

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK - CAPE VERDE

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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.2 NQF snapshot

The country report on the NQF of Cape Verde¹, elaborated in the context of the Mapping Study of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) project is the main source of information used in this country fiche. Several chapters benefited of information updates, gathered from official Websites and sources, especially: Government of Cape Verde, Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ), National Institute of Statistics, and UNDP (Human Development Index).

The **National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Cabo Verde has 10 years of experience** and has been conceived and operationalised as an instrument of the National Qualifications System (SNQ). This is a fundamental characteristic that marks the nature and functions of the NQF and its interconnection with the other instruments of the SNQ. The SNQ comprises the instruments necessary for the promotion, development and integration of training offer and qualifications, and the evaluation and certification of competences enabling professional, human, and social development of the individuals and responding to the needs of the economic system. The SNQ is operationalised by the combined action of the following instruments:

- **The NQF (in Portuguese language: QNQ)**
- The National Catalogue of Qualifications (CNQ): [website](#).
- The credit system
- The individual register of qualifications and competences
- The system of monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement of the SNQ
- The system of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC)

The main milestones of the history of the SNQ-NQF in Cabo Verde are as follows:

- 2009: Enacted legislation regulating the NQF governance body – the Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System (UC-SNQ) (decree-law n° 62/2009). [Website](#).
- 2010: Approved the legal Acts establishing: the SNQ, the NQF and the CNQ
- 2013: Approved legislation on the legal regime on accreditation of training institutions
- 2014: Regulated the system of recognition, validation. and certification of competences
- 2018: Adopted new legal Act on SNQ; new regulation on the organisation of the UC-SNQ
- 2020: Adopted new legal Acts on CNQ and on NQF (Joint Portaria n° 9 and n° 10/2020)

The NQF of Cape Verde is at operational stage.

1.2 Policy context

The Republic of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) is an island country in the central Atlantic Ocean. The 10 volcanic islands have a combined land area of 4 033 km², and the capital – Praia – is located approximately 650 km west from Dakar (Senegal). According to the World Population Review², the total population was 562 659 in 2021, and the growth rate was 1,1 per cent. According to National Institute of Statistics (INE), the share of population below 15 years of age is approximately 28 per cent, and that

¹ ACQF mapping study: Cape Verde. 2020. Country report. AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme – SIFA Technical Cooperation. Author: E. Castel-Branco.
<https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth/publication/african-continental-qualifications-framework-acqf-mapping-study>

² World Population Review. <https://worldpopulationreview.com>. Accessed: 16/08/2021

of age group 15-34 years is approximately 36 per cent. Politics in Cabo Verde have been largely consensus-oriented, and since its independence from Portugal in 1975, Cabo Verde has not experienced a single coup d'état. Elections are considered free and fair, and parties in power alternate regularly. Cape Verde is a member of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)³.

Cabo Verde's Human Development Index (HDI) for 2019⁴ is 0,665, putting the country in the medium human development category and positioning it at 126 out of 189 countries and territories. Cabo Verde's 2019 HDI of 0,665 is above the average of 0,631 for countries in the medium human development group and above the average of 0,547 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country's HDI has registered visible progress in the last two decades. Between 1990 and 2019, Cabo Verde's life expectancy at birth increased by 8,3 years (72,8 years in 2018), mean years of schooling increased by 2,8 years (to reach 6,3 years) and expected years of schooling increased by 1,2 years (127 years). Cabo Verde's GNI per capita increased by about 146.5 percent between 1990 and 2019, reaching 7,019 PPP\$).

Labour market indicators have degraded in the period 2019-2020. The Covid-19 crisis adversely affected the economy, in which tourism and related economic activities (hotel, restaurants, recreation travel) play a central role. INE labour market data (2020)⁵ shows a visible decline of the activity rate (from 57.4 to 53 percent), and of the employment rate (from 50.9 to 45.3 percent), with a corollary increase of the unemployment rate (11.3 to 14.5 percent).

A new Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (PEDS) 2030 is in consultation, through a wide mobilisation of debates, strategic discussions and thematic studies under the umbrella of the Platform "[Cape Verde Ambitions 2030](#)" (CVA2030). The agenda of CVA2030⁶ is comprehensive of all major domains of socio-economic sustainable development, including human capital development, post-Covid-19, economic and business recovery, resilience and climate action, blue and digital economy. The previous Plan (2017-2021) was based on 35 programmes articulated around three pillars and four objectives, which jointly should contribute to Cabo Verde's sustainable development with full employment.

1.3 NQF legal basis

The **legal basis of the SNQ and NQF** is extensive and comprises specific legal Acts, listed in Chapter 9 of this report. The **first NQF legal Act** was the Decree-Law n° 65/2010 of 27 December⁷, regulating the nature, structure and effects of the NQF. The history of the SNQ and the NQF in Cabo Verde took its initial steps with the first Decree-Law n° 20/2010⁸ of 14 June 2010, establishing the legal regime of the SNQ and its components, including the NQF.

