Constructing and Managing an NQF MIS
The SAQA Experience

African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)
Peer Learning Webinar
22 July 2021

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Overview

1. SAQA & the South African NQF
2. Key aspects of the SA NQF/MIS
3. Highlights, Challenges & Lessons
SAQA & the South African NQF

WHAT IS SAQA?
The South African Qualifications Authority is a statutory body established in terms of the SAQA Act and continuing in terms of the NQF Act.

The NQF Act mandates SAQA to:

- Develop & implement
- Advance the objectives
- Co-ordinate sub-frameworks

OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS THE NQF?
The South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a single integrated system for the

- Classification
- Co-ordination
- Registration
- Publication
- Articulation

OF QUALITY ASSURED NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

NQF Act (67 of 2008) ✓ ✓ ✓ Approved by the Minister: HET ✓ ✓ ✓
South African NQF contd...

Evolving Understandings of the South African NQF

- The NQF as a social construct
  Requires democratic participation, intellectual scrutiny and adequate resourcing; also includes a strong transformational purpose

- The NQF as a comprehensive system for classification
  As defined in the NQF Act of 2008, single-integrated system with three sub-frameworks

- The NQF as a technical perspective that limits the NQF to a system for data management
  C3 framework across education, training, development and work

- The NQF as a register of qualifications
  Requires democratic participation, intellectual scrutiny and adequate resourcing; also includes a strong transformational purpose

- The NQF as a framework for communication, collaboration and coordination

Technical perspective that limits the NQF to a system for data management

C3 framework across education, training, development and work

As defined in the NQF Act of 2008, single-integrated system with three sub-frameworks

The NQF as a social construct
  Requires democratic participation, intellectual scrutiny and adequate resourcing; also includes a strong transformational purpose
The NQF Act of 2008: SAQA must with respect to records of education and training, maintain a National Learners’ Records Database (MIS) comprising registers of:

i. National qualifications and part-qualifications

ii. Learner achievements

iii. Details of the institution that awarded the qualification or part-qualification

iv. Recognised professional bodies [professional designations]

v. Associated information relating to registration, verification and accreditation;

AND in terms of the 2019 Amendment to the Act:

(i) Establish and maintain a register of misrepresented qualifications or part-qualifications

(ii) Establish and maintain a register of fraudulent qualifications or part-qualifications
With regards to information matters

- The three Quality Councils (QCs) must:
  - Maintain a database of learner achievements and related matters for the purposes of the NQF Act
  - Submit such data in a formatted determined in consultation with the SAQA for recording on the NLRD

- SAQA-recognised Professional Bodies must (in consultation with SAQA):
  - Maintain a database for the purposes of the NQF Act
  - Submit such data in a formatted determined in consultation with the SAQA for recording on the NLRD
1 SAQA & the South African NQF

2 Key aspects of the SA NQF/MIS

3 Highlights, Challenges & Lessons
The NQF MIS (including the NLRD)

- **NQF MIS:**
  - An integrated information system which facilitates the management of the NQF
  - Contains all quality assured qualifications, accredited providers people who achieve it
  - It is linked to everything that is the essence of how the NQF is described in the NQF Act (67 of 2008)

- **The NLRD:**
  - Developed in 1999 to enable SAQA be ‘the only source of complete data on qualifications, providers, assessors and learners in South Africa’
  - Serves as a repository for the collection and management of NQF-related data
  - Guided by strict data loading requirements/standards and data loading regulations.
  - Widely considered the most comprehensive register of national learner achievements, and largest NQF MIS on the continent
The NLRD: Purpose

The information in the NLRD is used to:

• Provide information and progress made towards implementing the NQF

• Provide analysis at macro policy level
  • Provide insightful reports to policy makers, policy implementers, policy beneficiaries and other stakeholders
  • Inform research and answer NQF-related queries

