process which often may be the starting point for a new qualifications system or for the revision of the existing one.

The choice of one or the other approach is related to the existing situation. In countries where classifications are already elaborated the challenge is to build a grid of levels covering the largest range of descriptors used to do the classification. In countries where no classification has been established, the challenge is focused on the emergence of criteria that permit to make visible and available the largest range of qualifications delivered and so to design the qualifications (sub-) system included in the framework and out of it.

Such a collective endeavour is rather complex and the establishment of a NQF needs some main points to be officially addressed. Five main aspects will be specifically stressed here:

3.3.1. The Definition of the Target of the NQF

As already mentioned above, a NQF can cover different types of qualifications. In some cases, the NQF permits to have a comprehensive mapping of all qualifications sub-systems. In another case it covers only a part of a system. Many NQFs are finally set up to give visibility to vocational, sectoral and (sometimes skills) qualifications. They could constitute a first step that could evolve a more holistic framework. However, in countries where TVET has little value, it is important to increase such a visibility and, consequently, to signal the value of NQF to stakeholders involved in its elaboration. At this step, the descriptors are built with an internal scope for a national use such as the legibility of a reform.

It is worth noting that a NQF could aim at a broader visibility to permit mobility of the qualifications owners. The grid to build could question the first national picture made and even the national descriptors identified. This situation means promoters ought to be very clear about the objectives of the NQF. This will be addressed in Chapter 4.

3.3.2. The Specification of the NQF Provided by the Designers

Whatever is the target of the NQF, its establishment supposes to address the issues related to the institution and the stakeholders that will be in charge of elaborating the qualifications framework, of its development and of its publication through different supports (generally a web site). The elaboration process is generally long and it supposes the existence of a coordinator with sufficient legitimacy and technical competence to be accepted by all the stakeholders involved. In some countries, a new institution was created for this purpose. It is receiving appropriate resources to take up this role. In other countries, the coordinator belongs to an existing institution and the establishment of the NQF corresponds to an additional mission. The choice of one or the other solution depends on the political context. Stakeholders are composed of representatives of the different ministries delivering qualifications, and of representatives of labour market. Experts often help them. The main problems arise when resources are not sufficient from a

financial, human and material point of view; and when the duration of the elaboration process is underestimated. NQFs can lead to good results but they need to be thought as a sustainable device.

3.3.3. The Sustainability of the Involvement of Stakeholders

One of the main problems in elaborating qualifications frameworks is related to the technical basis needed to manage analysis and debates about the concept of “qualification”. Most stakeholders are specialist of education and training or of the labour market. However, few of them are competent in “qualification”. Many terms are completely new to them – such as learning outcomes –, or produce misunderstanding, such as competence. Therefore, many different definitions of the same term or concept are used and it is difficult to make a decision about which one to adopt and communicate with.

It is the reason why two approaches are used: organise the capacity building for all the stakeholders and prepare glossaries in order to better communicate on the basis of a common vocabulary. External definitions coming from abroad or from international fora may help to formalise national ones but national contexts are so different that it is always necessary to provide referencing also for terms used in a NQF. Such a preparatory work is a necessary condition for a better involvement of the stakeholders that can commit to a collective approach they can then consider as their own.

3.3.4. A Legislation Specific to NQF

According to the two points 2 and 3 above, formal legislation and regulations are important tools to create, manage and govern NQFs. Qualifications and their classification are related to societal values and can be considered as rules for a society and even legal rights in some countries. The introduction of TVET and classifications are seen as a break from older practices. That is specifically evident when is introduced the principle of recognition of non formal or informal learning outcomes. A NQF sheds light on the reforms that are needed and on what has value and currency in a country. Changing the role and position of some systems will have consequences for decades and even more.

3.3.5. Learning Outcomes as a Key Tool to Establish NQFs

It may well be that the most important concept making NQFs so successful is related to the qualifications as the objects of classification and their classification through levels of the learning outcomes they attest. “Learning outcomes” (LO) are often associated with “competences”. LO content derives from standards of occupations. Competences refer to the different cognitive, practical and attitude components in combination with actual occupations. Therefore, learning outcomes correspond to the combination of those components expected at the end of a learning process assuming the competences. LO based descriptions of a qualification are not easy to do because, generally, the learning process (curriculum) is immediately elaborated after the provision of occupational standards. The qualification process is the last step of a learning process and consists more of an assessment of the appropriation of the notions taught than of the checking of the use of those notions in action. The latter corresponds more to what is expected for the assessment of competences. Therefore, writing qualifications in terms of LO is often a very important step to reach in order to permit the establishment of a NQF.

3.4. A Mapping of the Existing National Qualifications Frameworks

ILO (2010) presents a map with more than 100 countries involved in the development of a NQF. However, they are at very different levels of realisation. Only 23 countries really had established a NQF. Most of the countries are making progress on the way to establishing one, are about to decide to establish one or at the very early stage of the feasibility and opportunity study. In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is as follows:

- Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius and South Africa established a NQF; Lesotho and Seychelles were at the stage of implementation;
- Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Zambia were establishing their NQF;
- Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe were considering the feasibility of establishing a NQF.

This study is not comprehensive. Some countries such as Gambia and Senegal are missing in this mapping. However, it is an interesting study that shows that Southern Africa seems to be more involved in establishing NQF. Interestingly enough, it also provides evidence that francophone countries are clearly out of this mapping.

Another way of looking at the approach used by countries in establishing their NQF shows there are common characteristics across countries. They are generally vocational qualifications frameworks. They are coordinated by a National Agency often called “National Training Authority”. This authority has a triple mission: i) collecting information on qualifications, ii) guaranteeing quality assurance related to the content of curriculum, iii) managing the assessment centres. In some cases, it is in charge of the provision of *curriculum*.

An example of an English speaking country: The South African NQF

The South African NQF is developed under the responsibility of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). “SAQA (*source SAQA website: www.saqa.org.za*) is a juristic person – that is an entity given a legal personality by the law. The South African Qualifications Authority Board is a body of 12 members appointed by the Minister of Education after consultation with the Minister of Labour. The members are nominated by identified national stakeholders in education and training.

SAQA’s role is to:

- Advance the objectives of the NQF;
- Oversee the further development of the NQF; and
- Coordinate the sub-frameworks.”

This public institution has an independent status with an overarching role about policies and quality assurance related to all kinds of qualifications. This is explained below:

“In terms of the NQF Act no. 67 of 2008, the Quality Councils (QC), will, among others:

- Develop and manage their sub-frameworks, and make recommendations thereon to relevant Ministers;
- Ensure the development of qualifications or part qualifications as are necessary for their sectors,

- which may include appropriate measures for the assessment of learning achievement;
- Recommend qualifications or part qualifications to the SAQA for registration.

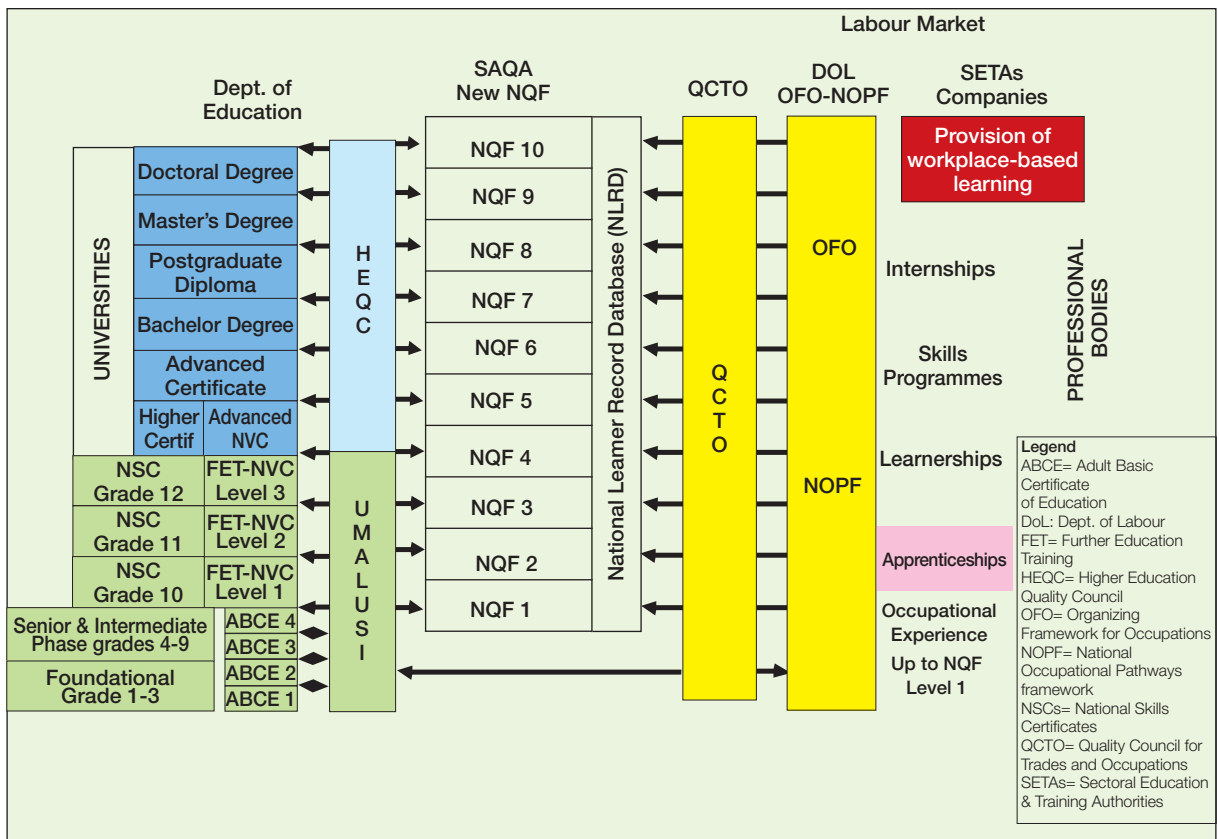
SAQA has the following role with respect to qualifications:

1. SAQA must develop and implement policy and criteria, after consultation with the QCs for the development, registration and publication of qualifications and part-qualifications, which must include the following requirements:
 - The relevant sub-framework must be identified on any document relating to the registration and publication of a qualification or part-qualification;
 - Each sub-framework must have a distinct nomenclature for its qualification types which is appropriate to the relevant sub-framework and consistent with international practice.

2. SAQA must register a qualification or part-qualification recommended by a QC if it meets the relevant criteria.
3. SAQA must develop policy and criteria, after consultation with the QCs, for assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer.”

After an original NQF designed in 2003, a new Framework is emerging in 2009 covering three sub-systems (Higher education, Ministry of Education, competency-based qualifications developed by 12 National Standards Bodies). Between qualifications providers and SAQA, responsibilities are shared here with “Quality councils” related to each sub-framework (or sub-training system). Finally, the NQF is structured in three main parts classified according to the type of sub-system: higher education is dealing with levels 5 to 8, education and training is dealing with levels 2 to 4 and general training is dealing with level 1 (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. Proposed New Arrangements for the South African NQF, 2009



Source: Adapted from Heitmann and Mummenthey (ILO, 2009)

The strong attachment to the education and training formal system prevents South Africa to really develop recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Prior learning that can be recognised is related to inputs even if those inputs are designed in a process where some discussions with the trades representatives and argued with job analysis. However, it is very difficult to make a correspondence between an individual experience and components of curriculum.

It is worth noting that there is a possible relation between the South African NQF and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The impact of the Bologna process on the South African approach is certainly one of the reasons for this.

An example of a French speaking country: Senegal

The Senegal initiative related to establishing a NQF is embedded in the national policy aiming at an important reform of TVET. The task of the TVET reform was given to a new Ministry of Vocational Training with the aim of developing a competence based curriculum. As in most countries, co-exist in Senegal different sub-systems with the same triplet: general (or basic) education, TVET and HE. Many different bodies develop TVET but learning outcomes are not recognised because the awarding bodies do not belong or work with a ministry or because there is no relevant qualification. The first idea at the origin of a NQF was the regulation of the training provision. The creation of a “Commission d’homologation” (Training Accreditation Body) was even considered in 2008. Finally, the Minister of Vocational Training was requested to develop a NQF with the purpose of covering the full range of qualifications, including higher education.

By law, the field of qualification is under the responsibility of the National Government. As it is the case in the French tradition, only a component of the State could undertake the role of dealing with the currency of qualifications. Since it pertains to Government prerogatives, it must fall in under a Minister jurisdiction. In 2009, it was therefore decided to give this authority to a component of the Ministry of Education: the Directorate for Education Planning and Reform. However, even if this authority could in theory extend to all the qualifications, it is very difficult to really obtain the commitment of the Ministry for Education or of the Ministry of Higher

Education. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon model, the creation of an independent body cannot be used as a solution to coordinate ministerial relationships. On the other hand, it is difficult too to imagine that one ministry could manage principles or criteria for the qualifications delivered by another ministry, except if this ministry directly falls under the authority of the Prime Ministry.

Nevertheless, an important investment was made in Senegal to reform training and relevant qualifications towards learning outcomes descriptions thanks to the methodology used to design the occupational standards and the competences-based assessment and training references. It can be mentioned that even general education programmes are designed on the basis of this competences-based method in order to develop adult training and the recognition of their non-formal and informal learning outcomes. This approach has driven exchanges especially between TVET content and general primary education. One of the objectives is to develop competences for all citizens especially young people that have not achieved a qualification. In July 2009, with the help of UNESCO-BREDA, a first step was made toward an NQF initiative. A first contact was made with each education stakeholders (Ministry of General Education, TVET and HE) in order to design a method and draw a schedule to organise a common reflection with this goal. A first workshop was organised in January 2010 with a first circle of stakeholders. Different ministries in charge of education and training, representatives of other ministries contributing to the qualification process, private education sectors were represented. The final conference of this workshop saw the participation of the private economic sectors and of international institutions. A first draft toward a common project and a road map were proposed. The method adopted is based on mapping and on making apparent quality criteria from a precise description and analysis of each qualification sub-system. Even if a real momentum was noticeable after this workshop, and if the Directorate for Education Planning and Reform was confirmed as the coordinator of the work, no effective leadership emerges one year later. The initial enthusiasm seems to be lost.

