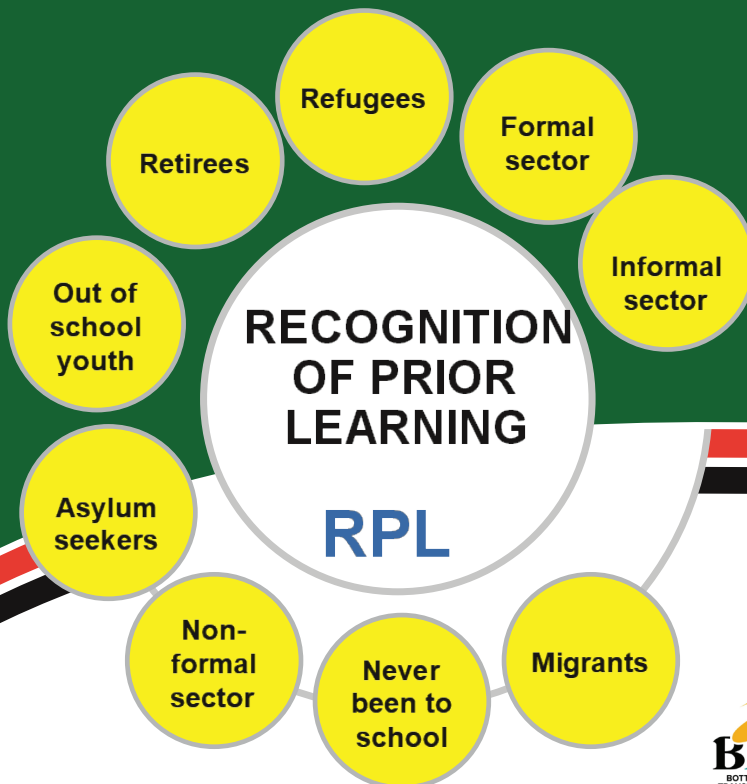




REPUBLIC OF KENYA



# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY FRAMEWORK IN KENYA



*Towards making knowledge, skills  
and competencies visible*

January 2024



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

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**RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING  
POLICY FRAMEWORK IN KENYA**

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**January 2024**



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# FOREWORD



Kenya's education and training sector is regarded as one of the best in Africa. This is evidenced by the fact that Kenya has led in developing and implementing policies, standards and procedures for the management of accreditation of institutions, qualifications and quality assurance on the continent. Kenya is one of very few countries in the East Africa region with a fully-fledged national qualifications framework. This framework brings together Basic Education (BE), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), University Education (UE), industrial training and lifelong learning to enable better coordination and harmonization

of qualifications across the various sectors. Like other African countries, Kenya has a large informal sector whose integration into the national development agenda has not been well articulated. The Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) seeks to bring into the national database numerous skills, knowledge and competences currently contributing to national development but have not been well understood, articulated, documented, recognised, assessed and certificated. This policy aims to develop and implement a more flexible, efficient learner journey in recognition that not all learning occurs in formal classes and formal laboratories. As part of its mandate to supervise the development of policies on qualifications in Kenya, the Ministry of Education has developed this policy for recognizing prior learning in Kenya.

The various actors, under the Ministry, have worked collaboratively and synergistically to develop the requisite structures within which, implementation of the RPL shall take place. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority, in its mandate to establish and manage the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), has played a major role in developing this RPL policy framework. In addition, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) and other regulators, such as the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), have developed RPL standards, which shall be used to quality assure the RPL process. Furthermore, Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAIs) already accredited and registered by KNQA, have developed assessment guides and tools to assess the RPL candidates. Through the aforementioned players, the Ministry will continue to consult with a wide range of stakeholders to review and refine these instruments so that the country can get maximum benefits from skills within the "Jua Kali" and other informal sectors of our economy. I am delighted that, following multi sectoral-multi agency consultations, Kenya is now ready to roll out this RPL policy framework. This is a major milestone in the management of qualifications in Kenya and opens doors for innovation and massification of education while maintaining quality and relevance. The policy opens new doors for more flexible pathways through any curriculum, thus enabling greater participation in higher education by learners from various backgrounds. It's my hope that this resource will also assist the higher education sector in driving RPL forward, enhancing policy and practice through critical reflection, development and collaboration. I would like to thank all the players who have contributed to bring to fruition the operationalization of the RPL process in our country.

**Hon. Dr. Ezekiel Ombaki Machogu, E.G.H**  
Cabinet Secretary,  
Ministry of Education, Kenya.

# PREFACE



The Ministry has developed The Kenya National Qualifications Framework that recognizes three Education and Training Progression pathways namely: The Academic (Basic and University Education), TVET and Industry. With the dynamic needs of the labour market, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will provide alternative access and admission to education, ensure progress of qualified candidates in their careers, avoid duplication of learning and accelerate the process of obtaining relevant qualifications.

Recognition and certification of existing skills and competences will also bridge skill gaps more efficiently allowing individuals to enter the workforce with less need for retraining and foster innovation and creativity within the economy. This RPL Policy Framework provides a clear roadmap for establishing a process that acknowledges skills, knowledge, and performance outcomes achieved through formal, informal, and non-formal learning pathways prior to undertaking the RPL assessment. These experiences include employer-provided training and experiential learning from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family/community life, or leisure, mainly involving incidental learning.

To optimize RPL's benefit to the candidates, a customized Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) will be developed. The System will facilitate determination of credits assignable to formal, informal or non-formal learning thereby providing for upward mobility in the education and training progression pathways and guidelines for effective implementation of the RPL Policy Framework. In addition, complimentary tools with guiding standards have been developed. The standards and guidelines shall thus provide a fair, transparent and accessible process of evaluation, documentation and recognition of acquired skills, knowledge, and competencies to RPL candidates and learners. It is envisaged that implementation of this policy will greatly contribute to improved employability, labour mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusivity, self-esteem, and increased productivity in Kenya for global labour competitiveness.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Esther Muoria', written in a cursive style.

**Dr. Esther Thaara Muoria, PhD**

Principal Secretary,

State Department for Technical Vocational Education and Training,

Ministry of Education, Kenya.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

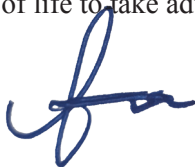


The structure of the colonial education system left many Kenyans with large gaps in their education, training and development, leading to inequality of opportunities, illiteracy and unemployment. Despite our concerted efforts to address these inequalities since independence in 1963, skills development outcomes in Kenya have not matched market needs. Because of this realization, during the enactment of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014, one of the functions identified for the KNQA was to "provide pathways that support the development and maintenance of flexible access to qualifications." All over the world, it is

recognised that learning does not take place in the formal setup only. This RPL policy recognizes that people who work in formal, informal and non-formal sectors gain knowledge, skills, expertise and attributes through practice. Consequently, they should be able to recognise their acquired knowledge and skills against exit-level outcomes as set out in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF).

This policy also acknowledges segments of society who have been marginalized or face additional barriers to education and employment and the need for equity and inclusion in RPL policy and practice. This policy provides that people can approach any accredited assessment center in the country and apply for recognition of their skills. Regulatory bodies are expected to provide quality assurance and standards as per this policy. Qualifications Awarding Institutions accredited by KNQA as set out in section 5 (1) of the KNQF Act shall carry out RPL assessment according to regulatory standards and resultant certificates registered within the KNQF, according to existing KNQF levels. Such certificates so issued will permit the learner to pursue careers in lifelong learning and employment.

I wish to acknowledge the role played by the Technical Committee in overseeing the conceptualization and development of this Policy Framework. I also take cognizance of all local and international stakeholders who participated in providing their input to make this document better. This RPL process will redress past inequalities, facilitating mobility, progression and access within education, training and development of career paths. To this end, I call upon all Kenyans from all walks of life to take advantage of this new initiative for recognition of their qualifications.



**Hon. Stanley Kiptis**  
Council Chairperson,  
Kenya National Qualifications Authority.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since independence, the Government of Kenya has continually implemented reforms to promote access and equity in education and training. One imperative of these reforms was the establishment of a complementary and flexible pathway for recognizing experiential learning. Learning happens throughout life, anytime, from cradle to grave (OECD 2007). This learning leads to acquiring knowledge, skills and competences that are not recognised and certified, hence disadvantaging the individuals.

Therefore, this RPL policy aims to guide the implementation of recognition of prior learning for improved employability, mobility, self-esteem and advanced learning. The policy aims at mitigating the challenges faced by disadvantaged individuals who possess competences but lack certification, thereby depriving them of fair opportunities with those who have attained competences through the formal education system.