In 2018, as a result of evaluation, the country adopted new legislation on the SNQ (Decree-Law n° 4/2018)⁹, expanding its structural components, reinforcing its role in information and orientation for employment and in a more effective integration of the subsystems of education and training. In the same line of reform, in February 2020, two legal Acts regulating the CNQ (Joint Portaria n° 9/2020 of

³ <https://www.ecowas.int>

⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/CPV.pdf

⁵ <https://ine.cv/quadros/estatistica-do-mercado-trabalho-inquerito-multi-objetivo-continuo-2020/>

⁶ <https://peds.gov.cv/cva2030/cva2030/>

⁷ Decree-Law Nr 65/2010 of 27 December, Regulates the nature, structure and effects of the National Qualifications Framework (in Portuguese: Regula a natureza, a estrutura e os efeitos do Quadro Nacional de Qualificações – QNQ. Boletim Oficial Nr 50 – I serie, 27/12/2010. At: <https://kiosk.incv.cv/1.1.50.85/>

⁸ Decree-Law Nr 20/2010 of 14 June, Regulates the legal regime of the National Qualifications System (SNQ) (in Portuguese: Regula o Regime Jurídico Geral do Sistema Nacional de Qualificações (SNQ). At: <https://kiosk.incv.cv/V/2010/6/14/1.1.22.171/>,

⁹ Decree-Law Nr 4/2018 of 10 January, Establishes the new legal regime of the National Qualifications System (SNQ) (in Portuguese: Estabelece novo regime jurídico do Sistema Nacional de Qualificações (SNQ). At: <https://kiosk.incv.cv/V/2018/1/10/1.1.4.2461/>

20/02) and the NQF (Joint Portaria nº 10/2020, of 20/02)¹⁰ were jointly developed and adopted by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

2.1 Education and training reforms

The Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Plano Estratégico da Educação de Cabo Verde – PES)¹¹ reflects the education objectives set in the PEDS 2017-2021 and is aligned with the Government Programme 2016-2021. The plan specifies a framework of priorities and the investment programmes and actions, which jointly contribute to the country’s vision for development of human resources aligned with the national macro-economic perspectives. The plan provides a detailed diagnostic of the situation, challenges and performance of all subsystems of education.

The priorities are articulated around access to education and efficiency of education management. They are a) universalised access to preschool education, basic and secondary education; b) improved and relevant education services; and c) reinforced efficiency and management of education.

These priorities of education policy are unpacked in five investment programmes, representing the shared vision between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance:

- Preschool education: Universalisation of access
- Obligatory basic education: Bases for life
- Reinforcement and consolidation of secondary education
- Higher education, science and innovation
- Education management: The pillar of change.

Structure of the education system

Cabo Verde has an ample legal basis regulating the education system as a whole and the particular domains of each of the subsystems. The fundamental legal act is the Legislative Decree Nr 13/2018 of 7 December, amending the Legislative Decree nº 2/2010 of 7 May, which defined the bases of the education system. The Legislative Decree Nr 13/2018 defines in detail the structure of the education system (Table 1).

Table 1: Structure of the education system

Section of the law nº 13/2018	Subsystem	Cycles	Qualifications	Observations: age, progression
Section II	Preschool education			From four years of age
Section III	Basic education eight years	- first cycle: four years (1 st -4 th) - second cycle: four years (5 th -8 th)		From six years of age

¹⁰ Portaria conjunta Nr 9/2020 of 17 February, and Joint Portaria Nr 10/2020 of the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education, At: http://iefp.cv/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/bo_20-02-2020_20-CNQ-e-QNQ.pdf

¹¹ <https://minedu.gov.cv/documentos1>

Section IV	Secondary education four years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9th to 12th years - Two optional pathways: general and technical. Permeability between general and technical is guaranteed - Artistic education: Via technical pathway or via complementary year of secondary education 	<p>Diploma and certificate</p> <p>For the technical pathway: Double certification (academic and professional)</p> <p>For artistic education: Diploma</p>	<p>Progression upon conclusion of secondary education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To higher education - Professional training (initial and continuous)
Section V	Higher education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University education - Polytechnic education 	<p><u>Three cycles of study:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Licenciatura: Credits correspondent to six to eight semesters. Some areas of study require higher number of credits 2. Master: Credits corresponding to three to four semesters. In some cases: Integrated cycle after secondary education of ten to twelve semesters 3. Doctorate <p><u>Postsecondary education:</u> courses of professional nature, not leading to academic degree (CESP – Courses Higher Professional Studies)</p>	<p><u>Academic degrees:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Licenciatura (certificate) - Mestrado (Master): certified by a magister letter - Doctorate: doctoral letter <p>Non-academic postsecondary courses (CESP) lead to Diploma of Higher Professional Study (DESP)</p>	<p>Licenciatura degree: Can be awarded in university and polytechnic education</p> <p>Master and doctorate degrees: Only in university education</p> <p>DESP: Credits transferable to continue education to obtain licenciatura degree in the same area of study</p>
Section VI	Extra-school education	<p><u>Adult Education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alphabetisation - Continuing education: cultural, scientific and technological upskilling <p><u>Basic education of youth and adults</u> articulates general and professional training (age: 15+, with or without schooling)</p> <p><u>Component of technical-professional training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skill development for the exercise of a profession and integration in the world of work - Lifelong learning 	<p><u>Basic education and youth and adults</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>First cycle (two years):</u> certificate - <u>Second cycle (two years):</u> diploma (equivalent to diploma of basic education) <p><u>Technical-professional training</u> is closely articulated with the national system of professional training and apprenticeship</p>	<p>In both modalities: Learning is organised in units (accumulation and transfer), flexible and adaptable to different individual needs and competences</p>

2.2 Aims of NQF

The **objectives of the NQF** defined in 2010 have been reinforced in the Joint Portaria Nr 10/2020, by adding emphasis on readability, transparency, and comparability of qualifications – in the education and training system and in the labour market. Article 4 defines the objectives of the NQF:

