

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

The Tanzania Qualifications Framework (TzQF) was proposed in 2009 by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) (TCU, 2010; SADC and UNESCO, 2010, p. 20). A comprehensive framework covering all sectors of education and training, the TzQF builds on the experience gained from the development of the already existing sub-framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Although implementation of the TzQF is still in progress, the government is confident that the framework will catalyze systemic change in the Tanzanian education and training landscape.

1. CHALLENGES THE NQF WOULD NEED TO ADDRESS

Unemployment is a major problem in Tanzania. 10.7 per cent of the population is unemployed; among urban youth, particularly young women, the figure is even higher (OECD, 2012). A number of TVET programmes have been initiated to address this problem. However, the present TVET system in Tanzania is deficient in several respects. These were highlighted by the recently conducted Education Sector Analysis (Government of Tanzania, Pôle de Dakar and UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2011), which found that the system in its present state is unable to cater to the diverse learning needs of a heterogeneous target population.

TVET in Tanzania is divided into Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Technical Education and Training (TET), involving two ministries and three different parastatal agencies. This fragmentation results in a lack of coordination among programmes and providers. There is little opportunity for horizontal and vertical mobility between VET, TET and university education or between basic and advanced levels of training. These shortcomings are increasingly making themselves felt as ever greater numbers of employers in the country and the region demand proven demonstration that graduates have mastered the expected learning outcomes of training courses. There is also a pressing need to make learning outcomes internationally comparable so as to facilitate learner and worker mobility (Sabaya, 2006).

2. MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES

The TzQF aims to create a unified national education and training system which:

- defines nationally valid standards regarding the knowledge and skills required for entry into employment, self-employment and further education and training;
- features agreed and standardized principles, practices, procedures and terminology;
- makes learning achievements (credits) and qualifications recognizable, comparable and transferable across institutions, levels, learning modes and borders, both within and outside the Southern African Development Community (SADC); and
- enables the establishment of a national education and training database accessible to all stakeholders (TCU, 2010).

The above policy objectives are aligned to the TVET Qualifications Sub-Framework developed by the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE). They are also linked to the Policy on TVET which

was developed in 2009 with the aim of rectifying the deficiencies in the TVET system (SADC and UNESCO, 2010, p. 5).

3. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The TzQF was established through a participatory process which brought together a wide range of stakeholders involved in the provision of education and training and the awarding of certificates (TCU, 2010). The institutional set-up for the TzQF is not yet complete. In line with international best practice, Tanzania intends to establish a national qualifications authority, the TzQA, which will create and maintain an electronic register for all TzQF qualifications and providers. Establishment of the TzQA will be enacted by Parliament. The TzQA Act will, among other things, stipulate the responsibilities of existing bodies such as the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA), the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), NACTE, the TCU and professional bodies with respect to the TzQF (ibid.).

The VETA was established as an autonomous government agency to promote access to vocational education and training for disadvantaged groups, including women and people with disabilities (SADC and UNESCO, 2010, p. 5). NACTE coordinates institutions which deliver TVET courses leading to certificates at technician, semi-professional and professional levels (excluding universities and affiliated colleges) (NACTE, 2013). The VETA and NACTE will together be responsible for quality control and assurance, accreditation of institutions and approval of programmes (Muluga, 2012). The TzQA will in due course establish standards-setting committees for all TzQF programmes in collaboration with the regulatory bodies under its jurisdiction.

4. LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS AND THE USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The 10 levels of the TzQF cover the Tanzanian education and training system in its entirety (TCU, 2010). As well as targeting all areas of formal education and training, the TzQF also makes provision for out-of-school or non-formal education, open and distance learning, and e-learning.

