## 

MAPPING STUDY

Towards an African Continental Qualifications Framework

KENYA REPORT

Draft Version 2

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Another part of this report was taken from the Draft Mapping National Qualification Frameworks of IGAD Member States, paper prepared for the UNESCO Regional Office Eastern Africa on the Development of the IGAD Education Qualification Framework by Kilemi Mwiria, November 2019.

# Introduction and context to Kenya and the KNQA

* 1. **General information**

The Republic of Kenya (in [Swahili](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swahili_language): *Jamhuri ya Kenya*), is a country on the east-coast of [Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa), with a population of around 50 million people. Kenya has a young population, with 73% of residents aged below 30 years. Kenya has known rapid [population growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_growth); from 2.9 million to close to 50 million inhabitants over the last century.

Kenya is a [presidential](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_system) [representative democratic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representative_democracy) republic. The president is both the [head of state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_state) and [head of government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_government), and of a [multi-party system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-party_system). [Executive power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_power) is exercised by the government. [Legislative power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legislative_power) is vested in both the government and the [National Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Kenya) and the [Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_of_Kenya). The [Judiciary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judiciary) is independent of the executive and the legislature. The country has 47 semi-autonomous [counties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counties_of_Kenya) governed by elected [governors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor).

Kenya's capital and largest city is [Nairobi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nairobi) while its oldest city and first capital is the coastal port city of [Mombasa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mombasa). [Kisumu City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kisumu) is the third largest city and also an inland port on Lake Victoria. Other important urban centres include [Nakuru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakuru) and [Eldoret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eldoret).

The official languages are English and Swahili. The latter is the [main](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206&q=languages+of+kenya+main&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXv6nR6bDnAhXB2aQKHQwHDj0Q6BMoADApegQIERAJ&sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206) language, [with regional](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206&q=languages+of+kenya+regional&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXv6nR6bDnAhXB2aQKHQwHDj0Q6BMoADAqegQIERAM&sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206) languages being [Kikuyu](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206&q=Kikuyu&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLUz9U3MDEyLC9fxMrmnZldWlkKAKgoGhIWAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXv6nR6bDnAhXB2aQKHQwHDj0QmxMoATAqegQIERAN&sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206), [Luhya](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206&q=Luhya&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3MMqoKLeoWMTK6lOaUZkIAJlV-CoWAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXv6nR6bDnAhXB2aQKHQwHDj0QmxMoAjAqegQIERAO&sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206), [Luo](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206&q=Luo&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLUz9U3MDWrKjNbxMrsU5oPAG5OE_kTAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXv6nR6bDnAhXB2aQKHQwHDj0QmxMoAzAqegQIERAP&sxsrf=ACYBGNShGftJT9J35F8bweMeb2UV42csBA:1580576321206).

Kenya has over the past year been undergoing a process to introduce a nation-wide biometric ID scheme. This Huduma Namba ID will in future be needed to access public services, including school admission, certification etc. Sensitive information, such as contact details, fingerprints and a person's profession, was collected during 2019. The introduction of the controversial scheme was halted by Kenya's High Court early 2020 until new data protection laws are enacted.

Kenya has met some [Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)](http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/http:/www.worldbank.org/mdgs/) targets, including reduced child mortality, near universal primary school enrolment, and narrowed gender gaps in education. Interventions and increased spending on health and education are paying dividends. While the healthcare system has faced challenges recently, devolved health care and free maternal health care at all public health facilities will improve health care outcomes and develop a more equitable health care system. In 2019, the fertility rate for Kenya was 3.42 children per woman falling gradually from 8.08 children per woman in 1970.

* 1. **Economy**

Kenya is a lower-middle-income economy. [Kenya's economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Kenya) is the largest in eastern and central Africa, with [Nairobi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nairobi) serving as a major regional commercial hub. While economic activity faltered following the 2008 global economic recession, growth resumed in the last five years reaching 5.7% in 2019 placing Kenya as one of the fastest growing economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The recent economic expansion has been boosted by a stable macroeconomic environment, positive investor confidence and a resilient services sector. Agriculture is the largest sector; tea and coffee are traditional cash crops, while fresh flowers are a fast-growing export. The [service industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_industry) is also a major economic driver, particularly tourism. Higher education and [telecommunications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecommunications_in_Kenya) are other well performing sectors. Telecommunication and financial activity over the last decade now comprise 62% of GDP. 22% of GDP still comes from the unreliable agricultural sector, which employs 75% of the labour force. Half of Kenyans live below the poverty level. A small portion of the population relies on food aid. Industry and manufacturing are the smallest sectors, accounting for around 16% of GDP. The service, industry and manufacturing sectors only employ 25% of the labour force but contribute 75% of GDP. Kenya also exports textiles worth over $400million under AGOA.

The country has an extensive network of paved and unpaved roads. Kenya's railway system links the nation's ports and major cities, connecting it with neighbouring Uganda. There are 15 airports which have paved runways.

Shortfalls of electricity occur periodically, when drought reduces water flow. To become energy sufficient, Kenya installs [wind power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_power_in_Kenya) and [solar power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renewable_energy_in_Kenya#Solar_power), and aims to build a nuclear power plant by 2027. In 2013, the government launched a National Climate Change Action Plan, having acknowledged that omitting climate as a key development issue in the 2007 Vision 2030 was an oversight.

Kenya has a high degree of corruption according to [Transparency International](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transparency_International)'s [Corruption Perception Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption_Perception_Index) (CPI), a metric which attempts to gauge the prevalence of public sector corruption in various countries.

