

Recognising your Competencies

Seychelles Qualifications Authority

# **The Seychelles National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System – Policy and Guidelines (The SNCATS)**

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Version 1





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## PREAMBLE

The development of this Seychelles National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System – Policy and Guidelines (The SNCATS) is one of the initial steps towards the partial fulfilment of output 2.1 of the ACQF II Project. According to the terms of reference for the ACQF II Project, output 2.1,6 entails the development of policy documents and guidelines on credit accumulation and transfer systems for identified countries, working in close cooperation and coordination with the national qualifications framework authorities such as the Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA).

This document has been prepared based on resolutions and information collected during consultation and planning workshops and technical visits conducted from 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in Victoria, Seychelles. Particular attention was also paid to the country's development and education aspirations as espoused in the National Employment Policy and Strategies (2014), Seychelles Vision 2033 (2019), Seychelles National Development Strategy (2019-2023), Seychelles National TVET Policy (2023 – 2028) and the Seychelles National TVET Strategy and Roadmap (2024 – 2028). Further, stakeholders' recommendations and views gathered during the stakeholder review and commenting stage in August-September were diligently considered and incorporated.

In addition, reference was made to CATS policies and guidelines from the ACQF website (Guideline 4 on validation and recognition of learning) and SADC Guidelines for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SADC-CATS), as well as national CATS documents from Mauritius, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Further, various online sources on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the American University Credit System (AUCS) were consulted.

This draft comprises two parts; Part 1 – Policy and Part 2 – Guidelines. The two parts are then segmented into chapters and key topics to be covered under each chapter. In some chapters, topics are further particularised into thematic sub-topics.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seychelles is among the countries that have a long-standing and valuable experience in implementing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and related policies, notably Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In order to ensure the full implementation of the NQF, the new Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) Act 57 of 2021 broadened the mandate of the SQA. Article 4 (1) defines the object and functions of the Authority, and its point k) stipulates that SQA will “establish policy and criteria for credit accumulation and credit transfer”.

In living up to the foregoing mandate, and considering the importance of a credit accumulation and transfer system (CATS) in the context of internationalisation of education, mobility of learners, rise of micro-credentials, recognition of learning periods and qualifications, lifelong flexible pathways for learning and the increasing demand for recognition of learning achieved via non-formal and informal learning contexts, SQA is committed to developing a functional and coherent CATS, encompassing all forms of learning and aligned with international good practice. This aspiration was conceived at the right time as it coincided with the review of the country’s NQF, which has also taken into consideration the need for promulgation of regulations pertaining to CATS.

The Seychelles National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System – Policy and Guidelines (SNCATS) is seen as a key tool in the country’s quest for an internationalised education and training sector. The SNCATS will provide a common understanding and unified framework for implementation of credit accumulation and transfer across all education and training sectors, as well as for the designing and quality assurance of learning programmes in the country. CATS and RPL are now seen as key, interconnected components of a country’s education and training system. Thus, the SNCATS will be implemented side-by-side with the national policy on recognition of prior learning so as to facilitate seamless recognition of credits acquired from non-formal and informal learning settings. This will also promote learner mobility and articulation from non-formal and informal learning settings into the tertiary/ higher education sub sector.

Undoubtedly, the SNCATS will be a catalyst to learner mobility and progression that will be used by all education and training providers and other stakeholders to support access to education and training, mobility and progression, flexibility of learning pathways and lifelong learning. Further, the SNCATS will cater for the entire education and training system and levels of the Seychelles National Qualifications Framework (SNQF), qualifications acquired from all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal), including micro-credentials.

The SNCATS is an overarching national document that sets the basis on which education and training providers will develop or reference, in a transparent and open manner, their institutional credit accumulation and transfer procedures/ guidelines.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Seychelles National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SNCATS) is another feather in the Seychelles Qualifications Authority's cap and is proof that with the right network anything can come to fruition. Well before the realisation of such a project, the need to have a CAT system for the country was tacit and thus it was introduced in the SQA Act 2021. With the fast developments of qualifications frameworks around the world, it was quickly realised that the decision to establish a CAT system soon had been an essential one.

When SQA approached Mrs Eduarda Castel-Branco, coordinator of ACQF-II project regarding the establishment of Seychelles CAT system, she was immediately interested and offered to assist SQA, and with the assistance of Mr James Mwewa, she helped us throughout every step of the project. We are thus thankful to the ACQF II for granting us funding and technical assistance through Mrs Castel-Branco and Mr Mwewa, and we are eternally grateful to both of them for making time and themselves available to us.

We would also like to extend a sincere thank you to all Tertiary Education and Training Providers who contributed valuable information to the project through their presence during workshops, meetings and visits.

SQA is also very grateful to the Ministry of Education, Department of Employment, and Central Bank of Seychelles who also provided information through the two-day workshop.

As it is well known, an organisation's biggest assets are its people; therefore, it is apt that the biggest thank you goes to the staff of the SQA who have contributed in various ways to the development of the Seychelles National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AUCS	American University Credit System
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
HEC	Higher Education Commission
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-CATS	SADC Guidelines for Credit Accumulation and Transfer
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNCATS	Seychelles National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
SNQF	Seychelles National Qualifications Framework
SQA	Seychelles Qualifications Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBE	Work-Based Experience
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority
ZIMCHE	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background and Situational Analysis

Seychelles has a well elaborated and functioning 10 level NQF. In order to ensure that the NQF remains current, and responds to the need for continued international comparability of Seychelles' qualifications, the SQA has embarked on the review of SNQF. As part of the review process, regulations on CATS are also being promulgated to support the implementation of the revised NQF, which is earmarked to be finalised by end 2024.

In 2022, SQA developed the "Manual for Development, Evaluation and Approval of Qualifications and Unit Standards" so as to safeguard the quality and relevance of qualifications registered on the SNQF.

At present, the University of Seychelles and some professional centres run credit-bearing short courses (proxies of micro-credentials). Thus, stakeholders consider it necessary to create room for micro-credentials on the revised SNQF. Currently, about 81% of qualifications (SNQF Levels 3 to 6) were designed based on unit standards. This makes it feasible for the concept of micro-credentials to be applied to these levels of the SNQF with little adjustments to the structure of learning programmes that fall within those SNQF levels.

When it comes to learner mobility and progression, there is currently no established national document on CATS in Seychelles. Nevertheless, education and training providers have been implementing some form of CATS, albeit in an uncoordinated manner. Further, learner mobility is largely in-country and mostly from Professional Centres into the University of Seychelles. Where learners move across Professional Centres, it is mostly to access new programmes.

International mobility of learners is mostly from Seychelles (exports) into other countries, such as South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, Malaysia, France

and the United Kingdom. However, the country is now focused on internationalising its education and training offer; and attracting foreign learners into Seychelles (imports). Hence, the development of SNCATS policy and guidelines is being viewed as one of the initiatives to help realise this ambition. Stakeholders wish to have a CATS that will encompass all the sub-sectors of the NQF and one that would support flexible learning pathways.

It is also imperative to note that other private institutions such as Banks, Hotels and ICT companies offer institutional courses which are not yet recognised on the SNQF. It is hoped that with the coming on board of the SNCATS, these would also be placed on the SNQF in due course.

### B. Legislative Context

The Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act, 2005 (Act No. 12 of 2005) was the principle Act that established the SQA. The Act was later strengthened through the promulgation of the SNQF regulations in 2008 dubbed "Regulations Setting-up the National Qualifications Framework for the Republic of Seychelles of 2008".

In 2021, the Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act was promulgated to among other things expand the mandate of the SQA. The Act also made provision for the development of the SNCATS.

Section 4. (1) (2) states that, "in pursuing the object, the Authority shall have the following Functions; (k) establish policy and criteria for credit accumulation and credit transfer".

The need to promote skills development and lifelong learning is also emphasised in the Seychelles National TVET Policy (2023 – 2028), in which it is stated that, "for the 'modern education sector aligned with future needs' priority area, the guiding themes are to emphasize skills over content, to incorporate technology, to foster creativity and innovation, to encourage lifelong learning, teaching standards, to foster diversity and inclusivity, and to strengthen collaboration with industry and business"<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Seychelles National TVET Policy (2023 – 2028), Pg. 5.

Other pieces of legislation that can be considered as enablers of the development and implementation of the SNCATS include (1) the Education Act 13 of 2004 as read together with the Education (Amendment) Act 28 of 2017, (2) Tertiary Education Act 12 of 2011 as read together with the Tertiary Education (Amendment) Act 5 of 2022, and Education (Private Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2005 (S.I. 43 of 2005).

## C. SNCATS linkage with national development priorities

The following national development blueprints and aspirations have placed emphasis on the critical role that skills development, quality education and lifelong learning would play in shaping Seychelles' developmental agenda.

### i. Seychelles Vision 2033 (2019)

In this blueprint, Government commits to place people at the centre of development. "The need to build our human capital is pressing and is a top priority on the development agenda. As Seychelles engages with the wider world, the country requires a pool of highly-skilled, creative workers who can increase labour productivity and economic growth. The Seychellois people must invest time and attention in acquiring skills and knowledge which will allow us to take part in national development and provide us with the income and resources to sustain ourselves and our families"<sup>2</sup>, reads part of the document.

On the quality of education, the document reads in part, "furthermore, unsatisfactory educational outcomes raise concerns about the productivity of the labour force. The education system will have to ensure that the youth are equipped with the necessary academic, soft, and vocational skills"<sup>3</sup>.

### ii. Seychelles National Development Strategy (2019-2023)

Just like the Vision 2033, the Seychelles National Development Strategy (2019-2023) also recognised the need for availability of a skilled society and importance of lifelong learning. The strategy reads in part, "in addition to getting us towards our dreams and aspirations, the Strategy also guides us on measures to deal with the most critical challenges facing our country today: Transforming our education system to prepare a knowledgeable, skilled, responsible and capable Seychellois workforce in light of technological advances, innovations and the resultant demands of the labour market and our economy. Productivity, participation and performance are the major challenges for Seychelles. The challenges of providing a solid education for all, strengthening skills, reforming the social protection system, addressing current constraints to accessing high-quality jobs and securing the sustainability of health services remain pressing. Investing in education leads to significant development benefits"<sup>4</sup>.

The strategy further adds, "however, to achieve sustainable development, it is not enough to provide access to education, but central to the development of human capital is the quality of education provided. This is in line with the achievement of SDG 4, which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all. It is therefore recognised that the quality of the education system is a critical determinant in sustaining the future of the country. Additionally, a culture of learning should be encouraged to ensure that education is valued by all"<sup>5</sup>.

