



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP  
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE



# African Continental Qualifications

## Framework

### MAPPING STUDY

#### Country Report

#### Working Paper

## Kenya

Author: Maria Overeem

Reviewer: Andrea Bateman

Reviewer and contributions: Eduarda Castel-Branco

July 2020



JET EDUCATION SERVICES  
THINK EDUCATION. THINK JET.

This project is co-funded by the European Union and the Federal  
Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



This working paper on the Kenyan national qualifications framework is part of the Mapping Study of qualifications frameworks in Africa, elaborated in 2020 in the context of the project *Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)*.

The reports of this collection are:

- 1) Reports on countries' qualifications frameworks: Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Togo
- 2) Reports on qualifications frameworks of Regional Economic Communities: East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Authors of the reports:

- 1) Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF): reports Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Morocco, Mozambique
- 2) James Keevy (JET Education Services): report Ethiopia
- 3) Jean Adotevi (JET Education Services): reports Senegal, Togo and ECOWAS
- 4) Lee Sutherland (JET Education Services): report Egypt
- 5) Lomthie Mavimbela (JET Education Services): report SADC
- 6) Maria Overeem (JET Education Services): report Kenya and EAC
- 7) Tolika Sibiyana (JET Education Services): report South Africa
- 8) Teboho Makhoabenyane (JET Education Services): report South Africa
- 9) Raymond Matlala (JET Education Services): report South Africa
- 10) Zaahedah Vally (JET Education Services): report South Africa

Reviewers of the reports: Andrea Bateman and Eduarda Castel-Branco

The contents of this paper are the sole responsibility of the author / authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the project and/or JET Education Services. While every effort was made to verify the contents of the working papers, we encourage the reader to provide us supplementary information where any unintended omissions are identified: [info@jet.org.za](mailto:info@jet.org.za) and [ecb@etf.europa.eu](mailto:ecb@etf.europa.eu)

Reproduction is authorized provided the source is acknowledged.

July 2020

## Contents

Acronyms.....	6
Introduction on the ACQF Mapping Study.....	8
Policy Context of this Mapping Study.....	8
ACQF Mapping Study: Brief Overview of the Scope and Methodology.....	8
Acknowledgements.....	10
1.0 Snapshot of the Kenyan NQF.....	11
2.0 Introduction and Context of Kenyan Education.....	13
2.1 General Information.....	13
2.2 Economy.....	14
2.3 Informal Sector.....	14
2.4 In- and Outbound Labour and Students.....	15
3.0 Mapping of Education and Training System.....	16
3.1 The Structure of Kenyan Education System.....	16
3.1.1 Pre-Primary and Primary.....	16
3.1.2 Secondary.....	17
3.1.3 Tertiary.....	18
3.2 Competency Based Curriculum (CBC).....	19
3.3 Assessment, Learning Pathways and Accreditation.....	20
Table 1: Levels of Education and Certificates Awarded in Kenya (Current System).....	21
3.4 Teaching Force.....	21
3.4.1 Teacher Training.....	21
3.4.2 Pre-service Training.....	22
3.4.3 Professional Development of Teachers.....	22
4.0 Scope and Structure of the NQF.....	22
4.1 Scope.....	22
4.2 NQF Levels.....	23
Table 2: The KNQF.....	24
4.3 Level Descriptors.....	25
4.4 Development of qualifications.....	26
4.5 Credits.....	26
4.6 National Qualifications Information Management System.....	26
5.0 Legislation.....	27
5.1 Legal Acts Directly Applying to the NQF and its Implementation.....	27
5.2 Other Related Legal Acts and Regulations.....	28
6.0 Organizing Systems: Governance, Institutions, Stakeholders.....	28
28	
6.1 The Kenya National Qualifications Authority.....	28
6.2 Skills Councils.....	30

7.0	Quality Assurance of Qualifications .....	31
7.1	Legal base of the Quality Assurance framework .....	31
7.2	Scope of the Quality Assurance framework .....	31
7.3	Quality Assurance Bodies and Regulators in NQF Implementation.....	32
7.4	Curriculum Development .....	33
7.5	Participation in International Bodies .....	33
7.6	Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) System .....	33
8.0	NQF implementation .....	34
8.1	Inclusion of qualifications in the register .....	34
	Table 3: example of TVET qualification in the KNQF qualifications register - Fisheries Technology (fishing operations) 083104T4 .....	35
	Table 4: Fisheries Technology (fishing operations) - Qualification content (units) .....	32
8.2	Funding.....	32
8.3	Monitoring, Evaluation and Development.....	33
9.0	Validation of Prior Learning .....	33
9.1	Relation of RPL and NQF .....	33
9.2	Stage of Development of RPL .....	33
9.3	Informal Learning.....	33
10	Recognition of ForeignQualifications.....	34
11.0	Conclusions and future plans .....	34
	References and sources .....	36

## Acronyms

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
APSEA	Association of Professional Societies in East Africa
AQVN	African Qualifications Verification Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CBC	Competency Based Curriculum
CBET	Competence Based Education and Training
CDACC	Curriculum Development and Certification Council
CHE	Council of Higher Education
COBET	Complementary Basic Education
CUE	Commission for University Education
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
EAC	East African Community
ECDE	Early Childhood Development and Education
ECTS	Exemption and Credits Transfer System
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
KCATS	Kenya Credit and Transfer System
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KICD	Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development
KNCCI	Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
KNCES	Kenya National Classification of Education Standard
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
KNOCS	Kenya National Occupational Classification Standard
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHEST	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
MSEA	Micro and Small Enterprise Authority

NAQIMS	National Qualifications Information Management System
NARIC	National Recognition Information Centre
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
QAI	Qualifications Awarding Institution
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TCDF	TVET Curriculum Development Framework
TSC	Teachers' Service Commission
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
TVET CDACC	TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
VIT	Vocational and Industrial Training
VTT	Vocational Technical Training
YP	Youth Polytechnics

### Policy Context of this Mapping Study

This country report forms an integral part of the *Mapping Study on the state-of-play and dynamics of qualifications frameworks in Africa*, which lays the updated evidence foundation for development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). The purpose of this report is to provide an updated overview - not an evaluation - of policies, practices and instruments related with qualifications frameworks in Africa.

The African Union Commission (AUC) initiated the ACQF development process in September 2019 working in partnership with the European Union (EU), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationaler Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) over a period of 2.5 years (2019-2022). The ACQF- development activities are part of the African Union (AU)-EU project “Skills for Youth Employability”, which supports a holistic process building on evidence and analysis; AUC political leadership and consultation of African stakeholders (national, regional and continental); awareness raising and capacity development of African stakeholders.

The main planned output of the project by mid-2022 is the ACQF policy and technical document and action plan technically validated for decision making by the relevant organs of the AU.

The intermediate project outputs planned for 2019-2022 are:

- 1) ACQF Mapping study (by mid-2020)
- 2) ACQF Feasibility study (by mid- 2021)

### Other key activities:

- 1) Stakeholder consultation workshops throughout the process (2019-2022)
- 2) Awareness raising and capacity development actions (2020-2022)
- 3) Website to support ACQF development and information sharing
- 4) ACQF related policy and technical information for STC-EST meetings

### ACQF Mapping Study: Brief Overview of the Scope and Methodology

The ACQF mapping study aims to chart a comprehensive, specific and updated analysis of where Africa stands in respect to qualifications frameworks development, establishment, operationalization and revision. The scope of the study is wide in terms of explored thematic domains; and inclusive, as it considers the broad range of countries’ dynamics and progression



stages in developing and establishing qualifications frameworks.

The mapping study builds on a combination of sources of information and data:

- 1) Desk research: collection and analysis of sources, including policy-legislative framework; methodology sources; qualifications websites, registers and catalogues; statistical data; analyses and studies.
- 2) Online survey: conducted between beginning of November 2019 and mid-January 2020. Responses received from 29 countries.
- 3) Technical visits to a group of ten countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs): carried out by a team of experts, in the period from mid-December 2019 to mid-March 2020.

