

Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)

Inaugural workshop

Venue: African Union Commission, Addis Ababa
2-3 September 2019

ACQF Advisory Group Meeting

Venue: African Union Commission, Addis Ababa
04 September 2019

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1. Launching the ACQF development

1.1 African Continental Qualifications Framework: a contribution towards the Africa We Want.

Africa is changing. The key for the better societies, good governance, productive employment and inclusive wealth creation we all want to achieve, lies in the population, especially the youth - their knowledge, skills and competences. This calls for innovation in education and training, while strengthening intra-African collaboration for achieving economies of scale.

The desire of the African Union (AU) to establish the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is underpinned by Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want¹, and the continental strategies in the domain of education, science and technology, and youth.

Integrated Africa is a major transformational outcome² of the Agenda 2063, and it encompasses, amongst others, free movement of persons, free trade, customs union, common transport market, but also an African common education space.

The African Union (AU) and its Member States have decided to equip the continent with the necessary conditions and mechanisms to facilitate mobility and transparency of skills and qualifications, in support of the AU Agenda 2063, through ongoing initiatives in harmonisation of education, development of common standards and quality frameworks, and the Addis Ababa Convention for mutual recognition of degrees and certificates. More emphatically, the African Union has signed into effect the “African Continental Free Trade Area” (AfCFTA), which entered into force on 30th May 2019. At the 12th Extra-Ordinary African Union Summit of 07/07/2019 in Niamey the Heads of State launched the operational

phase of the AfCFTA³. Article 10 of the Protocol on Trade Service of the AfCFTA mentions recognition of education and harmonization⁴.

Most importantly for the purposes of the ACQF project, the “Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment”, adopted by the 30th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (20/01/2018), in its Article 18 (on “Mutual Recognition of Qualifications”), specifies that **“The State Parties shall establish a continental qualifications framework to encourage and promote the free movement of persons”**⁵.

¹Agenda 2063: <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

²Transformational Outcomes of Agenda 2063: <https://au.int/agenda2063/outcomes>

³Press Release: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20190707/operational-phase-african-continental-free-trade-area-launched-niger-summit>

⁴“For the purpose of the fulfilment, in whole or in part, of its standards or criteria for the authorization, licensing or certification of services suppliers, and subject to the requirements of paragraph 3 of this article, a State Party may recognize the education or experience obtained, requirements met, or licenses or certifications granted in another State Party. Such recognition, which may be achieved through harmonization or otherwise, may be based upon an agreement with the State Party concerned or may be accorded autonomously”. Pages 40-41.

⁵Text of the Protocol available at: <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/african-union/1965-protocol-to-the-abuja-treaty-free-movement-of-persons-right-of-residence-and-establishment-adopted-29-january-2018/file.html>

Factsheet on the AfCFTA: <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/faqs/2377-african-continental-free-trade-area-faqs-june-2018-update/file.html>

1.2 A vision for transparency and quality of qualifications and comparability of qualifications frameworks across the continent

The ACQF, which the AU aspires to develop and support, will be a policy instrument contributing to:

- Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications from all sub-sectors of education and training;
- Facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates;
- Facilitate portability of skills
- Promote an African education space, and support people's learning outcomes acquired throughout life.

These features of the future ACQF will contribute to ease African and international mobility of learners and workers and contribute to an African common education area, in synergy with other relevant instruments such as the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework.

The ACQF will be inclusive, receptive to innovation, and open: to involve stakeholders from the worlds of education and work; to embrace diversity of learning and valuable experience from national and regional qualifications frameworks of the continent; to promote cooperation and alignment between different qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and eventually with other frameworks globally.

1.3 The ACQF development project

The African Union Commission (AUC) is partnering with the European Union (EU), with GIZ and with European Training Foundation (ETF) in developing the ACQF, a key output of the "Skills for Youth Employability project" (SYEP), launched in June 2019 and planned for three years. SYEP is a new contribution to the ongoing Skills Initiative For Africa (SIFA).

This project will work to deliver the **ACQF policy and technical document, discussed and validated for decision-making at AUC, and supported by an action plan to steer further steps and implementation.**

1.4 A shared ACQF vision through involvement of African stakeholders and based on evidence

Critical analysis, consultation of African stakeholders and experts, and a holistic and interlinked approach are key pillars of the ACQF development project. Starting from a mapping study of the state-of-play of national and regional qualifications frameworks in Africa (July 2019-July 2020), to the shared reflection on options for a relevant and feasible ACQF (July 2020-June 2022), the project will engage with continental, regional and national stakeholders, especially through the proposed ACQF Advisory Group (ACQF AG).