Kenya is a member of the [East African Community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_African_Community) (EAC) trade bloc, headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania. Kenya’s other regional economic association is with IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, an eight-country [trade bloc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_bloc) including governments from the [Horn of Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horn_of_Africa), [Nile Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nile_Valley) and the [African Great Lakes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Great_Lakes) with its headquarters in Djibouti City.

**1.3 Informal sector**

Jua Kali is the name given to Kenya’s informal sector. In Kenya, this sector makes up the majority of all enterprises, with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics estimating that, as of 2014, the informal sector represents 82.7 percent of employment. Kenya’s informal sector is large and dynamic - 95 percent of the country’s businesses and entrepreneurs are found here. According to the 2015 Economic Survey, the total number of persons enrolled in both formal and informal sectors increased from 13.5 million in 2013 to 14.3 million in 2014, and of the 799,700 new jobs, 700,000 were created by the informal sector. Men account for a majority of employment in the informal sector of Kenya and more than two-thirds of informal sector jobs are in trade, restaurants, and hotels. Other common sectors are furniture making, other forms of manufacturing as well as services sector.

Employment in the informal sector is associated with significantly lower levels of poverty than those experienced in farming. Improving the productivity of informal enterprises is essential for employment, income growth, and poverty reduction in the region. Education levels drive differences in the use of banking, the pay /income of the informal sector workers, the business losses experienced, the use of financial instruments, profitability.

**1.4 In- and outbound labour and students**

The Kenyan Interior Cabinet Secretary said in May 2018, as a new registration system of foreign workers was introduced, that there were more than 100,000 foreign workers in Kenya, way more than the 34,000 foreigners registered with the Foreign Ministry.

[Trace Kenya, a Mombasa-based counter-trafficking NGO](http://www.tracekenya.org/) estimated that a few years ago there are at least 120,000 Kenyans working in the Middle East, roughly one-third of whom had been trafficked. Women often worked as domestic workers in the Gulf states, while men may worked as security officers or in construction. Th Government of Kenya has since put restrictions on recruitment for the Gulf States.[[1]](#footnote-1)[[2]](#footnote-2)

Data from the Commission for University Education (CUE) indicate that out of 4,730 international students reported, 66.38 per cent (3,137) male and 33.62 (1,593) female. In May 2019 the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) wrote to all universities in the country seeking their approval in order to facilitate admission of foreign students with a target of 30,000.

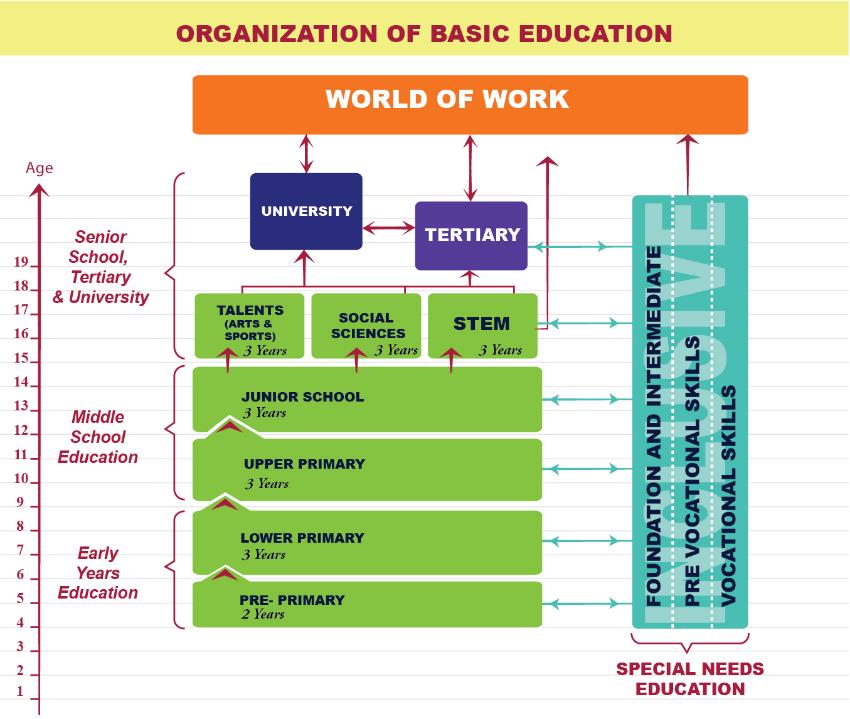
The number of outbound Kenyan students has declined over the past several years. UNESCO estimates there were just over 12,000 Kenyan students abroad in 2013, down from nearly 15,000 the year prior. More than half of these outbound students destined for US, UK, and Australia in 2013. Media reports have it that tens of thousands more Kenyan students are enrolled in nearby countries, notably Tanzania and Uganda, the latter which has long been seen as an education hub in the area, while reports from 2014 indicate that the number of Kenyan students [in Uganda](http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Kenya-student-numbers-drop-in-Ugandan-universities/-/688334/2231020/-/110x30e/-/index.html) has also begun to decline.

# Mapping of education and training system

**2.1 The Structure of Kenya’s Education System**

Figure 1 and Table 1 summarize the structure of the Kenya education system and certificates awarded respectively.

Figure 1: The Structure of Kenya’s Education System



Source: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

***Certificates/ Qualifications:*** Curriculum is delivered under a 2:6:6:3 education structure representing 2 years of pre-primary; 6 of primary education (3 in lower primary and 3 in upper primary); 6 of secondary education (3 lower secondary, and 3 upper secondary); and, 3 years of tertiary education and training.

