The effectiveness of mechanisms to support the recognition of migrants' skills in Southern Africa:

with a special focus on Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles and Tanzania

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Mechanisms to support the recognition of migrants' skills in Southern Africa:

with a special focus on Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles and Tanzania

Carmel Marock and Stephanie Allais
Singizi and Centre for Researching Education and Labour

Fieldwork: Carmel Marock, Renee Grawitsky, and Nosi Mandoyi

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ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
APEI	Accelerated Program for Economic Integration
AQVN	African Qualification Verification Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG-QA	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
AU	African Union
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
CEFA	Cape Engineers and Founders' Association
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CNMC	Malagasy National Certification Framework
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DPSM	Directorate of Public Service Management
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECCTIS	Education Counseling and Credit Transfer Information Service
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
EXCO	Executive Committee
FREC	Framework for Recognition and Equivalence of Certificates
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GOP	Gainful Occupation Permit
HAQAA	Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
HICs	High-income countries
ICT-BPO	Information Communication Technology – Business Process Outsourcing
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQFR	Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMAP	Labour Migration Action Plan

LMD	Licence Master Doctorat
LMIC's	Low and middle-income countries
MOE	Ministry of Education
MQA	Mining Qualifications Authority
MRC	Mutual Recognition of Qualifications
NACTE	National Council for Technical Education
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OAP	Onsite Assessment Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAQAAF	Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework
PAQAF	Pan-Africa Quality Assurance Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
QVN	Qualifications Verification Network
RECs	Regional Economic Community Secretariats
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RQF	Regional Qualification Framework
SA	South Africa
SAAEA	Southern Africa Association for Educational Assessment
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-CATS	SSouthern African Development Community Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems
SADC-HAQAA	SADC Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
SADC-QF	Southern African Development Community Qualification Framework
SADC-TCCA	SADC Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification
SADCCQF	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
QVN	Qualifications Verification Network
SAMM	Southern African Migration Management
SANAC	South African National Alignment Committee
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAQAN	Southern African Quality Assurance Network
SATUCC	Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council
SEIFSA	Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA)
SNQF	Seychelles National Qualifications Framework
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa

TCCA	Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TQF	Transnational Qualifications Framework
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
ZNQF	Zimbabwe National Qualifications Framework

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This report aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of systems and mechanisms to support the recognition of migrants' skills in the Southern Africa region with a special focus on Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles and Tanzania. This includes national and regional systems and mechanisms that are in place in both sending and receiving countries.

The recognition of migrants' skills is a complex issue. There are some indications that in many countries migrant workers, especially women, are over-represented in jobs that require skills and qualifications well below what they possess (OECD/ILO 2018; Crush et al. 2020; Amo-Agyei 2020). Lack of recognition of migrants' skills may also make it difficult at times for employers to find people with the skills they require (Werquin and Panzica 2019). Recognition of qualifications is believed to be a significant prerequisite to being capable of competing on equal terms with nationals in accessing employment, but also in improving employability and occupational mobility: the ILO Future of Work Report argues that "If learning is to become truly lifelong, skills must be portable. This requires establishing a common skills recognition framework, at both the national and international level" (ILO 2019, 31).

The issue of portability is also given expression in the ILO Convention on Migrant Workers (Convention 1975 (143) which states that, "A member may (…) after appropriate consultation with the representative organisations of employers and workers, make regulations concerning recognition of occupational qualifications acquired outside its territory, including certificates and diplomas" (Article 14) as well as the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which asserts that, "Special provisions should be designed to ensure recognition and certification of skills and qualifications for migrant workers" (Article 12). The emphasis on the portability of skills is also given expression in the ILO Guiding principles on the Access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, which states that, "Members should take steps to facilitate the portability of (…) skills accreditation and skills recognition of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons between countries of origin, transit and destination" (Article 19). This is taken further in Recommendation No. 195, which urges international cooperation to promote the recognition and portability of skills nationally and internationally. These conventions and resolutions all highlight the extent to which enabling the portability of skills is seen as critical to ensuring the transferability of skills.

Many countries have created mechanisms and systems for recognizing qualifications and skills. The specific aims of the project are therefore to understand:

i. The extent to which the systems for the recognition of qualifications and skills that are in place in Southern Africa, are benefiting migrant workers in practice and,

ii. Taking this learning into account, to explore if capacities of national administrations, Regional Economic Community secretariats (RECs) referring to SADC, COMESA and IOC, and skills systems need to be enhanced, and if so, which capacities should be the main focus.

To address these aims this study covers the following:

- An overview of the migration patterns in the SADC region.

- An overview of the implementation of the SADC Qualifications Framework and a description of the existing recognition and portability mechanisms that exist in SADC countries.

- An outline of the legal, policy, and institutional framework that supports SADC countries at the national level on the portability and recognition of migrant workers' skills.

- A description of the initiatives, instruments and services, at both national and regional level, (with a particular focus on SADC, COMESA and IOC) that are in place to support the portability and recognition of skills of migrant workers and their family members.

- An analysis of the extent to which these processes are perceived to be having a positive impact on the lives of individual migrants and on the economy.

The report was commissioned in August 2021 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project. The study is intended to contribute towards the work of the larger scope of the SAMM project, which is implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The project targeted the following regional organizations: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). In terms of countries, the project targets: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The research considers the SADC countries within the broader African context, and perspectives from other African regions are presented in places in this report to highlight where SADC is different and similar to the rest of the continent.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There is an international policy focus on, and extremely high hopes for, qualifications frameworks and associated mechanisms but without an accompanying literature on impact

The review of international and African documentation found that skills recognition is a high priority for policy makers, and that qualifications frameworks as well as recognition of prior learning systems and credit accumulation and transfer mechanisms are believed to be appropriate policy mechanisms for skill recognition. However, there is a dislocation between policy aspirations and the experiences of implementation to-date, and evaluations of the extent to which these mechanisms have actually been implemented and the functionality of these systems are not easily available in publicly available documentation.

There is no data about the ways in which these systems are supporting migrants to get their skills recognized. Further, while we could find limited data on the number of qualifications recognized per annum, there is no publicly available documentation that provides insights about the extent to which migrants are then able to access either education or work, nor is there a gender analysis on the impact of these processes. Rather, the focus seems to be on the systems for the systems sake, in the hope that at some point, when other aspects of migration are supported, that qualification recognition will then play a supportive role in enabling labour mobility—thereby enhancing employability prospects—and that qualifications frameworks will facilitate skill recognition.

There are numerous agreements, policies, tools and structures in Africa, and very extensive policies and mechanisms within Southern Africa, for the recognition of qualifications, but limited information about the extent to which these are benefitting migrant workers

The review of African documentation found that skill recognition has been a priority for many decades, with a series of conventions, agreements, policies, and tools having been put in place. More have been focused on university qualifications rather than on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) qualifications—and our research confirms that this is where demand from migrants and employers has been expressed. The most recent policy intervention is an African Continental Qualifications Framework that is under development, as well as national and regional qualifications that are being developed or have been targeted for development in many countries. The review of SADC documentation found a bewildering number of policy interventions, all of which aim in different ways to support recognition of skills and qualifications in the region, and all of which relate to each other in complex ways. What is clear is that evidence-based national migration policies recognizing the labour market needs (supply and demand)—rules and systems for allowing entrance, residence and work (for example, regularization schemes)—that are in place, or are in development in many countries need to be finalized first, and once this is done, qualification and skills recognition could play a supportive role.

In most cases **visa requirements are complex and have distinct purposes, involving many ministries and agencies and qualification recognition bodies.**

Emerging strongly from the study is a question about whether the challenges facing migrants relating to wage differentials, employability and occupational mobility can be addressed by the recognition mechanisms in place in the region given the complicated regulatory environment pertaining to work permits. Interview responses suggest three notable trends in SADC: first, that visa allocation is driven by national analysis of skills shortages, and usually related to specifically designated sectors and occupations; second, and related to this, is that these Skills Lists primarily focus on the need for foreign workers that are highly skilled; and thirdly, that processes are complex and cumbersome for migrants and employers and there is very little information available about them. The review of key role players across the continent that was conducted as part of the study, found that while respondents from West African countries were most optimistic about the ability of people from their country to have their qualification recognized in other countries in the region, and that there is some degree of confidence from respondents in the SADC region that it is easier for migrants who are moving to a country with a qualifications framework, as yet there is no publicly available evidence of the ways in which these conventions, policies, and tools are effectively domesticated and the extent to which they are being effectively implemented.

There have been considerable delays in the implementation of both national and regional qualification frameworks

The interview data validates the document review, confirming that SADC is more "advanced" than the rest of the continent in terms of developing national qualifications frameworks. However, most countries are still in the early stages of implementation of their frameworks. Actual implementation appears slow in most cases and in one case appears to have been delayed for several years. The interview data validates the document review, showing that only Seychelles and, South Africa have formally aligned their national frameworks to the regional framework, Mauritius has submitted their alignment report to the technical committee in charge, and other countries are described as being in the process of doing so. Some interviewees from countries described in the documentation as unaligned were not aware of the formal status of their frameworks from the perspective of the SADC structures and processes. There is little indication to-date of whether or not this has had any impact on the ways in which migrants' qualifications are recognized.

Multiple processes to support the recognition of qualifications are widely required by authorities in different countries

There is a high level of agreement from TVET stakeholders across the continent that migrants' qualifications need legal verification to ensure that they are legitimate, with close to 90% of survey respondents from the SADC region selecting this option. This is not very different from the picture in East and West Africa, where over 80% of survey respondents selected this option; the lowest number is from two Central African countries, at 60%. The process of legally verifying qualifications was not seen as a very lengthy one and respondents are fairly evenly split between stating that it takes less than a month, and between 3 to 6 months. This is confirmed for each of the individual countries of SADC

as well. In terms of recognition of qualifications for the purposes of further study, respondents explained that qualifications need to be recognized by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level, that the curriculum is adequate, and to check if the duration of the learning programme is sufficient. Again, the process of verification was widely seen as lasting between one and six months. Similarly, findings within SADC. indicate that in terms of recognition of qualifications for the purpose of access to the labour market, there is a requirement for qualifications authorities to conduct a verification process that 'ensures a match with learning outcomes and level on the qualifications framework,' with some role for professional associations. Respondents also suggest that it takes somewhat longer to verify qualifications for accessing work than for accessing further study.

Interviews in SADC suggest that the times indicated are the anticipated timelines but that they are unrealistic, and in fact processes generally take longer. In SADC, where the qualifications framework is considered the most advanced, many respondents suggest that, over and above the requirement for ensuring a match with respect to learning outcomes and level, the qualification must also be verified by a national agency to ensure that the curriculum is adequate and to check if the duration of the learning programme is sufficient. This suggests an inverse relationship between the extent to which policy mechanisms such as qualifications frameworks are in place and the complexity and cumbersomeness of processes and systems for verification of skills and qualifications, with implications for visa processes. Further, we found that the awarding institution and its status in the country of origin seems to be the major factor in the speed of processing qualifications, and not relationships between national qualifications frameworks and the regional qualifications framework. Of additional concern is that few respondents across the continent indicate that employers have any say as to which qualifications meet their requirements or even whether certain qualifications are appropriate. This has particular implications where, for example, migrants are applying against a scarce skills visa. Similarly, with some exception in West Africa, the study found that respondents did not agree that recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is an industry and/or bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in.

Qualification verification records are low in relation to migrant numbers and provide limited information
The numbers of migrants in the SADC region who have their qualifications officially verified by organs of the state are a tiny fraction of the number of migrants in the region. In addition, publicly available data does not enable an analysis of how recognition systems have pegged the level of the qualification (as compared to the level in their country of origin), the extent to which these processes are supporting migrants to work at their correct skills levels: there is no indication of levels of qualifications or gender break down. There is also an absence of data as to how many female and male migrants have skills recognized through other processes.

Interview data suggests that **migrants who get qualifications verified are**

primarily applying for higher education qualifications to be verified. **The biggest challenges are for recognition and hiring of workers with mid-level (TVET) skills. Further, there are significant challenges faced by migrants in an irregular situation and those in the informal economy.** These challenges in part relate to the finding from our limited sample of employers surveyed, who suggest that political factors, such as pressure on, and from, politicians to employ locally, are more important than qualification recognition in terms of barriers to employing migrants.

Qualification recognition is, however, still a concern. Interviews confirm that qualification recognition systems strongly focus on higher-level skills, and that the biggest challenges are for mid-skilled and low-skilled workers, as well as for the recognition of skills that only relate to some aspect of work within a particular occupation. Again, political considerations, related to a strong focus on local employment and access to services, over-ride the potential logic of qualification recognition systems. **Recognition of prior learning systems are seen as important, but in some countries are not available for migrants, particularly migrants in an irregular situation or those in the informal economy,** and in most are not well-functioning. In addition, both in terms of accessing further study or the labour market, few respondents across the continent indicate that **there is very little counselling and support for migrants.** In line with a gap in the documentation, interviewees were not able to provide insight into any counselling and other support services available to individuals who need skills and qualifications recognized.

Key priorities for capacity building

1. The most important area for capacity building is data gathering and analysis: there is an extreme lack of systematic data on migrant numbers from a range of perspectives, of which skills and qualifications are only one. Significantly, this means that the activity and systems around skill and qualification recognition are not based on any analysis of where the real needs of migrant workers and employers in the destination countries are or an evaluation of the extent to which these interventions are having the intended impact. Work being done, including as part of the SAMM initiative, has already contributed to an increased understanding of this picture but further work in this regard would be vital to allow for more targeted interventions (including different forms of. recognition, in identified sectors and for specific cohorts). Additional work in this area could include analysis of current patterns of skills mismatch among migrants as reported in the empirical literature.

2. Countries and regions need assistance with high-level coordination with regard to migration systems. This requires a shared understanding of what is to be achieved and how this can best be achieved. Two priorities out of this study emerge:
   – Qualification recognition for the purpose of employment systems for migrants with high levels of qualifications and skills need to be streamlined. That is, where there are recognition arrangements (either through the alignment of the qualification framework system or in terms of institutional recognition)

it should not be necessary to review the details of the curriculum, et cetera.
- There is a need for an understanding of how best to recognize the qualifications and skills of migrants with lower levels of skills. An intervention that emerges from the international literature in this relate relates to the need to provide job seeker support to migrants. Further, this could include targeted RPL mechanisms that are coupled with interventions to address any identified gaps. Planning in this regard would need to take into account the wider political and economic context and the reality that these will be most effective as targeted interventions rather than as a large-scale solution to ensuring the rights of migrant workers are realized.

The relationship of these processes to the development of scarce skills lists should be considered including with respect to who is involved in these processes, how often they are reviewed, and then extent to which they take vacancies into account.

These priorities point to the need for more realism about what can and cannot be achieved through qualification recognition systems and to ensure there is an on-going process of coming back to the problem that is being addressed and understanding the extent to which the interventions are contributing to changes in this regard.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the study has four main components: an analysis of key reports and policy documents; a survey with role players across Africa; focused interviews with officials from qualifications authorities in 6 SADC countries (Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles and Tanzania) as well as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) authorities; and an in-depth focus on two countries through interviews with employer associations and a survey of their members. The focus on TVET role-players was decided on given that TVET systems engage with skills for mid-level and semi-skilled workers, and that this seems to be (and this was confirmed in our interviews) the area where formal systems for recognition of skills are least functional.

This section of the report provides a brief overview of each of the four components of the methodology. However, before commencing with them, we started with an in-depth analysis of migration trends in the region, to inform our sampling and analysis, and this is presented first.

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3.1. Analysis of Migration Trends in The Region

In order to select countries to focus on, we undertook an analysis of the available data pertaining to migration in SADC and selected the 4 countries that attract the most migrants. We also considered those countries where there has been considerable work on qualification frameworks (based on the literature review) and selected 4 additional countries on this basis.