- Integrate and articulate the qualifications obtained in different sub-systems of education, vocational education and higher education and those obtained from non-formal and informal pathways and professional experience;
- Improve transparency of qualifications, supporting their value in the labour market, education and training and other contexts of personal and social life;
- Promote access, evaluation and quality of qualifications;

- Apply a competence-based approach to define and describe qualifications and promote validation of non-formal and informal learning; tap on the advantages of this approach to increase the participation in lifelong learning of the population at risk of unemployment and precarious employment.
- Promote close links with the European Qualifications Framework and with NQFs of other countries, notably ECOWAS member countries, with the aim to improve people's mobility and facilitate recognition of skills and competences.
- Improve readability, transparency, and comparability of qualifications in the education and training system and employment training.
- Adopt adequate measures assuring that all new certificates and diplomas issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference to the adequate NQF level.

3. LEVELS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

3.1 NQF scope and structure

The NQF is structured in eight levels, from basic education (Level 1) to doctorate degree (Level 8).

The NQF is inclusive and comprehensive, its scope covers qualifications from basic, secondary and higher education as well processes of validation, recognition and certification of competences obtained via non-formal and informal learning.

Article 5 of the NQF legal Act of 2020 ([Joint Portaria Nr 10/2020](#)) and its Annex II define the structure of the NQF and the level descriptors. Qualification levels represent learning outcomes and are defined by descriptors in three domains of learning.

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Responsibility and autonomy

The domains of level descriptors are defined as follows:

- Knowledge – The body of facts, principles, theories and practices related with a field of study, work or professional training, and is the outcome of assimilation of information through learning.
- Skills - The ability to apply knowledge and use acquired resources to complete tasks and solve problems and are described as cognitive, including the application of logical intuitive and creative thinking, and practical, implying manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments.
- Responsibility and autonomy - The proven ability to apply knowledge, skills and personal, social and methodological skills in professional situations, in study and training contexts for purposes of professional and personal development.

3.2 Types of qualifications

The NQF legislation defines qualification as “the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process, which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.” [UC-SNQ](#) clarifies further: “A qualification is obtained through a formal process of evaluation and validation of professional competences – knowledge and skills that allow the exercise of professional activity according to the requirements of the labour market.”

The NQF includes qualifications of different types, as illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2. Two main types of qualifications are awarded in Cape Verde:

- Diplomas
- Certificates

Annex 1 of the new NQF legal Act of 2020 (Portaria Nr 10/2020) presents the alignment of accredited qualifications with NQF levels (Table 2, in Chapter 10 of this report).

Higher education diplomas (DESP, Carta de Curso, Carta Magistral e Carta Doutoral) are accompanied by the Diploma Supplement, regulated by Portaria Nr 18/2014. The Diploma Supplement does not replace the diploma but complements the information on the programme and its level, for purposes of transparency and comparison. The adopted structure is aligned with international practice.

3.3 Quality assurance of qualifications

Legal base of quality assurance

In vocational training

Accreditation of institutions

- Decree-Law Nr 6/2013 of 11 February¹². Establishes the legal regime for accreditation of training institutions in relation with provision of courses and programmes of professional training.

Other legal Acts defining elements of quality assurance of programmes and qualifications in professional education:

- Joint Portaria Nr 9/2020 (CNQ) and 10/2020 (NQF) of 20 February on the principles and related regulations: Components of professional qualifications, format and structure of units of competence and of training modules.

In higher education, the fundamental legal Act is the Law Nr 121/VIII/2016 of 24 March¹³, which creates the Regulatory Agency of Higher Education ([ARES](#)) and approves its statute.

Other legal Acts on quality assurance of higher education:

- Decree-Law Nr 20/2012 of 19 June. Establishes the legal regime of HEIs¹⁴.
- Decree-Law Nr 22/2012 of 7 August. Establishes the legal regime of academic degrees and diplomas in higher education¹⁵.
- Despacho 05/2014 of 28 May 2014. Defines the general parameters of the process of selection of professionals for the Bank of Evaluators of HEIs¹⁶.
- General Directorate of Higher Education – National System of Evaluation of Higher Education Directives of the National Quality Assurance System-SNAQES, of 7 October 2014¹⁷.

¹² http://snq.cv/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Regime_Acreditacao_Entidades-Formadoras_DL-n%C2%BA6-2013.pdf

¹³ <https://kiosk.incv.cv/V/2016/3/24/1.1.21.2165/>

¹⁴ <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/send/9-legislacao/182-regime-juridico-das-instituicoes-do-ensino>

¹⁵ <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/send/9-legislacao/175-regime-juridico-das-instituicoes-do-ensino-superior-cabo-verde>

¹⁶ <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/send/9-legislacao/838-diretrizes-do-sistema-nacional-de-garantias-da-qualidade-do-ensino-superior>

¹⁷ <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/send/9-legislacao/677-directivas-do-sistema-nacional-de-garantia-da-qualidade-do-ensino-superior-snaqes>

- General Directorate of Higher Education – National System of Evaluation of Higher Education, 07 October 2014, Guide for external institutional evaluation of HEIs¹⁸.

Quality assurance processes

In vocational training, quality assurance processes comprise:

- Harmonised development and validation of qualifications (professional profiles and training plan and modules) and their inclusion in the CNQ.
- Accreditation of institutions providing training.

