

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – MOROCCO

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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 NQF snapshot

Morocco's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has enjoyed more than a decade of national-level debate, peer-learning from other countries and growing political support. As a result, the concept paper on the NQF levels and specifications were renewed when, in 2019, the government introduced a coordination mechanism intended to contribute to making the NQF operational. Work on this mechanism was further supplemented by a white paper on creating implementing the NQF. The former Ministry of education, vocational training, higher education and scientific research (MENFPESRS) has approved the NQF reference document that sets and describes the levels (issued in 2013 and revised in 2015). Since the 2019 Framework Law No 51.17, the government has been carrying out a wide range of education and training reforms in which the NQF plays an important role. However, there is no legislation to define the NQF's parameters and characteristics so that it can be systematically applied within the education and training sector. But there are some positive steps towards implementation.

Some elements of the existing education system will be key to implementing future NQF legislation and regulations – the learning outcomes approach and the quality assurance system (policy, practice and institutions). There are still two important system components to be established for the NQF to operate as a policy instrument that fosters coherence between subsystems and flexibility: 1) a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system; and 2) a Credit Accumulation and Transfer system. There are already a conceptual and methodological bases for these components, which can be further consolidated for system-wide application once the ongoing reforms have reached maturity.

In 2019, the NQF appeared in legislation for the first time. Framework Law No 51-17 on the education, training and scientific research system, enacted on 9 August 2019, defines the purpose of the NQF and how it is governed.

It '... establishes a national certification and validation framework that specifies the rules and criteria for ranking and certifying qualifications and recognising learners' academic and professional achievements and skills. This framework has been drawn up by a dedicated independent national authority which comprises representatives from the various education and training sectors and professional bodies according to regulations, ...'. (Article 35)¹.

In April 2019, the Head of Government created, by circular no 10/2019 of 28 June 2019, the National Commission of the NQF, the presidency of which was assigned to the Ministry of education, vocational training, higher education and scientific research.

Similarly, a Standing Committee of the CNC was created by Decision No. 289-19 of 1 July 2019, issued by the Minister of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research. Its principal mission was to prepare for the establishment of the independent national authority in accordance with the provisions of Framework Law 51.17, in particular Article 35.

No action has yet been taken, but discussions on how to take the NQF forward have continued within the Vocational Training Department (DFP in French) at the Ministry for Economic Inclusion, Small Businesses, Employment and Skills (MIEPEEC), particularly as part of discussions on the vision for lifelong learning (LLL) which were held as part of the EU project PIAFE project (Integrated Support Project for Training and Education). The study on lifelong learning clearly shows the key functions the NQF and the APL system need to make progress in this area.

Morocco's NQF is still in the adoption stage.

¹ Dahir (royal decree) No 1-19-113 of 7 Hija 1440 (09 August 2019) enacting Framework Law No 51-17 on the education, training and scientific research system, Official Bulletin – Official translation edition of 17 December 2020.

1.2 Policy context

The Moroccan NQF draws on a series of policy and legislative documents, such as Framework Law No 51-17 on Education, Training and Scientific Research, the 2015-2030 Strategic Vision for Quality and Equity in Schools and the 2021 vocational training strategy. The NQF is one of the structural reforms in human capital development. Over the past four years, progress in implementing the NQF has slowed, as it struggles to find its place in government policies that focus more on inclusive growth, and developing infrastructure connectivity and investment in manufacturing and other key sectors.

In 2021, Morocco introduced a new development model that puts human capital in all its forms at the heart of its priorities and aims to promote a new socio-economic focus to development that stimulates growth and generates jobs.

The new government employment roadmap, launched in February 2025, put in place a strategy aimed at reducing the unemployment rate to 9 % by 2030 and generating 1.45 million new jobs. One of the roadmap's major initiatives focuses on modernising vocational training, including strengthening the links between general secondary education and adult learning.

The African Development Bank's [2024 economic outlook](#) highlights the new model structured towards manufacturing, trade integration, infrastructure connectivity and human capital development. The Bank also highlights the importance of inclusive growth and Morocco's position in global value chains, mobilising private sector resources and opening up public contracts to SMEs.

According to the [World Bank](#), Moroccan authorities have set out key reforms for long-term development, such as broadening health insurance coverage and implementing education reform to improve learning outcomes. Raw materials, human capital and green transformation are important to attract more foreign direct investment, while tourism and remittances also play a positive role in economic growth.

According to the [HCP](#), young people aged between 15 and 24 are a key group, representing around 39 % of all Moroccans under 25 years of age. This demographic potential harbours valuable energy and creativity for the country's development, though access to employment and social inclusion remains a major challenge for young people. Underachievement, unemployment, poverty and social exclusion are just some of the obstacles they face. As they are among the most vulnerable young people, NEETs are a particular concern. The 2022 national employment survey showed that there were 1.5 million NEETs aged 15-24 in Morocco, amounting to 25.2 % of all young people. 30.5 % reside in rural areas and 21.6 % in urban areas. It is important to remember that women account for almost 72.8 % of NEETs (ONMT, 2023). We can also see that NEET rates have not changed significantly in recent years.

