

Morocco: Snapshot on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

1 Legal base

The Moroccan National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is underpinned by a range of policy and legislative documents, such as the

- Framework-Law on education ([Loi Cadre n°51.17](#) adopted on 9 August 2019)
- The [Strategic Vision 2030 for a School of Equity Quality and Promotion](#)
- The [Professional Training Strategy 2021](#).

The “Reference Document of the Moroccan NQF” defines the detailed conceptual-technical design of the NQF, and is politically validated, but is not sanctioned by a legal act.

By Decision of the Minister of National Education (MENFPESRS) Nr 289/19 of 01/07/2019, an inter-stakeholder organ – the NQF Permanent Commission - was established with the mandate to operationalise the NQF. Details on the composition and mandate of the Commission: chapter 6 and Annex 2 of this report.

2 Stage of development of the NQF

In 2007 the Moroccan stakeholders and governmental institutions initiated the process of analysis and exploration underpinning the technical and conceptual design of the NQF.

The NQF conceptual-technical framework was defined in the Reference Document of the Moroccan National Qualifications Framework (NQF), originally validated by a Ministerial conference held in Rabat on 27/02/2013. In October 2015 the document was updated and revised, and in 2019 it was revalidated by the Minister of National Education (MENFPESRS).

On 23/05/2016 the first meeting of the National NQF Commission, chaired by the Prime Minister of Morocco (official designation: “*Chef du Gouvernement*”) approved the three key elements of the Reference Document NQF: 1) the eight levels and their descriptors; 2) the governance scheme of the NQF; c) the NQF implementation roadmap 2016-2017.

An important step was taken with the creation of the NQF Permanent Commission in July 2019. Concrete political orientations to start operationalisation are expected in 2020, notably: agreement on the roadmap for action, and establishment of an operational setting (unit) resourced and mandated to run the activities. Steps to conceive and launch the NQF Repertoire (Qualifications register) have been initiated and will be continued in 2020.

3 Governance

Lead and coordination: Ministry of National Education Vocational Training Higher Education and Scientific Research. By letter Nr 752 of 30th April 2019 the Government Presidency delegated the leading and coordinating role of the NQF development to the Minister (MENFPESRS).

The NQF is governed by two main commissions:

a) National Commission: political and strategic level of decisions. Composed by ministers and the President of the employers’ confederation (CGEM);

b) NQF Permanent Commission: created by decision of the Minister (MENFPESRS) Nr 289/19 of 1 July 2019 - is entrusted with the task to consolidate and operationalise the NQF. Composed by representatives from thirteen public and non-public institutions and departments (listed in Chapter 6.1 of this report). Apart from the key departments of MENFPESRS in charge of policy making and

coordination in higher education, national education and professional education, the NQF Permanent Commission includes representatives from: sector Ministries, public employment service, public institution provider of professional training, quality assurance agency of higher education, alphabetisation agency, the higher council of education, the conference of presidents of universities, the General Confederation of Employers of Morocco and the Observatory of professional branches

The preparatory work to establish the independent National Qualifications Agency is a task of the NQF Permanent Commission.

4 NQF objectives

In the Reference Document (2013) the NQF is defined as follows:

“An instrument for regulation of qualifications based on objective characteristics of quality, in view of their recognition by the labour market. It is an instrument for referencing of qualifications, whose quality is in line with a quality assurance system that takes account of learning outcomes, prescribed by the labour market following a prospective analysis.”

The framework law on Education 51.17, adopted in 2019, partially confirms the above definition, but adds a new driving element beyond the labour market: the society.

“The national certification framework: a tool for identifying and classifying diplomas at the national level, in accordance with a reference grid of applicable standards on different levels of learning outcomes, which takes into account the needs of the labour market and the development of society.”
(Law 51.17 on Education, Article 2)

5 NQF conceptual-technical design: scope, levels and descriptors

The Moroccan NQF is structured in eight levels (1 to 8), each defined by 6 domains of level descriptors:

1. Knowledge
2. Skills
3. Complexity
4. Autonomy/responsibility
5. Adaptability
6. Communication

The level descriptors in the Moroccan NQF are formulated with a degree of detail and can serve as a reference for stakeholders and practitioners involved in designing competence standards, learning programmes and assessment standards. By opting for the indicated domains, the involved stakeholders took account of key strategic areas for the future of education and training such as communication skills, as well as adaptability.