*Countries included in the technical visits: Morocco, Egypt, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Angola, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as Cabo Verde (included in March 2020). Three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) contacted: EAC, ECOWAS and SADC.*

### **Main Reports of the Mapping Study**

- Final comprehensive report, encompassing the full set of findings from the continental stocktaking and the thematic analyses on qualifications frameworks developments in Africa. Finalization: September 2020.
- Synthetic report and infographics focused on key findings. Period: September 2020.

### **Thematic analyses contributing to the comprehensive mapping study**

- Report of continental-wide survey on developments of qualifications frameworks encompassing all AU Member States (AU MS) and RECs;
- Report of analysis of qualifications; and,
- Country reports (11 countries) and REC reports (3 RECs).

The technical visit to Kenya for this mapping report was conducted in January 2020. The most significant meeting was conducted on 7 January with representatives of institutions of the education and employment sectors, and organizations of economic sectors and the world of work. The detailed list of participants is not included in this version of the report.

## **Acknowledgements**

The ACQF project expresses sincere gratitude to Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) led by the Director General Dr. Eusebius Mukhwana Juma, for the valuable contribution to this country mapping report. KNQA graciously hosted the main meeting with representatives of key institutions, and shared information and views during and after the country visit. The openness of these discussions reflects the high level of expertise and engagement of the KNQA and the other institutions in both the national and continental processes towards transparency of qualifications and closer cooperation of qualifications frameworks. In addition the project acknowledge the valuable contribution of all the Kenyan stakeholders who supported the survey by giving us information. These include the Ministry of education, universities, regulatory agencies, Kenya Federation of employers, assessment bodies, private sector, training institutions and professional bodies.

## 1.0 Snapshot of the Kenyan NQF

Two main legal acts regulate the KNQF:

- Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014
- Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2018)

The KNQF was developed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) in accordance with Section 6 of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) has developed and gazetted the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2018), which it is implementing. The Website of KNQA is [www.knqa.go.ke](http://www.knqa.go.ke)

The **Kenyan National Qualifications Framework (KNQF)** is a learning outcome-based qualifications framework, covering all education and training sectors and all forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal. The KNQF established a **common regulatory system** for the development, assessment and award of qualifications. In addition, a central register of qualifications sets out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2014).

The overall **aim** of the KNQF is to promote access to and equity in education, quality and relevance of qualifications, evidence-based competence, and flexibility of access to and affordability of education, training assessment and qualifications. The KNQF acknowledges **two separate sub-frameworks** within this overarching framework, one for academic and the other for vocational qualifications. However, core generic competences involving the application of knowledge in practical situations are the same for both domains. KNQF qualifications incorporate both theoretical knowledge and employability skills. Credits obtained through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and through the Kenya Credit and Transfer System (KCATS) are considered in order to determine which level of qualification an individual should work towards.

The KNQF has 10 levels. The **level descriptors** are structured in three domains of learning: knowledge, skills, and competence. The KNQA has developed descriptors for each level of education and training, the justification for each level and qualification and the knowledge, skills, competencies, and volume of learning associated with each level. The framework has also defined the minimum entry requirement for each level of qualification.

The KNQA is currently in the process of developing **occupational and training standards** in

consultation with state department of Post Training and Skills Development, industry players and training providers, so that the country's qualifications can be better aligned to employers' and industry needs. In re-aligning qualifications with requirements of the framework, the Authority is working with various existing curriculum development bodies, including the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development (KICD), and the TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC), and various other institutions such as universities and national polytechnics that have the legal mandate to develop curricula in the country.

In the KNQF one '**credit**' represents:-

- (i) The value assigned for ten notional hours of learning; (
- (ii) the recognition of equivalent in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning; or
- (iii) the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification which may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced studying, based on the number of notional hours for a specific qualification (Kenya Subsidiary Legislation. 2018).

The KNQF is governed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) which was set up in 2015 according to the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act No. 22 of 2014. The KNQA works closely with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Institute (KICD) and the TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TVET-CDACC) to ensure that the curricula being developed support the goals of the KNQF. The KNQA in collaboration with, State Department of Post Training and Skills Development, TVETA, NITA and the Kenya Chambers of Commerce have started engagements aimed at establishing Sector Skills Councils to guide skills and curriculum development in the TVET sector.

A central **register of qualifications** managed by the KNQA sets out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2014). The KNQA is in the process of establishing the Kenya National Learner Record Database (KNLRD) to track the qualifications awarded to Learners by various Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAI) in the country.

The KNQF is **aligned** with the East African Community (EAC) qualifications framework, the

East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE), developed by the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA). The EAC framework is annexed to the EAC Common Market Protocol for Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications, to which Kenya is a signatory.

## **2.0 Introduction and Context of Kenyan Education**

### **2.1 General Information**

The Republic of Kenya (in Swahili: *Jamhuri ya Kenya*), is a country on the East-Coast of Africa, with a population of around 50 million people. Kenya has a young population, with 73% of aged below 30 years. Kenya has experienced rapid population growth, from 2.9 million to close to 50 million inhabitants over the past century.

Kenya is a presidential representative democratic republic. The president is both the head of state and of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the National Assembly and Senate. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature. The country has 47 semi-autonomous counties governed by elected governors.

Kenya's capital and largest city is Nairobi, while its oldest city and original capital is the coastal port city of Mombasa. Kisumu City is the third largest city and also an inland port on Lake Victoria. Other important urban centres include Nakuru and Eldoret.

The official languages are English and Swahili. The latter is the main language, with regional languages being Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, Kamba among others .

Over the past year Kenya has been undergoing a process to introduce a nation-wide biometric identification (ID) scheme. This Huduma Namba ID will in future be needed to access public services, such as school admission and certification. Sensitive personal information, such as contact details, fingerprints and a person's profession, was collected during 2019. The introduction of the controversial scheme was halted by Kenya's High Court early 2020 until new data protection laws are enacted.

Kenya has met some of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including reduced child mortality, near universal primary school enrolment, and narrowed gender gaps in education. Interventions and increased spending on health and education are paying dividends. While the health care system has faced challenges recently, universal health care policy, devolved health care and free maternal health care at all public health facilities will improve health care outcomes and develop a more equitable health care system. In 2019, the

fertility rate for Kenya was 3.42 children per woman, a gradual decrease from 8.08 children per woman in 1970.

## **2.2 Economy**

Kenya is a lower-middle-income economy which has made significant structural, political and economic reforms that have sustained growth and development of the economy over the past 10 years. Despite reforms having been made, it is still confronted by inequality, poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment coupled with lack of investment from the private sector and these remain priority areas for government in Kenya (World Bank, 2019). Half of Kenyans live below the poverty level. A small portion of the population relies on food aid.

Kenya's economy is the largest in eastern and central Africa, with Nairobi serving as a major regional commercial hub. While economic activity faltered following the 2008 global economic recession, growth resumed in the past five years reaching 5.7% in 2019 and placing Kenya as one of the fastest growing economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The recent economic expansion has been boosted by a stable macroeconomic environment, positive investor confidence and a resilient services sector. Agriculture is the largest sector; tea and coffee are traditional cash crops, while fresh flowers are fast-growing export products. The service industry is also a major economic driver, particularly tourism. Higher education and telecommunications are other well performing sectors. Telecommunication and financial activity grew over the past decade and now comprise 62% of gross domestic product (GDP). Twenty-two per cent of GDP still comes from the unreliable agricultural sector, which employs 75% of the labour force. Industry and manufacturing are the smallest sectors, accounting for around 16% of GDP. The service, industry and manufacturing sectors employ only 25% of the labour force but contribute 75% of GDP. Kenya exports textiles worth over USD 400 million under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

The country has an extensive network of paved and unpaved roads. Kenya's railway system links the nation's ports and major cities, connecting it with neighboring Uganda. There are 15 airports with paved runways.

Shortfalls of electricity occur periodically, when drought reduces water flow. To become energy sufficient, Kenya is installing wind and solar power, and aims to build a nuclear power plant by 2027. In 2013, the government launched a National Climate Change Action Plan, having acknowledged that omitting climate as a key development issue in the 2007 Vision 2030 was an oversight.