*Pre-primary:* Learning at the pre-primary cycle is for 3-4-year-olds and focuses on the basics in language, mathematics, and environment, psychomotor, creative and religious activities.

*Lower Primary*: The next level is lower primary starting in grade 1 at an average age of 6 years. The focus of learning activities here are literacy, Kiswahili/ (Kenya sign Language for deaf learners), English language, indigenous language, mathematics, environment, hygiene and nutrition, religious education and movement and creative activities. Also, at this stage, ICT and appropriate contemporary issues are mainstreamed in all learning activities for enhancing learner’s appreciation of the world around them.

*Upper Primary:* At upper primary level, learners are exposed to a broad curriculum and given the opportunity to explore and experiment.

*Compulsory Subjects*: Compulsory subjects here are English, Kiswahili/(Kenya sign language for the deaf), home science, agriculture, science and technology, mathematics, religious education, creative arts, physical and health education and social studies. Learners at this level can do an optional foreign language from among Arabic, French, German and Mandarin languages. Contemporary issues and life skills are mainstreamed in all subjects and a pastoral program is conducted once a week.

*Competency Based Curriculum (CBC).*Kenya is currently implementing a CBC syllabus in line with recent reforms of Kenya’s education and training sector (Republic of Kenya, 2019a). The new curriculum is thus holistic and incorporates all forms of training from early childhood to vocational training. Unlike the previous system, this new curriculum is competency based and devalues memorization of facts and the mere passing of examinations. Instead, it encourages early identification and nurturing of talents in academic, vocational/technical and other individual learners’ abilities, including sports, drama, music; and, the imparting of positive values and attitude to promote responsible citizenship, appreciation of other cultures, sustainable development, global citizenship, among others. Learners are encouraged to innovate and explore their full potential in whatever they are best at. The three learning pathways at the senior secondary school level will be supported by an assessment system that is about the total learning process and content, and which emphasizes continuous assessment as opposed to end of school cycle examinations, and which promotes a teaching of skills that match the demands of industry. Learners can move within and across the training system and can accumulate credit gained in any given training programme or employment. Also important is the use of ICT and integration of science and innovation, practical skills all along the education and training system. STEM subjects are an exclusive category of knowledge that students can choose from. Kenya’s university system has yet to be inducted in this new curriculum.

*Secondary:* Secondary education is organized into two levels: lower secondary (grades 7 to 8); and senior secondary (grades 10 to 12). At the lower secondary level, the curriculum is broad-based to encourage learners to explore their individual talents, personality and potential as a basis for making informed career choices when they enrol at senior secondary school. 12 core subjects will be taught at this level: English, Kiswahili/(Kenya sign language for deaf students), mathematics, integrated science, health education, pre-technical and pre-career education, social studies, religious education, business, life skills, and sports and physical education with ICT cutting across all subjects. For optional subjects, learners can choose one or two from the following: visual arts, performing arts, home science, computer science, foreign languages, German, French, Mandarin, Arabic, Kenyan sign language and an indigenous language. Learners of ages 15 to 17 will be in senior secondary which will lay the foundation for further education and work. They can choose to advance in any of the following three pathways: arts and sports science, social sciences and a STEM cluster.

Assessments for determining progression from one level to another will be continuous and at the end of every cycle through a partnership between the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). Except for the languages taught as part of the curriculum, English will be the language of instruction and assessments for both the general curriculum and teacher training.

Table 1: Levels of Education & Certificates Awarded in Kenya (Current System)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Education Level | No. of Years | Awards/Certificates |
| 1 | Primary Education | 8 | Certificate of Primary Education |
| 2 | Secondary Education | 4 | Certificate of Secondary Education |
| 3 | Village Polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes | 2 - 3 | Craft Certificate |
| 4 | Middle Level Colleges (TTCs/Technical Schools, etc) | 2 – 3 | Higher Diploma/Diploma / Certificate |
| 5 | University education | 4 – 6 | Bachelor’s Degree |
| 6 | Post-Graduate Education | 1-5 | Diploma/Master’s/PhD |

The **Kenyan National Education Sector Strategic Plan** (Republic of Kenya, 2019) has spelt out the actions needed to ensure compatibility with the CBC curriculum for all levels of the education system.

For Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE), the plan is to enhance the quality of teaching and care in pre-primary schools in order to respond to the needs of the 3-5 aged children by: finalising the development of the new curriculum and related support materials; training teachers on the new curriculum; and, by developing and implementing a capacity building programme for quality assurance officers. Because ECDE has been devolved to county governments under the 2010 constitution, these local governments will be supported to recruit adequate qualified ECDE instructors and support staff.

Priority at the primary school level will be the expansion of the number of qualified teachers and the building teacher capacity on the new curriculum. Other plans are to integrate ICT in teaching and the design of training programmes tailored on building the capacity of teachers in the teaching of languages and STEM subjects more innovatively.

At the secondary level, the focus is on the development of the new CBC curriculum and the capacity of teachers to deliver it, use ICT for teaching all subjects, and to be able to develop student talents in all areas of their strength from STEM to sports. In this connection, resources will be set aside to establish model STEM schools and sports’ and other talents academies in each county.

On TVET, the plan notes that the priority will be to assess training needs of learners and instructors from the points of view of both personnel and content and the development of a CBC curriculum and occupational standards. To popularize TVET, at least 1 TVET institution will be put in each county and will be provided with the state-of-the-art equipment and with adequately trained teachers.