This approach aims to build a common understanding of the principles, added-value and operational instruments of the ACQF; as well as contribute to mutual trust, and buy-in of all African stakeholders. Experience-sharing with other regional / transnational qualifications frameworks in the world will be incorporated in the process to enrich the ACQF debate.

The working document "Scope of Work and Roadmap of the ACQF project" (separated annex) proposes the main activities and deliverables of the ACQF project, and the agenda for ACQF stakeholders' consultation, which includes indicatively eight main policy and technical workshops and conferences (2019-2022). The ACQF Advisory Group (ACQF AG), composed of African stakeholders and experts, will be regularly consulted.

1.5 Getting started! Inaugural ACQF workshop: 2-4 September 2019

Organised at the headquarters of the African Union the first workshop will set out the fundamentals for a coherent and participatory ACQF development process, under the political leadership of the AUC. The workshop agenda is action-oriented and supports a dynamic start of ACQF-development activities.

The workshop on 02-03 September will gather approximately 100 participants representing:

- Relevant ministry officials of all AU Member States
- Representatives of relevant technical agencies from Member States
- Regional Economic Communities
- Regional agencies responsible for higher education
- UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF
- The ACQF Advisory Group
- The ACQF project management team (representatives of AUC-HRST, ETF, EU Delegation to AU and GIZ SIFA project management).

On 04 September the inaugural meeting of ACQF AG will be held, to discuss and validate the mandate and action plan of the AG. The Advisory group will engage in a first debate on the expectations for the future ACQF. Participants of this meeting will be the members of the ACQF AG, AUC HRST and ETF (totalling approximately 33 persons).

Main themes of the workshop agenda (02-04/September 2019):

1. Setting the wider policy context and objectives of the ACQF project.
Overview of the context including guiding frameworks of the AU and the initiatives SYEP and SIFA.
Speakers: AUC; EU Delegation to the AU.
2. Overview of proposed ACQF scope of work and roadmap (2019-2022). Visibility and communication on ACQF.
Speakers: AUC, ETF
3. Sharing experiences and new developments of national and regional qualifications frameworks in Africa. Panel discussion.
Speakers: a selection of cases, e.g.: South Africa, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Angola; EAC; SADCQF.
4. Some ACQF stakeholders discuss their response and expectations on the ACQF.
Speakers: All African Students Union, Business Africa, Organisation of African Trade Union Unity, Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities & Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA).
5. Qualifications frameworks in the world: Global perspectives and overview of main developments related to mobility, digitalisation of learning and innovations in management of qualifications.
Speakers: representatives of Unesco and EQF Advisory Group
6. Getting started: approach to conduct the mapping study on the state-of-play of national and regional qualifications frameworks in Africa
Speakers: ETF and team of ACQF experts.
7. Interactive in-depth discussion in working groups: a) Vision, expectations on the objectives, role, added-value of the ACQF; b) Qualifications frameworks at national level: main developments and perspectives – information for ACQF mapping study.
Moderation: AUC-ETF and team of ACQF experts
8. First meeting of ACQF AG (half-day, 04/09/2019): only ACQF AG members and AUC-ETF.

2 Agenda of ACQF-development inaugural workshop

Monday, 02 September 2019

Chairperson: Mr Joseph Samuels, CEO SAQA

Time	Session	Speakers
Session 1: Opening Session		
09.00-09.45	Welcome and Opening Statements The ACQF in the context of the African Union strategic objectives of Agenda 2063. The ACQF in the context of AU-EU cooperation.	Commissioner HRST Deputy Head of Delegation, Ms Anna Burylo
Session 2: Policy Context and Objectives of the ACQF Inaugural Workshop		
09.45-10.30	Qualifications for lifelong learning, Harmonisation and Quality Assurance of education in Africa Main objectives and programme of the workshop and overview of participating institutions.	AUC HRST Education Dr Beatrice Njenga Dr Yohannes Woldetensae
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
Session 3: Developing the ACQF - Scope of Work and Roadmap 2019-2022		
11.00-12.00	Overview of ACQF: objectives, and activities Governance of the ACQF development project, involved institutions, stakeholders.	AUC-ETF Dr Yohannes Woldetensae Eduarda Castel-Branco
Session 4: African Experiences: Regional Qualifications Frameworks		
12.00-12.45	East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAC) Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADC)	Dr. Joseph Cosam - IUCEA Mr Franz Gertze - SADCQF
12.45-14.00	Lunch Break	
Session 5: African Experiences: National Qualifications Frameworks		
14.00-15.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa (SAQA) • Mauritius (MQA) • Ethiopia (Ministry of Education) • Kenya (KNQA) • Morocco (Ministry of Education) • Angola (INAAREES) • Senegal (ANAO-Sup) 	Mr Joe Samuels Mr Robin Phoolchund Mr Alemshet Berhane Mr Juma Mukhwana Mr Arafat Atmoun Ms Maria Chilompo Mr Lamine Gueye
15.30-16.00	Coffee Break	