The four countries, in SADC, with the largest number of migrants are South Africa, the DRC, Angola, and Tanzania. In 2019, the total number of migrants in the SADC region was estimated at 7,877,165. Angola, DRC, South Africa and Tanzania accounted for 6 366 734 or 81% of the total migrant numbers in the region as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Four SADC countries receiving the largest number of migrants

Country	Number of Migrants
South Africa	4, 224, 256
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	963, 833
Angola	669, 479
Tanzania	509, 166
TOTAL	6, 366, 734

Source: Crush et al (2020)

Taking into account countries that have been particularly active in qualification framework related work we have also explored developments taking place in Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Seychelles. Botswana and Namibia account for 110 596 (1.40%) and 107 561 (1.37%) respectively while Mauritius' and Seychelles' "total stock" of migrants was 28 849 (0.37%) and 12 926 respectively (0.16 %) (Crush et al. 2020). Combined, the eight countries mentioned above accounted for just over 84% (6,626,666) of the total migrant stock of 7,877,165 in the region, as seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample of countries with total migrant numbers for 2019

Country	Number of Migrants
South Africa	4, 224, 256
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	963, 833
Angola	669, 479
Tanzania	509, 166
Botswana	110, 596
Namibia	107, 561
Mauritius	28, 849
Seychelles	12, 926
TOTAL	6, 626, 666

Source: Crush et al (2020)

The numbers above are based on UN DESA data drawn from the Final Report for Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) Project Stocktaking of Work on Labour Migration in the Southern African Region, 2020. The SAMM report also used ILOSTAT data from either country level censuses or labour force surveys. However, both are not necessarily sufficiently thorough and robust in capturing employment status of migrants. There is a serious lack of comprehensive official statistical data on migrant workers at the national, regional and global levels. Nonetheless, the available data does give a good sense of which countries are the biggest destination countries for migrants in the SADC region and offers an indication of the relative number of migrants in the 4 additional countries that were selected based on their involvement in work related to the recognition of qualifications. A detailed analysis of sectors in which migrants are employed is presented in Appendix 1.

The remainder of this section explains the four components of the research methodology.

3.2 Document & Desktop Review

The numbers above are based on UN DESA data drawn from the Final Report for Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) Project Stocktaking of Work on Labour Migration in the Southern African Region, 2020. The SAMM report also used ILOSTAT data from either country level censuses or labour force surveys. However, both are not necessarily sufficiently thorough and robust in capturing employment status of migrants. There is a serious lack of comprehensive official statistical data on migrant workers at the national, regional and global levels. Nonetheless, the available data does give a good sense of which countries are the biggest destination countries for

migrants in the SADC region and offers an indication of the relative number of migrants in the 4 additional countries that were selected based on their involvement in work related to the recognition of qualifications. A detailed analysis of sectors in which migrants are employed is presented in Appendix 1.

The remainder of this section explains the four components of the research methodology.

3.3. Survey Sent to Role Players in The System

The second component of the methodology was a survey that was sent to a wide range of role players and experts in TVET systems, via email. The survey explored aspects of qualification recognition for TVET qualifications. The survey was sent to role players across sub Saharan Africa (rather than just to SADC countries) as well as to a diverse set of respondents so that we could compare developments in Southern Africa to other regions in sub Saharan Africa and also so that we could access a broad response from a range of different role players. We also sent the questionnaire directly to qualification authorities however we only obtained responses from 8 English speaking countries: Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

This methodology section highlights the responses received across SSA although this report particularly captures the findings from the SADC region. The response rate was as follows: In total, we had 223 responses, of which 139 were from the SADC region, and 29 specifically from South Africa. Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of responses per region, showing that the majority of responses are from the SADC region, with very few from East Africa, and insignificant numbers from Central Africa.

Figure 1: Response per Region
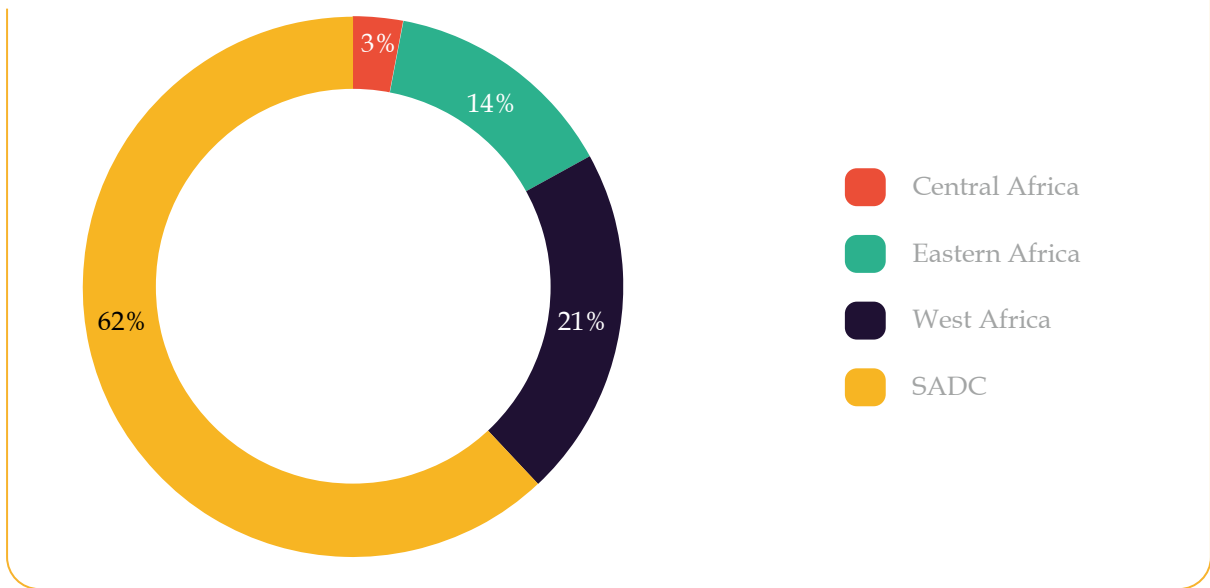
Figure 2 below shows the country break-down within SADC. It is noted that it is only for the countries with large numbers of responses that meaningful analysis of differentiation by stakeholder type can be done.

Figure 2: Response per SADC country

In which African Country (SADC)
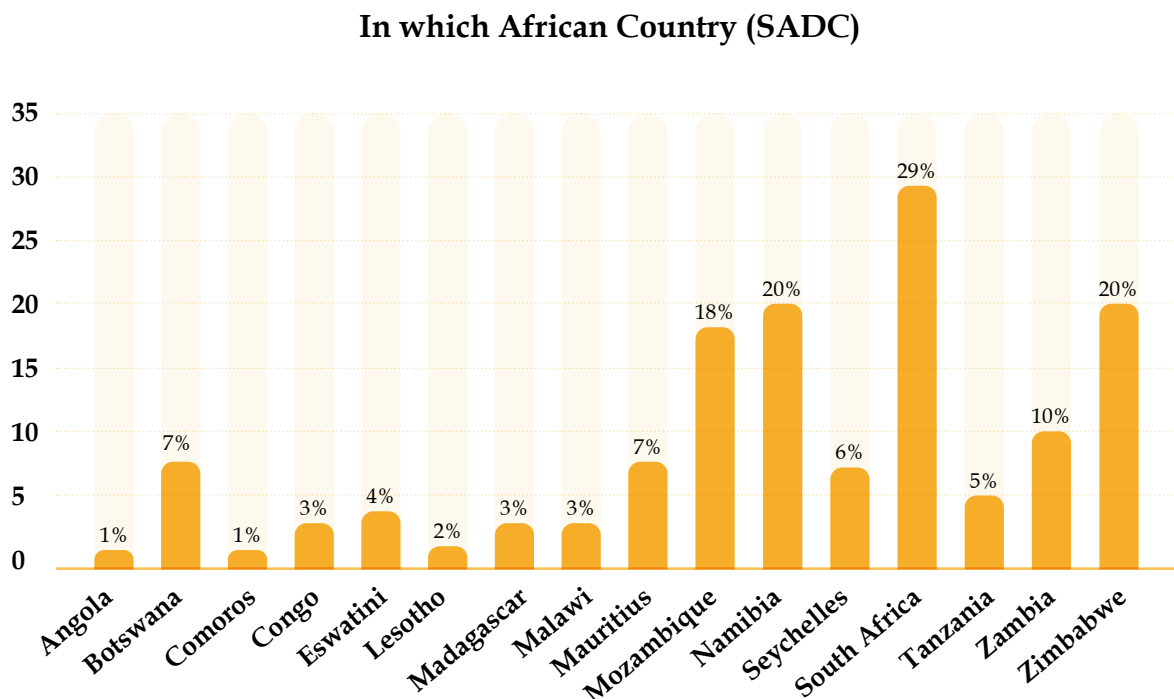
Finally, Figure 3 below provides a breakdown of the categories of respondents.

How would you describe your organisation or institution (Representation of SADC Countries)
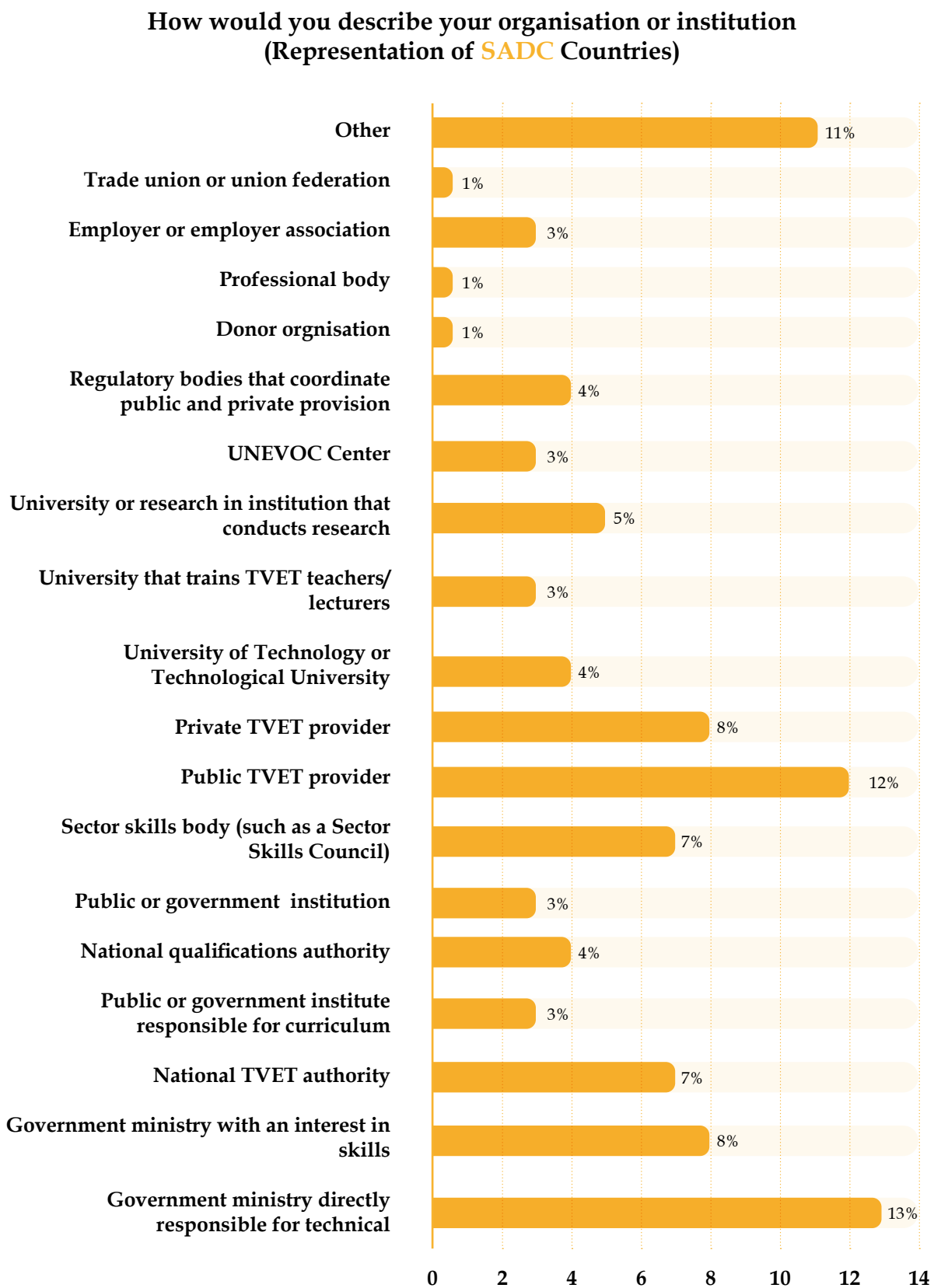
The role-player survey questions are attached as Appendix 2.

3.4.   Interviews with Qualifications and TVET authorities

The third component of the methodology was interviews with qualifications authorities, TVET authorities and from the regional structures of particular interest to this study. These interviews focused on understanding the way in which the system operates and specifically the ways in which these support the recognition of the qualifications and/or skills of migrants. We also probed whether these bodies are aware of the effect that this work has had for migrants and for the ability of employers to recruit individuals with the requisite skills and qualifications. We interviewed individuals from two of the three regional structures as well as qualification authorities or relevant structures in 6 countries. Interviews conducted to-date include representatives with the following institutions:

- Tanzania National Council for Technical Education (NACTE)

- Tanzania: Arusha Technical College

- Botswana Qualifications Authority

- Botswana Human Resource Development Council

- Botswana Department of Teacher Training and TVET

- Seychelles Qualification Authority

- Seychelles Ministry of Education

- Namibian Qualification Authority

- Namibian Training Authority

- South Africa: South African Qualifications Authority

- Mauritius Qualification Authority

We also conducted interviews with representatives of regional structures: COMESA (Programme coordinator COMESA secretariat); the SADC Secretariat; and the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC). The interview instruments are attached as Appendix 3

3.5.   In-depth focus on two countries: employer perspectives

The fourth component of the methodology was a deeper dive in two countries to review in more depth, from the perspective of professional bodies and employers, the extent to which the qualification frameworks enable migrants to have their skills recognised and be employed in roles that recognise these skills. In the two countries we selected we considered the economic sectors where most migrants are 'employed' in or find themselves in based on the analysis of the sectoral data that we could access: it is however acknowledged that there are limitations with respect to the data availability on the sectors that get the most migrants and in many cases interviewees had differing views as to which sectors attracted the highest number of migrants. There is also an absence of data relating to the sectors themselves and whether migrants are employed in low skilled or high skilled jobs within these sectors. Below, we provide an overview of the best estimates of how many non-citizens work in different sectors in these two countries with the most migrants ; as indicated, this assisted us to determine sectors from which we should interview employers. However, we also took into account the views offered by interviewees about the sectors that are attracting the highest number of migrants into particular skills categories (given that we wanted to ensure we had one

sector that employed migrants in high skill jobs and the other sector that also employed migrants at lower skills levels). Note: the analysis of the sectors in the other countries in the study are contained in Appendix 1. Table 3 below provides an overview of the estimated percentage of non-citizens working in different sectors in South Africa. It shows that the sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: trade (30%); Services (12%); Construction (12%); Private households (11%) and Manufacturing (10%).

Table 3: Estimates of percentage of non-citizens per sector, South Africa

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture	6%
Mining	3%
Manufacture	10%
Utilities	0%
Construction	12%
Trade	30%
Transport	4%
Financial	10%
Services	12%
Private Households	11%
Other	0%
All	100%

Source: ILOSTAT data in the Final report for Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project, Stocktaking of Work on Labour Migration in the Southern African region, 2020, based on UN DESA data.

As is evident from Table 4, the sector that appears to employ the highest number of migrants is trade. However, given we wished to focus on a sector with high skill occupations and a sector with lower level skill, we considered the above as well as the views of interviewees and selected manufacturing and services. Table 4 below provides the numbers for Botswana. It shows that the sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Construction (6 400); Agriculture, hunting and forestry (5 600); Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households (5 500); Manufacturing (4 400); Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household good (3 700); Real estate, renting and business activities (3 200); Other community, social and personal services activities (3 100); Education (2 900) and Health and Social Work (1 600).

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1 Based on ILOSTAT date in the Final report for Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project stocktaking of work on labour migration in the southern African region, 2020, and from Department of Labour (2017). Further, as the data comes from different sources and for this reason some of the data is presented in percentages and some in numbers.

Table 4: Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, Botswana

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting and forestry	5 600
Mining and quarrying	800
Manufacturing	4 300
Utilities (electricity and water supply)	800
Construction	6 400
Wholesale and retail trade, repair, of personal and household goods	3 700
Hotels and restaurants	900
Transport, Storage, communications	1 300
Real estate, renting and business activities	3 200
Public administration and defence, complusory social security	100
Education	2 900
Health and social work	1 600
Other community, social and personal services activities	3 100
Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households	5 500

Source: Based on ILOSTAT data in the Final report for Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project stocktaking of work on labour migration in the southern African region, 2020 based on UN DESA data.

As is evident from Table 4, the sector that appears to employ the highest number of migrants is construction: we therefore selected this sector and then selected manufacturing as a sector with high skill occupations.

We interviewed employer associations and professional bodies to assess their perceptions of how the qualifications of migrants are recognised in their sector, and the extent to which this contributes to improving the lives of individual migrants as well as the ability of the employers to secure the skills that they require. We also asked the associations to distribute surveys to their members. The employer survey and interview instruments are included in Appendix 4 and 5 respectively. Thus far we have undertaken interviews with employers in SA (Engineering and restaurants) and Botswana (Business Association and the Botswana Engineering professional registration board). These associations then shared the employer survey with their members. Ultimately we received 38 responses from SA (members of the Cape Engineers and Founders' Association (CEFA) and the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA). Of these 27 of these companies are in the manufacturing sector and 11 are in construction, mining and steel. Of these only 9 indicated that they employ migrants and 3 were unsure. We followed up on multiple occasions with employers in the restaurant industry in South Africa as well as from members of the associations in Botswana but did not receive responses despite the support of the employer associations who encouraged members to respond.