### iii. National Employment Policy and Strategies (2014)

The document points out that employment challenges at the national and sectoral levels in Seychelles have been exacerbated in particular by issues relating to the quality of training, availability of appropriate skills, productivity, emigration of skilled professionals ("brain drain"), and synergy between the roles of social (employment and

<sup>2</sup> Seychelles Vision 2033 (2019), Pg. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Seychelles Vision 2033 (2019), Pg. 80.

<sup>4</sup> Seychelles National Development Strategy (2019-2023), Pg. 9, 24 & 55.

<sup>5</sup> Seychelles National Development Strategy (2019-2023), Pg. 54.

training) institutions. More importantly, the academic orientation of education and training is a major challenge to employment creation as it results in a lack of functional skills.

The policy and strategies place great emphasis on skills development, acquisition, and retention. The employment policy also ensures sustainable economic development by promoting full, productive and freely chosen employment for the country's workforce; developing high-quality, multi-skilled human resources that are in line with the changing needs of the industry and international labour standards. "The curricula of professional centres have to adapt quickly to the changing conditions of the labour market to produce graduates of the appropriate calibre who satisfy the requirements of the labour market. There is also a need to emphasise more focused training for job growth, especially in the areas of hospitality, construction, fisheries, financial services, information, communications and technology"<sup>6</sup> reads the policy in part.

#### **iv. Ministry of Educations' Education for socioeconomic transformation: Statement of Engagement – Policy Document No. 03/2023 (2023)**

According to this policy document, the Ministry of Education aspires to create a system of education that motivates learners to perform and successfully achieve their best, enthuses the professionals' eagerness to teach and support learners, and stimulates partners to collaborate. The engagement strategy focuses on (a) negotiating and adopting an education system that is dynamic with several options for schooling and access to quality learning experiences; (b) creating teaching, training, and learning experiences built on curriculum materials that fit the current local and global reality; (c) empowering learners to grow holistically; and (d) developing teaching and instructional contexts in which the learners, lecturers, teachers, policy makers and all stakeholders can engage meaningfully.

#### **v. Seychelles National TVET Strategy and Roadmap (2024 – 2028)**

Based on a situation analysis of the TVET system, the Government's priorities as expressed in the National Development Strategy 2023-2027, the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan 2021-2024, and consultations with key stakeholders, some key priority areas have been identified as the main focus for development of the TVET sector in the next five years. These include; (a) improve quality and relevance of TVET, (b) increase flexibility and inclusiveness of TVET, and (c) promote blue/green skills and digital competences.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the SNCATS will play a crucial role in facilitating skills acquisition, enhancing quality and relevance of education and training, as well as promoting lifelong learning in Seychelles. This will in turn contribute greatly to the attainment of the country's developmental goals and aspirations.

## **D. Purpose for the Policy and Guidelines**

To provide a common understanding and unified framework for implementation of credit accumulation and transfer across the education and training sector, as well as for the designing and quality assurance of learning programmes in Seychelles.

## **E. Objectives of the Policy and Guidelines**

- Support access to education and training, and flexibility of learning pathways
- Enhance lifelong learning and employability of learners
- Create a common understanding of CATS and its application in Seychelles.
- Enhance intra and inter institutional mobility of learners within Seychelles.
- Facilitate the vertical, horizontal and diagonal mobility (in-country and international)
- Enhance the comparability of learning outcomes and qualifications

<sup>6</sup> National Employment Policy and Strategies (2014), Pg. 5.

- Promote equity and fairness in the country's education and training system.
- Support the internationalisation agenda of Seychelles' tertiary education and training
- Contribute to the enhancement of quality and relevance of qualifications in Seychelles.

## **F. Scope of the Policy and Guidelines**

- All sectors of the education and training system and levels of the SNQF.

- SQA, education and training providers (public and private), regulatory bodies, curriculum developers, industry, non-governmental organisations, private entities, recognised professional bodies and learners.
- Qualifications, part-qualifications and micro-credentials.
- Qualifications acquired from formal, informal and non-formal learning.
- Recognised foreign qualifications.

# **PART I: CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER POLICY**

This part contains the policy for the Seychelles Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SNCATS). It shall be read and implemented together with Part 2, which provides the guidelines for implementation of the SNCATS.



## CHAPTER 1: KEY SNCATS CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS:

### A. Credits

Credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. Credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent which normally comprises a number of educational components to which credits (on the basis of the learning outcomes and workload) are allocated. Credits are generally expressed in whole numbers.

### B. Notional Hour Approach

The SNCATS is based on the notional hour approach. Notional hours (also referred to as “learning hours”) represent an estimate of the time spent by an average full time equivalent learner to master a unit of learning or the demonstration of acquisition of learning outcomes corresponding to a formal unit of learning in the case of non-formal and informal learning. In this approach, the hours referred to include all the learning activities of the learner, inclusive of contact time (lecture time, tutorials, labs, etc.), private study, research, assignment writing, examinations, etc.

The following assumptions are made: the average learner accumulates 8 study hours per day. This amounts to a 40 hours/ week. Learning programmes are generally based on a 30-week full-time academic year. At 40 hours per week this amounts to 1200 hours per year.

Further, one credit is equated to 10 notional hours, with 120 credits being the minimum for an academic year. Education and training providers shall ensure that transcripts of results indicate credits for each completed course/ module.

It is imperative to note that CATS and RPL are now seen as key, interconnected components of a country’s education and training system. Thus, the effective implementation of the SNCATS will benefit from a review of the national RPL policy so as to facilitate seamless recognition of credits acquired

from non-formal and informal learning settings, including micro-credentials. This will in turn promote learner mobility and articulation from non-formal and informal learning settings into the tertiary/ higher education sub sector.

### C. Credit Rating

Credit rating is the process of assigning a number of credits to qualifications, learning programmes, single educational/ training components or even micro-credentials. Credits are allocated to entire qualifications or programmes according to national legislation or practice, where appropriate, and with reference to national and/or regional qualifications frameworks. They are allocated to educational/ training components, such as course units, dissertations, work-based learning/ experience and work placements, according to the estimated workload required to achieve the defined learning outcomes for each component. It is done on the basis of learning outcomes and associated learner workload. Thus, workload associated with each educational/ training component must be clearly identified and quantified.

The following concepts are critical to the appreciation of credit rating:

#### i. **Learner Workload**

Workload is an estimation of the time the individual typically needs to complete all learning activities such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, work placements/ work-based learning/ experience and individual study required to achieve the defined learning outcomes. The sum total of learner workload includes the following:

- Number of contact hours.
- Number of independent study hours.
- Number of hours spent on assessment tasks.
- Number of hours spent on Work-Based Experience (WBE). Note that for non-formal learning contexts, WBE can be accounted for under the contact hours.

#### a. Contact Hours

Contact hours is a phrase that often gets used to describe the amount of time when learners are in



direct contact with members of academic staff. There are diverse forms of contact time. For example, a workshop session, dance class or industrial visit may be used to develop practical skills through demonstration and guided practice by a member of staff. Contact time may also take a virtual form through use of educational technology. Examples include through the use of email, online discussion fora, and virtual learning environments. It can also take place in a work-based setting. Thus, contact time is variable amongst modules/courses.

Activities that constitute contact time include lectures, tutorials, group seminars, field trips and demonstrations.

#### *b. Independent study time*

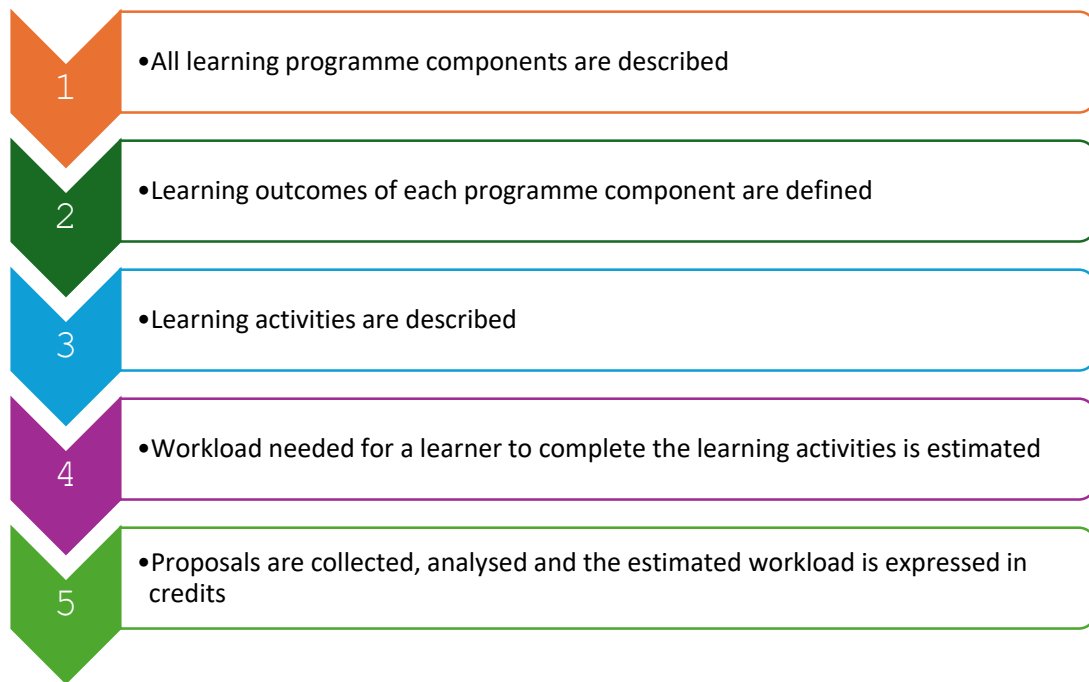
In tertiary/ higher education, learners are expected to study independently. This may itself be directed by members of staff or is self-directed. Activities that constitute independent study time include preparation for contact sessions, reading or practice, conducting research, completion of assessment tasks, revision work and completing projects.

### **ii. Key considerations in the allocation of credits**

The following facts need to be borne in mind when allocating credits to educational components or micro-credentials under the SNCATS:

Figure 1 shows a step-by-step process for allocating credits to a learning programme.

- A profile of the programme on the basis of its learning outcomes must be fully understood and presented;
- The curriculum must be designed to meet the intended learning outcomes;
- Credits are allocated on the basis of the weight of each component in terms of workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes;
- 120 credits correspond to a full-time-equivalent academic year (30 weeks);
- One credit should reflect 10 hours of study undertaken towards achieving a learning outcome;
- Credits should be allocated to educational components or micro-credentials that have defined learning outcomes and assessment methods;
- Each educational component should have a description which should include details of the learning outcomes, content, assessment methods, delivery methods and specified credit level;
- It is recommended that education and training providers set the minimum and maximum number of credits that can be allocated to an educational component; and
- It is recommended that a module/ course taken in different programmes and bearing the same workload in each programme, should be allocated similar credits in all the programmes where it is a component/ course.