## **2.3 Informal Sector**

*Jua Kali* is the name given to Kenya's informal sector. The Jua Kali sector consists of small-scale economic operations, which often rely on low and simple technologies. The informal sector contributes 70% of the economy's Gross Domestic Product, largely through small traders. Their contribution to local economy is supported by the administration, which has enacted the Protection of Livelihood Bill of 2018 to regulate, restructure and legitimise the operations from local to national level. About 60% of young people who are between 18 -35 years of age operate in the Jua Kali sector with half of them being women.

This sector makes up the majority of all enterprises, with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics estimating that, as of 2014, the informal sector represents 82.7% of employment. Kenya's informal sector is large and dynamic – 95% of the country's businesses and entrepreneurs are found here. According to the 2015 Economic Survey (Kenya Bureau of National Statistics, 2015), the total number of persons enrolled in both formal and informal sectors increased from 13.5 million in 2013 to 14.3 million in 2014, and of the 799 700 new jobs, 700 000 were created by the informal sector. Men account for a majority of employment in the informal sector of Kenya and more than two-thirds of informal sector jobs are in trade, restaurants, and hotels. Other common employment sectors are furniture making, other forms of manufacturing as well as the services sector.

Employment in the informal sector is associated with significantly lower levels of poverty than those experienced in farming. Improving the productivity of informal enterprises is thus essential for employment, income growth, and poverty reduction in the region. Education levels drive differences in the use of banking, levels of pay/ income of informal sector workers, business losses experienced, extent of use of financial instruments, and profitability.

#### **2.4 In- and Outbound Labour and Students**

On the introduction of a new registration system for foreign workers in May 2018, the Kenyan Interior Cabinet Secretary observed that there were more than 100 000 foreign workers in Kenya, far more than the 34 000 registered with the Foreign Ministry.

Trace Kenya, a Mombasa-based counter-trafficking non-governmental organisation, estimated that a few years ago there were at least 120 000 Kenyans working in the Middle East, roughly one-third of whom had been trafficked. Women often work as domestic workers in the Gulf states, while men may work as security officers or in construction. Over the past ten or more years, the Kenyan government has put restrictions on recruitment from the Gulf States (Kenya Government, 2007 and 2015).

Data from the Commission for University Education (CUE) indicate that of 4 730 international

students reported, 66.38% (3 137) are male and 33.62% (1 593) are female. In May 2019 the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) wrote to all universities in the country seeking their approval to facilitate admission of foreign students, with a target of 30 000.

The number of outbound Kenyan students has declined over the past several years. UNESCO estimates that in 2013 there were just over 12 000 Kenyan students abroad, down from nearly 15 000 the year before; more than half of these outbound students were destined for the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. Media reports suggest that tens of thousands more Kenyan students are enrolled in nearby countries, notably Tanzania and Uganda, with the latter having long been seen as an education hub in the area. Reports from 2014 indicate that the number of Kenyan students in Uganda has also begun to decline.

### 3.0 Mapping of Education and Training System

#### 3.1 The Structure of Kenyan Education System

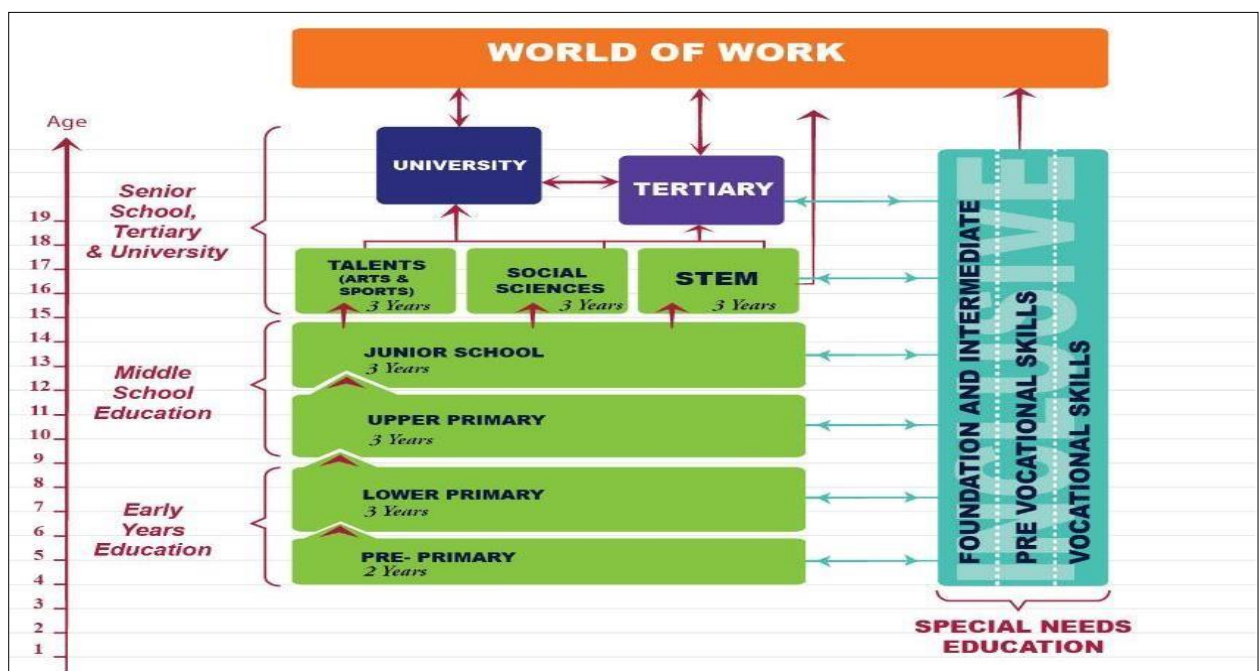


Figure 1: The Structure of Kenya’s Education System Source: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

The Kenyan system of general education has a 2:6:6:3 structure representing two years of pre-primary; six of primary education (three in lower primary and three in upper primary); six of secondary education (three lower secondary, and three upper secondary); and three years of tertiary education and training. The system is described below.

##### 3.1.1 Pre-Primary and Primary

*Pre-primary:* Learning at the pre-primary cycle is for 3-4-year-olds and focuses on the basics



in language, mathematics, and environment, psychomotor, creative and religious activities.

*Lower Primary:* The next level is lower primary starting in Grade 1 at an average age of 6 years. The focus of learning activities here is literacy, Kiswahili or Kenyan sign language for deaf learners, English language, indigenous language, mathematics, environment, hygiene and nutrition, religious education and movement and creative activities. Also at this stage, information and communications technology (ICT) and appropriate contemporary issues are mainstreamed in all learning activities for enhancing learners' appreciation of the world around them.

*Upper Primary:* At the upper primary level, learners are exposed to a broad curriculum and given the opportunity to explore and experiment. Compulsory subjects here are English, Kiswahili or Kenyan sign language for the deaf, home science, agriculture, science and technology, mathematics, religious education, creative arts, physical and health education and social studies. Learners at this level may do an optional foreign language selected from among Arabic, French, German and Mandarin languages. Contemporary issues and *life skills are mainstreamed in all subjects and a pastoral programme is conducted once a week.*

### **3.1.2 Secondary**

Secondary education is organized into two levels: lower secondary (Grades 7 to 8); and senior secondary (Grades 10 to 12). Students are examined at the end of the fourth year through the Kenya National Examination Council, after which they progress to the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

At the lower secondary level, the curriculum is broad-based to encourage learners to explore their individual talents, personality and potential as a basis for making informed career choices when they enrol at senior secondary school. Twelve core subjects will be taught at this level: English, Kiswahili or Kenyan sign language for deaf students, mathematics, integrated science, health education, pre- technical and pre-career education, social studies, religious education, business, life skills, and sports and physical education, with ICT cutting across all subjects. For optional subjects, learners can choose one or two from the following: visual arts, performing arts, home science, computer science, foreign languages, German, French, Mandarin, Arabic, Kenyan sign language and an indigenous language.

The senior secondary level, which lays the foundation for further education and work, caters for learners aged 15 to 17 years. Learners can choose to advance in any of the following three pathways: arts and sports science, social sciences and a STEM cluster.

Kenya has had three types of schools at a secondary level, namely private, public and Harambe. Harambe schools are run by communities, with some support from government in terms of funding. Unlike public schools Harambe schools are not selective in enrolment. Private schools may have religious affiliations and typically offer British or American curriculum and qualifications.