Only those institutions holding a valid accreditation licence (“*Alvará*”) can operate as training providers in the field of professional training. The accreditation system for professional training entities applies to all public or private entities, national or foreign, regularly constituted or registered in Cape Verde, with legal personality, which meet all the requirements established in the accreditation regime of entities for the development of initial and/or continuing vocational training courses.

Schools

The Ministry of Education is responsible for quality assurance of secondary schools, notably for their licencing. Moreover, those secondary schools (technical) providing training programmes included in the Catalogue of Professional Qualifications shall be accredited by UC-SNQ. This outreach of the UC-SNQ’s system of accreditation is fundamental to ascertain coherence and supervision over the performance of providers and the final trustworthiness of the achieved professional qualifications of the CNQ.

Higher education

By legislation, the national quality assurance system comprises the processes:

- Evaluation – twofold: a) internal (self-evaluation) of HEIs and b) external evaluation
- Accreditation and registration: a) creation of HEI; b) creation of study cycles (programmes) leading to degrees and diplomas.

All HEIs are obliged to establish internal systems of evaluation and a guarantee of quality and carry out regular self-evaluation of performance (Article 73 of Decree-Law Nr 20/2012).

External evaluation covers the following institutional dimensions of the HEIs, namely, institutional development, institutional management, infrastructure, academic policy, human resources policy.

The supervision of HEIs and their study programmes is a competence of ARES.

Currently there are 10 accredited HEIs listed in [ARES](#). Information on the respective legal acts of accreditation are published in the same webpage.

Quality assurance bodies

UC-SNQ’s role

UC-SNQ is responsible for the processes of accreditation of institutions providing training courses in the subsystem of Professional Training (with links to secondary education of the technical strand).

ARES’s mission and functions

In higher education, the only quality assurance body is the [ARES](#), created by Law Nr 121/VIII/2016 of 24 March. Article 5 states that ARES is independent in the exercise of its functions and is not submitted to superintendence nor guardianship by the government in respect to regulatory functions, without

¹⁸ <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/send/9-legislacao/680-guiao-para-avaliacao-institucional-externa-das-ies-de-cabo-verde>

prejudice to the supervisory powers conferred on the National Assembly. All governmental organs and institutions working in the sector of higher education have the duty to collaborate with ARES and provide information related with the quality assurance system.

ARES is tasked with four main competences: regulatory, supervisory, sanction and consultative

The purpose of ARES is to guarantee the quality of higher education through:

- Evaluation, accreditation and registration of HEIs and their study cycles (programmes).
- Accreditation of the internal systems of quality assurance of HEIs.
- Recognition of degrees and diplomas awarded by foreign HEIs.
- Organisation and maintenance of an information system on higher education.
- Performance of the functions of supervision and control of the functioning of public and private HEIs.

ARES's specific functions of quality assurance include, amongst others: defining quality standards; promoting the accreditation of study cycles and institutions to ensure compliance with the legal requirements; supervising and controlling of the performance of the HEI; giving advice and support on quality assurance of higher education; studying and surveying the quality assurance system of higher education in Cape Verde; providing information, statistical data and studies to support the definition of measures and strategies for higher education and research policies

ARES is governed by:

- Administration council: The main collegial executive organ
- The Fiscal organ: In charge of legal and economic-financial control
- Consultative council: Contributes to the efficient, effective and balanced exercise of the regulatory activity and provides advice to the administration council.

Cape Verde participates in the project HAQAA of the Africa-EU Partnership. HAQAA focuses on harmonisation of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education.

3.4 Use of learning outcomes and standards

The application of the learning outcomes approach in the design and description of qualifications is one of the key objectives of the NQF, as defined in Article 4 of the NQF legal Act (Joint Portaria Nr 10/2020). Further, Article 4 specifies that the application of the learning outcomes approach is essential to promote validation of non-formal and informal learning, thereby offering citizens in situation of vulnerability possibilities to access lifelong learning and to enter the labour market.

Learning outcomes appear to play a manifold role, namely, in conceptual and technical design of units of competence of professional profiles and in training modules, which together structure qualifications; and in ensuring a socially minded access to qualifications, inclusive for citizens with a limited schooling history but tangible life and work experience.

The application of the learning outcomes approach is well-rooted and established in qualifications design and management in the subsystem of vocational training. UC-SNQ organises regular capacity building programmes on the competence-based approach in vocational qualifications and training for stakeholders and practitioners¹⁹.

Conceptual basis

The conceptual and methodological underpinnings for the design and management of professional qualifications have been developed and adopted through legal Acts and explained and disseminated

¹⁹ <https://snq.cv/destaques/>

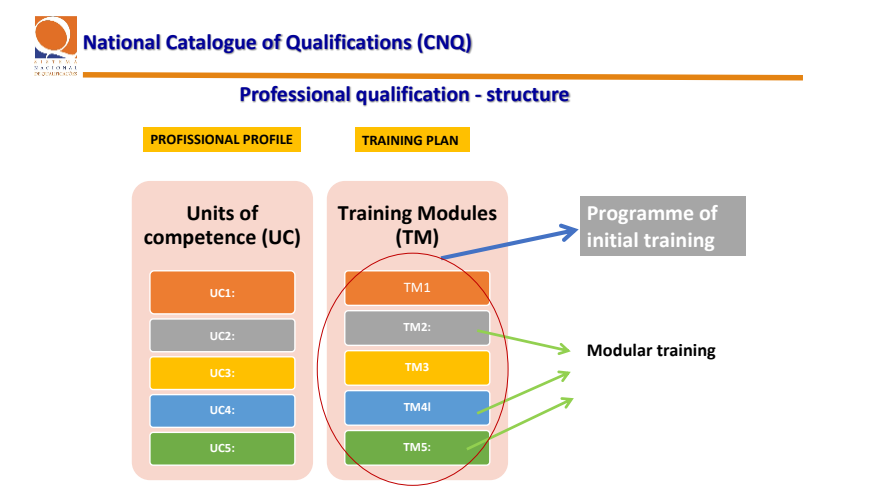
through handbooks. UC-SNQ assures the coordination, oversight and dissemination of this knowledge and methodological base.