**Figure 1: step-by-step process for allocating credits to a learning programme**

## D. Credit Accumulation

According to SADC-CATS (2021), credit accumulation is the process of assembling all the credits awarded for achieving the specified learning outcomes of components of learning in formal learning contexts, as well as learning obtained in informal and non-formal learning contexts. A learner can accumulate credits towards:

- Obtaining qualifications; and
- Documenting personal achievements for lifelong learning purposes.

Similarly, accumulation of credits in ECTS is the process of collecting credits awarded for achieving the learning outcomes of educational components in formal learning contexts and for other learning activities carried out in informal and non-formal learning contexts.

## E. Credit Transfer

Credit transfer is understood to mean the process of taking credits that were awarded in one learning context (programme, institution, country) and receiving recognition for these credits in another learning context (programme, institution, country) towards obtaining a qualification. Credits may be transferred within and across programmes, institutions and countries; credit transfer is key for learner mobility. Institutions, faculties and departments may make agreements, which guarantee the automatic recognition and transfer of credits under specified conditions.

### iii. Types of credit transfer

#### a. Block credit transfer

Block credit transfer entails reducing the total credit of the receiving programme by the amount of credits from the completed programme. For example, a holder of a Diploma in Nursing can have his/ her duration of study for a Bachelor of Nursing reduced say by 2 years.

Providers will be at liberty to recognise credits regardless of the age of the credits. However,

providers will be required to determine the shelf life of credits by comparing components of the sending and receiving programmes and arrive at a decision to either recognise the credits in block or subject the applicant to supplementary learning or bridging course. The providers must include this provision in their internal CATS guidelines and procedures.

#### b. Course exemption

An individual may be exempted from taking a specific course or module of a programme based on the learning achieved in previous studies. This is applicable to both completed and uncompleted programmes.

In both cases, the supplementary principle must be applied to enable applicants to bridge the gap in content, volume or breadth of the modules/ courses in the sending and receiving programmes.

### iv. Modalities of credit transfer

#### a. Vertical Credit Transfer

This entails the transfer of credits from a lower qualification into a higher qualification and vice-versa, usually within the same NQF sub framework or education and training sub sector.

#### b. Horizontal Credit Transfer

This is a process of transferring credits between qualifications at the same NQF level, across NQF sub frameworks or education and training sub sectors.

#### c. Diagonal Credit Transfer

Refers to the transferring of credits from a lower qualification into a higher qualification and vice-versa, across NQF sub frameworks or education and training sub sectors.

## F. Relationship between CATS, RPL and the NQF

The underlying fact about CATS, RPL and NQFs is that they all use learning outcomes to measure and recognise the amount of learning that has taken place after a learning process. CATS is also considered a form of RPL used in most jurisdictions to recognise learning outcomes from formal learning settings. Both CATS and RPL are

indispensable in the optimal operationalisation of NQFs.

The three work together for the good of the education and training system.

### **i. Assigning credits to non-formal and informal qualifications**

Education and training providers should put in place mechanisms to recognise and award credits for learning outcomes acquired outside the formal learning context through work experience, voluntary work, learner participation, independent study, provided that these learning outcomes satisfy the requirements of their qualifications or components. The recognition of the learning outcomes gained through non-formal and informal learning should be automatically followed by the award of the same number of credits attached to the corresponding part of the formal programme. As with formal education, the award of credits is preceded by an assessment to verify the achievement of learning outcomes.

The assessment methods and criteria should be constructed to measure the achievement of the required learning outcomes at the appropriate level, without reference to specific learning activities or workload. For example, 'participation in classroom discussion' of the subject matter would no longer be considered in assessment, whereas the corresponding learning outcome of 'constructing arguments while interacting with a group' would become relevant.

Appropriate staff should be appointed in each department or subject area, who should have the formal authority and training to award credits for learning outcomes acquired outside the formal learning context on the basis of transparent criteria established and published by the Institution. It should be understood that they will be expected to report on, and document, their decisions through regular reports to an appropriate committee (e.g. at departmental, faculty or institutional level).

Transfer of credits denotes the recognition of prior learning represented in the form of credits,

evidence of which is reflected in the form of a letter of recommendation, or academic transcripts.

### **ii. The role of NQFs, RPL and CATS in the education and training quality assurance architecture**

NQFs and related policies are used as quality assurance tools in the education and training systems. The registration of a qualification on the national qualifications framework is seen as the highest benchmark of quality. This is because providers are expected to meet the standards and criteria laid down for registration.

NQFs and related policies provide the initial basis for quality assuring qualifications through:

- Describing levels of qualifications and of learning inputs or outcomes across these levels or qualification types, or both;
- Criteria that define the quality of qualifications included in the NQF (accreditation);
- Criteria that define the minimum standards of quality assurance operated by bodies issuing qualifications in the NQF;
- Regulations or guidelines for linking qualifications, either at the same level or between different levels;
- Regulations or guidelines for accepting validated non-formal and informal learning for part or full qualifications; and
- Rules or guidelines for the volume of learning that contribute towards a qualification.

In the European Union, for example, the EU Council Recommendation on EQF for lifelong learning (2017)<sup>7</sup> in Annex V defines generic principles for credit systems related to NQF referenced to EQF, providing a clear example of the strong linkage that exists between CATS, NQFs, RQFs and RPL.

<sup>7</sup> COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council

of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning  
[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN).

## CHAPTER 2: BENEFITS OF THE SNCATS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

### A. Benefits to Learners

The SNCATS will:

1. Support learner mobility (across geographies and institutions) which in turn can improve life chances and social mobility of under-represented groups in general education, TVET or tertiary/ higher education.
2. Reduce the risk of learner drop-out by reducing the time commitment required (as learners do not have to restart their studies from the beginning, and thus avoid repeating learning already undertaken) and creating re-entry possibilities.
3. Make general education, TVET, and tertiary/ higher education more attractive and accessible to under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. encouraging part-time study, and facilitating entry for those without formal qualifications through RPL).
4. Offer greater choice and flexibility in choosing programmes/ courses and institutions, allowing mixing of educational programmes (vocational, work-based and academic), thereby empowering them to make more informed career choices. Indeed, a credit framework provides a 'route map' showing potential progression routes.
5. Allow learners to track their progress towards a qualification and reward learning achieved if learners do not/ cannot complete the full programme of study, this can build confidence and encourage further learning.

### B. Benefits to Policy Makers (Ministries)

The SNCATS will:

1. Help in the identification of skills requiring government support through policy and funding interventions.
2. Promote skills development and enhances employability of citizens.

3. Help in attracting investments based on availability of skilled human resource.
4. Aid in the attainment of quality and relevant education and training for citizens.

### C. Benefits to SQA, and other Quality Assurance Agencies

The SNCATS will:

1. Promote adherence to set standards.
2. Be useful in the accreditation of learning programmes and registration of qualifications on the SNQF.
3. Be important in ensuring continued professional development of professionals in regulated fields.

### D. Benefits to Education and Training Providers

The SNCATS will:

1. Provide institutions, through the use of credits, with a common language and help compare learning achieved, which will assist in the design of modules and programmes between and within institutions, and recognising learning achieved in different institutions and in different learning contexts.
2. Help institutions to create customised learning opportunities for learners and employers.
3. Enhance the responsiveness of institutions, particularly to the learner market, and as such increase opportunities for additional income generation.
4. Help institutions, through the use of credit-based modular systems, to design and deliver curricula in a more economic and efficient way, leading to resource savings.
5. Contribute, through credit transfer, to higher learner retention and completion rates.
6. Promote and facilitate inter-institutional partnerships (such as progression pathways between TVET and tertiary/ higher education).
7. Support and facilitate learner mobility and exchange across country borders, and also labour

mobility in relation to the recognition of professional qualifications.

## **E. Benefits to Industry**

The SNCATS will:

1. Help with recruitment, as it will enable employers to have a clearer and more accurate picture of the amount and level of learning achieved by potential employees.
2. Support and foster labour mobility in relation to the recognition of professional qualifications.
3. Ensure availability of skilled and competent workforce.
4. Facilitate multi-skilling and up-skilling of employees.
5. Lead to reduced cost of retraining.
6. Result in improved productivity and profitability.

## **F. Benefits to Society**

The SNCATS will:

1. Aid in building an informed/ educated and productive society.
2. Promote global citizenship – individuals are able to apply themselves in any jurisdiction and society.
3. Support efforts towards the provision of equal learning and employment opportunities for all.



## CHAPTER 3: SNCATS LINKAGES WITH KEY COMPONENTS OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

### A. SNCATS and micro-credentials

National governments, and regional and international organisations have intensified debate and research with the aim to define the role and place of micro-credentials in national education and training systems and qualifications frameworks, enhancing their benefits for lifelong learning and employability. In 2022 UNESCO proposed a common definition of micro-credentials<sup>8</sup>, based on a process of experts' consultation of global scope. Similarly, in June 2022, the European Union approved the Council Recommendation<sup>9</sup> on a European Approach to Micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability. Both definitions emphasise: assessment, quality assurance and focused learning achievement as key features of micro-credentials.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), micro-credentials are typically focused on a specific set of learning outcomes in a narrow field of learning and achieved over a shorter period of time. Micro-credentials are offered by commercial entities, private providers and professional bodies, traditional education and training providers, community organizations and other types of organisations.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381668>.

While many micro-credentials represent the outcomes of more traditional learning experiences, others verify demonstration of achievements acquired elsewhere, such as in the workplace, through volunteering, or through personal interest learning. Micro-credentials are often promoted as

an efficient way to up-skill workers across the lifespan.

According to the UNESCO definition, a micro-credential:

- Is a record of focused learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do;
- Includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider;
- Has standalone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning; and
- Meets the standards required by relevant quality assurance.

The definition agreed in the European Union is:

'Micro-credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

Groups of learners engaged with micro-credentials are more diverse than those engaged with full qualifications. These include individual learners, the unemployed and job seekers, out-of-school youth, employees – including new hires, professionals – including associate professionals, technicians, as well as plant and machine operators and assemblers.

Flexibility is one of the major benefits of micro-credentials. Over-regulation of micro-credentials might curb their flexibility.

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO (2022). *Towards a common definition of micro-credentials*.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381668>.

<sup>9</sup> Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and

employability 2022/C 243/02 ST/9790/2022/INIT [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2022.243.01.0010.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.243.01.0010.01.ENG).