The development of this policy resulted from a broad consultation process among sector-wide stakeholders; informed by the Constitution of Kenya 2010 that views lifelong learning as an important stimulus and enabler for the country's socio-economic transformation agenda as stipulated in the national development blueprint, Kenya Vision 2030. It is also anchored on legal and policy frameworks, the African Union Agenda 2063 aspirations and the United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.

The policy outlines major outcomes to be achieved, including:

- i. A coordinated and harmonised RPL system through integration in the existing policy and legal frameworks for education, training and employment systems;
- ii. RPL applicants with skills and competences recognised and certificated for personal development and the employment market;
- iii. Well-developed RPL implementation quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation system;
- iv. Special needs cases and the marginalized groups mainstreamed into RPL;
- v. Enhanced collaborations, linkages and partnerships among the RPL stakeholders by clearly defining their respective roles;
- vi. Increased employability for the RPL outcomes;
- vii. Enhanced visibility of the skills in the labour market; and
- viii. A sustainable financing mechanism for the RPL process.

The main strategic actions identified to achieve the expected outcome are:

- i. Establishment of an institutional and regulatory framework;
- ii. Enhanced governance and management of RPL;
- iii. Specification of roles and responsibilities;
- iv. Assessment methodologies;
- v. Establishment of quality assurance and standards;
- vi. Establishment of an RPL funding model for sustainability;
- vii. Integration of ICT in RPL processes;
- viii. Development of a clear implementation plan; and
- ix. Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework for RPL.

The policy concludes by identifying major assumptions, risks and the mitigation strategies and recommending a review cycle of five years or any such other period as may be determined by the Ministry of Education.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACQF</b>	African Continental Qualifications Framework
<b>BETA</b>	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
<b>COG</b>	Council of Governors
<b>DRS</b>	Department of Refugees Services
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EAQF</b>	East African Qualifications Framework
<b>EDI</b>	Equity Diversity and Inclusion
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>KNQA</b>	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
<b>KNQF</b>	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NITA</b>	National Industrial Training Authority
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>RPL</b>	Recognition of Prior Learning
<b>SAQA</b>	South Africa Qualifications Authority
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TVETA</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>KCATs</b>	Kenya Credit Accumulation System
<b>KNBS</b>	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
<b>KASNEB</b>	Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examinations Board
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>TVET CDACC</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>QAIs</b>	Qualification Awarding Institutions
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Assessment Center** is an accredited training institution or industry workplace for assessment of a competence.

**Asylum Seekers** means a person seeking protection in Kenya in accordance with the provision of the Refugee Act 2013, but whose application has not been determined.

**Competence** covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes applied and mastered in a specific context.

**Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS)** means an arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace.

**Credit accumulation** means the totaling of credits required to complete a qualification or partial qualification.

**Credit** is a unit of academic measurement of educational value as defined in the KNQF.

**Credit transfer** means the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part qualification in the same or different levels, programs, departments or institutions.

**Disadvantaged groups** include persons living with disability, migrants, women, refugees and less privileged.

**RPL MIS** is the digital platform designed to support the management and administration of the RPL process. It involves collecting, processing, storing, and disseminating information to support decision-making in the RPL Process.

**Formal learning** means instructions given in education and training institutions or specially designed training areas, including in enterprises in formal apprenticeship systems. It is structured and has precise learning objectives.

**Full Qualification** means a certificate that shows attainment of nationally recognized qualification level on the KNQF.

**Gender** refers to the social differences between women and men that have been learned, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures.



**Gender responsive** refers to a planning process in which programs and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise if the socially constructed differences between women and men are not adequately addressed.

**Industry** means labor market comprising of employers, workers' unions, professional bodies, associations and federations.

**Informal learning** means a process that encompasses all learning and training activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competences and qualifications

**Jua Kali Sector** refers to an informal sector comprising of traders and artisans who are renowned for their unique skills.

**Kenya National Qualifications Framework** means the framework developed by the Authority in accordance with section 8 of the KNQF Act.

**Learning program** means a purposeful and formally structured set of learning activities and experiences that collectively lead to a targeted qualification.

**Lifelong learning** means learning that takes place in all contexts of life.

**Migrant** means persons who do enjoy the protection of their home countries, but decide to leave of their own volition in search of better economic opportunities in another country

**Ministry** means the Ministry in charge of education.

**Non-formal learning** means learning taking place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities but with an important learning element.

**Occupation** means what a person (habitually) is engaged in to earn a living: a job, a business, a profession, an activity.

**Partial qualification/Micro-Credential** means a certificate that shows unit(s) of competency that a candidate has attained towards attaining a nationally recognised qualification.

**Portfolio** means a guided collection of objects, pictures, videos, written testimonials and any other as per the assessment guide, attained over a period and duly prepared by an RPL candidate as evidence in support of his or her application for RPL assessment or issuance of a partial or full qualification.



**Prior learning** is knowledge or skills acquired in earlier study and work or through experience.

**A professional body** is a membership organization of regulated experts or practitioners in an occupational field and may include the role of members of an association or society.

**Professional designation** means a title or status conferred by a professional body to recognise a person's expertise and right to practice in an occupational field using a certain rank.

**Qualification** means a set of knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes (prescribed standards) that form a particular KNQF level.

**Qualifications Awarding Institution (QAI)** is an institution accredited by section 5 of KNQF Act to award national qualifications.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**, is a process used to identify, assess and certify a candidate's competences regardless of when, where and how they were acquired against prescribed standards or learning outcomes.

**Refugee** means a person, who for the purpose of the Act, is outside of his or her country of nationality and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion who is in Kenya and is unable; or owing to such fear unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of his nationality or the country of habitual residence.

**Resourcing of RPL** means the direct and indirect mobilization of physical, infrastructural, human and financial capacity needed to build, mainstream and maintain a sustainable RPL system at the National and County Government Levels.

**Returnees** means former refugees or internally displaced persons who return to their country or area of origin, whether spontaneously or in an organised manner.

**RPL applicant** means a person who presents himself/herself for RPL assessment

**RPL Player** means a person or an institution involved in the RPL process.

**RPL Practitioner** is a person involved in the RPL assessment process.

**Skills Development Provider** means an institution or other entity accredited by a regulator to offer a training program that leads to a full qualification or part qualification registered on the KNQF.

**Statement of attainment** is a document that shows the elements of a unit of competency or a specific skill that a candidate has attained, which builds up to a partial qualification.

**Work experience** means activities undertaken in the workplace, where the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes are related to routine tasks, processes and outcomes of a particular occupation.



# CHAPTER ONE

## POLICY FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

This chapter presents the global, regional and national perspectives for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). It also looks at the Problem Statement, rationale, objectives, guiding principles, policy approach, scope, legal and policy framework for RPL.

### 1.1 Background

The history of Recognition of Prior Learning dates back to the 1930s in France and the early 1970s in the United States of America, where it was used to broaden access to higher education for disadvantaged war veterans. In Canada, RPL promotes labour force development and contributes to organizational effectiveness. In the Australian system, RPL grants credit waivers for the units in which the person is already competent, thus reducing the time needed to obtain a qualification (Queensland Government, 2014).

In Africa, countries like Mauritius and South Africa use RPL for recognition, certification and progression to higher education. However, the impact of RPL is strongly felt in South Africa, where most of the population suffered educational discrimination during the apartheid regime. South African RPL is being implemented in more than 20 sectors and at all levels of qualifications (SAQA, 2014). Most institutions of higher learning in South Africa use RPL credentials for admission to undergraduate studies. In this regard, the University of South Africa (UNISA) has developed an RPL tool for assessing the suitability of candidates for Masters and Doctoral degrees (Smith, 2014).

In Tanzania, RPL is used to identify skills gaps and, hence, workers' training needs. This is premised on the fact that while countries facing skills shortages often have unemployed workers with the required skills, such workers are invisible as they lack formal qualifications. Here, RPL contributes to reducing skills shortages by certifying and making visible such knowledge and skills (Werquin, 2010b).

Locally, the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) and Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board (KASNEB) have implemented a form of RPL since the 1960s and 1970s, respectively.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2019, Kenya has a youthful population, with 75.1 % below 35 years of age. Consequently, the country requires a comprehensive RPL policy to recognize diverse competences regardless of when, where and how they were acquired against prescribed standards or learning outcomes. Most young people have perfected their skills but lack recognition of their competences. More so, Kenya has continued to host and integrate vulnerable populations fleeing conflict in their countries of origin since the 1980s.

