

REGIONAL TVET QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND TANZANIA (RTQF-EKT)



MAY 2022

**Copyright © [2022/2024] Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA).
All rights reserved. This work is protected by copyright. Use of this work is
permitted with proper attribution to the Inter-University Council for East Africa
(IUCEA). For commercial use or any use beyond the scope of this permission,
please contact: info@iucea.org**



Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania



COMMUNIQUE ON ADOPTION OF THE REGIONAL TVET QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR ETHIOPIA, KENYA, AND TANZANIA

1. We, the State Minister of Ministry of Labour & Skills, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Principal Secretary State Department of Vocational and Technical Training, Ministry of Education, Republic of Kenya, and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, United Republic of Tanzania, wishing to foster cooperation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
2. Re-affirming our desire to promote regional mobility of students and skilled workers, as enshrined in the Regional Integration aspect of the East African Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP).
3. Commending the work done by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), through the East African Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) with financial support from the World Bank Group in developing the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania.
4. Noting the flexibility in the intended application of Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania which is based on referencing approach.
5. We hereby affirm, our commitment to foster regional integration by adopting the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania and 44 related regional occupational standards developed under EASTRIP.
6. We commit to mainstream the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania into our national policies and qualifications frameworks and in our TVET education systems and enforce the effective implementation of the conceived purposes of the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework.
7. We commit to develop mutual recognition agreements to allow TVET qualifications

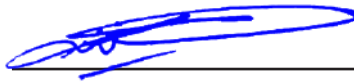
to be recognized by in our respective countries.

8. Implore other countries in East Africa region to make use of the Regional TVET Qualification Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania.
9. The adopted framework to be implemented by our relevant ministries, national agencies and institutions with technical guidance from Inter-University Council for East Africa.

We therefore hereby pledge our resolve to this Commitment at Addis Ababa, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on this 23rd day of May, in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two as duly attested by our respective signatures as hereunder.



Hon. Dr. Bekir Shale,
State Minister for Ministry
of Labour & Skills
Federal Democratic Republic
of Ethiopia



Dr. Margaret Mwakima,
Principal Secretary, State
Department of Vocational
and Technical Training,
Ministry of Education,
Republic of Kenya



Prof. Eliamani M. Sedoyeka
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Science
and Technology,
United Republic of Tanzania



PICTORIAL



MESSAGE FROM THE STATE MINISTER FOR LABOR AND SKILLS - FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA



DR BAKER SHALE
STATE MINISTER FOR
LABOR AND SKILLS
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
ETHIOPIA

I would like to begin with a few reflections of my own about our journey thus far in overseeing the EASTRIP project. I have learnt that EASTRIP is an important project working on critical areas within the TVET sector; which is increasing access, improving quality and relevance and promoting regional integration. More importantly the project that is striving to not only create Center of Excellences within our TVET Polytechnic Colleges but also to push beyond that and ensure a regional integration with our neighboring countries. The Pan African spirit of this project and the key integration areas are very much close to my heart.

When EASTRIP began the process to harmonize TVET qualifications framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania during March 2020, it appeared to be a long and difficult journey. Despite the challenges ahead; the assignment was taken on by all members with great enthusiasm, immense commitment and a sense of ownership in ensuring the success of the regional document.

A number of discussions, involving a several key stakeholders in the TVET sector, have since taken place to come up with the current Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania (RTQF-EKT)

A skilled and flexible workforce is increasingly identified by the Government of Ethiopia key to economic development. With the emergence of a global market in both educational services and labour, agreements on mutual recognition and transparency of skills and qualifications have become important elements of not only of Africa regional integration but also critical instrument that needs to be in place to assist the ever growing youth population.

This framework is a new paradigm which will facilitate the regional common recognition of TVET qualifications and hence used as an instrument to measure and standardize the skills provision of different TVET institutes of the region. When the countries in the region recognize the TVET awards from other countries; this will lay a foundation for free mobility of skilled workforce.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Skills is keen to see the success and the fruits of this project; including the implementation of the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. The free movement of skilled labor and the mutual recognition among our neighboring countries is a testament of Africa rising as this framework will serve as a catalyst for long term prosperity.

I personally am humbled to be a witness in the success of this endeavors. A big milestone not only for the TVET Sector but also at a National Level. Well done Ethiopia! Well done Kenya! Well Done Tanzania!

DR BAKER SHALE
STATE MINISTER FOR LABOR AND
SKILLS
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING, REPUBLIC OF KENYA



Dr. Margaret W. Mwakima;
PhD, DD, CBS
Principal Secretary
State Department for
Vocational and Technical
Training
Ministry of Education
Republic of Kenya

The Africa We Want” is underpinned in the Agenda 2063 for education, science and technology and youth. It envisages an integrated Africa encompassing free movement of persons, free trade but also an Africa with common education space for all Africans. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25) defines among its priorities the establishment of national and regional qualifications frameworks and a Continental qualifications framework linked with regional and national frameworks to facilitate regional integration and labor mobility.

The First ten-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 foresees that a common educational qualification system is developed and in place by 2023. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a key flagship of African integration. Its “Protocol on Trade in Services” mentions recognition of education and harmonization as a key aspect and states (in article 18) that “The State Parties shall establish a continental qualifications framework to encourage and promote the free movement of persons”.

The East African Community (EAC)-African Union (AU) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Dialogue Forum held in August 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya discussed how to strengthen and harness TVET potential for the socio-economic development of the EAC. One of the key recommendations from this dialogue was that “the EAC needed to harmonize the TVET systems in the region”. This was to be achieved through a joint TVET harmonization strategy that included the development of an EAC Qualification Framework. Since then, the Republic of Kenya has continued to play an active role in efforts to realize the aspirations of the Community.

The Ministry of Education, Kenya sits in the EAC Sectoral Council on Education, Science & Technology, Culture and Sports and has made valuable contributions towards the realization of a harmonized qualification Framework at the EAC level.