The mapping of the training provision facilitates the emergence of the main characteristics of each sub-system, and therefore the emergence of quality criteria. An important step was made with the recognition of non-formal and informal learner to

apply for some official qualifications or to access examinations. So the main trend that seems to appear consists of a regulation of the provision of qualifications. Nevertheless, there is an improved possibility to achieve them whatever the curriculum and the routes used to acquire the expected components of the qualification. This can be possible through the dissociation of the assessment process from the learning one. However, this means a common acceptance of such a principle in all the minds and new organisations in a context where, in general, assessment centres cannot be

independent from the learning providers. If the principles related to describe and design qualifications in terms of learning outcomes is effective, due to the competence-based method actually in use, the classification in terms of levels is far to be established. The different sub-systems are watertight and the authorities in charge of qualifications are so independent from one another that it complicates the development of a common approach and pathways in terms of establishment of a common currency for the different existing qualifications.

TABLE 4. The Qualifications Landscape in Senegal

Sub-systems	Under an Official Authority	Standards and Documents	On-going Qualifications	Planned Qualifications	Bridges
Elementary	✓	✓	✓		✓
Secondary	✓	✓	✓		✓
Higher Education	✓	✓	✓		✓
TVET	✓	✓	✓		✓
TVET Examinations for Teachers	✓	✓	✓		✓
NFE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

As it was already seen in the Gambian example, the Senegalese approach facilitates the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes due to the possible links existing between working life and personal life. The main difficulty to overcome is to find a legitimate body that can be accepted by all stakeholders. Another difficulty to solve that is not specific to French speaking countries is related to the social partners' representation in consultation and decision process about qualifications. Their participation is necessary to determine value and provide the basis for a common currency. However, in countries dominated by the informal economy, there is no labour market stakeholders and even less representatives to voice their needs. Organisations to represent the labour market must be politically promoted to permit the establishment of a NQF.

Cultural influences coming from the past have clearly an impact on the development of NQFs in sub-Saharan countries. The delegation of authority to an independent body to establish a NQF seems to be very difficult to implement in the French speaking countries where qualifications and its currency fall under the State prerogatives.

Another aspect should be explored further. It consists of a comparison of the qualifications' content. In the French speaking countries, a qualification is related to a whole occupation perimeter and curricula are structured with this goal. The assessment process is focused on the combination of the different components of competences that are combined themselves to occupations. In the English-speaking countries, it seems that a qualification is, first and foremost, the proof of the achievement of a completed learning cycle. The assessment allows to check each component of the acquired knowledge and skills.

If it is admitted in the French speaking and the English speaking countries that trade partners must be involved in the elaboration of the qualifications, it can also be observed that the multiple types of qualifications allowed in the French speaking countries, multiply the meeting and consultation areas, reducing the opportunity to strengthen capacity building and risking to develop drop out from such consultation processes.

CHAPTER 4



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THE REGIONAL APPROACH - EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

The Regional Approach - Examples of Regional Qualifications Frameworks

As it was already mentioned in Chapter 2, Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQF) are designed according to a common goal that several countries have adopted. Two main kinds of RQFs can be observed:

- One related to mobility; and
- One related to quality assurance

In both cases, the approach implies the elaboration of common criteria and common communication tools. In the case of mobility, mutual trust is based on common appropriation and use of concepts related to qualification by national authorities in charge of the referencing of the national NQF to the RQF. In the case of quality assurance, a regional board is in charge of checking the good appliance of the rules and criteria designed *ex ante* by the competent authorities in charge of the delivery of qualifications. An intermediary authority level may exist between the regional board and those authorities with a national board controlled itself by the regional one.

Examples of RQFs established as a mobility tool for the recognition of individual qualifications are presented in the rest of Chapter 4.

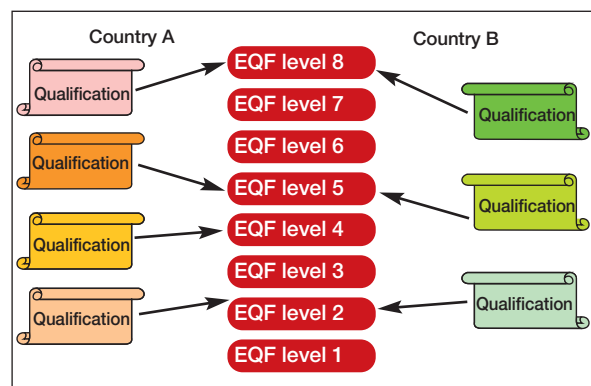
4.1. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Emanating from the Copenhagen process of the European Union, the EQF was clearly created to permit the transparency of qualifications and especially of vocational qualifications. The expected mobility, as it was forecasted in 2004, was related to the European labour market. In order to recognise that a worker owning a given “qualification” is able to do the corresponding activity, the idea was to give transparency to the “qualification” delivered by the education or training

authorities. At the beginning, transparency was achieved through a description of the qualifications by way of a common format (called Europass and designed in 2002). In a second step, the transparency object was best defined through what was called “learning outcomes”. This innovation dissociates the content of the qualification from the learning that leads to it (type and duration). The comparison of learning outcomes could not be done through a common grid of levels describing education and training systems. Therefore it needed a new grid of levels and new descriptors. Finally, after a long debate and national consultations within all European countries including accessing ones, the decision was made to use three descriptors (knowledge, skills and competences) and eight levels.

The main principles of the EQF come from National Qualifications Frameworks. They must express a hierarchy of learning outcomes levels to permit legibility towards the EQF. In 2008, when the EQF Recommendation was published, with the approval of the European Parliament and Council, some European countries had already a NQF but not necessarily based on learning outcomes. Their classification was based on descriptors coming from their education and training systems. The risk was high to bring confusion and to valorise academic knowledge instead of the three descriptors together: knowledge, skills and competences. In this case, referencing to the EQF needed to review the national approach in order to really compare learning outcomes. The other countries did not have a NQF at that time. In their hurry to make their citizens recognised in the European labour market, they adopted the 8-level grid but often forgot that the comparisons are dealing with learning outcomes whatever they way they had been acquired (see Figure 3). In some instances, TVET was forgotten, especially when it did not fall under the authority of the Ministry of Education.

FIGURE 3. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)⁴, a Translation Device



Source: EQF

The EQF approach has been a significant opportunity for countries to reflect on their own education and training system. More importantly, the EQF has provided an opportunity to make actors, users and stakeholders aware of the importance of a system for recognising qualifications in a country. This last point may be the most difficult to grasp because the concept of qualification is so related to education and training that the currency of a qualification is related to a social recognition and not only to education providers. The recognition of “qualifications” involves a lot of parameters according to the societal, cultural and historic environment that prevail in the country. It is the reason why so few countries have already referenced their NQF to the EQF. The notable exceptions are those that already had a NQF and have revised their descriptors in order to give legibility in terms of learning outcomes.

4.2. The Transnational Qualifications Framework for the Small States of the Commonwealth

The Transnational Qualifications Framework comes from an initiative of the Ministers for Education of the Commonwealth in 2000. At their triennial Conference, they considered that many States of

the Commonwealth were too small “to conquer the online eWorld on their own, but they might do it by working together”. A Virtual University was created in 2003 for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). It aims at strengthening the capacity of national education institutions with the help of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) organizations. Workshops, called “boot-camps”, are organised for educators coming from different areas to design learning materials. The first workshop was held in Mauritius. Fourteen countries participated. From then on, workshops were organised, with a main theme each time:

- 2006, Mauritius: Tourism and Entrepreneurship;
- 2007, Singapore: Professional Development for Education;
- 2007, Trinidad: Life Skills;
- 2007, Samoa: Disaster Management;
- 2008, Seychelles: Fisheries;
- 2008, Bahamas: Construction;
- 2009, Samoa: Maritime; and
- 2010, Maldives: Agriculture

Thirty-two Small States are currently involved in the VUSSC: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lesotho, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Seychelles (The Republic of), Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Swaziland, The Bahamas, The Gambia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

In 2007, the project to develop international recognition of the qualifications awarded by the VUSSC was launched. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) provided the basis for what has then been called the Transnational Qualifications Framework. “The TQF is a ten-level framework. It is not meant to replace existing qualifications frameworks in the Small States. It is a translation instrument between the systems in different countries and regions that will provide a mechanism for the transfer of credits, qualifications and learners between countries. It will also provide a means by which qualifications

⁴ Again, in this paper and in English, the terms “certification” and “qualification” are taken as synonymous.

frameworks can be compared and allowed for referencing of all qualifications to the TQF levels.” (Sir John Daniel from COL, VUSSC conference, Cape Town, 3 May 2010).

The TQF covers Vocational as well as Higher Education qualifications. It is based on quality assurance principles.

TABLE 5. The Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)

LEVEL	QUALIFICATIONS TITLES	MINIMUM CREDITS	Hrs of TQF
10	Doctoral Degree	360	3600
9	Masters Degree	240	2400
8	Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma; Bachelors Degree with honours	120	1200
7	Bachelors Degree; Graduate Certificate and Diploma	360	3600
6	Advanced/ Higher Diploma Associate Degree/ Foundation Degree	240	2400
5	Diploma	240	2400
4	Advanced Certificate	120	1200
3	Certificate III	40	400
2	Certificate II	40	400
1	Certificate I	40	400

Source: Dr. Kaylash Allgoo, O.S.K. Director, Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), Chairman, TQF Management Committee (TQFMC) for Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) – The TQF 2010.

The structure provided is based on a classification types of awards here is relevant to the South African Qualifications Framework. The use and currency of a qualification is related to education and training institutional organisations and to the system for the

delivery of qualifications. The mutual trust is assured by the existing rules and checking mechanism permitting the registration of the qualifications awarded in a regional, national framework. A local institution could even register the qualification if it is accredited by a local or a regional Quality Assurance Agency.

The TQF is “backed by Quality Assurance Guidelines, Qualifications Guidelines, Level Descriptors, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the maintenance of the VUSSC portal... It refers to the statements describing the characteristics of the generic outcomes of each of the ten (10) levels in the TQF. Characteristics consist of the knowledge, skills/competencies and attributes that participants should possess or be able to demonstrate on completion of a programme/course/module”.

In the case of mobility, in the 32 countries involved in the TQF, the recognition of a qualification owned by an individual can be seen through its registration in the TQF. This registration is related to its design following quality assurance guidelines. Although this quality is based on education and training support, it is possible to achieve a qualification thanks to a RPL procedure that seems currently difficult to develop. On the other hand, an experiment was carried out so that the French island of *La Réunion* could join the TQF. The competent Authority was contacted and bridges projected. However, systems are so different from each other that only agreement to provide equivalences between some qualifications could be proposed.

4.3. The African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (“*Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l’Enseignement Supérieur*” - CAMES)

The Regional Qualifications Framework developed by the Malagasy and African Council for Higher Education (CAMES) is a sectoral and partial framework focused on the qualifications related to HE degrees. CAMES was set up in 1968 to develop cooperation between the French speaking African countries and harmonize the higher education systems across the Continent. This institution accredits the titles and degrees of universities and higher education colleges.

It also evaluates researchers work as part of their doctoral studies. Another of their roles is to establish equivalence between the vocational qualifications and university degrees.

The Council is composed of the Ministers in charge of higher education and scientific research of the Member States. Sixteen countries are members of the CAMES: Benin, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo.

The CAMES had adopted the French approach to the Bologna process since 2007. The CAMES provided specific guidelines in order to enter in the new organisation it implies with content directly transferred from the French rules and principles.

TABLE 6. The Bologna Framework and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

EQF Levels	Bologna Levels	Scottish Framework	French Framework
8	Third Cycle	Doctorate degree	<i>Doctorat</i>
7	Second Cycle	Master degree	<i>Master</i>
6	First Cycle	Bachelor degree	<i>Licence</i>
5	***** Short cycle HE		
4			
3			
2			
1			

Source: Authors

When a public or private higher education institution or a university creates a new degree, it has to request accreditation from the CAMES. This request implies the preparation of a dossier and the existence of experts accredited by a General Consultative Committee. Experts examine information provided by the training in order control the teaching conditions,

the contents of the programmes and the compliance with the quality assurance criteria described in the Agreement established by the Higher Education Council. This theme involves the Council that has had organised workshops and reflection to strengthen quality criteria and the trust from foreign countries. The Bologna process provides the basis for most of the content and process in terms of quality. Some African Quality Agencies are registered with the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education (INQAAHE). Most investment is meant to be as close as possible to the French Higher Education rules and principles with attention to the quality of the teaching and, since recently, with an increased attention to the impact of the degrees achieved to facilitate the transition of their owners to the labour market.

The CAMES accreditation aims at a registration in the CAMES catalogue of each country. The owner of the degrees awarded in one of the 16 CAMES countries is allowed to be introduced in further studies in any Member States in theory. However, as all the countries are not at the same level of organisation and involvement in this matter, the recognition of qualifications is not systematically granted.

