



# Regional Framework for Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification

Inter-University Council for East Africa  
EASTRIP Regional Facilitation Unit

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# Foreword

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a critical component in the transformation and socio-economic development of any nation and its people. It provides vital skills for sustainable economic growth, particularly in an era of economic and rapid technological changes. Hence its development, expansion and quality are inevitable.

TVET has significant long-term benefits of addressing skills deficit in the labour force. The inadequacy of workplace skills limits the growth and productivity of businesses and job creation and socio-economic inclusivity. These skillset gaps in turn constrain economic growth. Any shift towards economic diversification requires a greater supply of highly skilled workforce at all levels.

In pursuit of the progress and benefits of TVET, countries across the globe have recognised the imperative of collaboration. They transcend borders to harness collective strengths and accelerate the pace of economic growth. It is within this context that the Regional Framework for Occupational Competency Assessment and Certification (RFOCAC) for Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and beyond has been developed. Its goal is to assure the quality of training, recognise prior training and fast-track regional integration of TVET in line with the vision of the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP).

RFOCAC marks a significant milestone in the collective aspirations of Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. It reflects a shared commitment to enhance the quality of technical and vocational education across borders. The harmonisation of occupational competency assessment and certification system lays the groundwork for mutual recognition of qualifications, fostering labour mobility and collaboration.

While RFOCAC is designed to fortify the collaboration between Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, its implications may extend beyond the Eastern Africa region. It serves as a call to other regions to join in the shared commitment to advance TVET and, by extension, the socio-economic development of our inter-connected world.

This Framework is a tool for the implementation of the umbrella regional policy framework for TVET integration in the region. As we embark on this transformative journey, it is imperative that the collaboration is guided by the principles of inclusivity, equitable access, quality and relevance, and the collective pursuit of excellence.

Our strong desire is that RFOCAC becomes a key implementation instrument for the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework, regional policy framework for TVET integration and ultimately facilitate the improvement of the quality of training, the recognition of qualifications, and lays a strong foundation for mobility of certified workers in the region.

.....  
State Minister  
for Labour  
and Skills – Ethiopia

.....  
Principal Secretary  
State Department for  
TVET, Ministry of  
Education Kenya

.....  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education,  
Science and Technology  
Tanzania

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASEAN-RQF	Association of South East Asian Nations Regional Qualification Framework
BETA	Bottom-up Economic Transformative Agenda
CBET	Competence Based Education and Training
CDACC	Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council
CoC	Centre of Competence
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EAC	East African Community
EASTRIP	East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project
EKT	Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETQF	Ethiopian TVET Qualifications Framework
IAB	Industrial Advisory Board
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
KSB	Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoLS	Ministry of Labour and Skills
NACTVET	National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NTA	National Technical Awards
NTQF	National Training Qualifications Framework
NVA	National Vocational Awards
OBET	Outcome-Based Education and Training
OCAC	Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification
OS	Occupational Standards
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
QAI	Qualifications Awarding Institutions
RFU	Regional Facilitation Unit
RFOCAC	Regional Framework for Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification
RFTI	Regional Flagship TVET Institutes
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC-RQF	Southern African Development Community Regional Qualifications Framework
TTLM	Teaching and Training Learning Materials
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Authority

# Acknowledgment

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We extend special appreciation to the World Bank whose invaluable support to enhancing technical education and skills development in the Eastern Africa region has significantly contributed to the success of the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP).

We appreciate the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kenya, the Ministry of Labour of Ethiopia and their respective agencies, professional bodies and TVET Institutions. Their expertise and insights have been pivotal in shaping the content and direction of RFOCAC. Their commitment to excellence has ensured that it aligns with the needs and aspirations of the Eastern Africa region.

Last but not least, I would like to thank colleagues at Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) for their coordination in the production of this document. IUCEA is committed to spearheading technical and vocational skills development as the vehicle for economic transformation and fostering regional integration in TVET.

We highly hope that RFOCAC will catalyse positive and transformative change, drive regional integration, economic growth, and empowerment of individuals throughout East Africa and beyond.

.....  
Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona  
Executive Secretary  
Inter-University Council for East Africa.

# Definition of Key Terms

**Accreditation** – third-party recognition of an entity/organisation to perform assessment and certification of occupational competences as per set standards.

**Assessment** – the process of determining if a candidate possesses the required competencies of an occupational qualification as stated in the occupational standards leading to certification.

**Assessor** – a professional accredited to conduct assessment.

**Assessors' Panel** – an occupation-specific body created for purposes of assessment whose members are accredited as assessors.

**Assessment Centre** – an establishment accredited for purposes of conducting assessment on certain specific competencies or qualifications.

**Assessment Method** – the means that an assessor applies to gather evidence in order to make a decision whether the candidate is competent.

**Assessment Tool** – the instrument used for assessing tasks given to a candidate, which will provide the assessor with evidence of performance competence.

**Candidate** – an individual who is being assessed for accreditation by meeting the requirements for certification.

**Certification** – a formal process of recognising an individual's competence measured against occupational standards.

**Continuous Assessment** – an ongoing process that measures a learner's achievement during the training, providing information that is used to support the learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and training process.

**Certifying Body** – the organisation responsible for issuing certification to a person who exhibited competence during assessment.

**Competence** – the ability to apply knowledge, skills and attitude required to perform the job of an occupation as indicated in the occupational standards.

**Competence Certificate** – a document issued to individuals who were assessed and found competent in a single unit or cluster of units of competence.