There were 623,865 refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya as of June 30, 2023 (UNHCR). Refugees hail from countries such as: Somalia, the *Democratic Republic of the Congo* (DRC), South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia. Similarly, Kenya is considered a source of and destination for migrant workers. Many of these refugees and migrants have vast experience and skills, while some have professional qualifications which are not recognised. Thus, a comprehensive RPL system is critical in making visible the competences of migrant workers and refugees. This will also facilitate smooth transition and integration into the host communities and their countries of origin upon return.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Kenya faces a shortage of quality and relevantly skilled workforce, which is largely occasioned by the mismatch between skills produced and the needs of the labour market. According to a 2019 survey by the International Labour Organization, over 83% of the workforce driving Kenya's economy, which is predominantly informal, have skills but do not have qualifications. An estimated 92% of Kenyan youths have unrecognized competences acquired through informal and non-formal means and are disadvantaged from competing favorably in the labour market due to lack of corresponding qualifications for the acquired competences.

The KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014 established the KNQF to promote access, equity and lifelong learning. Further, section 8(1) (k) of the KNQF Act provides for the recognition of attainment or competencies including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. Despite the achieved milestones, there exists a lack of supportive mechanism to facilitate validation and recognition of competences that are acquired informally and non-formally. To address these challenges, there is need for a functional and credible system for the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences that have been acquired but which lack corresponding qualifications. This policy framework, therefore, aims at establishing an RPL system to facilitate cohesive and structured recognition of uncertified skills and competences.

### **1.3 Rationale**

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2019, Kenya has a youthful population, with 75.1 % below 35 years of age. Many of these youths have acquired and perfected their skills in informal and non-formal settings but lack recognition of these competences. More so, Kenya has continued to host and integrate vulnerable populations fleeing conflicts in their countries of origin since the 1980s.

Skills acquisition and recognition are vital for any socio-economic development, especially in the era of rapid technological changes, globalisation and the world of work. These skilled but uncertified individuals drive Kenya's economy, predominantly the informal sector, with over 83% of the workforce having skills but without qualifications (ILO 2019). Therefore, they are disadvantaged from competing favourably in the labour market. RPL facilitates the transition from informality to formality and multi-entry–exit between the education system and the labour market. The RPL process aims at mitigating such barriers and establishing functional and credible systems for recognising knowledge, skills and competences.

It is in this regard that the country requires a comprehensive RPL policy framework to recognize diverse competences regardless of when, where and how they were acquired against prescribed standards or learning outcomes.

#### **1.3.1 Uncertified Skills in Kenya**

Given the fast-increasing developments globally, there is increasing diversity and flexibility in the manner individual's acquire knowledge, skills and competences. Competences acquired in the informal and non-formal settings are practical, flexible, on-demand, highly specific learning experience and of high quality and relevance. In the absence of validation and recognition mechanisms, these competences have not been certified hence are undocumented and invisible, leading to uncertified skilled labour force. The country, therefore, requires a comprehensive RPL policy framework to recognise diverse competences regardless of when, where and how they were acquired against prescribed standards or learning outcomes. Most young people have perfected their skills but lack recognition of their competences. More so, Kenya has continued to host and integrate vulnerable populations fleeing conflict in their countries of origin since the 1980s.

#### **1.3.2 Low Transition to the Formal Labour Market**

The conventional recruitment process requires formal certificates that most informal and non-formal learning do not offer, limiting access to job opportunities for the qualified, competent and uncertified workforce with requisite practical skills. This has led to

employers missing out on potential skilled employees due to a lack of certificates. These scenarios have led to skills mismatch in some sectors – especially the hands-on/practical jobs. The paradox here is that there are potential employees with the necessary competences to fill some of these jobs.

### **1.3.3 Learning and Labor Mobility**

The capacity and ability of labour mobility from one place to another, one occupation to another, one job to another, one industry to another is important in ensuring tapping and utilization of available skills in a national, regional and global economy. This mobility is currently hampered by a lack of standardization in systems and also a lack of certification in informally and non-formally acquired skills.

RPL seeks to promote portability and mobility of labour, allowing adaptation of skilled workforce to different working environments and industries, thereby enhancing their employability and contributing to economic development.

### **1.3.4 Knowledge Acquired Through Open Educational Resources**

Technology provides great opportunities for people to acquire, advance and utilise skills for economic benefits. The digital and creative economy has provided a platform for acquiring skills, creating jobs and entrepreneurship. Uncertified competence is a by-product of the proliferation of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Unfortunately, most of the skills acquired online are not certified. While the digital platform is meant to make access to information easy and create job opportunities, the irony is that without certification, this knowledge may not be competitive if one seeks formal employment or even to tender for a business opportunity.

### **1.3.5 Innovation**

Most innovators learn and gain knowledge and skills as they develop their innovations. This new knowledge and skill is mainly uncertified and invisible. Certification of this undocumented innovative knowledge shall enhance the protection of intellectual property rights. This will lead to more commercialization of the innovations, thus improving their livelihoods, enhancing the effective delivery of services and contributing to the national economy.

RPL will act as a vehicle for lifelong learning with support systems that promote access to opportunities for the beneficiaries by making the invisible competences visible.

## **1.4 Goal**

Provide for facilitation of recognition of all acquired competences towards improving employability, accessing decent work, labour mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem.

## **1.5 Objectives of the Policy**

- i. To improve access, equity, relevance and quality in the provision of RPL;
- ii. To strengthen coordination of the RPL system;
- iii. To establish a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework for RPL;
- iv. To establish an RPL quality assurance system; and
- v. To strengthen resource mobilization of RPL.

## **1.6 Expected Outcomes**

The following are the expected outcomes:

- i. A coordinated and harmonized National RPL System;
- ii. Facilitated recognition of acquired competences against Occupational Standards or Learning Outcomes;
- iii. Improved access and equity in the provision of RPL Services;
- iv. Established RPL Quality Assurance System; and
- v. Established sustainable RPL financing mechanism.

## **1.7 Vision**

A globally competitive Recognition of Prior Learning system.

## **1.8 Mission**

To provide a system of Recognition of Prior Learning that is responsive to the global mega trends, labour market dynamics, societal and individual needs.

## **1.9 Guiding Principles**

The RPL Policy Framework will be guided by the National Values and Principles of Governance as stipulated in Article 10 and the Values and Principles of Public Service (Article 232) of the Constitution of Kenya. In addition, and the context of RPL, the following guiding principles will be applicable:



### **1.9.1 Inclusivity**

Equal access to RPL opportunities and resources will be granted to people who are excluded, disadvantaged or marginalized.

### **1.9.2 Confidentiality**

All information regarding the RPL Assessment of an individual should not be divulged to other unauthorized entities.

### **1.9.3 Candidate Centeredness**

RPL system appreciates that the learning input of a candidate is unknown and individualized. Therefore, assessment design should be flexible and contextualized to specific candidate needs.

### **1.9.4 Stakeholders Participation**

This principle acknowledges the participation of all stakeholders. The Tripartite Social Partners comprising of the Government, the Employers Federation and the workers Unions will play a critical role in informing RPL on priorities and demands of the Labour Market.

### **1.9.5 Gender Responsive**

Gender-responsiveness refers to a planning process in which programs and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise if the socially constructed differences between women and men are not adequately addressed.

The gender strategy portion of this policy ensures that RPL policies and practices are gender responsive. It focuses on the inclusion of women and girls as they face additional barriers to education and employment. Ultimately, the policy seeks to address and overcome the obstacles to enhance women's employability, facilitate their transition to formal sector employment, improve access to training and education, encourage lifelong learning, and promote their dignity and self-esteem by recognizing their existing skills.

### **1.9.6 Collaboration**

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority will co-ordinate and seek partnerships and linkages with all RPL stakeholders.

### **1.9.7 Sustainability**

The Government will promote RPL sustainability through a multi-sectoral and multi-agency approach, ensuring that all players effectively deliver on their responsibilities. Financing of the policy will be a concerted effort from diverse sources from various players, including the Government, industry and development partners.

### **1.10 Policy Framework Strategies**

The following strategies will be used in realizing this policy framework:

- i. Establishment of institutional and regulatory framework;
- ii. Enhancement of RPL governance and management;
- iii. Specifying roles and responsibilities of RPL players;
- iv. Establishment of assessment and certification system;
- v. Mainstream quality assurance in the RPL process;
- vi. Establishment of a funding mechanism for sustainability;
- vii. Integrating ICT in RPL processes;
- viii. Developing RPL implementation road map and
- ix. Developing an RPL monitoring and evaluation plan.