### i. Purpose and users of micro-credentials

The study by Cedefop<sup>10</sup> showed that the main purposes of micro-credentials are up-skilling and reskilling the labour force, meeting needs and skills gaps in the economy, improving employability and promoting lifelong learning, among others. The main purposes of micro-credentials are related to a quick and accurate response to the needs of the labour market, provision of more flexible learning pathways, ways to recognise prior learning, and to make knowledge, skills and competences more visible.

Further, the study showed that adults in employment are key users of micro-credentials, while unemployed people and those in the initial phases of education are also important users. Micro-credentials make it possible to acquire new skills (e.g. for career progression or to undertake new tasks related to new work processes which might require fairly narrow, specific skills) and to validate existing skills they may have acquired during their employment or elsewhere. The overall findings from the case studies suggest that micro-credentials tend to be used predominantly by adults in continuing VET and as supplements to full qualifications.

### ii. Allocation of credits to micro-credentials

The description of and focus on learning outcomes is strongly emphasised when allocating credits to micro-credentials. Learning outcomes are considered as facilitating the design, delivery and assessment of full qualifications or components of qualifications. The European approach to micro-credentials also highlights the importance of clearly defined learning outcomes as a way to promote overall transparency and provide detailed information regarding what a learner is expected to know and is able to do.

Thus, it can be concluded that the same approach used to allocate credits to full qualifications should be applied to micro-credentials.

### iii. Minimum credits required for a micro-credential to be placed/ recognised on the SNQF

The length of a learning experience leading to a micro-credential varies significantly, as it depends on the type of provider and its purpose. Learning activities offering specific and very narrow skills and competences are usually shorter in duration compared to partial qualifications. In addition, self-paced learning is emerging via various platforms (e.g. Udacity, Coursera, FutureLearn, EdX), offering even more flexibility, as learner progress depends on individual availability. Some examples of countries that apply different approaches to duration of micro-credentials are as follows:

1. France: OpenClassrooms, a French private provider of open online learning, provides short learning courses, which last on average between 5 and 15 hours. They also offer modularised courses as part of a specific programme that provides an occupational certificate on completion. The duration of these programmes averages between 6 and 12 months.
2. Malta: Micro-credentials in Malta are offered on a full-time or part-time basis. The duration of full-time courses leading to awards (micro-credentials) is a maximum of 1 year, e.g. Skills kits, Award in retail, Award in basic office skills and Award in vocational skills A and B. Part-time courses vary in duration depending on the subject area. These may be followed either as a bundle or as separate modules/single units. For example, the award in tungsten inert gas pipe welding consists of three units/modules. The learner can opt either to take the course as a bundle or take each unit at a different time spread over a number of years.
3. Estonia: The Estonian Aviation Academy has developed a free online course, 'Introduction to Aircraft' a 3-month course that was made

<sup>10</sup> Cedefop (2022). *Micro-credentials for labour market education and training: first look at mapping micro-credentials in European labour-market-related education, training and learning: take-up, characteristics and functions*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

Cedefop research paper, No 87.  
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/351271>. Pg. 69-70, 107.



available via the e-learning environment Moodle.

4. Ireland: In Ireland, micro-credentials are incorporated at every level of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)<sup>11</sup>. The Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) specifies that the NFQ's minor, special purpose and supplemental award-types are examples of prototype micro-credentials and perhaps meso-credentials, though micro-credentials can be smaller even than minor awards'.
5. Australia: The Australian Government (2021) adopted the National Micro-Credentials Framework<sup>12</sup>, which uses the following definition: A micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning or competency, with a **minimum volume of learning of one hour** and less than an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) award qualification, that is additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of an AQF award qualification.
6. New Zealand: New Zealand Qualifications Authority manages the online Register<sup>13</sup> of Listed and Approved Micro-credentials, which contains over 400 micro-credentials, which - can be listed at any level of the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF). Micro-credentials must have at least one credit (10 notional learning hours), and are typically more than 5 credits and less than 40 credits<sup>14</sup>.
7. Portugal: Micro-credentials, though not referred to by that term, have been a part and parcel of the country's education and training landscape for some time now. Portugal has 2 types of micro-credentials: 1) short-term training units; 2) pathways of short and medium duration (PMCD). Currently, there are around 8,673 short-term training units (*unidades de formação de curta duração - UFCD*) with volumes of learning ranging from 25 hours to 350 hours (2.25 to 31.5 credits) in the National Qualifications Catalogue<sup>15</sup>. It is important to note that stand alone micro-credentials do not attribute a level of qualification, but they can be stacked into full qualifications. Micro-credentials can be obtained via RPL. The National Qualifications System awards digital certificates upon completion of micro-credentials.
8. Mauritius: In Mauritius, micro-credentials and flexible learning pathways are seen to offer tailored, **bite-sized educational achievements** that can be stacked and accumulated to meet specific career or academic goals, promoting lifelong learning and skill adaptability. In order to bring about uniformity in the design, development, approval, delivery, quality assurance and recognition of micro-credentials in the education and training landscape, the country has developed a National Micro-credentials Framework underpinned by the following five guidelines:
  - Guideline 1: Objectives for MC framework, coverage, principles, actors;
  - Guideline 2: Definition of MC – information requirements for increased transparency;
  - Guideline 3: Credit award and stackability;

<sup>11</sup> Unlike other jurisdictions that use the term National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Ireland calls its own the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Visit: <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications>.

<sup>12</sup> National Microcredentials Framework (2021). <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/National%20Microcredentials%20Framework%20-%20Final%20Framework.pdf>; <https://www.microcredseeker.edu.au/>.

<sup>13</sup> Register, accessed 16/09/2024: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/microcredentials.do>

<sup>14</sup> Refer to the following links for more information on treatment of micro-credentials in New Zealand: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/approval-accreditation-and-registration/micro-credentials/>;

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/rules-fees-policies/nzqa-rules/micro-credential-approval-and-accreditation-rules-2022/>

<sup>15</sup> Portugal's National Qualifications Catalogue: <https://catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/>.

- Guideline 4: Inclusion and levelling of MC against NQF, quality assurance; and
- Guideline 5: National register, credit bank and open badge options.

#### iv. **Stackability of micro-credentials into full qualifications**

Stackability of micro-credentials refers to the certification of learning that can be accumulated into a larger credential or degree. Accumulating and combining micro-credentials within formal education and training systems is already visible in various EU Member States, where traditional VET programmes that lead to a specific qualification are being unbundled and replaced by modularised programmes.

In Spain, for example, the modular structure of vocational training cycles offered by the education ministry allows each learner to decide autonomously the modules for which they wish to enrol. In Ireland, the modular nature of the qualifications system already accommodates free-standing qualifications and qualifications as small as five credits; credentials smaller than this can be used as steppingstones into qualifications on the national framework of qualifications by being aggregated and used in recognition of prior learning.

It was established that, most commonly, micro-credentials offered in organisations can be combined into a full qualification, stacked into a larger micro-credential, recognised as part of a learner's education and training programme, added to a learner's individual account or portfolio and recognised as prior learning.

#### v. **Quality assurance of micro-credentials**

Ensuring quality is a main prerequisite for micro-credentials to gain trust. A variety of (mainly internal) quality assurance processes is used. Micro-credentials offered within the education and training sector should follow the same standards as qualifications. However, it is worth noting that one of the key characteristics of micro-credentials is their flexibility. Hence, there is need to guard against over-regulation of micro-credentials.

In formal education and training, learning programmes are usually quality assured by well-established procedures. Thus, micro-credentials offered within the formal education and training system should follow the same standards applied to other formal qualifications and credentials. In countries with modularised VET systems, micro-credentials are often considered as modules of full qualifications. According to this approach, modules that are taken separately adhere to specific quality assurance standards, and there is no need for additional quality assurance standards to be introduced. This is also deemed to be the case in tertiary/ higher education institutions that divide their programmes into modules. Inclusion of micro-credentials in NQFs provides de facto trust in their quality.

### **B. SNCATS for programme design, delivery, and monitoring**

The use of credits aids programme design by providing a tool which improves transparency and helps to engender a more flexible approach to curriculum design and development. From an institutional perspective, designing a programme means planning a curriculum and its components in credits, indicating learning outcomes and associated workload, learning activities and teaching methods and assessment procedures/criteria.

The institutional credit framework should cater for the needs of different programmes and support inter and multi-disciplinary approaches. Some institutions foster this understanding by regular training for staff members. Team-based decisions on programme design enhance the coherence of the programme. Tertiary/ higher education institutions need to define their learning and teaching objectives in relation to their study programmes and how they should be delivered and assessed.

The programme is monitored to establish whether the credit allocation, the defined learning outcomes and the estimated workload are achievable, realistic and adequate. Monitoring can

be managed in different ways through questionnaires, focus groups, or interviews, or by monitoring the results achieved. Whatever method is used, feedback from learners, staff and where appropriate, stakeholders should constitute an essential element for checking and revising credit allocation. Data on completion times and the assessment results of programmes and their components should also be used.

### C. SNCATS for mobility

Successful learning mobility requires academic recognition and transfer of credits. Recognition of credits is the process through which an institution certifies that learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another institution satisfy the requirements of one of the programmes they offer. Given the diversity of programmes and Education and training providers, it is unlikely that the credits and

learning outcomes of a single educational component in two different programmes will be identical.

This is even more the case in recognising learning from other learning contexts (for example vocational education and training). An open and flexible approach to the recognition of credits obtained in another learning context, including learning mobility, is therefore recommended, based on compatibility of learning outcomes rather than equivalence of course contents. In practice, recognition means that the number of credits gained for compatible learning outcomes achieved in

another context will replace the number of credits that are allocated for compatible learning outcomes at the awarding institution. Institutions should make their recognition policies known and easily accessible.

### D. SNCATS and lifelong learning

The tertiary/ higher education learning landscape is changing with the rapid development of more diversified and flexible learning opportunities – including blended learning, new forms of open

online learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Open Educational Resources (OER), work-based learning, self-directed learning, individual learning pathways, continuing professional development.

A growing number of learners follow ‘stand-alone’ educational units or courses, without pursuing specific qualifications. Tertiary/ higher education institutions are faced with the need to satisfy a diversified learner group and provide opportunities for individual learning pathways and different modes of learning. Consequently, many are diversifying and offering educational components with innovative modes of learning and teaching for all, through new technologies and Open Educational Resources.