4.4. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework

The RQF of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was initiated in 2001 during a Ministers of Education meeting to enhance mobility, harmonisation and recognition of qualifications across the Region. In 2005 it was defined as “a regional framework that consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across borders in the SADC region, to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States, to harmonise qualifications wherever possible, and create acceptable regional standards where appropriate. The purpose of the SADCQF is to be a regional mechanism that is used in the SADC Region to meet the demands of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, most particularly the

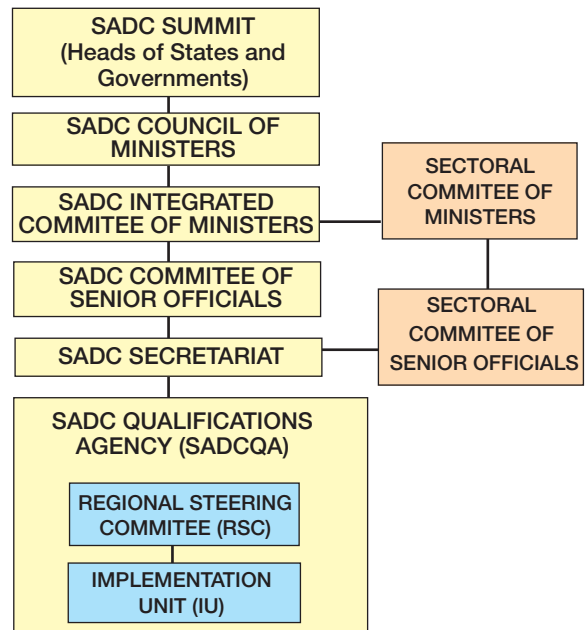
demands for harmonisation, standardisation and equivalences.” (See *Towards a Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework Concept Paper and Implementation Plan*, Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation, Maseru, March 2005).

This mechanism is connected to databases relaying information provided by the Member States. It will be a device permitting linkages and interfaces with the other NQF databases. It supposes common quality assurance criteria and procedures for registration. During its completion phase, the project delivered many studies about quality assurance systems. An important work will be done in order to harmonize the format of the information related to each qualification and communication will be done through a design allowing Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) to facilitate Recognition of Non-formal Learning. A particular focus was made during the pilot phase on the validation and recognition of foreign qualifications, whether they were achieved in a SADC country or outside.

Such mechanism implies a specific process validating the qualifications delivered by Member States and therefore the existence or the creation of a specific organisation. It supposes the creation of new institutions and Committees (see Figure 4).

The implementation of the whole system will be based on agreements, conventions and protocols signed by the different Member States of the SADC: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

FIGURE 4. The Organization of the SADCQF



Source: "Towards a SADC Qualifications Framework: Concept Paper and Implementation Plan" (March 2005)

In order to facilitate such an approach, the SADCQF will have to help Member States to develop and implement their NQF, to harmonize the NQFs among the different countries involved, to provide guidelines to review and strengthen national assessment and accreditation systems and facilitate agreement on the pre-requisite for accessing higher education.

The SADCQF is actually in a testing phase. The work that remains to be done involves the customisation of the Internet portal to allow easy access and use for all types of users (learners, employers, education, governmental institutions etc.). It may be a reality in 2011.

CHAPTER 5



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WAYS FORWARD - PERSPECTIVES AND ROAD MAP

Ways Forward - Perspectives and Road Map

A return on the ECOWAS context indicates a difference with SADC when it comes to NQFs or their use of the EQF. Among the 15 ECOWAS countries, only some English speaking countries seem to have established a NQF. In the French speaking countries, there exists an intention to develop a NQF in most of them, and a specific framework established to give a quality label to HE degrees designed according to the Bologna process.

NQFs in French speaking countries seem to be difficult to be established and implemented even if a NQF was already established in France even before the publication of the EQF Recommendation in 2008. It can be observed, in ECOWAS countries, a lot of different initiatives to develop TVET. However, it also appears that only Ministry of Education actions are considered as valid. A qualification is not only the signal of the achievement of a curriculum; it also has currency in the society, including labour market. A qualification must therefore be designed by the highest possible level of Government. In the countries with French influence, an independent body cannot be in charge of such a function, it has to be the Government. This is not the case in English speaking countries. Perhaps, it is one of the reasons why any process aiming at establishing NQFs have generally failed because a NQF needs a collective approach and it is difficult for a ministry to accept instructions coming from another ministry.

In addition, the transfer from an Anglo-Saxon model to a French context does not go without problems. The organisation developed to design qualifications have characteristics in common: the involvement of representatives of the labour market, committees with different stakeholders from education and training and industries or trades, work analysis in order to better know the needs of employers etc. These characteristics currently are more a target than a reality. However, most national policies are focused on these goals in all countries whatever the (cultural)

context. Nevertheless, it can be observed a difference in the design of qualifications even when they are called in the same way: diploma, degree or certificate. The French approach considers a whole occupation as the basis for a qualification and so it is composed of units covering a combination of transferable competences jointly assessed. In the Anglo-Saxon approach, a qualification could be related to a competence or a group of competences in a specific context that is not necessarily transferable. Such a difference on the scope of a qualification makes the comparison difficult when qualifications are not described through their content, especially learning outcomes. On the other hand, the concept of “credit” is often difficult to be applied in countries with a French influence because the assessment may use an average approach. It considers the weighting of certification unit on the basis of main core competences against less dominant ones to exercise a job. On the contrary, in the English approach, the weighting of the credits are more related to the duration of the learning process and to the workload for the student.

Those two approaches can be brought together in the same framework if the object of the classification is the “learning outcomes” and if the object is related to the same objective (e.g. mobility within education systems or mobility in the labour market). It is the reason why the first step of the elaboration of a qualification provides the objective of the framework. As a consequence, there is an organisation of the teaching by field of study for academic qualifications and according to work analysis for TVET qualifications.

The choice of an objective for a national qualifications framework is very important. It is even more important for a RQF. The criteria used to decide to include a qualification in the framework or not provide interesting information about this objective and the most adequate method to organise comparisons.

In the ECOWAS context, two main aspects give a real opportunity and hope to build a NQF and a RQF: one is related to the elaboration of qualifications with a competence-based method; the other one is related to the challenge of the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

5.1. The Competence Based Qualification Design

The competence-based design method is largely spread in the ECOWAS countries and beyond. Generally presented as a specific method derived from the Quebec experience developed at the end of the 90's, it is based on the principle of the job analysis in order to define TVET. However, it is not very new. It is currently used to elaborate a TVET curriculum that would match the needs of the firms. This approach is often questioned by many education stakeholders, especially in the field of primary or general secondary sectors where it is used under the name Competency-Based Education (CBE). Nevertheless, it appears very appropriate in the case of vocational education and training.

The competence-based method is used most of the time to elaborate curriculum. Its use could also be interesting in designing qualifications. It could be supposed that this aspect is not mentioned because a qualification is viewed as a signal of the achievement of the curriculum rather than it would be the signal of competences appropriation.

The development of this method is present in ECOWAS since the beginning of the 2000's. This choice was made by Education Ministers with the support of UNESCO through its International Bureau of Education (see *IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues N° 7 - L'approche par compétences en Afrique francophone : Quelques tendances. Geneva, Switzerland, May 2008*). The main interest of this method comes from the use of the analysis of job situations as the base of the standards to establish

a curriculum. The analysis is made following a specific enquiry whose purpose is to collect information related to the context of job activities (tools, materials, procedures, regulation, knowledge, know-how, attitudes etc...). With this method, competences are expressed in terms of expected results and performance criteria.

Generally, it is well mentioned that the job situation analysis could be the basis of the assessment in a qualification/certification process. In addition, it could also be the basis for the elaboration of such qualifications/certifications. Such information could be the "learning outcomes" describing the qualification that will be in the NQF or the RQF. Such expression could be legible by learners as well as employers, teachers and trainers.

This information could also be the basis for the comparison with other qualifications described in the same manner. If learning outcomes are defined before the training takes place, more flexibility could be achieved in pedagogical approach in order to reach more people according to the situation they are faced with. In this case, quality will also be achieved in the qualification standards and assessment procedures, and not only in the training or teaching processes.

Since many ECOWAS countries have adopted such an approach, it could be said that the different actors involved in the design of training and qualification have the capacity to give information about qualifications delivered in terms of "learning outcomes" and so permit description, organisation, classification and comparisons in order to build or integrate a framework whose objective consists of providing support for labour market mobility.

Such an approach is also essential in order to develop recognition of non-formal and informal learning related to job situation whatever the context of the activity (in a formal or informal economy).

5.2. The Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes

The theme of recognition of non-formal and informal learning is an important challenge for Africa. It is also at the heart of many debates all over the world (Werquin, 2010a and 2010b⁵). Many pilots have taken place and some have failed due to the lack of a convincing follow-up.

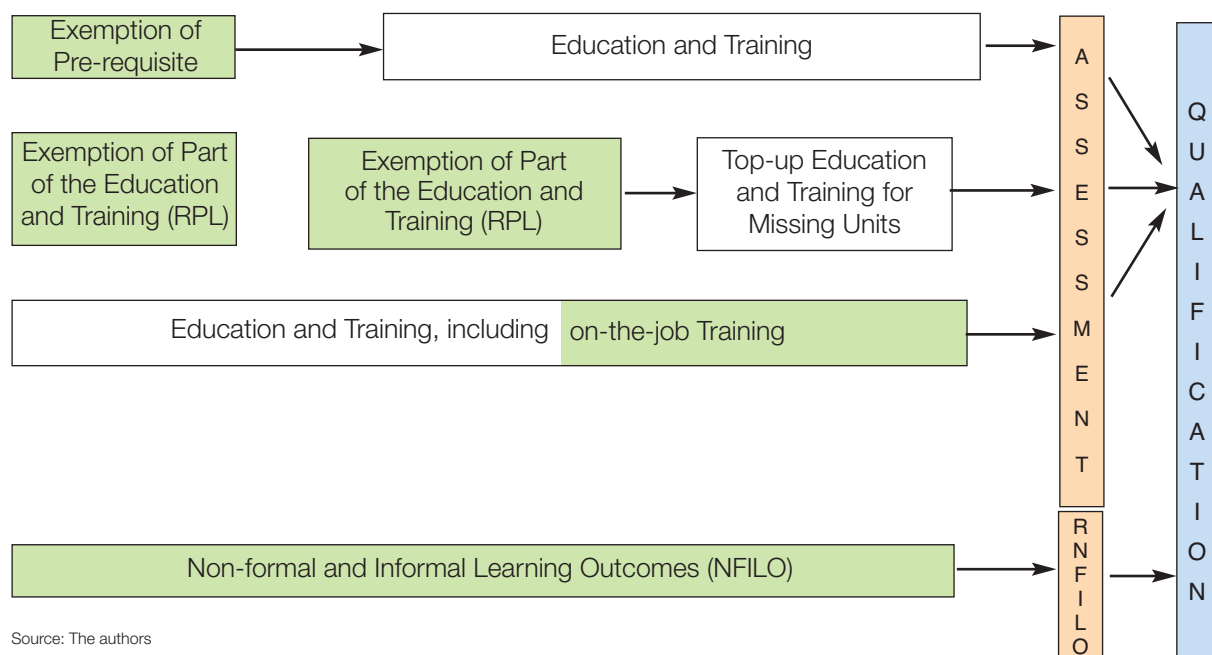
Many terms can be observed in this field (see Werquin, 2007, for a survey⁶). It seems “Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)” is the term used in Africa when it comes to NQF and RQF. Other terms are:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) in the United States;
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Canada;
- APL, again, and Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL) as well in the United Kingdom; and

- *Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience (VAE)* in France.

It is essential to clarify why non-formal and informal learning have to be recognised. RPL could be organised to improve individual employability and the aim of the recognition is therefore related to the competences expected by employers. RPL could also aim at helping individuals achieving a curriculum and the aim is then related to the principle of modularisation of the training and to an examination whose goal is to identify which modules are appropriate and which are needed. The aim of RPL could also be for individuals to be delivered a licence to practice. In this case non-formal and informal learning must be mentioned in the rules of the license. The approaches described above are interesting but the most important one is related to the use of RPL for individuals to achieve qualification/certification. Non-formal or informal learning could be developed and recognised through four processes (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. The RPL Processes for Achieving a Qualification/Certification



Source: The authors

⁵ Werquin Patrick, 2010a. *Recognising Non-formal and Informal Learning: Outcomes, Policies and Practices*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 91 p., www.oecd.org/document/29/0,3343,en_2649_39263294_44870941_1_1_1_1,00.html; Werquin Patrick, 2010b. *Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning: Country Practices*, OECD, Paris, February, 65 p., www.oecd.org/dataoecd/22/12/44600408.pdf

⁶ Werquin P., 2007. *Terms, Concepts and Models for Analysing the Value of Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning*, Document prepared for the OECD activity on “Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning”. www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/58/41834711.pdf

The main different practices that could be observed are:

- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning could be used in order to achieve a curriculum aiming at a qualification/certification without the academic prerequisite usually expected;
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning could be used to give exemption of a part of the education and training programme;
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning could be used to award credits, especially in a mixed curriculum such as apprenticeship; and
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning could be used to deliver a part or the whole qualification/certification. It is the French approach called *Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*. In this case, the procedure of assessment could be organised solely on the basis of work experience.

The development of such recognition processes may imply legislative rules and texts spelling out principles and processes to consider non-formal and informal learning as equivalent to formal learning. This needs a cultural shift that is not easy to obtain

in countries where qualifications could usually be the signal of the achievement of formal learning. Technical procedures must be set up to give trust to the assessment of non-formal and informal learning. Nevertheless, if the goal of the assessment process is to assess the same learning outcomes identified through competences in the case of formal learning, it could be easy to obtain this trust even by allowing access to applicants that have not followed the formal curriculum.