### **1.11 Scope**

This policy applies to the National and County Governments, Public and Private Education and Training Actors, Workplaces, Non-State actors and individuals with uncertified competences and are seeking recognition of these competences against occupational standards or learning outcomes. It is also applicable to all levels of the National Qualifications Framework and is read in conjunction with other relevant laws.

### **1.12 Policy and Legal Frameworks**

This RPL policy framework is anchored on the following national and international legal and policy Frameworks:

#### **1.12.1 Kenya Constitution, 2010**

Chapter Four articles 43 (f), 53 (b), 54 (b), 55 (a& c), 56 (b), and 57 (b) provide for the right to education for all people, including those living with disability, access for youth to relevant education and training; access to employment; professional development of older members of society; participation and representation of minorities and marginalised groups in governance and other spheres of life.

### **1.12.2 Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 on “A Policy Framework for Reforming Education, Training and Research for Sustainable Development”**

The Sessional Paper articulates the development of a middle-income country where all citizens will embrace entrepreneurship, engage in lifelong learning, and perform non-routine tasks. This is important for the education and training system required to deliver the requisite skills, competences, and attitudes. Chapter 6 provides for the promotion, recognition and equating of qualifications at all levels.

### **1.12.3 The Kenya National Qualification Framework (KNQF) Act No. 22 of 2014**

Section 8 (1) (a, c, k & l) of the Act mandates the Authority to co-ordinate and supervise the development of policies and a system on national qualifications; provide for recognition of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes; and facilitate linkages, credit transfers and exemptions and vertical and horizontal mobility at all levels to enable entry, re-entry and exit.

### **1.12.4 The Engineering Technology Act No. 23 of 2016**

Section 16 (3) (b) (iii) provides for registration of individuals on presentation of evidence of prior learning in engineering technology.

### **1.12.5 The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act No. 29 of 2013**

Section 7 (1) (i) & (m) provides that TVETA shall establish a training system which meets the needs of both the formal and informal sectors and assure quality and relevance in programmes of training.

Section 45 provides for the functions of the TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC) to include undertaking the design and development of curricula for competence certification, making rules concerning the above and issuing certificates to candidates who satisfy national TVET examination and competence assessment requirements.

### **1.12.6 The Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013**

Section 2 of the Act defines “*adult and continuing education*” to mean the learning processes within the perspective of lifelong learning in which an adult or out-of-school youth is granted an opportunity in an institution of basic education for purposes of developing abilities, enriching knowledge and improving skills.

### **1.12.7 The Universities Act No. 42 of 2012**

Section 3 of the Act provides for objectives of university Education to include facilitating life-long learning through the provision of adult and continuing education. Section 5 (1) (c) of the Act provides that the Commission on University Education shall be mandated to oversee quality assurance in university education, including promoting and supporting internationally recognised standards.

### **1.12.8 The Industrial Training Act Chapter 237, Laws of Kenya**

Section 3A of the Act mandates the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) to regulate and facilitate industrial training in a rational, transparent and predictable manner, integrating labour market information into skills development, harmonizing curricula and certificates of competence and assessing industrial training, testing occupational skills and awarding certificates including Government trade test certificates.

### **1.12.9 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Goal 4 advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning for all. Goal 8 advocates for promotion of sustainable economic growth, decent work and full employment for all by 2030.

### **1.12.10 The ILO 2004 Recommendation on Human Resource Development Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (No.195)**

This calls on member states to establish a framework for recognition and certification of skills including prior learning and experiences irrespective of where and how they were acquired.

### **1.12.11 Agenda 2063 on the Africa we want**

Goal number 2 aims to achieve well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation by 2063.

### **1.12.12 The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2016)**

The Framework sets out specific actions needed to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugees' self-reliance, expand access to third- world solutions and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

### **1.12.13 Support for Host Community and Refugee Empowerment (SHARE, 2020)**

Kenya's CRRF application and implementation will be done through SHARE to support the immediate and ongoing needs of asylum seekers, refugees and host communities. Key sectors include education, skills identification and certification to allow them to contribute to the host country's socio-economic development and utilise the skills acquired upon return to their countries of origin.

### **1.12.14 Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025)**

Strategic objective 8 aims at expanding TVET opportunities at both secondary and tertiary levels besides strengthening linkages between the world of work, education and training systems.

### **1.12.15 The Kenya Vision 2030 and Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA)**

This economic development blueprint is a vehicle for accelerating the country's transformation into a middle-income, rapidly industrializing nation by 2030. It aspires to create a globally competitive and adaptive human resource base to meet a rapidly industrialised economy's requirement. The five pillars of BETA (*Agricultural Transformation; Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Economy; Healthcare; Housing and Settlement; and Digital Superhighway and Creative Industry*), whose success is anchored on quality and relevant skills, will accelerate the realisation of Vision 2030.

### **1.12.16 The Kenya National Youth Development Policy**

This policy provides for enhanced investment, coordination and management to promote skills development and work experience for Kenyan youth.

### **1.12.17 The Employment Act No. 11 of 2007**

Section 5 of the Act places a duty on the Minister, labour officers and the Employment and Labour Relations Court to promote equality of opportunity in employment to eliminate discrimination in employment, including for migrant workers and their families. Such discrimination could be regarding recruitment, training, promotion, terms and conditions of employment.

### **1.12.18 The Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer (KCAT) Policy, 2021**

The Policy aims to provide a framework to recognise prior learning and ensure seamless progression of learners between qualification pathways, thus enhancing equitable access and enabling lifelong learning.

### **1.12.19 The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (PWPER), 2023**

The Report recommends Transforming Education, Training and Research for Sustainable Development in Kenya. It is premised on the effective implementation of Competency-Based Education that promotes an individual's well-being and acquisition of capabilities, skills and values.

### **1.12.20 African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)**

The Framework aims to enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications of all types and levels to support people's lifelong learning. The Framework recognizes RPL as one of the National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) pillars.

### **1.12.21 East African Community Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, 2015 (EACQFHE)**

Chapter 2 of the Framework provides for RPL as one of the entry requirements to the different education and training levels in the EACQFHE.

### **1.12.22 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Qualifications Framework**

The Framework was enacted to expand the opportunities for the mobility of IGAD citizens while advancing the right to access quality education for some of the most marginalized individuals in our communities.

### **1.12.23 ILO Strategy on Skills and Lifelong Learning, 2022 – 2030**

The Strategy describes how the ILO, in collaboration with relevant development partners, academia and other key actors, will strengthen its global leadership in skills development and lifelong learning systems.

### **1.12.24 ILO Recommendation on Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, No.195 of 2004**

Recommendation no.195 of 2004, established that member states should identify, among others, lifelong learning policies to address the challenge of transforming activities in the informal economy into decent work and develop policies and programs to validate prior learning and skills gained to assist workers and employers to move into the formal economy.

### **1.12.25 ILO Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208)**

The Recommendation recognizes that promoting and developing quality apprenticeships can provide lifelong learning opportunities to enhance productivity, resilience, transitions and employability and meet the current and future needs of apprentices, employers and the labour market.

### **1.12.26 The Djibouti Declaration on Education for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities, 2017**

The Declaration aims to promote quality education for refugees, returnees and host communities by adopting the IGAD TVET strategy and finalizing the development of the IGAD Qualifications Framework.

### **1.12.27 East African Policy Framework on Recognition of Prior Learning (EAC-RPL), 2022**

The policy aims to recognise all persons who have acquired competency through informal and non-formal settings. It seeks to develop a responsive and equitable education and training system that facilitates access, mobility, progression and fair chances for disadvantaged, discouraged and traditionally marginalized groups.

### **1.12.28 Guidelines for Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning in East Africa, 2022**

The Guidelines seek to operationalize the EAC-RPL by supporting Partner States in establishing functional and credible systems for recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences for prior learning acquired through formal, informal and non-formal training, work experience or other life experiences is appropriately recognised and certified.



## CHAPTER TWO

### SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

#### 2.1 Introduction

This section provides a broad sectoral overview of the critical issues that impact Kenya's progress towards establishing a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system relevant to labour market needs. The situational analysis focuses on formal and informal sectors (Jua Kali), refugees and asylum seekers, skills for national development priorities and the ILO Recommendation on Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, No.195 of 2004. These thematic areas have consequently identified a range of issues for discussion.

#### 2.2 Governance

The government has developed legal frameworks that provide for RPL. These include the KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014, TVET Act No.29.2013, Technology Act No. 23 of 2016 and Industrial training Act Chapter 237. In addition, the government has established the National Advisory Committee which uses a multi-sectoral approach to provide overall direction and oversight of the implementation of RPL. Furthermore, the National Implementation Committee has been established to coordinate the RPL process in the country.