Table 1 shows the correspondence between NQF levels and education levels / respective diplomas.

Table 1: NQF level and correspondence with levels and diplomas of the sub-sectors of education and training

NQF Level	National education	Professional training	Higher education
1	Mid-primary Certificat de Formation Professionnelle (CFP)		
2	Primary	Spécialisation	

3	CE9	Qualification	
4	Baccalauréat (Bac), Bac Professionnel (Bac Pro)	Technicien	
5 (Bac+2)	Brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS)	Technicien spécialisé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplôme Études Universitaires Générales (DEUG) • Diplôme des Études Universitaires Professionnelles (DEUP) • Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie (DUT)
6 (Bac+3)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence Études Fondamentales (LF) • Licence Professionnelle
7 (Bac+5)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master (M) • Master spécialisé (MS) • Master Sciences et Techniques (MST) • Diplôme d'ingénieur (DI) • Diplôme de l'ENCG et diplôme de traduction
8 (Bac+8)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorat (D)

Note: "Bac" stands for Baccalauréat (diploma of conclusion of secondary education)

6 Use of learning outcomes

The learning outcomes-based qualifications is well-rooted in the professional training sub-system. In Morocco the Competences-Based Approach (*Approche Par Competences*, APC) has been continuously promoted by the government, and gathered substantial experience of more than a decade of methodological developments, programme design and implantation, and training of APC-specialists. The successive APC projects conducted between 2003 and 2016 resulted in the design and review of 159 programmes of all qualification levels of the professional training system; 130 APC programmes were effectively implanted and launched in 213 public and private institutions. The APC methodological framework is detailed in a package of 17 guides and support materials.

In higher education the regulatory framework defines the rules for design of programmes (for accreditation) at all cycles and levels. The detailed structure for programmes leading to qualifications is provided in the National Pedagogic Standards (CNPN). These standards are specific for each qualification level and type. Programmes for accreditation include among the essential components: objectives of training, competences to be acquired, employment opportunities of the qualification, admission conditions, pathways and links with other programmes. All programmes are structured in modules of learning.

7 Credit system(s)

The core strategic and legislative base of education and training, such as the Law 01-00 on higher education and the Law 16-17 on education recognise the importance of better organised pathways between sub-systems and education institutions, and the introduction of passerelles to foster re-integration of learners, continuation of studies and reskilling in a lifelong perspective.

The higher education sub-system undertook pilot initiatives to adopt a credit accumulation and training system, but a credit system not mainstreamed it. In the sub-system of vocational education and national education the adoption of a credit system is not considered a priority at the moment.

8 Qualifications in NQF / NQF register

Table 2: Professional Education: number of programmes by level of qualification

Technicien Spécialisé	129
Technicien	105
Qualification	83
Spécialisation	30
TOTAL	347

Source: [DFP, La formation professionnelle en chiffres, 2018-2019](#)

Table 3: programmes leading to qualification BTS: [Portal of BTS](#)

Secteur Industriel	Secteur Commercial et de Service
Mouliste	Gestion Administrative
Bâtiment	Comptabilité et Gestion
Productique	Gestion des PME/PMI
Energétique	Management Commercial
Electromécanique et Systèmes Automatisés	Management Touristique
Maintenance Automobile	Technico-commercial
Maintenance Industrielle	Audiovisuel
Electrotechnique	Arts et Industries Graphiques
Matières Plastiques et Composites	
Conception du Produit Industriel	
Systèmes Electroniques	
Développement des Systèmes d'Information	
Systèmes et Réseaux Informatiques	
Multimédias et Conception WEB	

The [Website of the Department of Higher Education](#) (MENFPESRS) publishes information on diplomas from all types of higher education institutions: public, private and establishments non-dependent from Universities. The same Website publishes the [updated list of the accredited programmes of private higher education institutions](#). However, a similar detailed list for public higher education institutions is not available on the Website.

