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African Continental Qualifications Framework ACQF MAPPING STUDY

Regional Report Working Paper

East African Community

SIFA Skills for Youth Employability Programme

Author: Maria Overeem
Reviewer: Andrea Bateman and Eduarda Castel-Branco
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The reports of this Mapping Study collection are:

- **Reports on countries' qualifications frameworks:** Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Togo
- **Reports on qualifications frameworks of Regional Economic Communities:** East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Authors of the reports:

- Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF): reports Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Morocco, Mozambique
- James Keevy (JET Education Services): report Ethiopia
- Jean Adotevi (JET Education Services): reports Senegal, Togo and ECOWAS
- Lee Sutherland (JET Education Services): report Egypt
- Lomthie Mavimbela (JET Education Services): report SADC
- Maria Overeem (JET Education Services): report Kenya and EAC
- Raymond Matlala (JET Education Services): report South Africa
- Teboho Makhoabenyane (JET Education Services): report South Africa
- Tolika Sibiyi (JET Education Services): report South Africa
- Zaahedah Vally (JET Education Services): report South Africa

Reviewers of the reports: Andrea Bateman and Eduarda Castel-Branco

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Contents

Acronyms.....	5
Introduction on the ACQF Mapping Study.....	6
1. Snapshot of regional qualifications framework development in the EAC.....	8
2. Introduction and context of the East African Community (EAC)	9
3. Mapping of education and training system	11
4. Scope and structure of the RQF	12
4.1 Scope.....	13
4.2 RQF levels.....	14
4.3 Level descriptors	15
4.4 Use of Learning Outcomes.....	16
4.5 Definition of ‘qualifications’.....	16
4.6 Development of qualifications.....	16
4.7 Other instruments.....	17
3.7.1 NQF levels and EAQFHE levels - overview	17
5. Legislation.....	17
5.1 Legal acts directly applying to the RQF and its implementation	17
5.2 Relation with other related legal acts/ regulations	17
6. Organising systems: governance, institutions, stakeholders	18
6.1 Governance, roles, functions – policy, coordination, implementation, monitoring	18
7. Quality assurance of qualifications	18
7.1 Legal base of the QA framework	18
7.2 Scope of the QA framework.....	18
7.3 QA bodies and regulators in RQF implementation.....	19
7.4 Participation in international bodies	19
8. Regional Qualifications Framework implementation	19
8.1 Inclusion of qualifications in register	20
8.2 Funding.....	20
8.3 Monitoring, evaluation and development.....	20
9. Validation of prior learning, non-formal and informal learning	20
9.1 Relation of RPL and RQF	20
10. Recognition of foreign qualifications.....	21
11. Interrelationships with other countries and regions.....	21
12. Implications for the ACQF mapping study.....	21
13. Conclusions and future plans	22
14. References/sources	23
15. Interviews conducted	24

Acronyms

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CUE	Commission for University Education
EAC	East African Community
EAQFHE	East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HAQAA	Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
HE	Higher Education
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IUCEA	Inter-University Council of East Africa
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
PEACCM	Protocol on the East African Community Common Market
QA	Quality Assurance
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Introduction on the ACQF Mapping Study

Policy context of this mapping study

This country report forms an integral part of the *Mapping Study on the state-of-play and dynamics of qualifications frameworks in Africa*, which lays the updated evidence foundation for development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). The purpose of this report is to provide an updated overview - not an evaluation - of policies, practices and instruments related with the regional qualifications framework in the East Africa Community.

The African Union Commission (AUC) initiated the ACQF development process in September 2019 working in partnership with the European Union (EU), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) over a period of 2.5 years (2019-2022). The ACQF-development activities are part of the African Union (AU)-EU project “Skills for Youth Employability”, which supports a holistic process building on evidence and analysis; AUC political leadership and consultation of African stakeholders (national, regional and continental); awareness raising and capacity development of African stakeholders.

The main planned output of the project by mid-2022 is the ACQF policy and technical document and action plan technically validated for decision making by the relevant organs of the AU.