**Issues:** RPL requires to be integrated in the University Legal framework, inadequate policy research on RPL, RPL needs to be integrated in the employment act.

#### 2.3 Financing

RPL is financed through public, private and donor funding. In addition, the government has introduced cost sharing through Differentiated Unit Cost.

**Issue:** DUC for RPL needs to be integrated with existing funding models in the institutions implementing the RPL.



## 2.4 Human Resources - RPL Practitioners

The government has developed guides and manuals for building capacity of the RPL Practitioners:

**Issue:** There is a need to build capacity for RPL Practitioners.

## 2.5 Physical Resources – for RPL Providers

The government has put in place plans to strengthen infrastructure, tools and systems for RPL Providers across the implementing Institutions.

**Issue:** There is need to conduct inspection in the institutions implementing RPL

## 2.6 ICT Integration and the process

The government has developed the RPL Management Information System (RPL -MIS) to integrate ICT into the RPL Process.

**Issue:** The RPL MIS is not interoperable with other government data management systems. There is a need to build capacity for stakeholders using the system. There is need to enhance security in RPL MIS.

## 2.7 Data management

The Government has integrated data management into the RPL MIS. The data includes learners' profiles, registered qualifications, accredited awarding bodies.

**Issue:** There is a need for all QAIs to register qualifications in the National Qualifications Management Information System (NAQMIS) that will be offered through RPL.

## 2.8 Current Status

Kenya has implemented the Government Trade Testing schemes through the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), formerly the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) under the Ministry of Labor since 1925. With the reforms in the education and training sector gaining momentum, the country is witnessing a major focus on the informal sector by different Government agencies who intend to conduct training, certification and recognition of skills and competences acquired informally or non-formally.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) researched the National Kenyan Labor Market Trends Overviews (2020). The report revealed important Kenyan employment and economic trends from 2018 to 2019.

It indicated that the number of jobs increased by approximately 75,000 in both the public and private sectors. Most of the jobs were in the Jua Kali sector, which the report showed continued to grow in contrast with the decline in the formal sector. It also noted that most youth exit from learning institutions into the informal sector. This report supports the current focus on the informal sector and the need for a policy framework that articulates RPL in the country. It is appreciated that many of the persons working in the informal sector have and continue to acquire skills and knowledge informally or non-formally. These skills have not been recognised formally and may deny them an opportunity to access alternative choices in life. The maximum impact on access to opportunities can be achieved through this policy direction.

## **2.9 Stakeholder Interviews**

A stakeholder survey covered RPL key informants from government ministries, agencies, and industry and development partners. The respondents highly supported RPL in Kenya and emphasized the need for RPL Centers to accommodate large informal workers. Through RPL, the respondents appreciated that there should be increased access for non-traditional students. On the flip side, these stakeholders felt the operationalization of RPL needs time and investment of resources – from building capacity for RPL Practitioners to relevant infrastructure, given the practical nature of RPL and its cost for the applicants. The stakeholders highlighted the importance of aligning occupational standards and curriculum within the scope of the KNQF. They also highlighted the need for finance models, awareness campaigns and guidance/advocacy programs.

Employers felt that RPL would add value to their current investments in staff training by having them recognised and awarded with certificates. At the same time, increased competitiveness will increase productivity for employers. The Jua Kali sector welcomed RPL as an answer to their many unrecognized but competent members who will now enhance their competitiveness. However, the sector called for the cost of RPL to be affordable so their members are not excluded. Quality assurance of RPL was a key concern for stakeholders. It is imperative that quality is ensured in the RPL process for it to have the necessary credibility. One of the suggestions to enhance quality is to standardize tools, guides, and manuals to be used. They also need adequate government funding for RPL. Awareness creation was emphasized to ensure buy-in by the constituencies represented by the interviewees.

It was generally agreed that RPL would provide a new lease of life to the many workers with uncertified competences to enable them to access better opportunities, especially women, persons living with disability and persons from marginalized communities.

## 2.10 SWOT Analysis

Table 2.1: Swot Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Numerical strength of individuals with unrecognized competences that require certification.</li> <li>● Political goodwill in establishment of RPL process.</li> <li>● Linkages and collaborations with industry and development partners.</li> <li>● Existence of legal and regulatory frameworks to support RPL as per the legal framework stated in the policy document.</li> <li>● Existence of organizational structures within which to implement RPL.</li> <li>● Community and industrial support for RPL implementation.</li> <li>● Existence of elaborate network of potential assessment centers and expertise cutting across all sectors.</li> <li>● The Government of Kenya recognizes RPL as the vehicle for increasing the occupational prospect of young people and to address the mismatch between the demand and supply for skills.</li> <li>● Existence of National Qualifications Framework that is harmonized with Regional and Global Frameworks and occupational standards as a basis for RPL assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of a sustainable financing model for RPL.</li> <li>● Inadequate structures for Private sector and Industry linkages.</li> <li>● Limited awareness of RPL.</li> <li>● Lack of proper linkage between academia and industry negatively affecting innovation and creativity.</li> <li>● Low capacity for RPL players.</li> <li>● Inadequate ICT infrastructure.</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existence of regional qualification frameworks i.e. EAQF, ACQF. International and regional recognition for KNQF which is foundation to RPL.</li> <li>● Kenya’s integration into regional, continental and international economic blocks e.g. East Africa common market protocol, AU Agenda 2063.</li> <li>● Creation of digital platforms that allow online assessment for award of qualifications. Intergovernmental agencies that facilitate consultation and collaboration.</li> <li>● Development partners’ willingness to support RPL process.</li> <li>● Wide intersectoral catchment for potential RPL applicants.</li> <li>● Individuals acquiring competences through digital platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased demand for RPL certification may lead to overstretched resources need.</li> <li>● Competing priorities for funding in the education sector.</li> <li>● Rapid and dynamic technological changes.</li> <li>● Weak synergies within RPL stakeholders which may undermine the RPL process.</li> <li>● Lack of ICT knowledge and access among RPL potential applicants.</li> <li>● Unpredictable political environment and priorities.</li> <li>● Fragmented skills training system.</li> <li>● Negative societal perception of RPL process.</li> </ul>

## 2.11 Access, Equity and Inclusion of Skills in the Informal Sector (Jua Kali)

The Kenyan informal sector covers mainly small-scale activities that are generally semi-organized, unregulated and use low and simple technologies. The jobs in the informal economy are precarious in nature. They are characterized by insecurity, poor wages and terms and conditions of employment, low job tenure, absence of institutionalized social protection mechanisms and weak workplace safety and health standards (Sessional Paper on Employment Policy and Strategy for Kenya, 2013).

The socio-economic growth of any country largely depends upon the effectiveness and quality of the Human Resources Development (HRD) system. Despite Africa's significant progress in achieving Education for All (EFA) and the MDGs, many countries have failed to meet the 2015 target (UNESCO 2015). In this regard, the

continent has continued to witness a shortage of human capital to drive their economies, hence an impediment to poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Most Jua Kali artisans' skills and competences fall under the engineering profession and allied trades. However, it is a paradox that Kenya lacks enough engineers, technicians, crafts persons, and artisans to propel the country to a middle economy. Yet, an island of skills in the informal economic sector contributes to national development efforts yet unnoticed.

With such a paradox, Kenya's economic growth prospects face an uncertain future despite its current huge infrastructure budget and massive ongoing projects. Kenya critically requires four cadres of professional, and occupational skills and qualification levels. These are engineers, engineering technologists, engineering technicians and craft persons/ artisans. For most developed countries the ideal ratio for the four categories of professional qualifications is 1:2:4:16, while a typical developing country like Kenya, the more realistic ratios would be 1:3:12:60.

The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2015) reported that Kenya was experiencing a skewed skill mix particularly among university graduates, technicians and artisans. For example, the ratio of technicians and associate professionals to craft and related trades workers for machine operators and assemblers in the industry was 33:1:2 respectively. This ratio needed to be in reverse. The emerging oil, gas and mining industry would support between 42,000 and 98,000 jobs over the next ten years through its upstream needs. Therefore, these skills gaps require urgent actions in equipping post-primary, secondary youths and out-of-students with middle-level skills for the labour market.

The country's efforts towards becoming a middle-income economy through industrialization by 2030 require deliberate efforts aimed at improving the welfare of all the citizens but especially those sectors of the economy that are key to creating labor-intensive jobs through manufacturing as well as those expanding economic opportunities through promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment.