The first necessary step is related to the recognition of the legitimacy of the Authorities in charge even if they do not belong to the Ministry of Education. The development of a NQF or a RQF stimulates especially this second issue by positioning all different kinds of qualifications in the same grid with the same descriptors and so with the same parity of esteem; at least in theory.

5.3. Previous Draft of a Road Map

5.3.1. Main Steps to Establish a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The main steps that deserve immediate attention in the establishment of a NQF are reported in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Main Steps to Establish a National Qualifications Framework

Political decision	Setting up of a steering group and of an institution in charge of the monitoring of the project at the highest level of the government.
Background work in order to provide a first draft of the NQF	Mapping of existing qualifications at national level (see examples of tools in annex), discussions with the different Authorities in charge of delivering qualifications and industry and trade representatives in order to provide a proposal of the NQF purpose and use through a draft paper and advocacy.
Political decision and a possible legislative approach	Presentation of the draft and official decision to establish the NQF with a clear objective and delegation to the steering group to work with an inter-ministries technical and financial power. This aspect could be made official by a legislative text.
Elaboration of the draft NQF	Proposal for a classification grid and descriptors. Organisation of the implementation and maintenance of the NQF. Creation or expansion of commissions, agreements and/or committees. Creation of communication tools. Fund raising.
Political validation of the system	This step gives the starting point for the implementation of a NQF. The validation could be related also to the specification of the database

Accompaniment of the stakeholders	Describing a qualification instead of a curriculum or a training programme is not easy for all the Authorities. As a consequence, it is necessary to plan accompaniment that could be a collective one.
Testing and arrangements following the test	This step is the guarantee of the good functioning of the framework and related tools.
Communication in the country and dissemination	A good communication strategy is important to make the NQF known and used by all types of users that are targeted.

5.3.2. Important Considerations

i) Mapping All Existing Types of Qualifications

Making a mapping of all existing types of qualifications is an important step that supposes the realisation of a common format in order to collect the information related to each type of qualifications. This format can start with a grid already existing but in the perspective of the possibility of having a RQF in the future. It could be convenient to work with common regional tool and adapt the existing ones. This data collection permits to identify quality assurance related to the value of the qualification (stakeholders involved and procedure developed in the standards, curriculum, examination or assessment design and control), and therefore its currency in the society. This information is essential to determine which qualifications will be in the NQF, or not. For this mapping, as it is impossible to have a whole and comprehensive collection of existing qualifications, it is suggested to make it by taking three or four fields or specialities covering different levels, authorities in charge of their delivery (mixing public and private) and process used to design the qualification. This step will conclude with a proposition of a glossary related to the main NQF concepts and the objectives that could be pursued through the establishment of a NQF.

ii) Preliminary Work in the Elaboration of a NQF

Before the elaboration of the NQF per se, some preliminary work is suitable. It will determine the main structure of the NQF. Three aspects could be developed at the same time:

- A political one with the choice of the different kinds of qualifications retained as available in the NQF and why. The issue is the design of conditions and rules to be in, or out of, the framework but also the choice of the institution or authority (possibly a committee) will be in charge of this choice.
- A technical one with the experimentation of a database format describing the qualifications. This aspect is very important to get a realistic tool available as well for the use of qualification authorities as the use by the public to understand what underpins the qualifications in a guidance project or a job recruitment project. One important point that will be particularly strengthened is related to the descriptors that will be used.
- A third aspect deserves a lot of attention: the design of the grid of levels. Two dimensions should be kept in mind:
 - **A political one** in order to clarify the use of the NQF and therefore to decide on the meaning of the levels. In all instances where “academic” qualifications compete against “vocational” qualifications, the issue must be addressed and the two types of qualifications must be reconciled. The levels could be different: one focused on knowledge and duration of education and training, the other more related to skills and competences permitting a correspondence with job organizations. This choice will lead to different levels structures and therefore to an integrating NQF covering all qualifications but with different grids of levels.

The focus is currently on the concept of learning outcomes but the concept of learning outcomes varies according to the interpretation of the Authorities in charge of their description and each country has to clarify its own.

- **A technical dimension** by testing the format set up to collect information about qualification in order to achieve a database support. The database project must be tested in the fields chosen in the first step but also tested in some other fields to check the generalisation step to all the qualifications that will be in the NQF. This supposes to prepare a specification support necessary to develop the database and to prepare a communication strategy about it. This also implies to be clear about the stakeholders in charge of filling the description format, those in charge of the checking of its

content and those in charge of the publication and maintenance of the system. This database must be a sustainable system and it must allow the institution in charge of it to make all possible changes of content and even some part of the structure after its establishment.

In terms of method, the different steps suppose a steering group such as the NQF committee already established. An additional circle of stakeholders will be necessary. It should be composed of the stakeholders in the fields chosen for the tests and experimentation.

5.3.3. Main Steps to Establish a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF)

The main steps for the implementation of a RQF are provided in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Implementation of a Regional Qualifications Framework: Main Steps

Definition of the goal, area and stakeholders	A RQF needs a vision of the function of the framework and the qualifications dealt with.
Establishment of a network of countries that will be involved	This phase is important because it supposes a clear commitment of each stakeholder and a minimum of stability for the actors involved.
Choice of monitoring	It may be that a country will volunteer but it is generally the case that an external support is needed.
Definition of common tools and vocabulary	This could be rather important in a context where different cultural environments exist.
Preparation of a draft RQF	This phase permits to check the feasibility of the RQF, review the areas and main principles.
Political validation of the system	This step gives the starting point of the implementation of a CRC project. The validation could be related also to the database specification.
Testing and arrangements following the test	This step is the guarantee of the good functioning of the device.
Communication in the country	A communication strategy is important to make the NQF known and used by all types of users that are targeted.
Accompaniment of other countries that are considering being involved in the RQF	This supposes the production of documents explaining the rules and principles and accompaniment in order to adapt the national approach to the regional one.

5.4. Proposed Working Methods

The establishment of a NQF and a RQF could be done at the same time in an alternative way. This could be possible for the ECOWAS if:

- The aim of the RQF is clearly spelled out;
- A network is already set up with volunteer countries sharing the same goals; and
- There already exist resources to develop monitoring of the whole project.

In the example of the SADCQF, where the project is monitored by an external Authority established after the SADC decision and investment, some countries had already established their NQF, more or less following the same pattern. The project aims at relying on databases already existing and accompanying countries that do not have their own NQF to build one compatible with the RQF.

The ECOWAS area is still very far from this stage. In addition, it seems very difficult to imagine a similar system to the SADC one in the short run.

It is the situation that can be observed thanks to the work of the European Training Foundation (ETF), especially in countries around the Mediterranean sea. Those countries are largely influenced by the systems used in Arabic countries, Australia, Canada, England and/or France. So the idea was to begin by establishing a NQF using clusters and peer learning workshops. Such an approach aims at building capacity for the staff in charge of the NQFs. The work is focused on economic sectoral qualifications. Each country builds its NQF according to the same methods of analysis, exchanges of tools, and gathering stakeholders from different sectors such as education, trade and industry.

Describing qualifications and defining their value, and therefore its currency, in a country and in a region demands a lot of time. Quality assurance dealing with qualifications is not the same as quality assurance in the context of training. A possible way forward could be to organise exchanges between peers having the same mission in different countries. It could be the best way to reach the recognition of individual qualification in the case of mobility thanks to collaboration and a mutual understanding.



CONCLUSION FOR AN IMPLEMENTATION

Conclusion for an Implementation

The feasibility of a NQF implementation for an ECOWAS country, or of a RQF for the Sub-Region, could be supported by an experimentation related to 3 or 4 vocational fields. The choice of those fields supposes a consultation with the countries volunteers which agreed to be involved. The choice will be based also on some prospective information about resources available and about local, sectoral and financial actors contributing in the experimentation. The Senegalese example demonstrates that though a real institutional and experts wishes, the involvement in such initiative means other supports. Ivory Coast, Mali and may be Benin could be also eventually partners in this dynamic because it seems they have already developed some preliminary studies about a NQF. We can notice here that, except Gambia and may be Nigeria, none NQF is actually working in ECOWAS area. It will be necessary to prevent a specific accompaniment to stimulate and coordinate several countries in the same time at the two levels: national and regional.

Some opportunities could be developed with working approach dealing with, in one part, English speaking countries and, another part, French speaking countries. It is observed that the ministries of education in the French speaking countries are influenced by the structure of French education and training systems. Diplomas (or qualifications) hierarchy is already designed through a level grid based on a correspondence with the organization as well in production as services economic fields. Such specificity could be useful to design a Regional Qualifications Framework.

The 3 or 4 vocational fields to be chosen must be normally dealing with sectoral fields (agriculture, construction, electronics, transportations, tourism, energy etc...) which are represented at a national level and permit concrete exchanges with the other ECOWAS countries. It will be easier to develop such experimentation with countries which have adopted the "APC" (French acronym for "Approche Par Compétences") method because they can use common technical and conceptual background. It would be necessary to proceed in two times: a first time with countries groups according to the languages they used (English or French) and a second time to cross the first groups results.

It would be possible to set up transnational working groups dealing with Higher education qualifications frameworks. But must be verified if Higher education centers are ready to cooperate and make some articulation with VET fields and qualifications.

Nevertheless, no NQF or RQF could be projected without a preliminary session to define the objectives pursued and uses for African citizens for those frameworks. Examples proposed in this study could help to make choice and make this preliminary step.

The concept of "excellence centers" developed in the Kaduna experimentation is not directly related to NQF or RQF but it can contribute to quality approach, as it was observed during the IATT session of December 2010. It seems that the criteria to be integrated in the centers network are already defined with the support of the ECOWAS board. They have been presented as one of the approach useful to set Qualifications Frameworks. The "excellence centers" rationale is referenced to the constitution of a network which is in progress. It would be interesting to define if a concept of "excellence" related to a curriculum design methodology could be used as the unique criteria used to base an NQF or a RQF in contexts where qualifications do not attest the same kind of learning outcomes.

Guidelines for NQF and RQF have to be considered according to their use. This study could be considered as a first technical support for NQF and RQF designers. Must be precised if exists a need for a guide according to each country for its designers. It can be also considered that this study is the starter to set up a reflection to provide in each country a communication on NQF and RQF for the education and labour market stakeholders involved in the NQF and RQF implementation and maintenance. It could be also precised if a guide has to be done for a broad public to help the NQF and RQF data base use.

The issue working capability is one of the main challenges for TVET and the NQF and RQF role is to give some legibility to the different existing training and qualifications systems and sub-systems. If the qualifications aims are not related to the working capability, the Qualifications Frameworks will not solve this challenge. They can highlight what is missing and provide some proposals by giving a mapping of what exists and so provide the support to develop planning and orientation policies about learning process and qualifications to reach it.

APPENDIX 1

Example of Preliminary Work Conducted in Senegal in January 2010

The workshop in Dakar, in January 2010, took place in three main stages:

First Stage: Inventory of the current practices in terms of qualification processes. This implies the preparation of an inventory before the workshops on the basis of questionnaire 1.

Three working parties can be considered, respectively on:

- Qualification processes in primary and secondary education sectors;
- Qualification processes in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector; and
- Qualification processes in the tertiary sector.

Non-formal and informal learning were also taken into account through the practices of the schools delivering learning programmes on the basis of key competences (ECB, religious school (Daara Koranic Schools) or 3rd type institutions such as mobile training units for which the principle has been accepted that they deliver official qualifications as well (see page 18)). The approach aims at identifying all existing systems and sub-systems in order to map qualifications in preparation for the next stage. This next stage aims at making explicit the findings according to a story line outlined in Questionnaire 2.

Second Stage: Analysis of the substance of the qualifications and their currency in Senegal and possibly outside of Senegal. It will be about identifying the opportunities for evolution, and even possible bridges given the socioeconomic issues that are to be addressed at the moment.

This stage – with a common questionnaire allowing for a mapping of existing qualifications for each

sub-system – is a first attempt to position them in the Senegalese context, and beyond. For example, there might be issues for their evolution and the recognition of their currency for the world of training, for the world of work, or in the case of mobility within the training system in Senegal or abroad on the basis of a reflection based on Questionnaire 3.

Third Stage: Definition of national framework in terms of objectives and methods in two steps:

- A first step will consist of pooling the work of the sub-groups; and
- A second step that should lead to pooling the conclusions and recommendations of each sub-group along the following lines:
 - The objectives of the framework (for what? for whom?);
 - The principles of its elaboration (which structure for which legibility?);
 - The characteristics of its content (which certifications will be in it and why others will be excluded?);
 - The conditions to register qualifications in the framework; and
 - The modalities for formalisation (legal support) and dissemination (communication support).

Preparation of Workshops with the Aim of Implementing a National Qualifications Framework in Senegal

See next stages

STAGE 1: Description of the Qualifications Systems

Each system or sub-system could be described using the questionnaire presented in Table A.1.

TABLE A.1. Questionnaire for Stage 1
Wording of the qualification (name of the qualification)
Type of qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Academic (general or theoretical) - Vocational - Mixed (academic and vocational)
Subject(s) for which this qualification can be awarded (speciality, domain, discipline)
Pathways leading to this qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initial education and training - Continuing training and adult learning - Alternating scheme (dual system) - Recognition of non-formal and informal learning - Other
Type of institution where this qualification can be prepared? Is there a specific accord or legal agreement or are there specific conditions for an institution to be allowed to prepare the learners for this qualification?
Which are the competent authorities involved in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The elaboration of the standards (“référentiels”)? - The checking or the assessment of the knowledge, skills and competences of the applicants? - The validation and/or the awarding of qualifications to successful applicants at the end of the assessment process? - The legal validation of the standards and how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By Ministerial Decree (provide details)? - By Ministerial Decision (provide details)? - Other (provide details)?
Which currency? Are they pre-requisite for being awarded this qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through a pre-requisite for accessing the preparation leading to the qualification? - Through a pre-requisite for being assessed or seating at the examination?
Does this qualification allow the owner to access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific regulated occupations? - Occupations falling under collective agreements? - Occupations in the formal economy? - Further education and training? - Further qualifications?
Is this qualification recognised abroad ?
Are they equivalencies between this qualification and other qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Senegal? - Abroad?