The Republic of Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia are implementing the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project in 17 Regional Flagship TVET Institutions supported by the World Bank. One of the Key objectives of the project is to promote regional Integration through Staff- Trainees Exchange. Equally, regional integration would be promoted through free movement of labor across the region. To realize this objective within TVET, the development of a Regional TVET Qualification Framework within the three Countries implementing the project became necessary.

The Ministry of Education Kenya, nominated a team of Four Technical Officers to form part of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Regional TVET Qualifications Framework- Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania (RTQF-EKT). I am happy that the TWG has been able to produce a credible document that will not only guide the RFTIS but also TVET in the three Countries. Congratulations to the Team and Interuniversity Council for East Africa for the splendid coordination and robust Stakeholders engagement.

The above initiatives clearly show the good will and commitment towards the development of a Regional Qualification framework.

The development of the RTQF-EKT, therefore comes at a very opportune time when the idea for a harmonized Qualifications Framework in the African region is highly welcome. It will address the long-time challenge encountered by migrant taking cognizance of the fact that the African region is characterized by migratory movements driven by multiple political, economic, and environmental factors. At the same time, high levels of cross border trade and temporary flows across borders are indicative of the socio-economic interdependence of these areas. Harmonized qualification will result in free flow of labor and services. The RTQF-EKT, shall allow recognition of skills

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING, REPUBLIC OF KENYA

of migrants thereby eliminating the disadvantage for the migrants to compete favorably in the job market with the host communities. This will bring about greater regional integration among member States, which is expected to bring about the expansion of trade, economics of scale and greater foreign direct investment; all contributing to accelerated economic growth of the Region and Africa as a whole.

Thank you.

Dr. Margaret W. Mwakima; PhD, DD, CBS

Principal Secretary

State Department for Vocational and Technical Training

Ministry of Education

Republic of Kenya

MESSAGE FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF TANZANIA



Dr. Francis Michael
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education,
Science and Technology
United Republic of
Tanzania

Tanzania is committed to strengthening cooperation with other East Africa Countries. One of the essential areas of cooperation which the East African Community entails to achieve is free movement of students and skilled labour among member countries. This objective can be realized if the education systems of these countries can produce skilled human resources who fit the labour market standards within the Community.

To achieve the above goal, the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) with the financial support from the World Bank through the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (ESTRIP) has done a remarkable job of coordinating the development of Regional Technical and Vocational Education and Training Qualifications Framework and Occupational Standards. These standards Carters for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania which are aligned with the scope of the project, which is to increase the access and improve the quality of TVET programs and to support regional integration within the named three countries.

The selected Harmonised Occupational Standards in priority sectors of the project will enable the EAC countries to deliver training to students, out with a focus on their labour market demands and thereby produce competent human resources who would fit with the labour market standards.

The Regional Qualification Framework for TVET will act as a reference point for qualifications for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. This will provide for easy comparison and equivalence of the qualifications of graduates from these countries to facilitate movement of both students and labour. Before these initiatives, it was difficult to recognize TVET qualifications of graduates moving from one country to another, a fact that hampered student and labour mobility.

In this new Qualification Framework, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania TVET qualifications are referenced to the TVET Harmonised Qualification Framework for East Africa. This is commendable in order to fast track the process of mobility of students and labour in these countries. The referencing approach will make these countries able to maintain their qualification frameworks while accommodating students and labour mobility at the same time.

On behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, we commend the commitment of the World Bank through the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (ESTRIP) for financing this important project. We also congratulate the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) for the commitment to coordinate the assignment and this realize noble objective of the project. We also appreciate all other key stakeholders for their involvement in this vital assignment.

As the country, we are committed to implementing the Regional Qualifications Framework and Occupational Standards for TVET towards achieving East African Community objectives of students and labour mobility.

Dr. Francis Michael
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education, Science and
Technology
United Republic of Tanzania

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, IUCEA



**Prof Gaspard
Banyankimbona
Executive Secretary
Inter-University
Council for East
Africa (IUCEA)**

Countries in East Africa are focusing on skills development to meet the growing demand for technical and vocational skills to solve youth unemployment. Equipping the youth with the required technical and vocational skills is important in developing a skilled workforce that will support economic development of the region. However, this will require a concerted effort from all countries in the region to complement each other in terms of training and investments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems to attain the desired level of economic development.

The IUCEA Strategic Plan (2021 -2026) puts emphasis on development of skilled labour in the region by supporting the development Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems as part of implementation of the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area, which was declared by the EAC Heads of State Summit in May 2017.

EAC Partner States have made commitment to foster cooperation in the Community by harmonizing their education and training systems to make them comparable and compatible, as part of operationalizing the EAC Common Market Protocol. Particularly, the Partner States agreed to co-ordinate their human resources development policies and programmes and also to harmonize curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions through the joint action of their relevant national bodies.

In the case of TVET, the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania (RTQF-EKT) will facilitate easy movement of learners and skilled labour in the region. It provides a framework for mutual recognition of TVET qualification among the three countries in the region.

The RTQF-EKT is based on referencing approach which gives it flexibility for other EAC Partner States to use it as a reference tool for harmonization and mutual recognition of TVET qualifications in the region. It builds

on the successes we have so far achieved under the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education developed in 2015 under auspices of IUCEA.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the World Bank, through the East African Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP), for the financial and technical support which made it possible to produce the RTQF-EKT.

The RTQF-EKT envisions: “A strong and dynamic demand-driven TVET system contributing to enhance access, quality, and relevance of TVET programmes, geared towards regional socio- economic integration in East Africa”. When fully implemented, the RTQF-EKT and related occupational standards will not only foster regional integration among the three countries in technical and vocational education, but it will also increase access and improve quality and relevance of TVET programmes in the region.

I would like to implore ministries responsible for TVET, national agencies and institutions in TVET sector, charged with the responsibility of implementing this RTQF-EKT, to mainstream its provisions into national policies and qualifications frameworks and, where necessary, undertake policy reforms to ensure its successful implementation.

I believe the RTQF-EKT will go a long way supporting national TVET systems to train competent and skilled workforce that will build and transform the economy of East Africa region.

**Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona
Executive Secretary
Inter-University Council for East Africa
(IUCEA)**

Table of Contents

3	Acronyms	9	National Qualifications Frameworks
4	Definition of Key terms	10	Regional Qualifications Frameworks
6	Vision & Mission	11	Scope of the RTQF-EKT
7	Introduction	11	Outline of the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework
8	Background	11	Eight Levels
9	Competency Based Education and Training (CBET)	11	Levels and Descriptors

Table of Contents

13	Tentative Reference with the three countries National Qualifications Frameworks	21	Regional Recognition of National Certificates
14	RTQF-EKT Levels and Descriptors	22	Recognition of Prior Learning
20	Implementation of the RTQF-EKT	22	Entry Requirements
20	Implementation Options	22	Credit Transfer
20	Recommended Implementation Option	22	Quality Assurance
21	Roles of Regional Coordination Bodies	23	Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementation of RTQF-EKT
		23	Review of the RTQF-EKT

ACQF
AQRF
ARQF
ASEAN
EAC
EASTRIP

ETF
EQF
EAQFHE

EU
ICT
IUCEA
IAG
KNQA
NACTVET

NQF
NTA
NVA
NVC
OS
QA
QF
RCC
RFTIs
RTOF-EKT

RQF
SADCOF

SIP
TVET
TVETA

TWG
UNESCO

African Continental Qualifications Framework
ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
African Regulated Qualifications Framework
Association of Southeast Asian Nations
East African Community
East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project
European Training Foundation
European Qualifications Framework
East African Community Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
European Union
Information and Communication Technology
Inter-University Council for East Africa
Implementation Advisory Group
Kenya National Qualifications Authority
National Council for Technical and Vocational Education Training (Tanzania)
National Qualifications Framework
National Technical Awards
National Vocation Awards
National Vocational Certificate
Occupational Standards
Quality Assurance
Qualifications Framework
Regional Coordination Council
Regional Flagship TVET Institutes
Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania
Regulated Qualifications Framework
Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
Strategic Investment Plan
Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (Kenya)
Technical Working Group
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

A wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development, which may lead to qualifications.

Qualification

A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Qualifications are described in terms of their field, the content and the occupational activities that can be performed by a qualified person. Qualifications are classified in terms of complexity and autonomy.

Qualifications Framework

An instrument for the regulation of the development, classification, comparison of qualifications and learning outcomes in terms of articulated standards or sets of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and coordinating qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression,

and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and educational context.

Level

A classification of (learning) achievements in terms of complexity and autonomy on a defined scale, based on level descriptors.

Level Descriptor

A statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the Qualifications Framework that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

Public Sector

Companies, corporations, and institutions owned by government.

Private Sector

Part of the economy that is run by individuals and companies for profit and is not state controlled.

Competence

The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

1 Source: <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/filt=all/id=474>

2 Source: European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Recommendation of 22/05/2017, annex I.

3 Source: SAQA https://www.saqa.org.za/faq/level-descriptors?language_content_entity=en#:~:text=A%20level%20descriptor%20is%20a,a%20qualification%20at%20that%20level

4 Source: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN)

DEFINITION OF KEYTERMS

Units of Competence

The smallest part of competencies that can be assessed and recognized. Competency assessment A measurement of an individual's capability in performing a given task against a learning outcome or prescribed standard.

Certificate

An official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following a standard assessment procedure .

Credit

A formal confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard

Credit Transfer

The process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context or country to have it valued and recognised in another context or country.

Learning Programme

A written document planning learning experiences in a specific learning setting. It is developed on the basis of the curriculum and takes into account the learners' and labour market needs.

Quality Assurance (in TVET)

The 'processes and procedures ensuring that qualifications, assessment, and programme delivery meet certain standards'. Quality assurance comprises the processes of ensuring that specified standards and requirements for TVET provision, learning, TVET management,



5 Source: Yadessa Tolossa Woyessa : Internal paper for experts' team, Dec. 2021

6 Source: <https://www.voced.edu.au/vet-knowledge-bank-glossary-vet>

7 Source: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5506_en.pdf

8 Source: ILO 2007, An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers

The purpose Of The RTQF-EKT is to:

- 1 Enable ease of movement of learners and labour across the East African region and internationally.
- 2 Compare levels and qualifications across countries within the East African region
- 3 Facilitate mutual / regional recognition of TVET qualifications;
- 4 Promote transparency and trust between countries regarding the quality of their TVET systems and the qualifications of their graduates;
- 5 Apply common criteria for referencing and quality assurance systems;
- 6 Promote access to resources in TVET institutions within the region;
- 7 Provide the basis for developing regional standards;
- 8 Facilitate approaches to validate learning and competence acquired outside formal education.

VISION STATEMENT

A strong and dynamic demand-driven TVET system contributing to enhance access, quality, and relevance of TVET programmes, geared towards regional socio- economic integration in East Africa.

MISSION STATEMENT

Promote access, quality, and relevance of demand-driven TVET programmes, and facilitate mobility of TVET staff, students, and workers through mutual recognition of qualifications.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The development of the RTQF-EKT is part of the EASTRIP. The rationale for the development of RTQF-EKT in the East African region lies in the growing cooperation between the states in the region. This requires among others, measures to foster cooperation in education and training, in particular with respect to the harmonisation of education and training systems in order to render them comparable and compatible. States agreed to co-ordinate their human resources development policies and programmes and to harmonize curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions through the joint action of their relevant national bodies. In the case of TVET, this will facilitate ease of mobility of learners and labour, which among others, requires the establishment of a qualifications framework to enable mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications across the region.

The RTQF-EKT makes referencing and comparison of levels of qualifications across the countries possible and eventually can serve as an instrument to harmonize TVET occupational standards, curricula, assessment, and certification systems in the East African region.

The RTQF-EKT development process has considered the existing National Qualifications Frameworks of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. Currently, the RTQF-EKT is applicable to the three initial East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) countries and in a later phase, it may be adopted by the wider Africa and beyond.

East African region, serve as a point of reference and as a beacon for the further development of TVET in East Africa. The development of the RTQF-EKT is part of the EASTRIP, which is funded by the World Bank and the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania to increase access and improve quality of TVET programs offered by selected Regional Flagship TVET Institutes (RFTIs) and to promote regional integration.

