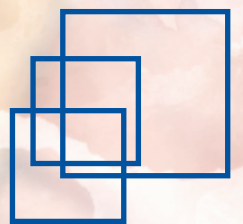




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MIGRANT WORKERS' SKILLS PORTABILITY IN AFRICA AT REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AND CONTINENTAL LEVEL

GUIDANCE TOWARDS AN AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS
FRAMEWORK?

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FRAMEWORK?

PATRICK WERQUIN · FRANCESCO PANZICA

Africa currently hosts nearly 25 million international migrants. Some are fleeing from conflicts, instability, climate change or hardship, while others chose to leave their country for better living conditions and income opportunities elsewhere. All of them possess skills that can be used in their new environments, in the community, and, most importantly, to help them find and sustain a decent job.

Migrant workers all over the world are at risk to underutilize the skills they have, for the simple reason that their skills might not be portable. Portability of skills is defined by ILO's Recommendation No. 195 as: a) employable skills which can be used productively in different jobs, occupations, industries; and, b) Certification and recognition of skills within national and international labour markets. The transferability of skills is essential to migrant workers as they move from countries of origin to countries of destination, and as they return back home with newly acquired skills.

The non-recognition, non-compatibility and non-comparability of skills, qualifications and experience across national borders along with the absence of safe, regular and orderly migration opportunities and the weak implementation of free movement rights and mechanisms, are some of the main impediments to good governance of labour migration. Skills recognition and mobility help to alleviate skills imbalances and labour shortages across sectors and regions and improve productivity. This is why the AU/ILO/IOM/ECA Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) focuses on the initiative entitled "Skills recognition for better labour mobility in Africa" as one of its priority outcome areas.

The report **"Migrant Workers' Skills portability in Africa at Regional Economic Community and Continental level - Guidance towards an African Qualifications Framework?"** contributes to shed light on the issue of portability of skills of migrant workers in Regional Economic Communities and at the continental level in Africa. It aims to provide a conceptual background and information on the main instruments currently in use internationally, as well as to map current provisions for skills portability in Africa. It then discusses policy pointers for ways to improve skills portability. The draft report was presented and discussed at a Regional Expert's Workshop on Skills Portability in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, from 26-28 April 2016.

It highlights that qualifications frameworks have become a policy tool in other regions to help promote labour mobility, yet that many important conditions need to be met for this tool to be effective in Africa. The report recommends that further dialogue takes place on the feasibility, cost and benefit of an African Qualifications Framework for a more realistic assessment of its potential.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ADB	Asian Development Bank
Addis Ababa Convention	Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Tertiary education in African States, 12 December 2014
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AHERS	African tertiary education and research space
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
Arusha Convention	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Tertiary education in the African States, 5 December 1981
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CAMES	Conseil africain et malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur(African and Malagasy Council for Tertiary Education)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CEDEFOP	Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COE	Council of Europe (not a European Union body)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
EAC	East African Community
EC	European Commission (the executive body of the European Union)
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EECAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EMIS	Education management information system
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres in the European Region
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary education
EQARF	European quality assurance reference framework for VET
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICT	Information and communication technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
JLMP	Joint Labour Migration Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MRA	Mutual recognition agreement
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union
NQF	National qualifications framework
NQS	National qualifications system
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PQF	Pacific Qualifications Framework
PRQS	Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards
REC	Regional Economic Community
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
RNFILO	Recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes (a.k.a RPL)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC	SADC Qualifications Framework
STC-EST	Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology
TQF	Transnational Qualifications Framework
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET	Vocational education and training
VUSSC	Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Promoting visibility of skills through qualifications

A major concern in most of Africa, and more specifically within its Regional Economic Communities (RECs), is the non-recognition, non-compatibility and non-comparability of skills¹, qualifications and experience across national borders. These elements have been found to be contributing factors to wasted potential, reduced productivity and the inability of employers to obtain needed competences. Portability of skills means that skills are transferrable from one context to another, and are recognized by a trusted source of information.² Alongside the weak, in some cases zero, implementation of free movement rights and mechanisms, the lack of skills portability is one of the main impediments to good governance of labour mobility (movement of workers between jobs, sectors or occupations; within or between States).

In January 2015, the 24th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa and endorsed the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP). Furthermore, in June 2015, in order to furnish a sustainable response to the long-lasting migration crisis involving African young people in the Mediterranean Sea, the 25th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly adopted the Declaration on Migration that calls, inter alia, for the establishment of “a harmonised mechanism to ensure that tertiary education in Africa, is compatible, comparable, with acceptability and enable recognition of credentials³ that will facilitate transferability of knowledge, skills and expertise”⁴.

Beyond this focus on skills and competences acquired in the tertiary education system, the portability of all individual competences – including those acquired in the technical vocational education and training system typically – is highly relevant. It is of paramount importance for national economic and social development at a time of rapid change in technologies, global markets and work organisation, high levels of youth unemployment and rising regional and international migration. Workers need to have relevant and verifiable competences in order to gain access to job opportunities and to adjust to changing labour markets. Employers’ ability to select the workers they need depends on clear information on the type and level of workers’ skills. This means skills need to be transferable between jobs and easily recognised by employers, and therefore portable. It also means skills and competences ought to be visible to all stakeholders, including to the competent people themselves.

1 The term “skills” is used broadly in this report to encompass knowledge, attitude and competence, i.e. including the context in which tasks/a job is performed. (See also Annex 1 - Definitions).

2 ILO. 2007. Portability of Skills. GB.298/ESP/3, 298th Session, Governing Body Geneva, March 2007.

3 (i.e. “qualifications”) in the context of this report.

4 African Union, document Assembly/AU/Decl.6 (XXV).

1.2 Objectives of the Report and Working Method

One of the initial aims of this study was to prepare a consistent development plan to overcome the current fragmentation in education and training systems and thereby allow all African countries to benefit from labour mobility. As part of this, it was decided to study the potential added value of qualifications and of qualifications frameworks – whether national, regional, or continental. Therefore, data collection and analysis could not be limited to desk work, but required the collection of complementary information from stakeholders working in the field of qualifications, with a view to ensuring agreed outcomes and a solid basis for further developments. Three RECs have been visited and complemented through telephone interviews.

A first version of this report was finalised in October 2015 and the main outcomes were presented to the first Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST) meeting (27-30 October 2015, Addis Ababa) for preliminary endorsement. The report and policy indications included were updated and complemented with findings from visits to three regional economic communities. The report was presented for validation to the Debre Zeit Expert's Workshop (26-28 April 2016), which made recommendations for improvements, and also launched reflections on the feasibility of an African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), on quality assurance and skills anticipation.

This version is an abridged version of the 2015 version revised after the 2016 Workshop. It focuses on regional arrangements for skills portability, on conceptual issues and reflects on the feasibility of any international qualifications frameworks, whether regional or continental. It therefore provides some policy pointers and looks to address the conceptual and practical needs of policy makers and of any other stakeholders that may be interested in elaborating and thus establishing mutual recognition mechanisms.

1.3 Structure of the report

For all the reasons indicated in **Section 2**, a comprehensive description of existing African education and training systems (especially tertiary education systems that depict only a small fraction of the reality of skills and competence development in Africa nowadays) as well as more detailed discussions of skills anticipation or quality assurance have been dropped from this version. This 2017 version is indeed meant to provide an overview for policy makers regarding skills portability instruments, with a focus on international qualifications frameworks as a first scoping exercise to provide evidence for policy decisions on whether Africa should embark on an African Qualifications Framework (AQF) or not. It does not mean that a discussion regarding skills portability should not be holistic.

On the contrary, such a discussion should touch on many other subjects such as: education and training systems, lifelong learning systems, tertiary education, quality and quality assurance, technical vocational education and training, credit accumulation and transfer systems, recognition of prior learning outcomes, governance of education and training systems, career guidance, labour market needs and skills anticipation, and even social protection, the informal sector of the economy as well as monitoring and evaluation. This clearly cannot be done in one single report and the work should be organised accordingly so that issues are addressed in due course and in accordance to an efficient division of labour.

Section 1 of the report introduces the report objectives, structure and provides a first introduction to different instruments to facilitate skills portability.

Section 2 provides conceptual clarifications around the concepts of qualifications, qualifications frameworks and recognition of prior learning.

Section 3 describes examples of regional skills recognition approaches outside Africa.

Section 4 explains the Pan-African approach to skills portability as part the African Agenda 2063.

Section 5 discusses the state of advancement in terms of skills portability in African Regional Economic Commissions (RECs).

Section 6 provides conclusions and policy pointers and ways forward, building on the discussions at the STC-EST workshop in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, in October 2015.

1.4 Different instruments to facilitate skills portability

There are different approaches to skills recognition: The most widely used is credential evaluation that is the assessment by a destination country of whether a qualification issued in a country of origin is equivalent or not to the qualification or skill standard in the destination country. Other approaches include mutual recognition agreements, qualifications frameworks and recognition of prior learning outcomes. Quality assurance is essential for the awarding of a qualification since the trust of labour market actors in the certifying body is key to make the system work. State-of-the-art assessments are important to gain confidence among stakeholders.

Qualifications frameworks and recognition of prior learning outcomes – which are also two components of a qualifications system – are addressed in this Section 2. Mutual recognition agreements are addressed in Section 4 when it comes to Africa, and in Section 3 for international strategies beyond Africa. It is of paramount importance to realise that these approaches are complementing one another, and are not competitors. They correspond to different levels of action, at different levels of education/training and qualifications systems:

- Recognition of prior learning outcomes leads to the awarding of a qualification to applicants that have [not yet recognised] competences, and that meet the qualifications standards during the assessment process;
- A bilateral or mutual recognition agreement usually focuses on specific occupational fields, sectors or specific qualifications, often for regulated professions, and establishes equivalence;
- A qualifications framework is a classification instrument for qualifications that, provided the frameworks are sufficiently similar (in terms of levels and level descriptors) facilitates comparability of qualifications.

Africa harbours a large number of competent individuals that have never participated in any formal learning activities, and therefore may only prove their competences through direct assessment. This is exactly what recognition of prior learning outcomes does, and why RPL systems could prove highly effective to support portability of skills in Africa.

2.1 Qualifications to make individual skills and competences visible

A clear difference should be made between two widely used terms: skills/competence and qualification. A competent person is capable of doing something, and/or is knowledgeable in a given field. A qualified person is someone who possesses a document that confirms that s/he is capable of doing something; and/or knows something. A competent person may not be qualified, if s/he has never been assessed, and hence has not been awarded a qualification. Therefore her/his competences are not visible. This is a major issue when it comes to generating revenues through engaging in labour markets that are heavily structured, at least in the formal economy, or for seeking a job abroad. In short, a qualification is a visa for a decent employment and for occupational mobility – provided the entity that issues the document is trusted by labour market actors.

Skills and competences include knowledge and behaviour, and are only valid in the context they are provided in. The context is essential because it allows that an assessment takes place. Without the context, it is extremely difficult to assess skills and competence and therefore to award a qualification. For the sake of this work, skills and competences are very close, in essence, to learning outcomes. A skills or competence is not necessarily documented. It is documented when individuals hold a corresponding qualification; that is often the case when the investment is made in the initial formal education and training system. As often seen in the case of Africa, this is not documented, typically, when individuals have learnt their skills and competences through non-formal and informal prior learning.

A qualification is a document, awarded by – or on behalf of – an accredited institution, in most of the countries in the world, on behalf of the Ministry of Education or of the Ministry of Labour; but many sectoral ministries also award qualifications (e.g. Tourism, Health, Agriculture). A qualification describes what the individual knows and/or can do in a specific field of action, and therefore makes the competences visible.

Qualifications are often defined as the outcome of a learning programme. This approach is not conducive to establishing a system for recognising prior learning. A simple change of vocabulary – such as a qualification is the outcome of a learning – leaves all doors opened. This is particularly true in the context of the preparation of a legislative framework. It is often times a necessary step toward establishing systems for skills recognising systems.

2.2 A qualifications framework is a classification device for systemic visibility

First of all, and by way of definition, a qualifications framework is a classification device. It aims at classifying existing and newly created qualifications as well as future qualifications¹. For this reason, a qualifications framework provides transparency for the users of any qualifications system, whether that be regarding the positioning of a given qualification sought after or regarding the most obvious educational pathway to achieve it. A qualifications framework consists of a structure – most likely a multi-entry table – involving levels, descriptors and education providers. It may be very succinct. A qualifications framework is inevitably accompanied by a longer document describing all the qualifications existing in a country: the Qualifications Catalogue, or Repertory. It contains a comprehensive description – typically name, provider, academic prerequisite, educational pathway(s) leading to it – of all qualifications formally registered in a country. Ideally, it is organically linked to the catalogue of occupations, for better matching policies in the labour market.