4. DESKTOP REVIEW

This review provides an analysis of available documentation about policies, strategies, and institutional frameworks that focus on the link between skills, employment, and migration. We start with a brief consideration of international practices, and then focuses on documents that describe systems for the recognition of migrant qualifications in regions in Africa. We consider any information that is available from this documentation that indicates the extent to which these systems are contributing to the intended impact.

4.1. International Overview

An analysis of challenges facing migrants globally is provided by a ILO report, which highlights a key challenge facing migrants relating to wage differentials. The report provides the findings of an analyses of wage data from 49 countries, 33 high-income countries (HICs) and 16 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). These countries host nearly half of all migrant workers world-wide (Amo-Agyei 2020, iii). The key findings of the report note that on average, migrant workers in HICs earn 12.6 per cent less than nationals. Women migrant workers face a "double wage penalty", as both women and migrants, with the wage gap between men nationals and women migrants at 20.9 per cent in HICs. Of these women, care workers face even more wage penalties, with the wage gap between national and migrant care workers at 26.4 per cent (Amo-Agyei 2020, 77). The ILO report also notes that despite similar levels of education, migrant workers earn less than nationals in HICs and are more likely to occupy low-skilled and low-paying jobs that do not match their qualification level. In selected LMICs and HICs, 62.4 per cent of migrant workers are informally employed, and the majority of these roles are occupied by women (Amo-Agyei 2020).

In response to these challenges of wage differentials and the limited recognition of the skills of migrants, there are a range of policy initiatives and systems that attempt to improve the ways in which migrants' skills are recognized. First, there are Skills Recognition Agreements, which are international treaties or agreements, involving governments and their agencies. Different types of recognition agreements exist—unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral; they are often signed at the sub-regional or regional level. They can be stand-alone or part of trade agreements and are mostly based on the principle of equivalence and mutual recognition. Second, there are qualification frameworks, one of the key focuses of this research, which are developed by Qualification authorities, accredited training bodies, or assessment bodies, under the auspice of government. Third, professional standards and occupational standards are sometimes used by professional bodies, employers organizations, public authorities, tripartite bodies and public authorities to award professional designations to individuals that meet the requirements. Fourth, credential evaluation is related to qualifications frameworks but an additional step: a competent body evaluates the content of a foreign qualification and then (sometimes another body) takes a decision to recognize it, partially or fully. Fifth, recognition of prior learning is the process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, informal and non-formal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training. It can involve institutions such as public employment services, vocational education and training institutions and other accredited training providers, as well as qualifications authorities. Sixth, credit transfer and exemption is a process that allows to obtain credit for successfully

completing a unit of competency/module in one course transferred to or accepted by another training program in the same country or foreign countries. This research particularly focused on qualifications frameworks, as this has been the major focus of policy within SADC, but the other mechanisms are related to the implementation of the SADC qualifications frameworks, and are also discussed where information is available.

We begin this review of policy documents and research findings with a high level international overview of the extent to which migrants globally face challenges in their destination countries, to ground the analysis of the SADC region in broader research findings. We then provide a synopsis of the interventions that are being suggested by key agencies to address these challenges. This is because it is important to locate the analysis of both challenges and potential solutions in Africa in an analysis of challenges internationally as well as evidence on how challenges are being dealt with. The international analysis is followed by a focus on Africa and Southern Africa in particular. We start with regional qualifications frameworks, as key policies intended to facilitate mobility; this is followed by a discussion of mechanisms to recognise qualifications of migrants in the destination country, and the implementation of 'recognition of prior learning' systems; we then briefly mention the role that technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions can play in terms of skills recognition, particularly with regard to mid-level skills.

The development of international qualifications frameworks as a 'transparency tool' to understand different systems is argued by some policy makers and international agencies as important to recognize migrants' skills and support international labour mobility (Wedekind, Fakoush, and Alla-Mensah 2019). The European Training Foundation argues that for individuals, a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) will make it easier to describe their broad level of competence to recruiters in other countries and make it simpler to read across from one qualification system to another, such as when looking for further education and training opportunities (ETF 2021).

The assumption is that qualification frameworks will support the recognition of the skills of migrants, making it possible to fully integrate migrants into the labour market and to access employment that fully utilises their skills. This in turn, it is hoped, would ensure that the labour and skills needed in critical occupations and sectors are available. In other words, recognition of skills is believed to support integration of skilled migrants in ways that are seen as valuable for individuals as well as employers and national economies.

An example of where such a mechanism has been put in place to enable the recognition of migrants' skills is offered by the European Qualifications Framework. The European Qualifications Framework is described as an (ILO 2020), learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualifications. It is intended to play the role of a 'translation tool' between different national qualifications frameworks in Europe (EU 2021). The hope is that it will enable the comparison of qualifications and qualification levels across European countries (EU 2021) and that this will encourage mobility and lifelong learning (EU 2021).

However, even in the case of Europe, the only region where there is any substantial movement towards countries 'referencing' their qualifications on a regional framework, there is no evidence

that this in itself has facilitated mobility—that is an increased ability to access work visas—or employability. A report which identifies and analyses evaluations of policy effectiveness through a review of impact evaluations conducted globally observed that they could not find any evaluation studies that focus "on the impact of the recognition of foreign qualification" (Bilgili 2015, 18) and recommends that further research is required in this regard to substantiate their effectiveness.
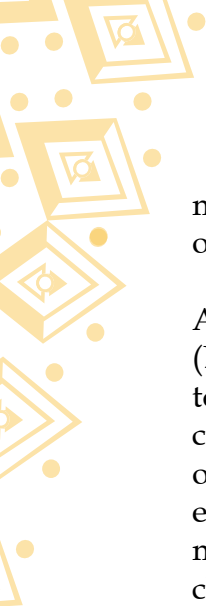
Instead, we found that much of the evaluative literature is circular—it evaluates the extent to which its own policy mechanisms are in place instead of establishing the ways in which these have been implemented and the impact that this has had on the initial objectives. So for example, an evaluation of the EQF in 2013 (ICF GHK 2013) attempts to evaluate the extent to which the EQF has contributed to mobility, but does this by exploring the extent to which countries have 'benchmarked' their qualifications on the regional framework. It attempts to evaluate the extent to which the EQF has improved the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and does this by an evaluation of the extent to which countries have adopted learning outcomes. The assumption seems to be that the adoption of such policy mechanisms in itself will support skill recognition and whether this in turn contributes to improved mobility—but this is precisely what needs to be tested by research.

This type of circularity is echoed by an evaluation of the Irish framework, which argues that 'Adopting a learning outcomes approach when developing curricula, is seen by many European countries as an effective way to ensure the successful matching of education and training provision to learner and labour market needs' (Indecon 2017, iv). The Irish report is more focused on aspects of real-life achievements than most—and it concludes that the framework in Ireland has made it easier for Irish qualifications to be understood, compared, and valued in other countries; improved the interface between qualifications and the world of work; that the vocational qualifications signal relevant skills and competencies for occupations; and that the framework has facilitated a better matching of skills and competencies required for particular occupations. However, while it is admirable that the evaluation focused on these issues, only 7% of the 781 stakeholders surveyed were employers or employer associations.

Closely related to the development of international qualifications frameworks is the imperative that is placed on countries to have a system in place to support the recognition of the qualifications that migrants hold and to ensure their articulation with the relevant qualification on the destination's country's national qualification framework. Having a recognition system is seen, by policy makers and the development community, as integral to facilitating labour mobility and labour market integration (BILT 2020). However, there are multiple challenges that arise in this process. Wedekind, Fakoush, and Alla-Mensah (2019) suggest that many skills and competencies that are recognized across borders and occupations are at the higher and university levels, while recognition at the technical level is not as prevalent. They argue further that it can take time to find common ground among the various relevant actors in the field of recognition and the challenge remains that there are different conceptions, quality, and institutional provisions of TVET across countries and regions. Also, recognition procedures require the submission of previously acquired certificates, but

migrants may have acquired skills in informal settings, have incomplete documents or may generally be missing documents — particularly if they have fled their country.

A report from a workshop on 'Migration and TVET' held at University of Nottingham (BILT 2020) observed that addressing these challenges calls for innovative procedures to recognize skills or foreign vocational qualifications, which relies on stakeholder coordination and informing migrants, relevant authorities and employers about opportunities for recognition. Participants in the workshop suggest that a tailored educational and employment roadmap would allow for a quick entry into the labour market and subsequent upskilling to enable integration. Specifically to address the challenge that migrants may have acquired skills in informal settings, participants in the workshop discussed a need for recognition of prior learning (RPL) policies and mechanisms with the hope that they will assist migrants' integration into host countries' education and training systems as well as labour markets. The assertion is that RPL mechanisms should be coupled with the deepening of cross-system understanding and the ability to adapt exist curricula or offer flexible courses that address specific gaps, as well as a system that can match migrants to occupations and employers before arriving in host countries (Wedekind, Fakoush, and Alla-Mensah 2019; BILT 2020).

The ILO has developed guidelines that seek to address these challenges and facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers (ILO 2020). The guidelines focus on the labour market services that could be made available to migrant workers. In particular, the guidelines indicate how to provide assistance in the recognition of skills and qualifications including both recognition of qualifications acquired in the country of origin and recognition of informal and non-formal learning outcomes, recognition of qualifications for licensed and technical occupations, the recognition of informal and non-formal learning outcomes and that reflected on the management and methodologies that that can be used to obtain recognition.

The ILO guidelines reiterate the views outlined above, which is that the implementation of recognition systems is challenging, and raises a number of considerations in this regard. These include that: the skills certificates are sometimes insufficiently recognized or valued by employers in the labour market or by institutions of learning. This makes it difficult for certificate holders to use them as a springboard to new careers and paths of learning; recognition providers do not have the capacity to provide services for a growing number of potential users; and, there is a lack of awareness of labour market structures and potential users may have difficulty in accessing them. The ILO suggests that employment services providers could assist migrants to access to skills recognition processes by: a) providing information, guidance and assistance to migrants, b) preparing migrants for the recognition process, c) playing an active role in supporting migrants through liaising with the agencies involved and providing translation and interpretation services throughout the process and acting as a mediator between the assessor and the migrant worker seeking RPL, d) developing a learning plan to fill in the gaps for migrants where there is no recognition, e) using the certificates or partially recognized skills to assist migrants to access the labour market where there is full recognition.

However, even with these guidelines they caution that the recognition of prior learning

may prove costly if there are large numbers of applications although they observe that this does depend on the assessment method, the level of qualification aspired and the assessment material required (Werquin and Panzicia 2019).

A review of impact evaluations of the kinds of initiatives that could support the integration of migrants, including through the recognition of qualifications and skills (Bilgili 2015), concludes that there are "promising results" for interventions that directly target the job search process. They observe that where programmes provide "time-intensive counselling" for a small number of 'job-ready' immigrants and refugees at risk of long-term unemployment this produces successful outcomes. This job search support is intensive and includes assistance "at all stages of labour market entry.

Further, a UNEVOC report (de Otero et al. 2020) highlights the competencies needed by migrant students to facilitate their integration into society and labour markets (although Bilgili 2015 critiques this). It notes that "as with local students, migrant students must develop awareness of diversity, inclusion, and cultural expectations." They acknowledge that language proficiency is the most crucial skill for the successful integration of migrants and also point to the importance of entrepreneurial competencies being a focus of these interventions. This report also reiterates the need for migrant students to be given the opportunity to learn technical and professional competencies required by specific occupations and jobs. One example of the way in which refugees have been integrated into the vocational education system in Germany is provided by BIBB: data from this project show that the number of foreign trainees in the German dual system had increased by almost 100% in 10 years. The intervention, entitled, 'Perspectives for young refugees', is an initiative of the German Federal Employment Agency and offers a six to eight-month programme that includes identifying previous knowledge and experience, teaching professional language skills, training in how to undertake job applications, providing information about addiction and debt prevention, and the basics of healthy living. Plus, the programme also gives migrants the opportunity to participate in work assignments in which the participants gain practical experience inside companies (BIBB, 2018).

The role of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in supporting the recognition of skills or addressing gaps that are identified was also highlighted by participants in the TVET and Migration Workshop discussed above (BILT 2020). The workshop participants suggested that this could be achieved through TVET Colleges offering technical skills coupled with a focus on language and culture to facilitate social integration. These elements are expanded upon by Wedekind, Fakoush, and Alla-Mensah (2019) highlight that in addition to language and culture there is a need for a focus on career guidance for migrants, mental health provision in order to ease their entry of migrants into labour markets. If TVET is to play this role effectively, partnerships between public and private sector players are necessary and suggested that for TVET to be able to do this effectively there is a need for international collaboration from within and outside Europe in order to share good practices and solutions.

Below we provide four examples of international initiatives to support skills recognition of migrants, drawn from Wedekind, Fakoush, and Alla-Mensah (2019).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region has been formed to promote a regional response to economic and political challenges that contributes to the sustainability of its states. Their joint approach to occupational recognition aims not only to enable labour mobility across the states, but also to contribute to quality and standards of the vocational qualifications gained by their members. In 2005 they introduced the mutual recognition agreements on engineering services and since then the agreements have been published in seven other occupations. The mutual recognition agreements aim to facilitate labour exchange as well as knowledge sharing to ensure best practice informs the quality and standard of qualifications.

Another example comes from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in the Philippines. This is in the form of an Onsite Assessment Programme which aims to support Filipino overseas workers in the Middle East. The programme provides the opportunity to Filipinos working in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to take assessment in a variety of vocations to earn certification from the Authority.

Sweden's approach towards the recognition of migrants' skills shows that early intervention is necessary for migrants' integration into host economies. The country's migration agency carries out a general mapping of the education levels and occupational skills of asylum seekers, while they are waiting to be granted status, and maps these against employment opportunities (Wedekind, Fakoush, and Alla-Mensah 2019).

In Germany the Recognition Act 2012 was introduced. This is a nation-wide framework to allow all migrants to go through a recognition process to determine the equivalency of qualifications obtained abroad to that of Germany's. Although this framework is open to all migrants, assessing the qualifications of asylum seekers and refugees is more challenging as documentation to prove previous training is usually unavailable. The European Training Foundation recommends procedures for recognising qualifications that take into consideration the limitation of documents to be provided. Unfortunately, these examples, drawn from international research, are somewhat anecdotal; evaluation of impact could not be found.

Finding #1:

International policy focus on qualifications frameworks and associated mechanisms exists without an accompanying literature on impact

The review of international documentation found that skill recognition is a high priority for policy makers, and that qualifications frameworks as well as recognition of prior learning systems and credit accumulation and transfer mechanisms are believed to be appropriate policy mechanisms for skill recognition. Evaluation of the extent to which these mechanisms have actually been implemented, and more importantly, the ways in which they are supporting migrants to get their skills recognized, is not easily found in publicly available documentation.

4.2. Recognition systems: migrants' skills and qualifications in Africa

This section reflects on the developments pertaining to a continent-wide qualification framework and then provides an overview of the regional developments focusing on SADC in more depth. This section concludes with a comment on what has been achieved and any perceived challenges.

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4.2.1 Continent-wide Agreements and Qualification Framework

The Arusha convention is a continent-wide agreement on the recognition of qualifications. In 1981 it was adopted in Arusha, Tanzania, initially focused on higher education qualifications. It was not really implemented. This convention was revised in Addis Ababa on 12th December 2014 and it is therefore now referred to as the Addis Convention (the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications on Higher Education in African States). We were not able to find any information about its actual implementation.

The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) was developed through the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative and approved in 2019. The ASG-QA offers guidelines recommending that learning outcomes be defined and documented for all programmes and benchmarked against level descriptors of national or regional qualifications frameworks. We were not able to find reports or research about the extent to which it has been implemented (African Union 2020).

Another instrument for recognizing qualifications is the African Qualification Verification Network (AQVN), which was formed in 2016 in response to the challenges faced by many African government entities in respect to the verification of foreign qualifications[2]. According to the limited online sources that we found, it is facilitated by the South African Qualifications Authority, and was the outcome of a declaration by key stakeholders in qualifications management in Africa to "Build Trust and Promote Genuine Qualifications in Africa through Effective Verification". Its official function is to 'develop trustworthy and legitimate institutional linkages and networks across the African continent to verify qualifications and access learner records seamlessly'. We were unable to ascertain exactly how it relates to the various other similar initiatives. A linked policy which the AU is aiming at is a Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (African Union 2020).