**Formal Learning** – the systematic and sequential acquisition of knowledge and skills.

**Informal Learning** – learning that is unstructured and takes place away from the traditional formal learning settings, like a classroom.

**Formative Assessment** – a planned, ongoing assessment administered as a part of teaching to enhance training.

**Industry** – enterprises, organised private sector and professional associations, both governmental and non-governmental that provide products and services.

**National Learners Records Database** – national master register of all records of learners' achievements.

**Non-formal Learning** – learning that is acquired outside formal learning settings but within some organisational framework.

**Occupational Standards** – a set of required competences prescribed by industry experts to perform various tasks of the occupation.

**On-Site Assessment** – an assessment process conducted at the workplace.

**Professional Body/Associations** – a registered body of practitioners in an occupational field.

**Qualification** – a set of units of competencies (learning outcomes) which form a particular level on the National Qualifications Framework.

**Qualifications Awarding Institutions** – institutions with a legal mandate to develop curricula, conduct occupational competence assessment and award competence certificates.

**Qualification Levels** – the scope and composition of qualifications and degree of responsibility a qualified person can assume in the workplace.

**Skills** – the ability to apply knowledge to perform a given task.

**Standard** – the minimum requirements, reference point or benchmark to be considered acceptable.

**Summative Assessment** – shall be conducted at the end of Unit(s) of competence/module.

**Validation** – is a quality review process on an assessment tool.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Overview and Context

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the global, regional and national perspectives on occupational competence assessment and certification. It also looks at the statement of the problem, rationale, guiding principles, scope and context of RFOCAC.

### 1.1. Background

Occupational competence assessment and certification frameworks provide a structured conceptual map for collecting evidence, making judgement on whether competence has been achieved or not and formally recognising the competence against industry standards. These frameworks are part of qualifications frameworks which have gained traction in education, especially in Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET).

The origin of structured qualifications can be traced back to organised education in ancient civilizations such as Greece. Yet it was not until the 1980s that national qualifications frameworks became global phenomena. The first National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) were established in Australia, England, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa on the premise of competence approach to vocational education and shifts in learning outcomes.

The reasons for the establishment of NQF include: strengthening the coherence of the qualifications system; providing common standards for quality assurance; creating platforms for cooperation and visible learning pathways between sectors; supporting lifelong learning; strengthening linkages between supply and demand for education and training and human resource development; increasing transparency of the qualifications system; and enhancing accountability and credibility of education and training systems. More importantly, at a generic level, a qualification framework is seen as an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications based on a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved.

Furthermore, qualification frameworks make qualifications more readable and understandable, promote learners' and workers' mobility across countries, and enhance fair and transparent recognition of qualifications where qualification frameworks have been developed. For instance, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is currently being implemented by 38 countries. The Association

of South East Asian Nations Regional Qualifications Framework (ASEAN RQF) has 10 member states. While the Southern African Development Community Regional Qualifications Framework (SADC RQF) is being implemented by nine member states. The East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) aims to improve access to and quality of TVET programmes offered in selected Regional Flagship TVET Institutes (RFTI). EASTRIP is funded by the World Bank and the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania.

EASTRIP also intends to promote regional integration. According to the United Nations Statistics Division, the Eastern African geographical region is made up of 16 countries. They are interlinked in various sub-regional initiatives like the East African Community (EAC), the Inter-Governmental Agency for Development (IGAD), and the Eastern Africa Northern, Central and Southern infrastructure and economic corridors.

Moreover, EASTRIP is expected to benefit not only the three countries directly involved in it, but also other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The regional integration aspect of the project will contribute towards the future socio-economically integrated East African region.

Some of the achievements of EASTRIP so far include: the development of the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania (RQF-EKT); harmonisation of 44 occupational standards; and identification of 235 existing TVET qualifications from the three countries for mutual/regional recognition. The Qualifications Framework was adopted by the three countries to promote regional integration through mutual recognition of qualifications and to facilitate mobility of learners and TVET professionals across the region.

Owing to these achievements, TVET stakeholders decided it was necessary to operationalise the RQF-EKT by developing RFOCAC. This Framework is expected to serve as the guiding system for harmonised occupational competence assessment and certification system in the region. Such harmonisation is expected to promote employability by facilitating free mobility of labour and workforce in the region and consequently contribute in the development of a harmonised labour market in the region.

## 1.2. Problem Statement

EASTRIP through IUCEA has developed the RTQF - EKT and harmonised occupational standards to facilitate the harmonisation of TVET systems and hence mobility of staff, trainees and labour. Despite these key milestones, there still exists a gap on the harmonisation and standardisation of the occupational competence assessment and certification.

## 1.3. Rationale

Rationale for RFOCAC in the Eastern African region lies in the growing synergies between countries in the region. A harmonised assessment and certification framework will lead to mutual recognition of assessment and certification processes of TVET qualifications. This will further promote transparency and trust between

countries regarding the quality of their TVET systems, quality of graduates and the qualifications of their graduates. It will enable common criteria for referencing and quality assurance systems of qualifications, and facilitate common approaches to validate competencies acquired through formal, non-formal and informal training systems. This, in turn, improves overall integration within the region.