### **3.1.3 Tertiary**

A wide range of agencies offer tertiary level courses at various levels to young people and adults. Universities offer a variety of distance learning, evening, school based and recognition of prior learning (RPL) courses; such courses were previously available only at the University of Nairobi. Complementary Basic Education programmes (non-formal programmes equivalent to formal education) offer children and teenagers who have dropped out of school the opportunity to reintegrate into the formal system.

Over the past 15 years Kenya has expanded its higher education sector to 23 public university institutions, 14 chartered private universities. Plans are afoot to build and expand the sector even more, especially with public universities. The expansion has largely been restructuring and upgrading the existing institutions, in particular colleges. In addition to these various educational institutions accredited to offer academic programmes, there are 13 educational institutions that function on an interim basis, authorized by letters from the state department to operate and award academic qualifications. The increase of both public and private education institutions over the past 15 years has led to enrolment growth.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions are public, private or both, enrolling students for technical and vocational training. There are also teacher and medical training colleges, all accredited to offer two- to three-year programmes, and to award certificates, national diplomas and higher national diplomas. Despite the huge increase in infrastructure investment into institutions of learning, and the subsequent rise in student enrolment, the sector is grappling with lecturer shortages that hamper improvement in quality standards and lead to ever growing student-to-faculty ratios. However, to enhance access, quality and relevance of the TVET qualifications, the Government of Kenya is reforming this sector in through various initiatives. Infrastructure expansions and new funding models for TVET sector has been established including establishment of Centers of Excellence with the state of the art equipment, allocating grants to students and partnering with the Higher Education Loans Board to fund TVET training.

The government is also reforming the TVET curriculum to a demand based curriculum that

addresses the labour market needs through introduction of a Competency Based Education and Training Curriculum (CBET).

The erstwhile Joint Admission Board has been rebranded the Kenyan Universities and College Placement Service, which administers and coordinates student placement to public and private universities and colleges. Entry to universities in Kenya is based on the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education. The university entry requirement is grade C+.

The education institutions are under the auspices of the Education, Science and Technology Department, responsible for national policies and programmes dealing with access, quality, mobility and affordability of school and post-schooling education, higher education and research. Children have the right to free education, which is also compulsory. People with special needs have the right to access educational institutions and facilities catering for their special needs, including sign language, Braille or any relevant means of communication, and access to materials and instruments necessary to overcome the disability constraints. The constitution also gives minorities and vulnerable marginalized groups rights to reasonable access to water, health services and infrastructure and it is incumbent upon government to develop a culture of human rights, promote gender equality and equity and facilitate gender mainstreaming in national development (Ministry of Education, 2020).

### **3.2 Competency Based Curriculum (CBC)**

Kenya is currently implementing a Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in line with recent reforms in the country's education and training sector (Republic of Kenya, 2019a). The new curriculum is holistic and incorporates all forms of learning from early childhood to vocational training. Unlike the previous system, this new curriculum is competency based and encourages early identification and nurturing of talents and abilities, which are valued over memorization of facts and the mere passing of examinations. Learners are encouraged to innovate and explore their full potential in whatever they are best at, including academic, vocational/ technical and other areas, including sports, drama, and music. The imparting of positive values and attitudes to promote responsible citizenship, appreciation of other cultures, sustainable development, global citizenship, among others are also emphasized. The CBC is in initial stages of implementation but the *Kenyan National Education Sector Strategic Plan* (Republic of Kenya, 2019) has spelt out the actions needed to ensure compatibility with the CBC curriculum for all levels of the education system.

For **Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE)**, the plan is to enhance the quality of teaching and care in pre-primary schools in order to respond to the needs of the 3-5-

year-old age group by finalizing the development of the new curriculum and related support materials; training teachers on the new curriculum; and developing and implementing a capacity building programme for quality assurance officers. Because ECDE has been devolved to county governments under the 2010 constitution, these local governments will be supported to recruit adequate qualified ECDE instructors and support staff.

Priority at the **primary school level** is the expansion of the number of qualified teachers, and building teacher capacity in the new curriculum. Other plans are to integrate ICT into teaching and design training programmes aimed at building teacher capacity in the more innovative teaching of languages and STEM subjects.

At the **secondary level**, the focus is on the development of the new CBC curriculum and the capacity of teachers to deliver it, the use of ICT for teaching all subjects, and the ability to develop student talents in all areas of their strengths, from STEM to sports. In this regard, resources will be set aside to establish model STEM schools, and academies for sports and other talents in each county.

At the **technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** level, the plan notes that the priority will be to assess training needs of learners and instructors from the perspectives of both personnel and content, as well as the development of a competency-based education and training curriculum and occupational standards. To popularize TVET, there are plans to establish at least one TVET institution in each constituency and will be provided with the state-of-the-art equipment, and with adequately trained trainers.

### **3.3 Assessment, Learning Pathways and Accreditation**

Assessments for determining progression from one level to another are continuous, and take place at the end of every cycle, through a partnership between the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). Except for the languages taught as part of the curriculum, English is the language of instruction and assessments for both the general curriculum and teacher training.

The three learning pathways at the senior secondary school level are supported by an assessment system that is about the total learning process and content, and which emphasizes continuous assessment as opposed to end-of-school cycle examinations, and which promotes teaching of skills that match the demands of industry. Learners can move within and across the education and training system and can accumulate credit gained in any given training programme or employment. Also important across the education and training system is the use of ICT and integration of science and innovation and practical skills. Thus STEM subjects are an exclusive category of knowledge that students can choose from. Kenya's university system

is being inducted in this new curriculum approach.

Kenya’s three main awarding bodies are the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) currently referred to as the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and the Commission for University Education. An institution shall not award national qualifications unless it is recognised or accredited in accordance with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) or unless it is a university, accredited in accordance with the Kenyan Universities Act No.42 of 2012.

**Table 1: Levels of Education and Certificates Awarded in Kenya (Current System)**

	Education Level	No. of Years schooling	Awards/ Certificates
1	Primary Education	8	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
2	Secondary Education	4	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
3	Vocational Training Centers and Industrial Training Institutes	2 - 3	Artisan/ Craft Certificate
4	Middle Level Colleges (TTCs/ Technical Training Institutions, Technical and Vocational Colleges, etc.)	2 – 3	Higher Diploma/ Diploma / Certificate
5	University Education	4 – 6	Bachelor’s Degree
6	Post-Graduate Education	1-5	Post Graduate Diploma/ Masters/ PhD

### 3.4 Teaching Force

#### 3.4.1 Teacher Training

Kenya’s current teacher training model is organized at three levels: universities and diploma colleges for secondary school teachers and technical trainers; primary teacher training colleges for primary school teachers; and a variety of training centres for Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) teachers. Reforms are planned to align teacher training to the new curriculum and the dictates of the KNQF. Three diploma certificates will be offered: Diploma 1 for ECDE teachers; Diploma 2 for primary school teachers; and Diploma 3 for secondary school teachers. However, it is expected that the minimum academic qualification to teach will be as follows: to teach in basic education, a post- secondary qualification; to teach in secondary education or TVET, a master’s degree; and post education; and to teach at university level, a PhD.

### **3.4.2 Pre-service Training**

For pre-service training, the focus will be first to conduct a study to evaluate the status and relevance of existing pre-service teacher training programmes. Study findings will then inform the required changes in the curriculum and entry requirements for teacher recruits, modes of delivery of content in teacher training colleges, and methods of assessing learners. Other changes will include rehabilitation of existing teacher training colleges for pre-service training in the reformed curriculum; development of guidelines on the identification and deployment of teacher educators in teacher training institutions; induction of teacher educators on the reviewed curricula; and the development of a framework for institutionalizing internship programmes for all persons entering the teaching service.

### **3.4.3 Professional Development of Teachers**

To support the professional development of teachers, the government will vote resources for the establishment and equipping of a national teacher support and professional development resource centre, where some of the teaching approaches will be on how to create professional teacher learning communities. Second, the capacity of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) field officers for ICT integration in teacher development, and for training of teachers in the use of new teacher development teaching modules is being strengthened. Capacity of trainers to deliver content at both the pre-service and in-service levels is also being developed, as will assessment guidelines for both learners and institutionally based projects. In order to enrich practical experience by relating what is taught to the world of work, training institutions will be encouraged to strengthen ties with the world of work.

