Face to face interface with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority, who were also piloting an RPL project, enable SQA officers to learn much about RPL especially as the Mauritians were benefitting from funding from the Commonwealth of the learning which enable them to use French experts on "Validation des Acquis" or RPL. At the end of the day the SQA opted for performance-base RPL, rather than the portfolio type of the French where the assessment is through a jury system.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Cabinet Approval of the Regulations

The Regulations of the National Qualifications Framework were presented to the Cabinet of Ministers in July and had been approved. These will be gazetted and set to become law at the beginning of 2009.

With the Framework officially in place at the start of next year, all providers (public or private) wishing to have their qualifications registered on the Framework will need to adhere to the relevant dimensions of the legal framework, policy guidelines and working documents as part of this process.
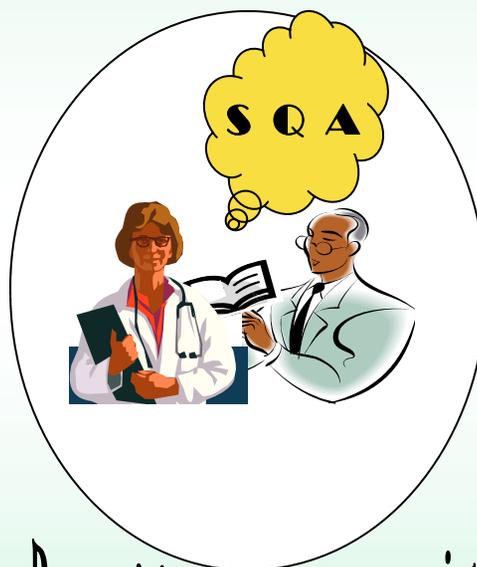
INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION, CAPACITY BUILDING & EXCHANGE

International Workshops on RPL

Towards the end of June and end of July the Executive Director of the SQA participated in workshops on the Recognition of Prior Learning. In the first workshop held in Mauritius, he was accompanied by Mrs. Winnifred Agricole, a local consultant who has been supporting the SQA in developing its RPL Policy-Guideline.

The June workshop in Mauritius marked the end of the Mauritius pilot RPL project in tourism. The objective was to review the experience and to plan the way forward for RPL in Mauritius. The project was well accepted and had been given high level support. However, the method of assessing RPL candidates by jury rather than by having them demonstrate their competence in "hands on" situations raised intense debate. The second prong of the workshop involved a meeting amongst the international delegates (mainly African) with a view to spread RPL on the continental mainland.

The workshop in Zambia towards the end of July took up where the Mauritius Workshop had left off, and looked at cross cutting education and training issues which would affect the launch of RPL in selected African countries. There were presentations on skills training and labour market mainly from the perspective of the tourism industry. It was agreed that the various participations would sensitize their respective local constituencies vis-à-vis RPL and its benefits and make known to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the main sponsor of the workshop, their interest in RPL by the end of September. COL and Mauritius pledged their support to such countries would have had to kick start the process.
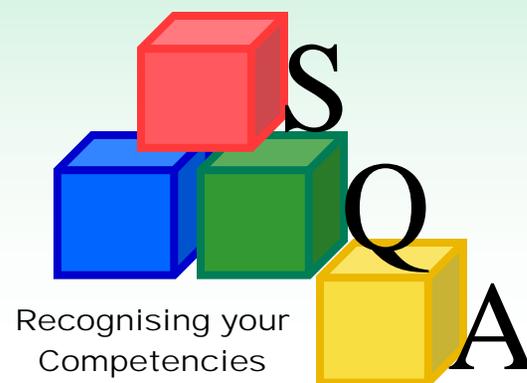

S Q A

Recognising your Competencies

Contact us
If you have any queries please email

sqa@seychelles.net
Or phone **312476**

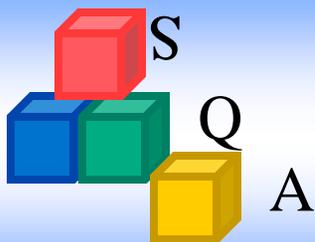# SQA
Monthly News Update

Recognising your Competencies

EDITORIAL

Dear Community of Stakeholders, we are pleased to present the fourth edition of SQA Update. With the approval of *The Regulations of the National Qualifications Framework* by the Cabinet of Ministers in July, the work of the SQA is gathering momentum.

As the Framework will be officially in place at the start of next year, the Secretariat is putting every effort to ensure that all the tools and instruments necessary for the implementation of the regulations will be in place.

We look forward for your valuable contribution and trust that these information will provide an overview of the recent development at the SQA.