The measures to foster cooperation in education and training, particularly with respect to the harmonisation of education and training systems renders them comparable and compatible. The three countries (Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) agreed to cooperate in their human resource development policies and programmes, and to harmonise curricula, examination, assessment and certification as well as accreditation of education and training institutions through the joint action of their relevant national bodies. In the case of TVET, this will facilitate mobility of learners and labour, which, among others, required the establishment of RFOCAC to enable mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications across the region. The TVET system in the Eastern Africa region, through RTQF-EKT, is designed to provide an adequate and competent, motivated, adaptable, and innovative workforce that plays a pivotal role in poverty reduction and socio-economic development of the region. This is achieved through facilitating demand-driven, self-employment oriented, relevant, and outcome-based TVET at all levels through an outcome-based skilling system. In this system, competences of the labour market that are described in the Occupational Standards (OS) are the basis documents not only for skills development process, but also for competence assessment and certification.

Occupational competence assessment and certification system is an important tool in assuring quality, equity and relevance of the TVET sector. However, despite the three countries developing a regional qualifications framework, and each country having its own system for competence assessment and certification, there is no harmonised system for mutual recognition of the regional qualifications that would catapult regional integration through mobility of labour and workforce. This is the key rationale behind to develop this framework.

## 1.4. Guiding Principles

The guiding Principles of RFOCAC shall include:

- a) A comprehensive and flexible assessment and certification system for TVET sector within the region;
- b) A Basis on Occupational Standards;
- c) Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal competencies;
- d) Inclusivity;
- e) Integrity, fair and accountable;
- f) Applicability to national recognised qualifications;
- g) Ability to be done at unit(s) of competency and/or full qualification level;
- h) Conduction in accredited assessment centres by accredited assessors;
- i) Development and validation of assessment tools with participation of the industry and other key stakeholders;

## 1.5. Scope

The Framework will apply to TVET occupational competence assessment and certification primarily in the three partner states (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania). However, the Framework can be applicable beyond the three states to any country that will subscribe to the values and harmonisation principles of EASTRIP.

The Framework covers the whole continuum of occupational competence assessment and certification processes including the establishment of occupational competence assessment centres, whether in training institutions or in the industry, development and management of occupational competence assessment tools, conduct of assessment, management of assessment records, and certification of occupational competencies. In addition, the Framework also covers modalities of involvement of various institutions as well as industry in the process of occupational competence assessment and certification.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Situational Analysis

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the critical issues impacting occupational competences assessment and certification in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Kenya, and the United Republic of Tanzania. These factors include the legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangement and governance, infrastructural and human capacity.

### 2.1. Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification in the Federal Republic of Ethiopia

The National TVET system is designed to provide a competent, motivated, adaptable and innovative workforce that plays pivotal roles in the poverty reduction and socio- economic development for the country's industry development. This is achieved through facilitating demand-driven, self-employment oriented, relevant and outcome-based TVET at all levels. That is why the Ethiopian TVET system is reorganised as an outcome-based system. This means that identified competences of the labour market that are described in the occupational standards are the final benchmarks not only for training and learning activities but also for the assessment and certification of competencies.

#### 2.1.1. Legal and Policy Frameworks

The policy and legal documents such as the TVET policy, TVET proclamation, regulations and occupational competency assessment and certification guidelines are developed and put in place. However, the government is playing a major role while the participation of the private sector in terms of ownership is minimal.

#### 2.1.2. Institutional Arrangement and Governance

The institutional arrangement for the occupational competence assessment and certification is improving from time to time in the context of Ethiopia. However, the private sector involvement still needs to improve. There are regional level Centre of Competencies (CoC) in all regional states and all the CoCs are supported by government budget to run the occupational competency assessment and certification business. There are accredited assessment centres under CoCs and accredited assessors as well. This is an essential arrangement required for the smooth running of the business. The infrastructure needed including technologies and assessment materials are established although they are not in required amounts and quality. The accessibility and quality of the occupational competency assessment and certification is compromised, at times, due to this.

### 2.1.3. Human Capacity

The human capacity and the application of technologies including digitisation of assessment processes and protection of forgery on certification is crucial when it comes to administering the occupational competency assessment. In view of this, the country has made significant progress. However, there are still many challenges especially on utilisation of technology and making the process more reliable and efficient.

## 2.2. Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification in the Republic of Kenya

The Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification process in the Republic of Kenya is supported by elaborate legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangement, infrastructural and human capacity.

### 2.2.1. Legal and Policy Frameworks

Key legislation guides the assessment and certification of occupational competences. The relevant laws in this regard include the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014; The TVET Act No. 29 of 2013, the National Industrial Training Act cap 237 (3) (Revised 2012). Others are Kenya Medical Training College Act cap 261 of 1990 (Revised 2012), the Universities Act, No. 42 of 2014, legal orders which have upgraded the National Polytechnics as Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAI) and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Framework.

### 2.2.2. Institutional Structure

The above legal framework has established regulatory, assessment and certification bodies that include the Kenya National Examination Council, TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC) and the Kenya Medical College (KMTC) among others to execute the occupational competences assessment and certification.

### 2.2.3. Infrastructural and Human Capacity

To actualise this process, the implementing institution's capacity has been enhanced and qualified trainers recruited and trained in competence-based assessment. Kenya has also developed the National Standards for Assessment of National Qualifications to guide the occupational competence assessment and certification.

## 2.3. Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification in the United Republic of Tanzania

### 2.3.1 Legal and Policy Documents

TVET is viewed as a tool in implementing and promoting sustainable development in the United Republic of Tanzania. TVET institutions are major suppliers of skilled workforce who will be in the forefront of dealing directly with sustainable issues. It

is an integral part of the whole education system in Tanzania, which aims at guiding and promoting the development of citizenship and an appreciation of the cultures, customs, and traditions of Tanzania.