### 2.2 Teaching Force

*Teacher Qualifications:* The current teacher training model is organized at three levels: universities and diploma colleges for secondary school teachers; primary teacher training colleges for primary school teachers; and, a variety of training centres for early childhood development and education (ECDE) teachers. To be in synch with the new curriculum and the dictates of the KNQF, teacher training will be reformed to consist of three diploma certificates: Diploma 1 for ECDE teachers; Diploma 2 for primary school teachers; and, Diploma 3 for secondary school teachers. As this change has yet to be publicized, we do not have details on the content and qualifications required of teacher trainees for the three diploma types. However, it is expected that the minimum academic qualification for teaching in basic education will be a post-secondary education; a master’s degree for secondary/TVET and post education; and, a PhD for university teaching.

*Pre-service training:*For pre-service training, the focus will be to first conduct a study to evaluate the status and relevance of existing pre-service teacher training programmes. Study findings will then inform the required changes in the curriculum and entry requirements for teacher recruits, modes of delivery of content in teacher training colleges, and methods of assessing learners. Other changes will include rehabilitation of existing teacher training colleges for pre-service training on the reformed curriculum; development of guidelines on the identification and deployment of teacher educators in teacher training institutions; induction of teacher educators on the reviewed curricula; and, the development of a framework for institutionalising internship programmes for all persons entering the teaching service.

*Professional development of teachers:* To support teacher professional development, the government will: vote resources for the establishment and equipping of a national teacher support and professional development resource centres, where some of the teaching approaches will be on how to create professional teacher learning communities. Second, the capacity of the Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) field officers on ICT integration in teacher development, and train teachers on the use of new teacher development teaching modules will be strengthened. Capacity of trainers at both the pre-service and in-service levels on content delivery will thus be developed, as will assessment guidelines for both learners and institutional based projects. To relate what is taught to the world of work for an enriched practical experience, training institutions will be encouraged to strengthen ties with the world of work.

**2.3 Qualifications Register**

Regarding the **Qualifications Register**, Regulation 16 sub regulations 1 of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (KNQF) 2018 requires the Authority to establish a national database of national qualifications to inform the implementation and maintenance of the national qualifications framework.

The database established contains the following information;

* registered unit standards;
* registered qualifications;
* accredited education institutions;
* assessment and certification systems of accredited education institutions-Work In progress;
* validated learning qualifications;
* equated foreign qualifications;
* recognized and approved foreign qualifications;
* qualifications recognized from prior learning and student records –Work in progress;

As of now, the **National Learners Database** is a work in progress.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Authority has established technical departments which implement various mandates of the Authority. The National Learners Records Database is under development.

Equated **Foreign Qualifications and Recognized and Approved Foreign Qualifications** are under the department of Recognition Equation and Verification. The department has a list of all recognized and equated qualifications up to date.

**Registered unit standards, assessment and certification systems** of accredited education institutions are under the department of Standards Assessment and Quality Assurance. The department is under the process of developing standards and guidelines on various aspects. A policy on recognition of prior learning was formulated and validated.

In view of the above, it is safe to conclude that the register of qualifications is a work in progress as it has not been harmonized into one.

# Scope and structure of the NQF

## Scope

The multiplicity of qualifications and awarding bodies made it difficult for employers to understand what competences they can expect the holder of a particular qualification to possess. The KNQF is intended to address this situation by establishing a common regulatory system for the development, assessment and award of qualifications. A central register of qualifications will set out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2014).

The principle for which the KNQF is established is to promote access to and equity in education, quality and relevance of qualifications, evidence-based competence, and flexibility of access to and affordability of education, training assessment and qualifications. According to the KNQF Act the objectives of the Framework are: to help coordinate and harmonize education, training, assessment and quality assurance of all qualifications awarded in the country; with the view to improving quality and international comparability; and to create a database of all qualifications in the country.

Kenya’s NQF has been aligned to the new curriculum framework. It’s main objectives are: establishment of a framework for the definition of standards for recognizing qualifications obtained in and outside of Kenya; development of a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualification; strengthening of the national accreditation, quality assurance, assessment and examination systems for national qualifications; facilitation of mobility and progression within education, training and career paths; and, aligning of qualifications obtained in Kenya with global benchmarks to ease national and transnational mobility of workers (Republic of Kenya, 2018).

The KQF acknowledges two separate sub-frameworks within this overarching framework, one for academic and the other for vocational qualifications. However, core generic competences involving the application of knowledge in practical situations are the same for both domains.

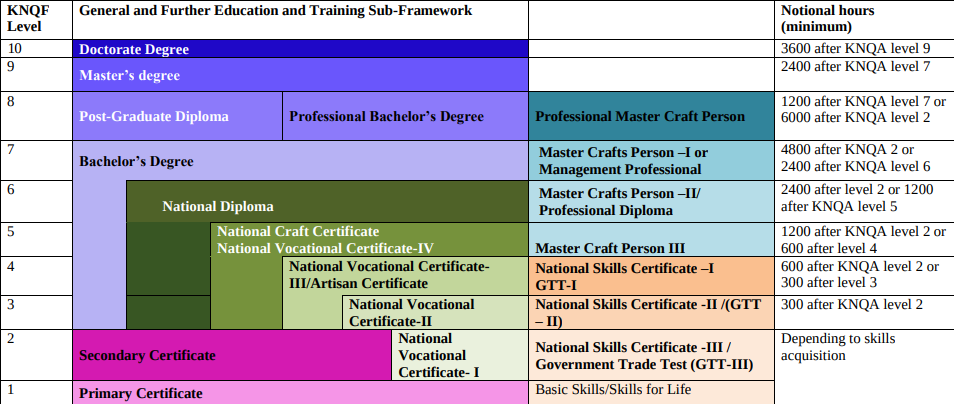
KNQF qualifications incorporate both theoretical knowledge and employable skills. Credits obtained through RPL and through the Kenya Credit and Transfer Systems (KCATs) are considered in order to determine which level of qualification an individual should work towards.