The intermediate project outputs planned for 2019-2022 are:

- ACQF Mapping study (by mid-2020)
- ACQF Feasibility study (by mid-2021)

Other key activities:

- Stakeholder consultation workshops throughout the process (2019-2022)
- Awareness raising and capacity development actions (2020-2022)
- Website to support ACQF development and information sharing
- ACQF related policy and technical information for STC-EST meetings

ACQF Mapping Study: brief overview of the scope and methodology

The ACQF mapping study aims to chart a comprehensive, specific and updated analysis of where Africa stands in respect to qualifications frameworks development, establishment, operationalisation and revision. The scope of the study is wide in terms of explored thematic domains; and inclusive, as it considers the broad range of countries’ dynamics and progression stages in developing and establishing qualifications frameworks.

The mapping study builds on a combination of sources of information and data:

- a) Desk research: collection and analysis of sources, including policy-legislative framework; methodology sources; qualifications websites, registers and catalogues; statistical data; analyses and studies.
- b) Online survey: conducted between beginning of November 2019 and mid-January 2020; a second round was conducted in May 2020. Responses were received from 33 countries.
- c) Technical visits to a group of ten countries and three Regional Economic Communities (RECs): carried out by a team of experts, in the period from mid-December 2019 to mid-March 2020.

Countries included in the technical visits: Angola, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Togo and South Africa. Cabo Verde was included in March 2020, but due to the Coronavirus Pandemic the research did not include a country visit, and was based on online meetings, a presentation of the NQF and extensive desk research. Three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) contacted: EAC, ECOWAS and SADC.

Main reports of the mapping study

- Final comprehensive report, encompassing the full set of findings from the continental stocktaking and the thematic analyses on qualifications frameworks developments in Africa. Finalisation: September 2020.
- Synthetic report and infographics focused on key findings. Period: September 2020.

Thematic analyses contributing to the comprehensive mapping study

- Report of continental-wide survey on developments of qualifications frameworks encompassing all AU Member States (AU MS) and RECs
- Report of analysis of qualifications
- Country reports (11 countries) and REC reports (3 RECs)

Acknowledgements

This study of the East African regional qualifications framework has been based on literature study and on the generous input of Dr James Otieno Jowi, Principal Education Officer, East African Community (EAC). The implementing body of the regional framework, IUCEA, had difficulties to respond to the invitation of the AUC to contribute to this mapping report.

1. Snapshot of regional qualifications framework development in the EAC

The first regional qualifications framework (RQF) to be developed by the East African Community is the **East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)**. This framework was developed in 2015 by the IUCEA, with funding from Swedish SIDA. Its stated purpose is that ‘the EAQFHE provides the set of policies, objectives and information central to the organisation, management, implementation and monitoring arrangements for the qualifications framework. In addition to the EAQFHE, it has been noted that from 2020 the EAC has embarked on a process of developing a TVET qualifications framework, with assistance from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank. Plans are also underway for the development of a teacher education qualifications framework for the region (Jowi, 2020).

The EAQFHE, as its name suggests, is a framework for qualifications in the higher education sector. The Higher Education Qualification Descriptors relate to programmes and not modules or course units. RQF levels. The EAQFHE is an 8-level framework, with **level descriptors** for all levels. It is based on a **credit system** based on notional hours whereby 1 credit is 10 notional hours. One year of study is equal 40 credits, or 400 notional hours, which seems little, for example in comparison to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), where 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent. Credit transfer in the EAQFHE is time bound. However, learners on non-formal and informal programmes may have their cases considered on a case by case basis.

All qualifications listed on the EAQFHE contain **outcome statements** which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate. The outcome statement is designed to be used by prospective employers and other tertiary education organisations, and for comparing qualifications. The EAQFHE also refers to UNESCO frameworks and the Arusha Convention on the recognition of qualifications in higher education in Africa.

The following **legal instruments** provide the legal framework for the EAQFHE (Kerre, undated):

- Treaty Establishing the EAC;
- Protocol on the East African Community Common Market (PEACCM)
- IUCEA Act;
- National higher education policy and legislation of each partner state;
- EAC Legislation for EAQFHE.

The overall mandate over the EAQFHE rests with the **IUCEA**, which is the custodian and governing body, delegated by the EAC. Monitoring of the framework according to a monitoring framework is being done by the IUCEA, to be reported to EAC. The monitoring system uses a scorecard, which covers a number of actions that the EAC is undertaking and which are shared with representatives of the partner states of the East African Community.