The government's continued investment in education and training is, however, bringing results. Initial vocational training is very much in demand according [to the ETF 2023 Torino Process](#), indicating that young people consider it to be a relevant and competitive choice for their education. The system is registering twice as many applications as it has places. On the other hand, continuing vocational training is struggling to attract adult learners onto its courses. While the Moroccan vocational training system seems future-oriented, and includes general and green skills in its curricula, it is difficult to provide good quality skills and basic aptitude teaching to these young learners. Exposing Moroccan vocational training providers to the international system might spark improvement and innovation.

The NQF is not really mentioned in these developments, but it is potentially a key tool in bringing about quality, relevance, coherence, transparency and comparability of qualifications in Morocco. A Moroccan NQF could also link the different parts of the education and training system to lifelong learning, pegging qualifications on an international scale to support job mobility. It seems that the national qualifications framework will take on more importance in the coming years. Morocco recognises the importance of international worker mobility and seeks to improve and reinforce the links between labour market occupations and skills and the qualifications and learning outcomes offered by the education and training system.

1.3 NQF legal basis

The current legislation and policy underpinning how the NQF and future measures to implement it are to be developed are as follows (see details in Table 1 below):

- Framework Law on Education: [Framework Law No 51-17 \(passed on 9 August 2019\)](#) on education, training and scientific research.
- 2015-2030 Strategic Vision: 'Pour une École de l'Équité, de la Qualité et de la Promotion' (For a School of Equity, Quality and Promotion).
- Roadmap 2022-2026 for quality in state schools.
- National plan for accelerating the transformation of the ecosystem around higher education, scientific research and innovation.

Other NQF-related legislation:

- Law No 01.00 on higher education.
- Law No 36.96 on alternated training.
- Law No 12.00 on apprenticeships.
- Law No 13.00 on the status of private vocational training.
- Law No 60-17 on continuing training for employees in the private sector, certain categories of public sector staff and other non-salaried persons in private work (published 6 October 2018).

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

2.1 Education and training reforms

The government's policy is contextualised in the 'Vision stratégique de la réforme de l'enseignement à l'horizon 2030' [Strategic vision of education reform by 2030], which aims to meet four major objectives:

- Fairness and equal opportunities.
- Quality for all.
- Promoting both individuals and society.
- Effective leadership and renewed drivers for change.

The main focus areas of the 2015-2030 Strategic Vision have been set down in Framework Law No. 51-17. This law safeguards the integrity of the Strategic vision of political and institutional risks and is a national pact binding on all parties. It underpins the legislation that will be needed for implementation.

A national commission for monitoring and supporting the reform of the education, training and scientific research system has been set up under the Head of Government to ensure the objectives set out in the Framework Law are met.

Table 1: Education and training reform strategies and policies and how they relate to the National Qualifications Framework

Text/Source	Key NQF references
Framework Law No 51-17 on education, training and scientific research Framework Law No 51-17 (passed 9 August 2019)	The NQF: an instrument that describes and ranks national qualifications according to a scale of parameters. These parameters are applied to levels of learning outcomes and reflect needs in the labour market and to develop society (Article 2). Establish a national framework for the certification and validation of qualifications, including the methods and criteria for ranking qualifications and recognising learning outcomes acquired in education, training and other contexts. This framework is a set of regulations designed by a dedicated stand-alone national commission representing the various education and training sectors as well as professional organisations (Article 35).
Strategic vision of education reform 2015-2030 For a School of Equity, Quality and Promotion: Vision stratégique de la réforme [Strategic vision for reform] 2015-2030	Lever 12, point 80: NQF [...] Establish a national qualifications system capable of organising and classifying certificates and diplomas using a reference grid mandated by the ministries responsible for education, training and scientific research. Such a framework will ensure transparency and clarity, and that qualifications can be compared against a national certification reference framework; it will improve the instruments used to assess learning outcomes and enhance their credibility and effectiveness. The framework will also ensure qualifications are transferable nationally and internationally. [...] Lever 12, point 81: Validation of professional experience [...] Establish a system for the recognition of skills resulting from in-occupation experience to benefit people with such experience, enabling them to access continuing training [...] Lever 19, point 102: Validation of cognitive and in-occupation learning [...] Adopt a unified system for the recognition of cognitive and professional learning outcomes of individuals, overseen by an independent national body comprising representatives from the various ministries of education, training and professional sectors; [...]

Roadmap 2022-2026 for a quality public school	This roadmap focuses on how to improve learning outcomes and in particular the basic and key skills of pupils leaving state primary and secondary education. Currently only a minority master these skills by the end of their studies and too many still drop out of school. Twelve measures have been identified to help pupils, teachers and schools/universities improve performance.
National plan to accelerate the transformation of the ecosystem around higher education, scientific research and innovation.	The Plan aims to create a new system for Moroccan universities, making them more innovative and better connected to the ecosystems around them. The plan focuses on academic excellence, scientific research, innovation, governance and operational excellence. In terms of learning outcomes, the focus is on new methods for learning, including for students' skills and problem-solving capacities, better work-based learning for students and greater emphasis on applied research and innovation, global value chains, and international cooperation and mobility. Universities should become centres of excellence firmly anchored in their regional ecosystem and cooperating closely with the private sector. Overall, the plan aims to increase the relevance and quality of higher education and the capacity of universities to actively contribute to economic development.