The “[Qualifications Regime](#)” of UC-SNQ defines the wider principles of professional qualifications:

- Wide scope and based on competencies, with value and meaning for the labour market;
- Adaptable to the evolution of production modes and occupations;
- Based on concepts of professional skills that ensure workers’ ability to work in different contexts and production situations;
- Compliance with the requirements and formats of professional profiles structured in competence units, and training Programmes organised in modules associated with competence units;
- Supported by learning programmes that are the basis of the training offer in technical education and the vocational training system, and enable the implementation of the modular training system;
- Designed and formulated to support validation of individuals’ learning outcomes acquired in all types of learning contexts.

The established structure of a professional qualification included in the CNQ is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Structure of professional qualifications (Portaria nº 9/2020)



Source: UC-SNQ – Presentation at ACQF webinar on 8 May 2020

3.5 Credit systems

In professional training

- Legal basis: SNQ, Decree-Law Nr 4/2018 of 10 January: Article 11

The System of Credits of Professional-Technical Education is based on the attribution of credit points to qualifications of double certification in the NQF, which are integrated in the CNQ. The specific regulatory text is in development. Credit accumulation and transfer is permitted to enable mobility, notably in the space of ECOWAS and the EQF. Moreover, the credit system will apply to other certified training not integrated in the CNQ but based on valid quality assurance criteria.

In higher education

- Legal basis: Legislative Decree nº 13/2018 (Article 36) on the Bases of the Education System
- Decree-Law nº 22/2012 of 7 August. Establishes the legal regime of academic degrees and diplomas in higher education. At: <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/send/9-legislacao/175-regime-juridico-das-instituicoes-do-ensino-superior-cabo-verde>

The Legislative Decree nº 13/2018 determines that organisation of education provided by HEIs is based on the credit system, and defines:

- Credits are the measure of the number of hours of student workload.
- The number of hours of student workload to that is be considered in the definition of the number of credits includes all forms of academic work, namely contact hours, hours for practical learning (internships), field work, individual and group study and evaluation.

The credit system in higher education contributes to students' mobility and to recognition of prior learning.

- Students' mobility between national education institutions of the same or different subsystems, national and foreign institutions is ensured through the credit system, on the basis of the principle of mutual recognition of the value of learning and the acquired competences
- Recognition of prior learning: Education institutions recognise, through the credit system, the professional competences, and the postsecondary training of candidates and enrolled students, through the special access modalities, which are to be defined in a specific legal Act.

Besides, the Decree-Law nº 22/2012 in Article 52 stipulates that the number of credits allocated by curricular unit is defined in accordance with a set of principles, amongst the others the following: "The number of credits corresponding to the workload of one curricular year in full time is 60". This definition is aligned with ECTS.

The credit system is applied in HEIs as follows²⁰:

- One credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of workload (all forms of learning – contact hours, autonomous study, project work, laboratory work, evaluation).
- One curricular year (full time) corresponds to 60 credits. One semester (full time) corresponds to 30 credits.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

4.1 Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

Policy institutions

The Ministry of Education leads education system policy, from preschool to higher education. The Secretary of State of Education is responsible for higher education policy.

The recently established [ARES](#) implements and supervises the system of quality assurance in higher education.

Professional education policy is conducted by the Deputy Secretary of State for Professional Training and Innovation, at the Ministry of Finance.

²⁰ University of Cabo Verde, Deliberation Nr 005/CONSU/2013 of 19/03/2012. Establishes the norms of curricular organisation and credit system in the courses of licenciatura of the University of Cabo Verde <https://unicv.edu.cv/universidade/organizacao/orgaos/conselho-da-universidade/deliberacoes/39-delibera%C3%A7%C3%A3o-n%C2%B0-005-consu-2013-estabelece-as-normas-de-organiza%C3%A7%C3%A3o-curricular-e-do-sistema-de-cr%C3%A9ditos-nos-cursos-de-gradua%C3%A7%C3%A3o-da-uni-cvdownload>

Governance of the NQF, in the frame of the SNQ, is assured by the UC-SNQ, established by Decree-Law N° 62/2009 (14/12/2009). A decade later the UC-SNQ remains the core governing structure and its leading and coordinating role was reinforced (Decree-Law N° 7/2018). The UC-SNQ is led by the Unit Coordinator and is composed by a) the Inter-ministerial Technical Committee for Qualification (CTIQ), b) the Executive Secretariat, and c) the National Commission of Professional Equivalences (CNEP), a specialised body of the SNQ.

UC-SNQ is the central service tasked with the coordination, design, and technical support in the domain of professional qualification policies. UC-SNQ ensures the construction and integrity of the National Qualifications System, with the aim to promote and develop the integration of technical-professional training offers, through the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), as well as the assessment and certification of competences.

