

A QUALIFIED WORLD:

A GLOBAL LANDSCAPE OF REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS



RQF

MAPPING THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (RQFs)

RQFs are qualifications frameworks agreed by a number of countries or national organisations. They share an agenda for economic, labour or educational cooperation, and they aim to strengthen trust.

Individuals looking for jobs and learning opportunities abroad can benefit from regional frameworks as their qualifications are made easier to understand and compare beyond their borders. RQFs can turn qualifications into passports for jobs and studying abroad.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning is a regional scheme involving 38 countries. It opens up to others by comparing its criteria to those of other national and regional qualifications frameworks.

The ETF mapped the latest developments in RQFs and explored ways to compare them with the EQF. Our investigation focused on 15 RQFs that are not linked to the EQF:

- African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)
- Arab Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (AQF; ANQAHE Model)
- ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)
- CARICOM Qualifications Framework (CQF)
- Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement supérieur (CAMES)
- ECOWAS Regional Qualifications Framework of West Africa
- East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)
- Gulf Qualifications Framework (GQF)
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa
- Marco de cualificaciones Alianza del Pacífico (Pacific Alliance) (MCAP)
- Marco de Cualificaciones para la Educación superior centroamericana (MCESCA)
- Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards/Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework

- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Regional Qualifications Framework
- Transnational Qualifications Framework for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (TQF VUSSC)

There is little online information about these initiatives. Interviews provided most of the information. We also benefitted from the mapping study of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), which provided new information on qualifications frameworks across Africa.

RQFs work on the basis of levels. In order to link national levels to those of RQFs and partner countries, officials compare frameworks and explain their approaches. Several RQFs have made progress.

RQFs find themselves at different stages of development. Many are in early stages, which makes comparison difficult. They all seem to strive to develop, register and establish quality assurance qualifications.

The EQF might be the best known RQF, but it is neither the oldest nor the most modern. None of the RQFs analysed is a copy of the EQF, but they all use it as a benchmark.

RQFs are diverse. Some aim to delve beyond common levels and attempt to harmonise quality assurance and develop common qualifications or common registers. Some aim to share common programmes, particularly among groups of small countries. Climate change is a popular topic in this regard. Online programmes have become increasingly important, especially during the pandemic. RQFs are extending beyond formal and higher education systems. Databases are being linked. Micro-credentials are getting attention.

Most RQFs have been established by middle- and low-income countries. Efforts to develop RQFs for the 21st century have been hampered by a lack of capacity and resources, fickle donor funding, and the Covid crisis. There is a strong interest in sharing experiences among RQFs and in greater cooperation.

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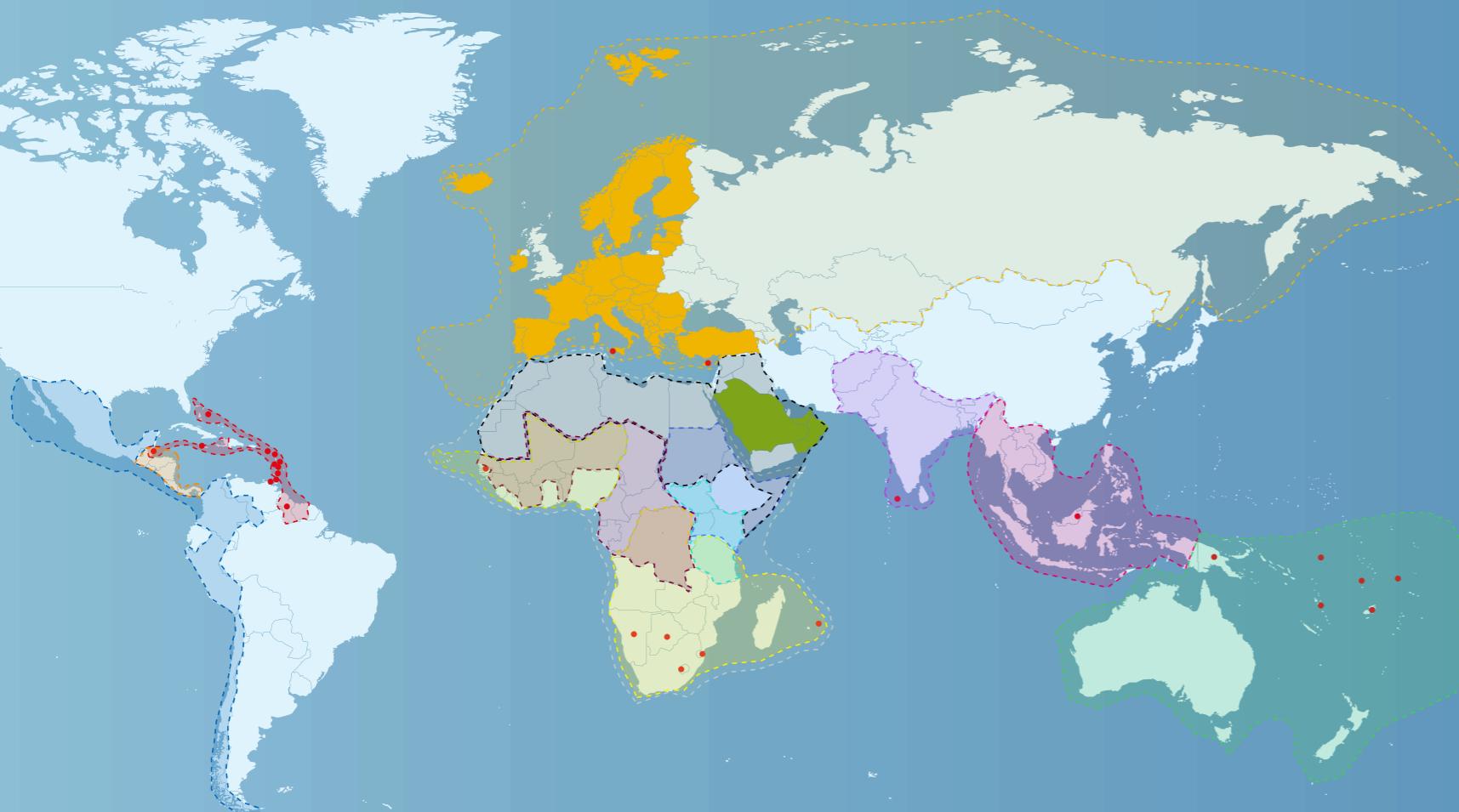
WHAT IS AN RQF?

are qualifications frameworks agreed by a number of countries or national organisations with a common agenda for economic, labour or educational cooperation



WHAT ARE RQFs GOOD FOR?

- Connecting national standards among participating nations.
- Building confidence in their universality
- Referencing and aligning local qualifications with those in other countries
- RQF equivalency can serve as a passport to international mobility



17 RQFs AROUND THE WORLD.

European Qualification Framework [EQF]

Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area [QFEHEA]

African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)

Arab Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (AQF, ANQAHE Model)

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)

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Gulf Qualifications Framework (GQF)

Qualifications are essential and diverse. But levels can be confusing. The key is cooperation.