2.2 Aims of the NQF

The NQF is defined in the original 2013 Ministry of Education reference document (see page 5, above) as follows:

“An instrument governing qualifications based on objective quality characteristics so that they are recognised by the labour market. It is an instrument for referencing qualifications whose quality is consistent with a quality assurance process that assesses learning outcomes as prescribed by the labour market following future-focused analysis.”

Framework Law No 51-17 on education partially reiterates the above definition but introduces a new driving force beyond the labour market – society.

‘The national certification framework: a tool that identifies and ranks national qualifications according to a reference grid of standards. This grid is applied to levels of learning outcomes and reflects needs in the labour market and to develop society.’ (Law No 51.17 on education, Article 2).

3. LEVELS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

3.1 NQF scope and structure

According to its own reference document, the Moroccan NQF is a comprehensive tool divided into eight levels (1 to 8), each with six domains of level descriptor: knowledge, skills, complexity, autonomy/responsibility, adaptability and communication.

The detailed level descriptors serve as a reference for stakeholders and practitioners involved in designing skills frameworks, curricula, and assessment standards. In choosing the domains above, the stakeholders involved assessed strategic areas key to the future of education and training, such as communication skills and adaptability.

The analysis of qualifications and pegging to NQF levels was carried out on a provisional basis in 2015-2016 for level 5 qualifications (Diplôme de Technicien Spécialisé pour la Formation Professionnelle [Technical Qualification Specialised in Occupational Training], Diplôme Technicien Supérieur pour l'Enseignement Supérieur [Technical Qualification Specialised in Higher Education] and Diplôme Universitaire Technique pour l'Education Nationale [Technical University Qualification for Schools sector]) for construction and automotive industries.

3.2 Types of qualifications

The NQF reference document (of 2013) breaks down the types of qualifications by level.

The Moroccan National Certification Framework is divided into eight levels (1 to 8). Table 2 in Chapter 9 shows the correspondence between the NQF levels and the respective levels of education/qualification according to the reference document.

3.3 Quality assurance of qualifications

Higher education

The main legislation on state and private higher education, and accreditation of curricula and of institutions (colleges and universities) is available on this website: [Higher education](#).

[Law No 80-12 of 21 August 2014](#) brought in the Agence nationale d'Évaluation et d'Assurance qualité de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (l'[ANEAQ](#)) [National agency for assessing and quality assurance in higher education and research]. The Agency's mandate is to implement its quality assurance processes of higher education and scientific research courses and teaching institutions. The ANEAQ website opens with its motto: 'Evaluate to evolve'.

The principle of quality assurance was introduced into higher education on the basis of the three main measures provided for in Law No 01-00 on higher education. Quality assurance of teaching institutions is conceived as a lever for reform and spans evaluation of:

- Overall ethos, consistency and retrospective analysis.
- Mandatory self-assessment for all higher education colleges and universities (state and private).
- Mandatory rating disclosure to national and regional bodies.
- Mandatory rating disclosure to the public.
- Audits and appraisals by specialised and independent agencies.

The ANEAQ began work in 2016 and carries out more than a thousand course inspections per year at both private and state higher education colleges and universities. The Agency's latest reports are available on its website <https://www.aneaq.ma/>

One fundamental development has been the decree (11 July 2019) bringing in the [National standards in assessment and quality assurance](#) that sets out the areas, standards and criteria that apply to all higher education and scientific research establishments. The framework sets out the quality assurance processes:

- Quality assurance: processes and mechanisms by which to assess to what degree objectives have been achieved and to agree on the methods to use for continuous improvement at the college or university.
- Assessment: systematic audit process that measures a college or university's ability to meet specific requirements and objectives against its own criteria or expectations. It is designed to reveal the college or university's strengths and weaknesses while taking into account the public nature of the response and reports.
- Internal assessment: self-evaluation carried out by the establishment, formalised in a report called the 'self-evaluation report' that is sent to a committee of external experts.
- External assessment: inspection carried out by independent experts from outside the college/university with no conflicts of interest.
- Quality audit: periodic quality analysis of the college/university, or its affiliated units, by an independent pair of experts to check it complies with the quality requirements and to suggest any necessary changes.

Vocational training

The Vocational Training Department (DFP) has the wide-ranging task of developing the government's vocational training policy and implementing and assessing strategies to develop the sector across the board.

As such, the Vocational Training Department is responsible for:

- carrying out studies and research to develop policy on vocational training.
- proposing curricula designed to meet the demand for the skills businesses need to improve performance and competitiveness, to better integrate people into the labour market and to improve worker employability.
- adapting the legislative and regulatory framework governing vocational training – in both the state and private sectors – to economic, social and cultural changes, and ensuring that it is properly applied.
- overseeing the running and inspection of private vocational training courses, in accordance with current legislation and regulations.
- designing and overseeing the proper running of courses designed to improve the quality of the services provided by the various stakeholders in the sector.

Appraising the entire vocational training structure takes different forms and is carried out at various levels. The main objective is to improve the quality of training and adapt it regularly to changing socio-economic needs. Assessment provides quantitative indicators against which to monitor changes in the system.