**3.2 Levels**

The framework’s structure is organized around 10 levels.

* Level 1 takes care of basic academic skills and skills for life, which mainly comprises of primary school level education and culminates in the award of primary leaving certificate because life skills are as important as basic literacy skills as the out of school world is not just about book knowledge.
* Level 2 incorporates formal secondary school education curriculum and relevant vocational skills leading to qualifications of a secondary certificate for those pursuing and academic line; and, for those pursuing vocational education, the National Vocational Certificate I, National skills Certificate III, and Government Trade Test III.
* Level 3 includes national skills’ certificate and government trade test 2 leading to a national vocational certificate 2. It is an upgrade of the vocational skills and certificates of level 2 for Vocational Certificate II and National Trade Test II.
* Level 4 upgrades the same to certificate I.
* Level 5 leads to a National Craft Certificate 4 and Master Craft Person III.
* Level 6 to the award of a National Diploma, Master Crafts person II and a professional Diploma.
* At level 7, those who opt for the academic line can attain a bachelor’s degree or Master Crafts Person I and Professional Diploma.
* Level 8 is for Postgraduate Diploma, a professional bachelor’s degree, and Professional Master Craft Person. Levels 8, 9 and 10 are only for those in the academic line and lead to a master’s degree and PhD, respectively. KNQF is managed through a credit accumulation and transfer system that allows learners progression from one level of qualification to another, both vertically and horizontally. In this regard, the number of hours and credits one needs to attain to move from one level to another are specified.

**Table 2 The KNQF[[4]](#footnote-4)**



**(**

**3.3 Level Descriptors**

The Kenyan NQF has level descriptors, which align to the EAC proposed 10 level framework for the RQF. They cover the education system from primary all the way up to post-graduate studies. They are classified in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The core generic competences, involving the application of knowledge in practical situations are the same for the two domains - academic and vocational. These core competences include the ability to:

* Analyse, synthesise and create;
* Solve problems;
* Organize, plan and communicate;
* Use ICT;
* Work in teams;
* Engage in developing projects, research and innovations;
* Work autonomously.

The KNQF contains level descriptors at primary, secondary, tertiary, TVET and university levels.

Descriptors are also provided for ‘short cycles’ linked to the main TVET levels and graded ‘sub-cycles’ for artisanal skills.

**3.4 Learning Outcomes**

## The KNQF is a learning outcome-based qualifications framework, comprising of all educational and training sectors and all forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal.

## 3.5 Definition of “qualifications”

A qualification is referred to as a record of learner achievement. [[6]](#footnote-6)No formal definition is given in the KNQF Handbook.

## 3.6 Development of qualifications

See under Chapter 5.

**3.7 Credits**

"Credit" means the value assigned for — (a) ten notional hours; (b) the recognition of equation in content and learning outcomes, between different types of learning; or (c) the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification which may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced studying, that is based on the quantity of notional hours for a specific qualification.[[7]](#footnote-7)

# Legislation

## Legal acts directly applying to the NQF and its implementation

The Sessional Paper of 2005 (MoE, 2005) and the Policy Framework for Education of 2012 (MoE, 2012) highlighted the need to both coordinate and clarify Kenya’s education and training system.

The Kenyan Qualifications Framework (KQF) has been developed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA, www.knqa.go.ke) in accordance with Section 6 of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Authority has developed and gazetted the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2018), which it is implementing.

The activities of the Authority are guided by KNQF Regulations of 2018.

## Relation with other related legal acts / regulations

The Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 (renamed No. 1 of 2019) on Reforming Education and Training proposed a raft of reforms in the TVET Sector. These reforms led to the enactment of TVET Act No. 29 of 2013 which established Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) under section 7 to assure quality in technical and vocational; TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC) under section 44 to undertake design and development of curricula for the training institutions' examination, assessment and competence certification; and TVET Funding Board under section 47 to provide funds to be used for financing technical and vocational training.

Also, the section 26 (2) of TVET Act No. 29 of 2013 establishes National Polytechnics with respective legal orders allowing them to develop their own training programmes and award qualifications. A number of TVET institutions in line ministries and Technical Universities, established under section 25 of Universities Act, 2012, have mandate to train and award various TVET qualifications.

# Organising systems: governance, institutions, stakeholders

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) was set up in 2015 according to the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act No. 22 of 2014. The KNQF is governed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), which is the chief advisor to government on all matters pertaining to qualifications and the certificates issued by all qualification awarding bodies. In this capacity, KNQA is mandated to recognize and accredit all qualifications awarding bodies an institutions operating in Kenya, to regulate these qualifications, and to liaise with government national examination and quality assurance departments, and professional and external quality assurance bodies to check that any qualifications awarded meet the national standard and are internationally competitive. Thus, the Authority has developed descriptors for each level of education and training, the justification for each level and qualification and the knowledge, skills, competencies, and volume of learning associated with each level. Determination of the descriptors involves consensus building with both the trainers, employers and curriculum designers. Given the many vested interests in area of qualifications and corruption, this has not been an easy job for the KNQA to do. University diploma granting institutions have been some of those resisting regulation as have government institutions outside the ministry of education.