## **4.0 Scope and Structure of the NQF**

The KNQF is a learning outcome-based qualifications framework, covering all education and training sectors and forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal.

### **4.1 Scope**

The multiplicity of qualifications and awarding bodies in Kenya made it difficult for employers to understand what competences they could expect the holder of a particular qualification to possess. The KNQF is intended to address this situation by establishing a common regulatory system for the development, assessment and award of qualifications. In addition, a central register of qualifications will set out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2014).

The overall aim of the KNQF is to promote access to and equity in education, quality and relevance of qualifications, evidence-based competence, and flexibility of access to and affordability of education, training assessment and qualifications. According to the KNQF Act of 2014 the objectives of the framework are to help coordinate and harmonize education, training, assessment and quality assurance of all qualifications awarded in the country, with a view to improving quality and international comparability, and to creating a database of all qualifications in the country.

The KNQF is been aligned to the new competency-based curriculum. Its main objectives are establishment of a framework for the definition of standards for recognizing qualifications obtained in and outside of Kenya; development of a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualification; strengthening of the national accreditation, quality assurance, assessment and examination systems for national qualifications; facilitation of mobility and progression within education, training and career paths; and aligning of qualifications obtained in Kenya with global benchmarks to facilitate national and transnational mobility of workers (Republic of Kenya, 2018).

Core generic competences involving the application of knowledge in practical situations are the similar for the two sub-frameworks of KNQF.

KNQF qualifications incorporate both theoretical knowledge and employable skills. Credits obtained through RPL and through the Kenya Credit and Transfer System (KCATS) are considered in order to determine which level of qualification an individual should work towards.

The KNQF is aligned with the East African Community (EAC) qualifications framework, the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE), developed by the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA). The EAC framework is annexed to the EAC Common Market Protocol for Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications, to which Kenya is a signatory.

## 4.2 NQF Levels

The KNQF has 10 levels, and integrates the two sub-frameworks: general and further education and training framework:-

- a) **Level 1** covers basic academic skills and skills for life, which mainly at the primary school level, and culminates in the award of Primary School Leaving Certificate. Life skills are considered as important as basic literacy skills, because the world outside school is not just about knowledge.

- b) **Level 2** incorporates formal secondary school education and relevant vocational skills leading to the awarding of a Secondary Certificate for those pursuing an academic pathway, and, for those pursuing vocational education, the National Vocational Certificate I, National Skills Certificate III, and Government Trade Test III.
- c) **Level 3** includes the National Skills Certificate II and Government Trade Test II, and a National Vocational Certificate II, which is an advance on the Vocational and Skills Certificates of Level 2.
- d) **Level 4** advances the same to National Vocational Certificate I .
- e) **Level 5** leads to the National Craft Certificate and National Vocational Certificate IV, equivalent to the Master Craft Person III.
- f) **Level 6** sees the award of a National Diploma, Master Crafts Person II and a Professional Diploma.
- g) At **Level 7**, those who opt for the academic line can attain a Bachelor’s degree or Master Crafts Person I or Professional Diploma.
- h) **Level 8** covers a Postgraduate Diploma, Professional Bachelors and Professional Master Craft Person.
- i) **Levels 9 and 10** apply only to the academic pathway and lead to a Master’s degree and PhD, respectively.

The KNQF is managed through a credit accumulation and transfer system that allows learner progression from one level of qualification to another, both vertically and horizontally. The number of hours and credits needed to move from one level to another are specified.

**Table 2: The KNQF**



KNQF Level	General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework		Notional hours (minimum)
10	Doctorate Degree		3600 after KNQA level 9
9	Master's degree		2400 after KNQA level 7
8	Post-Graduate Diploma	Professional Bachelor's Degree	Professional Master Craft Person 1200 after KNQA level 7 or 6000 after KNQA level 2
7	Bachelor's Degree		Master Crafts Person –I or Management Professional 4800 after KNQA 2 or 2400 after KNQA level 6
6	National Diploma		Master Crafts Person –II/ Professional Diploma 2400 after level 2 or 1200 after KNQA level 5
5	National Craft Certificate National Vocational Certificate-IV		Master Craft Person III 1200 after KNQA level 2 or 600 after level 4
4	National Vocational Certificate- III/Artisan Certificate		National Skills Certificate –I GTT-I 600 after KNQA level 2 or 300 after level 3
3	National Vocational Certificate-II		National Skills Certificate -II /(GTT – II) 300 after KNQA level 2
2	Secondary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate- I	National Skills Certificate -III / Government Trade Test (GTT-III) Depending to skills acquisition
1	Primary Certificate		Basic Skills/Skills for Life

Source: <http://www.knqa.go.ke/about-the-qualification-framework/>

### 4.3 Level Descriptors

The level descriptors are structured in three domains of learning: knowledge, skills, and competence (KNQA 2019). The details of level descriptors for all KNQF levels are available on [KNQA website](#).

The KNQA has developed descriptors for each level of education and training, the justification for each level and qualification and the knowledge, skills, competence, and volume of learning associated with each level. Determination of the descriptors involves consensus building with the trainers, employers and curriculum designers. Given the many interests in the area of qualifications this has not been an easy task for the KNQA. University diploma granting institutions have been some of those resisting regulation, as have government institutions outside the Ministry of Education. Arguments from the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) have centred on the issue of university autonomy, while regulatory bodies from higher education have posed issues of control over their sector, in the context of an integrated framework (KNQA, 2020).

The level descriptors cover the education system from primary school all the way to post-graduate studies and thus include level descriptors at primary, secondary, tertiary, TVET and university levels. Descriptors are also provided for ‘short cycles’ linked to the main TVET levels and graded ‘sub-cycles’ for artisanal skills.

Core generic competences, involving the application of knowledge in practical situations, are the same for both the academic and vocational domains. These core competences include the ability to:

- 1) Analyse, synthesize and create;
- 2) Solve problems;
- 3) Organize, plan and communicate;
- 4) Use ICT;
- 5) Work in teams;
- 6) Engage in developing projects, research and innovations; and
- 7) Work autonomously.

#### **4.4 Development of qualifications**

The KNQA is currently in the process of developing occupational and training standards in consultation with industry players and trainers, so that the country's qualifications will be better aligned to employers' and industry needs. In re-aligning qualifications with requirements of the framework, the Authority is working with various existing curriculum development bodies, including the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development (KICD), and the TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC), and various other institutions such as universities and TVET institutions that have the legal mandate to develop curricula in the country.

#### **4.5 Credits**

In the KNQF one 'credit' represents

- (i) the value assigned for ten notional hours of learning;
- (ii) the recognition of equivalent in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning; or
- (iii) the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification which may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced studying, based on the number of notional hours for a specific qualification (Kenya Subsidiary Legislation, 2018).

#### **4.6 National Qualifications Information Management System**

Regulation 16 sub-regulation 1 of the KNQF Regulations 2018 (Republic of Kenya, 2018: 790) requires the Authority to establish a national database of national qualifications to inform the implementation and maintenance of the national qualifications framework. For more details on

qualifications in the register – refer to chapter 8.1 of this report.

The database is required to contain, among other things, the following information:

- 1) Registered unit standards;
- 2) Registered qualifications;
- 3) Accredited Qualifications Awarding institutions;
- 4) Assessment and certification systems of accredited education institutions (a work in progress);
- 5) Validated learning qualifications;
- 6) Equated foreign qualifications;
- 7) Recognised and approved foreign qualifications; and
- 8) Qualifications recognised from prior learning and student records (a work in progress).

The Authority has established technical directorates which implement its various mandates. In addition, the National Learners Records Database is under development (KNQA, 2020). Equated Foreign Qualifications and Recognised and Approved Foreign Qualifications fall under the Department of Recognition, Equation and Verification. The department has a list of all recognised and equated qualifications to date. Registered unit standards, assessment and certification systems of accredited education institutions are under the remit of the Department of Standards Assessment and Quality Assurance. The Department is in the process of developing standards and guidelines on various aspects. A policy on recognition of prior learning has been formulated and validated. Registered Qualifications Awarding Institutions and their Qualifications under the department of Registration Accreditation and Development and the department of Planning, Research, Outreach and Policy

In view of the above, it is safe to conclude that the register of qualifications is work in progress.