The implementing agencies include 16 RFTIs, the Ministry of Labour and Skills in Ethiopia, Ministry of Education in Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Tanzania. The Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is the Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) for the project.

The project supports the development of highly specialized TVET programs as well as industry-recognised short-term certificate level training. It will train technicians and provide training of teachers /trainers at the certificate, diploma, and degree levels, targeting the regional priority sectors; Transport, Energy, Manufacturing, and ICT. The program development objectives will be achieved through complementary interventions at three distinct levels, including institute, national, and regional level.

At regional level, IUCEA is mandated to “Building a Harmonised TVET Qualifications Framework and Regional Harmonised Occupational Standards for East Africa” contributing to the project development objective; promotion of regional integration.

In the process of harmonising the TVET Qualifications Frameworks, proper analysis of the National Qualifications Frameworks of the three countries, four Regional Qualifications Frameworks, and comparison with the Regional Qualifications Framework For Higher Education (EAQF-HE) has been thoroughly conducted and presented in an extensive desk-study report. The Technical Working Group (TWG) comprising representatives from the three countries' TVET Authorities, private sector as well as Qualifications Framework Agencies, supported the development of the RTQF-EKT. Meetings with the TWG were held in which an in-depth discussion of the draft RTQF-EKT was done with a focus on two key issues:

- (i) The level descriptors and how they referenced with the NQFs of the three countries
- (ii) The implementation strategy and the perspectives of implementation

This led to the development of the final document, followed by validation and adoption of the RTQF-EKT on 23rd of May 2022 by the three countries that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The RTQF-EKT is based on:

- 1 A close analysis and comparison of the Qualifications Frameworks of Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Kenya with the EAQFHE.
- 2 The East African Community Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE), which has some aspects on TVET qualifications and education system, was also consulted.
- 3 Benchmarking against three Regional Qualifications Frameworks: the African Regulated Qualifications Framework (ARQF), the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF).
- 4 Global analysis of other existing Qualifications Frameworks in the East African Community (EAC), to mention Burundi, South-Sudan, Rwanda, and Uganda.

5 Desk study of relevant literature relating to the development and functioning of Regional Qualifications Frameworks and their links to National Qualifications Frameworks.

6 Regional consultative meetings with TVET representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania as well as with TVET representatives from Burundi, South-Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda and the EAC Secretariat.

Detailed analysis was done of the different Qualifications Frameworks from the three countries focusing on the level descriptors and the levels of qualifications within the frameworks, at the level of the key characteristics, the level descriptors and the assignment of levels within the of the Qualifications Frameworks from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania.

The level descriptors provided a comparison of the Qualifications Frameworks analysed, based on the details in the descriptors in terms of key areas such as autonomy, complexity, supervision, creativity, routine versus non-routine, predictable versus unpredictable, etc.

In addition, the existing EAQFHE (which albeit its name holds descriptors for the whole education system) served as standard for the comparison.

Other Regional Qualifications Frameworks were benchmarked upon to provide guidance on objectives, structure, and implementation modalities

2.0 Background

The objective of the EASTRIP is to increase the access and improve the quality of TVET programmes in selected Regional Flagship TVET Institutes and to support regional integration in East Africa. "Building a Harmonised TVET Qualifications Framework and Regional Harmonised Occupational Standards for East Africa" is part of the EASTRIP project and has two main elements.

(i) The development of (a proposal for) a Harmonised Qualifications Framework for TVET, based on an analysis and comparison of three NQFs from Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia

(ii) The harmonisation of occupational standards (at least 10) from these three countries in four selected project priority sectors of the economy

The RTQF-EKT is closely related to the EAQFHE and thus attunes with the development of common elements of education policies in the East African region. It also has the potential to link with other RQFs which are valid in Africa and the rest of the world.

2.1 Competency Based Education and Training (CBET)

CBET is an approach to vocational education and training in which skills, knowledge and attitudes are specified in order to define, steer and help to achieve competence standards, mostly within a kind of National Qualifications Framework. Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania have been moving towards an CBET approach to TVET, to achieve professional and technical competence standards. These are embedded in their National Qualifications Frameworks.

The design of CBET programmes requires careful planning and continuous monitoring of development steps. The first step is to define competence standards by translating work-based requirements into nationally endorsed industry standards. This involves experts in relevant occupational fields who are able to depict essential work activities, tasks and functions with respect to a specific competence profile. The level of CBET integration within the TVET systems of the three countries differ, although similarities exist in implementation challenges.

2.2 National Qualifications Frameworks

In the Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks published by UNESCO in 2015, it is noticed that:

1 The overall understanding of the role and function of NQFs has evolved, and it is becoming increasingly clear that frameworks can combine communication and transformation functions and roles in different ways, reflecting the particular national situations and contexts.

2 The recognition of non-formal and informal learning can be better achieved through the use of NQFs based on expected learning outcomes, which can influence standards, curricula and assessment criteria. Through the use of these, individuals' knowledge, skills and competences can be referenced and understood by the different sectors and stakeholders of the economy and society at large. The NQFs also constitute a source of quality assurance of validation processes.

3 There is an increased tendency to link NQFs to informal sector skills development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and emerging economies with large informal sectors. These formalising tendencies are seen in terms of the existence of a system of regulated learning outcomes-based qualifications, opportunities for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, support from competent authorities and the private sector, incorporation of existing informal sector skills initiatives, and the permeability of education and training systems.

4 Many countries now have some or most of the necessary elements of a modernised qualifications system in place. Many have passed legislation, developed quality assurance systems to regulate the new system, and developed occupational standards. However, it is

observed that often, NQFs remain empty of qualifications, and universally the urgent need is to populate these frameworks.

5 The degree of regulation is determined by historical, cultural, and socio-political factors. Legislation is often required to start the NQF implementation, but legislation is a process conducted in various stages, and is bound to change during the implementation.

in general, the above applies also to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania as well as other East African countries. However, achievements regarding the development of qualifications and National Qualifications Frameworks differ. The Ethiopian NQF has eight levels, of which level one relates to general education, and level two to eight refer to TVET and Higher Education. Kenya applies a ten level NQF, covering TVET from level two to six. Tanzania applies seven National Technical Awards (NTA), which are linked to the National Vocation Awards (NVA) to provide a ten-level framework of TVET qualifications. Indeed, to achieve the common goal, skills for transformation and regional integration, harmonised standards toward mutual recognition of qualifications for priority occupations are crucial.