In 2019, the development of an African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) was also initiated with the support of the EU, GIZ and ETF as part of the African Union (AU)-EU project "Skills for Youth Employability." The main planned output of the project is that by mid-2022 the ACQF policy and technical document and action plan will be validated for decision making by the relevant organs of the AU (Mavimbela 2020).

The aspiration for the ACQF is to enhance transparency and portability of qualifications of all sub-systems and levels of education and training, supporting complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks and contributing to continental integration. The argument made is that this will facilitate recognition credentials and therefore the mobility of learners and workers. This intention is well captured in the policy recommendations outlined in the African Economic Outlook 2020, which emphasises the need to address obstacles to labour mobility to enhance growth's inclusiveness, within sector productivity growth and cross-sector labour reallocations to reduce poverty in Africa (African Development Bank 2020).

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2   http://gdn.uma.es/201602/AQVN.html accessed 19th November 2021

The synthesis report on the ACQF (Keevy et al. 2021) states that this is seen as a vital policy underpinned by key strategic commitments and policies of the AU:

- Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan (2023)
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);
- Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU Free
- Movement Protocol) ;
- Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25); and
- Sectoral development strategies, such as the African Tourism Strategic Framework (2019–2028)7.

The synthesis report (Keevy et al. 2021) further states that the most explicit references to a continental qualifications framework are found in the following policies:

- AU Free Movement Protocol: Article 18; and
- CESA 16–25: Strategic Objective 4 c), d).

The document explains that the AU Free Movement Protocol, adopted by the 30th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (20 January 2018), in its Article 18 (on 'Mutual Recognition of Qualifications'), specifies that the "States Parties shall establish a continental qualifications framework to encourage and promote the free movement of persons" (Keevy et al. 2021, 2). The synthesis report also highlights the importance of CESA's Strategic Objective 4, which aims to 'ensure the acquisition of requisite knowledge and skills as well as improved completion rates at all levels and groups through harmonisation processes across all levels for national and regional integration'. Goals c) and d) explicitly refer to the establishment of qualifications frameworks, notably a continental qualifications framework linked with national and regional qualifications frameworks. The recent progress report prepared for the 4th meeting of the ACQF Advisory Group scheduled for the 13th January 2022 (Castel-Branco 2021) also indicates that another initiative mentioning the ACQF is the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) .

Keevy et al (2021) explain that by October 2020 they had collected relevant information from 41 countries and provided the following analysis of the status of the qualification frameworks at the point that the study was undertaken.

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3   https://www.nepad.org/agenda-2063/publication/agenda- 2063-first-ten-year-implementation-plan-2014-2023-0
4   Text of the Protocol at: https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/african-union/1965-protocol-to-the-abuja-treaty- free-movement-of-persons-right-of-residence-and-establishment-adopted-29-january-2018/file.html
5   The policy documents and intentions are captured on the website of the ACQF: https://acqf.africa/

- No NQF: 7% (3 countries)
- Early thinking: 20% (8 countries)
- In development & consultation: 32% (13 countries)
- Legal Act, approved, implementation started: 34% (14 countries)
- Advanced implementation, reviewed: 7% (3 countries)

However, of concern is that while the report documents the details of the qualification frameworks in each of these categories in terms of the progress made in putting in place the system it acknowledges that monitoring and evaluation of NQFs and measurement of their contribution towards wider objectives are not often taken into account and indeed the report does not provide evidence of impact in terms of stated objectives even for those countries which are categorised as having qualification frameworks in an advanced state of implementation.

The available documentation does not make clear the relationship between the various different policies, initiatives, and agreements that relate to the recognition of qualifications and skills across the continent. For example, the available information on the African Qualifications Verification Network states that 'the AQVN will be used to concretely contribute to building an Africa-wide network that will support the objectives of the Addis Convention signed in December 2014.' It is also described as important for providing visibility for qualifications frameworks, as mechanisms for the verification of qualifications and skills.

4.2.2 Regional level developments

In addition to the continent-wide agreement there have been developments at a regional level, which could be seen as having their origins in the Arusha convention, although they are also linked to the emergence of national and regional qualifications frameworks in the past 20 years. What stands out from this brief review is that while all regions seem to be concerned with recognition agreements, there is little documented evidence of achievements.

Regional qualifications frameworks are generally not aimed at the development of qualifications or the regulation of national systems, but rather focus on recognition of qualifications across borders with the

aim of facilitating labour mobility. As described below, progress made in this regard has been slow to date (African Union 2020).

In the North, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have had legally established frameworks for some time and are working on implementation structures and registers of qualifications.
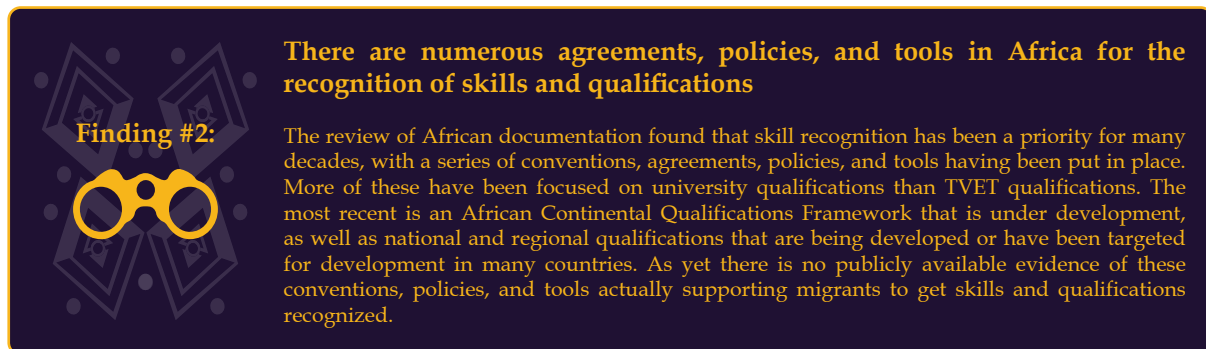
In the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) region, guidelines for regional and national qualifications frameworks were approved by ministers of education in October 2013 (African Union 2020). Further, policies such as the Framework for Recognition and Equivalence of Certificates in the Ecowas Region and the Ecowas Benchmarks for the Harmonisation of University Education are also being developed. Further, the AU Mapping report indicates that Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana, Cape Verde, and Senegal have functional national frameworks and that the region will be adopting a common approach for the development of qualifications to support harmonisation across countries. However, a more detailed review of the situation in countries shows a more diverse picture.

So, for example, West African countries have established systems such as the Licence Master Doctorat (LMD) system in higher education; this system is also found in Cameroon. Ghana has an eight-level TVET framework and is engaging in the development of a comprehensive NQF. Cape Verde has a comprehensive national qualifications framework that has been in design and implementation for over ten years. Other West African countries, such as Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, were found to be are at early stages of their NQF development processes.

East Africa adopted a regional framework for higher education qualifications in 2015, but little information is available about how it is actually being used. The overall coordination for the higher education section of the framework rests with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (African Union 2020). A more detailed review of countries in East Africa offers the following picture: the Ethiopian qualifications framework has been in development since 2006 and was formally proclaimed in 2010, but it is unclear whether legislation has been enacted since the proclamation. In Kenya, the Kenya National Qualifications

Authority (KNQA) has developed and gazetted the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2018) in accordance with Section 6 of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act No. 22 of 2014, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The KNQA is in the process of developing occupational and training standards, with the hope that this will align qualifications to industry and employer needs (Overeem 2020). Rwanda adopted a qualifications framework for higher education in 2007 and is currently developing and implementing a single national qualifications framework. However, there is no published evidence on how this has proceeded to date.

Finding #2:

There are numerous agreements, policies, and tools in Africa for the recognition of skills and qualifications

The review of African documentation found that skill recognition has been a priority for many decades, with a series of conventions, agreements, policies, and tools having been put in place. More of these have been focused on university qualifications than TVET qualifications. The most recent is an African Continental Qualifications Framework that is under development, as well as national and regional qualifications that are being developed or have been targeted for development in many countries. As yet there is no publicly available evidence of these conventions, policies, and tools actually supporting migrants to get skills and qualifications recognized.

The SADC region is discussed in more detail separately below, as it a focus area for this research.

4.2.3   Focusing on SADC

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) consisting of 16 member states shows a strong focus on regional policies in a number of different areas, focusing on economic integration and mobility of people. There is an extensive history of the development of policies specifically to support recognition of skills and qualifications, to support these broader policies or as part of them. While policy frameworks may have a longer history, and there appear to be more of them than in other regions, what is similar is a lack of evidence of effects and achievements of the policies.

As early as March 2005, SADC adopted a concept document that outlined the need to ensure comparability of qualifications and credits across borders in the SADC region.

This work was underpinned by a set of legal and policy instruments and strategic frameworks. These include:

the SADC Treaty, 1992, which indicates that human resource development should facilitate industrial development, competitiveness, regional integration and cooperation. This is given further expression in the SADC Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) (2015), Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030, which guides regional education and training initiatives and together with the SADC Industrialisation Strategy 2015 – 2026 which focuses on greater industrialisation of economies to raise total productivity in the region (adopted in 2015), the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Road Map 2015-2063 focuses on the restructuring and re-purposing of the education systems, and in particular those that develop the technical and vocational skills deemed appropriate for a modern, knowledge economy so as to support the industrialisation of SADC economies through the transformation of natural

resources.

Other SADC policy instruments and commitments governing education and training in the region includes the Protocol on Education and Training (1997 - 2020) (Mavimbela, 2020, p. 12). The protocol promotes the comparability of standards, portability and qualifications across the region to encourage and ease the mobility of workers and learners. The SADC Framework for the Implementation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), 2018-2027; the Protocol on Science, Technology and Innovation (2009); Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) and the Protocol on Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005), which while not yet in force, is intended to promote the free movement of people in the region; and SADC Declaration on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (2017) (Mavimbela 2020).

Other documents that are in place in the region that are intended to improve the achievement of education outcomes include:

- The SADC Open and Distance Learning Policy Framework; and the SADC Guidelines for Development of National Broadband Plans, 2012.
- SADC Policy Framework for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning, 2016.
- Harmonisation of standards and competencies of teachers supported by the Regional Framework for Teacher Professional Standards and Competencies.
- A Draft Regional Continuing Professional Framework has been developed and is awaiting validation and approval.

A number of protocols and agreements also exist that relate indirectly to skills portability: in 2014 the Employment and Labour Sector of SADC introduced the Labour Migration Policy Framework. The Framework involved ministries of labour in July 2014. The Policy Framework is expected to help enhance the protection of migrant workers' rights and to facilitate their integration into domestic labour markets by identifying the workers and skills required and available and by harmonising and recognizing educational and training qualifications (Werquin and Panzicia 2019). This has since been translated into the Labour Migration Action Plan (LMAP). The "Protocol on Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005)" and the "Protocol on Trade in Services (Article 7) 2012" are also intended to support free movement of labour and a mutual recognition of qualifications (Mavimbela, 2020, p. 12) although it was noted that this has been adopted by very few countries. Other relevant policies include the SADC Youth Employment Promotion Policy Framework, drafted in 2016, addresses youth labour migration and mobility by calling for alignment to the SADC regional qualifications framework.

The SADCQF was established in 2011 (Article 2 SADC Protocol on Education and Training). The SADCQF contains 10 level descriptors based on learning outcomes with three domains of knowledge, skills, and autonomy and responsibility. The SADCQF is described as operating on principles of inclusiveness in encompassing various categories of education and training. By this, policy

makers seem to mean that all learning—out of school, formal, non-formal and informal learning; general education, TVET, higher education and various modes of learning such as face-to-face, distance and on-line—should be accommodated within it. Its purpose is to facilitate the movement of workers and learners both within the region and internationally (Mavimbela 2020).

The SADCQF governing structures entail policy, technical and administrative structures namely:

i.   SADC Council of Ministers and Ministers responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation that provide strategic policy leadership and monitor implementation of the SADCQF.

ii. The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) that provides overall technical oversight, advocates, and oversees its implementation.

iii. SADC Secretariat and Implementation Unit[6] that has overall responsibility to coordinate, drive the implementation of the SADCQF and report progress of implementation to the TCCA.in encompassing various categories of education and training.

The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation was given the task of implementing the SADCQF. A two-year milestone plan was agreed, and an implementation model adopted (1) development and alignment; (2) quality assurance; (3) verification; (4) Communication and advocacy; (5) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) and articulation and (6) Governance (SADC 2019). The TCCA mobilised Member States to oversee the development of the six programmes as shown in Table 5 below, sourced from SADC reports:[7]

Table 5: Implementation of the SADC-QF, role of member states

Programme	Member State	Status
Development and alignment of NQFs to SADCQF	South Africa	Eight countries volunteered to pilot alignment of their NQF to the SADCQF. Two countries namely Seychelles and South Africa have aligned their NQFs to the SADCQF based on alignment criteria developed.
Advocacy and Communication	Zambia	A SADCQF Communication strategy, Communication tools and Marketing materials have been developed. The SADQF is published on SADC social media sites. Currently, there is no database or register for the SADCQF.

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6   At the time of writing the Implementation Unit is reported was not yet operational although there is an indication that member states are supporting elements of this work
7   Primarily drawn from Mavimbela (2020)

Verification of Qualifications	Eswatini	A regional Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) which is a member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) was established to ensure that credible, trustworthy information is shared across SADC and shares the common goal of ensuring that African qualifications can be trusted. A SADCQVN booklet was produced and is consistently updated annually and shared across the region. The annual collation of statistical information on learner and worker mobility in SADC, as well as on misrepresented qualifications, is a key feature of the work of the SADCQVN. A Draft SADC Recognition Manual is awaiting validation by the TCCA in October 2020.
Quality Assurance	Eswatini	A regional Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) which is a member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) was established to ensure that credible, trustworthy information is shared across SADC and shares the common goal of ensuring that African qualifications can be trusted. A SADCQVN booklet was produced and is consistently updated annually and shared across the region. The annual collation of statistical information on learner and worker mobility in SADC, as well as on misrepresented qualifications, is a key feature of the work of the SADCQVN. A Draft SADC Recognition Manual is awaiting validation by the TCCA in October 2020.
Governance	SADC Secretariat	The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA), meets twice every year. A TCCA Executive Committee (EXCO) was established based on the SADC Troika principles and meets twice a year to review and monitor progress of implementation in the six programmes of the implementation of the SADCQF.

Articulation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS)	Namibia	The report notes that SADC region has a set of RPL guidelines and the status of implementation has not yet been determined. In addition, a Draft SADC CAT Guidelines is awaiting validation by TCCA in October 2020. Since then, in 2021, the Guidelines for Southern African Development Community Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (SADC-CATS) were released. The report indicates that CATS is available in the following countries: Madagascar (The Decree establishing the Malagasy National Certification Framework), South Africa and Zimbabwe). It does not indicate which countries offer RPL, nor is it clear the extent to which CATS systems are operational.

SADC notes that in order to promote trust and ensure that qualifications and quality assurance meet the regional standards, mechanisms that aim to verify information about individual qualifications obtained in member states have been put in place. To ensure that credible, trustworthy information is shared across SADC, a regional Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) was established. The SADCQVN is a member of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN), which shares the common goal of ensuring that African qualifications can be trusted (SADC 2019). However, while the work on SADCQF was undertaken based on the existing qualifications frameworks in South Africa, Namibia, and Mauritius and the AU (2020) describes this framework as the 'most advanced' regional framework in the continent, in reality documents suggest that despite the commitment made and the formation of the Technical Committee there has been limited progress made on the SADCQF.

The extent of the delays is indicated in a number of reports documenting the process. One report suggests that this alignment process was 'revived' in 2016 (Jaftha and Samuels 2017), although another report (Mavimbela 2020) indicates that the process was only actually 'reactivated' in 2017 when eight countries (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia) agreed to be part of a pilot phase of alignment. Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe then joined this process in 2019. According to the AU report, only two member states—Seychelles and South Africa—had completed this exercise by 2020 and reported that their National Qualifications Frameworks are fully aligned with SADCQF (African Union 2020).