Quality assurance of qualifications in East Africa is done at different levels: at institutional level (universities, institutes of higher learning) and at national level through quality assurance authorities (Jowi, 2020). For example, for Kenya the Commission for University Education (CUE) is responsible for quality assurance and regulation of the higher education sector. Quality assurance institutions and policies exist in the EAC member states. For coordination and harmonisation of policies and practices, the IUCEA works closely with these institutions. Other levels of education, such as TVET, have different policies, mechanisms and institutional settings for quality assurance and regulation of the sector.

The IUCEA intended to keep a **register of qualifications**. Otherwise qualifications are registered at the national level and may be passed on from their register. Qualifications are registered at the national levels by the relevant bodies, i.e national qualifications authorities, quality assurance institutions and others organs.

2. Introduction and context of the East African Community (EAC)

The East African Community (EAC) is, besides IGAD and COMESA with whom it has overlapping membership and roles, the regional economic organisation for eastern Africa. It was formed in 1967 and has its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. Its members are Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The treaty for the establishment of the East African Community was signed on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by the original three Partner States – Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Burundi acceded to the Treaty on 18 June 2007 and became full members of the Community with effect from 1 July 2007. The Republic of South Sudan joined the EAC in April 2016. The accord established the East African Community whereby all participating nations agreed to establish more cooperative commercial and political relations for their cumulative 133 million citizens. Currently the total population of the EAC member states is around 177 million people. (EAC, 2020)

The Mission of the EAC is to widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration, in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments. The governance of the EAC is structured into seven main organs:

- The Summit;
- The Council of Ministers;
- The Coordinating Committee;
- Sectoral committees;
- The East African Court of Justice;
- The East African Legislative Assembly; and

- The Secretariat.







The Council of Ministers is the central decision-making body and governing organisation.

According to the [Africa Regional Integration Index Report 2019](#), EAC is relatively well integrated, with an overall score of 0.537. It performs most strongly on the free movement of people dimension, where its countries average 0.664, but at 0.660 macro-economic integration is not far behind.

The combined GDP of the EAC in 2019 was USD 193.7 billion (EAC, 2020). The economies of the EAC countries are largely agriculture-based, and the informal sector dominates in terms of employment. The strongest economy is Kenya, which also has the biggest education sector, with Uganda and Rwanda following.

The current urban population of the East African Community stands at about 20%. Its literacy levels are as follows (Wikipedia, 2020).

Table 1: EAC: population and literacy

No.	Country	Population (2020)	Literacy (%)
1.	 Burundi	11 530 580	67.2
2.	 Kenya	53 771 296	87.4
3.	 Rwanda	12 952 218	71.1
4.	 South Sudan	12 042 910	27
5.	 Tanzania	59 734 218	67.8
6.	 Uganda	45 741 007	73.2
	East African Community	195 772 229	68.35

Source: Wikipedia, 2020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_African_Community

In promoting Kiswahili, the EAC encourages its use as the regional common language for a variety of reasons: a) widely understood, b) ethnically neutral, c) relatively small learning curve needed for mastery, d) related to other Bantu languages in syntax structure and vocabulary, e) Pan-African appeal, and f) akin to a resource language. Having at least 120 million speakers, it is not only spoken extensively in the EAC countries and Congo but also with increasing significance in parts of the Horn

of Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands (i.e. Mauritius, Seychelles, and Comoros Islands) (Katembo, 2008).

3. Mapping of education and training system

Education, training and science and technology have a pivotal role in enabling the EAC to attain its vision and mission and to facilitate the operationalisation of the EAC Common Market Protocol, in addition to other key aspects of the development agenda. In recognition of this, in Article 102 (Education and Training) and 103 (Science and Technology) of the Treaty Establishing the East African Community (EAC Treaty), the EAC partner states commit to undertake concerted measures to foster cooperation in education and training, science and technology in the community. Such cooperation includes coordination of human resource development; cooperation in industrial training; development of common programmes, harmonisation of curricula, examinations, certification and accreditation of training institutions and facilitation of mobility of students and teachers. In pursuit of these commitments, several undertakings and achievements have been recorded and have impacted significantly on developments in education and human resource development in the region.

Beginning in 2008, the EAC Secretariat and the Partner States undertook a process of harmonisation of their education curricula, examination structures and frameworks, certification and accreditation of education systems and training curricula. This led to the development of harmonisation strategies for the seven different cycles (pre-primary, primary, secondary, teacher education, TVET, adult, continuing and non-formal education, and special needs education). The harmonisation process also included the development of structures and frameworks for examination and certification for the different levels. Using these structures and frameworks, by 2018 the partner states had aligned their curricula to the approved, harmonised EAC curricula and framework.