The strength of SNCATS is that it can be used in all these lifelong learning contexts, applying the same principles for credit allocation, award, accumulation and transfer. In the same way as credits are allocated to component parts of programmes, credits allocated for open learning and other modes of lifelong learning are based on the workload typically needed to achieve the defined learning outcomes. Providers of all ‘formally’ (i.e. in the same way and meeting the same standards as conventional tertiary/ higher education institutions) quality assured education and training are encouraged to use SNCATS with the same transparent mechanisms as described in this document. This will greatly facilitate transition between different modes of learning, recognition and transfer, while increasing learner and stakeholder confidence in the outcomes of the various learning modes.

### E. SNCATS and quality assurance

The primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with each education and training provider. Internal quality assurance involves all procedures undertaken by tertiary/ higher education institutions to ensure that the quality of their programmes and qualifications meets their own specifications and those of other relevant bodies such as quality assurance agencies. External quality reviews undertaken by quality assurance agencies provide feedback to institutions and information to

stakeholders. Quality assurance principles and processes apply to all modes of learning and teaching (formal, non-formal, informal, new modes of learning, teaching and assessment).

The following indicators can be used for evaluating the quality of SNCATS implementation:

- Educational components are expressed in terms of appropriate learning outcomes, and clear information is available concerning their level, credits, delivery and assessment;
- Studies can be completed in the time officially allocated to them (i.e. the workload associated with an academic year, a semester, or a single course component is realistic);
- Annual monitoring examines any variations in patterns of achievement and results gained and follows up with appropriate revision;
- Learners are provided with detailed information and advice so that they can follow progression rules, exploit options for flexible pathways and select educational components at an appropriate level for their qualification;
- Learners are informed promptly of their results.

## CHAPTER 4: GOVERNANCE – SNCATS DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

### A. At Policy Level

The Ministry responsible for education and training or delegated institution will have overall oversight on the development and implementation of SNCATS policy and guidelines at national level.

### B. At SNQF Quality Assurance Level

The SNQF agency (lead body), in this case the SQA, will coordinate and ensure the full implementation

of SNCATS policy and guidelines by all relevant SNQF stakeholders. This may be achieved through incorporating CAT in learning programme accreditation or qualification registration criteria, as well as through institutional audits.

### C. At Education/ Training Provider Level

Education and training providers will be responsible for the development and implementation of institutional procedures on CAT. This will be done in line with the SNCATS policy and guidelines.

## **PART II: CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER GUIDELINES**

This part contains the guidelines for the Seychelles Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SNCATS). It shall be read and implemented together with Part 1, which constitutes the policy for the SNCATS.

## CHAPTER 5: GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SNCATS IMPLEMENTATION

### A. Principle 1

*CATS should be formulated with a view to promoting learner mobility across sectors, levels and types of qualifications by eliminating duplication of learning.*

The system should eliminate unnecessary duplication of learning and support different learning pathways through the recognition of credits that learners have gained from learning already undertaken. This entails that learners should not be requested to repeat learning if the prior learning can be duly recognised as equivalent and counted towards further learning.

### B. Principle 2

*Systems and procedures developed in institutions to support CAT should be transparent, fair, flexible and easy to use.*

1. Institutions should provide clear, reliable and easy to use information on their CATS and procedures. Any restriction and limits on transfer of credit, such as the 'shelf-life' of credits (if any) and ceiling of transfer should be specified, along with the implications for progression, grading or final award classification. Information on formal articulation pathways and credit transfer arrangements between institutions should also be included. In addition, information on the criteria for selection, the number of credits to be awarded, and additional programme requirements, if there are any, should be provided. Further, the CATS and its procedures should be easy to understand and use, both on the part of the learner and the institution.

Note: Articulation arrangements enable learners to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined pathway. Articulation arrangements broaden access into formal learning and may be a potential source of credit based on learner

achievement through formal learning. Articulation arrangements provide a seamless pathway with automatic admission into one qualification from another. Articulation arrangements may include:

- clustered qualifications involving lower qualifications that are embedded completely in the next qualification with multiple exit and entry points (an articulated suite of qualifications);
- partially clustered qualifications that include some qualification components of the lower level qualification nested into the linked qualification; or
- arrangements where two separately designed qualifications are linked to each other to form a defined qualification linkage and credit pathways.

2. Given the multiplicity of institutions, programmes and learners, it is unlikely that individual components in one programme will be identical in all respects to components in another programme. In order to simplify procedures and to ensure maximum benefit for learners, institutions should adopt a flexible approach to the recognition of credits. Institutions should consider adopting a recognition approach based on a review of learning outcomes, rather than seeking perfect equivalence between two qualifications or programmes.

### C. Principle 3

*Decisions regarding credit transfer should be timely, academically defensible and equitable, and based on learning outcomes.*

Decisions on credit transfer should be evidence-based, equitable, academically defensible, consistently applied and communicated to applicants within a specified timeframe, to avoid delaying a qualified learner's access to a programme of study. In determining the eligibility of credits for recognition and transfer towards a new qualification, receiving institutions should satisfy themselves that the associated learning



outcomes attained are comparable to the required outcomes of the new programme.

## D. Principle 4

*Credit awarded in recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning is of equal standing to credit awarded through other forms of learning.*

All accredited and verified learning (including formal, non-formal and informal learning) should be eligible for consideration for credit award. Receiving institutions should recognise learning achieved by a learner at any time and in any learning context on an equal basis, provided that the learning outcomes have been appropriately assessed and matched with the requirements of the qualification applied for.

## E. Principle 5

*In line with the concept of institutional autonomy, CAT shall not affect the authority of a receiving institution to make decisions about the admission of learners. There is a distinction between the separate processes of admission and credit transfer.*

The CATS should facilitate the recognition of credit for entry into a qualification (that is, admission to a programme) as well as recognition of credit towards the award of a qualification (that is, granting course exemption from part of the qualification). While an open and transparent CATS will facilitate learners' progression, admission is a matter for the receiving institution.

## F. Principle 6

*Credit recognition and credit transfer should not undermine the academic rigour or integrity of the qualification into which the learner is accepted.*

Institutions must ensure that recognising the credit earned by a learner towards the completion of a programme does not adversely affect the integrity and quality of their qualifications. Institutions should determine the maximum amount of credit which can be transferred (or the minimum amount

of study which must be undertaken at the awarding institution to be eligible for an award).

## G. Principle 7

*Institutional commitment and cooperation must be adhered to for the optimal functionality of CATS.*

The CATS should be adopted by the relevant decision making body of the institution and its implementation fully supported and appropriately resourced.

Articulation arrangements between institutions should protect and preserve the academic standards of each institution as well as the integrity of their qualifications. Arrangements should be documented and promulgated and be subject to regular review and update as the programmes evolve and develop over time. Further, institutional collaboration should ensure appropriate dovetailing of curriculum content and learning outcomes and facilitate maximum credit recognition and transfer.

## H. Principle 8

*CATS and procedures should be subject to rigorous quality assurance measures.*

Credit transfer and articulation arrangements should be subject to normal quality assurance measures. Implementation of CATS should be kept under regular review by the education and training providers and relevant quality assurance bodies, to ensure that it is functioning effectively. Issues surrounding credit accumulation and transfer should form part of regular internal programme review and collaborating partners should hold regular meetings to ensure continued alignment between their programmes.

Institutions should consider building up a database of CAT activities, including statistical information on the number and origin of learners to whom credit transfer has been granted, as well as on their performance in comparison to other learners with normal entry. This will help assess the effectiveness of the CATS and inform changes to enhance the quality of the system. Further, feedback from





stakeholders should be sought with a view to sharing good practice and addressing issues that may have arisen.

## CHAPTER 6: KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SNCATS

### A. Role of stakeholders in SNCATS Implementation

The roles of stakeholders in the implementation of the SNCATS will be to:

#### i. Government

1. Mobilise resources to support the development and implementation of SNCATS.
2. Formulate policies that promote the implementation of SNCATS.

#### ii. SQA

1. Spearhead policy formulation, development, implementation and reviews of the SNCATS policy and guidelines to facilitate credit transfer.
2. Develop the national action plan for implementing the SNCATS policy and guidelines.
3. Coordinate implementation of credit accumulation and transfer in Seychelles.
4. Coordinate the development and implementation of institutional CAT procedures by education and training providers.
5. Support the development of collaborative partnerships across the entire education and training spectrum so as to create an enabling environment for implementing the SNCATS.
6. Promote the collaborative development of curriculum and qualification pathways between different education and training providers to promote and enable successful implementation of SNCATS.
7. Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to establish and manage a SNCATS monitoring and evaluation system.
8. Undertake research to improve SNCATS in collaboration with relevant education and training stakeholders.
9. Conduct capacity building and awareness creation about SNCATS.

#### iii. Applicants

1. Understand the SNCATS, the professional requirements and the programme requirements of both the sending and receiving institutions before applying for credit transfer.
2. Use the prescribed format when applying for credit transfer.
3. Provide the necessary evidence to support their applications for credit transfer.

#### iv. Education and training providers

1. Develop and implement institutional guidelines and tools for CAT in accordance with the principles outlined in this document.
2. Provide information to applicants and the wider public on the CAT opportunities that exist in their respective institutions.
3. Demonstrate through regular internal and external quality reviews, including those done by the regulators, that their policies and practices for CAT support the principles as listed in this document.
4. Translate SNQF level descriptors into specific learning outcomes to enable assessment of workload and awarding of credits to each programme component or micro-credential.
5. Implement collaborative approaches to curriculum development across different institutional types to advance implementation of SNCATS, including alignment of curricula in common fields, taking into account their purpose and the types of knowledge and competencies.
6. Initiate and participate in partnerships with other education and training providers to implement and promote SNCATS.
7. Maintain records of all CAT activities and submit the relevant data to SQA in a prescribed format to be agreed with SQA and other stakeholders.

#### v. Industry/ employers and professional bodies

1. Understand the importance of SNCATS in skills and continuous professional development of professionals.
2. Participate in the curriculum development process.
3. Participate in assessments.
4. Support the uptake of credit bearing short courses/ micro-credentials.

5. Facilitate skilling, up-skilling and reskilling of employees through credit-bearing short courses/ micro-credentials.

## B. Stages in SNCATS Implementation

### Stage 1: Establishing an Administrative Structure for SNCATS

Clear structures should be established for the administration and implementation of SNCATS both at SQA and provider levels. Education and training providers must clearly define the roles and duties of persons responsible for processing CAT applications. Where it is considered necessary, a special committee or panel may be set up to deal with the assessment and decision-making processes. There should be separation of responsibility between those responsible for the assessment and those responsible for approval of the applications. In addition, administrative support should be provided to staff holding different positions in the structure.