Internal performance of the vocational training system

For every 100 trainees enrolled at a vocational training college in 2022, 55 went on to graduate.²

External performance of the vocational training system

The panel survey carried out by the DFP to track graduates is a means by which to assess the external performance of the vocational training system. This survey, which is carried out by scheduling two successive rounds of interviews with graduates 9 and 36 months after graduation, makes it possible to measure the level of labour market integration of these graduates and to obtain information on employment rates, the characteristics of the jobs held, the unemployment rate and the extent to which their training matches the job. Data from 2022 shows that 70 % of graduates are in employment or further study immediately after graduation³ (with the rate exceeding 80 % for some colleges) and 90 % three years after graduation⁴.

Standardised assessment of institutions

The vocational training department has developed a quality assurance cycle for vocational training in Morocco that meets national and international standards.

This quality assurance cycle consists of the following four stages:

1. an in-house inspection, called self-assessment.
2. an external inspection, carried out by independent auditors using external assessment standards (consistent with the ISO 21001 standard).
3. a national label for institutions that have demonstrated at inspection that they have established, fully-fledged systems in place.
4. ISO 21001 international certification awarded by an accredited body.

These stages are consecutive. Recognition that a college/university meets quality assurance standards is gradual, in accordance with the benchmark standards for external inspection and the requirements of ISO 21001.

The new cycle of measures is being introduced gradually. A total of 250 vocational training providers are participating in the national integrated self-evaluation system for vocational training establishments (SNIAEV), generating data for use in external inspections and focusing on continuous performance improvement. Three years of self-assessment had been completed by 2024. Work on the other external evaluation cycles is progressing.

3.4 Use of learning outcomes and standards

Morocco has been promoting the use of skills in education and training for 25 years and Moroccan education and training has many years of experience in using learning outcomes, which are at the heart of education and training reforms.

Use of learning outcomes for the literacy sub-sector and for general primary and secondary education

The adult literacy rate in 2022 was 77.3 %. ANCLA, the National Agency to Combat Illiteracy, supports programmes to improve adult literacy. However, these programmes sit outside formal education, and learning outcomes are not recognised as enabling adults to integrate into the labour market, unless they take the free exam in Year 7. There is also an age limit of 30 years of age for returning to education. The strategic study on lifelong learning suggests aligning levels 1 and 2 of the

² 2023 Progress report from the Vocational Training Department (DFP)

³ 2023 Progress report from the Vocational Training Department (DFP)

⁴ [Minister Sekkouri at the House of Representatives 22 July 2024](#)

literacy programme with NQF levels 1 and 2 to create pathways to progression and support lifelong learning.

A competency-based approach (called the APC in French) has been used in general secondary education since the early 2000s, though not in all schools and not by all teachers. International studies, such as PISA, and national assessments such as the National programme for assessing learning outcomes (PNEA) have shown that the vast majority of pupils are unable to master the expected learning outcomes in Arabic, French and mathematics by the end of primary or lower secondary education, and that state schools lag behind private schools. Further, there are still too many pupils dropping out of school at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. The government has announced a national learning crisis and adopted a roadmap for 2022–2026 to improve pupil attainment.

Use of learning outcomes in vocational education and training

Qualifications based on learning outcomes are well-established in vocational training in Morocco. The country has continuously promoted its competency-based approach (APC) over the last decade, so that institutions and actors have acquired substantial experience of both developing and applying the methodology to curricula, and in training specialists in its use.

The concept of *competence* in the APC has some specific nuances:

- Specific competences.
- Transferable competences.
- The exit competency to be achieved by the end of a course – described in the training plan (competency matrix or training objectives): listed in the transcript of competences.
- Specific descriptors – described in the APC component ‘Analysis of the work situation’ (AST in French): cognitive and motor skills, complexity, and communication.
- The DFP website provides links to a number of documents on a competency-based approach in vocational training.
- The Moroccan APC is an ecosystem governing vocational training. The APC is more than methodologies for designing skills repositories, curricula and assessments and includes tools for identifying and analysing skills needs by sector and for assessing the performance of vocational training as a whole.
- The latest generation of the structured APC methodology framework (2015) is online and includes 11 guides.

Despite the APC’s extensive implementation and continuous progress, it is not yet used by all training providers on all courses. The strategic study on lifelong learning highlights that the APC, when applied alongside the traditional approach of objectives-based teaching, creates inconsistency in teaching methods. It recommends that the APC should become the standard approach for all vocational training courses.

Use of learning outcomes in higher education

In higher education, a regulatory framework sets the rules on course design (for accreditation) at all levels. The detailed structure of the courses leading to qualifications is provided in the national educational standards (CNP). These standards are specific to each level and type of qualification. Courses leading to accreditation include in their curricula, among the key elements, the training objectives, skills to be acquired, certification opportunities, admissions criteria, training pathways and links with other courses. All courses are split into modules.

The National plan for accelerating the transformation of the higher education, scientific research and innovation ecosystem 2030 aims to ensure that universities are better integrated into their regional ecosystems, work more closely with the private sector and offer more training and applied research to business to help them be more innovative. As a result, students need to be able to develop more practical, problem-solving skills. They will also have to be prepared to work in a more international environment.