In higher education (public institutions) there are 2,345 accredited programmes, of which 1,527 in open access.

Definition of the components and configuration of the repertoire of all qualifications, aligned with NQF levels and principles, is one of the attributions of the NQF Permanent Commission. The related technical activities will be implemented with EU support starting in 2020.

Approved education programmes and related qualifications from the key sub-systems – national education, professional education and higher education – are organised in different and separated instruments: a) databases for internal use of the relevant ministerial departments, not open for public users; b) information on courses, programmes and qualifications published the Websites of different sub-systems of MENFPESRS, and of education and training institutions, such as OFPPT, training centres and higher education institutions. This information on programmes and qualification is concise; the exception is the OFPPT Website, which offers details on the content of each professional qualification.

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The Department of National Education created a separate [Portal of BTS](#) (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur - BTS). The Portal contains information on the organisation of this qualification and its programmes. [BTS – list of programmes](#) indicates, without details on learning outcomes and organisation, the 22 programmes in two sectors leading to BTS diploma.

The Department of Professional Training of MENFPESRS (DFP) is developing the new information system and online platform, which will systematise information and data for policy monitoring and information for end-users. At the moment of writing (April 2020), in its *Space for Youth*, the Website of DFP publishes information on available qualifications: a) detailed [list of programmes of public providers](#), distributed by qualification levels and by region; b) [list of programmes of accredited private providers](#). Information on content and learning outcomes of these programmes and qualifications is not published on the Website.

The [Space REM/REC](#) of the same Website contains the (partial) list of Repertoires Emploi-Metier (REM) and the Referentials Emploi-Competences (REC), which represent a reference base for programmes of the sub-system. All published REM/REC contain the full content (tasks, competences) and can be used as reference by any stakeholder. Until January 2020 a total of 716 REM and 815 REC had been developed for 18 sectors.

[OFPPT](#): in the main Website users have easy access to complete and detailed information on the existing programmes and qualifications in professional education for both types of credentials: a) diplomas and b) certificates of qualification. The space “Find a training programme” (“*Trouvez une formation*”) displays the full repertoire of all programmes and qualification level – with concise information in standardised format on the occupational profile, learning outcomes, course organisation, occupations, and training providers. See [example of qualification “Technician in Office Secretariat”](#), of level *Technicien Spécialisé*.

9 Quality assurance

Higher education has developed a substantial legislative-regulatory framework for quality assurance and in 2014 established a specialised autonomous institution (ANEAQ). Quality assurance is based on evaluation and accreditation of programmes and institutions.

[ANEAQ](#), the National Agency for Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Scientific Research was created in 2014 by [Law 80-12 of 21 August 2014](#), as the agency mandated to implement the quality assurance processes of quality assurance of programmes and institutions in higher education, and in the area of scientific research. The Website of ANEAQ opens with the keyword: “Evaluate to evolve”. ANEAQ started operations in 2016 and in 2017 and 2018 conducted two rounds of external evaluation of programmes (over 1,600 programmes of public and private institutions were evaluated). In addition, ANEAQ conducted the evaluation of progress and monitoring of a sample of programmes that had been accredited in 2017 (157 programmes of the 12 public universities).

A first pilot external evaluation of ANEAQ was conducted in November 2018 under the auspices of the project of the Africa-EU Partnership’s project HAQAA. The [report of this external evaluation](#) examined ANEAQ’s compliance with a selection of standards of [African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance \(ASG-QA\)](#).

Professional education, under the leadership of DFP (MENFPESRS) is engaged in strengthening the system of quality assurance. Since 2014 a comprehensive system of performance monitoring is in development, of which the quality assurance framework is a major component. Practical implementation is underway, focusing on self-evaluation of public and private providers of professional education. Other elements of quality assurance in professional education comprise: a) the methodology of the

Competence-Based Approach (APC) and b) the regular surveys of employment outcomes and further education of graduates (graduate tracer studies), whose methodology and coverage is currently undergoing substantial upgrading.