The social partners contribute to the coordination of the SNQ through statutory participation in the CTIQ and in CNEP. Other entities that integrate the governance and implementation of the SNQ include the Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP), Sectoral Technical Committees (CTS), and higher education institutions (HEIs).

4.2 Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

As part of the tasks of creating and managing the National Catalogue of Qualifications, temporary support and consultation bodies are created from UC-SNQ, namely:

- Sector Technical Committees (SC), responsible for technical support in the design of professional profiles and associated training modules related with professional qualifications corresponding to each of the professional families of the CNQ.
- Sector Councils (COS) responsible for the validation of profiles and training modules of each of the professional qualifications elaborated by the CTS and approved by UC-SNQ.

5. RECOGNISING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

5.1 VNFIL / RPL (RVCC) arrangements

Recognition Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVCC) is one of the statutory components of the SNQ and is organically linked with:

- **NQF:** Through the application of the learning outcomes approach. The primacy of learning outcomes in designing and assessing qualifications enable the access to qualifications by validation and certification of acquired competences.
- **CNQ:** Through the right to acquire any of the registered qualifications via processes of recognition, validation and certification of acquired competences, in accordance with the legislative-regulatory framework.
- **Individual register of qualifications and competences:** Registers individual acquired competences and qualifications and identifies the competences missing to the completion of a certain qualification, thereby contributes to build individual trajectories of adequate training. Currently in the process of legislative regulation.

The Decree-Law Nr 54/2014 of 22 September, on RVCC, defines the policy and conceptual underpinnings of the promotion of validation of competences acquired in all contexts of learning. Social and labour market inclusion, economic productivity, valorisation of all types of learning and

reinforcement of flexible lifelong learning paths of citizens are the benefits expected from effective implementation of this policy.

- “People acquire, with their life experience, namely in professional activities, knowledge and competences relevant for the exercise of many activities. Those competences can and shall be formally certified, and, if necessary, complemented with training adjusted to individual needs, thereby promoting access to higher levels of qualification.” *Source: Decree-Law Nr 54/2014*

Stage of development of RPL (RVCC)

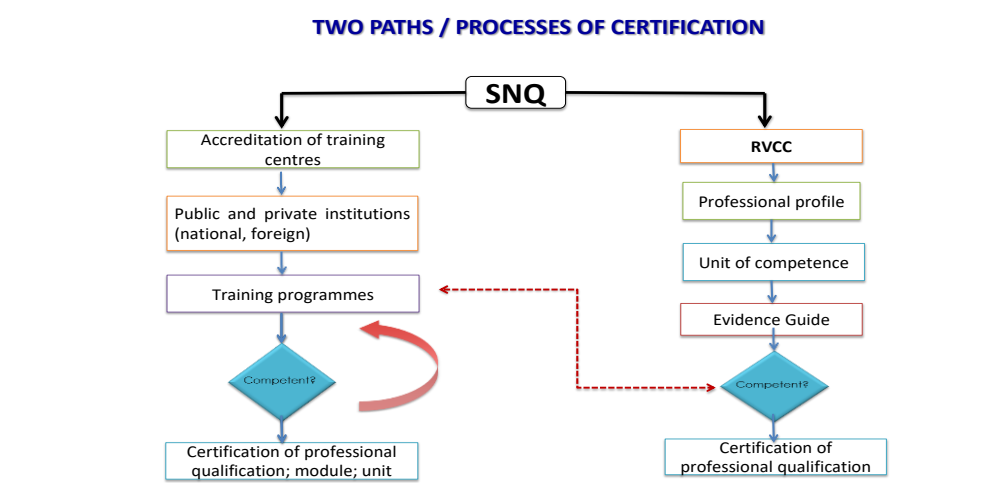
In Cape Verde, RVCC is in the activation stage. In 2020, the UC-SNQ is developing additional instruments to be pilot-tested in the context of RVCC.

RVCC is defined in Article 3 of the Decree-Law nº 54/2014, as the formal process enabling individuals to obtain the recognition, validation and certification of his/her skills and competences, independently of the ways and contexts in which these competences were developed.

Main features of RVCC as a system:

- Target group: Individuals over 25 years of age with at least 5 years of professional/ employment experience.
- Governance of the system: UC-SNQ coordinates the organisation, functioning and elaboration of referential for professional certification and assessment standards. UC-SNQ accredits the certifying entities, monitors and supervises them and provides technical and methodological support.
- Accreditation: Only accredited certifying entities can provide services of the RVCC system, in accordance with the legal requirements. Substantive experience in professional training and in the targeted professional families are among the key criteria of accreditation of certifying entities. The accreditation can be revoked under circumstances of breach of the legal requirements and obligations, low performance or at request of the entity.

Figure 2: Different paths to a common goal – certification of competences within the SNQ.



Source: UC-SNQ: Presentation at ACQF webinar of 8 May 2020

The RVCC process integrates the following phases:

- **Phase 1**: Information and guidance – first orientation for candidates on the process and viability in each case.