NQF level descriptors in relation to the learning outcomes of qualifications

The tests summarised in the 'Guide for analysing and pegging qualifications to the NQF', issued in 2016 for two existing higher education qualifications and two vocational qualifications, highlighted the extent to which the learning outcomes expressed in the curriculum documentation match the descriptors of the NQF levels.

The comparison with each of the six categories of descriptors shows that certain categories are more unequivocally represented in course learning outcomes than others. For example, knowledge and skills are better represented than communication and adaptability.

Use of professional standards and qualifications

Standards-occupations-competences (REM/REC)

The REM and REC identify and classify competences by occupation within a sector. As an example, the REM/REC suite for the construction industry shows how the REC more accurately defines and ranks competences, while the REM is more explicitly oriented towards the characteristics of an occupational profile.

The REM and REC are important references in the process of developing units of competence, programmes and qualifications in vocational education. The REM and REC are sector-based classifications of occupational standards and skills profiles. Morocco has invested in developing a REM and REC for 18 industries. The REM and REC are developed by professions themselves and the ministries for those industries (tourism, industry and others), with support on methodology from the DFP and the involvement of the ANAPEC job service. The REM and REC are based on the principle of learning outcomes. REMs describe the key roles and responsibilities by occupation, as well as the key competences required. RECs provide finely detailed descriptions of tasks, skills and competences.

Together, the REM and REC are management tools for professions (by industry) to make learning outcomes from VET courses better meet the needs expressed by businesses. It is hoped that REMs and RECs will contribute to transparency and quality in learning outcomes and qualifications. Lastly, REMs and RECs provide a solid foundation for setting mechanisms by which to recognise non-formal and informal learning, and to provide information and careers guidance.

Since 2016, nearly 500 REM and nearly 600 REC entries have been made, though this does not yet cover all industries. In 2023, there were 20 REM and 20 REC entries developed for the pharmaceutical industry. Nevertheless, some of these entries should be updated and it must be ensured that they are all used to improve training provision.

In higher education

The main reference for drawing up higher education courses that lead to accreditation are the National teaching standards workbooks ([CNPNS](#)). The regulatory framework sets the rules on course design (for accreditation) at all levels, as well as the course structure. These standards are specific to each level and type of qualification.

3.5 Credit systems

The various strategies and legislation, such as Law No 01-00 on higher education and Law No 51-17 on education, recognise the importance of better-organised routes between education subsystems and colleges and in introducing gateways to reintegrate learners and allow them to continue in further education and retraining throughout their lives.

Morocco introduced the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) into higher education in 2024-2025. Students will have the opportunity to continue part of their training in other higher colleges or universities, either domestically or internationally. The credits obtained from these

establishments will be recognised and recorded, offering them a unique opportunity to diversify their academic experience.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

4.1 Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

Oversight of the NQF is covered by two articles of Framework Law No 51-17.

Article 18 states that special coordination mechanisms should be created to develop and later implement the following:

- courses, curricula and training.
- training courses for educators and professionals.
- university, academic and careers guidance.
- qualifications, recognising equivalence of qualifications and accrediting competences acquired on-the-job.

Article 35 concerns the setting up of a national qualifications and accreditation framework that sets, inter alia, the rules and criteria for the classifying and ranking of qualifications and accrediting of learners' and workers' competences.

This framework has been drawn up by a bespoke independent national authority and comprising representatives from the various education and training sectors and professional bodies according to regulations.

A Standing Committee was set up in 2019 to ensure monitoring of the implementation of these two articles. The committee includes representatives for all the stakeholders concerned. The commission presented a draft decree on NQF implementation, but the decree did not pass into law. Internal discussions within the DFP are ongoing as to how to advance the Framework Law.

4.2 Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

There are currently (2025) three ministries responsible for employment policies, vocational training and secondary and higher education, namely:

- The Ministry of economic integration, small businesses, employment and skills (MIEPEEC), which is responsible for employment policy and industrial relations and includes the vocational training department.
- The Ministry of national education, pre-school and sports, which is responsible for pre-school and primary education.
- The Ministry of higher education, scientific research and executive training (ENSSUP).

Other key institutions and stakeholders are:

- The High Council for education, training and scientific research (CSEFR), an independent advisory body responsible for issuing opinions on all public policy and issues of national interest in the fields of education, training and scientific research.
- ANAPEC: National agency for the promotion of employment and skills. The public employment agency that coordinates and puts into practice active labour market policy, including on training. ANAPEC plays a key role in the oversight of jobs and careers repositories (REMs).
- Labour market observatory: monitors and predicts the dynamics in the labour market and skills needs, appraises employment policy, and analyses job vacancies and employer demand for skills and qualifications. The Observatory is part of MIEPEEC.

- The General confederation of Moroccan enterprises (CGEM): a body that has been involved in NQF development for more than a decade. The CGEM's training commission participated in NQF methodology testing and in qualification transparency projects.
- Professions observatory (OdB in French): set up in 2014 under the aegis of the CGEM to support the professions in the face of fast-paced economic and technological change. It is particularly involved in analysing developments in professions and producing skills frameworks for continuing training.

