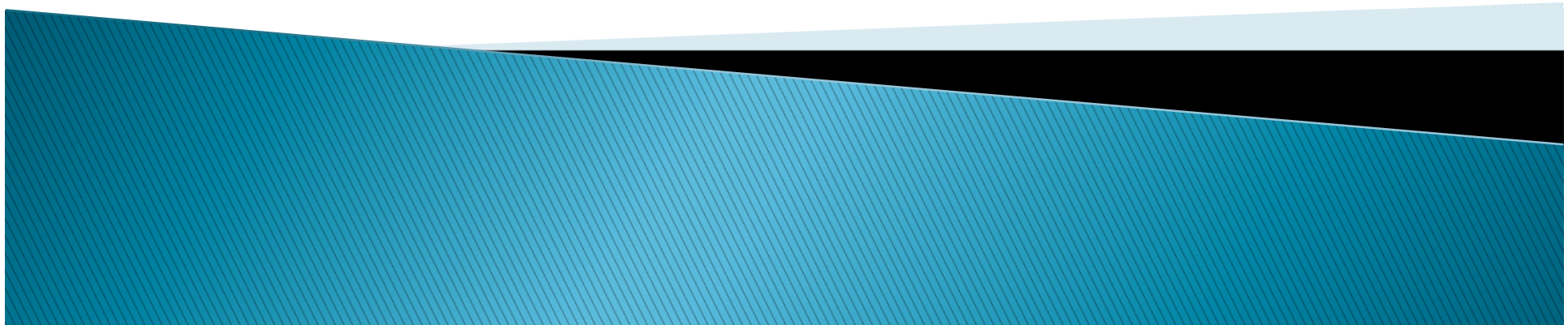


The Qualifications Framework and Quality Assurance in South Africa

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Origins of South African QF

- ▶ Currently, more than 120 countries with QF development but only a few QFs in mid 1990s
- ▶ The SA QF is one of those few 1st generation QFs—legislated in 1995 as part of major reform of SA education and training system.
- ▶ 2 strong contextual drivers—integration of segregated Education and Training(ET) systems from apartheid era; social justice goals of providing educational access and mobility for black workers denied formal ET by exclusionary social policies



Origins of South African QF

- ▶ Equity focus in SA QF in addition to QF values of mobility, portability, transparency
- ▶ National considerations uppermost then and now with strong links to local ET reform goals
- ▶ Influence of other 1st generation QFs at start through international benchmarking and policy learning (McBride and Keevy 2010)
- ▶ QA identified as key-quality improvement also a SA education reform goal
- ▶ Uneven QA systems development in different ET sectors

Development of SA QF

- ▶ All 1st generation QFs undergoing changes due to implementation reviews, government requirements and stakeholder concerns.
- ▶ In SA critiques of QF led to major review of QF implementation between 2001 and 2007
- ▶ Revised QF in 2008
- ▶ Comprehensive QF with all sectors of education including HE
- ▶ 10 levels with descriptors, provision for RPL and CAT

Development of SA QF

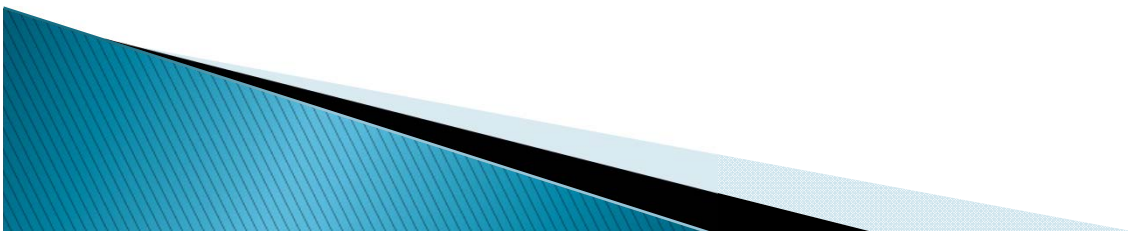
- ▶ From a single framework to 3 sub-frameworks each with own Quality Council—general and further education(levels 1–4), higher education(5–10), and trades and occupations(1–6).
- ▶ Revised QF still evolving
- ▶ Government has asked QCs to provide information on character of each sub-framework, demarcation and articulation between them
- ▶ Higher Education Sub-QF legislated in 2012