Following the harmonisation of the higher education level, in 2017 the EAC Heads of State declared the EAC region a Common Higher Education Area. In addition, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has developed and operationalised the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) for further implementation of the Common Higher Education Area. The IUCEA has also introduced scholarship programmes to facilitate mobility of students in the EAC. A mobility programme for academic staff in the EAC has also been set up and facilitates the exchange of academic staff amongst the universities in the EAC partner states. The EAC Secretariat and the IUCEA have identified and operationalised regional centres of excellence for capacity building and research in prioritised strategic fields in which capacity deficits had been identified. These centres of excellence further facilitate the mobility of students and staff in the EAC.

To facilitate the regional integration process and especially the free movement of human resources, the EAC partner states have identified the harmonisation of the education curricula, standards, assessment and evaluation of education programmes as a priority issue (EAC, 2020). In the EAC Secretariat, education matters are coordinated by the Education Department, headed by a Principal Education Officer (Jowi, 2020). The policy and coordination of activities and programmes at the higher education level is under the purview of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), based in Kampala, Uganda.

The education sectors of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were, after independence, based on the British model, but have undergone major transformations since. In addition to the governments of the

respective partner states, religious organisations and development partners have played a major role in education provision in most of the East African countries. The education system of South Sudan has suffered greatly due to years of civil strife. It has been, to a large extent, provided as part of relief in refugee camps.

In Kenya and in Rwanda technical and vocational education and training have been declared a policy priority by their governments.

The coming into force of the *EAC Common Market Protocol* in July 2010 prompted the urgent need to develop tools and systems for the operationalisation of Article 11 of the *Protocol* in order to facilitate easy mobility of learners and labour. The Regional Qualifications Framework for Higher Education was developed as a consequence of these agreements (EAQFHE, 2020).

4. Scope and structure of the RQF

The first regional qualifications framework (RQF) to be developed by the East African Community is the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE).



This framework was developed in 2015 by the IUCEA, with funding from Swedish SIDA.

The EAQFHE 'relates the EAC partner state national qualifications systems to a common EAC reference framework'. It also claims to be an 'independent reference point' aiming 'to develop trust between the different stakeholders' in the region (Kerre, undated).

Its stated purpose is that 'the EAQFHE provides the set of policies, objectives and information central to the organisation, management, implementation and monitoring arrangements for the qualifications framework. The EAQFHE:

- Provides important points of reference for setting and assessing academic standards for higher education providers;
- Assists in the identification of potential progression routes, particularly in the context of life-long learning; and
- Promotes a shared and common understanding of the expectations associated with typical qualifications by facilitating a consistent use of qualification titles across the higher education sector within the region' (EAQFHE, 2015:11).

The EAQFHE is aimed at:

- Ensuring the description of higher education qualifications based on learning outcomes attainable through successful completion of an educational and training regimen and certified by an award issued by a higher education/professional institution;
- Enabling individuals and employers to better understand and compare the qualification levels of education and training systems among the EAC partner states and in other countries;
- Enhancing international recognition of qualifications obtained in the partner states both for studies and employability;
- Enabling employers to better understand the education process and the expected skills and competences of job applicants;
- Enabling learners to choose education programmes according to their interests and needs and to understand requirements in each study area, and therefore being able to plan their learning more successfully; and
- Providing wider possibilities to life-long learning and for recognition of prior learning' (EAQFHE, 2015:11).

In addition to the EAQFHE, it has been noted that from 2020 the EAC has embarked on a process of developing a TVET qualifications framework, with assistance from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank. Plans are also underway for the development of a teacher education qualifications framework for the region (Jowi, 2020).

Assessing the contribution of the EAQFHE in education and training and qualifications systems in the region will require specific data and analysis, and the EAC is aware of the relevance of monitoring and evaluation of this policy instrument. Analysing the impact or contribution of the EAQFHE in the region and for its member countries in terms of referencing, mutual recognition and quality of education and training qualifications can also contribute to enhance regional cooperation and integration.