- **Phase 2:** Recognition of competences – candidates identify the knowledge and competences acquired throughout life, applying a methodology of *Bilan de competences* (Skills Audit). Main outputs: Individual professional portfolio, assessor’s report identifying the candidates’ competences by units of competence and the professional activities to be validated from the provided evidence.
- **Phase 3:** Validation of competences – evaluation of the competences in correspondence with the professional profiles of the CNQ. Based on evaluation instruments adapted to the nature of the competence, for example, technical interview, practical examination. The jury comprises an assessor, an evaluator, and a representative of the enterprise sector (independent evaluator). Output: Deliberation of the jury on the validation process.
- **Phase 4:** Certification of competences – the jury certifies that the assessed and validated competences have a formal value in relation to a predefined referential. In case of partial certification, the assessor and the evaluator propose a personal qualification plan, encompassing the units of competence, which were not certified. With this personal plan, the candidate has access to an adequate modality of training or to self-training in the context of the SNQ. At conclusion of the training programme, the candidate resumes the RVCC process.

UC-SNQ started practical implementation of RVCC, via two main actions: a) several rounds of training of RVCC professionals (assessors, coaches); b) piloting of RVCC process for priority sectors. One of the first pilot of RVCC processes took place in the sector Hotels-Restaurants-Tourism (Professional Qualification: Services of Food and Drinks, level 3). In 05/2021 a total of 32 candidates from different public and private organisations started their RVCC process to acquire the professional qualification Administrative Services and Client and User Support (level 4). More information is available in the [UC-SNQ website](#).

6. NQF IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

6.1 Key achievements and main findings

A major strength of the NQF in Cape Verde results from its operationalisation as inherent part of the qualifications system – the NQF is not a separated policy instrument but is integrated. The NQF has been legally defined and organised as component of the SNQ, working in complementarity with the national qualifications catalogue (CNQ), the system of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC / RPL) and the credit system. This systemic approach has contributed to the policy robustness of NQF, supported by a stable governance setting (led by UC-SNQ) and the involvement of social partners, sector councils and other consultative bodies such as Inter-ministerial Technical Committee for Qualification (CTIQ).

In the decade of evolution, the CNQ has been populated with new professional qualifications in 15 professional families (sectors) developed according to a common competence-based approach. RVCC is becoming a reality for workers in different economic sectors and human and technical capacities have been built to operationalise RVCC processes within common parameters of quality and credibility.

The way forward needs to move towards closer cooperation of the NQF with higher education qualifications, in line with the objectives of the NQF and the SNQ.

6.2 Qualifications registers and databases

The online **National Catalogue of Qualifications** is available at the [home page of UC-SNQ](#). Currently, it includes 63 professional qualifications of four NQF levels (2, 3, 4, and 5), distributed in 15 professional families. The webpage of each professional family contains extensive information on the respective

qualifications, in particular the professional profile by units of competence and the training plan by modules: [example](#).

Moreover, the [CNQ webpage](#) includes comprehensive information on the legal and methodological aspects guiding development of qualifications, on the professional families and the related sector studies ([example of study of IT sector](#)).

The updated **register of accredited programmes in higher education leading to qualifications** is managed by the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES) and the summary list is published at [Agência Reguladora do Ensino Superior](#). By mid 2020 this register includes 205 accredited programmes of NQF levels 6, 7, and 8 (licenciatura, master and doctorate).

6.3 Qualification documents

The format and award of certificates and diplomas included in the NQF are regulated by legislation. UC-SNQ and ARES supervise the award of qualifications in vocational training and higher education respectively.

UC-SNQ carries out the homologation of certificates delivered by all training entities duly accredited by the competent authority, pursuant to 11 of Decree-Law No. 53/2014, of September 22, which regulates the new Legal Regime of Vocational / Professional Training. Homologation is obligatory for certificates of initial vocational training, certificates of professional qualification included in the CNQ, and certificates of modular training courses.

6.4 Recognition of foreign qualifications

In professional training

Decree-Law Nr 7/2018 of 7 February is the main legal basis regulating professional equivalence. The CNEP is a specialised organ with technical and scientific autonomy to evaluate and issue opinions and recommendations on professional equivalence of courses and other training activities carried out abroad or in foreign schools established in Cabo Verde. CNEP operates in close cooperation with UC-SNQ, which homologates the opinions on equivalence issued by CNEP.

In higher education

[ARES](#) is the institution in charge of the recognition of academic degrees and diplomas.

In Cape Verde, the recognition of academic degrees and higher education diplomas awarded by foreign HEIs is regulated by Portaria nº 49/2013, of 15 October²¹, and by the Decree-Law nº. 22/2012, of 7 August, which approves the Legal Regime of Degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education (RJGDES).

Portaria nº 49/2013 standardises the procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications, making them more transparent, equitable and simple, and introduces changes to previous regimes. This broadens the recognition of foreign qualifications to diplomas of higher education courses not leading to academic degrees, of a level and nature identical to higher technical-professional courses. It introduces simplified procedures, establishing in the recognition of a system of precedence, which ensures a more automatic process on the decision, avoiding repetition, reducing costs and response times on the decision of recognitions.

The recognition of foreign degrees and diplomas is the act that allows to generically recognise a degree or diploma of foreign higher education, whose level, objectives and nature are considered equal in Cape

²¹ <https://portondinosilhas.gov.cv/images/igrp-portal/img/documentos/1AD97C9EB7221E20E053E600040A6AAF.pdf>

Verde to bachelor, master and doctor or diploma. The recognition process lasts approximately 30 days upon submission of the full file, conditional on the timely response of the concerned foreign HEI.

7. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORK/ OTHER FRAMEWORKS

7.1 Referencing to regional frameworks

Cape Verde is an open society and economy, which values cooperation with Europe and Africa. The objectives defined in the NQF legal act (Joint Portaria nº 10/2020) reflect these values. Article 4, e) stipulates: “Promote close links with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and with other NQFs, notably with NQFs of ECOWAS states to support credit transfer and accumulation in education, vocational training and higher education, with the purpose to improve people’s mobility and facilitate recognition of acquired skills and competences”.