STAGE 2: Synthesis

Stage 2 requires the preparation and analysis of Tables A.2 and A.3.a to A.3.f.

TABLE A.2. Compiling Pieces of Information about the Different Systems				
	System A	System B	System C	System X
Type of qualification				
Competent Authorities for the Elaboration of the Standards (“référentiels”)				
Position in the Education and Training System				
Places to Prepare the Qualification				
Competence Authorities for Certifying				
Currency in the Society				
Position in the Qualifications System				
Issues				
Evolution in terms of Engineering				
Evolution in terms of Policy				
Meaning of a Framework				

Implementation in the Context of the Workshops of January 2010 (Analysis by Sub-systems)

TABLE A.3.a. Analysis – Primary Education	
Primary Education	Currently
Types of qualifications	CFEE
Foundation documents	Decree 90-1463 of the 28th of December 1990
Authority in charge	DEXCO
Access modes	Formal application and free application
Bridges	Vocational Education and Training
Issues	Issues with civil status
Position in the education and training landscape	First academic qualification that allows entering the labour market
Statistics	

TABLE A.3.b. Analysis – Secondary Education

Secondary Education	Currently	
Types of qualifications	BFEM	BAC
Foundation documents	Decree 2004-912 of the 13 th of July 2004	Decree 95-947 of the 18 th of October 1995 modified by the Decree 2000-586 (in Arabic) appended with the Decree 2002-330 of the 3rd of April 2002 (S4-S5)
Authority in charge	DEXCO	Bureau of the BAC
Access modes	Formal application and free application	Formal application and free application
Bridges	Secondary education, Vocational education and training	Tertiary education and Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)
Issues	Organisational issues	Organisational issues, issue with career guidance
Position in the education and training landscape	2 nd academic qualification	3 rd academic qualification
Statistics	49,162 successful applicants in 2009	19,961 successful applicants in 2009

TABLE A.3.c. Analysis – Tertiary Education

Tertiary Education	Currently
Types of qualifications	DUT, DTS, Vocational or Academic Bachelor (" <i>Licence</i> "), Master (" <i>maitrise, master et DESS</i> "), PhD.
Foundation documents	Each qualification is governed by a Decree
Authority in charge	University
Access modes	Guidance – Entry test
Bridges	Mobility, technical and vocational education and training (TVET)
Issues	Long waiting lists
Position in the education and training landscape	Allows entering the labour market
Statistics	NA

TABLE A.3.d. Analysis – Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)					
TVET	Currently				
Types of qualifications	ISCED 2 and 3 Vocational Qualification (CAP, BEP, BT, BP, BTS).				
Foundation documents	Decree				
Authority in charge	Ministry of TVET				
Access modes	Formal application and free application				
Bridges	CAP: 8 th Grade + 3 years of education and training.	BEP: 9 th Grade + 2 years of education and training.	BT: BFEM + 3 years of education and training or: BEP + 2 years of occupational experience.	BTS: BAC + 2 years of education and training or: BT + 3 years of occupational experience.	BP:
Issues	Organisational issues				
Position in the education and training landscape	First academic qualification that allows entering the labour market				
Statistics	NA				

TABLE A.3.e. Analysis – Vocational Examinations	
Vocational Examinations	Currently
Types of qualifications	CEAP, BSC, CAP
Foundation documents	Decree
Authority in charge	DEXCO
Access modes	Examinations
Bridges	Promotion in the professional body and perspective of promotion
Issues	Lack of the Arabic language as an option for the BSC since the Decree of 1967.
Position in the education and training landscape	Allows access to higher levels
Statistics	NA

TABLE A.3.f. Analysis – Non-formal and Informal Learning	
Non-formal and Informal Learning	Currently
Types of qualifications	CFEE
Foundation documents	Decree 90-1463 of the 28 th of December 1990
Authority in charge	DEXCO
Access modes	Formal application and free application
Bridges	Vocational Education and Training
Issues	- Issues with civil status; - Low academic level of the facilitators and voluntary workers; and - Issues with assessment.
Position in the education and training landscape	First academic qualification that allows entering the labour market
Statistics	NA

Qualifications Landscape in Senegal

By way of conclusion of Section 2, a summary of the landscape of qualifications is provided in table A.4.

Table A.4. Qualifications landscape in Senegal					
Sub-systems	Under an Official Authority	Standards and Prescribed Documents	On-going Qualifications	Planned Qualifications	Bridges
Elementary Education	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Secondary Education	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Tertiary Education	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
TVET	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Vocational examinations For teachers	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Non Formal Education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

STAGE 3: Questionnaire for stage 3. Grid for the reporting from the sub-groups.

Objective: Delineation of the Senegalese National Qualifications Framework.

Content of the framework:

- Types and nature of the qualifications included in the framework;
- Are there qualifications awarded in Senegal that are not included in the national qualifications framework and, if yes, why?
- What are the criteria for including a qualification in the framework and which institutions have the decision making power to include it?
- What are the principles underpinning the qualifications framework in terms of quality (quality of the training, of the standards (“référentiels”), of the training providers, of the qualifications providers...)?
- Is there a hierarchical classification system? If yes, which one and for whom?
- Which institution is in charge of coordinating the elaboration of the qualifications framework? Which authorities will be in charge of implementing the work for the referencing to the qualifications framework? Is it suitable to consider the creation of a Registration Commission (“Commission d’homologation”), and with which missions?
- Which uses of the qualifications are at stake in the qualifications framework?
- o Individual mobility among Senegalese qualifications systems or sub-systems (legibility for the world of education and training under

the form of equivalences or bridges, whether complete or partial);

o Individual mobility abroad;

o Legibility for the labour market and the world of work;

Formalisation of the Qualifications Framework

Key issues are:

- Which legal approaches are to be considered for elaborating, establishing and using the qualifications framework?
- Which approach is being considered for communicating about the qualifications framework; whether among institutions, for the greater public in Senegal and abroad?
- Which financial investment must be planned? By whom?
- To which institution the different actors of the preparatory work should report about the progressing and the monitoring of the work?

The response to these different questions should allow for the establishment of a comprehensive list of the points that need to be formalised and for the preparation of the terms of reference for a working party for the year to come with the objective an initial sketch of the qualifications framework and its establishment.

APPENDIX 2

The Glossary of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)

Articulation	Active linking between vocational and academic streams
Benchmarking	Practices that enable us to make mutually intelligible and useful judgments about the comparative value of qualifications;
Credit value	Value assigned to a qualification that represents the notional learning time required to satisfy the performance requirements and standards of the qualification;
Credit transfer	Granting of credit towards a qualification on the basis of credit already earned in another qualification or at another institution;
Comparability	Capacity to compare qualifications or credits in order to make decisions, with appropriate economy of effort, about such issues as employment or admission, including ease of access to reliable information, the status of the information and practical, well-made guidelines and resources for making a comparison;
Equivalence	Accepted arrangements of quality of educational competence and qualitative value of the various levels of the education and training systems and of whole education systems;
Harmonisation	Agreed and accepted arrangements, which match the educational competence and qualitative value of one education and training system with another or among a group of education and training systems;
Level descriptors	Set of statements that describe the levels of a qualification framework in terms of progressive stages of achievement and complexity;
Mobility	Improved access of learners to education and training institutions across SADC Member States;
Mutual recognition	Acknowledgement of the status of different but related qualifications that satisfy the requirements of the SADCQF;
National Qualifications Framework	Set of agreed principles, procedures and standardised terminology
Outcomes	Required qualities of those considered qualified or competent at a certain level of learning;
Programme	Structured pathway of learning or training designed to equip a person with the competencies relevant to requirements for the award of a qualification
Qualifications	Planned combination of learning outcomes with a defined purpose or purposes, including defined, applied and demonstrated competence and a basis for further learning
Quality Assurance	Ways in which evidence for qualification is collected, interpreted and used, it has both a disciplinary and developmental role, attempting to overcome the conventionally recognised difficulty of nurturing and judging performance at the same time;

Recognition of Prior Learning	Acknowledgment through evaluation of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credits;
Regional Qualifications Framework	Set of agreed principles, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits within a particular region;
Regional Standards	Standards agreed and adopted by a majority of Member States in a particular region (e.g. in SADC);
Standardisation	Agreed arrangement of fixed same levels of educational competence and quality attached to whole education and training systems;
Standards	Explicit statements about expected capabilities to be met as an expression of accomplishment.

Source: "Towards a SADC Qualifications Framework: Concept Paper and Implementation Plan" (March 2005)

APPENDIX 3

The Glossary of European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

For the purposes of the Recommendation, the definitions that apply are the following:

- (a) **‘Qualification’** means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards;
- (b) **‘National Qualifications System’** means all aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework;
- (c) **‘National Qualifications Framework’** means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society;
- (d) **‘Sector’** means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology;
- (e) **‘International sectoral organisation’** means an association of national organisations, including, for example, employers and professional bodies, which represents the interests of national sectors;
- (f) **‘Learning outcomes’** means statements of 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 competence;
- (g) **‘Knowledge’** means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;
- (h) **‘Skills’** means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
- (i) **‘Competence’** means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Source: EQF Recommendation, June 2008

APPENDIX 4

Initial Questioning for the Elaboration of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF)

1. Is there a National Qualifications Framework (NQFs) in the countries belonging to this Region??

If yes:

- Which institution has the authority on it? When was it established?
- Why was it established in the first place? Which qualifications are included in this framework?
- Is the public aware of the existence of this qualifications framework in the country? How is, or was, this qualifications framework communicated to the wider public?

If not:

- Is there a project – or official statements – to elaborate/establish a qualifications framework?
- Are there barriers to the elaboration/establishment of a qualifications framework, and which ones?

2. What are the Processes to Elaborate National Qualifications Frameworks?

- Who are the actors involved?
- Is the approach to elaborate the qualifications framework based on existing methods, and which model(s) is being used?
- What are the advantages of a qualifications framework in the national context?
- What are the difficulties encountered for the elaboration or the establishment of the qualifications framework, and for maintaining it?
- Does the qualifications framework allow for an improvement of the education and training systems?

3. Is There a Regional Approach to Establishing National Qualifications Frameworks?

- In which region(s) are there national qualifications frameworks? Where is it planned to integrate national qualifications frameworks in a RQF?
- What are the reasons for the existence of a qualifications framework in a region, and for its absence in another one?
- If a RQF is in place, how does it work?
- What is the role of the RQF and what is the added value for the countries involved in this RQF?
- What were the necessary political/policy and legal steps to establishing the RQF?

4. Additional Potential Questions

If the approach is specific to the qualification process, the participants may want to also think about the following issues:

- Is there an inventory of the principles and systems adapted to the national context?
- Which qualifications are currently being awarded after training pathways?
- Are there bridges, or plan to build them, among the sub-systems?
- Do all qualifications have currency in the labour market and do they have a role for school-to-work transition? Do all qualifications have a role for individual mobility, whether for young people or for adults? Are all qualifications relevant to the expectations of the labour market, or are they irrelevant?

- Are the prevailing reference (key competences, knowledge) mainly in line with an approach by competences or with a focus on knowledge?
 - Do the processes for the assessment of the learning outcomes allow the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes as well?
 - Is it planned to make sure that the processes leading to the systematic awarding of a qualification in the formal education and training system would also include the possibility of recognising non-formal and informal learning outcomes to facilitate individual mobility, school-to-work transition and lifelong learning?
- If they exist, are these plans linked to the plans for the economic development of the country?
- Which political/policy processes, technical and financial means can be mobilised to anchor the qualification process in an approach that would be adapted to the issues and to the vision of the countries involved, and in a feasible and sustainable institutional framework?
 - What is the role of the State, and what are the required institutional structures? What is the role of the different actors to involve in the process? What are the partnerships and socioeconomic regulation to implement?

PART II



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POLICY GUIDELINES AND ROADMAP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (NQFs/RQF) IN ECOWAS SUB-REGION

The content of this part has been required by Governments so that their decision makers at the highest level have a summary document for the development of Qualifications Frameworks. This document should remind both major elements (but not exhaustive) to take into account, but also provide a practical roadmap for their implementation.

These guidelines and the roadmap have been elaborated since the beginning of 2012 following the analysis and conclusions of the previous study (Part I) by representatives of Countries and the Technical Committee. The document was then shared, reviewed and consolidated until its final validation by ECOWAS Experts and Ministers of Education in Abuja in October 2012.

Policy Guidelines and Roadmap for the Implementation of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs/RQF) in ECOWAS Sub-region

1. Justification for the global Consensus

In line with the African Union (AU) Second Decade of Education and all previous international events and recommendations on TVET (involving countries, experts, bi/multilateral partners, social and economic representatives) concluded unanimously to the social and economic advantages of instituting the NQF and RQF (e.g. in last few months: ADEA Triennale recommendations, the international “Shanghai Consensus”, OIF-CONFEMEN Assises recommendations, ECOWAS meeting in Cotonou on TVET, UNESCO capacity building meeting in Abidjan).