Session 6: ACQF Stakeholders' Views on the Future ACQF

16.00-16.45	Stakeholders' views: expectations on the ambition, role and added value of the ACQF in a lifelong learning perspective Panel discussion	All Africa Students Union Business Africa Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities & Polytechnics in Africa
16.45-17.00	Wrap-up of day 1	AUC-ETF

Tuesday, 03 September 2019

Chairperson: Prof. Ana Maria Nhampule, President of Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance of Higher Education

Time	Session	Speakers
09.00-09.15	Welcome and Main Messages from day 1	AUC-ETF
Session7: Qualifications Frameworks in the World		
09.15-10.00	New developments and mega trends. Global perspectives: evolution of qualifications frameworks; diversification of modes of learning and acquisition of qualifications; impact of digitisation and new technologies in qualifications frameworks; stronger user orientation; evaluating the contributions of qualifications frameworks.	UNESCO, Mr Borhene Chakroun European Qualification Framework (EQF) - Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF) / Mr. Jens Bjørnåvold
10.00-10.30	Coffee Break	

Session 8: Getting Started: ACQF Mapping Study – The Approach

10.30-11.30	Overview of objectives, approach, methods and timeline. Study outline. Main research questions. Sources of information and data. Interactions with the stakeholders at national and regional levels. Communicating and tailoring the ACQF mapping study to users. Getting started with the ACQF mapping study: methodology for session 9 Presentation. Discussion	ETF Team ACQF mapping study experts
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Session 9: Making Sense of ACQF Development - Working Groups

11.30-12.45	<p>Working Group Sessions (part 1)</p> <p>1. What do we expect from the future ACQF: synergy and added value for the national, regional and continental objectives? Views of the countries and stakeholders' groups.</p>	<p>Moderation:</p> <p>ETF Team ACQF mapping study experts</p>
12.45-14.00	Lunch Break	
14.00-15.45	<p>Working Group Sessions (part 2)</p> <p>2. ACQF Mapping study: information collection (supported by a short questionnaire).</p>	<p>Moderation:</p> <p>ETF Team ACQF mapping study experts</p>
15.45 – 16.15	Coffee Break	
16.15- 17.00	<p>Plenary Session</p> <p>Report back from each working group</p> <p>Discussion</p>	
17.00-17.30	<p>Main conclusions and lessons from the inaugural ACQF development workshop. Next steps. Acknowledgements and closing remarks</p>	AUC HRST

The Inaugural Workshop will be concluded on Tuesday evening. Members of the ACQF Advisory Group are kindly requested to take notice of the Agenda for the following meeting on Wednesday 04. September.

3 Agenda of the first meeting of ACQF Advisory Group

Wednesday, 04 September 2019

First meeting of the ACQF AG

Chairperson: Dr Beatrice Njenga, Head of Education Division, AUC

Time	Session	Speakers
09.00-09.15	Opening, Objectives of Meeting.	Dr Yohannes Woldetensae
09.15-10.00	Session 1: Launching the ACQF AG Introduction of all ACQF AG members Expectations on Role and Activities of ACQF-AG	All members
10.00-11.00	Session 2: Discussion and Validation of the Terms of Reference of ACQF AG Main functions of the ACQF AG (Terms of Reference) Rotating co-chairs of the ACQF AG. Secretariat. Main milestones for ACQF AG.	Dr Yohannes Woldetensae
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break	
11.15-12.30	Session 3: Towards the ACQF and Action Plan Synergy with NQFs, RQFs in Africa. ACQF – place in the ecosystem of education and training. Contributing ideas for the future ACQF.	ACQF AG co-chairs
12.30-13.00	Main Conclusions, Next steps. Closing Remarks	ACQF AG co-chairs Dr Beatrice Njenga
13.00-14.00	Lunch	