A qualifications system includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning outcomes whereas a qualifications framework is only a potential component of the qualifications system. Other key components are, for example, teacher and trainer training systems, work-based learning and apprenticeships, skills identification and anticipation systems, quality assurance, or a system for recognising prior learning outcomes or a credit accumulation and transfer system (Coles and Werquin, 2007). All countries delivering qualifications have a qualifications system. However, despite recurrent claims by many international organisations, only few countries have an operational qualifications framework, and even less have a vision about it. A qualifications framework is a device that intends to facilitate the use of qualifications by stakeholders, especially in the labour market and in the education and training system. It aims at promoting visibility of competences, transparency of educational pathways and therefore of portability of skills and competences.

A persistent issue is the tendency for countries – which have been striving for decades to establish an equitable and inclusive education and training system – to swiftly adopt such and such foreign qualifications framework model regardless of their national needs, and without any form of adaptation to local idiosyncrasies. The key initial question about “what do we need a qualifications framework for” is never asked and, when it is asked, the answers are barely taken into consideration.

¹ For the sake of clarity, it is not a competences framework: it only deals with qualifications, i.e. the documenting of competences that have been assessed and validated by a competent body.

Nevertheless, this report makes the case that qualifications frameworks have become a policy tool and may help promote labour mobility. However, qualifications frameworks alone will not be effective in promoting labour mobility, and several important conditions need to be met; especially that a feasibility study including cost and benefit analysis is carried out in the first place – as this study suggests.

The debate is often made even more complicated by the use of inadequate vocabulary and wrong translations in other largely used languages on the African continent, such as French. The propagation of misconceptions regarding what a qualifications framework is all about has been detrimental to its actual implementation in many countries. Therefore, going back to square one has some merits in this particular case.

2.3 A qualifications framework is meant to connect the world of work and the world of education

When it comes to qualifications frameworks, there are two worlds that should be taken into consideration: the world of education and the world of work. In the most common scenario they do not talk to each other. In another scenario, they even compete with one another. This is true regarding the actors in the field: teachers and professionals barely consult with one another regarding skills and competences in need and/or the best way to provide them to learners. This is also true at the highest level since issues are not shared across ministries; the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education typically. A qualifications framework has the potential merit of providing a common language to both worlds and to smoothen communication. There is room for quick improvement if employers are able to voice their needs and teachers are in a position to provide the competences on demand. Behind this however, there is the assumption that the world of work knows its needs, in the short and medium term. This is a very strong assumption to make because the market for goods and services evolves very fast and employers are barely able to state clearly the skills they will need in the near future. In fact, it is somewhat unfair to criticise employers for not reporting their needs. This indeed touches the thorny question of skills anticipation, as most employers are not equipped to address this issue in a satisfactory way.

Most employers – except perhaps the sizeable ones – do not even have the time to invest in any form of forecasting activities; let alone the competent staff to carry out the task. They need to be helped. Skills anticipation will not be addressed here for the sake of brevity, but the participants to the Debre Zeit Workshop in 2016 were right to recommend that an in-depth reflection be launched regarding skills anticipation. Quality in education, also identified in Debre Zeit as a key topic, will not be addressed here either, because it is a topic of its own. In addition, skills anticipation demands a very effective career

guidance system to inform about skills in demand and how to acquire these, whether in the initial education and training system or in the adult learning system. Currently, it is barely the case that learners choose their field of study on the basis of the opportunities existing in the labour market; and this demands careful attention by policy makers, and education and training planners.

For the world of work – and the labour market in particular – to be able to rely on the world of education to train competent individuals, one needs to distinguish skills development from skills recognition through the awarding of a qualification. The development of skills and competences may be achieved in the education and training system (the formal learning system) and/or by experience (the non-formal and informal learning systems, which in the African context includes informal apprenticeship²). In order for skills to be transferrable, contexts in which they are applied need to be sufficiently similar. This is an underlying assumption in international portability discussions that also deserves more attention. For broader occupational competence, it is safe to assume that skills and competences are transferrable yet ongoing discussion in higher education about harmonizing educational content are precisely about this challenge. For skills and competences to be portable they must be also be visible to have currency in the local and foreign labour markets, and also in the society in general – among family members, friends and peers. A competence can become visible through interviews/test and/or trial period. This is what employers do most of the time in Africa when they hire workers: they assess workers' competences on the spot. This situation takes time and is costly for employers. For workers, it is also exhausting since they have to prove that they are competent every single time they apply for a job.

The solution to this unsustainable situation is a wider use of qualifications in recruitments. This is substantiated by Coles and Werquin (OECD, 2007), and one of the key conditions mentioned above for qualifications frameworks to promote labour mobility. Indeed, as soon as competences are documented, and that the corresponding document – the qualification – carries value, is deserved and therefore trusted, and hence has currency in the labour market, labour mobility is improved; i.e. geographical as well as occupational mobility.

2 ILO. 2012. *Upgrading informal apprenticeship. A resource guide for Africa*, Geneva, ILO.

2.4 Skills portability and societal recognition of qualifications

Skills portability for the ILO combines :

- The possibility to use employable competences in different jobs, occupations and industries; and
- The certification and recognition of competences within national and international labour markets.

The word “recognition” has two meanings, and they are both important. On the one hand it is the technical process by which an assessor, or a group of assessors, decides that the applicant's competences match predefined standards. On the other, it means that the qualification delivered to a successful applicant is accepted as proof of competences by the society, and the labour market stakeholders in the first place. The former is technical whereas the latter is societal. Technical recognition of competences is relatively easy to organise, provided the existing assessors are able to assess competences: it is often called validation. Societal/labour market recognition is what matters for job search and other labour market or further training related activities. In fact, without societal recognition, almost all assessment and validation processes are useless because they provide learners with qualifications that have no currency in the society and in the labour market.

It is of paramount importance – especially for policy makers – to realise that an assessor may well validate the learning outcomes of an applicant without the society accepting that the corresponding award (e.g. a qualification, or credits) has any value or currency. In fact, there are examples of countries where simple certificates awarded by major vendors – such as US information and communication technology companies – have better currency than a tertiary education qualification awarded by the local Ministry of Education. What matters to applicants is that the award they receive is recognised by the society they live in and, most importantly, among the key stakeholders in the particular society, especially in the labour market and by employers. This is key for occupational mobility, including abroad.

In practice, societal recognition of qualifications is often achieved when all relevant stakeholders are involved early enough in the process of designing the qualifications system. Societal recognition must be among the top priorities of any system assessing learning outcomes and awarding qualification. Otherwise the entire system could collapse because of lack of trust from stakeholders.

Once national recognition is guaranteed and qualifications have currency in the domestic labour market, the next step is to convince partner countries that they should also accept those qualifications as evidence for competences.

2.5 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for equity

Recognition of prior learning outcomes is at the top of the policy agenda in many countries in Africa and beyond. But there remains some confusion, if not misconception, about the concepts in use, and their definitions. The most efficient way to describe recognition of prior learning outcomes is to say that it is another route to achieving a qualification; either directly through the awarding of a qualification on the sole basis of an assessment, or indirectly through the awarding of credits or the facilitation of access to additional education and training through exemption of academic prerequisite for access and/or exemption of all or part of a study/training programme. In short, recognition of prior learning outcomes provides a second chance of qualification (Werquin, 2012b).

Validation designates the process by which individuals (applicants/candidates) are assessed in order to determine whether they meet some [preferably widely agreed] predefined assessment standards. If a typical applicant meets the standards, then s/he can be awarded a partial or full vocational or academic qualification, s/he can be awarded some credits toward a qualification, s/he may have the right to take an examination in order to be awarded a qualification, s/he may benefit from the exemption of academic prerequisites to enter the formal learning system (university typically), and s/he may be exempted all or part of a curriculum in the formal learning system.

As it is obvious from this list, the validation process may lead to many outputs. This list is composed of the most often seen outputs in countries that have set validation systems in motion. Needless to say, there are as many systems as there are countries (Werquin, 2010b and 2016). What usually makes the differences is:

- Whether countries accept to validate learning outcomes from the labour market or from private activities, or both.
- Whether countries may award the full qualification at the end of the validation, or whether it is merely a right to sit for an examination in the formal learning system.
- Whether what is awarded (qualification, credit or exemption) is fully accepted in society, and first and foremost by employers.

The level of formalisation of the validation and recognition process should mainly depend on the objectives of the applicants. This is of high relevance to policymaking because the cost of the validation/recognition process for each individual applicant depends on the level of formalisation. In short, the preparation of a portfolio of competences, with some hours of guidance, costs less than a quality assured formal validation process, with the awarding of a qualification, for applying to a regulated occupation for example (assistant nurse that would like to become nurse, or a tourist guide that needs to be aware of safety issues¹).

¹ See, for example, the case of Namibia (Werquin, 2011. *Recognition of Prior Learning within the Vocational Education and Training System: A Policy and Strategy for Namibia* (unpublished NTA document – Namibian Training Authority). There are also examples of Tourist Guide preparing a portfolio of competences in Saskatchewan, Canada.

Just for the sake of clarity, qualifications frameworks and recognition of prior learning systems do not have to be elaborated, nor implemented, at the same time. It is a frequent misconception that recognition of prior learning systems and qualifications frameworks need one another. Technically, it is possible to set in motion a recognition of prior learning system without establishing a qualifications framework, and the other way around. There are historical examples proving the two systems may be disconnected. Nevertheless, it remains true that establishing a system for recognising of prior learning is more easily done if a qualifications framework has been established. It is also true that a qualifications framework is more equitable and more inclusive if there are alternative routes to qualifications than the formal learning system (see Werquin, 2012a, for details).

For the recognition of prior learning outcomes approach to be fully understood, it is necessary to realise that:

- It is the context that is informal, not the learning outcomes.
- All qualifications awarded in the context of the RPL approach are formal; and applicants must be assessed against recognised standards, whether existing standards (from the Ministry of Education typically) or created on purpose (usually with a strong input from labour market stakeholders).
- The issue of the assessment procedures (how applicants are assessed in practice) is different from the one of the standards. There could be several assessment procedures but only one set of standards.
- Assessment is at the core of any RPL approach. Since the learning process is unknown, what matters is whether applicants are competent, and only a thorough assessment process may establish it.
- Any RPL approach aims at targeting the non-qualified, or lowly qualified, yet competent individuals; it aims at making visible the learning outcomes – i.e. competences – individuals have acquired from any type of activities, including informal ones.
- RPL is particularly relevant in countries with a large competent but unqualified workforce: it puts name and evidence on competences. Generating revenues often depends on owning a qualification, for potential employers (for employees) or potential customers (for self-employed). It is extremely relevant for occupational mobility, especially abroad.
- There is a continuum of learning, from very formal to totally informal.
- There is also a continuum of approach to validating prior learning outcomes, from light to thorough, with Quality Assurance and awarding of a qualification (or credits toward a qualification).

Recognition of prior learning outcomes should not be seen as a competitor to education and training. On the contrary, when used accordingly, recognition of prior learning outcomes can become a precious ally to education and training since it will help positioning individuals on the competence scale and facilitate access to the most relevant education and training module(s).

For recognition of prior learning outcomes systems that have been established around the world the take up remains small. Success stories show the value of the approach, but countries often find it difficult to scale up. A frequent explanation for this modest success is that the RPL-ready

individuals – those with documented competences learnt from experience – usually apply first. They are assessed and qualified relatively easily; but it is a small group of the population. Then come a larger group of applicants that are less ready for an RPL process: they need additional top-up education and training. However, few systems are organised in order to deliver education and training so that learners acquire only some learning outcomes towards full validation. In other words, education and training are currently not modular.

Recognition of prior learning outcomes is among the most equitable and inclusive approaches and it deserves attention in the context of the work of the AU on labour mobility. It aims to make competences visible and to give them currency in society and labour markets. It can alternatively promote the awarding of credits, thus facilitating access to formal studies. It is meant to provide equity for workers whose competences are not visible, through the second chance to obtain a qualification, which gives a visa for work. Actual implementation demands that the concepts in use are clearly defined at the onset of the process, for all stakeholders to have a sense of ownership, which is the way to societal recognition.

Overview of the Main Systems for Promoting Skills Portability

3.1 Europe: European Union and Council of Europe

The European Commission of the European Union has promoted two pan-European studies for skills forecasting: one conducted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Cedefop ; and a series of sector studies , in 19 sectors accounting for about 60 % of the total EU employment. The conclusion is that there is a tendency towards polarization of the labour market and skills needs, with a growing gap between low-skilled (e.g. elementary occupations) and high-skilled jobs (e.g. professionals, managers) and a decline in skilled trade-jobs (e.g. craftsmen).