In the framework of this mapping study, it can be affirmed that the EAQFHE has become an important guide and reference for the higher education sector, as well as for the process of developing qualification frameworks for other levels of qualifications frameworks, and the EAQFHE is considered an important tool for implementation of the regional Common Higher Education Area.

4.1 Scope

As regards stated scope,

the EAQFHE, applies to all types of education, modes of delivery, training and qualifications from basic to higher education, professional and vocational institutions, obtained through formal, and/ or non-formal, and/ or informal learning. The EAQFHE is central to education reforms currently being undertaken in the Community. The Framework does not distinguish between any profiles or orientations of qualifications, as such distinctions shall be made in the national qualifications frameworks. Given that the partner states have different titles for qualifications obtained in professionally or academically oriented higher education programmes, this distinction is illustrated in the EAQFHE. This means that in addition to distinguishing between the levels of programmes, the EAQFHE also specifies their orientation (EAC, 2015:11).

The EAQFHE, as its name suggests, is a framework for qualifications in the higher education sector. In the process of developing this framework, it was seen as helpful to develop a full qualifications framework, since a framework for higher education only would be ‘hanging’ (Jowi, 2020).

The Higher Education Qualification Descriptors relate to programmes and not modules or course units. For qualifications, the framework of analysis of the EAQFHE contains the following descriptors:

- Development of Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific);
- Cognitive / Intellectual Skills;
- Key Transferable Skills;
- Practical Skills; and
- Volume of Learning (Kerre, undated).

4.2 RQF levels

The EAQFHE is an 8-level qualifications framework, with level descriptors for all levels. The framework It is based on a credit system based on notional hours whereby 1 credit is 10 notional hours. One year of study is equal 40 credits, or 400 notional hours, which seems little, for example in comparison to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), where 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent.

Credit transfer in the EAQFHE is time bound. However, learners on non-formal and informal programmes may have their cases considered on a case by case basis.

Figure 1: EAQFHE - levels, qualifications and minimum credits required

MINIMUM CREDITS FOR GRADUATION

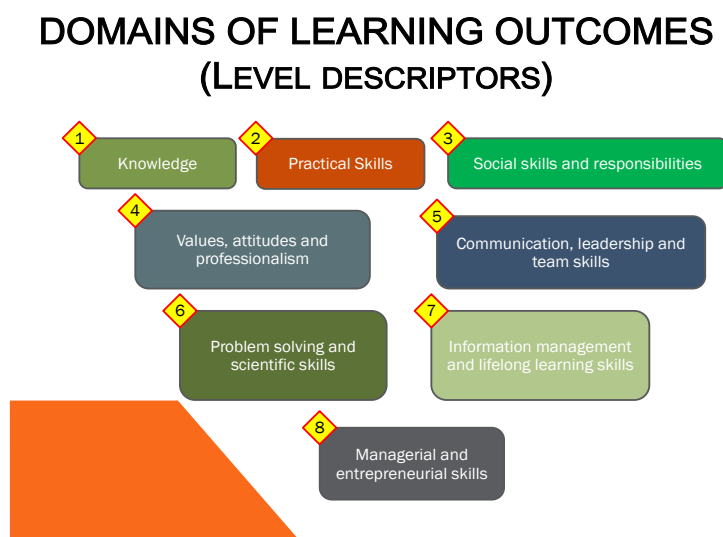
Qualifications Type	Minimum Credits Required for Graduation	EAQFHE Level	Qualification Types
Doctorate Degree	540	8	Postgraduate
Master's Degree	180	7	
Postgraduate Diploma	120		
Post graduate Certificate	60		
Bachelor degree	360	6	Undergraduate
Advanced Diploma	300		
Graduate Diploma	240		
Graduate Certificate	120		
Diploma	240	5	Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary Education and Training
Certificate	120	4	
		3	Lower Secondary School
		2	Upper Primary
		1	Lower Primary

Source: IUCEA (2020), Presentation at ACQF launch workshop 2-3 September 2019 in Addis Ababa.

4.3 Level descriptors

The conceptual technical design of the EAQFHE includes a refined approach to level descriptors.

Figure 2: EAQFHE domains of learning outcomes



Source: IUCEA (2020), Presentation at ACQF launch workshop 2-3 September 2020.

Their definition resulted from the comparison of sets of level descriptors used in EAC member states. These are listed below (Kerre, undated).