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

5.1 VNFIL arrangements

The 2015-2030 strategic vision expresses the intention to build a system for accrediting prior learning (APL): *‘Adopt a unified system for the recognition of cognitive and professional learning outcomes of individuals, overseen by an independent national body comprising representatives from the various ministries of education, training and professional sectors’* (lever 19, p. 70).

Extensive reference is made to APL in Framework Law on Education No 51-17, which provides for the framework for accrediting prior experience. Accreditation of occupational or professional skills is incorporated into the national qualifications framework. It describes the accreditation process for accrediting occupational or professional skills as a tool for assessing and recognising work experience and skills acquired outside formal education and training, with the aim of enabling candidates to continue their studies.

It calls for special coordination mechanisms to be created in order to develop and run courses leading to certification, recognising the equivalence of diplomas and accrediting occupational skills, and setting up a national framework for certification and accreditation that specifically sets the rules and criteria for the classifying and ranking of qualifications and accrediting of learners’ occupational or professional skills.

It calls for a bespoke independent national body to be set up, setting down the rules and criteria it should follow. It would be a body comprising representatives from the various sectors of education, and from training and professional bodies.

The Guidance Act on education is not the only law that references APL. Accrediting prior learning is also covered by Law No 60-17 on continuing vocational training for workers, which stipulates that any person engaged in a trade or profession has the right to have his or her achievements accredited, especially those gained on the job, with a view to obtaining a qualification or certificate. The list of occupations concerned and the minimum time required before taking a test will be set by a regulation.

The same law refers to the skills audit. The aim of the skills audit is to enable employees to analyse their professional and personal skills, aptitudes and motivations to draw up a career plan and, where appropriate, a training plan.

Although APL is seen as an important tool for lifelong learning and is mentioned in the framework law on education, it is mainly seen as a labour market instrument in Morocco.

APL covers prior learning linked to practising a trade or profession under an REM and REC, and explicitly only concerns trades that broadly align with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) qualifications. This is especially relevant to businesses as it is they who put forward the candidates. APL cannot be sought by an individual on his/her own initiative in Morocco. APL does not lead to any certificate that might be listed in the catalogue under the Moroccan NQF.

Experiments have been carried out in different sectors in 2008-2010, 2011-2012, 2016, and 2019-2023 in the construction, textiles, tourism and meat processing industries and for tradespeople, with the DFP signing agreements with industry federations and their relevant ministries. These federations and ministries then signed the labour market skills certificates that successful candidates received. In total, more than 2,489 candidates took part and 1,488 certificates were awarded. Four new agreements on implementing APL for tradespeople were signed on 26 June 2024 with the chambers for tradespeople in the Marrakech Safi, Tangier Tetouan El Hoceima, Oriental and Souss Massa regions as part of the framework agreement signed on 21 April 2021 by the Vocational Training

Department and the Department for Tradesmanship. The information/advice stage has been completed, drawing on the experience of tradespeople in the four regions concerned. The certification stage is scheduled for June 2025.

As part of an Erasmus+ project, Morocco has also passed into law a process for accrediting prior learning in higher education. The AMEL project saw a group of higher education colleges and universities coming together to agree the theory and techniques behind introducing accreditation of prior learning to Moroccan higher education. It then carried out five assessments – with interviews – in 2022-2023 to test the approach. In the November, three candidates defended their written applications with a view to obtaining a degree in computer science. One candidate applied for a Master's degree in Human Resources. All candidates were partially accredited. In the specific case of the AMEL project, candidates received a document clearly indicating which units had broadly been accredited.

APL consists of four phases, following the DFP's APL manual:

1. Information and advice for candidates: on the APL process and its requirements, and on pre-assessments of professional experience in the field of the target qualification.
2. Eligibility: examines the application file and decides whether the applicant is eligible.
3. Follow-up: support candidates in preparing their work experience description file and prepare them for the certification process.
4. Certification: a jury decides whether to recognise the skills acquired on the job, guided by the certification reference framework.

The qualifications awarded after an APL appraisal do not have the same value or status as qualifications resulting from formal vocational training, because the appropriate legislation is not yet in place.

The Agency for literacy (ANCLA) also recognises prior learning at six specialised centres.

For APL to become a reality, the time has come to move beyond all these pilot schemes towards a system for APL covering different sectors and levels of education, including adult training and learning, and to implement the NQF.⁵

⁵ Strategic study on lifelong learning (2023) and Inventory on the accrediting informal and non-formal learning 2023 Country Report: Morocco

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF THE NQF

6.1 Key achievements and main findings

The NQF exists, although the legislation to govern its use has not yet been passed. It is a set of principles, a concept of qualification levels and a vision of the route to take to achieve them. But it is also an existing benchmark that should be recognised as such. A back catalogue of references, achievements and lessons learned exist that will make the Moroccan NQF unique and add value.

From a purely technical and methodological standpoint, the foundations for the NQF include the REMs and RECs, the competency-based approach (APC), the quality assurance framework (particularly in higher education), the basic elements of a planned APL process, and soon also a digital database of qualifications.

These foundations also include an essential element of any NQF: active socio-economic partners committed to a more unambiguous and, above all, operational NQF – the CGEM, the profession observatory and other professional bodies.