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) and the Kenya Chambers of Commerce have started engagements that are anchored on establishing Sector Skills Councils that will guide skills training and curriculum development in the TVET sector. KNQA will be developing a national policy on development of a sustainable skills development system; and development of occupational standards with various sectors; while TVETA needs to develop training standards to ensure that training matches expectations of industry. Actual training will take place in technical and vocational training institutions with TVETA providing quality assurance. National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), Micro and Small Enterprise Authority (MSEA), Association of Professional Societies in East Africa (APSEA) and Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) should form the core of the team that should be involved in coordination of this exercise and ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each player are well spelt out.

The KNQA works closely with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Institute (KICD) and the TVET Curriculum Development and Certification Council (CDACC) to ensure that the curriculum being developed supports the goals of the KNQF.

In consulting with curriculum developers, KNQA is mostly concerned with:

* the quality and relevance of the curriculum;
* determination of how much time and credits training units are allocated;
* how what is taught is delivered;
* whether or not entrants have attained the minimum qualifications for all training units they enrol for including recognition of prior learning; and,
* if the amount of learning proposed is adequate but not too much for the expected outcomes and competencies, and
* that it meets the requirements for the relevant KNQF level descriptors.

Currently, KNQA is working with Kenyan higher education institutions to accredit all agriculture and teaching programmes offered in Kenya’ s higher education institutions. For now, however, the management of the majority public and private universities have not reached consensus with the KNQA on the system of evaluating and accrediting what they teach

The KNQA is governed by a Council comprising the Chairperson appointed by the Cabinet Secretary – Education, Principal Secretary – Education, Principal Secretary – Labour, Principal Secretary – National Treasury, one person representing Commission for University Education, one person representing TVETA, one person representing Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council, one person representing Professional Associations of Kenya, one person representing FKE, one person representing COTU and Director-General – KNQA38 .

The day to day affairs of KNQA are managed by the Director-General/CEO with assistance of two directors

(i) Director - Technical Services with five departments: Accreditation and Registration; Kenya National Learners Records Database; Standards, Equation and Recognition of Qualifications; Assessment, CATs and QA; Research, Outreach and Policy,

(ii) Director - Administration, Finance and Strategy with four departments: Planning, Resource Mobilization & Strategy; ICT; Finance and Accounts; Human Resource and Administration.

# Quality assurance of qualifications

## Legal base of the QA framework

The KNQA has produced Guidelines for Assuring the Quality of Qualifications Registered in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework.

## Scope of the QA framework

1. Within the KNQF the assurance of quality shall primarily focus towards:
2. Quality assuring the delivery, assessment and awarding of the qualifications validated and approved within the framework; and
3. Quality assuring the institutions accredited to award them.
4. In carrying out this work, the KNQA shall work closely with key agencies involved in quality assurance within the KNQF. These include the CUE (for University education qualifications). TVETA (for local and foreign TVET qualifications; and ESQAC (for Basic qualifications);
5. KNQA shall develop and issue standards, regulations and guidelines to guide assessment and quality assurance of all qualifications offered in the country which it shall expect ETQAs to adhere to and implement in collaboration with QAIs;

With regard to i. Quality assuring the delivery, assessment and awarding of approved qualifications:

The purpose of certifying Qualifications awarding Institutions is to confirm what learners have learned or what they are able to do in employment based on the evidence that has been assessed. The evidence must be enough to enable a clear inference to be drawn that the learner possesses the knowledge and skills attested to by the certification. Unless assessments are quality assured, there can be no confidence that this is the case. Assessments for all qualifications shall be subject to a quality assurance process known as verification, to ensure that assessors are making consistent assessment decisions in accordance with assessment criteria. Verification is the process of monitoring and sampling assessment practice and learner performance to ensure that assessment decisions are accurate. KNQA shall establish and maintain a verification process for all registered qualifications in the country.

## QA bodies and regulators in NQF implementation

Diplomas and certificates being offered by universities must be approved by the Technical and Vocational Training Authority (TVETA). For an institution or qualification to be registered in the KNQF, it must be accredited by a recognised quality assurance body. Registration in the KNQF assures an academic institution, and the courses that it offers, international recognition. For diplomas and certificates, this must be done by TVETA, while for degrees (bachelor's, master's and doctorate) they must be accredited by the Commission for University Education (CUE).

The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) was established in 1980 to oversee national examinations and award certificates in both the formal and informal learning sectors. In the formal education and training system, a national system of certification from primary through secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education already exists in Kenya. In the informal learning sector, trade tests are used to certify artisans and craftspeople (Kerre and Hollander, 2009). The KQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification.

## Participation in international bodies (e.g.: AQVN…)

No information available

# NQF implementation

## Inclusion of qualifications in register

A central register of qualifications managed by the KNQA sets out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2014).

## Funding

The KNQA is administratively located in the state department of vocational technical training (VTT) with an annual budget allocation. The annual budget is allocated to the Authority by the parliament through the Ministry of Education.

The authority gets its funds from;

* Funds payable to the Authority appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the Authority;
* Service charges: funds payable to the Authority in the course of the exercise of its powers or in the performance of its functions;
* Funds that has been lawfully granted, to Authority by the government with the approval of the Cabinet Secretary for the time being responsible for matters relating to finance.

## Monitoring, evaluation and development

No information available

# Validation of prior learning, non-formal and informal learning

## Relation of RPL and NQF

In the KNQF Act "recognition of prior learning" means the consideration of knowledge skills or competencies acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning. The Act states that “11.

(1) Subject to sub regulation (3), a person who has worked in any field of study may apply to the Authority for recognition of prior learning in Form KNQA/L/006 set out in the First Schedule.

(2) Where the Authority allows an application made under sub regulation (1), it shall issue the applicant with a Certificate of Experiential Learning in Form ICNQA/L/007 set out in the First Schedule.