Mauritius has already submitted its alignment report to the TCCA EXCO. What this 'alignment' means in practice is not yet clear. The status of each of the frameworks is illustrated in the Table 6 below, referenced from the 2021 CATS guidelines document (SADC 2021b)

Table 6: *Country status of benchmarking qualifications against regional framework and establishing CATS policies*

Country	Year NQF Establishes	Alignment with SADC-QF	CATS Availability
Angola	-	-	No
Botswana	2015	Yes, completing pilot	No
Comoros	-	-	No
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	-	-	No
Eswatini	2017	Yes, completing pilot	No
Lesotho	2019	Yes, completing pilot	No
Madagascar	02/06/2019: date of the decree's release (Decree n°2019 - 073)	There is an in principle commitment in this regard but still in process	The Decree establishing the Malagasy National Certification Framework (CNMC)
Malawi	2019	No	No
Mauritius	2005	Yes, completed pilot and submitted alignment report to TCCA	No
Mozambique	2010	No	No
Namibia	2006	Yes, completing pilot	No
Seychelles	2008	Yes	No
South Africa	1998	Yes	Yes
United Republic of Tanzania	2009	No	No
Zambia	2014	Yes, completing pilot	No
Zimbabwe	2018	No	Yes

Source: SADC (2021a)

Table 6 above also illustrates that only a few countries in SADC have a Credit Accumulation and Transfer System and reports from SADC note that full implementation of the SADCQF requires the development of the SADC-CATS. The guideline document points to a number of challenges in the absence of this system indicating that the growth in globalisation and internationalisation of higher education has led to the expansion of higher education systems but there are sometimes misinformed judgements about the educational credentials that migrants possess (SADC 2021a). The guidelines also observe that, "it is clear that numerous initiatives exist aimed at promoting quality assurance in higher education in SADC region" but suggest there are limitations in this regard stating that, "oftentimes these initiatives are disparate and uncoordinated, mostly found at regional levels, with little collaboration among the region and key organisations (Okebukola 2012)". Other challenges may relate to linguistic barriers, differences in the education and training systems, well as a lack of political will and commitment by some member states.

The guideline document concludes that CATS is therefore required as, "this will provide a mechanism for the comparability and recognition of qualifications in the SADC region; facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications in all member states; harmonise (develop a common understanding of the comparability of) qualifications wherever possible; promote the transfer of credits within and among member states and even beyond; and create SADC regional standards where appropriate" (SADC 2021a, 2). What is interesting about this analysis is that while substantial problems are noted, the solution proposed is a new set of recognition agreements and systems— while the report itself notes the existence of many such agreements and systems, potential duplication, and lack of effective implementation.

Such a credit accumulation and transfer system is argued by the guidelines document to be integral to facilitating the implementation of the Addis Convention on the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas, degrees and other academic qualifications in higher education in African States. Thus in 2021 the Guidelines for Southern African Development Community Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (SADC-CATS) were developed with support from the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN) and the SADC Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (SADC HAQAA) Group within the context of the African HAQAA Initiative. Input was also provided by the SADC Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification (SADC TCCA) and various stakeholders.

However the documents do not specify how the SADCQF and the SADC-CATS System relate to each other and whether

they reinforce each other or if in reality the SADC-CATS System is being put in place because of the delays in the actual implementation of the regional framework.

In summary this section has highlighted that considerable progress appears to have been made at the level of developing an extensive set of policies and systems, but that there appear to be delays in implementation or lack of implementation.

The discussion above was presented chronologically, to attempt to provide an overview of how the systems have unfolded over time. The SADC-QF Mapping report as well as the SADC report on the SADC-QF both provide an overview of the extent to which these processes currently enable the sharing of information. These are listed as they are but it is noted that these could be expanded to improve the availability of information on migrants and mobility:

- A common system has been developed and is periodically used by Member States to collect and report information and data on the current supply of education and training in the region.
- The SADC Labour Market Information System has been developed and is being implemented, providing labour market information, including employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to stakeholders, with the aim of facilitating access and effective planning and utilization of human and material resources in the labour market.
- Statistics on qualifications verified and recognised per country are collected and compiled annually through the SADCQVN and a report on mobility statistics that shows the total number of applications received for verification,

their origin, and status of verification per country is produced. An example of such a report is provided below in Figure 5. It demonstrates the number of applications per country that supplies reports (on the y-axis) and in which country these applicants received the qualification they need verification for (on the x-axis). As such, this report does not provide information about migration per se, as many applications may be from nationals who have studied in another country. Information is available in a separate report as to how many qualifications are rejected (for example if the awarding institution is not recognized or the qualification is suspected to be not valid), and how many are evaluated by the respective agencies in the countries. What is not available is information about how they are related to qualifications in the receiving country in terms of level, which is important from the perspective of migrants working at the correct skill level. This data is also not disaggregated by gender.

- SADC also indicates that the annual collation of statistical information on learner and worker mobility in SADC, as well as on misrepresented qualifications, is a key feature of the work of the SADCQVN.

Figure 4 and 5 below are 'heat maps' that provide an indication of the way in which data is captured in the region. These are not publicly available and were sourced from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), derived from the reports submitted annually by countries to SADC, for the purposes of this study.

Figure 4: *SADC mobility 'heat map', 2020/2021*

Figure 5: *SADC mobility 'heat map', 2017/2018*

Qualifications Evaluated per Country:

Figure 3: Source of qualification applications to SADC Countries, 2017/18

In addition to the information that is being collected a number of guidelines and resources have been developed:

- The SADC Secretariat has developed guidelines, providing commonly agreed elements to facilitate the implementation of RPL. SADC developed a recognition manual, and worked on regional policies on verification and set up verification agreements between SADC countries (Werquin and Panzicia 2019).

- SADC QA guidelines have been developed and this is coupled with the creation of a list of 'credible' SADC institutions and their qualifications and making the information publicly available. Botswana is overseeing this implementation area, and the aim is to ensure that QA alignment and implementation is centrally driven and supported (Jaftha and Samuels 2017).

- Recognition of prior learning, credit accumulation, transfer and articulation: The SADC region has a set of RPL guidelines (Jaftha and Samuels 2017) that were approved by SADC Ministers in June 2016. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been closely involved in the production of the SADC RPL guidelines and has further indicated a readiness to assist with implementation across the region.

There are also areas that are highlighted but have not yet been achieved:

- The SADC 'Qualifications Portal' has been established but is not yet functional. The SADC Mapping Report notes that the "qualifications portal that includes part-qualifications and full qualifications was initially developed but was discontinued due to inadequate funding". They state that SADC envisages the revival and further development of a SADC Qualification Portal with "data and information on qualifications and skills, covering qualifications both internally and externally acquired and evaluated in each country" suggesting that "this will facilitate the sharing of expertise and skills between countries in the region and beyond, thus minimising or alleviating skills deficits within countries in the SADC region." However, the report notes that stakeholders emphasised that, "for a portal to exist, the capacity of Member States will need to be built and strengthened" (Mavimbela 2020).

- Additionally, in terms of credential recognition, South Africa reports that they have started to implement a digital E-Credentialing system. The SADC E-certificate is being piloted in four countries of the SADC region (Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia).

In addition, SADC indicates that there has been a focus on Advocacy and communication. The Technical Committee has identified platforms to advocate and communicate about the SADCQF. A communication strategy, which includes promotional material on the SADCQF, was developed and approved to disseminate information about the SADCQF and to ensure that the SADCQF is visible and that member states commit to its implementation.

4.2.4 Reflecting on these developments

The previous sections all suggest considerable policy activity in terms of developing guidelines, rules, frameworks, and so on, which don't always appear to be coordinated with each other, and with little indication of if any of them have any real effect, or indeed have even been implemented. Some indications of the issues that may be causing delays is contained in a number of key reports. For example, the AU SADC study (Werquin and Panzicia 2019) notes that some of the challenges in advancing the regional framework relates to the capacity of the structures to support the process and the limited involvement of key stakeholders. The report states that there are many weaknesses of regional bodies, and that it is not clear whether they have the capacity to develop and implement regional qualifications; certainly, progress has been slow to date, according to the report (Mavimbela 2020). This despite the considerable support that has been provided to the process by the European Training Foundation. This includes a tool for self-assessment, which has been disseminated coupled with 'peer learning' and 'capacity building' workshops (SADC 2017). The SADC Mapping Report (Mavimbela 2020) explains that one of the reasons for these delays is that the awareness and understanding of qualification frameworks, and the benefits surrounding the regional framework, was very limited. This may have been because the SADCQF was largely developed by government stakeholders with limited involvement of stakeholders from the private sector, training institutions and employees. The absence of any real

involvement of the private sector is likely to have contributed to the limited recognition of the skills and qualifications of migrants in the region and therefore limits the mobility of migrants.

What is notable in all the above discussion is that documents primarily point to what the regional frameworks could achieve and point to a large number of guidelines, policies, systems, and mechanisms that have been developed. These documents argue that regional alignment would enable institutions and individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and thereby reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes (Jaftha and Samuels 2017). However, limited evidence highlighted here already points to the complexity of ensuring that stakeholders trust these qualifications. Further, there is no research which indicates whether in those countries where progress has been made, in terms of aligning the frameworks, this is having a positive impact on the ease of recognition for migrants.

Finding #3:

There is extensive policy activity within the SADC region, again with limited indication of impact from publicly available documentation

The review of SADC documentation found a bewildering number of policy interventions, all of which aim in different ways to support recognition of skills and qualifications in the region. It is difficult from the documentation available to develop a clear picture of the relationships between the different policies, systems, and interventions, as there are so many, and they are so extensive. However, there is no publicly available documentation that provides insight into any aspect of impact—whether considering how many qualifications are successfully verified each year, how many migrants have skills recognized through other processes, and the extent to which migrants are then able to access either education or work.

5. FINDINGS: *Locating SADC Recognition Policies, Systems and Processes within the continent*

This section draws from the survey findings and serves to locate the SADC within sub–Saharan Africa, and specifically highlights the differences across these regions in terms of the recognition of qualifications.

Table 7 below provides an overview of survey responses with regard to the legal verification of qualifications of migrants. The table highlights that the highest proportion of respondents from SADC member states state that qualifications must be verified as genuine when someone from one country moves to their country and wants their qualification to be recognized. This is closely followed by the percentage of respondents from East Africa and then West Africa. The responses from Central Africa are not sufficient for much analysis, and come from only two countries, Chad and Cameroon). It is interesting to note that here, the respondents from Central Africa suggest that there are no national processes to check qualifications with the respondents stating that their country accepts qualifications from other countries. When we considered the responses specifically from the DRC, as a country that is important from a migration point of view, we find that respondents specify that qualifications must be verified as authentic.

Table 7: *Legal verification of qualifications in Africa*

When someone from a country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants their qualification to be recognized, the following statements apply

Note: *Here we are concerned with qualifications authenticity and prevention of qualification fraud*

		There are no national processes to check qualifications. My country accepts qualifications from other countries	Their qualification needs to be verified as genuine	I don't know	Total
Western Africa	Count	4	20	1	25
	%	16.0%	80.0%	4.0%	100.0%
SADC	Count	8	87	4	99
	%	8.1%	87.9%	4.0%	100.0%
Central Africa	Count	3	1	1	5
	%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Eastern Africa	Count	1	17	2	20
	%	5.0%	85.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	16	125	8%	149
	%	10.7%	83.9%	5.4%	100.0%

Finding #4:

Legal verification of qualifications as authentic

There is a high level of agreement from TVET stakeholders across the continent that migrants' qualifications need legal verification legitimate, with close to 90% of survey respondents from the SADC region selecting this option, and over 80% from East and West Africa. The lowest number is from two Central African countries, at 60%. The process was not seen as very lengthy as respondents are fairly evenly split between stating that it takes less than a month, and between 3 to 6 months. This is confirmed for each of the individual countries of SADC as well.

We then considered how long this verification process takes, where this process exists, as illustrated in Table 8 below, which shows that on average respondents state that this process takes less than a month (in SADC and East Africa) and between 3-6 months in West and Central Africa (Chad and Cameroon); this last selection was also made for the DRC.

Table 8: Length of process of legal verification

On average, how long does this verification take?						
		Less than a month	3 to 6 months	More than 6 months	I don't know	Total
Western Africa	Count	3	10	2	8	23
	%	13.0%	43.5%	8.7%	34.8%	100.0%
SADC	Count	38	22	7	27	94
	%	40.4%	23.4%	7.4%	28.7%	100.0%
Central Africa	Count	0	2	1	1	4
	%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Eastern Africa	Count	8	4	2	4	18
	%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%	100.0%
Total	Count	49	38	12	40	139
	%	35.3%	27.3%	8.6%	28.8%	100.0%

We then explored the requirements when someone from one country in the region moves to another country and wants to study as illustrated in Figure 6 .

What is evident from Figure 6 is that for the purposes of further study, the focus within regions is on ensuring that: their qualification are recognized by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level, to ensure that the curriculum was adequate and to check if the duration of the learning programme was sufficient. Of particular interest is that it is the SADC region where respondents highlight that all three of these elements – outcomes and level, curriculum and duration – are important prior to recognising a qualification for further learning. This need to review each element of the programme is perhaps somewhat at odds with the view that the SADCQF is the most advanced of the regional qualification frameworks. Responses from DRC are in line with this.

Across regions very few respondents indicate that if there is a national qualifications framework then recognition is automatic although again of interest is that this is slightly higher in Central Africa (Chad and Cameroon). It is notable that Chad does not have a qualifications framework, and Cameroon is in the very early stages of developing one, which may indicate that respondents were reflecting an aspiration in their response; the response could not be on the basis of actual experience. There were also very few respondents who agreed that the recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is a bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in. Of particular concern is that very few respondents agreed that counselling and support are offered to assist individuals with all of these processes.

It should also be noted that this level of information provides no insight into the success rate of applicants, nor whether or not their qualifications are likely to be recognised as the same level as qualifications in the receiving country.

Figure 6: Recognition of qualifications for further study

When someone from another country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants to study further, the following statements apply:

Note: *Here we are interested in the recognition of qualifications for further learning*

Counselling and support are offered to assist individual with all of these processes
- East Africa: 3%
- Central Africa: 14%
- SADC: 6%
- Western Africa: 6%

The institution at which they want to study check recognizes their qualification against their own requirements
- East Africa: 10%
- Central Africa: 29%
- SADC: 27%
- Western Africa: 17%

Their qualification must be recognized by a nation an agency to check if the duration of the learning programme was sufficient
- East Africa: 23%
- Central Africa: 14%
- SADC: 34%
- Western Africa: 19%

Their qualification must be recognized by a national agency to ensure the curriculum was adequate
- East Africa: 27%
- Central Africa: 43%
- SADC: 35%
- Western Africa: 19%

Their qualification must be recognized by a nation an to ensure a match on learning outcomes and levels
- East Africa: 27%
- Central Africa: 14%
- SADC: 36%
- Western Africa: 13%

Recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is a bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in
- East Africa: 20%
- Central Africa: 14%
- SADC: 12%
- Western Africa: 9%

If they have a national qualifications framework, recognition is automatic
- East Africa: 10%
- Central Africa: 29%
- SADC: 7%
- Western Africa: 17%

Legend: East Africa | Central Africa | SADC | Western Africa

When asked how long recognition of qualifications to access further learning takes, respondents answered as per Table 9 below, with selections that are similar to the time taken to verify qualifications.