The European Union is becoming a common labour market. The mobility of workers within the European Union is facilitated by instruments put in place by its Commission, such as:

- EURES, the European Job Mobility Platform. It is a cooperation network between the public employment services of the 28 EU Member States, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and partner organisations.
- EURAXESS, Researchers in Motion. It is a portal aimed at facilitating matches between the demand for and supply of researchers.
- European Skills Panorama. It is a portal that facilitates regular monitoring of skills anticipation and assessment at national and European level. The website allows to identify the strongest mismatch between skills and labour market needs existing in the Member States.
- European Classification of Skills/competences, Qualifications and Occupations, ESCO. It is a multilingual classification of European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations. It introduces a standard terminology in 25 European languages and categorises the skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the European Union labour market and education and training systems.

Regarding the portability of skills and competences, the main European instruments for harmonising qualifications, facilitating their portability and recognising prior learning outcomes are:

- EQF, the European Qualifications Framework. Adopted in 2008 , the EQF is designed to increase the transparency, portability and recognition of qualifications throughout Europe. The system serves as a common reference point for relating different countries' national qualifications frameworks. The EQF is a lifelong learning framework, meaning that the eight levels encompass qualifications earned in any setting, whether general education, tertiary education or vocational education and training. They also include qualifications acquired after the assessment of non-formal and/or informal learning outcomes.
- ECVET, the European credit system for vocational education and training. ECVET complements and builds on concepts and principles shared with the EQF and other EU instrument, such as the Europass. This is a methodological framework that can be used to describe qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated points. It allows learning outcomes acquired in various contexts, both in other countries and through formal, informal or non-formal learning, to be attested and recorded.
- EQARF, the European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training. This is a reference tool intended to encourage Member States to improve quality management practices at national level by introducing a set of common criteria and indicators.
- Europass, or the European Skills Passport. It was designed to help citizens communicate

their competences and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training. The Europass consists of a Curriculum Vitae, a Language Passport, the Europass Mobility, Certificate Supplement (TVET) and the Diploma Supplement (Tertiary Education). These documents aim at recording skills and competences, especially for individuals aiming at some form of mobility across Europe. The supplements are especially relevant for that matter as they go beyond the qualification and provide details about individuals' competences.

- The Bologna Process. Launched in 1999, it led to the development of the European Tertiary education Area (EHEA), which is a qualifications framework on its own. It aims at facilitating mobility by providing common tools – mainly European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, ECTS, and Diploma Supplement – to ensure that periods of study abroad are recognised in all partner countries. The three levels of the Bologna Process – Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates – are the top three levels of the EQF (6, 7 and 8 respectively). They have now been adopted by every participating country. The ECTS is a key concept to relate learning outcomes, workload and notional time.
- The Lisbon Convention. Students' qualifications have to be recognised so that they can study at different institutions in different countries. To that end, the Council of Europe and UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Tertiary education in the European Region, in Lisbon on 11 April 1997. It entered into force on 1 February 1999.
- ENIC, the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region. It was established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO to implement the Lisbon Convention and, in general, to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications. It operates jointly with the NARIC (the National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union).
- Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. It covers all regulated occupations, except professions for which the recognition of professional qualifications is governed by specific legal provisions at the European level.
- The Copenhagen Process, focusing on vocational education and training. In 2002, participating countries agreed on priorities and strategies for the promotion of mutual trust, transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications in order to increase mobility and facilitate access to lifelong learning.
- EURAXESS, Researchers in Motion. It is a portal aimed at facilitating matches between the demand for and supply of researchers.

In a nutshell, the Copenhagen Process (ECVET) is for vocational education and training what the Bologna Process (ECTS) is for tertiary education. With an eight level framework, the EQF attempts at encompassing all levels. Even if the Bologna Process started somewhat earlier than the Copenhagen Process, this shows a parallel focus and a clear interest for both the worlds of tertiary education and of technical vocational education and training.

At the heart of all the European instruments, there is the concept of learning outcomes and, for learning outcomes to be comparable, all participating countries must apply common quality assurance standards. European standards and guidelines have therefore been developed for internal and external quality assurance in order to provide all stakeholders with common reference points (e.g. the European Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary education, ENQA¹).

1 www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG_3edition-2.pdf

3.2 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations² was established on 8 August 1967. In 2015, it established the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)³, a single common market for the free flow of goods, services and investment, as well as financial capital. At present, the AEC targets the free movement of “skilled” labour across ASEAN member countries.

The AEC’s labour mobility initiative is based on mutual recognition agreements (MRAs). These establish recognition procedures for professionals in eight sectors in order to gain a qualification in another country and ultimately work abroad. However, implementing the MRAs is difficult, as education and testing requirements vary widely across the region, and given challenges in operationalizing work permit procedures following skills recognition.⁴ Given that all MRAs except for one (focusing on tourism) address highly-skilled professions, and the majority of migrants within the region are low- or medium-skilled, MRAs seem to have a limited short-term impact on labour mobility so far.

Nevertheless, the ASEAN has developed the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), which aims to enable qualifications to be compared across Member States while providing a coherent benchmark for current national qualifications frameworks. ASEAN Member States are at different stages of development. In addition, the ILO supported ASEAN in the development of Model Regional Competence Standards in key occupations to improve comparability of standards.

Qualifications have to comply with the ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competence Certification Systems, a set of common principles agreed and used by Member States.

3.3 The Commonwealth

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) was established at the initiative of the Ministers of Education of the 31 small States of the Commonwealth⁵. The aim was to create a mechanism allowing participants to strengthen and develop tertiary education by recording and sharing qualifications. To harmonise the different approaches present in the participating States, the VUSCC developed the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF), which was developed and implemented in the different regions by a committee of experts.

2 Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam.

3 ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 (www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2015/November/aec-page/AEC-Blueprint-2025-FINAL.pdf).

4 ILO. 2014. Assessment of the readiness of ASEAN Member States for implementation of the commitment to the free flow of skilled labour within the ASEAN Economic Community from 2015, ILO, Bangkok.

5 Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji, Gambia, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lesotho, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Swaziland, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The Cayman Islands and Montserrat are also part of the network, even though they are not members of the Commonwealth.

The TQF is first and foremost an instrument for transposing qualifications. It is not intended to replace any existing sectoral, national or regional qualifications frameworks or quality assurance systems.

3.4 The Caribbean Community

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy was created to facilitate labour mobility and skills matching. Priority was given to developing coordinated TVET systems and reference mechanisms. This led to the creation of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) to implement and manage a regional training and certification system, to ensure standard and uniform delivery of competence-based TVET within the Single Market and Economy. CARICOM applies the principle of conformity and convergence, meaning that the Caribbean Association of Training Agencies (CANTA) created in 2003 establishes and governs a Regional Training and Certification System, and not just a qualification framework for transposing qualifications, with the aim to harmonize national TVET systems, develop regional standards and finally establish a regional system for assessment, certification and recognition of skills. To date, member states still use their own national qualifications and the use of CVQs remains limited.

3.5 The Pacific Community

The fifteen countries of the Pacific Island Forum⁶ adopted the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF), a transposition device that is similar, in terms of functionality, to the EQF, in order to facilitate the comparability and recognition of Pacific qualifications in terms of other regional and international qualifications systems.

Countries that do not yet have a national qualifications framework can adopt the PQF.

Accredited qualifications that have met all national and regional quality assurance requirements and are referenced against the PQF are registered on the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS).

3.6 Conclusions and reflections on international qualifications frameworks for mutual recognition of skills and competences

International (i.e. regional or continental) qualifications frameworks aim to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications. There are two different types of frameworks, those that act as a transposition/ translation device (EQF, Asian QRF, PQF) and those that establish a uniform international framework aiming to harmonize qualifications entirely across the region (e.g. CARICOM). The second option is highly unrealistic for Africa given the large number of countries on the continent, and their considerable differences in size, economic development, state of education and training systems and governance mechanisms in place.

⁶ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, plus Tokelau.

With regard to the first option, the question needs to be asked whether Africa could skip the regional stage and move directly to a continental African qualifications framework – given that only SADC has adopted a regional qualifications framework that goes beyond higher education. Even for SADC, and including in other regions in the world, political actors have not waited for all member states to establish national qualifications frameworks before embarking on a regional qualifications framework. It is too early to say whether this tool and the resources invested will prove effective or not. However, there are a number of conceptual reflections that could be helpful in the decision-making process for Africa.

All education and training reform needs to address domestic issues first of all, including the recognition of skills of migrant workers. In practice, the first step must be to gather stakeholders early in the process and to ask them about their needs at local level, and the best way to meet them. It is in fact simpler to first address domestic issues – and elaborate a national qualifications framework if it is deemed useful – because there are several practical advantages to working at the national level:

- The stakeholders are known; and they may easily be brought together to organise a national consultation;
- The stakeholders know each other and may work swiftly;
- There are no (or less) language issues;
- The economic situation is a given;
- The education and training system is a given;
- The state of development of the qualifications system is a given; and
- Stakeholders share the same culture, and historical background.

To be concrete, the common cultural and historical background will make it easier to decide on the number of levels and on the number and definition of the descriptors needed for a qualifications framework. Bluntly put, there is no way to have countries from an entire continent to agree on the descriptors when, for example, what matters in one country is autonomy and in another is knowledge or practical skills. The risk is high to keep all descriptors that countries propose, in order to make all countries happy. Yet, it would be a disastrous solution because as experience has shown, beyond three descriptors a qualifications framework is difficult to operationalize, as most qualifications are likely to appear at different levels for each descriptor. The alternative option could be to select the smallest common denominator, but this might be even worse and risks making all countries unhappy.

By working at the national level, with national objectives, in the first place, the process of selection of levels and descriptors can take place independent of international issues. Another immediate consequence of this national approach is that countries do not have to negotiate about what has value, or not, in their domestic context regarding competences. The consensus building process is much easier and the resulting qualifications framework is much stronger. It is then easier for country representatives to join international

debates about establishing an international qualifications framework. Finally, if the initial steps are organised nationally then there may not be any need for internationally agreed definitions; which have always proved a major barrier to establishing international frameworks. If establishing an international framework only takes a referencing process, all the work on elaborating definitions disappear. What will then matter will be the general understanding of the different concepts and definitions. And definitions will be chosen according to local needs and objectives; as they should be.

Technically, establishing an international qualifications framework does not necessarily require national qualifications frameworks to exist. Yet, in the case of frameworks as transposition/ translation devices, qualifications are not directly referenced to the regional framework. They need a national qualification that is then connected and referenced to the international framework. This means that for any specific qualification in a given country, the national qualifications framework is the only concrete point of reference. In other words, it is usually the case that a specific qualification will only be given a Regional Qualifications Framework level when the qualification has an agreed level in the national framework and this system has been officially referenced to the Regional Qualifications Framework. If the formal link between the qualification and a national framework is missing, the situation is complex because there is normally no procedure for linking the qualification to the Regional Qualifications Framework. Therefore, it is advisable that national qualifications frameworks be built first – if deemed useful given the country context – and to serve national purposes in the first place. The referencing process is the immediate next step, but it is only the next step.

If national qualification frameworks are not in place – as is the case in the majority of African countries, the only function a regional or continental framework would fulfil is to provide some possible additional guidance when national authorities compare qualifications or training programs from one country with the qualification or training program in their own country for the sake of recognition.

This process, often called credential evaluation, happens in all countries where foreign workers apply for work permits and request to have their qualifications recognized. An alternative to establishing regional and continental frameworks is therefore strengthening the capacity of countries to evaluate credentials and to introduce recognition of prior learning systems.

The Pan-African Approach to Skills Development under Agenda 2063

4.1 Labour mobility and skills portability

The African Union has launched the ambitious programme “Agenda 2063” to gradually build an effective, peaceful, socially and economically integrated African Community. It pays close attention to the continent’s education issues¹. Urgent priority was given to the establishment of a continental free trade area. A first step was taken in this direction with the creation, in June 2015 at Sharm el-Sheikh, of the Tripartite Free Trade Area between COMESA, the SADC and the EAC.

The Tripartite Free Trade Area, to be effective, implies free movement of goods, capital and people, including workers. It is therefore essential to identify the qualifications needed in the Area, and later in the continental free trade area, so as to foster the conditions for improving the quantity and quality of skills and competences developed by the education and training systems concerned, and to create mechanisms for qualified mobility and appropriate skills matching. Indeed, many regional economic communities currently lack the competent labour force needed to spur investment and economic development.

Skills portability is relevant not only for worker mobility within the Communities and free trade areas, but also for labour migration in both directions: outflow and inflow. Accordingly, the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa² emphasizes the need for Member States to adopt all appropriate measures to “maximize the contribution of skilled professionals in the Continent by facilitating mobility and deployment of professionals in a continental and regional framework”.