QA in 3 sub-frameworks

- ▶ Higher Education—one QA body for public and private institutions—carries out institutional audits, programme accreditation at start up point, programme reviews in chosen fields, quality promotion.
- ▶ General Education—one QA body assuring exit examination at end of schooling. Further Education—no system wide QA as yet
- ▶ Trades and Occupations—new Quality Council just beginning to establish QA systems.
- ▶ Challenge to align QA systems and requirements as basis for student mobility across ET sectors

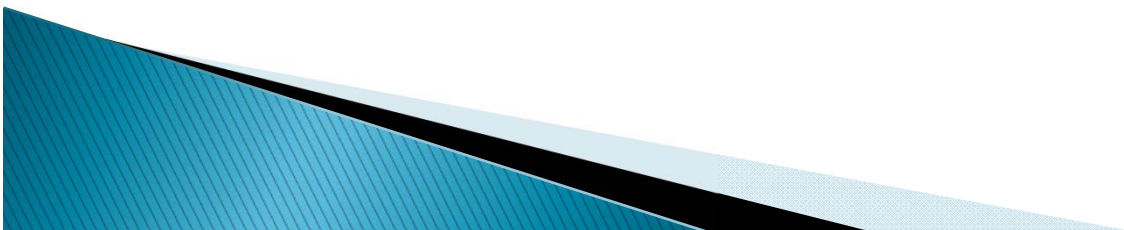
A Regional QF in the Southern African Development Community

- ▶ Long-standing concern on African continent about mobility and recognition of studies
- ▶ Arusha Declaration(UNESCO) on recognition of studies in higher education–adopted in 1981, revised 2002, decision in 2006 to draft new version for changed context
- ▶ SADC Protocol on Education and Training in 1997 –commitment to harmonising qualifications in the region (15 states)



A Regional QF in the Southern African Development Community

- ▶ SADC Ministers agree to 10 level RQF in Sept 2011, SADC portal for qualifications, and guidelines for regional QA
- ▶ Implementation challenges are daunting—only a few SADC countries with developed QF systems; limited capacity and resources in regional secretariat; QA systems in early stages of development



Transnational referencing of QF in SA and SADC

- ▶ National priorities still strong but much greater emphasis now on international comparability of qualifications–influence of EQF project evident in SA and SADC RQF
- ▶ SA considering referencing to supplement credential evaluation as mechanism to compare qualifications–questions about which QFs to reference with
- ▶ SADC Ministerial agreement urging member states to reference national QFs with SADC RQF by 2014

Challenges for the SA QF

- ▶ QF part of idealistic and ambitious goals relating to SA history (equity and redress) –sophisticated policies and complex architecture but many implementation struggles
- ▶ Impact–QF has provided framework for integration and coherence of fragmented ET sectors; raised awareness of quality and QA as key to QF goals; guided qualifications design; facilitated collaborative multi sector policy approach to issues like RPL
- ▶ Many fundamentals not yet in place–ET infrastructure, access, quality of provision. Goals like articulation across institutions and sectors still aspirational in many respects

Challenges for the SA QF

- ▶ Revised QF more ‘modest’(Keevy 2013)–focus on increasing intra and inter sector agreements among ET providers
- ▶ International/regional referencing–new challenge
- ▶ Some lessons from SA QF experience–need to ensure that investments in ET infrastructure, quality and capacity are adequate to deliver QF goals; necessity for staged, sector focused approach in a comprehensive QF where resources and capacity are limited; clarity about what QFs can and cannot deliver.

QA as key to Transnational Alignment of QFs: Two Concerns

- ▶ Outcomes focus has been central to QF philosophy and design. This may downplay importance of investing in ET infrastructure, training educators, and improving curriculum and pedagogy (inputs and processes) in some country contexts. Better balance needed between inputs and outcomes where ET systems still fragile and in development
- ▶ What kind of QA would better facilitate transnational alignment of QFs—institutional or study programme/qualification focus, accreditation or evaluation? Would this need greater transnational convergence of quality criteria and standards as in Europe with ESG? Advantages from convergent QA systems but also potential dangers to contextual needs, innovation.