In particular, TVET programmes aim to enable and expand the acquisition of life skills needed to meet the changing needs of industry and the economy. Provision of TVET is enshrined in global and national policies, acts, programmes and strategies. These include the National Development Goals 2030; Education and Training Policy 2014 (2023 Version); the Technical Education and Training Policy 1996, NACTE and VETA Acts. Other policy programmes are the United Republic of Tanzania Development Vision (TDV) 2025; the Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP)III 2021/202-2025/2026, the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) 2017. All these policies, laws, strategies and visions focus on bringing quality of TVET in Tanzania.

### 2.3.2. Institutional arrangement

TVET is among the five (5) education subsectors in Tanzania. It is composed of Technical Education and Training (TET) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) components. TET and VET components form a ten (10) level TVET qualifications framework whereby VET takes the lowest three vocational education and training award levels known as National Vocational Awards (NVA). Occupational Standards (OS) are assessed and certified in form of learning outcomes in the approved curriculum due to the fact that OS are used to develop market oriented CBET/OBET curricula as explained earlier. Thus, CBET Competence Assessment and Certification in Tanzania is guided by:

- a) Tanzania's TVET Qualification Framework, which standardises and harmonises the country's qualifications by putting in place a system for setting standards, defining expected knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for labour market or for progression to next level of education within Tanzania's education and training system and beyond the country borders.
- b) The National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) which was established in 1997 by the Act, Cap. 129. It oversees and coordinates the provision of technical and vocational education and training offered by non-university tertiary institutions in the country. NACTVET is empowered to ensure that the courses offered by technical and vocational institutions are of high quality and respond to labour market demands nationally and internationally. In this regard, NACTVET is required to establish and operationalise quality assurance mechanisms, which are consistent in all registered institutions in order to assure stakeholders and the public of the quality desirable by TVET graduates.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Governance and Implementation

### 3.0. Introduction

This chapter outlines the implementation process of occupational competence assessment and certification that consists of assessment and certification actors, assessment centres, assessment, certification, quality assurance, records and database management.

### 3.1. Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification Actors

This section provides information regarding roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders from partner countries specified by RFOCAC. An effective and efficient occupation competence and certification process shall be governed through collective initiatives of key stakeholders of relevant occupational regulatory bodies, assessment and certification bodies and implemented by TVET institutions and industry.

In order to develop and implement the RFOCAC, each partner country shall:

- a) Develop a specific national framework for stakeholders' engagement;
- b) Establish structures for framework management;
- c) Establish modalities for stakeholders' involvement in assessment and certification processes; and
- d) Develop a clear occupational competence assessment and certification governance structure.

These assessment and certification actors include:

- i. Ministries responsible for TVET;
- ii. TVET agencies/bureaus;
- iii. Assessment Centres;
- iv. TVET Institutions
- v. TVET QAI/CoC/Certifying bodies
- vi. Industry
- vii. Regulatory Bodies
- viii. Professional Bodies
- ix. Regional Bodies

### 3.1.1. Ministries responsible for TVET shall:

- a) Provide enabling environments for occupational competence assessment and certification through relevant policies and guidelines;
- b) Promote quality and relevance in training and competence assessment and certification;
- c) Monitor conduct of competence assessment and certification; and
- d) Provide linkages with other line ministries/bodies involved in assessment and certification.

### 3.1.2. TVET Agencies/Bureaus/Regulatory Bodies

The TVET Agencies/Bureaus responsible for TVET shall:

- a) Accredite/Register QAI/CoC/Certifying bodies;
- b) Maintain database of qualifications;
- c) Promote recognition of qualifications nationally, regionally and internationally;
- d) Develop standards for assessment and certification;
- e) Maintain quality of training, assessment and certification processes;
- f) Register and license assessment centres, and assessors/verifiers; and
- g) Monitor and evaluate occupational competence assessment and certification processes.

### 3.1.3. Assessment Centres

These are establishments accredited by the CoC/QAI to manage assessment on specific competencies or qualifications. Assessment Centres may be in the training institutions or in the industry that is on-site assessment. Assessment Centres shall:

- a) Prepare candidates for assessment.
- b) Provide competent staff who will be assessors, verifiers and examiners.
- c) Provide resources for assessment.
- d) Manage candidates' assessment records/Portfolio of Evidence (POE).
- e) Apply and maintain assessment guidelines
- f) Provide security of assessment personnel and materials.
- g) Provide conducive environment for competence assessment (infrastructure).
- h) Conduct internal assessment/continuous assessment/national assessment.
- i) Provide a conducive environment for assessment of candidates with special needs.
- j) Comply with requirements of regulatory bodies.

### 3.1.4. TVET Institutions

These are training institutions for TVET. They may be accredited as assessment centres or not.

They shall:

- a) Admit trainees who meet entry requirements as stipulated in the CBET programmes.
- b) Conduct training in line with the OS.
- c) Conduct formative/Continuous assessment.
- d) Maintain assessment records.
- e) Provide assessors and verifiers.

### 3.1.5. National/Regional Regulatory Authorities

These include Ministries responsible for TVET, partner country's regulatory bodies and TVET agencies/Bureaus where applicable.