The importance of promoting regional and sub-regional labour mobility is clearly underlined in the most recent policy documents adopted by the AU Commission:

- The Youth and Women Employment Pact (April 2013);
- The AUC Strategic Plan 2014–2017, aimed at promoting labour migration to support cross-border investment and fill the skills gap;
- The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025;
- The Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment (2013);
- The AU revised Migration policy framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2027);
- The African Continental Free Trade Area (2018);
- The AU Protocol on Free Movement of People and draft plan of action (2018).

¹ See <http://agenda2063.au.int/>

² AU Executive Council, document EX.CL/276 (IX).
Available at http://sa.au.int/en/sites/default/files/au_migration_policy_framework_africa.pdf.

4.2 Legal framework – recognition conventions at regional level

Many past and present experiences offer a sound basis on which to design mechanisms allowing AU Member States to develop systems for recognising qualifications in both tertiary education and TVET. Three recognition conventions on higher education have been adopted in the past, either at regional level or at sub-regional level, yet outside of Regional Economic Communities.

For TVET in Africa, any skills portability mechanisms need to be in line with the new global development agenda relating to skills development and TVET, namely:

- The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goal 4 commits the international community to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030, otherwise known as Education 2030) ; and
- The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation (R195) of 2004, and the Conclusions on Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development of 2008 ;
- The UNESCO Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET) of 2015 ;
- The recommendations made by the Third International Congress on technical and vocational education and training, Shanghai, May 2012 (the Shanghai Consensus).
- The AU Protocol on Free Movement of People and draft plan of action (2018).

4.2.1 The Arusha Convention/Addis Ababa Convention

The AU Commission and UNESCO revised the Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (now known as the Addis Ababa Convention, 12 December 2014). It provides the legal means for fostering mobility of learners and workers and strengthening intra-African cooperation in education, training and research for higher education.

Adopted more than 30 years ago by Ministers of Education in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, the Arusha Convention was revised in 2002, 2003 and 2011. Between December 1981 – when the Ministers of Education met – and 2002, it was ratified by only 21 States in Africa, plus the Holy See.

Three main obstacles have been identified to full harmonisation:

- The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goal 4 commits the international community to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030, otherwise known as Education 2030) ; and
- The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation (R195) of 2004, and the Conclusions on Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development of 2008 ;

4.2.2 Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Tertiary education in the Arab States 1978 (Paris, 22 December 1978)

Under this Convention¹, recognition of a degree or diploma obtained in a Contracting State implies acceptance by the competent authorities of another Contracting State and the granting to its holder of rights enjoyed by those of the first Contracting State. These rights extend to either the pursuit of studies or the practice of a profession. Generally, equivalences are checked using specific criteria, such as the content and duration of the training.

To achieve the expected results, Member States have to undertake all necessary steps at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels, in particular by means of bilateral, sub-regional, regional or other agreements, agreements between universities or other tertiary education institutions and arrangements with the competent national or international organisations and other bodies.

The Convention is implemented by means of national bodies and a regional committee composed of representatives of all the Contracting States.

4.2.3 African and Malagasy Council for Tertiary Education - CAMES

The African and Malagasy Council for Tertiary Education (*Conseil africain et malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur, CAMES*²) was established by the Heads of States of the African Malagasy Union, meeting in Niamey on 22-23 January 1968, after the Conference of Ministers of Education held in Paris in 1966, decided to review in depth the structures and teachings of African and Malagasy universities.

On 26 April 1972, the 16 French-speaking countries of Africa and the Indian Ocean signed an agreement for the recognition of qualifications in tertiary education in Lomé (Togo). In that agreement, they affirmed their determination to recognise all qualifications issued by their institutions as automatically valid or equivalent on the territory of each of them.

¹ Signed by the following States: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic.

² Currently 19 countries are members of CAMES: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo.

They also agreed:

- To establish permanent scientific and cultural cooperation between the parties to the agreement;
- To draw up agreements between the parties on tertiary education and research, and to contribute to their implementation; To monitor the coordination of tertiary education systems and the standardisation of programmes and recruitment levels in tertiary education and research institutions; and
- To guarantee that scientific information was collected and disseminated to establishments.

In order to guarantee the achievement of those objectives, CAMES set up four quality assurance programmes. It also recognises the validity or equivalence of qualifications based on an assessment of the contents of studies, teaching methods, quality assurance standards and modalities. One initiative worth mentioning in this context is that of the WAEMU countries to introduce the French Licence, Master and Doctorate system. The initiative is coordinated by UNESCO³ and aims to introduce a three-level or – grade tertiary education structure corresponding to that of European countries, in order to facilitate international mobility (Bachelor, Master and Doctorate). In France, a *licence* requires 180 ECTS, a *master* 120 additional credits.

4.3 Education and training in Africa – strategies and plans of action

Under the **Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006–2015)**⁴, the AU Conference of Ministers of Education adopted seven priority areas of focus with a view to achieving consistent and appropriate human resource development: gender and culture, education management information systems (EMIS), teacher development, tertiary education, TVET, curriculum and teaching and learning materials, and quality management. An additional priority area, early childhood development, was added in 2009.

The AU Commission ensured continuity for the next decade with the adoption, by Ministers of Education in Addis Ababa on 30 October 2015, of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025. The Strategy focuses on completion rates at all levels and for all groups, with harmonisation processes across all levels for national and regional integration. Among the main policy indications, the following have a direct bearing on the present study:

- Establish and institutionalize assessment of classroom learning outcomes at various stages;
- Build the capacity of teachers in formative assessment and its utilization for the improvement and remedial of learning outcomes;

³ See www.unesco.org/new/en/dakar/about-this-office/single-view/news/unesco_and_partners_join_hands_for_bachelor_master_doctorate_reform_in_eight_west_african_countries/#.VhAKmSuElgQ.

⁴ See www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Dakar/pdf/AU%20SECOND%20DECADE%20ON%20EDUCATION%202006-2015.pdf.

- Set up national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs) to facilitate the creation of multiple pathways to acquisition of skills and competences as well as mobility across the sub-sector;
- Develop a continental qualifications framework linked to regional qualifications and national qualifications frameworks to facilitate regional integration and mobility of graduates; and
- Establish and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation systems

4.3.1 Tertiary education

With regard to tertiary education specifically, the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006–2015) priorities are as follows:

- Promotion of research and original knowledge production in tertiary education;
- Promotion, development and quality assurance in African tertiary education in all its dimensions, including the development and ratification of regional and continental qualifications frameworks (such as the Arusha Convention)⁵ to facilitate mobility of students and staff;
- Increased involvement of universities in the continent's development efforts, including development of lower levels of education; and
- Ensuring appropriate levels of funding for tertiary education.

The AU endorsed the Harmonisation Strategy for Tertiary education and the African Quality Rating Mechanism in March 2008 in Accra, Ghana.

The AU Commission's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 aims to revitalise and expand tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness:

- Honour national commitment to allocate 1 % of GDP to research and innovation;
- Create conducive environments for research and innovation through the provision of adequate infrastructure and resources;
- Link research to the development of priority areas and enhancement of global competitiveness;
- Promote research on education and TVET;
- Consolidate and expand Centres of Excellence and enhance institutional linkages in the continent;
- Promote international research and development cooperation based on continental interest and ownership;
- Expand competitive grants and awards and other support mechanisms to nurture young academics and accomplished researchers; and
- Strengthen quality (post)graduate and post-doctoral education to cater for expanding tertiary education as well as meet demand for high level human capital.

5 The Arusha Convention does not establish a continental qualifications framework. What is meant seems to be continental recognition mechanisms.

While education systems have made progress overall, the most significant improvements to date have been in the field of tertiary education.

The approval in 12 December 2014 of the Addis Ababa Convention (modifying the Arusha Convention) set the right frame for the creation of an African tertiary education and research space. For the new Convention to be truly operational, a coherent set of quality assurance standards is needed to which all tertiary education institutions have to refer. Thus the AU Commission, in collaboration with the European Commission and the Association of African Universities, has undertaken to develop a pan-African quality assurance and accreditations framework. To validate the process for establishing the framework, a workshop was held in Accra, Ghana, from 29-30 July 2015, attended by 56 participants from 28 African countries. The workshop's conclusions were as follows:

- The framework is needed to harmonise quality assurance practices on the continent;
- Political endorsement and continuous support by AU Member States is essential for the establishment of the requisite legal structure;
- The framework's effective operationalization requires continued consultation and coordination of tertiary education institutions;
- Countries that do not have, or are in the early stages of developing, quality assessment agencies need to be encouraged to commit themselves and must be supported by the AU Commission to that end;
- An agency needs to be set up to operationalize the framework. Its mandate, roles and functions will be to coordinate, promote and facilitate the harmonisation of tertiary education, quality assurance and accreditation systems within, across, to and from Africa, and to serve as the continent's lead agency for quality assurance, quality enhancement and accreditation.

Proper functioning of the framework was said to also require:

- A continental qualifications framework;
- Agreed continental standards and guidelines for quality assurance and accreditation;
- An African quality rating mechanism;
- An African credit accumulation and transfer system;
- An African quality assurance portal comprising:
 - An African register of quality assurance and accreditation agencies;
 - A register of quality-assured tertiary education institutions;
 - A database of experienced peer reviewers.
- An African credit accumulation and transfer system;

Proper functioning of the framework was said to also require:

- The African Quality Assurance Network, which was inaugurated in 2007 to improve the quality of tertiary education in Africa by strengthening quality assurance;
- The 21 national quality assurance agencies that existed in 2013 across Africa

(according to data made available at the 6th International Conference on Quality Assurance in Tertiary education in Africa, Bujumbura, Burundi, September 2014); and

- The African quality rating mechanism being developed by the AU Commission in order to ensure that the performance of tertiary education institutions can be measured against a set of agreed criteria, and to help the institutions carry out self-evaluation exercises aimed at developing an institutional culture of quality.

An important example of innovative initiatives to revitalize tertiary education in Africa is the Pan-African University, a post-graduate training and research network of university nodes established in five regions with support from the AU. Each region has different areas of specialisation, with a regional node in one country and other countries hosting satellite campuses. The North African node on water and energy sciences (including climate change) (PAUWES) is hosted at the University of Abou Bakr Belkaïd, in Tlemcen, Algeria. For Central Africa, the Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS) is hosted at the University of Yaoundé II, in Soa, Cameroon. The Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, in Jumia, Kenya, is home to the East African node on Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI). The Institute for Life and Earth Sciences including Health and Agriculture (PAULESI) is hosted at the University of Ibadan, in Ibadan, Nigeria. The Southern African node will be based in South Africa and focuses on space sciences.

Another important innovative project in the field of tertiary education is Tuning Africa. Tuning is a methodology used to improve teaching, learning and assessment in tertiary education reform. It guides the development of curriculum, a credit accumulation mechanism and a transfer system to obtain the intended learning outcomes, skills and competences. One of its objectives is to ensure a consensus among academics across borders on a set of reference points for generic and subject-specific competences along subject lines.

Tuning was developed in Europe under the Bologna Process. Tuning projects have been completed to date in over 60 countries around the world, in Europe and Latin America, in the Russian Federation and in the United States of America. Projects have recently started in Australia, India and China. More than a thousand universities, ministries, agencies and other bodies have been involved. Tuning Africa is part of this larger initiative to help harmonise and reform tertiary education in the region.

The harmonisation of tertiary education in Africa is a multidimensional process that promotes the integration of the tertiary education space in the region. The aim is to achieve collaboration across borders, sub-regionally and regionally, in curriculum development, educational standards and quality assurance, joint structural convergence,

consistency of systems and compatibility, recognition and transferability of degrees to facilitate mobility.

Another important initiative is the roadmap towards a jointly funded EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership. The roadmap focuses on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture, areas in which African and European countries can find considerable common ground around regional goals and policy objectives, but in which current efforts are clearly fragmented. The initiative dovetails with the AU Commission's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024⁶, which targets priorities such as the eradication of hunger and achievement of food security, disease prevention and control, communication (physical and intellectual mobility), the environment, community building and wealth creation.

In spite of these positive developments, the maintenance of quality standards in tertiary education faces tremendous challenges at the national and regional levels. Most African universities are predominantly teaching rather than research institutions and are characterised by the absence of graduate programmes; this dramatically limits their research capabilities. Basic research, which is a precondition for the production of scientific knowledge, is therefore not given the importance it deserves in African universities.

4.3.2 Technical and vocational education and training

The Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-15) set the following priorities in terms of TVET:

- Equitable access to TVET for all;
- Quality and relevance of national TVET systems and programmes, with increased participation and financing by the private sector;
- Enhanced resources to ensure modern equipment and facilities for TVET;
- Integration of TVET in literacy and non-formal learning programmes for vulnerable groups, and in reconstruction projects in post-conflict situations; and
- Capacity building, including the mobilization of TVET teachers.

⁶ See <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/uploads/pageContent/5481/Science,%20Technology%20and%20Innovation%20Strategy%20for%20Africa%20-%20Document.pdf>.

