

## **Introduction**

Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on policy framework on Education, Training and Research (MoE, 2005) highlighted the need to coordinate and clarify Kenya's education and training system. Multiplicity of qualifications and awarding bodies<sup>[1]</sup> made it difficult for employers to understand competences expected of holders of various qualifications. There was need to establish a common regulatory system for the recognition of attainment of knowledge, skills, competences, values and attitude. In this regard, the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014 was enacted which led to the establishment of the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) to develop and implement the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF); as a system of accreditation, Quality assurance, assessment and examination of national qualifications.

The KNQF has created 10-levels of qualifications; which are in tandem with the qualifications created by the East African Community (EAC) qualifications framework (EAQF). International countries are adopting the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 2011) proposed by UNESCO which creates 8 levels of qualifications. Globally, Qualification Frameworks seek to facilitate improved mobility of learners and workers across regions. The KNQA has developed and is currently promoting the use of the Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard (KNQCS).

Sub-frameworks developed within the KNQF have the basis of academic and vocational training which are meant to realize theoretical knowledge, competences, skills and provide for progression within the framework as shown in figure 1 below. The work of the Kenya National Qualifications framework cuts across the basic, TVET and university levels and seeks to create better harmony and/or integration/coordination within the education and qualifications awarding system of the country.

The KQF needs to be understood in the context of the reforms to Kenya's education and training policy, which occurred in 2005 and 2012. The objectives of the KNQF are set out in the KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014. They are to: (i) establish the Kenyan National Qualifications Authority; (ii) establish standards for recognizing qualifications obtained in and outside of Kenya; (iii) develop a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualifications; (iv) align the qualifications obtained in Kenya with the global benchmarks in order to promote

national and transnational mobility of workers; (v) strengthen the national accreditation, quality assurance, assessment and examination systems for national qualifications; and (vi) facilitate mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.



**KNQF STRUCTURE**

KNQF Level	General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework		National Status (minimum)
6	Doctorate Degree		5000 after KNQF level 5
5	Master's Degree		2400 after KNQF level 4
4	Post-Graduate Diploma	Professional Bachelor's Degree	1200 after KNQF level 3 or 6000 after KNQF level 2
	Bachelor's Degree		
3	National Diploma		Master-Craft Person -I or Management Professional
			Master-Craft Person -II or Professional Diploma
2	Credit Certificate National Certificate National Vocational Certificate-I		Professional Certificate or Master-Craft Person-III
			1200 after KNQF level 2 or 600 after level-4
1	National Vocational Certificate-II/Artisan Certificate		600 after KNQF level 1 or 300 after level-3
0	National Vocational Certificate-I		300 after KNQF level 1
7	Primary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate-I	National Skills Certificate -III (ITT-III)
	Primary Certificate		Primary Education (Level 1) Both Certificate

*Figure 1: KNQF structure*

**Qualifications regulation**

**Level Descriptors**

Descriptors of qualifications in the national framework focuses on generic competences and not competences derived from occupational classification, which vary from sector to sector along professional lines. On the other hand, descriptors in disaggregated industry sector frameworks target competences to reflect deployment functions. The KNQF level descriptors prescribes the purpose, knowledge, skills and competences of a qualification level.

## **Regulated qualifications**

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is the chief advisor to government on qualifications issued by qualification awarding institutions (QAIs). The Authority recognizes and accredits all qualifications awarding bodies operating in Kenya; and regulates the qualifications they are mandated to award. It also works with professional bodies and external quality assurance bodies in the country to ensure that qualifications awarded meet the national standard and are internationally competitive.

## **Progression**

The Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATs) is designed to facilitate progression of learners from one level of qualification to another; vertically or horizontally. The system recognizes experiential learning and volume of study in order to locate learners' on the qualification framework. The KNQF provides a single frame as the means for locating qualifications at their relative levels in a comprehensive, hierarchical, national qualifications structure. Need may arise to specify knowledge taxonomy under the cognitive domain to suit basic and higher education and the framework for TVET qualifications that emphasize skills taxonomy under the psychomotor and affective domains. The KCATs system is meant to improve the efficiency of our education system, and support student progression.

## **The strategic objective**

*“To manage accreditation, quality assurance, assessment and examinations for all qualifications in the country”.*

## **Challenges facing the Country on Qualifications**

1. Lack of a Nationally accepted institutional and program accreditation system and standard(s) to be used by the many regulators in the country;
2. Lack of a Nationally accepted Quality Assurance system and standard(s) to be used by the many regulators in the country;
3. Lack of a Nationally accepted Examination and/or Assessment system and standard(s) to be used by examination bodies in the country;

4. Disconnect between Qualifications and actual skill needs in the workplace;
5. Poor documentation of who has been awarded which qualification in the country (including a database of how many people have which qualifications);
6. Lack of coherence and fragmentation of our qualifications system;
7. Rampant production of fraudulent certificates and/or fake certificates and qualifications;
8. Public and private training institutions awarding qualifications for which they have no legal mandate to do so;
9. Many sub-standard local and foreign qualifications that do not meet the local standards;
10. Lack of nationally accepted admission requirements for different levels of our education system;
11. Lack of integration of curricular for different levels leading to poor progression of students across levels;
12. Lack of a nationally accepted Credit accumulation and transfer system (CATs);
13. Difficulties in getting international students to study in Kenya;
14. High levels of student drop out from different levels of our education system;
15. Lack of a central register/inventory of various qualifications; and
16. Existing TVET curriculum are provided under various settings which include formal, non-formal and informal with no uniform guidelines;

**To address these challenges the Government will address the following policy:**

1. Develop and implement a Nationally accepted institutional and program accreditation system and standard(s) to be used by the many regulators in the country;
2. Develop and implement a Nationally accepted Quality Assurance system and standard(s) to be used by the many regulators (and quality assurance agencies) in the country;
3. Develop a Nationally accepted Examination and/or Assessment system and standard(s) to be used by examination bodies in the country;
4. Work with sector skills councils to develop and implement occupational standards for each field of our qualifications;
5. Establish and maintain a national database of institutions, qualifications and learners (Kenya National Learners Record Database, KNLRD) in the country;
6. Develop and maintain the Kenya National qualifications framework specifying progression pathways; and inter-relationships between qualifications;
7. Develop and implement a National qualifications/Certificates Verification system;

8. Develop and implement rules and procedures to guide awarding of qualifications in the country;
9. Vet and ensure that all local and foreign qualifications meet the national standards (ensure that only registered and recognized foreign qualifications are offered in the country);
10. Develop and implement a nationally accepted admission requirements for different levels of our education system;
11. Encourage and support integrated curriculum development for different levels of our qualifications to ensure that they facilitate student progression and minimize duplication;
12. Develop and implement a nationally accepted Credit accumulation and transfer system for different categories of our qualifications (CATs);
13. Support and facilitate internationalization of the Kenyan education system through development of policies that are supportive of foreign students studying in the country;
14. Develop and implement policies to minimize student drop out from different levels of our education system;
15. Develop and maintain a central register/inventory of all recognized foreign qualifications in Kenya;
16. Develop and implement policies to recognize and equate qualifications obtained using format including from the formal, non-formal and informal education systems;