S
Q
A

Recognising your Competencies

MONTHLY NEWS

Careers Fair 2008

For the first time, the SQA participated in this year's Careers Fair. The stall was relatively small, but there was much in the way of information to be provided to students. These included brochures on the pathways for qualifications one on Frequently Asked Questions which sought to answer most of the queries directed at the SQA thus far. To attract students to the stall, questionnaires where given to fill in using available information at the stall. This also allowed them to stand a chance of winning prizes (air time) sponsored by Cable and Wireless and Airtel. It was unfortunate, that many students failed to return the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the SQA's exhibition could be considered a success. There is much we have learnt and we will need to act on for the next fair in 2009.

SQA Presentation to Local Consultants

A number of local consultants who had applied to be considered for standards setting and quality assurance tasks attended a meeting with the SQA Secretariat recently. The objective was to sensitize the potential consultants with the mandate of the SQA and the nature of the work that they will need to undertake if they agreed to the conditions laid down. Being new to the subject at hand, most of the consultants would need training. This would be provided by the SQA in due course, most probably towards the end of the year or early next year depending on progress made on the policy guidelines and the availability of the required expertise. It was noted that, because quality assurance needed the engagement of the consultants during regular working hours, that it would be problematic for many of the applicants.

The Nolan Report and Education Reform

The Nolan report which came out last month has emphasized the centrality of the role of the SQA in both regulating and improving education and training. It is in this context that the President, in his address launching the National Education and Training Strategy Committee, talked about the importance of the work that the Authority should be doing.

President Michel stressed that "*there must be course monitoring mechanism to ensure that educational standards are maintained by providers of formal education, and that learning is properly accredited. The Seychelles Qualifications Authority will have a key role in this regard.*"

Following the launching of the Committee the Ministry of Education has appointed an internal Working Group and the SQA secretariat is thereby giving input on issues touched on in the report. The Board of the SQA will also be scrutinizing the report with a view to make known to the National Committee its position on the reports' recommendations.

It is the aspiration of the SQA that the recommendations of the Nolan report will help to bring about improvements to the education and training system that will help further release the potential of very learner for the good of our society.

FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT WORK

Quality Assurance

The quality Assurance policy guidelines have been the main item on the SQA's agenda after the launch of the National Qualifications framework (NQF) in May 2008. An extensive review of the Criteria and Indicators took place after which the QA documents produced were sent to the Heads of Institutions prior to the presentation of the QA policy.

A workshop with providers took place on the 6th of August, and Dr Marie-Therese Purvis, the consultant drafting the policy, then presented the overall QA policy together with its Criteria and Indicators to the providers. She emphasized the importance of the indicators in the Accreditation process. There was spirited debate on the issues, mainly on the Evaluation of Courses and governance of Providers. Some heads of institutions felt that some Criteria and Indicators should be left in their hands. Their concerns were integrated into the daft that was presented to the SQA Board on August 13. The QA policy now awaits the final approval by the SQA Board in the meeting of October 2008.

Standards Setting

Over the last two months there has been much development on the standards setting front. Training for standards setters from the post-secondary institution was conducted in July and subsequently standards setters across the institutions have been meeting the secretariat to flesh out the work that needs to be undertaken, and to agree to contractual agreements for payment for the work done.

National Standards Setting Committees for MTC, SAHTC, Nursing, and Visual Arts have been formed and work has started. A third member is to join the Core Standards Committee to facilitate the work of reviewing the standards and also ensure that a thorough job is done as the standards will eventually be registered on the framework and they must be according to the format stated in the policy guidelines. The third member is Ms Jill Tirant from NHRDC.

A larger committee has now been formed to work on national coding system for occupations, sectors and qualifications. The members are: NHRDC, DPA, NSB, Employment, SQA, and ICT. It has been agreed that we should now use ISCO 2008 structure to classify occupations. Once the classification of occupations is done the next phase will be to classify sectors. This will help the SQA to classify individual units of qualifications and also qualifications. SQA will soon be taking this up with concerned parties.

Recognition of Existing Qualifications

The process of recognition of existing qualifications has picked up pace. Over 25 qualifications have been submitted to the SQA for evaluation. Some institutions are submitting their qualifications in batches, with the oldest qualifications being submitted last. The team has prepared the evaluation tools and will soon start the work proper.

RPL Policy-Guidelines

The policy-guidelines on the Recognition of Prior Learning was presented to the SQA Board in August. The Board approved the policy subject to some changes. Prior to that the policy had been floated to stakeholders in the Health and Construction industries, where, by and large, the policy had been well received. Stakeholders were advised on the possible implications of the policy. In the development of the policy the SQA had learnt much from the RPL pilot that had been conducted by the NIHSS for Environmental Health Officers.