TVET figures high on government agendas, prompting the AU Commission to update the 2007 Strategy to Revitalise Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Africa by adopting the Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment in 2013. The new Strategy addresses the cross-cutting issues of employability, relevance, collaboration between training institutions and employers, accreditation of training providers (in the formal and non-formal sectors), assessment and certification, quality assurance, and portability of TVET qualifications across national boundaries. Each country has to formulate a national TVET policy and establish a national training coordination agency and its implementing organs to drive the policy and the entire TVET system.

Not only must national TVET policies and strategies be based on relevant international best practices, they must also be firmly rooted in indigenous knowledge and learning systems that take account of local cultural practices and values, technological preferences, the challenges of globalization and national development priorities. The new Strategy makes the point that the development of higher-level skills is necessary for technological adaptation and innovation, transformation of national production systems, and industrialisation of the economy.

The Strategy recommends that AU Member States:

- Improve the TVET policy and management environment;
- Promote a paradigm shift in TVET;
- Modernize the informal TVET sector;
- Promote skills for the agricultural and rural development sectors;
- Provide training for the green economy and emerging job markets;
- Assure quality provision;
- Promote ICT in TVET;
- Enhance relevance and employability;
- Develop a harmonised system of skills recognition;
- Strengthen partnerships and linkages with the private sector;
- Engage with key economic, political and international players;
- Promote higher-level skills;
- Diversify funding sources and ensure sustainable financing;
- Enhance the image and attractiveness of TVET;
- Increase access to and participation in TVET of girls, women and vulnerable groups;
- Monitor and evaluate TVET systems; and
- Promote TVET research.

All the above recommendations address the challenges faced by the TVET sector. The following are of particular concern:

- The relevance of the skills produced to labour market demand: in fact, a number of remarkable mismatches allow jobs to go unfilled in some countries because of a dearth of suitable human resources. Many African countries suffer from shortages of artisans, machine operators and technical personnel (Zimbabwe, Niger, Gabon, etc.). South Africa, for example, is reported to have 800,000 unfilled high-skilled positions.
- The current vibrant economic and anticipated future development of some African countries puts pressure on TVET systems to provide the skills needed.
- TVET systems are not able to absorb the large cohorts leaving primary school and willing to learn a technical profession.
- The above is partially compensated by an increased number of privately owned institutions, for which adequate accreditation and certification are needed.
- Quality assurance mechanisms need to be introduced in many countries.
- Lack of credit transfer/ recognition systems at bilateral or regional level; harmonisation tools, such as the national qualifications frameworks, are only used in very few countries such as South Africa, Botswana and Mauritius or the sector-based TVET qualifications framework adopted in Mali, Rwanda and Ghana;
- Low prevalence of systems of recognition of skills and competences acquired in formal, informal and non-formal settings (RPL).
- The role of the informal economy, which is the biggest employer and provider of apprenticeship in the African economy, with 80 per cent of the labour force. The informal and agricultural sectors need to be harnessed and their potential for skills development promoted for structural transformation and job creation.
- Female enrolment rates in formal TVET are generally very low (where data are available for 2011, they do not exceed 54 per cent). Yet evidence suggests that women face more obstacles in finding employment because they have acquired fewer foundational skills.
- The mainstreaming of information and communication technologies in curricula: the difficulties of attracting qualified trainers in this area should be addressed as a priority.
- Social partners i.e. organizations of employers and workers are not always sufficiently involved in TVET systems. In countries with large informal economies, their representativity is also limited.

These concerns are underlined in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016–25) and in the new Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment, which is aligned with current global trends and defines a set of indicators for monitoring progress. The revised Strategy incorporates concrete recommendations to address the policy issues, challenges and shortfalls that often bedevil the implementation of many skills development initiatives and programmes on the continent. It critically explores the power of TVET to promote national development, social cohesion, political stability, poverty reduction and regional integration, and takes inspiration from recent regional and international initiatives to promote TVET and youth employment.

The Strategy is a framework and therefore non-prescriptive; to be meaningful, it has to fit into an individual country's socio-economic context.

Regions Targeted – Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

5.1 Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa – COMESA

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, a free-trade area with 19-members¹ established in 1994, has placed vocational education and training as one of its top priorities. This means that the Member States have to “strive to provide quality education through formal and non-formal distance learning and lifelong learning to meet the diverse needs of the individual”.

One key initiative is the COMESA Youth Programme. It has six strategic priorities with the sixth one focusing on TVET under the label: “Enhancing education and training for greater youth employability”. However, there seems to be a mismatch between the competences (skills and knowledge) of young people in the COMESA region and employer needs. Young people’s lack of work readiness and marketable competences makes the transition from school to work difficult. The failure of the public education and training system to respond to labour market demands clearly has negative consequences not only for the employability of young people but also on the productivity and competitiveness of local businesses, with some economic subsectors experiencing skills shortages.

In order to advance regional integration, the COMESA Virtual University of Regional Integration admitted its first students in September 2017. 22 universities from the Member States cooperate in this project currently hosted by the Kenyatta University of Kenya. The virtual university will train experts on regional integration through a digital platform. The project might serve as a pilot to develop common criteria in tertiary education, especially if the virtual platform actually develops into an actual university in the long run, as intended by COMESA. However, for now only one master programme, attended by a few pioneer students, is offered.

As in the rest of Africa, publicly funded TVET has been largely neglected in COMESA and is not well regarded. Most countries will have to reform their TVET system. Closer cooperation will be required between TVET institutions and the private sector, to better align demand and supply of skills in the labour market. Moving towards learning outcomes, and introducing national qualifications frameworks, has been on the reform agenda of several members states.

The main challenges COMESA is faced with are:

- Low levels of comparability of qualifications within the Region;
- Weak interregional coordination;
- Addressing youth employability by improving the quality and relevance of TVET.

¹ Burundi, the Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, the Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

5.2 Intergovernmental Authority on Development – IGAD

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is an eight-country² trade bloc, created in 1996. Challenged by rapid population growth rates (2.5-3 % per annum) and being located at the crossroads of Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, one of its many objectives is to facilitate the integration of migrants into the labour market, including the education and training system.

The Migration Action Plan 2015-20 serves as the basis for IGAD action on labour mobility and overall migration governance, aiming to strengthen labour migration governance and the collection of labour market data, conducting labour market surveys and skills assessments in the Region.

In a joint effort to ensure that every refugee, returnee and members of host communities have access to quality education, the Ministers of Education of the Region signed the Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education in IGAD Member States in December 2017³. Its aim is to ensure that every refugee, returnee and member of host communities has access to quality education. The signing partners commit to “Establish regional minimum education standards and targets on access and delivery of quality education for pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education including TVET and education for people with special needs [...]” The declaration also calls on Member States to recognise and validate the qualifications of refugees and returnees across all levels of education. The annexed action plan includes the development of a regional mechanism for recognition of formal qualifications obtained throughout the education systems of the Member States as well as the recognition of prior learning outcomes. A technical working group is tasked to develop suitable criteria, including quality assurance tools and mechanisms, until 2019.

At the same time, IGAD works, funded by the EU Trust Fund, on the establishment of the Regional Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, an effort that also aims to improve the transfer of skills and knowledge between borders, with the latest workshop on the topic held in February 2018. The ILO conducted a scoping study in 2017 on skills portability in IGAD with a number of recommendations on how to strengthen skills recognition in the region.⁴

The main challenges IGAD is faced with are:

- Developing adequate skills and competences and providing relevant training for its large and youthful population;
- Providing skills and livelihood opportunities for the large numbers of migrants and refugees in the region.

² Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.

³ <https://igad.int/attachments/article/1725/Djibouti%20Declaration%20on%20Refugee%20Education.pdf>

⁴ Keevy, J.; Paterson, A.; Boka, K. 2018. THE POTENTIAL OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION FOR REGULATED LABOUR MOBILITY IN THE IGAD REGION. A scoping study covering Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan, ILO, forthcoming.

5.3 East African Community – EAC

The East African Community is composed of six Member States.⁵ Founded in 1967, it already upheld the principle of learner and worker mobility, among other aspects of integration, during the initial period of its existence (1967–1977). Article 11 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Common Market, adopted in July 2010, highlights the urgent need to develop tools and systems to facilitate the mobility of learners and workers. This requires, inter alia, the establishment of a framework to enable the mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications across the region.⁶

In 2013 and 2014, the Inter-university council for East Africa (IUCEA) guided a regional consultative and participatory process that led to the development of the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE), which was approved by the EAC Council of Ministers on 30th April 2015. The policy frameworks spelt out in the EAQFHE document include a Qualifications Issuance Policy, a Qualifications Pathways Policy, a Qualifications Register Policy, a Policy on Qualifications Type Addition and Removal, Guidelines on Programme/Subject Benchmarking, Guidelines for Alignment of EAQFHE with International Qualifications Framework and a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy – all currently being discussed. The EAQFHE was developed with the goal to align the Member States' NQFs and includes 8 level descriptors.

The IUCEA has also developed a regional quality assurance policy framework for further harmonisation of the Community's quality assurance practices in tertiary education. In May 2017, the member states declared the EAC a Common Higher Education Area (EACHEA), naming the EAQFHE and the regional quality assurance system as two instruments used to achieve a harmonized system of higher education, in addition to a student mobility policy developed in 2015 and benchmarks for academic programmes. The Tanzania Commission for Universities introduced a process of Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) to facilitate access to tertiary education programmes for potential students who acquired skills and competences through non-formal and informal learning. In addition, the ILO supported the Vocational Education and Training Authority in Tanzania, to also introduce RPL for TVET. The TVET curricula have been reviewed and aligned with competence-based education and training principles.

⁵ Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan

⁶ We would like to thank Mr James O. Jowi, Principal Education Officer at the EAC, for the up-to-date information he provided to include in this report.

Between 2011 and 2016, the EAC Member States signed four Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for the professions of architects, accountants, engineers and veterinarians. However, not every member is part of every agreement. While the accountants' MRA is signed by all parties except for South Sudan, both Burundi and Tanzania have not signed the veterinarians' MRA. Tanzania also is not part of the architects' MRA and Burundi did not sign the engineers' MRA. South Sudan has not signed any of the agreements yet. The MRAs differ in design and content but share features like the automatic and mutual recognition of registered professionals. However, in practice the implementation and mobility of professionals between the countries has been very limited; most of the few cases of actual movement of these professionals have been from Kenya to the other Member States. In 2018, the EAC and ILO signed a Memorandum of Understanding, committing to cooperate in the implementation of the East African Decent Work Programme and to consultations in the fields of labour and employment, social dialogue and industrial sectors. The MoU also includes the commitment to cooperate and consult to harmonize employment policies, laws, and frameworks in the Member States, plus a manpower survey with the aim to facilitate labour mobility.

The main challenges EAC is faced with are:

- Mismatch between training delivery and the skills demanded by the labour market. In 2014, 47% of employers reported that lack of the right skills was a major reason they did not fill vacancies.⁷
- The large presence of the informal economy in the region affects the development of skills in line with planned economic development.
- Large numbers of privately owned training providers require strong quality assurance mechanisms and strict monitoring of compliance;
- The fact that Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda are also members of COMESA, and the United Republic of Tanzania also of the SADC, is a potential source of conflict in terms of non-harmonised interregional education and training policies.

5.4 Economic Community of Central African States – ECCAS

The Economic Community of Central African States⁸ was established on 18 October 1983 and began functioning in 1985, but was inactive for several years because of financial difficulties and conflict in the Great Lakes area. The priorities set out in the ECCAS Treaty include cooperation on human resource development, including the harmonization and recognition of education and training.

Improving tertiary education is considered a priority and essential to the Region's economic, social and cultural development, which is to be achieved through student and teacher mobility (ICMPD/IDEP/FIIAPP, n.d.).

The region's oil, mining, timber and services (trade, small business) sectors attract labour migrants. It might be assumed that Protocol VII to the ECCAS Treaty, on

7 IUCEA. 2014. Report from a Study Establishing the Status of Higher Education Qualifications Systems and their Contributions to Human Resources Development in East Africa (Arusha). Available at: https://www.iucea.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&download=127:iucea-study-report-on-status-of-higher-education-status-in-eac-2014&id=14:qa-policy-documents&Itemid=613

8 Members are: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Rwanda.

freedom of movement and rights of establishment of ECCAS nationals, would make it easy to fill vacancies. Unfortunately, despite the many decisions the Community has made in that respect, freedom of movement is hampered by conflicts and the Member States' resulting security concerns.

The region's oil, mining, timber and services (trade, small business) sectors attract labour migrants. It might be assumed that Protocol VII to the ECCAS Treaty, on freedom of movement and rights of establishment of ECCAS nationals, would make it easy to fill vacancies. Unfortunately, despite the many decisions the Community has made in that respect, freedom of movement is hampered by conflicts and the Member States' resulting security concerns.