- SET I 1. Knowledge 2. Practical skills 3. Social skills and responsibilities 4. Values, attitudes and professionalism 5. Communication, leadership and team skills 6. Problem solving and scientific skills 7. Information management and lifelong learning skills and 8. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills.
- SET II 1. Scope of knowledge 2. Knowledge literacy 3. Method and procedure 4. Problem solving 5. Ethics and professional practice 6. Accessing, processing and managing information 7. Producing and communicating of information 8. Context and systems 9. Management of learning 10. Accountability.
- SET III 1. Complexity 2. Autonomy 3. Responsibility 4. Adaptability 5. Knowledge and 6. Know-how and behaviour.
- SET IV 1. Knowledge and understanding 2. Practice (applied knowledge and understanding) 3. Generic cognitive skills 4. Communication ICT and numeracy skills 5. Autonomy accountability and working with others.
- SET V 1. Work with information 2. Reflection 3. Ability to learn 4. Business communication 5. Responsibility 6. Motivation 7. Setting up goals 8. Independence 9. Ability to teach 10. Breadth of views.
- SET VI 1. Knowledge and understanding 2. Applied knowledge and understanding 3. Generic cognitive skills 4. Autonomy, accountability and working with others 5. Dynamism and adoptability 6. Non-routine and operational responsibility 7. Routine operations

- SET VII 1. Knowledge, creativity and leadership 2. High level management responsibility 3. Management training 4. Independent operative, supervisory responsibility 5. Requiring support 6. Functional workplace
- SET VIII: IUCEA 1. Knowledge at the most advanced frontiers of a discipline 2. Specialised problem-solving skills 3. Originality and creativity 4. Generic cognitive and analytical skills 5. Adequate problem-solving skills evidenced by ability to identify relevant issues, concepts, principles and theories 6. Society conscious 7. Leadership and supervisory abilities 8. Subject proficiency.

4.4 Use of Learning Outcomes

The EAQFHE is based on learning outcomes and is learner-centred.

All qualifications listed on the EAQFHE contain outcome statements which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate. The outcome statement is designed to be used by prospective employers and other tertiary education organisations, and for comparing qualifications.

Different learners will achieve the outcomes in different ways, so outcome statements indicate the minimum achievement expected from a qualification. Each outcome statement includes information on:

- Graduate profiles that identify the expected learning outcomes of a qualification. This is captured in notions of what a learner will know and understand and be able to do when they achieve the qualification.
- Education pathways that identify other qualifications that a graduate could enrol into after completing this qualification. Where qualifications are standalone, and do not prepare graduates for further study, the outcome statement should make this clear.
- Employment pathways or contributions to the community that identify the areas in which a graduate may be qualified to work, or the contribution they may make to their community (EAC, 2015).

4.5 Definition of ‘qualifications’

The EAQFHE uses the following definition of a qualification: ‘A qualification recognises the achievement of a set of learning outcomes for a particular purpose through formal certification’ (EAC, 2015).

4.6 Development of qualifications

All qualifications listed on the EAQFHE:

- Are subject to quality assurance as outlined in the quality assurance guidelines;
- Have the qualification title and details publicly available;
- Are defined by a qualification type and level;
- Are allocated a credit value;
- Have a subject area classification; and
- Shall have a status to indicate whether the qualification is current, expiring or discontinued (Kerre, undated).

4.7 Other instruments

The other main instruments the EAQFHE is working with are:

- The Regional Quality Assurance System (IUCEA, 2019)
- Credit system
- The national qualification frameworks
- The Addis Convention on the recognition of qualifications in higher education.

3.7.1 NQF levels and EAQFHE levels - overview

	EAQFHE	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda
PhD Degree	8	?	10	7	10	?
Doctoral Degree	7	?	9	6	9	?
Master's Degree	6		8	5	8	
Post Graduate Diploma						
Post Graduate Certificate						
Bachelor Degree Graduate Diploma	5		7	4	7	5
Graduate Certificate						
Diploma Certificate	4		6	3	6	4
	3		5	2	5	3
			4		4	
	2		3	1	3	2
			2		2	
	1		1		1	1

Source: Kerre, undated.

5. Legislation

5.1 Legal acts directly applying to the RQF and its implementation

No legislation appears to apply directly to the establishment of this RQF.