10 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

10.1 Relation of RPL and NQF

The *Strategic Vision 2015-2013* foresees the development of a system of validation of learning outcomes from experience (VAE), noting “*Adopt a unified system of validation of individuals’ cognitive and professional achievements, overseen by an independent national body, where the various departments of education and training and professional sectors will be represented*”. (Lever 19, pg 70).

10.2 Stage of development of RPL

DFP in partnership with sector federations and sector ministries carried out several [VAE projects](#) in sectors with high demand for labour with qualifications:

- 2008-2010: in the sector of construction, 138 candidates were awarded qualifications for 13 sector occupations, of three levels (technician specialise, technician and qualification). Participated 320 candidates and 62 enterprises.
- 2011-2012: sector textile / garments, 19 qualified candidates
- In the follow-up of these successful projects, between 2012-2016 the Ministry promoted additional VAE projects in different regions, with the sectors of construction (100 candidates), hotels (200 candidates) and meat processing (400 candidates).

The VAE process is structured in four phases:

1. Information and counselling of the candidates: on the VAE process and its requirements, preliminary screening of the professional experience in view of the envisaged certification.
2. Admissibility: instruct the application file and decide on the eligibility.
3. Follow-up: support the candidate in the preparation of the Dossier of Description of Professional Experience and prepare for the process of certification.
4. Certification: the jury decides on the validation of the competences from professional experience – on the base of the certification standard.

The NQF Permanent Commission is mandated to prepare the premises and legal-regulatory basis for establishment a functioning VAE system. This line of work will be fostered within the EU institutional twinning supporting the NQF, planned to start in Autumn 2020.

Alphabetisation (ANCLA) offers validation of prior learning to beneficiaries in 6 specialised centres.

11 Relation to regional frameworks

In the medium-term, Morocco aspires to reference its NQF to the European Qualifications Framework. At the same time the highest country leadership expressed commitment to join and contribute to the activities of the ACQF development process, and work for common objectives on qualifications in the continent.

The conceptual-technical design of the Moroccan NQF reveals the openness of the country to international developments, notably to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Morocco cooperates with regional and cross-country initiatives and projects relevant for the NQF:

ANEAQ is a member of the [Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education \(ANQAHE\)](#) and participates actively the Africa-EU [HAQAA Initiative](#), including the piloting of ASG-QA.

12 Recognition of foreign qualifications

Information about [Recognition of Foreign Qualifications in Morocco](#) is available for users on the website of the MENESFPRS. [E-Equivalence](#) is the new online recognition platform.

Morocco is one of the four participating Southern Mediterranean countries of the [Meric-Network project](#).

13 Next steps, plans

The key building blocks enabling the operationalisation of the NQF are in place: a) supportive policy and legal basis, and a reform strategy that recognises the role of the NQF for formal education and validation of competences from experience and non-formal learning; b) governance set-up for the initial period paving the way to establishment of an independent qualifications agency; c) regulatory and technical-methodological framework underpinning the development, adoption and renewal of qualifications in all sub-systems of education and training; d) established quality assurance system in higher education and the developing system in professional education; e) professional branches and employers' organisations committed to good qualifications and a transparent qualifications framework.

The next steps will be necessarily intertwined with the recovery effort related with the Covid19-Pandemic, consequently the NQF roadmap planned in 2017 for two year will be adjusted. The NQF Permanent Commission has an ambitious set of tasks and attributions – effective implementation within a roadmap will require capacity and resources (human, technical) to make operational the current set-up. Technical cooperation to support implementation of the NQF is guaranteed through the partnership with the EU.

Learnings from the decade-long dialogue and construction of the technical-institutional set-up of the NQF are valuable to guide the Permanent Commission in the new phase. Learnings include: flexibility, common vision, analysis, partnership and action for both quick wins and for sustainable results.

Morocco took measures to assure continuity of education and training through the period of Covid-19 confinement. As an illustration: in the sub-system of professional education, since mid-March 2020, the OFPPT prepared and made available [online courses](#), including videos for practical classes on [Youtube](#). All levels and types of training of OFPPT are accessible for online learning through an App and pedagogic materials will be gathered in a common platform.