## **5.0 Legislation**

### **5.1 Legal Acts Directly Applying to the NQF and its Implementation**

The KNQF must be understood in the context of the two major reforms to Kenya's education and training policy, which occurred in 2005 and 2012. The Sessional Paper of 2005 (MoE, 2005), and the Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 (formerly No. 1 of 2019) on Reforming Education and Training, proposed a draft of reforms in the TVET Sector. The Policy Framework for Education of 2012 (MoE, 2012) highlighted the need to coordinate and clarify

Kenya's education and training system.

Two main legal acts that regulate the KNQF:

- Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014
- Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2018)

The KNQF was developed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA, 2018) in accordance with Section 6 of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Authority has developed and gazetted the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2018), which it is implementing.

The activities of the Authority are guided by KNQF Regulations of 2018.

## **5.2 Other Related Legal Acts and Regulations**

The TVET Act No. 29 of 2013 established the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) under Section 7 to assure quality in technical and vocational education and training; TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC) under Section 44 to undertake design and development of curricula for the training institutions' examination, assessment and competence certification; and the TVET Funding Board under Section 47 as a mechanism to provide funds to be used for financing technical and vocational training.

Section 26 (2) of TVET Act No. 29 of 2013 establishes National Polytechnics with respective legal orders allowing them to develop their own training programmes and to award qualifications. A number of TVET institutions in line ministries and Technical Universities, established under Section 25 of Universities Act, 2012, have been mandated to train and award various TVET qualifications.

## **6.0 Organizing Systems: Governance, Institutions, Stakeholders**

### **6.1 The Kenya National Qualifications Authority**

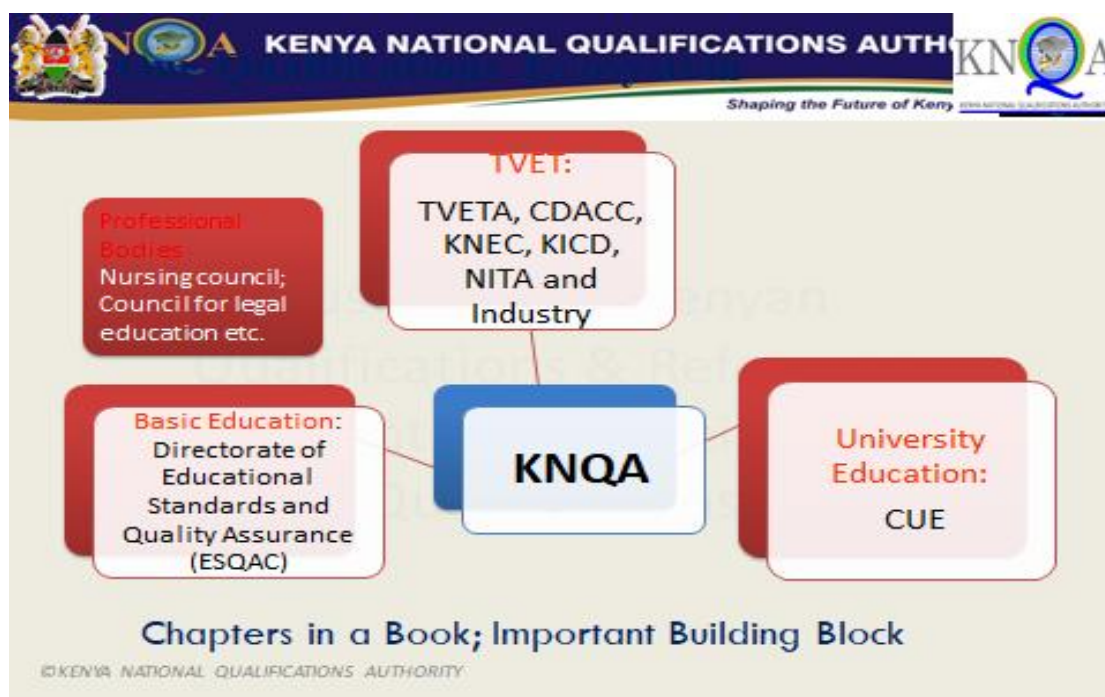
The KNQF is governed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) which was set up in 2015 according to the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act No. 22 of 2014. The website of KNQA evolves and provides a wide range information on the features of the KNQA, and main functions and services of KNQA: <http://www.knqa.go.ke/>.

The KNQA is the chief advisor to government on all matters pertaining to qualifications and the certificates issued by all qualification awarding bodies. In this capacity, KNQA is mandated

to recognize and accredit all qualifications awarding bodies in institutions operating in Kenya, to regulate these qualifications, and to liaise with government national examination and quality assurance departments, and professional and external quality assurance bodies to confirm that any qualifications awarded meet the national standards and are internationally competitive. Governance of the qualification framework is seen as a key issue.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Interview KNQA, 7 January 2020



**Figure 2: KNQA linkages.** Source: [http://www.knqa.go.ke/?page\\_id=264](http://www.knqa.go.ke/?page_id=264)

The KNQA works closely with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Institute (KICD) and the TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC) to ensure that the curricula being developed support the goals of the KNQF.

In consulting with curriculum developers, KNQA is mostly concerned with:

- 1) the quality and relevance of the curriculum;
- 2) Process of curriculum development;

- 3) determination of time and credit allocations for training units;
- 4) how what is taught is delivered and assessed;
- 5) whether or not entrants attain the minimum qualifications for all training units they enroll for, including recognition of prior learning; and
- 6) if the amount of learning proposed is appropriate for the expected outcomes and competencies; and
- 7) that it meets the requirements for the relevant KNQF level descriptors.

The KNQA is governed by a Council comprising the Chairperson appointed by the Cabinet Secretary; a Principal Secretary for Education; a Principal Secretary for Labour; a Principal Secretary for National Treasury; one representative from each of the Commission for University Education, TVETA, the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council; one nominee from an organisation representing professional associations in Kenya; one nominee from FKE; one nominee from an organisation representing workers unions; and the Director-General, who shall be the secretary.

The Council appoints the Director General, who is the CEO of the Authority, responsible for its day-to-day management with assistance of two directors responsible for the following functions:

- Responsible for Technical Services with five departments: Accreditation and Registration; Kenya National Learners Records Database; Standards, Equivalence and Recognition of Qualifications; Assessment, CATs and QA; Research, Outreach and Policy; and
- Administration, Finance and Strategy with four departments: Planning, Resource Mobilization and Strategy; ICT; Finance and Accounts; Human Resource and Administration.

## **6.2 Skills Councils**

The Authority, TVETA, department of Post Training and Skills Development and the Kenya Chambers of Commerce have started engagements aimed at establishing a National Skills Council and Sector Skills Councils to guide skills training and curriculum development in the TVET sector. In the Accounting sector, the Authority is working with the Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board (KASNEB); and for various professions the KNQA is working with professional bodies that have developed and are implementing qualifications, such as the Nursing Council, Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB), Engineers Registration Board (ERB), and Council for Legal Education (CLE) among others. The KNQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification. The same professional bodies are

seen as key to the development of sector skills councils, which is an ongoing effort (Kerre & Hollander, 2009).

The State Department in collaboration with KNQA has developed a national policy on development of a sustainable skills development system, and development of occupational standards, working with various sectors. TVETA needs to develop training standards to ensure that training matches the expectations of industry. Actual training will take place in technical and vocational training institutions, with TVETA providing quality assurance. The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), the Micro and Small Enterprise Authority (MSEA), the Association of Professional Societies in East Africa (APSEA) and the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) should form the core of the team that should be involved in coordination of this exercise and ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each player are well defined.

## **7.0 Quality Assurance of Qualifications**

### **7.1 Legal base of the Quality Assurance framework**

Section 8 of the KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014 mandates KNQA to develop standards and set benchmarks for qualifications and competencies. KNQA has already developed standards, regulations and guidelines to support the development of assessment and examination and certification of all qualifications, but implementation is ongoing. Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies are expected to adhere to and implement quality assurance processes in collaboration with other quality assurance bodies, and with the involvement of many different bodies having various mandates. This work is in progress.