2.3 Regional Qualifications Frameworks

Regional Qualifications Frameworks are emerging as a tool for supporting cross-border mobility of learners and workers and acting as a means for fair and transparent recognition of qualifications.

In a recent European Training Foundation (ETF) report Bateman identified 17 RQFs or RQFs in developmental stage (such as the African Continental Qualifications Framework or the Caricom QF) in the world. Out of these 17, the four most developed and functional Regional Qualifications Frameworks were selected to serve as reference and benchmark for the development of the RTQF-EKT. These are:

- 1 ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)
- 2 European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- 3 Southern African Development Community Regional Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)
- 4 East African Community Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)

One of the key issues, which is further elaborated on in Chapter 5, on implementation of the RTQF-EKT is specifically whether the RTQF-EKT;

- 1 Is (in the long run) a replacement or a prescription for each country to “copy” the RTQF-EKT as part of the National Qualifications Framework and related instruments (quality assurance policy, accreditation, and certification, etc.)?
- 2 Is a “translation device” to assist the countries in developing and implementing a National Qualifications Frameworks that are aligned, but not necessarily identical to the RTQF-EKT? Is it a common reference framework to ease the comparability and recognition of qualifications across the East African region?

3. SCOPE OF THE RTQF-EKT

The scope of RTQF-EKT focusses on qualifications for technical and vocational professionals at all relevant levels. The Framework applies to all forms of TVET (formal, non-formal and informal) and all modes of delivery.

It provides a tool for the comparability and recognition of technical and vocational qualifications and can support the mobility of learners and workers, through promoting credit transfer.

This Framework primarily applies to the three countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania) with a view of extending to other sub-Saharan countries.

4. Outline of the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework

4.1. Eight Levels

The RTQF-EKT is an eight-level Qualifications Framework underpinned by learning outcomes and quality assurance mechanisms in the East African region. It is closely linked with the EAQFHE.

The RTQF-EKT is built on:

- 1A close analysis and comparison of the Qualifications Frameworks of Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Kenya with the EAQFHE;
- 2Benchmarking against three other Regional Qualifications Frameworks (ARQF, EQF and SADCQF)
- 3Analysing the status quo of the Qualifications Frameworks in Burundi, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Uganda.

The eight levels are described by level descriptors which are linked to the level descriptors for the EAQFHE, however with more focus on specific vocational and occupational aspects that are at the forefront in TVET.

4.2. Levels and descriptors

The RTQF-EKT is a regional reference framework for TVET of eight levels. For each of the levels the descriptors are ordered in the following three categories:

- a. Knowledge
- b. Skills
- c. Competencies

For the descriptors of an overarching Qualifications Framework, as the RTQF-EKT, these three categories are sufficient. The contents of the Framework, as per the level descriptors, are helpful in defining Occupational Standards and hence curricula. The table below defines the three categories and the subdivisions.

Domain	Defined as:
Knowledge	Able to recall and present information. Apply knowledge, principles, theories, and problems and reflect on these.
Skills	The ability to do in context

Transferable Skills	Apply general knowledge, and skills
Technical/Vocational Skills	Apply specific skill to do job or self-assigned tasks
Competencies	General personal skills and qualities relevant in a work environment and for personal development.
Generic Competencies Foundation Interpersonal Personal	Numeracy, Language, Literacy Teamwork, Communication, Gender Awareness Employability, Entrepreneurship
Common Competencies	Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes common in a certain occupational field
Core Competencies	Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes specific for an occupation

The eight levels of the RTQF-EKT are described with the level descriptors. The base of the descriptors is linked to the EAQFHE, more specified to the (less academic and more applied) needs of the World of Work and occupational standards. This fits better in a referencing QF for TVET.

In the table below a tentative reference RTQF-EKT with the National Qualifications Frameworks of the three countries is presented. The reference is based on the discussions which took place in a workshop with the TWG in Dar es Salaam in April 2022. It remains tentative because it needs to be validated formally by the relevant Qualifications Framework Authorities and the Ministries in charge of the three countries. A formal validation of the RTQF-EKT took place in a conference in May 2022 in Addis Abeba.

In a communique issued at the end of the conference by Hon. Dr Bekir Shale, the State Minister, Ministry of Labour & Skills, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; Dr Margaret Mwakima, the Principal Secretary State Department of Vocational and Technical Training, Ministry of Education, Republic of Kenya; Prof. Eliamani M. Sedoyeka, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, United Republic of Tanzania, the three countries re-affirmed their "commitment to foster regional integration by adopting the Regional TVET Qualifications Framework and 44 related regional Occupational Standards developed under EASTRIP".

4.3 Tentative Reference with the three countries National Qualifications Frameworks

RTQF-EKT	KENYA	TANZANIA	ETHIOPIA
8. PhD	10. PhD	10. PhD	8. PhD
7. Master's Degree	9. Master's Degree	9. Master's Degree	7. Master's Degree
6. Bachelor's Degree	8. Bachelor's Degree/ Professional Master Craft	8. Bachelor's Degree	6. Bachelor's Degree
	7. Bachelor's Degree / Management Professional	7. Higher Diploma	5. Advanced Diploma
5. Diploma	6. Diploma	6. Ordinary Diploma	4. Diploma
4. Certificate 4	5. Craft certificate	5. Technician Certificate	
3. Certificate 3	4. Artisan	4. Basic Technician Certificate	3. Certificate 3
2. Certificate 2	3. National Skills Certificate	3. National Technical Award III	2. Certificate 2
1. Certificate 1	2.	2. National Technical Award II	1. Certificate 1
	1.	1. National Technical Award I	