Two components of the qualification system have not yet been implemented: credit accumulation and transfer and APL. It should be noted that Morocco's European partners have reviewed the concept and technical aspects underpinning the credit system in higher education. It is also expected that APL processes will draw on the lessons learned from the pilot projects and evolve to better reflect the NQF, meaning that qualifications can be awarded that are fully aligned with it. Both components – credit transfers and APL – should be taken into consideration more when looking at their contribution to advancing careers and equipping people to be more mobile in the labour market throughout their lives, and the NQF is an important tool in this strategy.

Certificates from the national basic literacy programme provide real opportunities for thousands of Moroccans to access NQF education and training/pathways to qualifications, and the NQF can demonstrate its added value as a tool for social inclusion and in its ability to contribute to change.

6.2 Qualification registers and databases

The qualifications framework cannot function without a central repository where people can find qualifications. This repository should be the official source of information, accessible online, and provide clear information on qualifications and related competences, as well as the career opportunities and courses that lead to these qualifications, with information on where and how these qualifications can be obtained. At present, there is no such database of qualifications in Morocco.

The content of courses and their associated qualifications from the main education divisions – schools, vocational education and higher education – are available from different and distinct instruments: a) databases for internal use by the ministerial departments and not open to the public; b) information on courses, syllabuses and qualifications published on the websites of the various education and training bodies, such as the OFPPT, training centres and higher education colleges. The information on courses and qualifications is usually concise. The exception is the OFPPT's MyWay website, which provides details on the content of every vocational qualification course.

The Ministry of Higher Education website and ANEAQ publish information on qualifications of all types from higher education colleges, and state, private and non-university dependent institutions. You can find lists of qualifications and training courses from state and private universities, categorised by how learners can access them – national entrance examinations or open access. However, no such similarly detailed list is available on the website for state higher education institutions. Those interested have to go to the website of each college or university.

The Ministry has created a BTS (senior technician qualifications) portal. The portal contains information on the qualification and courses leading to it. The list of courses gives, without specifying

the learning objectives or how they are run, the 22 courses divided into two streams that lead to a BTS diploma.

The young people's page of the DFP website publishes information on available courses and qualifications, namely: a) a list of courses offered by state providers, broken down by level of qualification and by region and b) a list of courses available from accredited private providers. No information on the content and learning outcomes of these courses and qualifications is published on the website.

The DFP website also contains a list of Jobs and careers (REM) and Jobs and skills (REC) repositories, which are a source of reference for that division of education's courses (see REM/REC Space). All published REM/RECs contain their full content (tasks and skills) and can be used as a reference by any user. However, the repositories are published as PDF files, which does not make it easy to search for the various occupations.

The [OFPPT](#), the main public vocational training organisation in Morocco, provides easy access to comprehensive and detailed information on existing vocational training courses and qualifications for both types of qualifications, i.e. a) diplomas and b) certificates. The MyWay site is aimed at future students who want to find out about the various training opportunities offered by the OFPPT. It has the complete directory of all qualification courses and levels, with concise information in a standardised format on the occupational profile, learning objectives, how the course is run, careers and training providers.

6.3 Qualification documents

There is legislation governing the format of diplomas and certificates awarded after completing accredited formal training of guaranteed quality.

In Morocco, there is no equivalent to the diploma supplements and certificate supplements that exist in European countries. Digital degrees are not yet available either. As part of the THAMM project (for a global approach to governing labour migration and mobility in North Africa), two digital supplements to the qualifications were tested in 2023 (for the specialist technician in climate engineering and the specialist technician in civil engineering qualifications).

6.4 Recognition of foreign qualifications

'Information on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Morocco' is available to users on E-equivalence, the new online recognition platform from the Ministry for Higher Education, and applications can be made remotely.

The National agency for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education and scientific research (ANEAQ) is responsible for officially recognising qualifications. Law No 67-16 (22/09/2016) amending the provisions of Law No 80-12 on the ANEAQ authorises the Agency to 'carry out investigative work on applications for recognition of equivalence of higher education qualifications'.

The DFP grants, on request, equivalence recognition to vocational training qualifications awarded by accredited foreign state or private bodies that meet the requirements laid down in law, in particular with regard to: content, number of hours and conditions of acceptance onto the training course.

Since 2016, recognition of qualification equivalence has been governed by the decree setting the conditions and the specific procedure for obtaining vocational training qualifications, the ministerial decree enacting the decree and the decision establishing a high commission for processing equivalence applications.

Morocco cooperates with the EU and sub-Saharan Africa on matters of international student mobility. An increasing number of foreign students are enrolled in Moroccan higher education institutions, which is the French-speaking African country hosting the most foreign African students.

7. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL/OTHER FRAMEWORKS

7.1 Referencing to other frameworks

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is fast developing and becoming operational, as the first African countries are undertaking referencing of their national qualifications frameworks to the ACQF. The country's highest authorities have expressed their commitment to join and contribute to the work of the ACQF development process, working towards common targets for qualifications on the continent. Morocco is expected to benefit from this process if the NQF makes progress in its implementation.

The Moroccan NQF scoping paper was developed before the ACQF existed and shows the country's openness to international developments, including the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. In the medium term, Morocco aims to align its NQF with the European Qualifications Framework, which would also create links with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. The NQF scoping paper refers to the European Qualifications Framework referencing process. The process of comparing against the EQF is expected to start as soon as the NQF is up and running.