### 3.1.6. Qualifications Awarding Institutions/Centres Of Competence/ Certifying Bodies

These institutions accredited by national regulatory agencies to develop curricula, conduct occupational competence assessment and award competence certificates shall:

- a) Develop guidelines for assessment and certification based on assessment and certification standards set by the regulatory bodies.
- b) Register candidates for occupational competence assessment and certification.
- c) Maintain a database of candidates.
- d) Conduct capacity building of assessment and certification personnel (examiners, assessor/verifiers and supervisors/managers)
- e) Maintain a database of examiners, assessors, verifiers and supervisors.
- f) Conduct capacity building of industry players in occupational competence assessment.
- g) Sensitise citizens on occupational competence assessment and certification processes.
- h) Develop and validate occupational assessment instruments and tools.
- i) Conduct occupational competence assessment.
- j) Award competence certificates to candidates who qualify.

### 3.1.7. Private Sector

The Private Sector shall:

- a) Provide assessors and verifiers.
- b) Identify competency gaps during assessment to be addressed through review of OS.
- c) Participate in the development and validation of assessment tools.
- d) Recognise competence certificates awarded and register qualified professionals.
- e) Provide professional regulation guidelines during assessment.

### 3.1.8. Regional Body

The regional body responsible for occupational competence assessment and certification in East Africa and beyond shall;

- a) Coordinate harmonisation of regional frameworks for qualification, OS, Curriculum/Courses, assessment and certification.
- b) Conduct M&E of the implementation of RFOCAC
- c) Promote movement of skills and labour across the East African Region for regional integration.
- d) Coordinate regional quality assurance programmes.

## 3.2. Occupational Competence Assessment Process

This section entails the planning, preparation and conduct of occupational competence assessment in each member country, which shall conform to principles of assessment including validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness. The process covers the domains of competency, knowledge, skills, values and attitude.

### 3.2.1. Planning for Assessment

Planning for assessment shall entail: preparation of candidates for occupational competence assessment; development of assessment tools; identification and engagement of assessors, verifiers and supervisors and preparation of assessment centres.

#### 3.2.1.1. Preparation of Candidates

Candidates shall be the focal point of occupational competence assessment and certification. Because of this, candidates shall be prepared for their responsibilities in occupational competence assessment, which include:

- a) Preparing for assessment.
- b) Discussing and agreeing on an assessment plan with assessors.
- c) Availing oneself for occupational competence assessment whether internal or external.

- d) Adhering to assessment rules and regulations.
- e) Producing sufficient evidence of current competence and/or of prior achievement (where applicable).
- f) Conducting self-assessment under the guidance of an assessor.
- g) Endorsing results of continuous assessment.
- h) Following appeals procedure when necessary.

### 3.2.1.2 Development of Assessment Tools

Development of Assessment tools shall:

- a) Depend on the method of assessment to be employed.
- b) Be derived from OS.
- c) Be developed by industry experts and assessors.
- d) Be validated before being used.
- e) Be used to collect evidence related to attitude, knowledge and skills.
- f) Abide by rules of evidence in occupational competence assessment which are:
  - i Validity: Does the assessment tool cover all performance requirements of the unit of competence?
  - ii Sufficiency: Does the assessment tool enable the assessor to make decisions about competence over time and in different situations? Are all dimensions of competence addressed? Can competence in different contexts be demonstrated?
  - iii Currency: Is the competent performance contemporary? Does the evidence demonstrate the candidate's current knowledge and skills?
  - iv Authenticity: Is the evidence collected the candidate's own work?

### 3.2.1.3 Identification and Engagement of Candidate Assessors, Verifiers and Supervisors

The identification of the candidate assessors, verifiers and supervisors shall be based on the prescribed standards by the responsible authority. Once the candidate assessors, verifiers and supervisors are identified, they shall be taken through proper assessment methodology training and certified. Only the licensed assessors, verifiers and supervisors shall be engaged.

### 3.2.1.4. Assessors' Accreditation/Approval

The following credentials shall be taken into account during accreditation of assessors:

- a) Have comprehensive and current knowledge of the industry practices and the job being assessed.
- b) Completed the assessors' methodology training on competency-based assessment.

- c) Must have at least three years of industry experience in the trade area/ occupation.
- d) Accreditation of an assessor shall be renewed after at least three (3) years subject to evidence of continuous professional development (CPD).
- e) Accreditation of an assessor may be revoked if there is proof of unprofessionalism in the conduct of occupational assessment.

### 3.2.1.5. Responsibility of Assessors

Assessors shall:

- a) Inspect assessment centres/ venues for readiness of assessment.
- b) Implement assessment activities, under supervision of the CoC/assessment manager/supervisor.
- c) Conduct assessment planning with the candidates.
- d) Implement assessment of candidates as per the plan.
- e) Collect evidence and provide feedback on the assessment results.
- f) Report the result to the responsible authority.

### 3.2.1.6. Verifier Accreditation

The following credentials shall be taken into account during accreditation of a verifier:

- a) Have comprehensive and current knowledge of the industry, industry practices and the job being assessed.
- b) Completed the assessors' methodology training/ training on competency-based assessment.
- c) Must have at least three years of industry experience in the trade area/ occupation.
- d) Accreditation of a verifier shall be renewed after at least three (3) years subject to evidence of continuous professional development (CPD).
- e) Accreditation of a verifier may be revoked if there is proof of unprofessionalism in the conduct of occupational assessment.

### 3.2.1.7. Responsibility of Verifiers/Supervisors

During quality assurance of the assessment process, the verifier/supervisor shall:

- a) Examine assessment tools and give feedback.
- b) Observe the implementation process of occupational competence assessment and give feedback.
- c) Develop a sampling plan for assessment.
- d) Conduct assessment of sampled candidates.
- e) Verify that the result of an assessment process is authentic, valid, reliable and fair.