4.4 RTQF-EKT Levels and Descriptors

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
1	<p>Able to use various cognitive and practical skills, which are necessary to perform tasks and to solve simple problems, by selecting and using basic</p>	<p>Able to: use elementary practical, cognitive, and vocational skills; execute them under direct supervision using simple tools; perform simple tasks, which are repetitive as to their content and predictable.</p>	<p>Able to perform tasks in a structured environment, to function in a limited context. Is able to perform elementary tasks, following a model, able to master personal basic self-care skills and vocational skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks.</p> <p>Able to apply reading, writing and numeracy skills; apply basic processes with computers and/or general tools working within a supervised structure or working with other people in a defined context.</p> <p>Demonstrate social empathy towards co-workers</p>
2	<p>Able to demonstrate basic knowledge in specific subject syllabi</p>	<p>Able to use basic cognitive and practical skills, which are necessary to solve everyday problems by using relevant information; perform tasks and using simple rules and means;</p> <p>Able to understand the consequences of one's own actions with regard to self and others. The knowledge is mainly factual, about the usual content, terminology, processes, tools or materials of an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area.</p>	<p>Able to perform tasks individually or in a group under supervision or guidance;</p> <p>Able to combine basic practical and thinking skills, using information and knowledge at this level. The skills will include reasoning, mathematical skills and planning to carry out tasks and solve problems which are subject specific, occupation or occupational area. This will be done by following routine practices based on clear rules, using simple tools and materials.</p> <p>Demonstrate social awareness and care for colleagues</p>
3	<p>Able to demonstrate the knowledge of facts, principles, processes, and general concepts</p>	<p>Able to use various cognitive and practical skills, which are necessary to perform tasks and to solve simple problems, by selecting and using basic</p>	<p>Able to apply a number of practical and thinking skills to complete tasks and solve problems in an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. By using</p>

4.4 RTQF-EKT Levels and Descriptors

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
4	<p>and to use them in professional activities;</p> <p>Able to understand various information about materials, technologies in the relevant field of studies or a concrete profession</p>	<p>methods, means, materials, information and technologies. This will include the facts, principles, processes, and ideas which they need to undertake structured learning or work successfully in the subject, occupation, or occupational area.</p>	<p>information to choose appropriate methods and carry them out with suitable tools and materials.</p> <p>Following routine and common procedures. Able to do this with some autonomy under supervision.</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of ethical and social issues, such as gender disparity</p>
	<p>Able to understand and assess given factual and/or conceptual knowledge of the occupational field with emphasis on the nature of the work and the appropriate terminology;</p>	<p>Can analyse with guidance using given classifications and/or principles</p> <p>Can collect and categorize ideas and information in a predictable and standard format</p> <p>Can evaluate the reliability of data using defined techniques and/or tutor guidance</p> <p>Can apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well-defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues</p>	<p>Can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques and tools</p> <p>Can act with limited autonomy and professional judgment within defined guidelines</p> <p>Works effectively with others as a member of a group and meet obligations to others (for example, tutors, peers, and colleagues)</p> <p>Uses and accesses a range of learning resources</p> <p>Able to evaluate own strengths and weakness</p> <p>Has the capability to manage information, collect appropriate data from a range of sources and undertake simple research tasks with external guidance</p> <p>Able to communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner</p>

4.4 RTQF-EKT Levels and Descriptors

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
-------	-----------	-------	------------

Can apply given tools/ methods accurately and carefully to a well-defined problem and begins to appreciate the complexity of the issues in the discipline

Demonstrates awareness of ethical and social issues, among which gender disparity and issues of social inclusion in current areas of work/study and is able to discuss these in relation to personal beliefs and values

Able to (re)collect and understand a detailed knowledge of major theories of the occupational field or disciplines(s) and an awareness of a variety of ideas, contexts, and frameworks

Can analyse a range of information with minimum guidance using given classifications/principles and can compare alternative methods and techniques for solving occupational problems and obtaining data

Can reform a range of ideas and information towards a given purpose

Can select appropriate techniques of evaluation and can evaluate the relevance and significance of the data collected

Can operate in situations of varying complexity and predictability requiring application of a wide range of techniques and tools

Can identify key areas of problems and choose appropriate tools / methods for their resolution in a considered manner

Able to act with increasing autonomy, with reduced need for supervision and direction

Can interact effectively within a team and lead small teams

Can manage information, select appropriate data from a range of sources and develop appropriate research strategies

Can identify key elements of problems and choose appropriate methods, techniques, and tools for their resolution in a considered manner

5

4.4 RTQF-EKT LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
-------	-----------	-------	------------

			<p>Can communicate effectively in a manner appropriate to the occupational field and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner in a variety of formats</p> <p>Is aware of the wider social, cultural and environmental implications of area(s) of the occupation and the specific work-field and is able to debate issues in relation to more general ethical perspectives, such as gender disparity or social inclusion</p>
6	<p>Has a comprehensive, detailed specialized, factual, and theoretical knowledge of the relevant major discipline with areas of specialization in depth and an awareness of the provisional nature of knowledge</p>	<p>Can analyse new and/or abstract data and situations without guidance, using a range of techniques appropriate to the subject</p> <p>Can transform abstract data and concepts towards a given purpose and can in dialogue with colleagues design novel solutions</p> <p>Can critically evaluate evidence to support conclusions/ recommendations, reviewing its reliability, validity, and significance</p> <p>Can investigate contradictory information/identify reasons for contradictions</p>	<p>Can operate in complex and contexts, requiring selection and application from a range of innovative or standard techniques and tools. Skills and understanding in a wide and unpredictable variety of contexts.</p> <p>Can act autonomously, within agreed guidelines</p> <p>Is aware of personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct and can incorporate a critical ethical dimension into a major piece of work</p> <p>Is confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and can apply appropriate knowledge, skills, and tools to their solution</p> <p>Can interact effectively within a team/professional group, recognize, support or be proactive in leadership negotiate in a professional context and manage conflict</p> <p>Can engage effectively in debate in a professional manner and produce detailed and coherent project reports</p> <p>Is confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and the application of appropriate knowledge, tools/methods to their solution</p>

4.4 RTQF-EKT Levels and Descriptors

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
-------	-----------	-------	------------

Has depth and systematic understanding of knowledge in specialized/ applied areas and / across areas and can work with theoretical/ research based knowledge at the forefront of their occupational field

Has a comprehensive understanding of techniques and methodologies applicable to their own work be it theory or research-based.