The main challenges ECCAS is faced with are:

- The establishment of a common market of Central African States requires as a prerequisite the mobility of services and persons. This means that the lack of skills will have to be addressed by devising a shared methodology for the comparability of qualifications and providing support to the Member States for its implementation.
- The region's successful economic and social development requires, in addition to formal agreements, concrete steps towards facilitating the free movement of people.

5.5 Economic Community of West African States – ECOWAS

The aims of the Economic Community of West African States established in 1975⁹ are to promote cooperation and integration by establishing an economic union in West Africa.

Regarding mobility of workers, ECOWAS members enacted the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment in 1979. Yet while West Africa is among the regions with the highest number of migrants from within the region (around 3% of the regional population), the opportunities of the ECOWAS protocol and its Common Approach on Migration have still to be fully exploited.¹⁰

None of the region's French-speaking countries have adopted a national qualifications framework as yet, but each country has a scale of qualifications for TVET.

In addition, none of these countries have any quality assurance agencies that have been established, although there are certificate and diploma accreditation committees for qualifications issued outside the African and Malagasy Council for Tertiary Education (CAMES) network.

⁹ Members are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

¹⁰ Ladan, M. 2009. Freedom of movement and the protection of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, UNHCR, Mali.

On regional employment and labour programmes, the following has been achieved:

- The adoption of the ECOWAS Labour and Employment Policy and related strategic plan (2009);
- The adoption of the ECOWAS Youth Employment Action Plan (2012);
- The adoption of the ECOWAS Action Plan on Child Labour (2012);
- The establishment of the Steering Committee of the ECOWAS Youth Employment Action Plan (2013);
- The development of the Statutes and operational guidelines of the ECOWAS Youth Empowerment and Development Fund;
- The organisation of a round table of universities and the private sector in the region, with a view to the adoption and implementation of best private-sector labour market-oriented initiatives by the region's universities and tertiary institutions, ultimately in order to address the problem of employability and skills mismatch within the labour market. The round table led to the establishment of a regional platform enabling universities and the private sector to meet on regular basis for continued discussion and cooperation on initiatives providing an effective response to labour market needs.

Other critical activities and initiatives include:

- The promotion of youth employment through capacity building for young people and stakeholders on entrepreneurship and enterprise development through cooperatives;
- Training and capacity development for Member States on the development of national youth employment action plans;
- The organisation, with ECOWAS partners (e.g. the ILO, IOM, the EU) and as part of the Support for Free Movement and Migration in West Africa project, of capacity-building enabling public employment services to leverage the establishment of the job-matching tool *Accueil Emploi* developed by the ILO in collaboration with *Pôle Emploi* (the French public employment agency)
- Plans are being made to establish a harmonised labour market information system in the region to support skills mobility in the region, based on a viability study and a plan of action put in place for this purpose.

5.6 Arab Maghreb Union – AMU

The Arab Maghreb Union was established on 17 February 1989, when the relevant treaty was signed in Marrakech, Morocco, by the five Member States¹¹. Although this makes the AMU one of the oldest African economic communities, it has made very little progress, especially in the field of human resource development; possibly owing to political tensions between Algeria and Morocco.

Some countries are moving towards national qualifications frameworks that are partially inspired by the European Qualifications Framework. In Morocco, the structure of the national qualifications framework was validated in October 2012. In Tunisia, the national qualifications framework was approved in 2009. In both cases, it is not yet operational.

Tertiary education is steadily expanding in the region. The tertiary education system in Morocco is gradually being brought in line with the Bologna Process; but the country has not implemented a credit accumulation and transfer system yet. The recently established Agency for Quality Assurance in Morocco is operational

¹¹ Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia

and has a convincing vision regarding quality and quality assurance, even beyond the tertiary education system.

Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, France, Italy and Spain have participated in a regional project on qualifications (Qualifications for the Mediterranean) launched by the European Training Foundation in 2010. The project aimed at enhancing regional and Euro-Mediterranean partnerships on issues related to qualifications. To date, the project has produced common profiles and certificate supplements for occupations in the key sectors of construction and tourism based on EQF concepts. Despite these efforts, countries are not applying the common profiles and certificate supplements within national skills development systems.

5.7 South African Development Community – SADC

Established in 1992, the South African Development Community, which has 16 Member States¹², is committed to promoting regional integration and eradication of poverty in Southern Africa through economic development, and to ensuring peace and security.¹³

The SADC has focused on education since its inception and adopted the Protocol on Education and Training in 1997. Its ultimate objective is to achieve “the equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of the education and training systems in the Region”. Various technical bodies have been established to support the bodies supervising the different priorities set in the Protocol. One such is the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation

In 2001, the Technical Committee was requested by the Ministers of Education and Training to:

- Facilitate the development and implementation of national and regional qualifications frameworks in SADC Member States; and
- Review and strengthen national assessment and accreditation structures, systems and procedures.

All SADC Member States devote a substantial part of public spending to formal education. Despite this, they all have serious skills deficits, implying that education priorities need to be revisited and more resources need to be made available for vocational training of all kinds.

The SADC Summit of 29 April 2015 approved the new Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015–2063. The Strategy stresses the importance of skills development to economic progress. It calls on the Member States to facilitate the movement of factors of production – capital and skills – within the SADC region. It also stresses the necessity of a “skills audit at regional level” and “mutually agreed accreditations frameworks”.

¹² Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

¹³ We would like to thank Ms Lomthandazo Mavimbela, Senior Programme Officer for Education and Skills Development at SADC, for the up-to-date information she provided to include in this report.

In line with the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063, in April 2015 the SADC Secretariat issued a revised Strategic Development Plan 2015–2020. The Plan assessed the achievements of the past decade against the objectives set, which were:

- To facilitate implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on Education and Training, including by developing a regional qualifications framework; and
- To establish and strengthen centres of specialisation and excellence in the region.

The following results had been achieved in 2015:

- A number of SADC Member States had drawn up and were implementing a national qualifications framework. This had led to the development and approval of a draft regional qualifications framework containing 10 level descriptors, a qualifications portal, and quality assurance guidelines (see below);
- A common system had been developed and was periodically used by Member States to collect and report information and data on the current supply of education and training in the region;
- The SADC Labour Market Information System had been developed and was being implemented, providing labour market information, including employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to stakeholders, and facilitating access and effective planning and utilization of human and material resources in the labour market; and
- The SADC Decent Work Programme had been developed and was being implemented, to help Member States promote job creation, labour standards, social dialogue and social protection in the region.

The Strategy aims to achieve the following measurable results by 2020:

- A regional qualifications framework, improved and implemented by 2017; and
- A regional database or portal on supply and demand for education and training relative to labour requirements, developed and implemented by 2020.

The Regional Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) was developed by the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation and approved by SADC Ministers of Education and Training in 2011. The main purpose of the SADCQF is promoting mobility; it both provides a benchmark for member states developing and aligning their NQFs and works as a transposition device, using the 10 level descriptors to compare and recognize qualifications. Eight countries volunteered to pilot the alignment of their qualification frameworks or education and training systems (given that they do not have an NQF) to that of the SADCQF.¹⁴ An alignment plan and roadmap, as well as alignment timelines were developed to assist the eight pilot countries. To support the Recognition of Prior Learning, the SADC Secretariat has developed guidelines, providing commonly agreed elements to facilitate the implementation of RPL. Currently SADC is developing a recognition manual, set to be finished in September 2018, works on regional policies on verification and sets up verification agreements between SADC countries.

14 The pilot countries are Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia.

Until 2014, the SADC did not have a regional labour migration policy framework, despite intense intraregional labour migration. The Labour Migration Policy Framework was adopted by the Employment and Labour Sector of SADC, involving ministries of labour in July 2014. The Policy Framework is expected to help enhance the protection of migrant workers' rights and to facilitate their integration into domestic labour markets by identifying the workers and skills required and available and by harmonising and recognizing educational and training qualifications. In the current Labour Migration Action Plan (2016-2019), the SADC has laid out its plans and implementation progress on labour migration for regional integration and development in the SADC Region. It calls on the Member States to develop national labour migration policies by 2019.

In line with this, the SADC Youth Employment Promotion Policy Framework, drafted in 2016, addresses youth labour migration and mobility by calling for alignment to the SADC regional qualifications framework. It also encourages bilateral agreements where skill deficient countries can access abundant skills in other Member States.

The main challenges SADC is faced with are:

- The adoption of national qualifications frameworks by all Member States, and the need to receive adequate support from SADC on this.
- The portability of qualifications within the region and beyond has to be harmonised with the provisions of the Arusha/Addis Ababa Conventions, in particular by facilitating validation and recognition of qualifications.
- National assessment and accreditation systems need to be reviewed and strengthened.
- The SADC has identified the lack of capacity to implement the SADCQF as the main weakness of the framework and has called for appropriate financial resources.¹⁵
- A dedicated implementation unit needs to be created, or the Education and Skills Development Unit at the SADC Secretariat reinforced with dedicated staff for the Regional Qualifications Framework and appropriate financial resources made available.
- The fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe are also members of COMESA, and the United Republic of Tanzania of the EAC, is a potential source of conflict in terms of non-harmonised interregional education and training policies.

5.8 Community of Sahel-Saharan States – CEN-SAD

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States was established on 4 February 1998 in Tripoli. It became a regional economic community during the 36th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity, held in Lomé, Togo, in July 2000. The Community has partnership agreements with many regional and international organisations with the aim of promoting common action in the political, cultural, economic and social fields.

¹⁵ SADC 2017: Southern African Development Community Analytical Review of the Regional Qualifications Framework and its Level Descriptors.

CEN-SAD has the following objectives:

- The elimination of all obstacles impeding the unity of the Member States, through the adoption of measures guaranteeing the following: free movement of individuals and capital, in the interests of Member States' citizens; freedom of residence, work, ownership and economic activity; free movement of national goods, merchandise and services; encouragement of foreign trade by drawing up and implementing an investment policy for Member States; and
- Coordination of pedagogical and educational systems at the various educational levels and in the cultural, scientific and technical fields.

The region is characterised by political instability, conflicts and economic fragility. While the establishing Treaty of the CEN-SAD mentions free movement of people as a core objective, implementation of this objective has been weak. Progress on the issue in member countries is primarily attributed to overlapping memberships with ECOWAS.

Despite its slow progress, CEN-SAD could also make a valuable contribution to the achievement of Agenda 2063, especially since Morocco has just resumed its participation to the AU Commission.

6.1 General challenges and policy pointers for AU

Changing processes in education and training at country level is always a complex and time-consuming undertaking. The level of complexity increases exponentially when the changes are transnational in nature.

The first difficult step is the passage from agreement on principles to the transposition of obligations into the national legal framework of the countries concerned. This is clearly demonstrated by the Arusha Convention, which, 30 years on, has been ratified by a very limited number of States. Whereas, the agreement on Skills Recognition and the Protocol on Education and Training, approved in 2004 by the ECOWAS Heads of State has not yet been ratified. Language barriers, cultural differences and administrative practices constitute a second set of hurdles.

Another factor to be considered is each country's different political priorities. For many reasons, some countries do not include education among the priority areas (ADEA, 2014) to be addressed using their, sometimes, limited resources. The lack of reliable statistical data means that investment in education and training systems may be jeopardised due to lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation. For example it seems that EU countries that invested, on average, less than some African countries – 5.3 % of GDP in Europe in 2011¹ vs. Malawi: 7.7%; Mozambique: 6.6%; Democratic Republic of the Congo: 6.2%; South Africa: 6.0%; and Burundi: 5.4% – still have better results. The glaring lack of resources in some other African countries should be addressed (e.g. Central African Republic: 1.2%; Congo: 1.5%; Zimbabwe: 2.0%; Madagascar: 2.1%; Liberia and Sierra Leone: 2.8%²).

The institutional capacity of stakeholders is another element to be considered. It requires increased cooperation among Member States of regional economic communities and adequate support from the international donor community. Each country needs to build or enhance capacity in order to be assessed and included in the feasibility analysis of each measure of reform that is undertaken. Training initiatives have to be tailored to the identified needs of decision-makers, policy-implementing officers and technical operators. Consideration also has to be given to the involvement of practitioners and private players. Finally, many of the proposed reforms entail a great deal of changes, and all stakeholders have to be prepared to understand and accept these changes.

Tertiary education and TVET are also affected by financial constraints. Tertiary education in Africa is essentially funded out of State budgets. The amounts allocated to tertiary education (in 2012) correspond to a mere 0.78 % of the GDP, while close to 6 per cent of the GDP was allocated to the entire education sector. The same applies to TVET. The lack of adequate resources affects the quality of delivery (most of the funds are absorbed by fixed costs and salaries, with only little left for innovation and updating of training material). Given their strategic importance for the continent's development, these subsectors require

1 Eurostat figures, available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tsd-sc510&plugin=1>.

2 World Bank figures (Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP)), available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS>.

additional funding or strategic solutions involving the private sector and social partners.