### 3.2.1.8. Accreditation of Assessment Centre/Venue

The following conditions shall apply to assessment centres:

- a) An assessment centre shall be accredited by the relevant accreditation authorities /agencies.
- b) Assessment centres may be accredited for one or more occupations or a unit of competence.
- c) An establishment/facility in industry shall be accredited as an assessment centre, if it meets the requirements.
- d) Training institutions shall be accredited as assessment centres/venues by the accreditation authority when it meets the requirements.
- e) Assessment centres shall apply for reaccreditation after every three (3) years.
- f) Accreditation of Assessment Centres may be revoked at any time if found non-compliant with assessment requirements set by the accreditation authorities/agencies.

### 3.2.1.9. Assessment Centre/Venue Accreditation Requirements

The requirements for accreditation of an Assessment Centre shall include at least:

- a) Availability of qualified personnel to manage assessment activities.
- b) Adequate facilities/infrastructure for assessment.
- c) Accessibility to persons living with disabilities for purposes of fairness and inclusivity.
- d) Sufficient number of functional equipment, tools, instruments, and materials for the practical projects included in the assessment activities.
- e) Authority to operate as a business (compliance with legal requirements).

## 3.3. Administration/Conduct of Assessment

The Conduct of assessment includes ensuring that assessment is conducted in a conducive environment and within the stipulated regulations and guidelines.

### 3.3.1. Modes of Assessment

Modes of assessment shall include:

#### a) Formative Assessment

This is a continuous assessment which is conducted internally by an internal assessor/trainer. Assessment centres shall put in place structures for conduct and management of formative assessment as guided by occupational competence assessment and certification standards and guidelines in the given country.

#### b) Summative Assessment

This is an assessment conducted at the end of an instructional unit. Centres of

Competence/Assessment shall put in place structures for conduct and management of summative assessment based on guidelines and standards for occupational competence assessment and certification in the given country.

### 3.4. Occupational Competence Certification

#### 3.4.0. Introduction

This section entails recognising a candidate who has achieved competencies at a level based on the NQF and also short-term training on competency based. It covers types of certificates, authenticity of certificates, withdrawal/rescinding of certificates and registration in the national database.

#### 3.4.1. Types of Certificates

Competence certificates shall be awarded by a body/agency/institution mandated by law of the given country to award a given qualification. There shall be different levels of occupational competence certificates:

- a) Full qualification certificate.  
This shall be awarded to competent candidates who have undergone assessment and are competent in all units of competence in the qualification.
- b) Unit of competence/Short Course/ Part Qualification certificate  
This shall be awarded upon demonstration of competence in a unit(s) of competence.
- c) Micro Qualifications Certificate  
This shall be awarded at the smallest certifiable competence from a unit of competence.

#### 3.4.2. Authenticity of Certificates

Occupational competence certificates shall:

- a) Have security features.
- b) Meet requirements of the national/regional qualification framework

#### 3.4.3. Withdrawal/Rescinding of Certificates

The QAI/Agency/Certifying body may withdraw a certificate if the agency/institution is satisfied that:

- a) The certificate was acquired in a fraudulent manner.
- b) There was assessment irregularity before, during, or after the assessment.
- c) The candidate was assessed without fulfilling the minimum assessment requirements.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Quality Assurance

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents quality assurance of occupational competence assessment and certification process comprising internal quality assurance, external quality assurance and quality audits.

### 4.1. Internal Quality Assurance

All institutions and organisations involved in occupational competence assessment and certification shall put in place structures for internal quality assurance. These shall include but not limited to:

- a) Setting up of an internal quality assurance unit.
- b) Appointment of internal quality assurance officers.
- c) Developing and implementing internal quality assurance guidelines.
- d) Carrying out self-assessment of the occupational competence assessment and certification system.
- e) Generating periodic quality assurance/audit report(s) in accordance with quality assurance/internal audit guidelines.

### 4.2. External Quality Assurance

External quality assurance shall be carried out by competent authorities responsible for training and qualifications. TVET agencies at national levels shall put in place structures for external quality assurance. These shall:

- a) Set standards and guidelines for institutional, programme and assessment centre accreditation.
- b) Set standards and guidelines for accreditation of assessors, verifiers and supervisors.
- c) Enforce quality assurance standards and compliance with guidelines.
- d) Generate periodic/annual quality assurance reports.

### 4.3. Quality Audits

#### 4.3.1. Internal audit

This shall be conducted by external (third) parties internally after completion of occupational competency assessment and certification. Each institution/

organisation shall put in place structures for conducting internal audits and generate audit reports annually. The audit reports shall be submitted to the competent authorities responsible for TVET regulation and qualifications regulation.

#### 4.3.2. External audit

This shall be conducted out by competent authorities responsible for TVET and qualifications regulation. The competent authorities shall carry out external audits of occupational competency assessment and certification and generate a report. The competent authorities shall then use the internal and external reports to prepare a comprehensive audit report, which shall be discussed annually with the occupational competence assessment and certification institutions/CoC/Regions.

### 4.4. Records and Database Management

This section entails the management of assessment records, data and results and assessment appeals.

#### 4.4.1. Management of Assessment Records, Data And Results

Competency assessment agencies/centres/QAI shall develop guidelines for:

- a) Making decisions on achievement of competencies (marking, validation, verification and moderation of results).
- b) Retention of assessment evidence.
- c) Storage and security of assessment materials and records including loss of data and against cyber-crime.
- d) Management of assessment fraud.
- e) Maintaining database of assessment records/Portfolio of Evidence.
- f) Recruiting personnel with integrity to ensure credibility of assessment data.
- g) Applying appropriate and secure technology to support data management.
- h) Maintaining data/records backup for safeguards.