(3) In considering an application made under sub regulation (1)

(a) an applicant who does not hold a certificate may be eligible for admission to a National Qualifications Framework level or granted experiential learning equivalent to a qualification in the National Qualifications Framework level; and

(b) an award of a certificate of experiential learning may be used by the awardee of the certificate.

## Stage of development of RPL

The Deputy Director for Planning, Research, Outreach and Policy at the KNQA is currently working on RPL regulations, which will be launched in March 2020.

## Informal Learning

In the informal learning sector, trade tests are used to certify artisans and craftspeople (Kerre and Hollander, 2009). The KQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification. The informal sector is well organized and is keen o having its members getting RPL, e.g. assessment of customer service.

# Recognition of foreign qualifications

The KNQA is in charge of recognition of foreign qualifications, and this makes up a large portion of its work, with many Kenyans who studied abroad requiring this service. However, equating of certificates is currently managed by the National Examinations Council (KNEC).

# Interrelationships with other countries and regions

The 10-level KNQF is aligned with the East African Community (EAC) qualifications framework. The EAC framework is annexed to the EAC Common Market Protocol for Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications, to which Kenya is a signatory. The Annex to the Protocol for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC) Common Market on Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications has proposed a ten-level framework designed to accommodate all qualification types and levels in the region. This framework emerged as a result of an audit of qualifications frameworks in the East African Partner States, which have agreed to harmonize the qualifications frameworks within the EAC. To this end, Kenya has already aligned its framework based on 10 level descriptors.

Other qualifications frameworks with 10 levels include those of Mauritius, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Australia.

An exercise on harmonization of the East African education systems and training curricula is currently in progress, under the coordination of the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA), an organization of the EAC. The IUCEA has already developed a Higher Education Framework for the EAC, consisting of 8 levels.

The KNQA mentioned links with the South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Zambian Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) regarding their frameworks.

Regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications the KNQA is very actively working with foreign accreditation bodies, African and worldwide organisations such as the European Association of International Educators (EAIE-Special Interest Group). Kenya will host the next meeting of the African body dealing with referencing qualifications, which met in South Africa (SAQA) last year.

# Conclusions and future plans

Kenya has finalized a comprehensive qualification framework incorporating all education sub-sectors and has in place a competency-based curriculum supported by the NQF that will allow for movement of learners within and across the different educational subsectors and institutions. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority is the link of the different education sub-sectors. However, most of the higher education and lifelong programmes are yet to be fully included. Refugee children and youth enrol in national education institutions and can sit for Kenyan national examinations. Some can even join Kenya’s public universities to do courses of their interest but as private students.

The Kenyan Government sees the KQF as a tool to aid accreditation, teaching, and assessment in accordance with established national curriculum development practice and standards. The KQF has already had a number of successes. One example concerns the mutual recognition of Kenyan and international qualifications, which has been greatly facilitated by the KQF. Foreign qualifications can now be much more easily assessed, which has resulted in an influx of foreign teachers and students to Kenya. The system is supporting the Kenyan Government policy on internationalization of education in the country.

Kenya’s endeavour to develop the KQF highlights the importance of building on existing institutions and structures, rather than importing models from outside the country or trying to reinvent the wheel.

And, in doing this the country has strived to support and work with established systems of training, education, assessment and examination in order to produce a truly efficient and functional qualification framework.

The informal learning taking place in the large informal sector needs to be included in the KNQF.

# References/sources

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<http://www.nkilatvija.lv/content/files/Global_Inventory_of_Regional_and_National_Qualifications_Frameworks_Volume_II_National_and_Regional_Cases.pdf>**)**

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The World Bank Group, Trade and Competitiveness. January 2016. Informal Enterprises in Kenya

# Interviews conducted

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | |
| **Category** | **Contact details** | **Time and date** | **Name and designation** | **Institution** |
| NQF responsible body | jums75@gmail.com | 7 January 2020, 10.00 hrs | Dr Juma Mukhwana (CEO);  Dr Winnie Bulima (Dir.)  Stanley Maindi (Dep. Director Planning, Research, Outreach, Policy) | KNQA |
| Independent stakeholder | rene.lenssen@eduquator.com | 23 January 2020 17.00 hrs | Rene Lenssen | EDUQUATOR, Australia Awards |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendance**  **KNQF Stakeholder meeting Nairobi, United Kenya Club**  **22 January 2020 9.00-12.30** | | | |
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# Annex 1 Abbreviations

CDACC Curriculum Development and Certification Council

COBET Complementary Basic Education

EAC East African Community

ECTS Exemption and Credits Transfer System

ICT Information communications technology

IUCEA Inter-University Council for East Africa

KASNEB Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board

KICD Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development

KNEC Kenya National Examination Council

KNOCS Kenya National Occupational Classification Standard

KCATS Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer system

KNLRD Kenya National Learners Record Database

KNQA Kenya National Qualifications Authority

KNQF Kenya National Qualifications Framework

MoE Ministry of Education

MoHEST Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology

NITA National Industrial Training Authority

RPL Recognition of prior learning

TCDF TVET Curriculum Development Framework

TVET Technical and vocational education and training

VIT Vocational and industrial training

YP Youth Polytechnic

KENYA

Introduction and context

The Framework is also in the process of establishing a Learner’s database (the Kenya National Leaners record database, KNLRD) to track the people who are awarded qualifications in the Country.

The KNQF needs to be understood in the context of the two major reforms to Kenya’s education and training policy, which occurred in 2005 and 2012.