Can undertake a critical analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge and occupation, communicating the outcome effectively

Can with critical awareness, synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of the occupational field and practice

Can critically evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and argue alternative approaches

Demonstrates self-direction and originality in problem solving. Can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.

Has the awareness and ability to manage the implications of ethical dilemmas, such as issues related to social inclusion and gender disparity and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions

Can work effectively with a group as leader or member. Can clarify task and make appropriate use of the capacities of group members. Is able to negotiate and handle conflict with confidence

Can reflect on own and others' functioning in order to improve practice

Can competently undertake research tasks with minimum guidance

Is independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others

7

4.4 RTQF-EKT Levels and Descriptors

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
8	Has great depth and systematic understanding of a substantial body of knowledge. Can work with theoretical and/ or research knowledge at the forefront of the occupational field/discipline at publication-quality and peer reviewed standards	Can undertake critical analysis, managing complexity, incompleteness of data or contradiction in the areas of knowledge	Can operate in complex and unpredictable/ specialized contexts that may be at the forefront of knowledge
	Has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/methodologies applicable to the occupational field/discipline (theory or research-based).	Can undertake development of new approaches, in a manner that can contribute to the development of new approaches and methodology in that field/discipline or practice Has a level of conceptual understanding and critical capacities that will allow independent evaluation of research, advanced scholarship, and methodologies Can argue alternative approaches	Has overview of the issues governing good practice Can act in a professional capacity for self/ others, with responsibility and largely autonomously initiative in complex and unpredictable situations Demonstrates technical mastery, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills Can act independently and with originality in problem solving, is able to lead in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level Can lead /work effectively with group. Can clarify task, managing the capacities of group members, negotiating and handling conflict with confidence Can critically reflect on own and others' functioning in order to improve practice Can independently undertake innovative research tasks Can analyse and manage the implications of ethical dilemmas, such as social inclusion and gender disparity and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RTQF-EKT

The first step in the implementation of the proposed Regional TVET Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania is the acceptance by all relevant parties of the proposed Framework which was made on 23rd of May 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Before starting implementation in the region and linking the RTQF-EKT with the existing National Qualifications Frameworks, the parties concerned had to decide what the ultimate implementation objective of the RTQF-EKT is.

5.1 Implementation Options

Essentially there are two options for implementation:

1. Referencing

This is a model whereby the levels and descriptors of the NQF and the RTQF-EKT are compared and decisions are made that diplomas or certificates from country 'A' have the same value (in terms of knowledge, skills, and competences) as the reference level in the RTQF-EKT to that of country 'B'. The RTQF-EKT functions here as a translator and point of reference.

2. Harmonising

This is a model whereby all qualifications (and the learning programmes through which these qualifications are acquired) are made the same, as opposed to the case in the referencing model.

The ultimate purpose of harmonising is more than just referencing. Eventually, harmonisation will imply the replacement of NQFs with one RTQF and the restructuring of learning programmes to acquire the regionally recognised qualifications.

Most of the functional Regional Qualifications Frameworks (EQF, ARQF, SADCQF) have adopted the referencing model. This is considered as a means to develop fruitful cooperation between National Qualifications Frameworks and education systems. It is interesting to see (at least in the case of the European Union) that the referencing process itself has effects on the further development of the levels and level descriptors in the NQF. The process itself is (unintentionally) a promoter of harmonisation.

In an ever closer economic and technological cooperation with frequent mobility of workers and students/

learners, there is a tendency for further harmonisation of qualifications.

To implement harmonised Qualifications Frameworks and learning programmes from the outset with a model RTQF as guiding point (option two), is not yet experienced anywhere in the world.

5.2 Recommended Implementation Option

Considering the above, one can conclude that there are two possible options/perspectives for the implementation of the RTQF-EKT. An option based on referencing as objective and a scenario based on harmonising as ultimate objective. The latter is the most far reaching and as argued above, will take more time, while one of the phases to achieve harmonisation will be referencing anyway.

The choice was made to start with the referencing approach and not from the onset to strive for harmonisation. The perspective in the long run can be harmonisation, but in the current phase of development of the national TVET policies and the TVET field, it is thought not to be wise to plea for full harmonisation and the development of a road-map to reach that in a relatively brief time.

This may grow, but it is better to develop the full potential of a referencing framework. Thus, option two is left open for the time being. As one of the discussion groups formulated "it will come naturally".

Some elements of implementation with the focus on the referencing objective are presented below.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities

5.3.1. Roles of National Governments

The National Governments in the East African region will have to assure through an official declaration (communique) the endorsement of the RTQF-EKT and commitment to its implementation. It is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education (or other agencies/authorities responsible for the Qualifications Framework for TVET) to make such a declaration.

¹² Every country has to make regular reference reports in which they reference their QF to the EQF

The National Qualifications Authorities and Quality Assurance Agencies, regardless of how they are structured in different countries, are responsible to update the National Qualifications Framework when necessary. They are also responsible to assure the quality of the overall implementation of NQF in reference to RTQF-EKT. Generally, the national authorities are responsible for the implementation of RTQF-EKT.

5.3.2. Roles of Regional Coordination Bodies

After endorsement of the RTQF-EKT by the National Governments, IUCEA will continue to oversee the overall coordination and implementation of the RTQF-EKT. IUCEA in consultation with national governments shall establish an Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) to coordinate implementation of the Framework. IAG shall be constituted by members from relevant stakeholders of the implementing countries. In this case representatives of both private and public enterprises/industry in the key-sectors of the economy (the “demand-side” of TVET) and TVET (the “supply-side”) shall be considered.

5.3.3. Roles of the RFTIs

The RFTIs are “model” institutions and as such they will have a role in the implementation of the RTQF-EKT at institutional level. They will use the RTQF-EKT as an instrument to guide the development of learning programmes in the various sectors. These learning programmes shall be based on the model occupational standards which are harmonised at regional level.

