



OVERVIEW: AU POLICY CONTEXT OF THE ACQF

Skills and qualifications of the people in Africa are at the heart of African renaissance. Therefore, the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is a vital policy of the African Union. Development of the ACQF is underway (2019-2022).

The ACQF is underpinned by the **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want** and the continental strategies in the domain of education, science and technology, and youth:

- ▶ *Integrated Africa* is a major transformational outcome of the Agenda 2063, encompassing free movement of persons, free trade but also an African common education space for all African learners.
- ▶ The *First ten-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063* foresees that a common educational qualification system is developed and in place by 2023.
- ▶ *CESA 16-25* defines among its priorities the establishment of national and regional qualifications frameworks, and of a “Continental qualifications framework linked with regional and national frameworks to facilitate regional integration and mobility.”

The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** is a key flagship of African integration wherein the ACQF will contribute. Its “Protocol on Trade in Services” mentions recognition of education and harmonization. Moreover, the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment” (2018) specifies: “*The States Parties shall establish a continental qualifications framework to encourage and promote the free movement of persons*” (Art 18).

VISION FOR THE ACQF



- ▶ Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications from all sub-sectors and levels of education and training and support people’s lifelong learning outcomes;



- ▶ Facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates, and mobility of learners and workers;



- ▶ Work in complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks, and support the creation of a common African education space;



- ▶ Promote cooperation and alignment between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.



The ACQF will be:



INCLUSIVE

qualifications of all levels and sub-systems of education and training

RECEPTIVE TO INNOVATION

from new trends and technologies



OPEN

to stakeholders’ contribution; good practice from Africa and the world

The ACQF is vital to the processes that contribute to create an African education space:

- ▶ Advance the implementation of CESA 2016-2025
- ▶ Harmonise higher education in Africa and implement the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF)
- ▶ Implement the AU TVET Strategy to Foster Youth Employment

DEVELOPING THE ACQF: AN AU-EU PROJECT

In the context of the AU-EU cooperation agenda, the European Union (EU) has committed to support the development of the ACQF, as defined in Action 4 of the *Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs* (adopted on 12/09/2018).

The African Union Commission (AUC) is partnering with EU, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and the *European Training Foundation* (ETF) in developing the ACQF over the period 2019-2022. The ACQF development activities are part of the AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme, contributing to the Skills Initiative for Africa – a programme initiated by the AU in cooperation with the German government.

Main output of the project: ACQF policy and technical document and action plan technically validated for decision making by the AU.

THE ACQF-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IS HOLISTIC, AND BUILDS ON:



► Evidence and analysis

Updated and comprehensive baseline analysis of the state-of-play, dynamics and issues of qualifications frameworks (national and regional) in Africa.



► AUC political leadership and consultation of African stakeholders (national, regional and continental)

The success and sustainability of the ACQF as a policy instrument depends on the ownership and leadership by the AUC and the buy-in and support of the African stakeholders. Therefore, an ACQF Advisory Group composed of 38 representatives (national and regional levels) provides advice and reviews the outputs.



► Awareness raising and capacity development of African stakeholders

Dissemination of information on the ACQF development as well as capacity development, peer-learning on qualifications frameworks in Africa and the rest of the world are embedded in the project activities. The ACQF Website will contribute to dissemination and networking of ACQF stakeholders in all AU states.



The intermediate project outputs planned for 2019-2022:

- ACQF Mapping study (until Sept-2020)
- ACQF Feasibility study (mid-2021)
- Common Guidelines for ACQF
- ACQF Website, tools

Other key activities (2019-2022):

- Stakeholder consultation
- Awareness raising and capacity development
- ACQF Experts' Network
- Online outreach to support ACQF development and information sharing
- Draft of ACQF related policy documents and technical information for meetings of the Specialised Technical Committee

ACQF PROGRESS IN 2019-2020

■ Launch of the ACQF development process

Stakeholders from the whole continent started the ACQF development process at the inaugural workshop (2-3 September 2019), at headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa. The first meeting of ACQF Advisory Group took place on 4 September 2019.

■ ACQF Mapping Study

The ACQF mapping study provides a comprehensive and updated analysis of where Africa stands in respect to qualifications frameworks development, implementation and renewal. The online survey collected information from 35 AU member states, and country and REC reports provide in-depth analyses of common thematic and policy dimensions. The final comprehensive mapping study (Sept 2020) will be disseminated in Webinars and infographics.

■ ACQF capacity development programme: phase 1 (2020) started with a series of 7 peer learning webinars (July-October). Phase 2: advanced learning and practical application (2021).

■ ACQF Policy and Technical Document

The ACQF experts' Task Force will co-create the ACQF as a sustainable policy instrument, building on the analysis of feasible options, and the wider policy objectives for the continent.

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