Training possibilities can be expanded by allowing private initiatives in tertiary education and TVET. In that case, however, it is crucial to have appropriate quality standards that are applied to private universities and vocational centres through strict accreditation and certification procedures and content-related inspections. Alternatively, instead of controlling providers of learning activities, countries may want to evaluate how well owners of qualifications perform in the education and training system and/or in the labour market. This would mean longitudinal follow up microeconomic surveys – tracer studies – that are usually not carried out because of the cost, but tracer studies are a lot less costly than establishing heavy accreditation procedures; which are barely applied anyway. The debate is open – and it will probably occupy stakeholders for the years to come.

The social partners need to play a central role in the reform process. Employer and worker organisations can help, through proper dialogue mechanisms, to identify the occupational profiles needed in specific economic sectors, or e.g. create additional funds such as those established in Italy.

Other challenges observed include the following general weaknesses:

- There is a serious mismatch between what the education system delivers and the labour market demands. This is due, not only, to the absence of dialogue between the education and economic sectors, but also to the inability of training and education institutions to anticipate future labour market needs. Countries need to strengthen labour market information systems and build systems for regular skill needs anticipation. Yet this is not enough. Information needs to be made available and feed into a guidance system so that learners benefit from an improved knowledge of the competences that are or will be in need.
- Skills portability at continental and regional level appears very limited, and the role of regional and continental actors is certainly to promote it. Nevertheless, promoting labour mobility demands that the tools are in place for labour mobility to be effective, and useful for the stakeholders. This means shared knowledge about skills and competences in need, and mutual recognition of qualifications. At the moment, students, workers and employers are flying blind when it comes to mobility and skills and qualifications necessary to become mobile. Comparability does not exist, and trust even less.
- Concepts around qualifications frameworks and recognition of prior learning systems, the tolls for its implementation, and the necessary legal framework are not fully understood. Nevertheless, recognition of prior learning is absolutely necessary in Africa because there is a large pool of competent unqualified individuals. Recognition of prior learning is the most equitable and inclusive approach to delivering qualifications to competent people, including for migrants.

Addressing these challenges and developing human resources, as a strategic asset for the achievement of the AU Agenda 2063, requires that the following general issues be addressed:

- Coordinated action at various levels (continental, regional and national);
- High priority at national level to the enhancement of education and training systems and

- their response to current and future labour market needs; and
- Support from the international community for the development and implementation of Agenda 2063.

In greater details, this is an invitation for AU and African stakeholders to review some or all of the following guiding principles:

- Tertiary education and TVET require diversified approaches but a comprehensive reference frame, transition pathways, and comparability;
- Activities have to be designed at different levels of organisation (continental, regional and national), they have to serve local needs but should also be harmonised through work at the international level;
- Given the differing situations of AU Member States, implementation should be gradual, with some starting immediately and others following suit when the conditions are right;
- Continental resources have to be mobilised and used;
- International organisations' expertise also has to be mobilised and used;
- Social partnership has to be encouraged;
- Proper governance has to be developed (governance and other capacities of implementing bodies have to be reviewed and, whenever possible, existing bodies or committees should be used in order to avoid creating new ones);
- Financing of education and training should be reviewed, and this may not mean spending more money but it definitely means using money in a different more effective way (e.g. for monitoring and evaluation); and
- The use of qualifications for lifelong learning and the labour market should be enhanced (e.g. recruitments, mobility, access to decent jobs).

All this demands first and foremost political will for reform. Second, it requires coordination between key actors, their empowerment and proper equipment with concepts and policy tools. This may also involve the ratification of international agreements such as the Addis Ababa Convention, still pending in some instances. It heralds a major step towards skills portability across Africa. The participating Member States would need to ratify the Convention as soon as possible and establish bodies and procedures in compliance with the Agreement. It falls to the AU Commission to monitor developments and encourage the Member States to take the necessary steps.

6.2 Further discussion regarding key initial issues/steps

6.2.1 The African Continental Qualifications Framework

In order to achieve the AU vision of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”, tools will have to be created that serve this purpose. Qualifications frameworks represent one possible tool. Yet before embarking on this ambitious and complex endeavour, an in-depth discussion needs to be launched about the costs, the benefits, and the feasibility of an African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) to support skills portability on the continent. The continental expert group on TVET can serve as a pool of expertise to facilitate this discussion. Whatever the outcome of this discussion, decisions taken should be the result of a consensus among AU Member States, and the final decisions should remain with the political level.

6.2.2 National Qualifications Framework

As mentioned on several occasions, continent-wide portability of skills and competences can be facilitated by increasing the use of qualifications in recruitments. However, the adoption of a national qualifications framework in each of the participating countries is neither a necessary condition nor a sufficient condition for successfully establishing an African Continental Qualifications Framework. It is true that establishing an international qualifications framework does not require that national qualifications frameworks exist in each of the participating countries.

However, as discussed above, there are arguments that support the establishment of national qualifications framework first in order to serve domestic needs – provided national stakeholders consider that a national qualifications framework is a useful tool in the first place. The referencing process that links any national qualifications framework to existing international qualifications framework is normally a second step, when labour mobility is a clearly stated objective. In between the establishment of a national qualifications framework and the referencing process, there is the establishment of the international qualifications framework, and experience suggests it may prove simpler and faster if country delegates already have some experience of qualifications frameworks, through the establishment of their domestic one. Qualifications frameworks are complex concepts, and national experience will clearly help in international discussions. At the current stage, this discussion would be dominated by the handful of countries that have already adopted a national qualifications framework.

6.2.3 Adequate number of Layers of qualifications frameworks

A trickier question is whether Africa – taking a long-term perspective – should establish national, regional and continental qualifications frameworks. This is obviously for the political level to address it. The technical hunch would be to transitorily maintain the three layers and to tend toward a situation where finally only the national and continental frameworks remain.

Regional qualifications frameworks could indeed be useful in the transitory phase to facilitate the elaboration of the African Continental Qualifications Framework. The number of stakeholders could be for instance reduced to the regional authorities for the initial pooling of ideas.

The current challenge is that, in practice, very few countries and Regional Economic Communities have already established a qualifications framework that would be operational.

6.2.4 National catalogue/repertory of qualifications

If a national qualifications framework is established in the first place, it should be accompanied by a National Catalogue of Qualifications. The framework may be described in a succinct way and could be a relatively fast endeavour. It may use qualifications levels, qualifications descriptors and qualifications providers; whereas the Catalogue – or Repertory – takes a long time to establish because it involves discussion with social partners, and usually a re-design of occupational standards and training programs, shifting to outcome-based training approaches and methodologies. A National Catalogue of Qualifications contains all qualifications currently awarded in the countries. It may mean several thousands of qualifications, and this may take several years to elaborate, and needs to be maintained on a permanent basis.

Another issue refers to quality and quality assurance. Decision makers may want to address the issue early enough and decide on the scope of their quality assurance system. The most comprehensive approach consists of a systematic review of educational programmes and institutions to ensure that acceptable standards of education, teachers and trainers, programmes and infrastructure are being maintained. Key elements are:

- The identification and description of quality indicators;
- The establishment and publication of minimum standards and benchmarks;
- The self- and external assessment of compliance with the minimum standards;
- Institutional and human capacity building;
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; and
- The establishment of a management information system.

6.2.5 Quality assurance

Quality assurance is often the task of a specific authority. For tertiary education, many African countries have established independent quality assurance boards³ and there is clearly experience to learn from. For TVET, TVET agencies, accreditation boards or qualification authorities usually play this role. However, the question for decision makers is whether a comprehensive quality assurance process is necessary, given the complexity of the matter and the existence of other priorities. In the context of skills portability, however, quality assurance plays an important role in strengthening trust between countries in the respective system of the other country, hence facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications.

In countries with qualifications frameworks, it may be more rational to focus on quality assurance of the skills assessment process rather than the education and training process itself. Indeed, while quality assurance for tertiary education in Africa is developing fast and consistently, including at regional and continental level, it remains an issue in TVET systems. Initially quality assurance guidelines could focus on the assessment process. The main issue is that any quality assurance procedures in the field of TVET will require that employers be involved in the assessment of individuals' competences. This has proven a systematic issue since, as said on several occasions herein, the world of education and the world of work do not easily cooperate; despite clear common interest.

³ Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

6.2.6 Recognition of Prior Learning outcomes – RPL

Systems for the recognition of prior learning outcomes focus on assessments and therefore naturally have stronger quality assurance mechanisms in place (Werquin, 2012c). As described above, this approach has many merits and it can be a companion to qualifications frameworks since both systems are based on learning outcomes, and are meant to provide equity and transparency regarding competences. However, a challenge that countries are faced with in practice is the existence of a critical mass of applicants in order to organise assessment and validation of prior learning outcomes. The issue indeed is that such processes may prove costly, depending on the assessment method, the level of qualification aspired and the assessment material required. Ideally, applicants would be organised by sector, as some of the assessors have to be professionals of the sector. The issue of the critical mass is cost, obviously, because staff has to be trained – assessors typically – and the assessment process organised. But there is also the issue of establishing a sustainable system, and that presupposes that there is a somewhat large number of potential applicants. In the early days of the implementation of a system for recognising prior learning outcomes, it is advisable to target only some sectors of the economy and the corresponding most frequent qualifications; as a sort of real size pilot.

6.2.7 Skills anticipation

Knowledge about skills needs in the labour market is an essential means of preventing future mismatches between labour supply and demand and supporting decision-makers in developing and adjusting human resource policies. Anticipating labour market requirements and skills needs is becoming a top priority for the AU Commission. The Debre Zeit Expert's Workshop (26-28 April 2016) concluded that skills forecasting was most appropriate at the level of regional economic communities and Member States.

6.2.8 Establishing a Regional Labour Exchange system

Regional labour market integration can be facilitated by creating an electronic system for publishing the occupations in demand in each Member State. This could be one of the operational systems of the Regional Labour Exchange. The system will work only if workers from one Member State are free to apply for jobs in other Member States. In other words, it should be designed along the lines of the European Employment Services Network

6.2.9 Institutional arrangements

In order to strengthen skills portability and undertake the measures discussed in this report, the AU, the RECs, member states, and in particular social partners at national, regional and continental level will require capacity-building and enhancing their existing capacity through targeted training and coaching.

The actions suggested at continental, regional and national level require consistent political coordination by the AU Commission and the regional economic communities, but also by a technical body able to provide advice and support to the relevant stakeholders. The AU Commission, together with its partners in the JLMP, could undertake a feasibility study on the creation of a technical agency on education and training. If this proves difficult to do, another option might be for the AU Commission to set up a group of visiting experts within its Education Department, to provide short-term advice and support to regional economic communities and Member States.

6.3 Ways forward

6.3.1 Ways forward regarding the ACQF

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should develop a digital portal for data collection, processing and dissemination on labour market needs, existing occupations, qualifications and skills needs, existing procedures for validation of learning outcomes and recognition of corresponding qualifications.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should establish a community of practice to serve as a knowledge and experience sharing platform, including through a Continental Dialogue Platform on TVET.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should develop a communication and advocacy strategy for skills development on the continent, for fostering employability.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should establish a community of practice on qualifications, and the use of qualifications in relation to labour market needs and labour mobility, to serve as a knowledge- and experience-sharing platform.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should develop an appropriate tool for monitoring and evaluation of learning programmes.

6.3.2 Ways forward regarding labour mobility in the AU

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should develop a digital portal for data collection, processing and dissemination on labour market needs, existing occupations, qualifications and skills needs, existing procedures for validation of learning outcomes and recognition of corresponding qualifications.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should establish a community of practice to serve as a knowledge and experience sharing platform, including through a Continental Dialogue Platform on TVET.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should develop a communication and advocacy strategy for skills development on the continent, for fostering employability.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should establish a community of practice on qualifications, and the use of qualifications in relation to labour market needs and labour mobility, to serve as a knowledge- and experience-sharing platform.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should develop an appropriate tool for monitoring and evaluation of learning programmes.

6.3.3 Accreditation and quality assurance principles

The AU Commission should finalise the establishment of a pan-African quality assurance, especially for assessment procedures; for all learning settings (formal or not, tertiary education and TVET). For this purpose, the AU Commission should set up a technical working group composed of experts from TVET quality assurance agencies that already exist in African countries, supported by other national or international practitioners. The working group will also develop guidelines for a coherent accreditation system.

The AU Commission, working with regional economic communities, should strengthen and harness regional and continental centres for excellence for promotion of good practices and quality benchmarks in TVET. In countries that want to enhance the quality of their education and training systems, the relevant Ministry should establish an ad hoc working group tasked with designing the quality assurance system, taking on board models and criteria established by the pan-African framework and the regional agency, as the case may be. Where a quality assurance agency for tertiary education already exists, the new agency should focus on TVET.