The RFTIs will set up regular communication and support services (such as support in programme development, training of trainers and assessors, etc.) with other TVET providers in the region.

5.3.4. Roles of Private and Public Industries; involvement and ownership

Private and public industries are the co-owners of the Qualifications Framework. It is in their interest to have properly qualified workers on the labour market and thus they have a responsibility for the implementation and use of the RTQF-EKT.

One of the roles of the industry is defining the need for a qualified workforce. Continuous dialogue with the sector is important to keep sight on the need for human resources in the various sectors and the need for renewal of policies, human resource competencies and learning programmes. This dialogue should be part of the agenda of regional coordination, including the outcomes of regular labour-market analysis in the sectors in the countries.

The industry has a significant role in the development of occupational standards, competency-based curricula, facilitating industry-based training, financing training, development of assessment tools, accrediting assessment centres, as well as the involvement on occupational competency assessment through contributing practitioners/assessors. The industry shall also reinforce the regulatory bodies through the provision of sectoral skills and so on

5.4 Regional Recognition of National Certificates

National competency certificates in TVET (certificates, diplomas, awards, degrees) are the expression of successful summative assessment of the occupational competencies of a learner. The RTQF-EKT and its referencing procedures make it possible to add to these certificates a reference to the regional level.

The holder of the certificate can thus be assured that the certificate is regionally recognised as a certificate on Level 1 to 8 which will give access to follow-up training in another country and/or work possibilities on the level of the certificate. Thus, this reference will facilitate the mobility of the learner and the reception of the learner by employers and/or TVET providers throughout the region and contribute to a better skilled workforce in the regional economy.

The endorsement of the RTQF-EKT and its descriptors by the National Authorities and guarded by the Regional Coordination Bodies will ensure that national certificates with a proper referencing to the level of the RTQF-EKT are accepted in any part of the East African region and in a later stage, if aligned with the ACQF, the rest of Africa.

13 In the development of the harmonised occupational standards representatives from the four sectors, RFTIs and TVET providers were consulted. Many of the participants expressed a keen interest to be involved in the functioning of the Regional Qualifications Framework.

14 Part of this project is the harmonisation of occupational standards in four sectors of the economy.

5.5 Recognition of Prior Learning

The RTQF-EKT specified to occupational standards, facilitates the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Learning may have taken place in any settings other than the formalised education structures, or in education environments where a proper description of competences acquired is not clear. Persons who feel that they are qualified for certain tasks or occupational activities without having a diploma or certificate, which is valid in the RTQF-EKT, can request to be assessed against the standards set by the competences or competence units and as such receive formalised recognition of their competencies.

In the case of the RTQF-EKT, this will have to be done in accredited assessment centres (which can be part of a TVET institute, such as an RFTI). These institutes can perform the assessment and deliver a national competency certificate with regional value, which is noted on the same certificate.

The certificate is valid in all the countries in the East African region.

5.6 Entry Requirements

In any Qualifications Framework, the question of minimum entry requirements is solved in the ordering of the levels of learning. A lower level should contain the relevant competencies (knowledge, skills, and competences) that precede the following level. Any learner who is competent at a certain level (as proven by successful assessment, certificate, or diploma) can enter the next level (in the same field).

The challenge arises when the learner wants to change his/her field at the same target level. Most of the Common Competences will still apply as well as most of the Generic Competences, but the Core Competences will be different. For this learner a specific learning programme will have to be designed in which the competences previously acquired and that apply in the new occupation are honoured and new elements (core units) have to be learned up to the required level.

5.7 Credit Transfer

The RTQF-EKT will facilitate credit transfer. This implies that each learning objective/achievement (usually competency unit) needs to be translated in terms of credits (often in terms of notional hours of learning). This makes comparison possible and it assists learners to continue their study in other TVET institutes without having to start at the beginning. The receiving TVET institute recognises from the credits where the learner is on his/her way to become a fully competent achiever in the occupation chosen and can advise a follow-up programme. If the levels of the NQFs are adequately referenced with the levels of the RTQF-EKT, then the national credit values for this level will function as the credits for the regionally recognised qualification.

5.8 Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance for a regionalised TVET sector (or a sector on the way to regionalisation) in the framework of the RTQF-EKT demands a close interplay between the national QA bodies for the TVET sector and the regional body with the involvement of the industry. The involved countries have their own national quality assurance agencies. These agencies are established by Acts of Parliament and are mandated by the respective governments to oversee the quality of TVET in both public and private institutes in their country. These agencies are either semi-autonomous or government departments. They all engage in external quality assurance activities which include; accrediting training providers based on pre-determined minimum standards; monitoring and evaluating quality assurance aspects in TVET institutions; and auditing for continuous enhancement of quality. The balance between the two levels (regional and national) can be defined through the identification of a set of common rules or guiding principles for quality assurance in each country.

The IUCEA, as regional body, can coordinate this process of defining common rules and guiding principles. The next step is to support National Authorities in improving their QA practices. This should be done through staff capacity building, publishing handbooks, organising training and conferences, and alike. A good base model exists in the Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa, as formulated in 2014 and the five volumes of the Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education .

This supports quality assurance of TVET provision, the credibility, and the relevance of the diplomas and/or certificates both for the learners, employers and for the African society at large.

5.9 Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementation of RTQF-EKT

As part of coordination of RTQF-EKT implementation, IUCEA will conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of RTQF-EKT. IUCEA will provide feedback and will report to all the Project Implementation Units including the Regional Steering Committee.

5.10 Review of the RTQF-EKT

The RTQF-EKT shall be reviewed regularly (every five years) in order to take cognizance of the dynamic nature of the labour market and training institutions' efforts to address skills match between demand and supply.

15 Notional hours of learning mean the total amount of time it would take an average learner to meet the outcomes

16 See: IUCEA: Principles and guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, June 2014.

17 These four volumes can be accessed at: <https://www.iucea.org/publications/qa-policy-tools-and-documents/>



Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)

Plot M833, Kigobe Road
Kyambogo, Kampala, Uganda
P.O. Box 7110, Kampala, Uganda
Email: Info@iucea.org
(+256) 414256251/2