Policy objectives

The objectives of the KNQF are set out in the KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014 (MoHEST, 2014). They are as follows:

1Kenya’s three main awarding bodies are the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and the Council of Higher Education (CHE).

 To establish the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA);  To establish a system of accreditation in the Country;  To establish a database of Institutions awarding qualifications, qualifications and learners;  To establish a system of assessment and examination for qualifications in the country;  To establish standards for recognizing qualifications obtained in and outside of Kenya;  To develop a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualifications;  To align the qualifications obtained in Kenya with the global benchmarks in order to promote national and transnational mobility of workers;  To strengthen the national quality assurance systems for national Qualifications; and  To facilitate mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.

About the award of national qualifications, an institution shall not award national qualifications unless it is recognized or accredited in accordance with the KNQF or unless it is a university accredited in accordance with the Kenyan Universities Act No.42 of 2012.

Source: MoE, 2012; MoHEST, 2012.

Stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangements

The KNQF Act mandates the establishment of the KNQA (MoHEST, 2014), which in turn is responsible for coordinating and supervising the development of policies on national qualifications and developing a framework for an accreditation system of qualifications and a system for the assessment of national qualifications.

The KNQA also develops and reviews the interrelationships of national qualifications in consultation with stakeholders, relevant institutions and agencies. The authority maintains a national database of national qualifications and publishes relevant manuals, codes and guidelines. Another important function of the KNQA is to advise and support any person, body or institution that is responsible for awarding national qualifications. It sets standards and benchmarks for qualifications and competencies including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values; defines the levels of qualifications and competencies; and provides for the recognition of attainment of competencies including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. It also facilitates linkages, credit

transfers and exemptions, as well as vertical and horizontal mobility at all levels; this in turn enables entry, re-entry and exit from learning programmes.

Given the importance of the international comparability of qualifications, the Authority also establishes standards for harmonization and recognition of national and foreign qualifications and promotes the recognition of national qualifications internationally. It builds confidence in the national qualifications system that contributes to the national economy and provides pathways that support the development and maintenance of flexible access to qualifications (MoHEST, 2014). Table 2 shows the Kenya National Qualifications as currently developed.

Recognizing and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

One of the key goals of the KNQF is to recognize and assess the outcomes of learning in all settings, whether formal, non-formal or informal, including in the workplace. A number of measures are being taken to pursue this goal. Progression pathways from primary to higher education in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector are being promoted through the TVET Curriculum Development

Table 2: The Kenya National Qualifications Framework, showing the levels, the different pathways and volume of learning required for each level.

Framework (TCDF), which was established in 2010 according to KNQF occupational standards. This is helping to link Youth Polytechnics (YP) and Vocational and Industrial Training (VIT) qualifications to formal TVET provision. The Authority is in the process of developing occupational and training standards for various professions in the country; and recently (2018) launched Competence Based Training and education (CBET).

A wide range of agencies offer courses at various levels to young people and adults. Universities offer a variety of distance learning, evening, school based and recognition of prior learning (RPL) courses; such courses were previously available only at the University of Nairobi. Complementary Basic Education (COBET) programmes (nonformal programmes equivalent to formal education) offer children and teenagers who have dropped out of school the opportunity to reintegrate into the formal system.

Three international standards guide the assessment of skills in Kenya: these are the International Labour Organization’s ISCO 88 Standard, UNESCO’s ISCED 97 Standard, and the ISO Standard 9000 Series on Education. In addition, the Kenya National Occupational Classification Standard (KNOCS) guides the Exemption and Credits Transfer System (ECTS), which is promoted through a combination of conventional testing methods and e-assessment methods for RPL. The Authority is in the process of developing and implementing the Kenya National Classification of Education Standard (KNCES).

Curriculum Development

The KNQF has developed and is implementing Level descriptors for each level of education and Training in the country. The descriptors describe the level, the purpose of each qualification, knowledge, skills, competences and volume of learning that must go to each level of training. The Authority is now in the process of developing occupational and Training standards in consultation with industry players and trainers, so that the country’s qualifications can become more aligned with employer’s and industry needs. To effectively do this the Authority is working with various existing curriculum development bodies to re-align the country’s qualifications with requirement of the framework. These include the Kenya Institute for Curriculum development (KICD), and the TVET Curriculum development and Certification Council (CDACC), and various other institutions such as universities and TVET institutions that have legal mandate to develop curricular in the country.

KNQF implementation

In order to avoid reinventing the wheel, the government intends to reform existing institutions for the implementation of the KNQF. One of these institutions is the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), which was established in 1980 to oversee national examinations and award certificates in both the formal and informal learning sectors. In the formal education and training system, a national system of certification from primary through secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education already exists in Kenya. In the informal learning sector, trade tests are used to certify artisans and craftspeople (Kerre and Hollander, 2009) mostly through the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). In the Accounting sector, the Authority is working with the Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National examination Board (KASNEB); and for various professions, the KNQA is working with professional bodies that have

developed an are implementing qualifications such as the Nursing council, Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB), Engineers Registration Board (ERB), and Council for Legal education (CLE) among others. The KNQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification.

1. Kenya Government, 2007, Labour Institutions Act; 2014, Amendments [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kenya Government, 2015, Diaspora Policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Interview KNQA Dr J. Mukhandwa [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.knqa.go.ke/about-the-qualification-framework/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.knqa.go.ke/about-the-qualification-framework/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Kenya National Qualifications Authority, The Kenya National Qualifications Framework, Shaping the Future Of Kenya. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Citation. Interpretation. No. 22 of 2014. Kenya Subsidiary Legislation, 2018 783 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)