#### 4.4.2. Occupational Competence Assessment Appeals

Each country shall establish an appeal mechanism to address occupational competence assessment grievances if or when they occur.

### 4.5. Management of Data/Records

In order to ensure effective and efficient quality assurance, there is a need for quality data. All QAI/TVET agencies/national bodies/regulatory bodies/regional bodies shall put in place structures for proper, safe, clear, easily retrievable and backed up data and records.

#### 4.5.1 Management of Data/Records at Certifying Bodies

In order to ensure proper management of data, the QAI/CoC/Certifying body shall:

- a) Have centralised database of all qualifications in the institution;
- b) Maintain a database of assessment records/POE;

- c) Put in place structures and appropriate credible technology to support data management and ensure data security against cyber-crime and data loss; and
- d) Engage qualified persons with integrity to ensure credibility of data.

#### 4.5.2. Management of Data/Records at TVET Agencies/Bureau/Regional Body/National Bodies

In order to ensure quality assessment and certification processes, TVET agencies/bureaus/ministries responsible for TVET shall have a centralised database of all qualifications in the country, put in place structures and appropriate credible technology to ensure data security and management against cyber-crime and data loss.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Review

### 5.0 Introduction

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are important in tracking the progress of the implementation of programmes and projects. It forms a basis for review and mitigation of emerging issues to make the implementation seamless. This chapter therefore discusses monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review of RFOCAC and the effective and coherent implementation for the occupational competence assessment and certification framework.

### 5.1. Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E of the implementation of RFOCAC is an aspect of quality assurance. It shall be undertaken at institutional, national and regional levels.

- a) Each level shall prepare instruments/guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the Framework.
- b) The regional body shall undertake monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the Framework annually.
- c) National bodies and institutions shall undertake monitoring of implementation of the framework biannually and evaluate the implementation annually.
- d) The regional body will develop instruments for collating feedback on implementation of the Framework.
- e) The collected and processed feedback of M&E will be shared with relevant bodies/agencies for consideration and implementation.

### 5.3. Reporting

Each member state shall:

- a) Ensure standardised and timely documentation and reporting on progress of implementation.
- b) Produce quarterly and annual progress reports in a consultative manner;
- c) Disseminate generated reports to all stakeholders; and
- d) Facilitate timely reporting, decision making and direction at all levels.

### 5.4. Review

- a) The review of the Framework shall take place based on M&E results from all the levels.
- b) The review will be coordinated by the regional body.

# References

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3. Ministry of Labor and Skills (2023). Assessment tool Development Manual, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
4. Ministry of Labor and Skills (2023). Assessment Administration Manual, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
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6. Republic of Kenya (2010). The Constitution of the Republic Kenya 2010.
7. East Africa Community (2022). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Harmonisation Strategy.
8. Republic of Kenya (2013). TVET ACT. Government Printers.
9. Republic of Kenya (2014). Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act of 2014.
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13. United Republic of Tanzania (2006). Vocational Education and Training Act. Tanzania
14. United Republic of Tanzania (2022). National Council for Technical Education Act, Tanzania
15. United Republic of Tanzania (2022). Tanzania National Qualification Framework (TQF)
16. United Republic of Tanzania (2016). Ten Year National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) 2016- 2026. Tanzania
17. IUCEA (2022). Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania.

# Annexes

## Annex I: Sample Application Form for Registration of Assessor/Verifier

Fill this form as required in various sections and attach all required documents.

Type of Application	TICK (as applicable) If you have experience of at least three years as a trainer or practitioner, please tick both. Otherwise tick assessor only
1. Assessor Registration	
2. Verifier Registration	

### Personal Details

Personal Details				
	First name	Middle name	Last Name	
1	(Please indicate the names as they appear in your identification document)			
2	ID/Passport No.	Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		
3	Gender (Please tick as appropriate)	Male	Female	
4	Special Needs (Tick as applicable)	Yes	No	If yes, specify
5	Postal Address			
	Phone/Mobile No:	E-mail:		

### Academic Qualifications

APPLICANT'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS			
ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	PERIOD		
	FROM	TO	

### Training in Competence Based Assessment

Have you been trained in competency-based assessment? (If yes please indicate the dates of training)	Yes	No

### Work Experience

APPLICANT'S RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE			
OCCUPATION	JOB TITLE	PERIOD	
		FROM	TO

### Qualification(s) applied for

SPECIFIC REGISTRATION INFORMATION (Please indicate the course(s)/qualification(s) and respective unit(s) of competence you wish to be registered as assessor/verifier)	
COURSE/QUALIFICATION	LEVEL

### Employer Information

EMPLOYER INFORMATION		
Full Name of Current Employer (Please specify whether company or training provider)		
Postal Address		
Physical Location		
Phone	Mobile /Phone Number	e-mail
Applicant's Duty/work Station (City/town where you are currently posted by your employer)		

### DECLARATION

I ..... declare that the information contained in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

## Annex II: Sample Assessment Plan

### ASSESSMENT PLAN

#### 1. Qualification

This assessment plan is to be completed together with the assessor. Your assessor will discuss the following areas with you:

Purpose and outcomes of the assessment process  
 Relevant units of competence  
 Appeals process  
 Confidentiality and security of information  
 Special needs/Additional information

Candidate's details  
 Candidate's Name & Registration Code

Phone No.

Assessor's Name & Registration Code

Phone No.

Employer Contact Details (where applicable)

Phone No.