#### Stage 2: Providing Information to Applicants

Institutions should provide clear and easily accessible information with relevant application forms and prospectus of learning programmes to applicants to assist them understand the available CAT arrangements, including the following:

1. How the CATS operates for purposes of credit transfer;
2. Opportunities for articulation from a specific programme offered by the institution to another programme offered by the same or other institution; and
3. Credit transfer agreements reached between institutions.

#### Stage 3: Processing Applications for Credit Transfer

The following aspects should be considered during the processing of applications for credit transfer:

1. Assessment of the application should be carried out by persons or unit designated for the task. The person responsible for assessing the

applications should have knowledge in the subject of the learning programme involved and also experience or training in processing CAT applications. The involvement of a second person in the examination of the application and the documentary evidence is common and advisable, especially in complex cases.

2. The assessment should be based on the information provided by the applicant.
3. In assessing the relevance of a qualification and the associated programme undertaken by the applicant for the purpose of credit transfer, the following factors are considered relevant:
  - I. The NQF level of a qualification is benchmarked against the level descriptors of the NQF in terms of the standards attained under different domains (knowledge, skills and competence). Receiving institutions should have confidence in NQF-recognised qualifications.
  - II. The overall NQF level of a qualification is indicative of the level of complexity of the programme associated with the qualification and will be useful for assessing whether the learning achieved from the programme should be accepted for credit transfer to a receiving programme.
  - III. As a general principle, institutions should accept a credit transfer application from a programme at the same or higher level than the receiving programme. Acceptance of a programme of a lower level for credit transfer into a higher level may be possible in some circumstances, but the receiving institution should evaluate the comparability of learning outcomes and the potential impact on the academic integrity and standard of the receiving programme.

#### 4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

Credits should be awarded on the premise that learners have been assessed as having achieved the learning outcomes specified for the programme.

The receiving institution should ascertain that the learning outcomes achieved by the applicant in a

previous programme are comparable to those of the receiving programme for which credit recognition is sought. Institutions should accept that two programmes or courses/ modules are of a substantial degree of comparability if there is at least 70% match, and hence should be accepted for credit transfer. In cases where programmes/ courses or modules fail to reach the 70% score, the supplementary principle must be applied to enable applicants to bridge the gap in content, volume or breadth of the programmes/ courses or modules.

Where it is not practicable to conduct direct mapping of the relevant content of two programmes, institutions could adopt the fair recognition approach and review the learning outcomes of the programmes based on a broad comparison of the knowledge, skills and competencies expected to be achieved in the programmes.

Where necessary, the institution may conduct interviews with the applicants to ascertain their learning experience for the consideration of credit transfer. A panel involving experts or external members may be formed to conduct the assessment.

5. **Programme Duration and Credit:** The duration of a programme and its credit value give an indication on the learning quantity and breadth of the learning programme, which is useful information for assessing credit transfer applications. The adoption of the credit as a common currency for measuring the quantity of learning of a programme effectively facilitates the comparison of two programmes for credit recognition and transfer.

6. **Syllabus, Curriculum and Associated Programme Procedures:**

- I. In addition to the transcript, the syllabus and the curriculum content should also be considered to understand the learning outcomes expected to be achieved in the programme.
- II. It should be noted that all credits earned from an accredited institution shall be transferrable. Depending on the shelf-life of the subject

knowledge, receiving institutions may recognise learning achieved by a learner at any time or a certain period of time, provided that the learning outcomes have been appropriately assessed and matched with the requirements of the qualification applied for. For the purpose of credit transfer, assessed qualifications obtained through non-formal and informal learning channels should be given equal standing to qualifications obtained through formal education.

- III. The procedures for application for credit transfer may vary among institutions or even individual departments within the same institution. It is in the interest of the institutions and learners that the procedures should, as far as possible, be standardised and streamlined.
- IV. Standardised application forms, in paper and electronic formats, should be provided to applicants together with clear guidance notes, which should contain any information that may be considered useful by the applicants and even internal staff of the institutions, including:
  - i. Application procedures.
  - ii. The purposes for applying for credit transfer and related requirements.
  - iii. Required supporting documents.
  - iv. Fees and refund arrangements, if any.
  - v. Estimated time required for processing the application.
  - vi. Details of the contact person(s) for enquiry.
- V. Institutions should give advice on the types of documentary evidence which may be required to support the application. In respect of a recognised qualification already obtained by the applicant, the certificate, and other supporting documents such as transcript, course outlines, curriculum and outcome statements, will be useful. In respect of credits acquired through non-formal and informal learning, evidence including the statement of achievement from awarding bodies, licenses issued by relevant authorities, certificates of international awards or reference letters from employers, will be useful to demonstrate the learning achieved and standard attained.
- VI. The awarding institution has the responsibility to assist its graduates in obtaining the necessary documentation to support further progression. Graduates who wish to apply for credit transfer based on a completed programme should

directly approach the institution concerned for the supply of documentation, certification, and other assistance to facilitate their application for credit transfer to a programme offered by another institution.

#### **Stage 4: Decision Making and Approval of Applications**

The following should be considered when making decisions on applications for CAT:

- a) The persons responsible for assessing applications for credit transfer should refer to set principles and procedures to ensure consistency before making a recommendation to the relevant authority for approval.
- b) The approval authority may make decisions on an application for credit transfer in one or more of the following ways:
  - (i) Credit Transfer and Articulation to Receiving Programme: An application for credit transfer may be accepted based on the learning achieved in a previously completed programme. The total credit requirement in the receiving programme may be reduced in block, e.g. a Diploma holder may be allowed to enter the senior year of a Bachelor's degree programme (block credits). This entails reducing the total credit of the receiving programme by the amount of credits from the completed programme, thereby reducing the duration of the receiving programme.
  - (ii) Course Exemption: An applicant may be exempted from taking a specific course or module of a programme based on the learning achieved in previous studies. This is applicable to both completed and uncompleted programmes.
- c) The use of different credit systems does not prevent the recognition of previous learning achieved by learners for articulation to another qualification. Institutions should assess and validate the learning outcomes achieved by the learner on a case-by-case basis, with reference to their CATS and established norms. Where credit transfer is sought for credits obtained in an institution using a different credit system – such as in the case of foreign qualifications or credits obtained from outside Seychelles-receiving institutions may refer to the conversion formula established between the different credit systems.

- d) Upon completion of the assessment and approval process, the institution should notify the applicant of the result of the application in writing in a timely manner. The notification, in letter or electronic form, should state the decision in respect of the application and the effect of the credit transfer on the programme to be enrolled (e.g., number of credits to be transferred, courses to be exempted, additional courses required for graduation, fees reduced and expiry date of the transfer).
- e) It is good management practice that for non-approval cases, the institution should give reasons for the decisions in a timely manner.
- f) An applicant reserves the right to appeal against the decision of the institution using the appropriate institutional procedure.

#### **Stage 5: Documentation and Record Keeping**

Credit transfer decisions and justifications for the decisions should be properly recorded and documented by institutions for future reference. Credit transfer decisions, including the credits granted and courses exempted should be reflected in the learner's transcript.

### **C. Learning Programmes Alignment as an enabler of SNCATS Implementation**

To ensure smooth and complete migration to the notional hour approach, education and training providers are required to:

- a) Align new/ proposed programmes with the SNQF and SNCATS for consideration for accreditation and reaccreditation.
- b) Embark on curriculum review processes of accredited programmes under implementation and align these programmes with SNQF and SNCATS.
- c) Develop/ align existing quality assurance mechanisms with the requirements of the SNQF and the SNCATS.

## **D. Key Considerations for Collaborations and Partnerships on SNCATS Implementation**

1. In order to foster wider, coordinated and systematic implementation of the SNCATS, SQA should implement strategies towards:
  - I. Strengthening collaborations and partnerships amongst CATS actors at national and international level. SNCATS actors must be encouraged to develop articulation agreements/ arrangements with a view to expediting the SNCATS uptake;
  - II. Developing communities of practice and continued stakeholder involvement framework;
  - III. Strengthening collaboration between parties implementing SNCATS through learning agreements and communities of practice; and
  - IV. Strengthening partnerships with development partners.
2. All education and training providers should endeavour to make exchange agreements with institutions:
  - I. That offer transparent descriptions of their programmes, including learning outcomes, credits, learning and teaching approaches and assessment methods;
  - II. Whose learning, teaching and assessment procedures can be accepted by both the sending and receiving institutions without requiring the learner to take any additional work or examination;
  - III. That are duly quality assured according to the Seychelles quality assurance system or their respective national systems in the case of foreign institutions.

Note that agreements may not only be made with institutions offering similar programmes, but also with those with different programmes.



## CHAPTER 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SNCATS

### A. Documentation of CAT Processes

Rules and guidelines on how to compare learning outcomes, notional hours, content and competences should be clearly documented. Outcomes of applications for credit transfer should also be documented for future reference and to ensure consistence of decisions.

### B. Establishment of Central Database on CAT Activities

A central database of all CAT activities shall be established with a view to regulating adherence of the CATS to requirements.

### C. Establishment of Internal Quality Committees

Internal quality committees or control circles shall be established in every department or faculty to oversee the implementation of CAT procedures in the respective departments or faculties. The reports from the quality committees or control circles should feed into the broader institutional quality assurance framework.

### D. Development of Articulation and Access Procedures

Progression within and across education and training sub sectors should be clearly outlined. Further, articulation arrangements between education and training providers, for example; between University of Seychelles and Professional/ RPL Centres should be encouraged.

Feedback from teaching staff and learners on credit transfer should be obtained by means of surveys, learner-staff consultation meetings, staff questionnaires, staff sharing sessions and any other

appropriate means to assess the effectiveness of the CATS. As part of the regular programme review, institutions should include in programme review documents reports on CAT implementation together with statistical data, analysis and evaluation. Issues identified from the review should be dealt with promptly at the appropriate level.

## CHAPTER 8: FINANCING OF SNCATS IMPLEMENTATION

### A. At National Level

Successful implementation of this policy and guidelines shall require adequate financial, human and technical resources. Thus, SQA will seek funding from the Government driven by the annual budgetary provisions for the development and implementation of the SNCATS at national level. Additional support may be sought from development partners and non-state actors.

### B. At Education and Training Providers' Level

Education and training providers shall fund CAT activities from their operational budgets. Applicants may not be charged fees for CAT except that which is deemed administratively necessary.



## CHAPTER 9: CURRENT/POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IN THE SNCATS IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### A. Current/ Potential Challenges

1. Limited capacity of stakeholders in the development and implementation of CAT procedures
2. Limited capacity of stakeholders in the development of harmonised learning programmes, credit-bearing short courses and micro-credentials.
3. Differences in structure and content of learning programmes – lack of harmonisation, including of duration and credits.
4. Lack of clarity on the place of micro-credentials and short courses in the current SNQF.
5. Lack of trust among education and training institutions.
6. Absence of clear and transparent CAT quality assurance systems and procedures.
7. Learning outcomes approach: differences in understanding and application.
8. Lack of awareness on CAT among potential applicants, and other stakeholders.