5.2 Relation with other related legal acts/ regulations

The following legal instruments were said to provide the legal framework for the EAQFHE (Kerre, undated):

- Treaty Establishing the EAC;
- Protocol on the East African Community Common Market (PEACCM)
- IUCEA Act;
- National higher education policy and legislation of each partner state;
- EAC Legislation for EAQF.

The EAQFHE refers to Article 102 of the Treaty of the EAC, which has four pillars of integration, one of which is Common Market Protocol. Article 102 of the Treaty is mainly on the commitment to cooperate in education and training, thus the basis for harmonisation and development of these

regional frameworks. It does address the Common Market Protocol, but not quite all other pillars of integration.

Article 11 of the Treaty states that mobility of professionals within the East African community needs to be facilitated (EAC, 1999). To facilitate the mobility of professionals in the EAC, the EAC states undertook to sign a Mutual Recognition Agreement between Competent Authorities regulating the different professions. By 2019 Mutual Recognition Agreements had been signed for Accountants, Architects, Engineers and Veterinarians. Negotiations of MRAs for Land Surveyors and the Advocates of East Africa have been concluded and are waiting for signature. A study on effectiveness of MRAs has since been undertaken. Sensitisation meetings for the MRA for Pharmacists were set to begin. The negotiations for Pharmacists commenced in 2017 and are on-going.

6. Organising systems: governance, institutions, stakeholders

6.1 Governance, roles, functions – policy, coordination, implementation, monitoring

The overall mandate over implementation of the EAQFHE rests with the IUCEA, which is the custodian and governing body, delegated by the EAC. Monitoring of the framework according to a monitoring framework is being done by the IUCEA, to be reported to EAC.

The key stakeholders of the EAQFHE are the higher education bodies in the member states, and the respective Ministries of Education.

7. Quality assurance of qualifications

7.1 Legal base of the QA framework

Quality assurance of qualifications in East Africa is done at different levels: at institutional level (universities, institutes of higher learning) and at national level through quality assurance authorities (Jowi, 2020). For example, for Kenya the Commission for University Education (CUE) is responsible for quality assurance and regulation of the higher education sector. Quality assurance institutions operate in the other member states. For coordination and harmonisation of policies and practices, the IUCEA works closely with these agencies. Other levels of education such as TVET have different quality assurance policies and mechanisms.

Although the EAQFHE does not have a specific mandate regarding Quality Assurance, it is closely associated with the Regional Quality Assurance System (IUCEA, 2020), developed to promote comparability of education systems, enhance quality education and maintain international standards that would render the system competitive regionally and internationally.

7.2 Scope of the QA framework

As an independent reference point the EAQFHE will need to stipulate quality assurance requirements regarding how qualifications are designed and how they are awarded (assessment, validation and recognition) supporting the credibility of qualifications in the framework. This does not mean that the

EAQFHE prescribes specific quality assurance processes (this may be regulated elsewhere in the national systems) but that all qualifications in the IUCEA network shall be quality assured (EAC, 2015).

7.3 QA bodies and regulators in RQF implementation

IUCEA is responsible to conduct the processes and policies to quality assure the EAQFHE.

7.4 Participation in international bodies

IUCEA participates in a number of relevant international projects, notably the HAQAA project (Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation).

8. Regional Qualifications Framework implementation

According to the EAQFHE document, the IUCEA shall bring together representatives from national authorities and other stakeholders to constitute the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Committee, whose functions shall be to:

- Lay the foundation for the establishment and operation of a sustainable EAC Qualifications management system;
- Continue to create and build confidence in qualifications that contribute to national and regional development obtained by recognising qualifications and competencies obtained through formal, informal and prior learning at national and across borders;
- Develop a structure to support pathways that provide access to qualifications that contribute to skills and competence development and life-long learning;
- Align with international qualifications to enhance national and international mobility of graduates and workers; and
- Strengthen national regulatory and quality assurance systems for education and training to ensure they are ready.’ (EAC, 2015)

It was intended that this RQF would be enforced by:

- EAQFHE Advisory Committee;
- EAQ Authority, to be established by legislation, which would fulfil the following mandate:

To oversee the development of the EAQFHE by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications;

To oversee the implementation of the EAQFHE by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions to bodies referred to above, as well as the registration of national standards and qualifications on the framework. It must also take steps to ensure that provisions for accreditations are complied with and where appropriate, that registered standards and qualifications are internationally comparable.