These efforts must include creating targeted policy initiatives that enable identification, assessment, and recognition (through certification) and redeployment into the labour market of the critical mass of skills, competences and experience gained and accumulated on the job by engineers, engineering technologists, engineering technicians and craft persons/artisans making up the engineering professions and allied skilled occupations.

### 2.11.1 Reviews on Trends and Highlights of any Unusual Patterns

Kenya's skills gap paradox is further compounded by weak linkages between the private sector and the education and training offered to students, resulting in a disparity between the supply and demand for skills (Awuor, 2013).

The following table shows Kenya's estimated engineering skills requirement by 2030 for a population of 60 million (Some, 2012):

Table 2.2: Kenya's Engineering Requirement by 2030 for a Population of 60 Million

S/No.	Professional Cadre/Qualification	Number
1.	Engineers	7,500
2.	Engineering Technologists	22,500
3.	Engineering Technicians	90,000
4.	Craft Persons/Artisans	450,000

Source: Some (2012)

The skills gap noted above requires urgent actions in equipping youths with relevant middle level skills for the immediate labor market. The proportion of the youth category is expected to remain relatively high at 34.6 % of the population in 2025 and 35.2 % by 2030. This means that at least one in every three Kenyans will continue to be the youth. Kenya's youth (18-35 years) are at least three times as likely as adults to be hit by open unemployment mainly due to mismatch between training and the labor market needs.

The overall country's employment problem is manifested in terms of 12.7 % open unemployment rate, a 21 % under-employment rate and a working poor of 46 % of the employed. The youth in the 18-25-year age cohort are also likely to be having only primary level education and mostly engaged in the informal sector (54.3%) or openly unemployed (14%) (AfDB, 2015).

### 2.12 Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers

Since 1992, Kenya has been a generous host to refugees and asylum seekers. As of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the country was home to 636,204 refugees and asylum seekers.

Out of which 269,545 were in Dadaab (Garissa County), 270,273 in Kakuma (Turkana County) Turkana and 96,206 in urban centres (UNHCR Kenya Statistics).

Therefore, a comprehensive recognition of prior learning system is critical in making visible competences of migrant workers, refugees and returnees, thereby facilitating

smooth transition and integration in the host communities and in their countries of origin upon return as well as contribute to the socio-economic development of the host country.

### **2.13 Skills for the Formal Economy**

The formal employment Sector in Kenya employs 2.9M (KNBS Economic Survey 2022) of the active workforce in Kenya and is a key driver of economic growth. The formal sector comprises enterprises of all sizes, from SMEs to large corporates, cutting across different sectors of the economy and employing people with diverse technical and professional skill sets. The Terms and Conditions of employment in the formal sector are regulated through the provisions of labour laws, employment contracts, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) and guidelines such as the wages order.

Employers require employees with good technical skills, soft skills, and attitudes to execute their mandate. However, historically, employers have faced a challenge of skills mismatch occasioned by a lack of alignment between the skills needed and those supplied into the labour market (FKE Skills Mismatch Survey 2018). Employers also struggle to fill certain positions due to a lack of skills, yet statistics indicate high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth.

While the formal sector promotes inclusion and equal employment opportunities for all, the conventional recruitment processes have been document-oriented and certificates-driven to prove competences. Unfortunately, skills acquired informally and non-formally lack formal certification, and as a result, skilled candidates from that pathway have been disadvantaged from accessing formal employment.

There are numerous changes in the world of work, and increasingly, employers in the formal sector are keen to tap into competences presented by their workforce to enhance their productivity and competitiveness. RPL provides an alternative pathway to ease employers' access to an already skilled potential workforce towards attaining their business goals. Employers in the formal sector also provide capacity development opportunities and initiatives for their employees on the job through training, coaching and mentorship. Some of these programs may not award qualifications for the new knowledge and skills, limiting the ability of the beneficiaries to leverage them to access more and/or better opportunities for growth and mobility. RPL provides an opportunity to have such skills certified, which will benefit employers and employees.

### **2.14 Skills for National Development Priorities and Knowledge Economy**

If skills are to be seen as both enablers and drivers of sustainable development, it is important to address their development within the framework of the national development agenda. Skills development is required to achieve the national agenda of accelerating



social-economic transformation in this context.

However, the implementation of the Medium-Term Plan III, 2018 – 2022, was faced with the challenge of inadequate capacity to deliver the Government’s agenda due to a lack of a relevantly skilled workforce and weak public-private sector linkages. The MTP IV, 2023-2027, under the Medium-Term Development Strategy for Education and Training, seeks to incorporate competency-based education training and competency-based assessment in education and training.

BETA is the Government’s economic blueprint, which sets out the priority programs that will be implemented to accelerate socio-economic transformation, increase job creation and improve the quality of life for all Kenyans. BETA pillars include: Agriculture, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) economy, Housing and Settlement, Health Care and Digital and Creative Economy. The BETA pillars are articulated in the Kenya Kwanza Manifesto, which recognises the inequities in the exam-based education system and is committed to reviewing the current exam-based system of academic progression, which has excluded millions of learners based on basic education level exit exams, by implementing alternative entry criteria. Thus, the President formed a Presidential Working Party on Education Reform that launched its report on various education reforms in June 2023.

The Kenya Kwanza Government committed to transforming the MSME economy concerning infrastructure and capacity building by establishing MSME Business Development Centres in every ward, and an industrial park and business incubation centre in every Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institution. This is an opportunity for the Government to identify knowledge, skills and competences through RPL in the MSME sector.

Concerning agriculture and housing production, the Government is committed to creating quality jobs for the hundreds of thousands or so young people who graduate from TVETs every year directly in the agriculture and construction sector, including strengthening the Jua Kali sector. The digital superhighway sector encompasses many youths doing creative work, including music, theatre, graphic design, digital animation, fashion and crafts. This sector presents an opportunity for the Government to identify skills and competences. The Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer (KCAT) Policy ought to incorporate this sector as one of the areas where credit transfer can be operationalised.

### **2.15 The ILO Decent Work Agenda, 2015**

The ILO Decent Work Agenda has four pillars: employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue. It promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.



## **2.16 The ILO Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208)**

The ILO recommendation on quality apprenticeships from the ILO Conference held in June 2023, recognizes that the promotion and development of quality apprenticeships can lead to decent work, contribute to effective and efficient responses to the world of work challenges and provide life-long learning opportunities to enhance productivity, resilience, transitions and employability to meet current and future needs of apprentices, employers and labour market. The recommendation recognizes RPL as a process undertaken by qualified personnel in identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying competences acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning based on established qualification standards.

## **2.17 The ILO Recommendation on Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, No.195 of 2004**

Recommendation No.195 of 2004, established that member states should identify human resources development, education, training and lifelong learning policies to address the challenge of transforming activities in the informal economy into decent work fully integrated to economic life. States should also develop policies and programs to create decent jobs and opportunities for education and training and validate prior learning and skills gained to assist workers and employers in moving into the formal economy (art. 3, d).

National Qualifications Frameworks were recommended for use in recognizing all achievements regarding learning and establishing equivalencies between learning acquired in different training environments. Adopting an NQF indicates that a country has a single system to express the competences of its workers and that it establishes equivalencies between formal educational levels and competency levels.

## **2.18 Skills Anticipation**

Skills anticipation is a strategic and systematic process through which labor market actors identify and prepare to meet future skills need, thus helping to avoid potential gaps between skills demand and supply. Anticipating and building skills for the future is essential in rapidly changing labor markets. It recommends that forecasting of trends in supply and demand for competences and qualifications in the labor market should be undertaken.

However, the Human Resource Planning and Succession Management Strategy for the Public Service (2017) reports that skills anticipation, which is key to identifying and preparing to meet future skills needs in Kenya, is deficient. In addition, the linkage between skills anticipation and policy, planning, and decision-making processes in skills development is weak.

RPL will seek to utilize Sectoral Based Approaches to Skills Anticipation and Development. Through this approach, the skills needed by the Country's priority and emerging sectors will be identified and appropriate measures to meet and develop them for enhanced productivity, competitiveness and economic prosperity. RPL will play an essential role in enhancing the visibility of skills for those sectors.

### **2.19 The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF)**

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework sets clear criteria for all qualifications and development of a harmonised national accreditation, quality assurance, assessment, and examination system to ensure that qualifications awarded in Kenya are of the highest quality and meet the national standard. The system is also used to develop and implement national policies on Recognition and Equation of local and foreign qualifications (REQs), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Verification of Qualifications, National Qualifications Database and a credible and reliable Credit Accumulations and Transfer System (CATS). This aims to create an efficient and effective training and Qualifications Awarding system that meets the needs and requirements of local and international employers and industry. Section 8 1(k) of the KNQF Act grants the mandate to develop a system of competence, life-long learning, and attainment of national qualifications, including recognition of prior learning.