### B. Possible Solutions to address the challenges

1. Capacity building of stakeholders in the development and implementation of CAT procedures in their institutions.
2. Capacity building of stakeholders in the development of harmonised learning programmes and credit-bearing short courses and micro-credentials.
3. Harmonisation of learning programmes, need for a common framework for development and accreditation of learning programmes, as well as criteria for registering qualifications on the SNQF.
4. Synergies between education and training institutions must be encouraged in order to

support cross-pollination of ideas and sharing of CAT best practises.

5. Stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation phases is key to the success of the SNCATS.
6. SNCATS Community of Practice for peer learning and sharing of good practice and solutions
7. Awareness creation on the availability of CAT in education and training providers and the benefits thereof.
8. Structures for CATS implementation to be put in place in education and training institutions.
9. CATS should be linked to the SNQF – determine applicability of CATS to SNQF Levels, including the introduction of levels on the SNQF for credit-bearing short courses/ micro-credentials.
10. Institutional commitment at national and institutional levels is a catalyst for a fruitful CATS.
  - I. CATS should be subjected to rigorous quality assurance, while at the same time, it should be utilised as a quality assurance tool.

## CHAPTER 10: MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SNCATS

### A. Monitoring and Evaluation

SQA should establish a SNCATS monitoring and evaluation strategy to ensure the policy objectives are monitored, tracked and evaluated. To this effect, SQA will support and work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to:

1. Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation tools and performance indicators that are integrated in the annual plans and development planning processes;
2. Develop and institutionalise tools for effective monitoring and evaluation; and
3. Facilitate peer sharing/ learning and promote transparency among the different SNCATS actors

### B. Research and Documentation

There should be strategies in place aimed at enhancing the collection, collation and analysis of data on SNCATS to inform policies, planning and decision-making.

### C. Reporting

Education and training providers shall submit reports to SQA (who will in turn keep a central national database on CAT), detailing the level of implementation of CAT. The information to be gathered will be key in informing decisions pertaining to the level and efficiency of implementation of SNCATS in particular, and the education and training sector in general. The information will also form an important input in policy making related to key priority national development sectors.

### D. Review of the SNCATS

The SNCATS should be subjected to regular reviews to ensure that it remains effective and up-to-date. The SNCATS shall be reviewed after every five years or any such other period as may be determined by SQA. Education and training providers shall also ensure that their guidelines and procedures are reviewed regularly, and updated as and when the SNCATS is revised or amended.

## ANNEXES

### A. Calculation of learner workload (example)

Learner workload is the basis upon which credits will be allocated under SNCATS. Understanding this term is the foundation upon which education and training providers can build the practice of credit allocation. Three components that constitute learner workload<sup>16</sup>. These are teaching, learning and assessment. There is a wide range of different methods of teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment has two main components; formative and summative. The figure below shows how learner workload can be calculated.

[A] Contact Time		[B] Independent Study Time	
Activity	Time Commitment (hours)	Activity	Time Commitment (hours)
Lecture		Preparation for scheduled work	
Tutorial		Completion of set tasks	
Seminar		Reading or practice	
Webinar		Conducting research	
Project supervision		Completing projects	
Demonstration		Revision work	
Practical work		Other work	
Field work			
External visit			

[C] Assessment Time		Total Study Time and Credits
Activity	Time Commitment (hours)	
Final written examination		<p><math>A + B + C = E</math> (notional study hours)</p> <p><math>E/10 = \text{Total credits for module}</math></p>
Tests		
Written assignments		
Presentations		
Dissertation		
Set exercises		
Oral examinations		
Practical skills assessment		

Figure 2: Calculation of learner work load.

Source: ZIMCHE (2017)

### B. Allocation of notional hours to a module/course/learning programme (example)

As an example, consider module/ course in Poultry Farming. The total time commitment in notional hours for the module/ course can be determined as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: Allocation of notional hours to a module/course/learning programme

Activity	Time Commitment (notional hours)
Contact time	

<sup>16</sup> Work-based experience is accounted for under contact time.

Activity	Time Commitment (notional hours)
Lectures	48
Tutorials	6
Group Seminars	4
Field Trips	4
Demonstrations	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>
<i>Independent study time (indicative)</i>	
Preparation for scheduled sessions	10
Writing assignments	8
Reading module material	20
Revision	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>
<i>Scheduled assessment time</i>	
Tests	1
Final Examination	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>120</b>

*Source: Adapted from ZIMCHE (2017).*

### C. Translation of notional hours into credits (example)

Based on the example in 12.2 above, and using the notional hour approach, the credit weighting for the module/ course in Poultry Farming is 12 credits ( $120/10 = 12$ ). The total credit weighting of a learning programme would be the sum of the credit weighting of all its constituent modules/ courses.

### D. How to convert credits obtained from different CAT Systems to the SNCATS (example)



**Figure 3: Types of credit systems**

In order to convert credits obtained using the ECTS to the SNCATS credits, multiply the ECTS credits by 2. In a similar manner, multiply AUCS credits by 4 to arrive at the equivalent SNCATS credits.

## E. Principles for credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>17</sup>

The EQF and national qualifications frameworks or systems, by using the learning outcomes approach, should better support individuals when moving (i) between various levels of education and training; (ii) within and between sectors of education and training; (iii) between education and training and the labour market; and (iv) within and across borders. Without prejudice to national decisions to (i) make use of credit systems; and (ii) relate them to national qualifications frameworks or systems, different credit systems, where appropriate, should work together with national qualifications frameworks or systems to support transitions and facilitate progression. To this aim, credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems where appropriate, should respect the following principles:

- 1) Credit systems should support flexible learning pathways, for the benefit of individual learners.
- 2) When designing and developing qualifications, the learning outcomes approach should be systematically used to facilitate the transfer of (components of) qualifications and progression in learning.
- 3) Credit systems should facilitate transfer of learning outcomes and progression of learners across institutional and national borders.
- 4) Credit systems should be underpinned by explicit and transparent quality assurance.
- 5) The credit acquired by an individual should be documented, expressing the acquired learning outcomes, the name of the competent credit awarding institution and, where relevant, the related credit value.
- 6) Systems for credit transfer and accumulation should seek synergies with arrangements for validation of prior learning, working together to facilitate and promote transfer and progression.
- 7) Credit systems should be developed and improved through cooperation between stakeholders at the appropriate national and Union levels.

## F. SNCATS implementation/action plan template

SN	POLICY ACTION AREA	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED DELIVERY DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1.	<b>Regulatory and Policy Framework:</b> Develop and strengthen legal and policy frameworks for equitable access and seamless progression within and	a) Integrate CATS policy in existing national legal and regulatory frameworks of education and training; b) Strengthen, if necessary, legislation of institutions charged with the responsibility of implementing and monitoring Credit Accumulation and Transfer; c) Integrate CATS into existing SNQF policies and strategies for recognition of skills and qualifications;	a) TBA  b) TBA  c) TBA  d) TBA	a) TBA  b) TBA  c) TBA  d) TBA

<sup>17</sup> These common principles are fully compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

SN	POLICY ACTION AREA	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED DELIVERY DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
	between qualification levels.	d) Synchronize national regulations with regional and global regulation if needed; e) Promote synergy between the existing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy, standards and guidelines and SNCATS.	e) TBA	e) TBA
2.	<b>A Common Framework for Programme Development:</b> Promote commonality in programme development process, design and assessment approaches to enable compatibility and transferability of qualifications.	a) Review the national programme development policy and ensure its coherence with SNCATS; b) Monitor implementation of the SNQF level descriptors which describe the level of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Credits that have been achieved;</li> <li>ii. Learning Outcomes;</li> <li>iii. Minimum entry requirement;</li> <li>iv. Volume of Learning.</li> </ul> c) Strengthen quality assurance systems to assure and ensure conformity to CATS standards and guidelines, and national and international standards of curriculum development; d) Strengthen collaborations between education and training providers in the development of programmes.	a) TBA  b) TBA  c) TBA  d) TBA	a) TBA  b) TBA  c) TBA  d) TBA
3.	<b>Institutional Framework:</b> Promote collaboration between stakeholders and institutions participating in CATS and build their capacity to promote accountability and quality of CATS processes.	a) Define the role of SNCATS actors; b) Assess the capacity of the existing SNCATS actors; c) Build capacities of SNCATS actors; d) Develop and implement institutional CAT procedures; e) Develop communities of practice and continued stakeholder involvement framework; f) Strengthen collaboration between parties implementing CATS through learning agreements and communities of practice.	a) TBA b) TBA  c) TBA d) TBA  e) TBA  f) TBA	a) TBA b) TBA  c) TBA d) TBA  e) TBA  f) TBA
4.	<b>Quality Assurance System:</b> Strengthen	a) Develop a national quality assurance policy and guidelines; b) Establish sectoral standardized CATS and processes;	a) TBA  b) TBA	a) TBA  b) TBA

SN	POLICY ACTION AREA	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED DELIVERY DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
	quality assurance systems in the qualifications' sector to promote quality.	c) Conduct an oversight to ascertain the quality of: programme development, assessment processes and CATS implementation; d) Establish a Monitoring & Evaluation framework for SNCATS; e) Build capacities of quality assurance agencies in quality assuring credit accumulation and transfer processes.	c) TBA  d) TBA  e) TBA	c) TBA  d) TBA  e) TBA
5.	<b>Awareness Creation and Publicity Campaign:</b> Promote countrywide awareness and publicity campaigns to promote ownership and transparency.	a) Develop and implement a SNCATS communication strategy; b) Ensure dissemination of the SNCATS to all stakeholders; c) Coordinate SNCATS piloting and national roll out.	a) TBA  b) TBA  c) TBA	a) TBA  b) TBA  c) TBA



## G. SNCATS Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix (National and Institutional Levels)

SN	GOAL	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
1.	Increased number of education/training providers capacity built in development and implementation of internal CATS procedures quarterly	Number of education/training providers capacity built in development and implementation of internal CATS procedures increased	Enhanced internal and external mobility of learners and workers	Percentage of education/training providers capacity built in development and implementation of internal CATS procedures	Cumulative number of education/training providers capacity built divided by the total number of accredited/recognised education/training providers multiplied by 100	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
2.	Increased number of education/training providers with internal CATS procedures per quarter	Number of education/training providers with internal CATS procedures increased	Enhanced internal and external mobility of learners and workers	Percentage of education/training providers with internal CATS procedures	Cumulative number of education/training providers with internal CATS procedures divided by the total number of accredited/recognised	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