### **7.2 Scope of the Quality Assurance framework**

Within the KNQF the assurance of quality primarily focuses on the development, delivery, assessment and awarding of the qualifications validated and approved within the framework, and quality assuring the Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs). In carrying out this work, the KNQA works closely with key quality assuring agencies. These include the CUE (for university education qualifications), TVETA (for local and foreign TVET qualifications), NITA (for industrial training) and ESQAC (for basic education qualifications). KNQA is developing standards, regulations and guidelines to guide assessment and examination and Certification of all qualifications offered in the country which it expects Education and Training Quality Assurance to adhere to and implement in collaboration with QAIs. According to

stakeholders<sup>2</sup> implementation of the quality assurance process is not without complications, and debates about mandates are still ongoing.

The purpose of certifying qualifications is to confirm what learners have learned and what they are able to do in employment, based on the evidence that has been assessed. The evidence must be sufficient to enable a clear inference to be drawn that the learner possesses the knowledge and skills attested to by the certification. Without quality assurance of assessments, there can be no confidence that this is the case. The intention of the KNQA is that assessments for all qualifications shall be subject to a quality assurance process known as verification, to ensure that assessors' assessment decisions are consistent and in accordance with assessment criteria. Verification is the process of monitoring and sampling assessment practice and learner performance to ensure that assessment decisions are accurate. KNQA shall establish and maintain a verification process for all registered qualifications in the country. Implementation of this assessment approach has begun.<sup>3</sup>

### **7.3 Quality Assurance Bodies and Regulators in NQF Implementation**

Diplomas and certificates being offered by universities must be approved by the TVETA and the Commission for University Education (CUE). For an institution or qualification to be registered in the KNQF, it must be accredited by a recognised quality assurance agency. Registration in the KNQF assures an academic institution, and the courses that it offers, of (inter)national recognition.

The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) was established in 1980 to oversee national examinations and award certificates in both the formal and informal learning sectors. In the formal education and training system, a national system of certification from primary through secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education already exists in Kenya. In the informal learning sector, trade tests are used to certify artisans and craftspeople (Kerre & Hollander, 2009). The KNQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification.

One of the key goals of the KNQF is to assess and recognise the outcomes of learning in all settings, whether formal, non-formal or informal, including in the workplace. A number of measures are being taken to pursue this goal. Progression pathways from primary to higher education in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector are being promoted through the TVET Curriculum Development Framework (TCDF), which was established in 2010 and meets the requirements and principles of the KNQF occupational standards. This is helping to link Youth Polytechnics (YP) and Vocational and Industrial Training (VIT) qualifications to formal TVET provision. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority is in the process



of developing occupational and training standards for various professions in the country; and recently (2018) launched Competence Based Education and Training (CBET).

---

Three international standards guide the assessment of skills in Kenya, namely the International Labour Organization's ISCO 88 Standard, UNESCO's ISCED 97 Standard, and the ISO Standard 9000 Series on Education. In addition, the Kenya National Occupational Classification Standard (KNOCS) guides the

<sup>2</sup> KNQF Stakeholder meeting Nairobi, United Kenya Club. 22 January 2020

<sup>3</sup> Interview KNQA, 7 January 2020

Exemption and Credits Transfer System (ECTS), which is promoted through a combination of conventional testing methods and e-assessment methods for RPL. The Authority is in the process of developing and implementing the Kenya National Classification of Education Standard (KNCES).

#### **7.4 Curriculum Development**

The KNQF has level of descriptors at each level of education and training. It explains the main purpose of each qualification, knowledge and skills, level of competences and the amount of learning that go through each level of training. The process to align curricula to the KNQF is advancing. Concerning TVET, occupational and training standards are being developed aligned to industry demands and needs, in consultation with industry experts and trainers. The standards will form the basis of the curricula.

#### **7.5 Participation in International Bodies**

Kenya is a member of the East African Community (EAC) trade bloc, headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania. Kenya's other regional economic association is with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an eight-country trade bloc including governments from the Horn of Africa, Nile Valley and the African Great Lakes with its headquarters in Djibouti City.

Kenya is a member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) whose vision is to build trust and promote genuine qualifications on the African continent and the African Quality Assurance Network.

#### **7.6 Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) System**

A robust framework for credit-based learning is central to an inclusive education system that fosters access, equity and lifelong learning, especially in post-compulsory education provided in TVET institutions. This is because credits make it possible to assess equivalence in learning achieved by students, enabling students, training institutions and even employers to compare

different qualifications at the same level or at different levels.

For nearly fifteen years, there have been efforts to develop, implement, and institutionalize a credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) system in training institutions in the Ministry of Education and line Ministries in Kenya for various qualification levels and discipline areas, to facilitate progression in education and training through various alternative pathways, especially in TVET, where the bulk of qualifications occur. The KNQA provides a unique opportunity for building and implementing a robust and sustainable CAT system for education and training at certificate, diploma and degree levels.

The KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014 and KNQF regulations (2018) mandate the Kenya National Qualifications Authority to develop and implement a national credit accumulation and transfer system that works for all players and levels of the education system. The system is designed to develop into an *accumulation* system to be implemented at institutional, national and regional levels, with the aim to:

- Enhance the quality and volume of student mobility in Kenya;
- Make study programmes easy to read and compare for all students, lecturers and institutions, facilitating mobility and academic recognition;
- Help colleges and universities to organize and revise their study programmes and qualifications.

Such a system can be used across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery and would help make Kenyan higher education more attractive for students from other countries. The Authority has made some progress towards the development of the CAT system, with the support of the GIZ-CAADP project.

## 8.0 NQF implementation

### 8.1 Inclusion of qualifications in the register

A central register of qualifications managed by the KNQA sets out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2014).

The National qualifications Information management system (NAQMIS) will bring together the qualifications awarding institutions, the qualifications that they award and the learners. NAQMIS should be fully operational by October 2020.

KNQA is still developing the Register of Institutions and qualifications and completing the online system. In the meantime qualifications are being registered manually, hence most of the

qualifications are not yet online at moment of conclusion of this report (July 2020). Qualifications already included in the online register can be accessed here: [http://www.knqa.go.ke/?page\\_id=3317](http://www.knqa.go.ke/?page_id=3317)

Qualifications in the register are structured according to the fields indicated in the example below.

**Table 3: example of TVET qualification in the KNQF [qualifications register](#) - Fisheries Technology (fishing operations) 083104T4**

Qualification Name	Fisheries Technology (fishing operations)
Qualification Code	083104T4
Subject/Classification	Fisheries
Qualification Type	Artisan Certificate
Level KNQF	04
Credit	90
Entry Requirements	KCPE Certificate, KCSE certificate E, KNQA level 1 or 2
Outcome Statement	This qualification is consists of competencies that a person must achieve to perform breath hold diving operations, use standard measuring devices and instruments, prevent and fight fire, protect aquatic environment, perform first aid treatment on board, transmit and receive information by marine radio or telephone, manage sea vessels, conduct fishing operations and handle harvested fish within the institution's/organizations acceptable Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
Submitting Organization	TVET CDACC
Qualification Developer	TVET CDACC
Quality Assurance Body	TVETA
Content	Fisheries Technology (fishing operations)

In addition, the record of the above-mentioned qualification also includes succinct information on content (units), as indicated in table 4.