Location of Assessment

Assessment Date

Time

Purpose of Assessment:

Unit(s) of Competence:

You may list the elements and performance criteria as per the relevant unit(s) of competence or attach extracts of the relevant Occupational Standards

Element	Performance Criteria to be assessed are:

Conditions of Assessment (Context: industry/ training system):

Methods of Assessment	Please tick (✓)	
Portfolio of evidence		
Written Assessment		
Questionnaire – Oral or written to assess underpinning knowledge		
Observation/Performance Checklists for demonstration of practical skills		
Supplementary Evidence (Third party & Workplace Documents. When and if applicable)		
Other (specify)		
Resource requirements for assessment:		
During the assessment, the following resources will be required:		
Allowable (Reasonable) Adjustments:		
Date of assessment:		
Assessment will take place at a mutually agreed time between the candidate and the assessor.		
DATE:	(Future Date)	TIME:
Candidate's Name .....		Date (Date of Signing)
Candidates' Signature. ....		
Assessor's Name .....		
Assessor's signature: .....		DATE: (Date of signing)

## Annex III: Sample Assessment Tool Validation Checklist

Unit of Competence: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit of Competence Code \_\_\_\_\_

Element(s) to be Assessed \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions to Validation Team:

Ensure all of the following items have been provided and are fully completed. In the event any of the documents is not provided, is not fully completed or is incorrect, do not proceed with the validation process.

Assessment Tool

Occupational Standards

Note: The checklist above will be used for written, oral, practical tools, some items may not necessarily be applicable to all this assessment methods.

Part A	Assessment Items	Yes	No	If no, Actions Required
1.1	Is the candidate provided with clear instructions?			
1.2	Is there a logical sequence of assessment items/activities?			
1.3	Is the timeframe provided adequate to complete the assessment?			
1.4	Are there any anomalies, misleading information, omissions, and errors in the assessment tool?			
1.6	Is the distribution of marks in line with PC weighting?			
1.7	Are the tasks given/level descriptors relevant to the level of assessment?			
Part B	The Assessment tool(s)			

2.1	Allow the practical application of skills and knowledge			
2.2	Utilise a number of different assessment methods			
2.3	Allow for reasonable adjustment if required			
2.4	Include feedback mechanisms?			
2.5	Marking guides and points clarified			
<b>Part C</b>	<b>Is the information provided for candidates suitable?</b>			
3.1	The instructions and guidance on what to do in order to complete the assessment task			
3.2	Any required materials and/or equipment			
3.3	The level of assistance permitted by the assessor in the assessors' guide			
3.4	Evidence to be collected			
3.5	The provision for making assessment decision (Competent or not yet competent) is provided in the observation checklist			
3.6	Location of Assessment			
<b>Part D</b>	<b>Principles of assessment-Validity</b>			
4.1	Addresses the elements and performance criteria			
4.2	ALL the PCs of the expected element(s) of competence assessed?			
4.3	Shows application in the context described in the range statement			
4.4	Meets the critical aspects of assessment requirements			
4.5	Demonstrates that performance, skills and knowledge are applied in real/simulated workplace situations			
	Principles of assessment-Reliability			

4.6	Provides clear instructions to assessors regarding the assessment requirements and how to use the tool/s			
4.7	Provides clear evidence criteria or decision-making rules			
	<b>Principles of assessment-Flexibility</b>			
4.8	Can be adapted to meet the needs of all students (including guidance to assessors regarding reasonable adjustment)			
	<b>Principles of assessment-Fairness</b>			
4.9	Provides clear information for students about assessment requirements			
4.10	Does not demand more than the qualification, level or course requires			
4.11	Ensures students are provided with objective assessment feedback			
4.12	Allows for recognition of existing competencies			

Summary of Comments and Recommendations from Validation of Assessment

S/N	Comments and Recommendations
1	
2	
3	
4	

Validation Committee Decision  
The Assessment Tool requires:

No change	
Minor change	
Significant change	

## Appendix 1: Technical Working Group Members (Experts)

FULL NAME OF THE MEMBER	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
Mr. GITAU NELSON	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - KENYA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA
Mr. ARCHER ARINA	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - KENYA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA
Mr. STANLEY MAINDI	KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (KNQA) - KENYA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA
Mr. RICHARD MUTETI	KENYA NATIONAL FEDERATION OF JUA KALI ASSOCIATIONS - KENYA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA
Mr. ALFRED MWANZIA	TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY - KENYA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA
Dr. BEATRICE OSUM-BAH	TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION COUNCIL (TVET CDACC) - KENYA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA
Dr. ENIYEW GETNET	MINISTRY OF LABOUR & SKILLS	FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
Ms. MEKEDES DERESSE	EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY	FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
Ms. MARTHA WOLDE	MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SKILLS	FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

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Dr. ETHEL KASEMBE	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MOEST) - TANZANIA	UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
Mr. ZACHY MBENNA	TANZANIA PRIVATE SECTOR FEDERATION - TANZANIA	UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
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Ms. ANNETH MGANGA	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY (VETA) - TANZANIA	UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
DR. COSAM JOSEPH	INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA	REGIONAL FACILITATION UNIT
HAILEMICHAEL ASRAT	INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA	REGIONAL FACILITATION UNIT
GODWIN BONGE MUHWEZI	INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA	REGIONAL FACILITATION UNIT
CHRISTOPHER KAKOOZA	INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA	REGIONAL FACILITATION UNIT
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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, creating a modern, abstract design.