### **2.20 Skills for Non-Traditional and New Occupations**

Skills for non-traditional occupations and learning methodologies are important in addressing the highly gender-segregated labour market. The extent to which women can participate in non-traditional occupations depends on the readiness of the skills development system to help them acquire the relevant skills. At the same time, new occupations are emerging with the rapidly changing labour market. This transformation calls for new skills to minimize the potential skills mismatch.

### **2.21 The COVID-19 Pandemic**

In addition to these drivers of change, the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded a worldwide shock effect on labour markets and created a need for new jobs and skills. New occupations have arisen due to increased demand for certain products and services and innovative workarounds for social-distancing restrictions. It has also created a paradigm shift in how work is undertaken. Technologies such as cloud computing and online collaboration tools have enabled remote working in various jobs that once required person-to-person interactions.

## CHAPTER THREE

### POLICY FRAMEWORK PRIORITY ACTIONS

This chapter summarizes the areas for consideration during the RPL implementation process. It outlines the policy statements and related strategies that various stakeholders will adopt to achieve the goal of the RPL policy framework. These priority areas and strategies include regulatory and institutional framework, stakeholder participation, quality assurance and evaluation system, methodology for assessment, financing, partnerships, ICT integration and dissemination.

#### 3.1 Regulatory Framework

##### 3.1.1 Policy Statement

The Ministry shall ensure that RPL system is an integral part of the country's national policies on education and training, employment, poverty reduction, development and migration.

##### 3.1.2 Strategies

- i. Integrate RPL policy framework in legal & regulatory frameworks for education and training in Kenya;
- ii. Mainstream RPL in implementation of the National Employment Policy and National Skills Development Policy;
- iii. Integrate RPL policy framework into existing regional and international policies for recognition of acquired skills and qualifications;
- vi. Match occupational standards and qualifications; and
- vii. Harmonize KNQF with regional and global qualifications framework.

## **3.2 Institutional Framework for RPL**

The RPL process incorporates a clearly defined institutional framework for planning and management.

### **3.2.1 Policy Statement**

The Ministry shall build capacity to promote the quality of RPL processes.

### **3.2.2 Strategies**

- i. Establish an RPL institutional framework;
- ii. Map RPL Stakeholders;
- iii. Establish a national committee to co-ordinate inter-sectoral RPL activities
- iv. Define the role of RPL Stakeholders;
- v. Assess the capacity of the existing RPL Stakeholders;
- vi. Build capacity of RPL stakeholders;
- vii. Integrate the RPL process in the existing education and training progression pathways; and
- viii. Mainstream gender and special needs in the RPL process.

## **3.3 Stakeholder Ownership and Commitment**

Stakeholder ownership and commitment are necessary to effectively implement the policy framework. Various stakeholders will be engaged, from policy initiation, implementation, review, monitoring and reporting to ensure ownership of adopted strategies. An engagement framework stipulating the roles and responsibilities of every stakeholder will be provided in the guidelines for the implementation of RPL.

### **3.3.1 Policy Statement**

The Ministry shall establish a coordination mechanism to ensure effective implementation and ownership of the policy.

### **3.3.2 Strategies**

- i. Build awareness and publicity of the RPL system through print and electronic media.
- ii. Establish the RPL stakeholders' database;
- iii. Establish intergovernmental forum(s) at national and county levels for effective policy implementation;
- iv. Build the capacity of all stakeholders on RPL; and
- v. Establish collaboration, linkages, and partnerships on RPL and evaluation of the implementation of the RPL system.

### **3.4 Quality Assurance System**

Quality assurance mechanisms will be implemented to ensure that the RPL process is efficient and effective and that the qualifications awarded meet the national standards.

#### **3.4.1 Policy Statement**

The Ministry shall establish a Quality Assurance Framework to promote efficiency and credibility of the RPL process.

#### **3.4.2 Strategies**

- i. Develop National Standards and guidelines for assessing and awarding qualifications;
- ii. Establish sectoral/occupation standardized RPL processes and methods;
- iii. Mainstream quality assurance mechanisms in the assessment process;
- iv. Mainstream continuous professional development for RPL Practitioners and facilitators; and
- v. Establish a Monitoring & Evaluation system for the RPL process.

### **3.5 Financing of RPL**

A sustainable RPL financing mechanism shall be developed and costed.

#### **3.5.1 Policy Statement**

In collaboration with other stakeholders, the Ministry shall promote resource mobilization for sustainable and successful implementation of RPL.

#### **3.5.2 Strategies**

- i. Establish RPL financing model;
- ii. Develop a differentiated unit cost of assessing prior learning;
- iii. Establish guidelines on chargeable fees for the RPL assessment process;
- iv. Develop a resource mobilization strategy to make RPL realizable;
- v. Enhance RPL financing through partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders; and
- vi. Establish financial aid plans for applicants from disadvantaged groups.

### **3.6 Integration of ICT into RPL**

Documentation is key in RPL implementation. Data that is collected will help inform the RPL process. An RPL MIS will help capture, analyze and maintain this data.

### **3.6.1 Policy Statement**

The Ministry shall promote the integration of ICT in the RPL process.

### **3.6.2 Strategies**

- i. Ensure the development and implementation of an RPL Management Information System;
- ii. Promote linkages on the use of ICT among the various RPL players/stakeholders;
- iii. Enhance the ICT capacity of the RPL stakeholders; and
- iv. Enhance ICT security in RPL MIS.

## **3.7 Collaboration, Partnerships and Linkages**

Successful implementation of RPL will be achieved through a multi-agency multi-stakeholder approach.

### **3.7.1 Policy Statement**

The Ministry shall promote partnerships, collaboration and linkages with all stakeholders in the design, provision and support of RPL.

### **3.7.2 Strategies**

- i. Develop partnerships, collaborations and linkages Framework;
- ii. Create and update the data bank of all the stakeholders;
- iii. Promote multi-sectoral linkages and collaborations initiative;
- iv. Promote intra and inter-regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration in providing recognition and certification;
- v. Strengthen mechanisms within the National Qualification Framework for RPL and certification;
- vi. Promote continuous professional development for QAIs, RPL Practitioners and facilitators; and
- vii. Strengthen collaboration on capacity building among RPL players.

## **3.8 RPL Process**

The RPL process shall consist of three (3) distinct but interrelated sub-processes namely: Awareness Creation and Publicity; Counseling and Facilitation; Assessment and Certification.

### **3.8.1 RPL Process**

#### **3.8.1.1 Awareness Creation and Publicity**

Creating awareness and information sharing shall be a continuous process that enables stakeholders to appreciate the RPL process and its impact on the economy. Public awareness will promote understanding, transparency and accountability of the procedures used. Measures will be put in place to ensure correct information in national, local, and indigenous languages reach all social segments and groups, especially women, people with disabilities, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups.

#### **3.8.1.2 Counseling and facilitation**

Counseling and facilitation shall be candidate centered to enable flexibility and mapping of candidate competencies to assess candidate suitability for specific qualification (full or part) and micro credentials. This stage shall entail guidance on collection and consolidation of a portfolio of evidence for candidates in line with mapped competencies.

#### **3.8.1.3 Assessment and certification**

Assessment and certification shall involve a number of steps which include candidate screening, evaluation of the candidate's portfolio of evidence, summative assessment and award of certificate. Across all the steps, the assessment shall be carried out by qualified and certified RPL Practitioners (RPLP), and the assessment infrastructure shall model/simulate a real work environment. The QAI shall employ adequate quality assurance processes to safeguard the integrity of all the steps. The assessment outcomes shall lead to award of full, part qualification or micro credentials.

### **3.8.2 Policy Statement**

The Ministry shall implement the RPL process by promoting countrywide RPL awareness and publicity campaigns, counseling and facilitating RPL candidates as well as conducting assessment and certification.

### **3.8.3 Strategies**

- i. Develop a National RPL communication strategy;
- ii. Create awareness of the RPL process to all the stakeholders;
- iii. Ensure that RPL candidates are adequately counseled and facilitated;
- iv. Establish efficient and transparent RPL assessment and certification process; and
- v. Monitor and Evaluate the RPL process.

# INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides the RPL institutional implementation framework. The policy builds on the strength of the existing institutional structures and systems. The identified institutions will facilitate the integration of RPL in their respective mandates while adopting a multi-sectoral approach with clearly shared and specific responsibilities and accountability. The stakeholders comprise various education sub-sectors, line ministries, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, training providers, the informal sector, development partners, and agencies. A national roadmap for the implementation of RPL will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. The roadmap will specify roles and responsibilities and targets and timelines for each actor. This policy emphasizes co-ordination and synergetic efforts for effective implementation.

### 4.1 Scope of Implementing Partners

The policy will be implemented by various economic stakeholders, including Ministries, Counties, Departments and Agencies (MCDAs), Qualifications Awarding Institutions, Regulatory bodies, Professional bodies and Assessment centers in collaboration with the Private sector, Civil Society Organizations, Faith Based Organizations and Development Partners.

### 4.2 Institutional Arrangement Model

RPL implementation process will incorporate accredited providers for assessment, recognition and reporting. Figure 1 below specifies some of the key institutions identified in the different sectors and their specific roles in the RPL process.



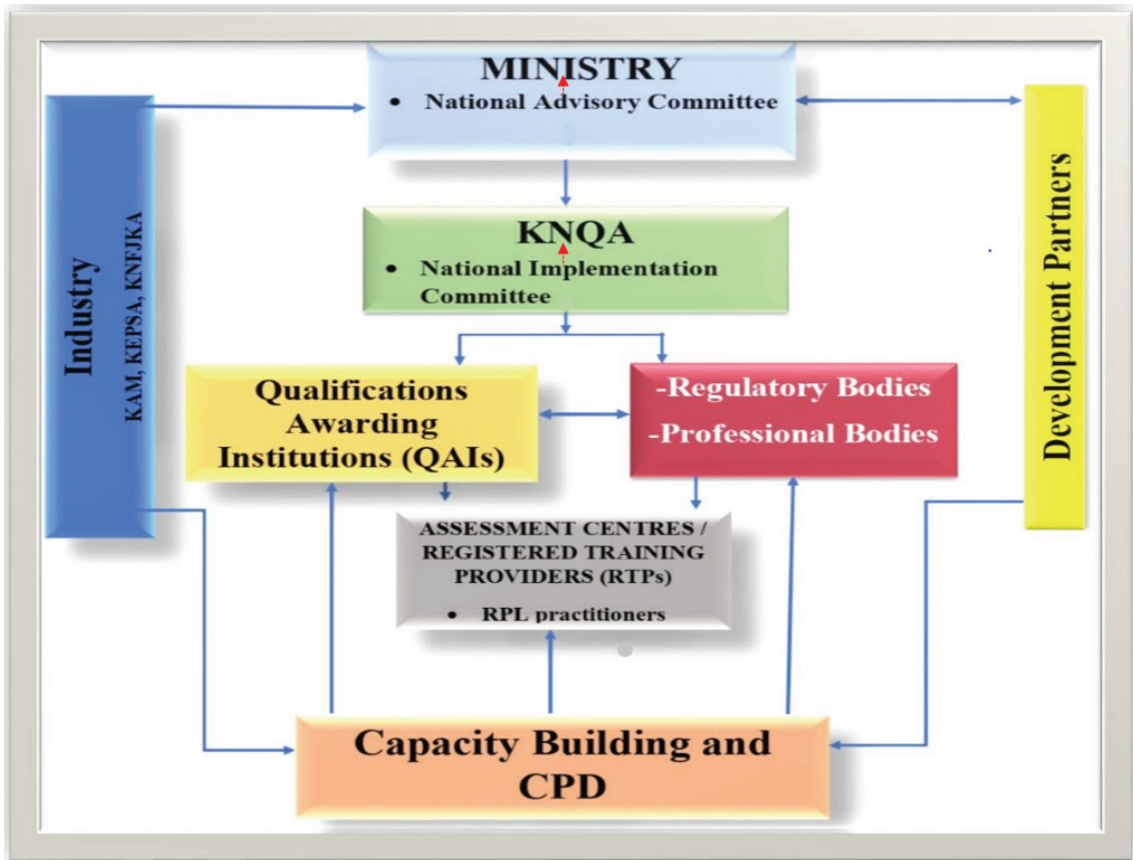


Figure 1: Institutional Implementation Model

### 4.3. Major Roles and Responsibilities of key RPL stakeholders

#### 4.3.1 The Ministry

The Ministry in collaboration with key stakeholders shall oversee implementation of the RPL policy.

##### 4.3.1.1. National Advisory Committee

Responsible to the Ministry and shall provide overall direction and oversight in the implementation of RPL

#### 4.3.2 The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)

The KNQA will be the main agency coordinating the RPL process in the country.

#### **4.3.2.1 National Implementation Committee**

The multi-sectoral National Implementation Committee shall work under the coordinating Agency – KNQA in coordinating the RPL process in the country.

#### **4.3.3 Regulatory Bodies**

The regulatory bodies as established by various Acts of Parliament, shall enhance and ensure quality assurance in the RPL process in line with KNQF.

#### **4.3.4 Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAIs)**

The Qualification Awarding Institutions as established by their various legal mandates, shall assess and award qualifications in line with the KNQF Act, 2014.

#### **4.3.5 Assessment Centre**

An Assessment center shall provide a conducive environment, facilities and resources for assessing a competence or qualification.

#### **4.3.6 Professional and Statutory Bodies**

Professional and statutory bodies shall be expected to recognise qualifications awarded under the RPL process.

#### **4.3.7 RPL Practitioners**

RPL practitioners shall execute the RPL assessment process.

#### **4.3.8 RPL Candidate**

Shall present himself/herself for RPL assessment.

#### **4.3.9 Development Partners**

They support the RPL process technically or financially.

#### **4.3.10 Industry**

Promote the implementation of the RPL process, develop Occupational Standards and recognise qualifications awarded through the RPL process.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND POLICY REVIEW

### 5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are important in tracking the progress of the implementation of programs and projects. It forms a basis for reprioritization and putting in place mitigation measures. To implement the policy, the Ministry will employ the following strategies:

- i. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the RPL process;
- ii. Establish a sustainable RPL Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) funding mechanism and
- iii. Build capacity of human resources in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) .

### 5.2 Reporting Policy Action

The Ministry will ensure that the RPL stakeholders produce quarterly and annual progress reports in a consultative manner and facilitate timely reporting, decision making and direction at all levels.

### 5.3 Policy Framework Review

This policy framework shall be reviewed after five years of implementation or when need arises.

### 5.4 Major Assumptions, Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The policy framework is a major reform in Kenya and is subject to several risks that need mitigation strategies. The table below shows assumptions, risks and proposed mitigation measures.

Table 5.1: Assumptions, Risks and Mitigation Strategies

ASSUMPTIONS	RISKS	PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES
1) Adequate allocation of required resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Partial implementation</li> <li>b) Compromised quality of RPL Process</li> <li>c) Cost of RPL affecting access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Lobby for resources</li> <li>ii. Establish a financing mechanism</li> </ul>
2) Effective institutional and regulatory structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Fake certification</li> <li>b) Compromised quality of RPL process</li> <li>c) Loss of credibility for RPL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Strictly ensure quality assurance process</li> <li>ii. Effective M&amp;E</li> <li>iii. Well defined institutional structures of RPL processes</li> </ul>
3) Adequate and competent RPL practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Substandard certification</li> <li>b) Delays in RPL process</li> <li>c) Fake certificates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Recruit adequate RPL practitioners</li> <li>ii. Ensure that only certified RPL practitioners are engaged.</li> <li>iii. Continuously capacity build RPL practitioners certified by relevant regulators</li> <li>iv. RPL practitioners to ascribe to code of conduct</li> </ul>
4) Standardized assessment tools and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Unreliable assessment outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Strengthen quality assurance process</li> <li>ii. Use of standardized assessment tools</li> </ul>
5) Efficient RPL process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Delayed RPL process for recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Develop a digital platform for real time data management, assessment and reporting strategies</li> </ul>
6) Effective Public Private Partnership (PPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Delays in RPL process</li> <li>b) Corruption</li> <li>c) Credibility of the results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Create awareness and advocacy on RPL</li> <li>ii. Create incentives for the private sector</li> </ul>

ASSUMPTIONS	RISKS	PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES
		iii. Active private sector participation in RPL decision making
7) Effective monitoring and evaluation	a) Fake certificates b) Substandard qualifications	i. Mainstream M&E in the RPL process
8) Equal opportunities to all potential RPL applicants	a) Unequal representation of all groups	i. Establish a sustainable funding model ii. Creating awareness in all social strata and groups in the society

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