2. Main challenges on TVET that can be solved by the development of NQFs and RQF in ECOWAS Sub-Region

Indeed the development of NQFs and RQF can help to solve identified challenges on TVET in the ECOWAS sub-region, and mainly:

- i) The fragmented and uncoordinated nature of TVET training and practices within and across countries;
- ii) The need for an integrated approach to recognizing skills and competencies acquired from the formal, non formal or informal learning environments;
- iii) The development of regional integration within facilitating geographical, occupational, and social mobility as well transnational peer exchanges and coherency among countries;
- iv) The poor legibility and credibility of TVET systems for Youths as well for Employers;
- v) The need to develop flexible pathways between sub-sectors and Ministries in a life long learning perspective for populations;

- vi) The irrelevancy of TVET systems in regards to the needs of Youths for their social and economic inclusion as well as the role TVET could play in human development in the sub-region and the growth of the sub-region;
- vii) The need for and enhanced social and economic dialogue among stakeholders of the various forms of TVET systems (including employers, employees, social partners, technical and financial partners, and civil society).

3. A Main Objective of NQFs/RQF for TVET

The issue of working capability (and therefore of enhancing the integration in the world of work) is one of the main challenge for TVET. The role of the NQF and RQF is to give some legibility to the different existing forms of training, skills acquirements, qualifications systems and sub-systems. If the qualifications aims are not related to the working capability, the Qualifications Frameworks will not solve this challenge. The Qualifications Frameworks can highlight what is missing and provide some proposals by giving a mapping of what exists in order to provide the support to develop planning and orientation policies about learning process and qualifications to reach it.

Describing qualifications and defining their value, and therefore its currency, in a country and in a region demands a lot of time. Quality assurance dealing with qualifications is not the same as quality assurance in the context of training. A possible way forward could be to organise exchanges between peers having the same mission in different countries. It could be the best way to reach the recognition of individual qualification in the case of mobility thanks to collaboration and a mutual understanding.

4. Main Principles for NQFs/RQF development

a) The creation of NQFs implies to take in account

- **A political aspect** with the choice of the different kinds of qualifications retained as available in the NQF and why. The issue is the design of conditions and rules to be in (or out of) the framework, but also the choice of the institution or authority (possibly a committee) that will be in charge of this choice.
- **A technical aspect** with the experimentation of a database format describing the qualifications. This aspect is very important to get a realistic tool that can be made available for the use of qualification authorities as well as the public to understand what underpins the qualifications in studies guidance project or job recruitment. One important point that will be particularly strengthened is related to the descriptors that will be used. A lot of attention has to be taken on the design of the grid of levels which is the tool used to classify all qualifications relevant to the NQF. The levels could be different: one focused on knowledge and duration of education and training, the other more related to skills and competences permitting a correspondence with job organizations. This choice will lead to different levels of structures and therefore to an integrated NQF covering all qualifications but with different grids of levels. The focus is currently on the concept of learning outcomes but the concept of learning outcomes varies according to the interpretation of the Authorities in charge of their description and each country has to clarify its own. In other hand, dissemination related to the NQF and descriptions of relevant qualifications are generally presented through a web site and a database. This also implies the need for clarity in selecting stakeholders in charge of filling the description format, those in charge of checking its content and those in charge of the publication and maintenance of the system. This database must be a sustainable system and it must allow the institution in charge of it to make all possible changes to its content and even parts of the structure after its establishment.

b) The feasibility of the development of a RQF for the ECOWAS Member States Implies

- A RQF objective clearly spelled out;
- A network already set up with volunteer countries sharing the same goals;
- Existing resources to develop monitoring of the whole project.

The methodology proposed here is interactive, based on practices exchanges and supported by an experimentation related to three (3) or four (4) vocational fields. The choice of those fields supposes a consultation with the volunteer countries that agreed to be involved. The choice will also be based on some prospective information about available resources and about local, sectoral and financial actors contributing to the experimentation. The three (3) or four (4) vocational fields to be chosen must deal with sectoral fields (agriculture, construction, electronics, transportations, tourism, energy etc...) which are represented at a national level and permit concrete exchanges with other ECOWAS countries. It will be easier to develop such experimentation with countries which have adopted the "Competence Based Approach" methodology because they can use common technical and conceptual background. It would be necessary to proceed in a two phased approach: a first phase with countries groups according to the languages of use (English or French) and a second phase to cross the first group results.

5. The Roadmap

This roadmap proposes a plan of action crossing national (no specific colour in the following table) and regional approaches (colored lines in the following table). It is based on the principle that exchanges between national working groups provide intercultural knowledge and mutual recognition. Exchanges about practices permit the enrichment and development of capacity building, especially when they are driven through a common action plan for all countries. Such exchanges could give the opportunity to discover different practices helping national and regional reflections if they are organized with this objective.

This following proposal is essentially applied to the conception of vocational national and regional qualifications frameworks. But it is necessary to consider the position of those types of qualifications against qualifications delivered in the general and higher education environment. The currencies of vocational qualifications are often, even actually, disconnected from systems of societal currencies considered as the only significant values. Frameworks to be designed must be sustainable devices which need responsible actors to be named and financial as human means where States commit on a long term. NQF and RQF must be integrated as a component of education systems development policies.

At this stage, it is not possible to define pertinent agenda because it is related to the effective commitment of the States, to the working groups involved, to their knowledge of the subject and to the means available. This information could be the first step developed in the first working national groups session.

However, in order to identify the special needs of each country for development and/or implementation of NQF, it is recommended that a questionnaire be designed to obtain prior additional inputs from Member States.

Objective	Nature of tasks to do	Level of mobilisation
Definition of objectives, geographic coverage, actors involved	Definition of objectives, action plans, and means dedicated for monitoring national and regional qualifications frameworks. The RQF requires to precise what is its role and function according to qualifications registered by the designers	Political decision from ECOWAS– IATT
National political decision	Official launching: Ceremony at high national level (ideally by Prime Minister) with significant involvement of the private sector (professional employment organisations). Setting up of a Steering Group and of an institution in charge of the monitoring of the project at the highest level of the government	High national level
Political decision and eventual legislative approach	Presentation of main principles of the NQF project and official decision to establish the NQF with a clear objective and delegation of authority to the steering group to work at an inter-ministerial level with an effective technical and financial power. This aspect may be made official by a legislative text.	High national level
Background work in order to provide a clearer draft of the NQF	Mapping of existing qualifications; discussions with the different Authorities in charge of delivering qualifications and with industry and trade representatives in order to adjust the NQF objective and use. Then production of a NQF draft and advocacy paper.	National working groups
Design of a transnational network of stakeholders involved	This step is important because it supposes clear commitments of actors and a minimal guarantee of sustainability along the project. Exchanges could be focused on sharing concepts and building of an action plan on common basis.	Working groups meetings according to their linguistic belonging
Design of a common regional programme	Share concepts approach and provide a first multilingual glossary (at least French and English). Define a common action plan with similar objectives (experimentation on more or less same vocational fields, common template to describe qualifications) Identification of resources which could be shared.	Meeting with multi linguistic working groups

<p>Experimentation of a common classification and description of levels</p>	<p>On the basis of real qualifications examples related to same vocational fields designed during the regional meeting (eg.: agriculture-fishing, environment, tourism; construction, ...– 3 to 4 fields are sufficient but it is necessary they cover several levels):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect standards which will be used to define levels - Description of qualifications - Define the number of levels which could be components of the NQF levels grid - Descriptors Proposal for grid of levels and contents - Draft of a « governance » organization involving private sector representatives. 	<p>National working groups</p>
<p>Elaboration of a classification grid and common descriptors</p>	<p>Exchanges are focused on sharing results of the experimentation made in order to provide a draft of descriptors and a levels grid to classify qualifications on common modalities. This step will permit the identification of the elements that may restrain the implementation of NQF and what support to plan.</p>	<p>Working groups meetings according their linguistic belonging</p>
<p>Draft of RQF in terms of principles, content and objective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of a common template to describe qualifications of at least one selected sector (minimal information to collect to do referencing to a national and regional grid) - Identification of classification modalities at regional level (classification by domains, by levels according to studies content or to level of responsibility in market organization...) - Positioning of the ECOWAS RQF against other existing RQF - Definition of quality principles and criteria in order to gain mutual trust 	<p>Meeting with French speaking and English speaking workgroups</p>
<p>Proposal for a NQF model</p>	<p>On the basis of the previous experimentation and the regional exchanges, the national working group can define the main principles and structure of the NQF taking account of the regional principles and the position of the NQF against the RQF (provision of levels descriptors, of a hierarchical classification, of a glossary, of an implementation plan, of the elements that are necessary to develop NQF, of a governance mechanism).</p>	<p>National working groups</p>
<p>Political validation of the system</p>	<p>This step is the starting point of the NQF implementation. Validation can be at the level of specifications of the NQF database.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee</p>
<p>Elaboration of a NQF prototype</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a website and communication tools - Organization of the establishment of the NQF database and its maintenance - Proposal for the creation or extension of some committees mission in order to permit agreements for registration of qualifications in NQF - Setting up funding for implementation of NQF 	<p>National working group + ICT actors</p>

Finalization of NQFs and development of principles and structure for RQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchanges about the NQF models built in each country and verification of their compatibility and credibility with the regional level - Conception of a RQF model (principles, structure, governance, resources necessary to its creation and localization). 	Meeting with French speaking and English speaking working groups
Validation of the national prototype	The validation of the NQF model and its articulation with a RQF may provide the opportunity to get some fundings in order to set up the NQFs and also the RQF. This implies to identify relevant actors to be involved and responsible for each step and contents of the NQF and RQF implementation. This step permits to verify the feasibility of the whole process according to the resources available.	National Steering Committee
Validation of the RQF model	This step is related to the validation of the two models proposed for NQF and RQF. Such validation is necessary to verify the pertinence and feasibility of the frameworks according to the objectives and expectations decided at the beginning of the project.	Political decision from ECOWAS – IATT
Launching of NQF and support to the stakeholders	For the qualifications designers, it is not easy to describe qualifications in another way than the description of the curriculum (especially training program). So it is necessary to set up a support to the institution in charge of qualifications. It could be a collective one. This step may need the creation of an engineering team in order to develop capacity building with this aim.	National working group + ICT actors + qualifications designers
Generalization and stabilization of the system	This step is the guarantee of the good functioning of the framework and related tools. It needs an important coordination of the various components (populating the database with credible and trustable information, verification that quality criteria used are in accordance with previous rules, evaluation of problems and research of adapted modalities to solve them).	National working group + ICT actors + qualifications designers
Communication and dissemination	Launching of the NQF through a specific communication plan to reach the public at large (citizens, employers, training centers...). That implies to develop a communication strategy to make NQF known and used by all structures and those for whom it was developed.	National working group + ICT actors + qualifications designers and awarding bodies + communication actors
Evaluation of the system	Evaluation of the first results following the NQF launching and its articulation to RQF. One goal of this step is also to provide a position (or value) to the TVET qualifications and the NQF against other types of qualifications and to improve further development.	National Steering Committee

<p>Elaboration of a RQF prototype</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a website and communication tools for the RQF. - Organization of an implementation and maintenance process of a database in order to set up the RQF. - Proposal of the creation of an « authority » in charge of verifying the « quality » of referencing made from NQF to RQF - Setting up funding for implementation of NQF 	<p>Meeting with French speaking and English speaking workgroups + ICT actors</p>
<p>Validation of the prototype and RQF launching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experimentation and finalization of the device - Communication and information in each country involved in the project - Support to new countries which eventually want to join the RQF process 	<p>Meeting with French speaking and English speaking workgroups + ECOWAS communication service</p>
<p>Evaluation of the results</p>	<p>This step is related to the evaluation of the first results following NQFs launching and their articulation to the RQF. One goal of this evaluation is also to provide a position (or value) to the TVET qualifications and the NQF against other types of qualifications and to improve further development.</p>	<p>Political decision ECOWAS – IATT UNESCO – UNDP</p>

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- Useful links:**
- Gambia: www.acronymfinder.com/Gambia-Skills-Qualification-Framework-%28Gambia%3B-National-Training-Authority-program%29-%28GSQF%29.html
 - Mauritius: www.mqa.mu/English/Pages/Framework%20Services/NQF.aspx
 - Nigeria: www.nbte.gov.ng/
 - OECD (NQF): www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/theroleofnationalqualificationssystemsinpromotinglifelonglearning.htm
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 - South Africa: www.saqqa.org.za/show.asp?id=907
- Regional frameworks:**
- SADC: www.saqqa.org.za/show.asp?id=2693
 - Europe: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf_en.htm
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Final report of the Fourth Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Education, October 2012



COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

FOURTH MEETING OF ECOWAS MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

MINISTERS MEETING

NIGERIA, ABUJA, 6th OCTOBER, 2012

FINAL REPORT

Department, Human Development and Gender
Directorate, Education, Culture, Science, & Technology
October, 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Fourth edition of the Conference of Ministers of Education and training of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held at the ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, Abuja, Nigeria, on the 6th of October, 2012. The Conference was preceded by an Experts' of Education meeting from the 15th -5th October, 2012.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

2. The objectives of the meeting were to examine the report of the Meeting of Experts towards achieving the following:

- Adoption of the proposal for institutionalization of the ECOWAS Inter Agency Task Team (IATT) at Regional and National Levels;
- Adoption of the Report of the Study on the ECOWAS Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks;
- Adoption of the ECOWAS Regional Manual for the teaching of Education for Peace;
- Adoption of the ECOWAS Regional Norms and Standards for the establishment of Education Management Information System (EMIS) in Member States;
- Adoption of the Roadmap for the revitalization of TVET in the ECOWAS region ;
- Ratification of the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training and the Convention on equivalence of certificates.