6.3.4 Recognition of Prior Learning for tertiary education and TVET

The AU Commission will establish a working group made up of representatives of the regional economic communities tasked with preparing RPL guidelines that can be used across the continent by the countries wanting to include RPL in their education systems. The working group can draw on SADC and Malawi guidelines, that the ILO facilitated. The stakeholders (Ministries of Education, Labour, Finance and the Economy, other interested ministries, national employment agency, employers' organisations and trade unions) have to be involved in the process of system design and approval.

Given the important role of employment service providers for migrants to provide information and job search services, skills upgrading, advice on protecting their rights, and referrals to other public or private institutions dealing with their needs, including recognition of their skills through RPL, the AU Commission, should provide guidelines for employment service providers to strengthen the coherence between skills development, employment and migration policies and practice.

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Attitude	Attitude can be defined as a "learned tendency to act in a consistent way to a particular object or situation" (Fishbein). Attitudes have affective, cognitive and behavioural intention components. A competent person must have the capacity to sense and recognise a situation, the tendency to act in a controlled and predictable manner and an ability to be consistent in acting in a manner relevant to the situation and expectations. (Examples of attitudes as components of competences are: Pro-active; Motivation; Commitment; Initiative; Entrepreneurship; Attention; Learning Carefulness; Responsible; Quality oriented Service; Client oriented)
Certification	The process of formally attesting that competences acquired by an individual have been assessed and validated by a competent body against a set of predefined standards. The certification process results in the issue of a certification (e.g. certificate, degree, diploma or title depending on the context). Certification is therefore the process as well as the outcomes of this process.
Competence	A cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organisation) to act effectively in a job or situation.
Educational standards	Educational standards define the competences learners should possess at critical points in their educational career (e.g. at the time they leave school).
Evaluation of learning outcomes	Evaluation permits the critical question to be asked and answered: have the goals and objectives of a learning process or experience been met? It assesses individual achievement to satisfy external requirements, such as occupational standards in the case of recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.
Informal learning	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Knowledge	Knowing and understanding of facts, data, and theories that are relevant and/or pre-conditional for occupational and professional activities.
Learning outcomes	The set competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process.
Level descriptors	A statement, using learning outcomes, that describes learning achievement at a particular level of a qualifications framework and that provides a broad indication of the types of learning that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.
Non-formal learning	Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support).
Occupational standards	Occupational standards identify and group tasks associated with a particular occupation and describe the competences that a worker must demonstrate to be considered competent in that occupation. Following the logic of employment, these standards will focus on what people need to do, how they will do it, and how well they do it. They have to be written as competences and formulated in terms of outcomes.
Qualification	The term qualification covers different aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. In most instances, a qualification confers official recognition of the value of learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. A qualification may be a legal entitlement to practice a trade. • The competences (job requirements) required to perform the specific tasks attached to a particular work position (ILO).
Qualifications framework	The hierarchical classification of the levels of formal learning programmes and their associated qualifications and certificates
Recognition of learning outcomes	It is the process of granting official status to competences through the award of qualifications; or through the grant of credits, exemptions or waivers.
Referencing of qualifications framework	A process that results in the establishment of a relationship between the levels of two qualifications frameworks, generally a national and an international one.
Validation of Learning outcomes	The confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined standards and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard.

ANNEX 2

EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK: LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS



DEFINITION

Set of principles which are necessary to ensure accountability and the improvement of tertiary education and vocational education and training in the European Union.

ANNEX 3

COMMON PRINCIPLES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EU COUNTRIES

1

Quality assurance policies and procedures should underpin all levels of the European Qualifications Framework

2

Quality assurance should be an integral part of the internal management of education and training institutions

3

Quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programmes or their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies

4

External monitoring bodies or agencies carrying out quality assurance should be subject to regular review

5

Quality assurance should include context, input, process and output dimensions, while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes

6

Quality assurance systems should include the following elements

7

Clear and measurable objectives and standards, guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement

8

Appropriate resources

9

Consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review

10

Feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement

11

Widely accessible evaluation results

12

Quality assurance initiatives at international, national and regional level should be coordinated in order to ensure overview, coherence, synergy and system-wide analysis

13

Quality assurance should be a cooperative process across education and training levels and systems, involving all relevant stakeholders, within Member States and across the Community

14

Quality assurance orientations at Community level may provide reference points for evaluations and peer learning

ANNEX 4

MAURITIUS NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

NQF	Primary and Secondary Education	Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Tertiary Education
Level 10			Doctorate degree
Level 9			Master's degree Postgraduate certificate Postgraduate diploma
Level 8			Bachelor honours degree Conversion programmes
Level 7			Bachelor ordinary degree
Level 6		Diploma	Diploma
Level 5	Higher School Certificate (HSC) CEC A Level Baccalauréat IB Diploma	Certificate	Certificate
Level 4			
Level 3	School Certificate (SC) CEC O Level		
Level 2			
Level 1	Certificate of Primary Education		

Level 1

The level at which CPE is registered

Enables learners to demonstrate basic operational knowledge, master readily available knowledge, be able to use known solutions to familiar problems, display/generate some new ideas

Level 2

The level at which National Certificates at level 2 are registered

Enables learners to demonstrate a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills

Enables learners to carry out processes that are limited in range, are repetitive and familiar, are applied within closely defined contexts, and require close supervision

Level 3

The level at which National Certificates at level 3 are registered

Enables learners to demonstrate basic operational knowledge, master readily available knowledge, be able to use known solutions to familiar problems, display/generate some new ideas

Enables learners to carry out processes that are established and familiar, are moderate in range, and are applied in a range of familiar contexts requiring supervision

Level 7

The level at which Bachelors Degree (Ordinary Degree) is registered

Enables learners to demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, including an understanding of some advanced aspect(s) of their area(s) of study, ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context, knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s), and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study, and an understanding of the limits of that knowledge and how this influences analysis and interpretation based on that knowledge.

Enables learners to carry out processes that use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solution to problems arising from that analysis, effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline with confidence, undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new competencies that enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations, and would have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making in complex contexts.

Level 6

The level at which National Diplomas at level 6 are registered

Enables learners to demonstrate specialised in-depth knowledge in their area(s) of study, have command of analysis, diagnosis, planning and evaluation across a broad range of technical and/or management functions, be able to formulate appropriate responses to resolve problems, communicate in a variety of forms and with structured and coherent arguments, the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and identify the broader principles, issues and impacts, display qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and in contexts where they are contributing to decision-making processes.

Enables learners to carry out processes that require a command of a wide range of highly specialised technical and/or management, and/or conceptual or creative skills and involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures are applied in highly variable and non-routine contexts.

Level 5

The level at which National Certificates at level 5 are registered

Enables learners to demonstrate broad knowledge base with substantial depth in area(s) of study, have command of analytical interpretation of a range of data, be able to determine appropriate methods and procedures to respond to a range of problems, communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments

Enables learners to carry out processes that require a wide-range of technical and/or management skills, involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures, often in non-standard combinations, are employed in highly variable routine and non-routine contexts

Level 4

The level at which National Certificates at level 4 are registered

Enables learners to demonstrate a broad knowledge base incorporating some technical concepts, have command of analytical interpretation of information, express informed judgement, and be able to display a range of known responses to familiar problems

Enables learners to carry out processes that require a wide range of technical skills, are applied in a variety of familiar and non-familiar contexts with the need for some or no supervision, demand occupation competence over a range of routine and non-routine tasks, and require the need for little or no supervision

Level 8

The level at which Bachelors degrees with honours, often referred to as honours degrees are registered. Also at this level are conversion programmes based largely on undergraduate material.

Enables learners to demonstrate a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of a coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which are at or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline, an ability to deploy accurately established analytical techniques and enquire within their discipline, an ability to devise and sustain arguments and/or to solve problems using ideas or techniques some of which will be at the forefront of a discipline and to describe, and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent scholarship in the discipline, an appreciation of the uncertain, ambiguous and limits of knowledge, the ability to manage their own learning and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g., refereed research articles and/or original materials) appropriate to the discipline).

Enables learners to carry out processes that apply the methods, techniques and (where applicable) modes of practice that they have learned & reviewed to consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge & understanding so as to initiate and carry out projects, consider abstract data, concepts and/or raw materials and frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution or identify a range of solution to a problem, communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions in a variety of formats appropriate to both specialists and non-specialist audiences, and would have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility for decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts, and the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Level 9

The level at which Masters degrees, e.g. MA, MSc, and MPhil are registered. Also at this level are advanced programmes, such as postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas.

However, differentiation between Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas is made on the basis of the lesser number of credits obtained and no practical understanding of techniques of research for the latter qualifications.

Enables learners to demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights at the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice, a comprehensive understanding of relevant techniques applicable to the professional practice, independent understanding of applications of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established disciplines of research are enquired into, and the ability to extend knowledge, discipline, conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically current, assess and defend their own and others' research, and to evaluate critically methodologies and where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Enables learners to carry out processes that deal with complex issues, both systematically and creatively, make sound judgement in the absence of complex data, and communicate these conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences; demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level, the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision making in complex and unpredictable situations and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Level 10

The level at which Doctorates are registered

Enables learners to demonstrate a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of a coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which are at or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline, an ability to deploy accurately established analytical techniques and enquire within their discipline, an ability to devise and sustain arguments and/or to solve problems using ideas or techniques some of which will be at the forefront of a discipline and to describe, and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent scholarship in the discipline, an appreciation of the uncertain, ambiguous and limits of knowledge, the ability to manage their own learning and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g., refereed research articles and/or original materials) appropriate to the discipline).

Enables learners to carry out processes that apply the methods, techniques and (where applicable) modes of practice that they have learned & reviewed to consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge & understanding so as to initiate and carry out projects, consider abstract data, concepts and/or raw materials and frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution or identify a range of solution to a problem, communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions in a variety of formats appropriate to both specialists and non-specialist audiences, and would have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility for decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts, and the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

The SADC Regional Qualifications framework has ten levels described by a set of level descriptors

ANNEX 5

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – SADCQF

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
1	Makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship	Conducts original research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards. Demonstrates problem solving ability and critical evaluation of research findings for academic discussion	Makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study through research and scholarship
2	Demonstrates mastery of theoretically sophisticated subject matter, showing critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline area	Conducts original research deploying appropriate research methods and processes primary and secondary source information using rigorous intellectual analysis and independent thinking and applies knowledge in new situations; and demonstrates independent thinking, problem solving, critical evaluation of research findings and ability to make judgements based on knowledge and evidence.	Shows independence, initiative and originality and the ability to manage own and group outcomes in complex and unpredictable situations
3	Demonstrates critical understanding of the principles, theories, methodologies, current research and literature of the discipline	Demonstrates capacity to use a coherent and critical understanding of the principles, theories and methodologies of a particular discipline. Selects and applies appropriate research methods and techniques, and critical analysis and independent evaluation of information	Operates within the context of a strategic plan with complete accountability for management of resources and supervision of others
4	Demonstrates knowledge of a major discipline with possible areas of specialisation, including command of the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of the recognised discipline	Demonstrates intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytical rigor, and advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable contexts	Designs and manages processes and works with broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and group outcomes
5	Demonstrate specialist knowledge in more than one area and ability to collate, analyse and synthesise a wide range of technical information	Demonstrate ability to apply specialist knowledge and skills in highly variable contexts and formulate responses to concrete and abstract problems	Manages processes and works with complete accountability for personal and group outcomes
6	Demonstrate a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas, ability to analyse information and construct a coherent argument	Applies a wide range of technical and/or scholastic skills in variable contexts using standard and non-standard procedures, often in combination	Works independently under broad guidance and can take some responsibility for supervising the work of others and group outcomes
7	Demonstrates a broad knowledge base, incorporating some abstract and technical concepts, and ability to analyse information and make informed judgements	Applies a moderate range of technical and/or scholastic skills which are transferable in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, using routine and non-routine procedures	Shows ability for self-direction, requiring little supervision, and complete responsibility for own outcomes and some responsibility for group outcomes
8	Demonstrates basic operational and theoretical knowledge and ability to interpret information	Demonstrates a range of well-developed skills and ability to apply known solutions to familiar problems	Works under general supervision with some responsibility for quality and quantity of output
9	Demonstrates recall and a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills	Can carry out processes that are limited in range, repetitive and familiar	Applied in directed activity under close supervision
10	Demonstrates basic general knowledge and numeracy and literacy for everyday purposes	Can follow simple instructions and perform actions required to carry out simple concrete tasks requiring no special skills	Works under close supervision in familiar situations and structured contexts