Table 9: Length of time for recognizing qualifications for the purpose of further study

On average, how long does this verification take?						
		Less than a month	3 to 6 months	More than 6 months	I don't know	Total
Western Africa	Count	3	9	2	8	22
	%	13.6%	40.9%	9.1%	36.4%	100.0%
SADC	Count	27	23	8	26	84
	%	32.1%	27.4%	9.5%	31.0%	100.0%
Central Africa	Count	0	2	1	1	4
	%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Eastern Africa	Count	9	3	2	3	17
	%	52.9%	17.6%	11.8%	17.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	39	37	13	38	127
	%	30.7%	29.1%	10.2%	29.9%	100.0%

Finding #5:

Verification of qualifications for further study is widely required, and almost never automatic, regardless of qualifications framework status and bilateral agreements

In terms of recognition of qualifications for the purposes of further study, respondents suggested that qualification need to be recognized by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level, to ensure that the curriculum was adequate, and to check if the duration of the learning programme was suffi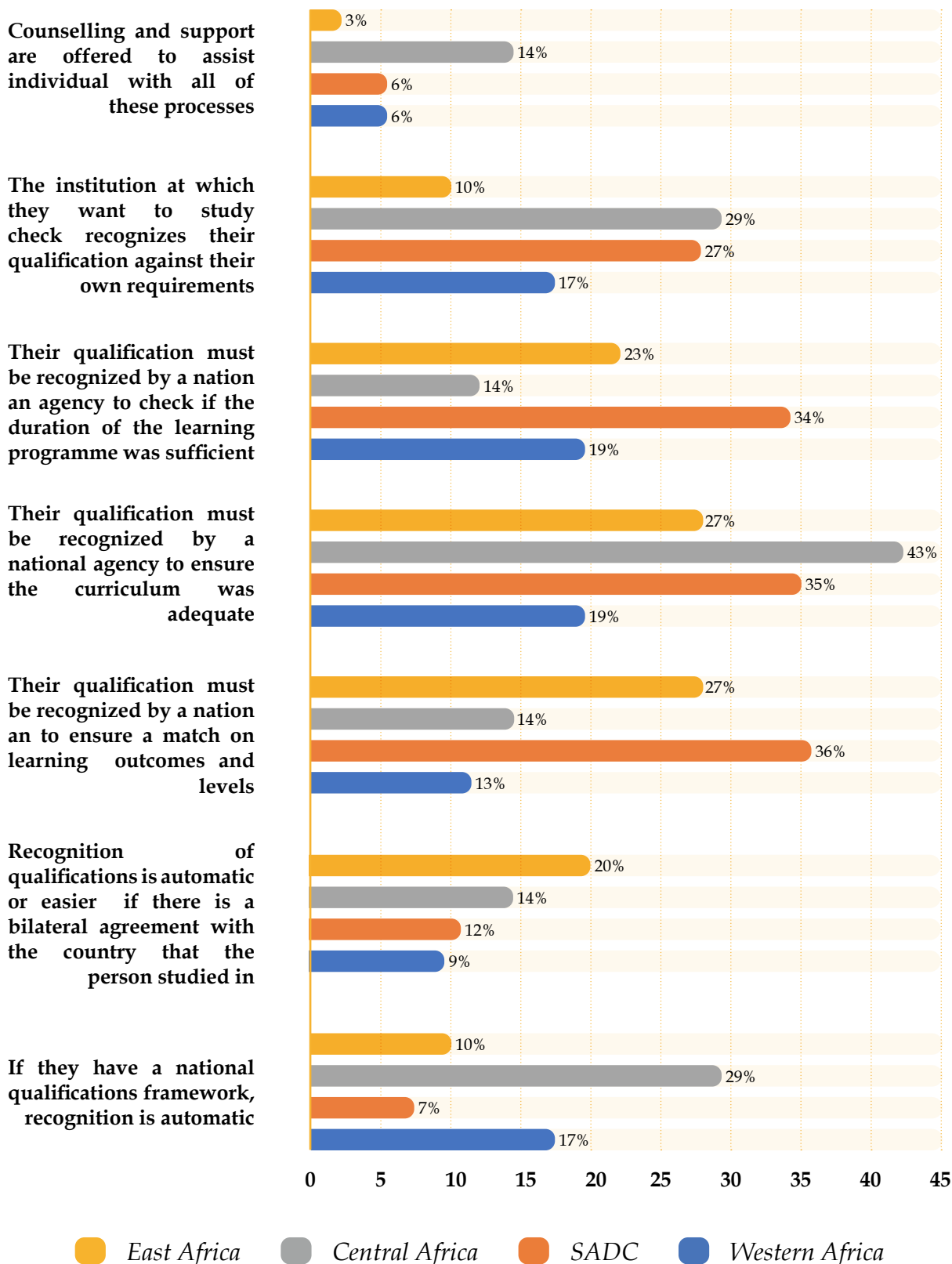cient. Very few respondents indicate that if there is a national qualifications framework then recognition is automatic, and very few respondents agreed that the recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is a bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in. Of particular concern is that very few respondents agreed that counselling and support are offered to assist individuals with all of these processes. Again, the process of verification was seen as lasting between one and six months, on the whole.

We also asked respondents about the recognition of qualifications in order to access labour markets. Their responses are shown in Figure 7 below, which shows again that verification by qualifications authorities 'to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level on our qualifications framework' was the dominant selection, with some role for professional associations particularly in the SADC region.

Figure 7: Recognition of migrants' qualifications for the purpose of accessing labour markets

When someone from a country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants their qualification to be recognized in order to access labour markets, the following statements apply:

Note: *here we are talking about the recognition of qualifications for*

	East Africa	Central Africa	SADC	Western Africa
I don't know anything about qualification recognition for access to labour markets	13%	0%	4%	4%
Counselling and support are offered to assist in individuals with all of these processes	0%	0%	2%	4%
Qualification have to be verified by professional associations for some occupations	23%	0%	23%	13%
In some fields there are national requirements, but in others employers are free to hire as they see fit	10%	14%	13%	17%
Employers decide if individuals have the appropriate qualificaton	17%	14%	30%	9%
Their qualification must be verified by a national agency to ensure that the curriculum was adequate	23%	0%	30%	13%
Their qualification must be verified by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and levels	43%	0%	53%	34%
Recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is an industry and/or bilateral agreement with the country	10%	14%	11%	15%
If they have a national qualifications framework, recognition is automatic	13%	29%	10%	15%

East Africa   Central Africa   SADC   Western Africa

Again Figure 7 suggests that contrary to what one might expect, even in regions where most countries have national qualification frameworks, the recognition process is very detailed and requires an assessment of the duration of learning programmes and the curriculum. In SADC, where the qualifications framework is considered most advanced and one might anticipate that there could be a simpler process of referencing the qualifications, level and outcomes, yet a large number of respondents state that there is also a need for a national agency to verify the qualification to ensure that both the curriculum is adequate, and that the duration of the learning programme was sufficient. Also echoing the previous responses, we see that this response differs in Central Africa (Chad and Cameroon), where respondents again indicated that recognition is automatic if there is a national qualifications framework. It is interesting to see that it is also in Chad where respondents indicate that, "in some fields there are national requirements, but in other fields employers are free to hire as they see fit" though the same caveat applies in this case.

We then isolated those statements which respondents typically did not select. These are highlighted in Table 10 below, which shows that very few respondents across the continent felt that counselling and support are offered to assist individuals, and relatively few that employers can decide whether or not qualifications are appropriate, and that recognition is easier where there are industry or bilateral agreements in place, with the highest numbers for the last two in West Africa.

Table 10: Options selected by fewest respondents, verification of qualifications for labour market access markets

	Counselling and support are offered to assist individuals with all of these processes	Employers decide if individuals have the appropriate qualification	Recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is an industry and/or bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in
Western Africa	2	8	7
	43%	17%	15%
SADC	3	18	15
	2.2%	12.9%	10.9%
Central Africa	0	1	1
	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%
Eastern Africa	0	3	3
	0.0%	10.0%	10.3%
Total	5	30	26
	2.3%	13.5%	11.8%

This highlights that again, in terms of processes related to the recognition of qualifications to access the labour market, respondents suggest there is very limited access to counselling and support to assist individuals with all of these processes. In addition it highlights that employers are not able to provide an input as to whether individuals have the appropriate qualifications: while it is expected that employers would not be involved in the legal verification of qualifications the

exclusion of employers from the process of reviewing qualifications can, based on experiences in South Africa, result in this process becoming a barrier to the employment of individuals Similarly, with some exception in West Africa, they did not agree that recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is an industry and/or bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in.

Also of interest is that when one looks at the length of time it takes for recognition of qualifications to access the labour market, shown in Table 11 below, we see that the percentage that indicate that it takes longer increases, as compared to the time it takes to receive recognition for qualifications with the intention of accessing further learning, in West Africa. This is also true in East Africa (although the largest proportion still indicate that the time it takes to recognise qualifications is less than a month). This could suggest that visa and work permit processes are linked to more detailed and therefore time-consuming analysis of qualifications.

Table 11: Length of time for verification of qualifications for labour market access

On average, how long does this verification take?						
		Less than a month	**3 to 6 months**	**More than 6 months**	**I don't know**	**Total**
Western Africa	Count	2	10	2	8	22
	%	9.1%	45.5%	9.1%	36.4%	100.0%
SADC	Count	28	25	6	29	88
	%	31.8%	28.4%	6.8%	33.0%	100.0%
Central Africa	Count	0	2	1	0	3
	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Eastern Africa	Count	8	5	1	3	17
	%	47.1%	29.4%	5.9%	17.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	38	42	10	40	130
	%	29.2%	32.3%	7.7%	30.8%	100.0%

Finding #6:

Verification of qualifications to access labour markets is widely required, mainly by qualifications authorities and with some role for professional associations

Verification by qualifications authorities 'to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level on our qualifications framework' was the dominant selection, with some role for professional associations particularly in the SADC region. Further in SADC, where the qualifications framework is considered most advanced, a large number of respondents state that qualification must be verified by a national agency to ensure that the curriculum is adequate and to check if the duration of the learning programme was sufficient. This is contrary to expectation as it suggests that in the region where there are the most established national qualification frameworks the recognition requirements are more cumbersome. Few respondents across the continent felt that counselling and support are offered to assist individuals, and relatively few that employers can decide whether or not qualifications are appropriate, and that recognition is easier where there are industry or bilateral agreements in place, with the highest numbers for the last two in West Africa. Respondents suggest that it takes somewhat longer to verify qualifications for accessing work than for accessing further study. Across interviewees in SADC there is however a view that in both cases these times are unrealistic, and in fact processes take longer.

Finally, we asked respondents whether, in their view, graduates "in your vocational education and higher education programmes find it easy to have their qualifications recognized in other countries in your region?". This is an entirely perception-based question but is an interesting one because all the questions discussed above provide insights into what the rules and systems are, but not for whether in fact they work well for migrants. Here we see that respondents from West African countries were most optimistic about the ability of people from their country to have their qualification recognized in other countries in the region, and some degree of confidence from respondents in the SADC region that it is easier for migrants who are moving to a country with a qualifications framework—shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Respondents' perceptions of how qualifications from respondents' own countries are received in other countries in the region

Region		All countries in our region recognize qualifications from my country	It is easy to have quals recognized in some countries in the region	It is easy if they are going to a country which has a national qualifications framework.	It is easy if their national qualifications framework is benchmarked	It is easy because our national qualifications framework is benchmarked against the regional qualifications framework.
Western Africa	Count	13	8	7	6	2
	%	27.7%	17.0%	14.9%	12.8%	4.3%
SADC	Count	30	22	34	28	21
	%	21.6%	15.8%	24.5%	20.1%	15.1%
Central Africa	Count	0	3	1	0	0
	%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Eastern Africa	Count	7	5	4	5	3
	%	23.3%	16.7%	13.3%	16.7%	10.0%
Total	Count	50	38	46	39	26
	%	22.4%	17.0%	20.6%	17.5%	11.7%

Finding #7:

Perceptions of reception of qualifications in other countries in the region

Respondents from West African countries were most optimistic about the ability of people from their country to have their qualification recognized in other countries in the region, and some degree of confidence from respondents in the SADC region that it is easier for migrants who are moving to a country with a qualifications framework.

6. FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD WORK: *Focusing on SADC*

In this section we report on some key insights from the surveys (with a particular focus on countries in SADC) as well as from the interviews conducted in the 6 countries in the Southern African region. In section 6.1., we start by considering the interview data in relation to our initial analysis of migration trends, followed by a consideration of where the main impetus for qualification evaluation is experienced, and how visa requirements impact on this. In section 6.2. we focus on qualifications frameworks. We start by considering their status in a selection of countries, and then consider the extent to which the national frameworks have been formally aligned with the regional framework. This is followed by an analysis of the processes related to the recognition of qualifications, and whether or not the formal alignment to the regional framework makes a difference in this regard. In section 6.3. we provide some reflections on these processes, from a regional, national, employer, and stakeholder perspective. In section 6.4. we reflect on other ways in which migrants' skills and qualifications are being recognized—first in terms of how other mechanisms interact with the formal qualification recognition processes, and second, in terms of support provided to migrants. In section 6.5. we provide some very limited insights into the interviewees' ideas about impact—interviewees had extremely limited information to share in this regard. We consider their reflections on why they are involved with regional qualifications frameworks, as well as views and insights about impacts for individuals and employers. Finally, in section 6.6., we reflect on insights from participants about institutional capacity.

6.1. Migration: *Trends with regard to movement as well as the need for qualification verification*

There are a few issues that emerge when considering what the findings tell us about the importance of the recognition of qualifications to the ability of migrants to access employment. We found that firstly, of the migrants that are recorded, only a small percentage apply to have their qualifications recognised; secondly, over and above the requirement to have qualifications validated there are many other requirements related to enabling migrants to work in countries in the region; and, thirdly, there are a myriad of structures that have responsibility for different elements of this process, which makes the process more cumbersome and complex.

6.1.1 Who is applying to have qualifications recognized?

While this section draws on the data from the surveys (with a particular focus on countries in SADC) as well as from the interviews conducted in the 6 countries in

the Southern African region the analysis in this section returns to the focus on those countries in the SADC region that receive the largest number of migrants. Figure 8 provides data about the number of migrants, and the countries in which they studied, that are applying for recognition of qualifications and the countries that report that they are evaluating these qualifications. In reviewing this Figure it is important to reiterate that: 2 out of the 4 countries in the region (DRC and Angola) that receive the largest number of migrants do not have a qualification framework in place. In Tanzania work has been done to develop a qualification framework but interviewees indicate that little progress has been made in implementation. Only SA, which has the largest number of migrants, has established and is implementing its national qualification framework and even in this case the data suggests there are limitations regarding the extent to which migrants utilise the processes that have been put in place through the framework.

This may explain the small numbers of migrants applying for the evaluation of qualifications in 2019/2020:[8], which as illustrated in the heat map below (Figure 8), reveals that DRC and Angola did not provide a report on qualifications evaluated in 2019, despite the large number of migrants during that year. Tanzania also did not report the number of qualifications evaluated (as shown in the heat map below. This suggests that in 2019/2020, out of the 4 countries with the largest number of migrants, only SA appears to have consistently reported and even in SA it is evident that most migrants do not seek to have qualifications evaluated

This challenge—that very small number of migrants[9] have their qualifications evaluated—can be seen in the heat map in Figure 8 below. To really understand this figure it would be important to understand how the number of qualifications that are being evaluated compare to the number of migrants. Using the data on migrant stocks per country (for the period between 2015- 2019) and focusing on the countries that we are looking at in more depth in this study shows that: in South Africa only 19 500 individuals had their qualifications evaluated as compared to the stock figure of 407 561 migrants (represents the numbers over the 5 year period up to and including 2019),[10] in Seychelles 438 individuals had their qualifications evaluated as compared to the stock figure of 135 migrants (represents the numbers over the 5 year period up to and including 2019), in Botswana only 613 individuals had their qualifications evaluated as compared to the stock figure of 7328 migrants (represents the numbers over the 5 year period up to and including 2019), and in Namibia 2472 individuals had their qualifications evaluated as compared to the stock figure of 5943 migrants (represents the numbers over the 5 year period up to and including 2019). Reviewing these figures foregrounds the challenges with interpreting the data as: we don't know which individuals requested the review of qualifications as the capacity to do this review did not exist so it may have been individuals from previous years and even more likely, as can be visibly seen in the Seychelles figures, the individuals whose qualifications have been evaluated may be nationals who studied elsewhere. This reinforces the need for this data to be captured in ways that allows for this level of analysis as for now this exercise can only be seen as indicative.

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8   The figures from 2019/2020 are used as they allow for a comparison with migrant figures available and also is prior to COVID and so provides a more realistic picture of migration in the region.

Figure 8: SADC mobility 'heat map', 2019/2020
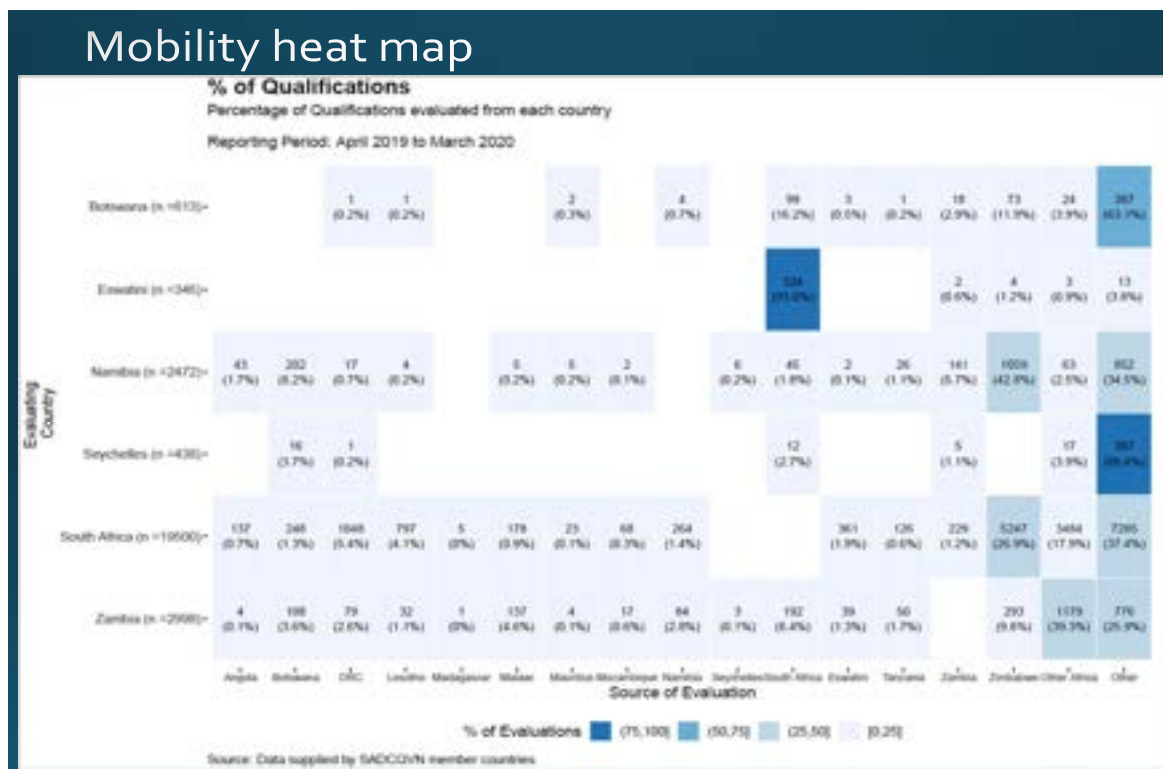
It is noted that, as shown previously in this report, DRC did report in 2021 that they had evaluated qualifications of 5 individuals and Angola qualifications of 1240 individuals. However, Tanzania did not report the number of qualifications evaluated in 2021. This suggests there is progress in reporting but that the numbers of qualifications being evaluated remains stubbornly low.