TzQF qualifications are classified into the following categories: (a) schools; (b) TVET; (c) universities; and (d) professions. Levels are differentiated according to the breadth, depth and complexity of the knowledge and skills imparted. These are described in terms of learning outcomes, which are designed to give both learners and employers a clear understanding of what the holder of a particular qualification can be expected to know and do. In this way, course content will be kept maximally relevant to the needs of the labour market. All TzQF qualifications are linked so as to facilitate learner mobility and progression. Mechanisms are provided for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Table 1. The TzQF and associated qualification titles

TzQF Levels	School Sector	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector*		University Education Sector	Professions	Lifelong Learning
		Vocational	Technical			
10				Doctorate Degree		Articulation – Horizontal and diagonal Articulation credits, credit transfers, RPL, also additional qualifications that facilitate mobility and access
9			Masters (Technology) Degree	Masters Degree <i>Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma</i>	Professional Level IV ←	
8		Vocational Bachelors Degree	Bachelors (Technology) Degree	Bachelors Degree	Professional Level III ←	
7		Higher Vocational Diploma	Higher Diploma	Higher Diploma	Professional Level II ←	
6		Ordinary Vocational Diploma	Ordinary Diploma		Professional Level I ←	
5	Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education	Advanced Vocational Certificate	Technician Certificate		Technician Level II ←	
4	Certificate of Secondary Education	Vocational Certificate	Basic Technician Certificate		Technician Level I ←	
3		Basic Vocational Certificate			←	
2		VET Level I			←	
1	Certificate of Primary Education	↑	↑	↑	↑	

Arrows in the framework refer to horizontal and diagonal articulation between and within sectors. Lifelong education pathways cut across all levels of qualifications through RPL.

Source: TCU, 2010.

5. PROGRESSION PATHWAYS AND RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The TzQF incorporates horizontal and diagonal pathways to facilitate articulation within and between both academic and vocational streams (TCU, 2010). Special attention will be given to helping education and training institutions to better articulate their entry requirements, awards of credits and qualifications. Institutions will be required to publicly declare entry requirements for qualifications programmes in order to register them on the TzQF.

The adoption of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) is expected to open doors for progression at all levels of education and training. Detailed implementation rules for CAT are presented in the TzQF draft. CAT may occur within a of study and across institutions and countries. Thus a student following a university path will be able to switch to a technical path and vice versa (Ibid.).

Access to qualifications in Tanzania is still very much determined by formal entry requirements. However, the creation of progression pathways and RPL mechanisms through the TzQF is intended to facilitate access to training courses for learners who do not meet the full entry requirements. The TzQF draft proposes a number of RPL assessment methodologies, including interviews, challenge examinations, assignments or projects, skills demonstrations, validation of previous qualifications, and combinations of the above. The RPL process usually entails the following steps:

- 1) identifying the qualifications, unit standards or learning outcomes for which a candidate believes he/she will meet the requirements;
- 2) matching the candidate's skills, knowledge and experience with those requirements;
- 3) assessing the candidate using appropriate methods; and
- 4) crediting the candidate for the skills, knowledge and experience he/she has attained (TCU, 2010).

6. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

The TzQF is expected to serve as an important component of the proposed Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework. The SADC framework aims to harmonize qualifications between SADC countries in order to facilitate the mobility of learners and workers in the region. This resonates with the TzQF's goal of integrating all levels and sectors of the Tanzanian education system and relating it to the education systems of other SADC member states (TCU, 2010).

7. IMPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS

The development of the TzQF represents a big step forward from the previous framework which focused on the TVET sector only. The division of responsibilities between the TCU and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is becoming clearer, but still needs fine-tuning. The TCU believes that the TzQF now needs to do the following things in order to be successful:

- learn from international best practice;
- respond to national policy objectives regarding the structure of the education and training system;
- gradually evolve into a comprehensive system whilst continuing to allow for differences between sectors; and
- audit and accredit education and training institutions so as to assure the quality of educational provision.

The TCU further recommends that the TzQF should serve the social and economic needs of the nation at large, taking into account the diversity in learning needs, qualification types and learning contexts. In order to do this, the framework must remain flexible enough to allow access and progression, yet robust enough to remain coherent and unified (TCU, 2010).

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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