7.2 International cooperation

Morocco cooperates with regional and transnational initiatives and projects that are relevant to the NQF, in particular with the ACQF.

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

7.3 International donor support

The European Union (EU) is one of the main donors to the modernisation of vocational training, general secondary education, higher education and the expansion and quality of literacy policy and programmes in the country.

The EU supports Morocco's labour migration policy through THAMM Plus as part of the Talent Partnership. The EU also supports the Integrated Training and Education Support Programme (PIAFE). A strategic study on lifelong learning has been undertaken as part of this programme.

Other key bilateral partners contributing to Morocco's human capital policies are France and Germany. Canada has also traditionally been a major partner for cooperation in vocational training.

8. IMPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS

The previous, 2021, edition of the this NQF report– concluded with the hope that creating an independent body would bring about the implementation of the NQF, but unfortunately this has not happened. Although the process has slowed down, discussions are still continuing behind the scenes – especially at the DFP – on how to get the NQF up and running.

Learning outcomes have been at the centre of education and training reforms in Morocco for the last 25 years. The poor performance against the set learning outcomes recorded in recent national and international studies has led the government to declare a learning crisis. Morocco continues to invest heavily in its human capital. Measures are being taken to make young people more employable and to support innovation and international cooperation in the private sector, as well as to ensure inclusion, reduce illiteracy, dropout and NEETs rates, and encourage lifelong learning. Quality assurance and improving quality are top of the agenda, as the country aims to meet international standards.

A lifelong learning approach is essential to ensure that all these initiatives are connected and that dropouts, NEETs, low-performing learners and the unemployed can find their way back into training and contribute to Morocco's economic development. The strategic study on lifelong learning carried out with the support of PIAFE projects sends a clear message: launching the NQF and incorporating APL are essential to make lifelong learning a reality. The NQF is also an important tool in making qualifications more transparent and easier to compare against qualifications from other countries.

The framework law sets clear conditions. The government must find a solution to the regulation issue and set up an independent body. Work could still start elsewhere in a more concrete way by developing the qualifications database, bringing together Morocco's existing qualifications, clearly specifying the learning outcomes and linking them to occupations and skills. Establishing a database of relevant, quality-assured qualifications strengthens overall confidence in those qualifications. This work could start in vocational training (where there is already a very good foundation with the courses offered by the OFPPT), then gradually extend to other parts of education and training, and involve progressively more stakeholders, service providers and the economic sectors and companies that supply and approve the information. This would create momentum in stakeholder groups and ministries, with the Ministry for Jobs entrusted with the key role of leading the process. This work could improve matching between job vacancies and qualifications and link up with a future classification of occupations and skills.

There are positive signs that developments could accelerate in the near future, but much depends on the willingness of government to begin the development and implementation process.

9. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

Table 2: NQF levels

NQF level	Schools	Vocational training	Higher education
1	Primary	Vocational Training Certificate (VTC)	
2	Primary	Specialisation	
3	CE9	Qualification	
4	Baccalaureate (Bac), Vocational Baccalaureate (Bac Pro)	Technician	
5 (2 years post-Bac)	Advanced technician diploma (BTS)	Specialised technician	Diploma in General University Studies (DEUG) Diploma in Vocational University Studies (DEUP) University Degree in Technology (DUT)
6 (3 years post-Bac)			Bachelor of Fundamental Studies (LF) Vocational degree
7 (5 years post-Bac)			Masters (M) Specialist Master's degree (MS) Master of Science and Technology (MST) Engineering Diploma (ID) Diplomas from Management and Translation Schools
8 (8 years post-Bac)			PhD (D)

Note: 'Bac' stands for Baccalauréat (secondary school leaving certificate)

ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African continental qualifications framework
ANAPEC	Agence nationale de promotion de l'emploi et des compétences [National agency for the promotion of employment and skills]
ANEAQ	Agence nationale d'évaluation et d'assurance qualité de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique [National agency for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education and scientific research]
ANLCA	Agence nationale de lutte contre l'analphabétisme [National Agency to Combat Illiteracy]
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
BTS	Advanced technician diploma
CEC/EQF	European Qualifications Framework
CFP	Vocational training certificate
CGEM	Confédération générale des entreprises du Maroc [General confederation of moroccan enterprises]
CNPN	Cahiers des Normes Pédagogiques Nationales [National Teaching Standards Manuals]
CSEFRS	Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, de la formation et de la recherche scientifique] [High council for education, training and scientific research]
CSMD	Commission spéciale sur le modèle de développement [Special committee on development models]
DFP	Vocational Training Department
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
HCP	Haut Commissariat au Plan [Higher Planning Commission]
LMD	Bachelor's degree/Master's degree/Doctorate

NQF	National qualifications framework
OdB	Observatoire des Métiers et Compétences des Branches Professionnelles [Observatory for trades and skills in occupational sectors]
OFPPT	Office de la formation professionnelle et de la promotion du travail [Office for vocational training and raising employment levels]
REC	Jobs and skills repository
REM	Jobs and careers repository
VT	Vocational training

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