Further, it is noted that the data reflected above, as well as in subsequent years, does not indicate the details of which qualifications are being applied for. Responses from the interviews suggest that this is primarily related to higher level qualifications. A respondent from one of the RECs commented that" The respondent also indicated that:

> They don't keep data about the percentage of migrants that seek recognition, versus the numbers that have their qualifications evaluated, but stated that, a lot of the focus is on highly skilled as opposed to the lower skilled.
>
> The region generally focuses on, specialised areas like IT services and Banking services those are things that have been prioritised because they are in need of those things right now in the current pandemic situation.

9   Noting that the numbers we have for migrants is likely to only include regular migrants and that the numbers that are included in terms of the evaluation of qualifications could include nationals that studied elsewhere. This suggests that the percentage of migrants that have their qualifications evaluated could be even smaller than suggested by a simple calculation.

SA total stock by 2019 was 4 224 256 migrants, Seychelles stock figure of 12 926 migrants, Botswana stock figure o 110 596 migrants, Namibia stock figure of 107 561 migrants

Another regional respondent made a similar observation explaining that, "migration occurs when you need migration. The private sector lobbies where they need certain skills". The same respondent commented that:

> With respect to lower level skills – even if skills are recognised there won't be a change. The main issue is not recognition of qualification – it's the conditions of recruitment – they are here to do specific jobs.
>
> ILO should focus on welfare and conditions – its not an issue of qualifications or recognition. So need to look at what drives demand and where specialised skills and training is required.

A respondent from a regulatory body in Mauritius confirmed that they primarily require skilled and semi-skilled levels; the key sectors are clothing and textile and ICT. This view was echoed by an employer respondent who stated that:

> ... In most cases people we looking at is people with special skills accountants, lawyers, insurance specialists. When we talk about artisans – it is mainly electricians for the mines and construction and broader engineers.

An ILO expert consulted in finalizing this report confirmed this view and also indicated that at present the majority of qualifications that are submitted for recognition are in typically male-dominated occupations such as: accountants, architects, agronomists, geologists, engineers, legal experts, IT experts, medical and health related services. The respondent observed that, "Indeed, with the exception of nurses, the rest of the occupations are in large numbers occupied by male workers".
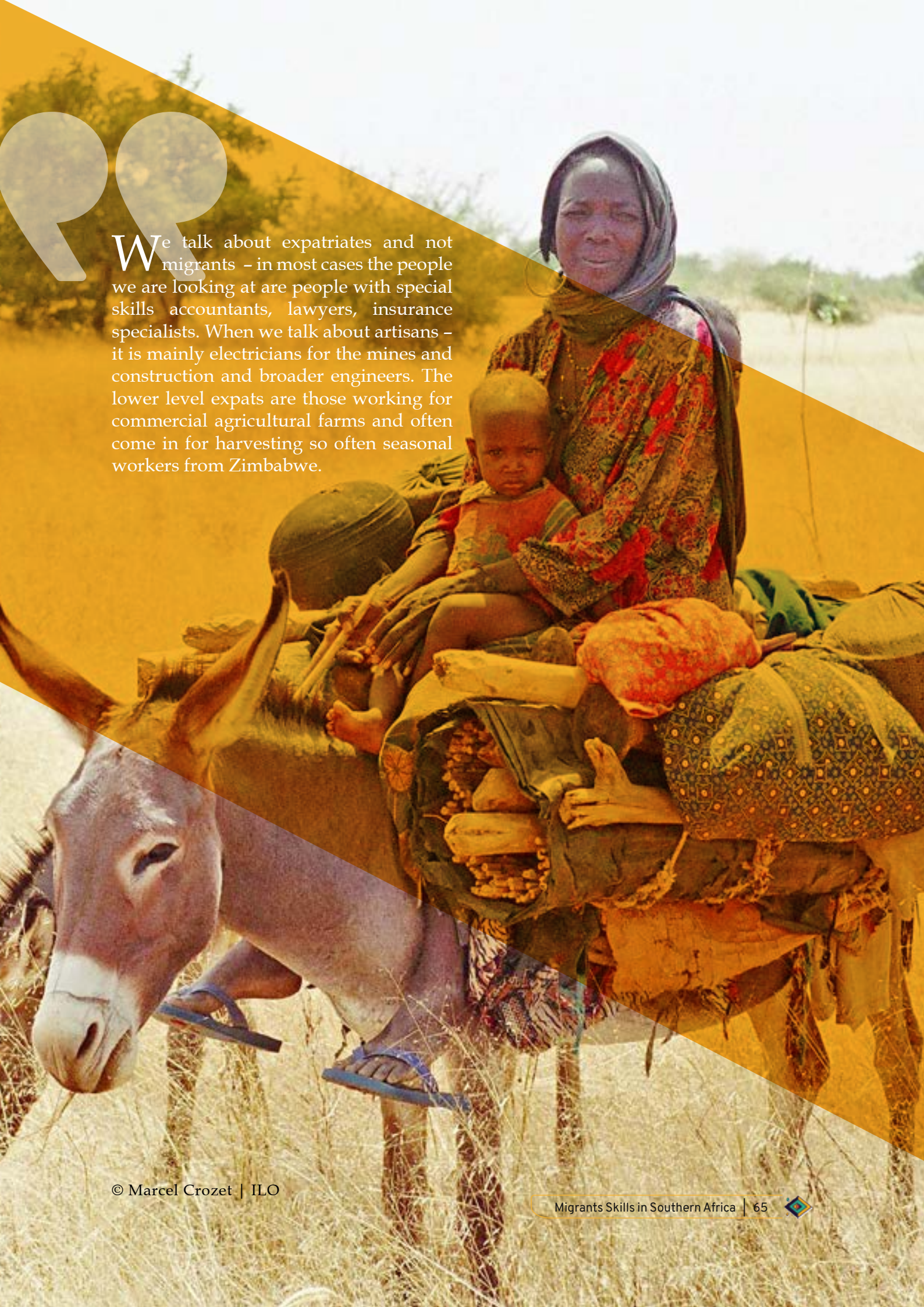
Of further concern is that, as indicated previously, this data does not provide an indication of the level of the qualification that was evaluated was placed at in the country in which the qualification was awarded nor the level allocated to the qualification in the destination country. This makes it difficult to assess whether this process is assisting to ensure that migrants can work at their skills level and whether this system in fact addresses the problem highlighted by the ILO, which is that migrant workers are more likely to occupy low-skilled and low-paying jobs that do not match their qualification level. There is no analysis of gender making it difficult to make an assessment of how women are faring in these systems.

Finding #8:

Qualification verification records are low in relation to migrant numbers and provide limited information

The numbers of migrants in the SADC region who have their qualifications officially verified by organs of the state are a tiny fraction of the number of migrants in the region. Publicly available data does not provide sufficient detail on new entrants to disaggregate the number per annum and for this reason we have relied on the data regarding the stock of migrants. This may skew the number up while the absence of data on irregular migrants may skew the number the other way. For this reason, the comparison only serves as a proxy in order to give a sense of the scale of the evaluations of qualifications versus the number of migrants. Further, it highlights the limitation of this data as it is not possible to use this to provide an analysis of the extent to which recognition systems are supporting migrants to work at their correct skills levels: there is also no indication of levels of qualifications or gender break down. Interview data suggests that migrants who get qualifications verified are primarily applying for higher education qualifications to be verified.

We talk about expatriates and not migrants – in most cases the people we are looking at are people with special skills accountants, lawyers, insurance specialists. When we talk about artisans – it is mainly electricians for the mines and construction and broader engineers. The lower level expats are those working for commercial agricultural farms and often come in for harvesting so often seasonal workers from Zimbabwe.

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6.1.2   The complexity of the visa requirements

Emerging strongly from the study is a question about whether the challenges facing migrants relating to wage differentials can be addressed by the recognition and portability mechanisms in place in the region given the complicated regulatory environment pertaining to work permits. While the imperative for this is captured in multiple recommendations and the importance of this for enabling increased equity is highlighted, there are still many challenges in this regard. In particular with respect to gender, it was noted by a respondent to this report that whilst there is limited data, "women migrant workers are more likely to be affected by 'brain waste' and de-skilling"[11]. The respondent observed that the main cause of this challenge relates to, "the lack of recognition of skills and qualifications and hence underutilization of people's skills, and/or difficulties to obtain work permits, also driving migrant workers to work in the informal economy and often in jobs below their skills level. This results in a loss-loss situation for workers, countries of origin and countries of destination"

This was reinforced in interviews during this study and three notable trends emerged in this regard: first, that visa allocation is driven by national analysis of skills shortages, and usually related to specifically designated sectors, offering little possibility for work permits for migrants within other areas (outside of specific bilateral agreements between countries); second, that these are typically for highly skilled workers; and thirdly, that processes are complex and cumbersome.

One respondent from a REC commented that:

> ... Unfortunately, we do not have a regional mechanism, however at national level there are various permits allowed for migrants to travel, there are work permits, temporary stay permits especially for those looking for work and it varies with the different states. They are not standardised regionally but they are aligned with international norms so you'll find that Southern Africa has quite similar work permits, temporary permits and residential permits its basically the standard in the region and they have adapted it to the international norms as opposed to regional standardization.

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11   'De-skilling' is a complex notion in the research literature, starting with the seminal work of Braverman (1974). However, in labour market statistics used by the ILO, it is used to refer to the phenomenon experienced by skilled or highly-skilled workers who enter the labour market and obtain a job below their skills or qualification level, and are therefore considered to be 'overqualified' for the job they occupy. This means that workers end up working in lower-skilled jobs and are often badly paid. If they stay in that same job, which is often the case, they become less and less likely to climb the occupational ladder. The result is an unfair loss of the time and money that the worker spent in obtaining (eventually unused) qualifications and the waste of funds that his/her family and country spent on human resources. 'Brain waste' is a term used in migration terminology in relation to other terms such as brain drain and brain gain. It determines the poor utilization of potential foreign human resources available in the labour market. It relates to migrant workers' skills, qualifications, and job experience acquired in the country of origin that are not properly utilised in the labour market of the country of destination.

In Mauritius a respondent explained that:

... Work permits tends to be demand-driven and subject to certain well-defined criteria for different sectors and scarcity areas. For example, given that there is a lack of Mauritian labour in the ICT-BPO sector, the eligibility criteria to apply for an Occupation Permit in that sector have been changed.

There are two types of work authorization in Mauritius: (1) The Work Permit - issued by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training and suitable for skilled foreign nationals employees whose salary is under Rs 60,000; and (2) the Occupation Permit as a Professional - issued by the Economic Development Board and the Passport and Immigration Office, suitable for employees whose monthly base salary exceeds Rs 60,000 (except for ICT scenarios where the salary threshold is lowered to Rs 30,000).

Another respondent from Mauritius made a similar observation and commented that:

... The challenges is for those who do not have any qualifications then difficult they can still work but that would depend on the employer approaching the immigration office and the work permit section and will determine the need for the skills in the country and based on that a work permit will be granted. If artisan – if employer has made request to immigration and then they will approach us for recognition of the qualification
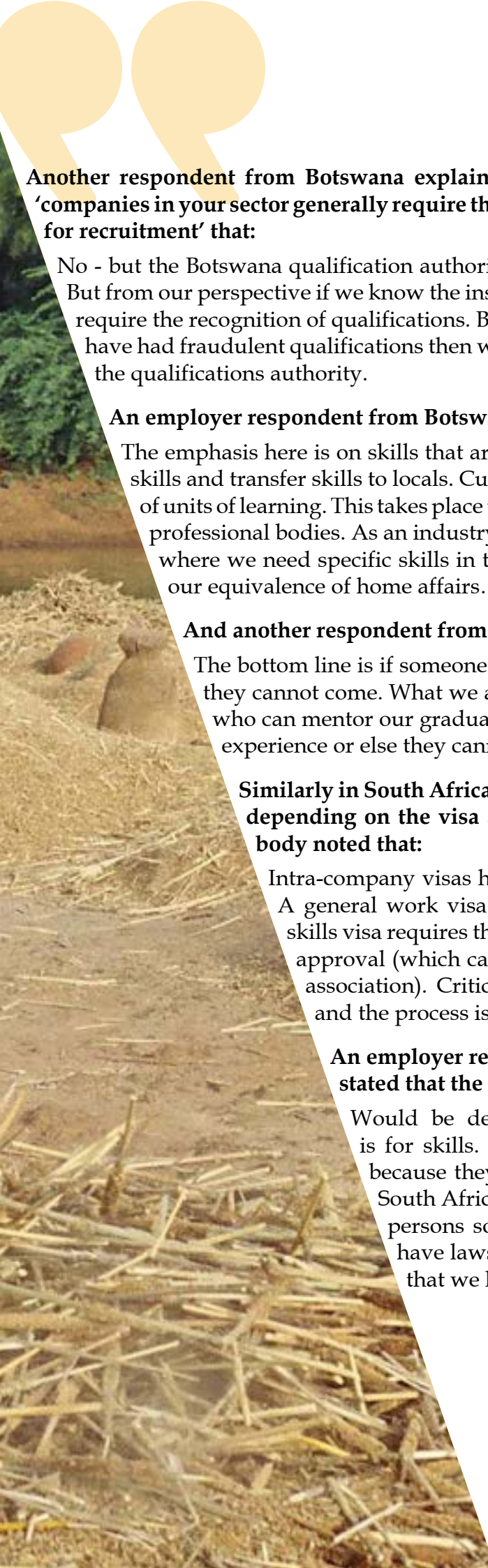
In Botswana a respondent from a regulatory body stated that:

Currently, Botswana has an informal policy of "promotional entry" where it tries to attract skilled personnel from other countries to fill critical areas of skills shortage (e.g. doctors, university professors). Moreover, the Directorate of Public Service Management has been sending recruitment missions all over the world to recruit skilled personnel. But in Botswana there are some sectors that employ migrants such as commercial agriculture but the reality is that it is mainly professionals that companies want and companies do not require evaluation of qualification – it is only an issue in the case of work permit. If someone needs a work permit that is when then required by law to come to the Qualifications Authority. So the kind of applications we get is for those who have bachelor degrees, engineering, educators – lecturers.

Another respondent from Botswana explained in response to the question as to whether 'companies in your sector generally require the recognition of qualifications as a pre-condition for recruitment' that:

No - but the Botswana qualification authority would like companies to approach them first. But from our perspective if we know the institutions the engineers come from then we do not require the recognition of qualifications. But if a person is coming from a country where we have had fraudulent qualifications then we would require that the individual goes through the qualifications authority.

An employer respondent from Botswana confirmed this view and noted that:

The emphasis here is on skills that are not locally available. The interest is bringing in skills and transfer skills to locals. Currently there is no process around the recognition of units of learning. This takes place through the Botswana Qualifications body and the professional bodies. As an industry body we do engage with government especially where we need specific skills in the country. Sometimes there are challenges with our equivalent of home affairs…

And another respondent from Botswana stated that:

The bottom line is if someone comes in with competencies that we have – then they cannot come. What we are looking for is people to come into the country who can mentor our graduates. So the bottom line is a graduate with 4 years' experience or else they cannot come in.

Similarly in South Africa it is noted that this process can be very different depending on the visa applied for. One respondent from a regulatory body noted that:

Intra-company visas have less rigorous checks on skills/qualifications. A general work visa goes through the SAQA process, and a critical skills visa requires the SAQA process as well as industry certification/approval (which can be proven through membership in an industry association). Critical skills and general work visas have backlogs, and the process is somewhat prone to fraud and abuse.