Cape Verde has expressed interest to compare with the EQF and participate in related activities.

7.2 International cooperation

Cape Verde participates in international cooperation and networks in the domain of education and training, notably:

- African Union: HAQAA project, ACQF project
- ECOWAS
- Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP)

The Government promotes bilateral cooperation and exchanges with other African countries, seeking to share experience and expertise in the domain of qualifications systems and education.

7.3 International donor support

Cape Verde and the European Union (EU) have strong cooperation ties in the context of the Special Partnership. The 11th Ministerial meeting (June 2021) of Foreign Affairs EU-Cape Verde reiterated the strong commitment to an enhanced political dialogue within the Special Partnership, of particular relevance in this period marked by the pandemic and the need for a swift recovery. The partners reaffirmed their attachment to the shared values and principles underpinning the relationship: respect for human rights, democracy, good governance and rule of law, and commitment to multilateralism, international peace and security. The focus of the next bilateral multi-annual programme 2021-2022 will be supporting socio-economic recovery based on a green and inclusive growth model taking into account Cabo Verde’s Small Island Developing State (SIDS) specificities. The Amendment to the Visa Facilitation Agreement EU-Cape Verde will reduce the cost and simplify the requirements.

Cape Verde maintains bilateral cooperation with Germany, Japan and other countries. GIZ and JICA support development of renewable energy, and electrical mobility. Portugal is an important bilateral partner, cooperating in several sectors, with special emphasis on education and health.

8. IMPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Can the NQF contribute more effectively to its objective of integration of the subsystems of education and training and promotion of lifelong learning?

The NQF aims to promote better integration of education and training subsystems and convergence between academic and professional education and training. While evidence of such convergence is visible in NQF Level 5 – attractive and provided by both professional training institutions and schools, but also by HEI – the analysed sources and websites show that the CNQ has been limited to qualifications of professional training (Levels 2 to 5). This path has been justified by factors of policy and institutional nature, but there are enablers of a refreshed dialogue across the subsystems.

The dialogue between the leading agencies – ARES for higher education and UC-SNQ for professional training – can reinvigorate the development of a common path and joint milestones in implementing the NQF. At least four opportunities can be identified to stimulate this dialogue:

- A common understanding and benchmarks for Level 5 qualifications.
- The place of secondary technical education with double certification – a starting point to professional training and/or to higher education.
- Shared concepts on outcomes of modular training for purposes of lifelong learning.
- The shared use of the CNQ for qualifications of all subsystems.

The **perspective developments of the SNQ** are planned in that the UC-SNQ was entrusted with the development of a wide range of policies and instruments the coming years. This portfolio of developments comprises the framework of key competences, the credit system for professional education and training, modular training, model of dual professional training, distance learning model and the model of “training checks”.

9. MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Agência Reguladora do Ensino Superior de Cabo Verde: <https://www.ares.cv>

DGES: <https://www.dgesc.gov.cv/index.php/ensino-superior-de-cv/legislacao/category/9-legislacao>

e-ME: <http://portal.minedu.gov.cv/>

Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP): <http://iefp.cv/2020/06/03/comunicado2-2-2/>

Instituto Nacional de Estatística: <http://ine.cv/estatisticas-por-tema/>

UC-SNQ website: <http://snq.cv/>

10. INFOGRAPHIC OF THE NQF/NQF OVERVIEW TABLE

Table 2: Structure of the NQF – accredited qualifications

NQF level	Qualification
1	Diploma of basic obligatory education

2	Diploma of basic adult education with double certification pathway corresponding to professional qualification of Level 2 Certificate of professional qualification of Level 2
3	Certificate of Secondary Education (10 th class) Certificate of professional qualification of Level 3
4	Diploma of secondary education (12 th class general strand) Diploma of secondary education (12 th class of technical strand corresponding to professional qualification of Level 4) with double certification Certificate of professional qualification of Level 4 with double certification Certificate of professional qualification of Level 4
5	Diploma of higher professional studies (DESP) with training of professional qualifications of Level 5 (CESP – Courses Higher Professional Studies). Certificate of the complementary professionalising class (ACP) with training of professional qualification of Level 5 Certificate of professional qualification of Level 5 with double certification Certificate of professional qualification of Level 5
6	Academic degree licenciatura
7	Academic degree master
8	Academic degree doctorate

Source: [Portaria conjunta 10/2020. Annex 1.](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ARES	Regulatory Agency of Higher Education
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CESP	Courses Higher Professional Studies
CNEP	National Commission of Professional Equivalences
CNQ	National Catalogue of Qualifications
CTIQ	Interministerial Technical Qualification Committee
CTS	Sectoral Technical Committees
DESP	Diploma of Higher Professional Study
ECTS	European Credit and Transfer System
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of Western African States

EU	European Union
ETF	European Training Foundation
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
HAQAA	Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IEFP	Institute of Employment and Professional Training
ME	Ministry of Education
REC	Regional Economic Community
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PEDS	Strategic Plan of Sustainable Development
RVCC	Recognition Validation and Certification of Competences
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SNQ	National Qualifications System
STC-EST	Specialised Technical Committee-on Education, Science and Technology
UC-SNQ	Coordination Unit of the National Qualifications System

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