**Table 4: Fisheries Technology (fishing operations) - Qualification content (units)**

Code	Unit Title	Hours	Credit
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/01/4/A	Communication skills	20	2
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/02/4/A	Occupational safety and health practices	25	2.5
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/03/4/A	Numeracy skills	35	3.5
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/04/4/A	Digital literacy	60	6
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/05/4/A	Entrepreneurial skills	30	3
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/06/4/A	Employability skills	20	2
AGR/CU/FISO/BC/07/4/A	Environmental literacy	20	2
AGR/CU/FISO/CC/01/6/A	Breathe Hold Diving Operations	50	5
AGR/CU/FISO/CC/02/6/A	Standard Measuring Devices and Instruments	30	3
AGR/CU/FISO/CC/03/6/A	Fire Prevention and Fighting	35	3.5
AGR/CU/FISO/CC/04/6/A	Aquatic Environment Protection	25	2.5
AGR/CU/FISO/CC/05/6/A	First aid treatment on board	50	5
AGR/CU/FISO/CR/01/6/A	Transmission and reception of information by marine radio or telephone	40	4
AGR/CU/FISO/CR/02/6/A	Small fishing vessels management	60	6
AGR/CU/FISO/CR/03/6/A	Harvested fish handling	30	3
AGR/CU/FISO/CR/04/6/A	Fishing operations	70	7
	Industrial attachment	300	30
	Total	900	90

Source: [http://www.knqa.go.ke/?page\\_id=3317](http://www.knqa.go.ke/?page_id=3317)

## 8.2 Funding

The KNQA is located administratively in the state Department of Vocational Technical Training (VTT), with an annual budget allocation by Parliament through the Ministry of Education. Funding arrangements are constituted as follows:

- 8.2.1 funds payable to the Authority appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the Authority;

- 8.2.2 service charges: funds payable to the Authority in the course of the exercise of its powers or in the performance of its functions; and
- 8.2.3 funds that have been lawfully granted to the Authority by the government with the approval of the Cabinet Secretary currently responsible for matters relating to finance.

### **8.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Development**

KNQA, under the Department of Standards Assessment and Quality Assurance is in the process of developing tools for monitoring the implementation of the NQF.

## **9.0 Validation of Prior Learning**

### **9.1 Relation of RPL and NQF**

In terms of the KNQF Act, ‘recognition of prior learning’ means the consideration of knowledge, skills or competencies acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning. In paragraph 11 section (1) the Act states that ‘Subject to sub regulation (3), a person who has worked in any field of study may apply to the Authority for recognition of prior learning in Form KNQA/L/006 set out in the First Schedule.’ Under section (2) the Act states: ‘Where the Authority allows an application made under sub regulation (1), it shall issue the applicant with a Certificate of Experiential Learning in Form ICNQA/L/007 set out in the First Schedule.’ Under section (3) the Act mentions that ‘In considering an application made under sub regulation (1):-

- (a) an applicant who does not hold a certificate from a formal learning system may be eligible for admission to a National Qualifications Framework level or granted experiential learning equivalent to a qualification in the National Qualifications Framework level; and
- (b) an award of a certificate of experiential learning may be used by the awardee of the certificate.’

### **9.2 Stage of Development of RPL**

The Department of Planning, Research, Outreach and Policy at the KNQA has developed a national RPL policy and regulations, while TVETA has developed standards to guide PLAR for the TVET Sector.

### **9.3 Informal Learning**

In the informal learning sector, trade tests are used to certify artisans and craftspeople (Kerre & Hollander, 2009). The KNQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification. The informal sector is well organised and keen for its members to be awarded qualifications

through an RPL process.

## **10 Recognition of Foreign Qualifications**

Given the importance of the international comparability of qualifications, the Authority establishes standards for harmonisation recognition and equation of national and foreign qualifications, and promotes the recognition of national qualifications internationally. The KNQA has the responsibility for recognition of foreign qualifications, which constitutes a large portion of its work, with many Kenyans having studied abroad requiring this service.

Regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications, the KNQA is actively working with foreign accreditation bodies, African and worldwide organisations such as the European Association of International Educators (EAIE-Special Interest Group), NARIC, etc. Kenya will host the next meeting of the African body dealing with referencing qualifications, which previously met in South Africa (SAQA).

The 10-level KNQF exists alongside the East African Community qualifications framework. The EAC framework is annexed to the EAC Common Market Protocol for Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications, to which Kenya is a signatory. The Annex to the Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Common Market on Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications has proposed a 10-level framework designed to accommodate all qualification types and levels in the region. This framework emerged as a result of an audit of qualifications frameworks in the East African partner states which have agreed to harmonise the qualifications frameworks within the EAC. The IUCEA has already developed a Higher Education Framework for the EAC, consisting of eight levels.

When asked about international links, the KNQA specifically mentioned that it maintains links with the South Africa Qualifications Authority and the Zambian Qualifications Authority regarding their frameworks<sup>5</sup>.

## **11.0 Conclusions and future plans**

Kenya has finalised a comprehensive qualification framework incorporating all education sub-sectors and supports a competency-based curriculum aligned to the framework that will allow for movement of learners within and across the different educational subsectors and institutions. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority is the link for the different education sub-sectors. However, most of the higher education and lifelong programmes are yet to be fully included.

The Kenyan government sees the KNQF as a tool to aid accreditation, teaching, and assessment in accordance with established national curriculum development practice and standards. The KNQF has had a number of successes. One example concerns the mutual recognition of Kenyan and international qualifications, which has been greatly facilitated by the KNQF. Foreign qualifications can now be much more easily assessed, which has resulted in an influx of foreign teachers and students to Kenya. The system supports Kenyan government policy on internationalization of education in the country.

Kenya's endeavour to develop the KNQF highlights the importance of building on existing institutions and structures, rather than importing models from outside the country or trying to reinvent the wheel. In doing this, the country has strived to support and work with established systems of training, education, assessment and examination in order to produce an efficient and functional qualification framework.

The government intends further to reform existing institutions for the implementation of the KNQF. One of these institutions is the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), which was established in 1980 to oversee national examinations and award certificates in both the formal and informal learning sectors. In the informal learning sector, this role is played by the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). Stakeholders commented that informal learning taking place in the large informal sector needs to be included in the KNQF.

## References and sources

Kenya Bureau of National Statistics. (2015). Economic survey 2015. Nairobi: KBNS.

Kenya Government, 2007, Labour Institutions Act; 2014, Amendments.

Kenya Government, 2015, Diaspora Policy.

Kenya Subsidiary Legislation. 2018 783. No. 22 of 2014. Citation. Interpretation.

Kerre, B.W. and Hollander, A. 2009. National Qualifications Frameworks in Africa. In: Maclean R., Wilson, D. (eds), *International Handbook of Education for the Changing World of Work*. Springer, Dordrecht

KNQA, 2019: *The Kenya National Qualification Framework*. Accessed from [www.knqa.go.ke](http://www.knqa.go.ke) and from <http://www.knqa.go.ke/about-the-qualification-framework/>

KNQA. 7 January 2020. Interview: Dr J Mukhandwa.

Ministry of Education (MoE). 2005. *Meeting the Challenges of Education, Training and Research in Kenya in the 21st Century*. Sessional Paper No. 1. Nairobi, MoE.

Ministry of Education (MoE). 2012. *A Policy Framework for Education: Aligning Education and Training to the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and Kenya Vision 2030 and Beyond*. (Draft). Nairobi, MoE.

Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST). 2012. *A Policy Framework for Education and Training: Reforming Education and Training in Kenya*. Nairobi, Government of Kenya.

Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST). 2014. *The Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act*. Available at: <http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/KenyaNationalQualificationsFrameworkAct2014.pdf> [Accessed 21 December 2016].

Ministry of Education (MoE). 2020. Accessed from <https://www.education.go.ke/index.php> on 14 April 2020.

Mukhwana, E.J., Untangling the Complex Training and Qualifications System in Kenya. RUFORUM Working Document Series (ISSN 1607-9345), 2018, No 16:19-32. At: <https://repository.ruforum.org/documents/untangling-complex-training-and-qualifications-system->



[kenya](#)

Mwiria, K. *Draft Mapping National Qualification Frameworks of IGAD Member States*. Paper prepared for the UNESCO Regional Office Eastern Africa on the Development of the IGAD Education Qualification Framework, November 2019.

Ministry of Education (MoE). Republic of Kenya, 2019. *Kenyan National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022*. Accessed from: <https://www.education.go.ke/index.php/downloads/file/642-national-education-sector-strategic-plan>.

The World Bank Group, Trade and Competitiveness. January 2016. *Informal Enterprises in Kenya*. Accessed from:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/24973/Informal0enterprises0in0Kenya.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

UNESCO. 2019. *Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2019, volume II: national and regional cases*. Accessed from:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372209?posInSet=1&queryId=f39a2df7-c8a3-48d0-9740-8e5577a058d6>.

Walters, S., Yang J.; Roslander, P. *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected African Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania*. UIL, 2014