III. PARTICIPATION

3. The meeting was graced by participation of the following Member States:

- Republic of Benin
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- Republic of Gambia
- Republic of Ghana
- Republic of Guinea
- Republic of Guinea Bissau
- Republic of Liberia
- Republic of Mali
- Republic of Niger
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Republic of Senegal

- Republic of Sierra Leone
- Togolese Republic

4. The meeting also had in attendance, representations from the following Organizations:

- UNESCO (Abuja Bureau and BREDA);
- Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA);
- The International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education and Training in Africa (CIEFFA);
- Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA) ;
- African Union Commission (AUC) ;
- Representatives of Private sector ;
- Civil Society Organizations

5. The list of participants is attached as an annex to this report.

IV. OPENING CEREMONY

6. The Opening Ceremony was marked by four (4) speeches.

a. Introductory remarks by the Commissioner for Human Development and Gender

7. The Commissioner for Human Development and Gender of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Adrienne Diop introduced the meeting and welcomed the Honourable Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States and their delegates to the Fourth Conference of ECOWAS Ministers of Education and to Abuja, Nigeria. She commended the high turnout of the meeting which she said is an expression of the significance that the Ministers accord to the Education sector. She recalled that Education is the bedrock to socio-economic development and wished them fruitful deliberations.

b. Remarks by UNESCO-BREDA

8. In her opening remarks, Madame Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, Director of UNESCO-BREDA commended Education Experts from ECOWAS Member States for the dedication and commitment

with which they have done the preparatory work for the Conference of Ministers in charge of Education and Training. She enumerated the thematic areas of the meeting namely: Education Management information Systems (EMIS); Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); and the Culture of Peace as being critical to the continued development of the region.

9. Madame Ndong-Jatta asserted that the impressive work done so far by the ECOWAS Commission in the area of Human Development and Gender has made ECOWAS stand out as one of the most focused Regional Economic Communities in the implementation of the goals and priorities of the Second decade of Education for Africa (2006 -2015).
10. In conclusion, she encouraged Member States to uphold the principle of consolidation in order to make additional progress in achieving the Education for All (EFA) on or before 2015; and pledged the continued support of UNESCO in the mobilization of partners and resources for the advancement of education in the ECOWAS region.

c. Welcome address by the Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission

11. The Vice-President of the Commission, Dr. Toga Gayewea MCINTOSH who on behalf of the President of the Commission, H.E. Ambassador Kadre Desire Ouedraogo welcomed the Honourable Ministers to Abuja, Nigeria. He thanked the Government and good people of Nigeria especially the Honourable Minister of Education, professor Ruqayattu Ahmed Rufa'i for their warm reception.
12. He expounded the role of education in the socio-economic development of the countries and the living standards of their citizen and identified education as one of the priorities of the ECOWAS Commission. He informed the Ministers that the inaugural Meeting adopted five priority areas in education namely: Promotion of Girls' Education;

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); HIV/AIDS preventive Education; Promotion of the teaching of Science and Technology; and Teacher Training using new technologies. In addition, the First Meeting also adopted the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and training and the Convention on Equivalence of Certificates.

13. Further in his speech, the Vice President enumerated the achievements of the Commission to include: a survey, development of policy and project documents on e-learning; Policy dialogue on education of girls; revitalization workshop on TVET; Capacity building of about 1,000 TVET teachers and administrators; inauguration of the ECOWAS Inter Agency Task Team (IATT) of TVET Partners; TVET Curriculum development; Study on Regional and National Qualifications Framework; development of regional Norms and Standards for Education Management Information System (EMIS); Consultation and advocacy on School Health Nutrition and HIV/ AIDS; and Feasibility Study on the ECOWAS Convention on Equivalence of Certificates.
14. Furthermore, he conveyed the appreciation of ECOWAS Commission to Partners and the Experts for their contribution to the quality of deliberations and implementation of ECOWAS education programmes.
15. In conclusion, Dr. MCINTOSH, invited the Ministers to examine and adopt the various documents and proposals recommended by the Experts and expressed confidence in their political will, professionalism; and ingenuity to contribute to the attainment of the set objectives of ECOWAS education programmes.

d. Opening speech by the Minister of Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

16. The Honourable Minister of Education of the Federal republic of Nigeria, Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'I (OON), welcomed her colleague

Ministers and participants to the Fourth Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Education to Abuja, Nigeria on behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria.

17. She expressed satisfaction that since its inaugural edition in 2002, the Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Education has provided an effective platform for advocacy; adoption of programmes and activities; and exchange of ideas and good practices among Member States.
18. She described Nigeria's position as the Chair of COMEDAF V as a privilege and opportunity for the entire West Africa to demonstrate leadership in the achievement of the goals and priorities of COMEDAF V and the Second Decade of Education in Africa Action Plan (2006-2015); and solicited the support of ECOWAS Member States in ensuring the smooth take-off of the West African Pan African University located in the Institute for Life and Earth Sciences in Ibadan.
19. Furthermore, she informed the meeting that the present leadership of the country under its revolutionary "Transformation Agenda" is actively involved in implementing strategies that will make education in Nigeria more functional and relevant to the developmental aspirations of the nation, with reasonable results to showcase.
20. In conclusion, the Honourable Minister expressed hope that, within the framework of the thematic areas slated for discussion, the meeting will come up with dynamic and actionable recommendations that will move the region forward.
21. Thereafter, she formally declared the meeting opened.

V. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

22. The Bureau was elected as follows:
 - Chairman: Nigeria
 - Rapporteurs: Côte d'Ivoire
Ghana

VI. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

23. The agenda and work programme adopted were as follows:
 - i. Opening ceremony;
 - ii. Election of bureau;
 - iii. Adoption of Draft Agenda and Work Program;
 - iv. Consideration of the Report of Experts;
 - v. Any Other Business;
 - vi. Adoption of the report;
 - vii. Closing Ceremony.

VII. PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF EXPERTS

24. The Chairman of the meeting of Experts, Professor Moussa Sylla, presented the report to the Ministers in charge of Education and Training. The meeting considered the report and adopted the following recommendations:

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Implementation of the ECOWAS Reference Manual on Education for Peace

➤ To ECOWAS Commission

- i. ECOWAS Commission should develop broad partnership with the United Nations System, technical and financial partners and Member States in order to achieve effective coordination of actions in the area of Education for Peace;
- ii. ECOWAS Commission should develop, in collaboration with technical and financial partners and Member States, a new programme with a view to widely promote the ECOWAS Reference Manual in the area of Education for Peace ;

➤ **To Member States**

- iii. Encourage Member States to incorporate themes from the ECOWAS Manual in the training reference frameworks of teacher training institutes in their countries.

26. Reinforcement of the ECOWAS Education Management and Information System (EMIS)

➤ **To ECOWAS Commission**

- i. Establish ECOWAS regional observatory and data bank.

➤ **To Member States**

- ii. Adopt the ECOWAS EMIS Norms and Standards and integrate them into national education plans with regards to data collection and management to enhance culture of management information systems;
- iii. Develop clear national policies on EMIS which facilitate national coordination and integration of the education and training statistics across the different ministries and agencies involved in the sector;
- iv. Allocate more budgetary resources for EMIS that are ring-fenced;
- v. Recruit, motivate and retain more specialized EMIS staff to ensure the use of appropriate statistical processes and the production of quality data for evidence-based planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery; .

27. Reinforcing the revitalization of ECOWAS Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

➤ **To ECOWAS Commission**

- i. ECOWAS Commission should continue to capacitate Member States;
- ii. ECOWAS Commission should produce a directory of technical and Vocational Training Institutes within the region to enhance exchanges and cooperation;

- iii. ECOWAS Commission should play a key role in advocacy and sensitization of Member States to embrace and encourage increased participation of women and vulnerable groups.

➤ **To Member States**

- iv. Ministers in charge of Education and Training should make a case to the Council of Ministers and Authority of Heads of States and Governments for better engagement, increased investment in TVET and the participation of the Private Sector;
- v. Member States should consider creating legal framework to make TVET compulsory at all levels of education.

28. Institutionalization of the ECOWAS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT)

➤ **To ECOWAS Commission**

- i. ECOWAS should put in place appropriate institutional arrangements to officially recognize the IATT
- ii. ECOWAS and partners should assist Member States to replicate the IATT mechanisms at country level for a more effective coordination of partners' interventions and meaningful impact.

➤ **To Member States**

- iii. Member States should make necessary arrangements to accommodate national structures of the IATT

29. Strengthening of the ongoing work on the ECOWAS Regional and National Qualifications Framework

➤ **To ECOWAS Commission**

- i. Request the ECOWAS Commission to develop a RQF in line with the guidelines.
- ii. Request the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with IATT, to build the capacities of Member States to develop the NQFs.

- iii. Request ECOWAS Commission to mobilize partners and resources for the establishment of the RQF and NQFs in Member States.
- iv. ECOWAS Commission should disseminate the study conducted by IATT on the development of NQF/RQF in Member States.
- v. Adopt the policy guidelines and Roadmap for the development of RQF.

➤ **To Member States**

- vi. Adopt the study conducted by IATT on the development of NQF/RQF in Member States and the region.
- vii. Adopt the policy guidelines and Roadmap for the development of NQFs.
- viii. Initiate the appropriate actions in the policy guideline and Roadmap to implement the NQF at country level.

30. Ratification and implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training

➤ **To Member States**

- i. Member States should embark on advocacy for the ratification of the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training.
- ii. Enhance quality learning through the professional development of teachers in the ECOWAS region (recruitment, remuneration, training and welfare).

IX. CONVENTION ON EQUIVALENCE OF CERTIFICATES

- 31. Having been informed that the Arusha Convention is undergoing revision; the participants recommended that the ratification of the ECOWAS Convention on Equivalence of Certificates should await its finalization.

X. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 32. The participants thanked the Chair of the Meeting, Professor Rukayattu Ahmed Rufai (OON), for her professionalism in piloting the affairs of the Meeting and thanked the Meeting of Experts for the quality of the report document prepared for the consideration of Ministers.
- 33. The participants expressed appreciation to ECOWAS Commission for the valuable and relevant capacity building sessions conducted in Member States, particularly in TVET and Human Rights and Citizenship.
- 34. Considering the prominent role of TVET in job creation, the Ministers reemphasized the need to prioritize TVET. They also decided to integrate the non-formal and informal sector in TVET programs.
- 35. The meeting recommended that ECOWAS and Member States should enhance quality of teachers by building their capacities and improving their professionalism.
- 36. The meeting expressed the need to focus on EMIS through better planning and better data collection system.
- 37. Include EMIS Capacity building as an agenda item of the next ECOWAS Meeting of Ministers in charge of education and training.
- 38. The Meeting endorsed Cote d'Ivoire's proposal to host the Fifth edition of the Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training.
- 39. The Ministers recommended that future dates of their Meeting should not coincide with the beginning of academic year since they are usually engaged in their respective programmes during that period.
- 40. Ministers wished that their forthcoming meetings do not coincide with the beginning of the school year because they are fully engaged.

41. The Commission appealed to those member states that have not ratified the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training to do so.

XI. ADOPTION OF REPORT

42. This report was adopted.

XII. CLOSING CEREMONY

a. Remarks by the Representative of the African Union

43. In his remarks, Dr. Yohannes Woldetensae, Representative of the African Union, thanked ECOWAS for their invitation. He informed that the Meeting of Ministers had arrived at excellent recommendations which were useful for the implementation of the Second Decade of Education in Africa and hoped that Member States would implement the recommendations arising from the COMEDAF V.

b. Remarks by the Vice President of the Commission

44. The Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission expressed satisfaction with the hard work and commitment of the Experts in the preparation of

documents for the fourth ministerial meeting. He also commended the professional manner in which the Ministers conducted the meeting. The Vice President took note of the recommendations and affirmed that the ECOWAS Commission would take necessary measures for their implementation. He also expressed confidence that Member States would implement the recommendations made to them. After taking note that the next meeting of Ministers of Education and Training will take place in Cote d'Ivoire, he wished participants a safe journey to their respective countries.

c. Closing Address by Her Excellency the Minister of Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

45. Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i (OON), Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in her closing address thanked the ECOWAS Commission for having organized the meeting. She expressed hope for greater cooperation between Member States, given the significant challenges of the education sector. In conclusion, she reiterated the commitment of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to work closely with ECOWAS Member States to achieve the goals of the Community and then declared the meeting closed.