SN	GOAL	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
					education/ training providers multiplied by 100						
3.	Increased number of education/ training providers with internal CATS implementatio n structures per quarter	Number of education/ training providers with internal CATS implementatio n structures increased	Enhanced internal and external mobility of learners and workers	Percentage of education/ training providers with internal CATS implementa tion structures	Cumulative number of education/ training providers with internal CATS implementation structures divided by the total number of accredited/ recognised education/ training providers multiplied by 100	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

SN	GOAL	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
4.	Increased number of education/training providers implementing CATS annually	Number of education/training providers implementing CATS increased	Improved international comparability and recognition of Seychelles qualifications.  Enhanced internal and external mobility of learners and workers	Percentage of education/training providers implementing CATS	Cumulative number of education/training providers implementing CATS implementation structures divided by the total number of accredited/recognised education/training providers multiplied by 100	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
5.	Increased number of learning programmes aligned to the SNCATS annually	Number of learning programmes aligned to the SNCATS increased	Improved international comparability and recognition of Seychelles qualifications.  Enhanced internal and	Percentage of learning programmes aligned to the SNCATS	Cumulative number of learning programmes aligned to SNCATS divided by the total number of active (current) learning programmes multiplied by 100	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

SN	GOAL	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
			external mobility of learners and workers								
6.	Increased number of education/training providers with local/international CATS collaborations/agreements annually	Number of education/training providers with local/international CATS collaborations/agreements increased	Improved international comparability and recognition of Seychelles qualifications.  Enhanced internal and external mobility of learners and workers	Percentage of education/training providers with local/international CATS collaborations/agreements	Cumulative number of education/training providers with local/international CATS collaborations/agreements divided by the total number of accredited/recognised education/training providers multiplied by 100	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

SN	GOAL	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
7.	Increased number of stakeholders sensitised on CATS quarterly	Number of stakeholders sensitised on CATS increased	Improved stakeholder participation in CATS	Number of CATS sensitisation workshops/seminars or other outreach activities conducted	Number of stakeholders sensitised on CATS against set target for the quarter	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
8.	Increased number of CAT applications processed annually	Number of processed CAT applications increased	Enhanced internal and external mobility of learners and workers	Number of CAT applications processed	Number of CAT applications processed during the year against the number of CAT applications processed in the previous year	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

## H. Glossary of Terms (from ACQF)

Source: ACQF (2021). *Thematic Brief 1. Concepts and definitions.*

<https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/thematic-briefs/acqf-thematic-brief-1-concepts-and-definitions>

### **Articulation:**

The process of forming systemic, specific and individual possibilities of connection between qualifications and/or part-qualifications to allow for the horizontal/ lateral, vertical and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system and its linkages with the world of work. Horizontal articulation is articulation within and between NQF Sub-Frameworks, on the same NQF level whereas vertical articulation is across NQF levels within an NQF Sub-Framework. Diagonal articulation refers to articulation across NQF levels and across NQF Sub-Frameworks.

### **Certificate:**

An official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following a standard assessment procedure.

### **Competence:**

Competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

### **Credential:**

Formal certification issued for successful achievement of a defined set of outcomes – for example, successful completion of a course in recognition of having achieved particular awareness, knowledge, skills or attitude competences; successful completion of an apprenticeship or traineeship.

### **Credit:**

‘Credit’ means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes.

**Credit transfer:** Means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context.

### **Employability:**

The degree of adaptability an individual demonstrates in finding and keeping a job, and updating occupational skills; relates to portable competences and qualifications that enhance an individual’s capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work.

### **Evaluation:**

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy, plan or programme, including its design, implementation and results. It aims to assess the relevance and fulfilment of objectives and strategies with the intention of informing decision-making. ‘Formative’ evaluation relates to ongoing activities and helps guide implementation. ‘Summative’ evaluation assesses the results of a particular initiative, after completion.

**Formal education and training:**

Education or training provided in educational institutions, such as schools, universities, colleges, or off-the-job in a workplace, usually involving direction from a teacher or instructor.

**Formative assessment:**

A range of formal, non-formal and informal ongoing assessment procedures used to focus teaching and learning activities to improve learner attainment, or which are required for the purpose of a year mark.

**Informal learning:**

Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured (in terms of objectives, time or learning support). Informal learning in most cases is unintentional from the learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification.

**Knowledge:**

Knowledge is central to any discussion of learning and may be understood as the way in which individuals and societies apply meaning to experience. It can therefore be seen broadly as the information, understanding, skills, values and attitudes acquired through learning. As such, knowledge is linked inextricably to the cultural, social, environmental and institutional contexts in which it is created and reproduced.

**Learning outcomes:**

Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

**Level descriptor:**

A statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

**Micro-credential:**

'Micro-credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

**Mobility:**

- The physical or virtual movement of individuals outside their country for the purpose of studying, researching, teaching, or working.
- Ability of an individual to move and adapt to a new occupational or educational environment. Mobility can be geographical or "functional" (a move to a new post in a company or to a new occupation, a move between employment and education); mobility enables individuals to acquire new skills and this increase their employability).

**Monitoring:**

Monitoring is the continuous and systematic collection of data on specific indicators in order to provide the main actors of an ongoing development intervention with indications as to the extent of progress and the achievement of objectives (in relation to allocated resources).

**Non-formal learning:**



Planned learning activities, not explicitly designated as learning, towards the achievement of a qualification or part qualification; often associated with learning that results in improved workplace practice.

#### **Prior learning:**

The knowledge, know-how and/or competences acquired through previously unrecognised training or experience.

#### **Qualification:**

Means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

#### **Qualifications framework:**

'A policy and instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.

#### **Qualifications system:**

This includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, QA processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. One feature of a qualifications system may be an explicit framework of qualifications.

#### **Recognition:**

'Formal recognition of learning outcomes' means the process of granting official status by a competent authority to acquired learning outcomes for purposes of further studies or employment, through (i) the award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); (ii) the validation of non-formal and informal learning; (iii) the grant of equivalence, credit or waivers.

#### **Recognition of prior learning:**

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which formal, non-formal and informal learning is measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system or workplace. (Source: National Policy for the Implementation of RPL: par 30).

The aim is to make it possible to obtain formal recognition for knowledge gained throughout life, such as in workplaces and own reading or experiences. The RPL process also entails providing support to a candidate to ensure that knowledge is discovered and displayed in terms of a relevant qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

#### **Skills:**

A bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learnt and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built upon and extended through learning.

#### **Validation of learning outcomes:**

Confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against pre-defined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

#### **Validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes:**

'Validation of non-formal and informal learning' means the process of confirmation by a competent authority that an individual has acquired learning outcomes acquired in non- formal and informal learning settings measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: identification through dialogue of

particular experiences of an individual, documentation to make visible the individual's experiences, a formal assessment of those experiences and certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.

## **I. B. Glossary of Terms (from Seychelles)**

Sources: Seychelles National Qualifications Framework (2024) and National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2024).

### **Accreditation:**

A process of assessment and review which enables a person, a tertiary education and training provider or a programme of education and training to be recognised and certified for a specified period of time by the SQA as meeting and conforming to appropriate standards of quality set by the SQA.

### **Appeal:**

The formal petitioning by an appellant to the Appeals Committee against a decision taken by the Authority.

### **Assessment criteria:**

The standards used to guide learning and assess learner achievement and/or to evaluate and certify competence.

### **Awarding body or institution:**

The body authorised to issue qualifications in the country of origin.

### **Competence:**

The knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal attributes combined with the underlying understanding needed to perform all or some of the functions of an occupation or a profession.

### **Course:**

A self-contained teaching or learning component of a programme that is integral to that programme, representing a discrete part of the learning to be achieved, and based on an overall clear aim, specific learning outcomes, content and assessment procedures.

### **Credit:**

A measure of the volume of learning required for a qualification or part-qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification or part-qualification, whereby 1 credit is equated to 10 notional hours of learning.

### **Credit accumulation:**

The process of acquiring credits for learning towards a qualification or part-qualification.

### **Credit transfer:**

The vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification on the same or different level, usually between different programmes, departments or institutions.

### **Foreign qualification:**

A qualification that either forms an intrinsic part of an education and training system other than Seychelles, and is awarded by an institution that is accredited or recognised in that system in accordance with the relevant laws, policies or general accepted practice or meets other specific criteria as determined and published by the Authority

### **International comparability:**

An analysis of how a qualification compares with and relates to similar international qualifications, best practices and standards.

**Learner:**

A person who is acquiring or has acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes, personal attributes or competencies.

**Learning outcomes:**

statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do upon completion of a learning process, defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and autonomy and responsibility.

**Level:**

one of ten levels of learning achievement arranged in ascending order according to which the SNQF is organised and to which qualification types are linked.

**Level:**

Descriptors statements used to describe a hierarchy of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility, and skills.

**Micro-credential:**

A record of focused learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do and includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by an accredited or recognised provider.

**Notional hours of learning:**

The estimated learning time taken by the average learner to achieve the specified learning outcomes of the course or programme and includes teaching contact time, non-contact time, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, and time spent in assessment processes.

**Part-qualification:**

An assessed unit of learning that is registered by the Authority, including a course, unit standard and a micro-credential.

**Programme:**

A planned combination of a coherent set of courses designed to meet the requirements of a qualification.

**Programme accreditation:**

recognition status granted to a programme by the Authority for a stipulated period of time after an evaluation by the Authority indicates that it meets standards of quality.

**Provider:**

An entity that intends to offer or is offering education and training in Seychelles, whether public or private, and registered as such by the ministry responsible for education or the Seychelles Qualifications Authority.

**Qualification:**

A registered national qualification.

**Qualification type:**

The specified nomenclatures for qualifications at particular levels set under the SNQF.

**Quality assurance:**

An ongoing process of evaluating and enhancing the quality of the education system, providers or programme, for ensuring that the required standards as determined by the Authority are maintained and enhanced.

**Quality assurance body:**



A body that is either legally mandated to undertake quality assurance within a national education and training system, or officially recognised within a framework as compliant with agreed quality assurance standards in a geographical area.

**Recognition of a foreign qualification:**

The formal acceptance of the appropriateness of a foreign qualification for a specific purpose.

**Recognition of prior learning:**

principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification or further learning and development.

**Unit standard:**

A statement of the outcome of any learning assessed, the type and quality of evidence that represents performance worthy of an award of credits, and the context in which that evidence should be demonstrated.

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