• Provide various reporting and analysis capabilities

• Verify information for work and/or study
The NLRD: Data Sources

- National qualifications & part-qualifications
  - Data from GFETQSF
  - Data from the OQSF
- Learners and Achievements
  - Providers
  - Misrepresented qualifications
  - Fraudulent qualifications
  - Associated information
- Information on Professional Bodies and their members
  - SAQA Recognised Professional Bodies
  - Registered Professional Designations
- Private Higher Education
- Public Higher Education
The NLRD: Snapshot of Content

As at 30 June 2021

Person
n = 20 701 417

Qualifications
n = 11 707

Learner Achievements
n = 61 865 048
Achievements via RPL
n = 36 292

Professional Bodies
n = 106

Provisional Designations
n = 395
Designated members
n = 1 192 672

Providers
n = 6 859

NLRD

Qualification_ID & Title
NQF level, Field, Sub-field
Maximum/minimum credits
Rationale/Purpose
NQF Sub-framework
Articulation options
International comparability
Recognition of Prior Learning
Registration date

Unit Standards
n = 11 482

Provider Name
Provider details: address, email, phones
Provider type

NQF level
Purpose
Learning assumptions
Embedded Knowledge
Provider

Professional body name
Registration number
Person ID

Learner ID
Qualifications/US Achieved
Enrolment date
Achievement date
Provider

Designation ID
Title
Criteria experience
Designation Start and end dates

Names
Gender
Population Group
Date Of Birth

...... including 20 more related fields
The NLRD: Snapshot of Content

Trend in achievement: 2009 to 2018
The NLRD: Sample analysis

Top 30: Learning pathways through NQF Levels between 1995 and 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Learning Pathway</th>
<th>Number of Learners</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>L1 to L2</td>
<td>17,368</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>L1 (17,368)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>L3 (88,904)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>L4 (4,456,142)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>L4 to L5</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>L4 to L6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>L5 to L6</td>
<td>35,930</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>L6 (186,655)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>L7 (187,153)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>L8 (130,344)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>L8 to L9</td>
<td>187,153</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>L9 (43,531)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>L5 (33,586)</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>L5 to L7</td>
<td>35,930</td>
</tr>
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Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)

Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)
1 SAQA & the South African NQF
2 Key aspects of the SA NQF/MIS
3 Highlights, Challenges & Lessons learned
• Tracking of articulation and progress made in implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
• Learning pathways for three sectors have been developed
  – Early Childhood Development
  – Community Development
  – Engineering

Highlights
• International benchmarking - *SADC Mobility report*

- **Highlights**

- SAQA has assisted countries with conceptualising similar systems and model (recently supported Namibia)
• Enables the tracking of articulation and progress made in implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
  – Learning Pathways for three sectors have been developed (Early Childhood Development, Community Development and Engineering)

• Used for national policy-making and analysis

• International benchmarking
  – SADC Mobility report

• SAQA has assisted countries with conceptualising similar systems and model
  – Recently developed and handed over the specification requirements for a similar model to Namibia
Challenges

• Historical data gaps:
  – *Due to the history of the country, fragmented records still exist on paper only*
  – *Digitisation initiatives are underway to ensure these paper records are digitised and recorded on the NLRD*

• Occasional and structural delays with data submissions
  – *Resulting in delays with the verifications process, and incomplete information*
  – *Gazette data regulations*

• Data quality and integrity:
  – *Consistent and extensive updates to the data through data cleaning processes/projects*

• Other registers exist in the ‘NQF-universe’
  – *But not fully integrated into the MIS*
  – *Introduction of a phased in project that focuses on the integration of other databases*
  – *Provides an opportunity to further improve, enhance, expand/enrich the NQF MIS*
• The transition to an integrated NQF MIS needs to take context into account
  – An NQF MIS must be guided and informed by the information needs of the national education and training systems to which it is linked and unified through a ‘System of Collaboration’
  – While instruments and approaches are transferable across countries, policies are systems are not because notions of education/training and learning outcomes are culturally and socially embedded

• Further development of information systems is a multi-year process, informed by continuous improvement

• Shift from procedural data loading to a more strategic use of the data
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Thank You!!!