DONE IN ABUJA, THIS 6TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2012

Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i (OON)

CHAIRPERSON

FOR THE MEETING OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

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Glossary of TVET terms – From the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAG-WG) at UNESCO Head Quarters level; July 2011

Definitions of most commonly-used VET terms

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Accreditation (associated term: quality)	Assurance that programme, materials and institutions, whether under public or private jurisdiction, meet standards as established by legislation. (9)	The official recognition and approval of training courses, programmes and institutions. (6)	A process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to a programme or provider of education and training, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards. (3)	A quality assurance procedure which monitors the quality of teaching and learning and results in a decision as to whether a VET provider or VET programme meets a threshold standard. (7)		Key terms used are: legislation, official, standards, assurance, approval, recognition. All definitions cover both programmes and providers or institutions. Definitions are differently constructed but there is no conflict in their meaning.
Adult education Adult education (associated terms: continuing education; lifelong learning)		Education programmes designed for adults that incorporate approaches drawing on the learners' life and work experience. (6)	General or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training for professional and/or personal purposes. (3)		The entire body of organised educational processes whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the purpose to: 1) complete a level of formal education; acquire knowledge and skills in a new field; 3) refresh or update their knowledge in a particular field. (13)	Key concepts are: after initial education; programmes are provided but there is flexibility in mode and content. Unlikely that these different definitions would lead to confusion.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Apprenticeship (associated terms: skills development; social partners)	A period of long-term training substantially carried out within an undertaking and regulated by statutory law or custom according to an oral or written contract which imposes mutual obligations on the two parties concerned. (9)	A system of training which usually combines on-the-job training and work experience with institution-based training. It can be regulated by law or by custom. (6)	Systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation. (3)	A formal, structured programmed of vocational preparation, sponsored by an employer, that juxtaposes part-time off-the-job instruction with on-the-job training and work experience, leads to a recognized vocational qualification at craft or higher levels, and takes at least two years to complete. (7)		Key concepts include: regulated; combination of on- and off- the job; systematic; formal; contract-based; specific occupation; recognised qualification. Potential for conflict exists in the expectation of 'long-term' and in the application of this term in the informal economy. Models will vary across countries and an overly prescriptive definition may not recognise some valid programmes.
Articulation (associated term: pathway; transfer)	Structures linking levels and programmes of education or education with employment and allowing movement between programmes at the same level or between education and employment. (9)					A lack of definitions of this term despite its widespread use, although not a term used by ILO. The UNESCO definition does reflect the generally-accepted understanding of the term.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Assessment (associated terms: certification; quality)		All methods used to appraise performance by gathering evidence to determine whether learners, trainers, training methodologie, programmes and institutions have achieved the required standards. (6)	The process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria. (3)	A quality assurance procedure which monitors the quality of teaching and learning and results in a graded judgment about the quality of a VET provider or programme. (7)		All definitions include the concepts of appraisal or monitoring. But confusion exists between assessment of the individual (EU) and the broader definitions which also encompass assessment of providers and programmes. The term should therefore not be used alone but always contextualised.
Certification (associated terms: assessment; learning outcome; qualification)	Proof of a qualification acquired by a pupil or student after passing an examination or completion of a course of training. (10)	The formal assurance that an individual has successfully achieved a defined set of learning outcomes. (6)	The process of issuing a certificate, diploma or title formally attesting that a set of learning outcomes acquired by an individual has been assessed and validated by a competent body against a predefined standard. (3)			Key terms are: proof; assurance; formal; (pre)-defined; completion; competent body. Definitions are differently constructed but there is no conflict in their meaning.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
competence (associated terms: employability; human capital development; learning outcome; skills development)	The proven or demonstrated individual capacity to use know-how, skills, qualifications or knowledge in order to meet the usual, and changing, occupational situations and requirements. (10)	The ability, encompassing knowledge, skills and attitudes of an individual to perform adequately in a job. (6)	The ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development). (3)			Key terms are: ability; capacity; proven; apply; perform; context; situations; requirements. The EU definition is broader by going beyond the work context. This is unlikely to cause difficulty in general use of the term.
Continuing education (associated terms: adult education; lifelong learning)	All forms and types of education pursued by those who have left formal education at any point and who entered employment and/or assumed adult responsibilities. (9)	Educational programmes for adults in personal, academic and occupational subject areas. It allows individuals to complete formal education, to acquire or update knowledge and skills and gain qualifications. It can take place within and outside the formal education system. (6)	Education or training after initial education and training - or after entry into working life. (3)	Covers the learning activity of those returning to education after having left initial education. The full-time equivalent duration of the programmed is at least one semester. (7)		General agreement that it takes place after initial or formal education, could be delivered in the formal education system and covers a wide variety of activities. Only significant conflict is the OECD duration requirement.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
curriculum (associated term: programme)	An organized programme of both theoretical and practical studies, the successful completion of which is considered necessary to achieve specified educational goals corresponding to different levels of knowledge and qualification. (9)	A detailed description of the objectives, content, duration, expected outcomes, learning and training methods of an education or training programme. (6)	The inventory of activities implemented to design, organise and plan an education or training action, including the definition of learning objectives, content, methods (including assessment) and material, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers. (3)			Key terms are: organised programme; inventory of activities. Potential area for disagreement is the inclusion of training of teachers and trainers by EU. Otherwise, although the definitions are expressed differently, their meanings are largely compatible.
Employability (associated terms: competence; mobility; skills development)	Portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work, to progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions. (10)	Portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work, to progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions. (6)	The combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during career. (3)			ILO and UNESCO use the same definition and EU's is highly compatible with it.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Equitable access (associated terms: access; equity; social inclusion)						
human capital development (associated terms: competence; lifelong learning; skills development; vocational education and training)			a) work which contributes to the lifelong development of individuals' skills and competences through the improvement of vocational education and training systems (4) . b) knowledge, skills, competences and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate personal, social and economic well-being. (3)	The development of knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes that allow people to contribute to their personal and social well-being, as well as that of their countries. (8)		Key terms are: competences, personal and social well-being. Limited number of definitions available but these are highly compatible. HCD is not used by ILO which prefers Human Resource Development.
Informal education (associated term: non-formal education)	Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. Informal learning is part of non-formal learning. It is often referred to as experiential	Unstructured education/training that takes place outside the formal education/training system. (6)		Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time	Acquisition of skills through ad hoc means, such as from parents, elders, or by	Key terms are: unstructured; not organised; unintentional; without clearly-stated objectives; related to work, family or leisure. All definitions are compatible. However

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
	learning and can to a certain degree be understood as accidental learning. (10)			or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. (3)	observing and practising on the job. ADB (1)	UNESCO states that informal learning is part of non-formal learning whereas the other agencies consider non-formal learning to be structured.
learning outcomes (associated terms: certification; competence; qualification; qualification framework)			The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal. (3)			More definitions required in order to be sure that a common understanding prevails.
Lifelong learning (associated terms: adult education; continuing education; human capital development; skills development)	All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons. (10)	All learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications. (6)	All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons. (3)			Key terms are: all learning; throughout life; competences; qualifications. UNESCO and ETF use largely the same definition. A general weakness of the definitions is their emphasis on qualifications; thereby excluding informal learning.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Mobility (associated term: employability)	The ability of an individual to move and adapt to a new occupational environment. (10)		The ability of an individual to move and adapt to a new occupational environment. (3)			UNESCO and ETF use the same definition. More definitions would be required to be confident that a common view prevails.
Non-formal education (associated term: informal education)	Education which takes place outside the formal system on either a regular or an intermittent basis. (9)	Organised and systematic learning activity conducted outside the formal education system. (6)	Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. (3)		Organised training outside the education and training system. ADB (1) Any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. It may take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages. ISCED (13)	Key terms are: regular, organised, systematic, planned, intentional. The only substantial contradiction that exists is UNESCO's view that informal is a sub-set of non-formal. This is emphasised by the need for an explicit system, required by the other agencies, not being evident in the UNESCO definition.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Pathway (associated term: articulation)		A sequence of learning or experience to be followed for attaining competence. (6)	A set of related education or training programmes provided by schools, training centres, higher education institutions or VET providers that facilitates individuals' progression within or between activity sectors. (3)			Whilst the definitions are not incompatible, the EU's suggests a more formal, institutionalised approach than that of ILO.
programme		A group of training activities defined by the subject matter to be covered, content, objectives, target population, methodology, duration and expected outcomes.	An inventory of activities, content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills and/or competences), organised in a logical sequence over a specified period of time. (3)			Key terms are: activities, objectives, duration. High level of compatibility, but only two definitions.
qualification (associated terms: certification; learning)	A formal expression of the vocational or professional abilities of a worker which is	Certification awarded to an individual in recognition of having achieved	The formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment and validation	When a competent body determines that		Key terms are: formal; recognition; competent body; achievement; standards; levels. High levels of compatibility between all definitions.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
outcome; qualification framework) qualification framework)	recognized at international, national or sectoral levels. An official record (certificate, diploma) of achievement which recognizes successful completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or examination. (10)	particular knowledge, skills or competencies. It is also the formal expression of the vocational or professional abilities of a worker which is recognized at international, national or sectoral levels. (6)	process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. (3)	an individual has learned knowledge, skills and/or wider competences to specific standards. (7)		
Qualification framework (associated term: qualification)	The structure into which accredited qualifications are placed, allowing learners, training providers and employers to gain information about the broad equivalence of qualifications. (10)	A system for placing qualifications that meet certain standards of quality on one of a series of hierarchical levels. (11)	An instrument for the development and classification of qualifications (e.g. at national or sectoral level) according to a set of criteria (e.g. using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes. (3)			Key terms are: structure, classification, equivalence, criteria, levels. The definitions are expressed very differently but are generally compatible.
Recognition of prior learning (associated term: access)		Acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills that an individual has acquired in previous training and work or through experience. (6)				Key concepts are acknowledgement and the acceptance of a diversity of learning modes and locations. More definitions are needed by the agencies to be confident that the term is similarly understood by all.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
<p>skills development (associated terms: apprenticeship; competence; employability; human capital development; lifelong learning; vocational education and training)</p>	<p>(Skill is) the relevant knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job and /or the product of education, training and experience which, together with relevant know-how, are the characteristics of technical knowledge. (10)</p>	<p>It is the task of basic education to ensure to each individual the full development of the human personality and citizenship; and to lay the foundation for employability. Initial training develops further his or her employability by providing general core work skills, and the underpinning knowledge, and industry-based and professional competencies which are portable and facilitate the transition into the world of work. Lifelong learning ensures that the individual's skills and competencies are maintained and improved as work, technology and skill requirements change; ensures the personal and career development of workers; results in increases in aggregate productivity and income; and improves social equity. (12)</p>			<p>The acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work – the practical competencies, know-how and attitudes necessary to perform a trade or occupation in the labour market (i.e. the outcome of the learning process without regard to source). ADB (2)</p>	<p>Key terms are: knowledge, experience.</p> <p>ADB is the only agency which provides a specific definition. As this is a term becoming more widely used it is important to have reassurance that all agencies are using it to mean the same. At present that could not be guaranteed.</p>

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Social inclusion (associated terms: access; equitable access; equity)		The conditions and processes whereby an individual or a population group is granted access to benefits or beneficial circumstances, including those related to education and training. (6)	The integration of individuals – or groups of individuals – into society as citizens or as members of various public social networks. Social inclusion is fundamentally rooted in labour market or economic inclusion. (3)			Key terms are: access; integration; benefits; networks. Definitions are differently constructed but there is no contradiction in their meaning.
Social partners (associated term: apprenticeship)		Employers represented by employers' organisations and workers represented by trade unions. (6)	Employers' associations and trade unions forming the two sides of social dialogue. (3)	Organisations of employers and employees representing specific or sectoral interests. (7)		Key terms are: employers; employees; representing. Definitions are differently constructed but there is no contradiction in their meaning.
Teacher (associated term: trainer)	A person employed in an official capacity for the purpose of guiding and directing the learning experience of pupils and students in an educational institution, whether	An individual with pedagogical and professional skills, as well as experience, who teaches students. (6)	A person whose function is to impart knowledge, know-how or skills to learners in an education or training institution. (3)	Vocational teachers are those who are primarily responsible for vocational theory. (7)		Different approaches evident in the terms: direct the learning experience; teaches; impart knowledge, know-how or skills. ILO puts more stress on the required skills and experience to be a teacher, the others are

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
	public or private. Usually, the person should have completed a professional training course in a teacher education institution leading to the award of appropriate credentials. (9)					concerned with their official capacity. Some acceptance needed that a teacher fulfils a recognised role in every country but that the requirements to be a teacher and the recommended teaching approach may vary.
Trainer (associated term: teacher)	Anyone, who in the context of initial and/or continuing vocational training, is competent to intervene in the training process by teaching or training. (10)	A person with pedagogical and professional skills, as well as experience, who imparts practical and theoretical training in an education and training institution or enterprise. (6)	Anyone who fulfills one or more activities linked to the (theoretical or practical) training function, either in an institution for education or training, or at the workplace. (3)	Those who are primarily responsible for imparting practical vocational skills. (7)		Similar to the definition of teacher, ILO puts more stress on the required background of the trainer. UNESCO does not detail what 'competent' means. All are concerned with practical skills, not all with knowledge. EU specifically mentions the workplace. Some potential for misunderstanding of each other's meanings.
Transfer (associated term: articulation)	The capacity (of competences) to be transferred to a new context, either occupational or educational. (10)	Competencies that can be transferred to a new job, occupation, or education and training programme. (6)	The degree to which knowledge, skills and competences can be used in new occupational or educational environments, validated and certified.			None of the agencies offers an explicit definition for this term. The UNESCO and ILO definitions refer specifically to transferability of competences and EU to transferability of learning outcomes.

Term	UNESCO definition	ILO definition	EU definition	OECD definition	other examples	observations
Vocational education and training (VET) (associated terms: human capital development; skills development)	Those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. (9)	Education and training beyond compulsory education, but excluding degree-level programmes, which provides individuals with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. (6)	Education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market. (3)	Education and training programmes containing both knowledge (theoretical understanding) and practical skills, designed for, and typically leading to, a particular job or type of job. (7)	The sources of skills acquisition, (i.e. the training supply). ADB (2)	Key terms are: occupation; trades; job; knowledge; skills; labour market; preparation. ILO specifically puts VET beyond compulsory education which may be incompatible with other agencies' views.
Vocational guidance	Assisting individuals through orientation to learn about relevant opportunities for education, training and work, and facilitating through counselling their career planning. (9)	The counselling of individuals on career, job, learning, education and training opportunities. (6)	Services (career information, guidance and counselling) intended to assist people of any age and at any point in their lives, to make education, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. (5)			Key terms are: counselling, education, training, work, career. ETF is the only one which specifically mentions 'any age' but the others do not contradict it. Definitions are largely compatible.

Sources of TVET terminology

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