The following supporting instruments were foreseen for the implementation of the EAQFHE (Kerre, undated and IUCEA 2020):

- Qualifications Issuance Policy
- Qualifications Pathways
- Qualifications Register and Policy
- Addition and Removal to the Qualifications (to/from the EAC Register for Accredited/Recognised programmes and institutions)
- Guidelines for Alignment of EAQFHE with National Qualifications Framework(s) and beyond the region
- Academic Programme Benchmarking
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Whether the above implementation bodies and policies have been implemented could not be established during this mapping study. The IUCEA website lists the East African Qualifications Framework Programme as one of its programmes, but no further information is given. (IUCEA, 2020).

8.1 Inclusion of qualifications in register

The IUCEA intended to keep a register of qualifications.

Qualifications are registered at the national levels by the relevant bodies, e.g. the national qualifications authorities, by quality assurance institutions and others.

8.2 Funding

Initial funding to develop the RQF was from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). More information on funding for the operationalisation of the EAQFHE was not shared at the moment of writing this report.

8.3 Monitoring, evaluation and development

Monitoring of the framework according to a monitoring framework is done by IUCEA, to be reported to EAC. The monitoring system uses a scorecard, which covers a number of actions that the EAC is undertaking and which are shared with representatives of the EAC states.

9. Validation of prior learning, non-formal and informal learning

9.1 Relation of RPL and RQF

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) may in some East African countries be done at national levels, implemented by national authorities. The IUCEA may, in the context of the RQF, advocates for RPL at national level (Jowi, 2020).

10. Recognition of foreign qualifications

Recognition of foreign qualifications is done at national level. Mutual recognition of qualifications is done by bringing the regulators together, which is where IUCEA may play a role (Jowi, 2020).

11. Interrelationships with other countries and regions

Relationships between the EAC and the EAQFHE and other regions have not been well developed. There have been no deliberate efforts to work together with other regions on the continent and beyond, which may be an area in need of improvement. The African Union and its initiative to work on the continental qualifications framework (ACQF) could be helpful in this respect (Jowi, 2020).

12. Implications for the ACQF mapping study

The EAC is aware of the development of the ACQF and has been participating in meetings in this regard. The EAC believes there is a need for the ACQF, as a means of harmonising strategies for education on the continent. Standards and frameworks can be harmonised for benefits to be shared.

The interview with Dr James Jowi indicated that the main benefit of an ACQF would be that the continental space will be opened, for more access to education. Other benefits will be the monitoring of the student mobility within the continent, and a growing capacity on the continent to receive students from across the continent. Another aspect is that there will be common standards, which will improve the quality of education. Deficits in one institution can be overcome with the help of other institutions, and by benchmarking, whereby the continental level could provide the links (Jowi, 2020).

Dr Jowi also indicated that the benefits to be accrued to the EAC as a regional body from the development and implementation of the ACQF will be as follows (JOWI, 2020):

- Within the EAC and elsewhere there is currently cooperation with European partners on quality systems. It will be beneficial to bring all systems together, working within one framework.
- The East African region can take advantage of services and professionals moving in the context of a continental free trade area. This cannot develop without including education into the continental integration.
- The EAC lacks resources; in the continental context resources can be shared, rather than developing initiatives in parallel, in particular where capacity is deficient.

Additional observations by Dr Jowi are that different countries and regions of Africa are at different levels of progress in development of their qualification frameworks. He noted that there is little awareness within the higher education institutions themselves of what a qualification framework is, or its purpose. He noted that it might have been preferable to focus on the regional level first, so that each region develops and experiences the workings of its qualifications framework before bringing them together into a continental framework.

Dr Jowi also noted that there are several ongoing continental initiatives, and better coordination and information is necessary for all practitioners and stakeholders at national and regional levels.

13. Conclusions and future plans

The East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education has developed the necessary documents to cover higher education in detail, and the lower levels of qualifications in general terms. In regard to its implementation it seems to have become a guide and reference document, informing further work on regional qualifications frameworks.

In addition to the EAQFHE, the EAC partner states also rely on their own national frameworks (in as far as these are in place) and interact with each other on various aspects of equivalencies, recognition of qualifications and education.

The plans at the East African regional level are (Jowi, 2020):

- To implement the Higher Education qualifications framework
- To develop a TVET qualifications framework and a qualifications framework for teacher education.

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