An employer respondent in SA made a similar observation and stated that the visa:

Would be dependent on what the company's requirement is for skills. Are they transferring the knowledge and skills because they don't have it, is it temporary or long term?. In South Africa the focus is on the high number of unemployed persons so we are not focused on external skills since we have laws like skills development to try and up-skill those that we have to put in positions.

As observed by the respondent:

> The companies in Gauteng would bring skills from Japan for about 3 years and transfer knowledge and the skills once the individual is here and leave after transferring skills and knowledge while other companies bring people from India and brought machine from India then say only technicians from India can operate and fix the machinery.

Other employer respondents in SA – from two different sectors – confirmed the level of pressure to hire locally as the key driver in this regard stating that:

> There is a huge notion that the industry employs foreign nationals and has large number of illegal immigrant recent studies show that we are not employing largely immigrants we are actually sitting on 80/20 quarter as per what the regulations are with the Department of Labour.
>
> Our sector does employ migrants because we are covered by collective agreements so as part of the skills development and employment equity we are focused more in South Africans so it will only be for very technical skilled positions where we would likely employ foreign migrants.

A respondent from Seychelles made a similar observation about the challenges facing migrants wishing to work in South Africa stating that:

> The current challenge that we are facing is that members are trying to protect their own citizen to ensure that they get jobs first for example South Africa advertises rare skills because they protect their own citizen to ensure they employ themselves before they can start accepting other skills from other countries.

A respondent from a regional organisation confirmed this view and stated that:

> The barrier is more an issue of the visa system and how they work …..In the region – highly skilled migrant workers are able to get employment in certain fields such as IT, engineering, mining but when it comes to low skilled workers it is difficult for them to access employment as the focus is on locals first. So if a migrant has a higher skill but this is not required they will migrate irregularly and then resort to a lower skilled job. That is any job available to them. This is all linked to the visa system in the countries as employers have to justify why they wish to employ a foreigner rather than a local person and the requirement is how many locals you are training and skills transfer.

Other regional respondents made a similar observation suggesting that:

> SADC is not yet at the level. So there is only a limited extent to which these frameworks can apply, while we are addressing issues of right to entrance and right of residence are still being resolved. We are not yet there. So the full impact of these frameworks cannot be felt at the moment until progress is made in the broader migration framework.

What emerged strongly in the research is the extent to which this environment is made more complicated by the myriad of structures and departments that have responsibility for different aspects of the migration process.

One employer in SA noted that:

> There needs to be more coordination and communication between the relevant bodies that assist migrants whether with work permits, or qualification verification. A challenge we face is that migrants end up duplicating their work permits and selling them or even sharing them so they can get work because the process can be long and stressful.

There is also considerable uncertainty as to who is responsible for what. As indicated by a respondent in Botswana, "At the moment I'm not very sure of what the situation is with the other ministry, Department of skills development, because he belongs to the other ministry…"

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An example of these complexities is also well captured in a document (SAQA 2018) developed In South Africa by SAQA , which describes the value chain for the recognition of foreign qualifications for different purposes. The report highlights the number of bodies and entities that have responsibilities related to the recognition of foreign qualifications: these are outlined below:

- Evaluation (verification and comparison) of foreign qualifications to determine authenticity and locate the foreign qualification within the NQF – SAQA.
- Permission to enter South Africa, the issuing of visas relating to study and work; and addressing the scarce and critical skills needs of the country - Department of Home Affairs (DHA).
- Registration and professional licensing – Professional Bodies.
- Employment, promotion and remuneration – Employers.
- And, admission to study - Learning and related institutions.

A concern in this regard was highlighted by one employer from SA who stated that:

> I would mostly mention the government institutions we've got the Department of Labour, Department of Recreations and Home Affairs they are the ones who do the main tracing of the migrants and the Minister of Trade/Foreign Affairs so that they coordinate the activities. We also have employer groups within member states but then we don't have a regional employer group forum….

This complexity was highlighted based on a rapid assessment carried out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The assessment found that:

> Most countries within the SADC have not dedicated a specific and unique structure to regulate and manage inward and outward labour migration. In some countries, several ministries claim their role in the overall countrywide coordination of labour mobility, which can lead to confusion and inefficiency in the management of labour mobility. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs carries out the issuance of work permits or the Ministry of Finance leads the component on free movement of persons within the Accelerated Program for Economic Integration process (IOM 2016, 7).

Finding #9:

In most cases visa requirements are complex, involving many ministries and agencies, and qualification recognition adds to this complexity

Emerging strongly from the study is a question about whether the challenges facing migrants relating to wage differentials and occupational mobility can be addressed by the recognition and portability mechanisms in place in the region given the complicated regulatory environment pertaining to work permits. Interview responses suggest three notable trends: first, that visa allocation is driven by national analysis of skills shortages in specifically designated sectors; second, that these are for highly skilled workers; and thirdly, that processes are complex and cumbersome.

6.2. Structures and tools in place to support recognition of qualifications at national and regional levels

6.2.1 The Status of National Qualifications Frameworks

The document review (section 4) offered an overview of the status of national qualifications in countries in Southern Africa, suggesting that while it is described as the most advanced region in the continent, there is little indication of either actual implementation or of impact, outside of South Africa (1998), Mauritius (2005), Namibia (2006) and Seychelles (2008) which have implemented frameworks for some time. This section draws from Figure 5 above and provides some additional nuance from interviews, although in the main they confirm what we could ascertain from the document review—that most countries are still attempting to implement their frameworks.

The document review highlights that in South Africa the qualification framework was established in 1996 and there is a mechanism for CATS in place. SAQA explains that they amended the CAT Policy and Criteria in 2020[12] to ensure alignment with other relevant policies and in particular the Articulation Policy for the Post-school Education and Training System of South Africa (published in 2017). The stated purpose of the CAT Policy is to "provide for the recognition of credits previously obtained through meeting the relevant credit requirements towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF. These credits accumulated towards a qualification or part-qualification may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements towards another qualification or part-qualification. Decisions regarding the transfer of credit are made by registered providers who are accredited to offer education and training,

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in line with this CAT Policy and Criteria and the aligned Quality Council policies for CAT, once the necessary evaluations have been complete" (page 7). The policy further indicates that, "all institutions must actively facilitate credit transfer and the bridging of theory and/or practice to enable access at appropriate points to the qualifications/part-qualifications that they offer" (page 9). In the interview with SAQA it was strongly argued that South Africa, and SAQA in particular, has been at the forefront of both SADC and Africa-wide processes to develop qualifications frameworks, and that many of the policy initiatives in the continent originate from and/or are supported by SAQA.

12   SAQA, Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework (As amended 2020): Draft for Public Comment

Mauritius

The qualification framework was established in 2005 and also does not have a mechanism for CATS. An interviewee explains that the qualifications framework also covers all levels from primary to technical and higher education. They indicate that whilst the national framework is comprehensive there are 3 agencies responsible for verifying qualifications. They also indicate that the framework currently only recognises full qualifications although "plans are in place to start looking at recognising part qualifications".

Namibia

The Qualification Framework was set up in 2006. A respondent from a regulatory body in Namibia explains that the Framework is "an inclusive, integrated framework with 10 levels and various types of qualifications." Namibia does not yet have an operational CAT system and the respondent explained that such recognition decisions are made by the higher education institutions.

Seychelles

Established a Qualification Authority in 2008 but has not set up a mechanism for CATS. Respondents from the Seychelles Qualifications Authority explain that the Seychelles National Qualifications Framework (SNQF) is "a framework for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills and competence to be acquired by learners." A report shared by respondents indicate that the SNQF establishes the regulations and principles that guide the development of qualifications. The report states the criteria to be met for qualifications to be recognized nationally. It defines the conditions for learners to be certified. It is also a set of policies and regulations which guides all providers of education and training about the conditions necessary for them to operate (Report on the Alignment of the SNQF and the SADCQF 2018).

Botswana
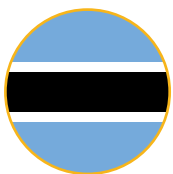
The Qualification Framework was established in 2015 and as per the SADC report did not have a mechanism for CATS. During interviews respondents explained that they have an integrated framework, which includes general education, However, they indicate that the "framework is still new and is only focusing on full qualifications that is what we have prioritised for now".

Tanzania

Set up its qualification framework in 2009 but has not yet established a mechanism for CATS. An interview in Tanzania confirmed this picture. The respondent stated that:

We have set up a national qualifications framework but it is not finalised yet – we do not have final approval for it but it was developed a long time ago. It is currently with the minister responsible for him to sign off on. So what is currently in place is different agencies and structures responsible for basic education, technical and vocational training and higher education. Our structure is currently responsible for the recognition and regulation of vocational and technical training. The new national framework has 10 levels and the new framework will provide for the recognition of full qualifications and RPL.

As indicated previously, the two countries where there is not yet a national qualification framework have not yet been interviewed making it difficult to make further comment in this regard.

Finding #10:

National Qualifications Frameworks

The interview data validates the document review, confirming that while SADC is in some ways ahead of the rest of the continent in terms of developing national qualifications frameworks most countries are still in the early stages of implementation of certain elements of these frameworks (for example some only consider full qualifications, only Madagascar, South Africa and Zimbabwe have mechanisms for CATS) and in the case of Tanzania they are still finalizing the level descriptors.

6.2.2 Extent that there is alignment with the Regional Qualification Framework

The document review showed that a few countries have formally aligned their national frameworks to the regional framework, and others are described as being in the process of doing so. Interviews confirmed that this process is ongoing, and that there is little indication to-date of whether or not this has had any impact on the ways in which migrants' qualifications are recognized, even in South Africa.

The respondent from the Seychelles stated that the National Qualifications Framework (SNQF) is aligned to the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) indicating that this alignment is both "structural and conceptual". They indicate that this is also given expression through their involvement with the SADCQVN and their participation in the SADC TCCA. They explain that the decision to align their framework with the SADCQF was in response to the recommendation made by the SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) which proposed that member states agree to align their National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) or National Qualification Systems (NQS) and QA mechanisms to the SADCQF. The Seychelles volunteered to pilot the alignment of its NQF and QA mechanisms to the SADCQF and published its alignment report in 2018.

A respondent from a regulatory authority in the Seychelles commented that they

have worked to align with the regional qualification framework as well as certain national qualification frameworks. The respondent stated that, "Yes, it is aligned to the regional with the workforce Africa. It is also aligned with the one in South Africa. Some of my colleagues went to Mauritius also to have a look at the MQA, and it is also aligned there." The respondent observed that they had undertaken this process taking the learning from Scotland and indicated that it is still very much work in progress.

In South Africa respondents from a regulatory authority also confirmed that they had completed the process of aligning with the SADCQF. During the interview respondents pointed to the report that had been completed by the (consisting of representatives from government and the quality councils).

The report[13] indicates that the intention of this alignment process is that:

> Alignment will enable this recognition of achievement at a regional level. The resulting transparency and information about the qualifications and QA of aligned Member States will further assist in embedding mutual trust amongst SADC Members. Regional alignment would also enable institutions and individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and would reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes.

The report states that it has established a clear and demonstrable link between qualification levels in the South African NQF and level descriptors of the SADCQF explaining that:

> The SA NQF levels are one level higher (cognitively) than the SADCQF for all the levels from Level One to Level Seven. However, the degree of difference in cognitive challenge in the two frameworks narrows as the learner progresses from Level 1 to Level 7. This results in the SA NQF Level 7 falling between SADCQF Level 7 and SADCQF Level 8; and concludes that once a research component becomes part of both frameworks at Levels 8, 9 and 10, the SADCQF and the SA NQF levels will be aligned.

However what was evident in the interviews is that respondents were somewhat unsure of the status of the alignment process suggesting that it has not yet really been given any practical expression at this stage.

In Botswana a respondent from a regulatory institution confirmed that their national qualification framework was benchmarked against the SADCQF. The respondent stated that they had been working on the alignment framework from 2017 to 2018, "But the process is not yet complete. We did a mapping process to see how our framework could be aligned to the SADCQF – so that we have evidence. We completed this phase and then expected some form of response from SADC –and we have not heard from
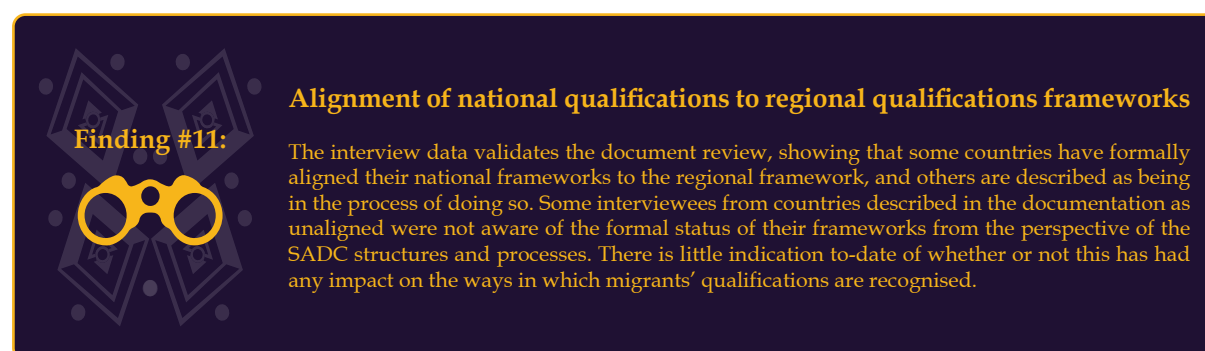
them in terms of them acknowledging the report and indicating what the next step is – that is what we expected – we expected some form of response but there has been no follow up from SADC".

In Mauritius they explained that they have completed their alignment report to SADC and that it is now under consideration. They stated that they have participated very actively in the process and indicated that, "when it started, SADC provided capacity building for member states and then pilot testing so after all that we embarked upon we took about a year to consult everyone in Mauritius and to get government approval for the alignment". The respondent commented that the alignment process was made easier because both their national qualification framework and the SADCQF has a 10 level framework. The one challenge that the respondent highlighted in terms of the alignment process is that the quality assurance systems in place differs from country to country.

Similarly in Namibia the respondent commented that while they have completed the alignment work but that, "when it comes to recognition, the regional Qualifications Framework is not yet fully implemented." The respondent observed though that they are able to use it as a reference as for example, "when someone comes from another country comes to Namibia, we know the level already because we've done this alignment" but that "at the moment, it's not yet put in practice. So that doesn't really currently impact on the recognition that much yet".

While the SADCQF study suggests that Tanzania is not yet aligned, a respondent from Tanzania stated that the national framework which they have developed, while not yet operational as it is still waiting approval, is aligned to the SADCQF. The respondent also indicated that they are also in the process of developing the East African qualifications framework so that it can be aligned across both regions.

Finding #11:

Alignment of national qualifications to regional qualifications frameworks

The interview data validates the document review, showing that some countries have formally aligned their national frameworks to the regional framework, and others are described as being in the process of doing so. Some interviewees from countries described in the documentation as unaligned were not aware of the formal status of their frameworks from the perspective of the SADC structures and processes. There is little indication to-date of whether or not this has had any impact on the ways in which migrants' qualifications are recognised.

6.2.3 The processes followed by the qualification authorities to facilitate recognition

In this section we consider findings from the survey as well as from interviews in terms of the process that are followed for qualification recognition. Table 13 below provides an overview of responses from the survey broken down by country (the same question that was discussed by region in Table 5 above). What is clear is that in all countries, qualifications need to be verified as genuine; there is no automatic recognition.

Table 13: Legal verification in SADC countries

When someone from a country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants their qualification to be recognized, the following statements apply

Note: *Here we are concerned with qualifications authenticity and prevention of qualification fraud*

		There are no national processes to check qualifications. My country accepts qualifications from other countries	Their qualification needs to be verified as genuine	I don't know	Total
Angola	Count	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Botswana	Count	2	3	0	5
	%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Comoros	Count	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Congo	Count	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Eswatini (formerly Swaziland)	Count	0	2	0	2
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Lesotho	Count	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Madagascar	Count	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Malawi	Count	0	1	1	2
	%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Mauritius	Count	0	5	0	5
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Mozambique	Count	1	10	0	11
	%	9.1%	90.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Namibia	Count	1	15	0	16
	%	6.3%	93.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Seychelles	Count	0	5	0	5
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
South Africa	Count	0	20	3	23
	%	0.0%	87.0%	13.0%	100.0%
Tanzania	Count	2	2	0	4
	%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Zambia	Count	0	5	0	5
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Zimbabwe	Count	2	14	0	16
	%	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	8	87	4	99
	%	8.1%	87.9%	4.0%	100.0%

When we explored how long this process takes, we can see in Table 14 below that most indicate that this takes either less than a month or between 3-6 months although many respondents were unsure.

Table 14: Length of time for legal verification by SADC country

<table>
<tr><th colspan="7">On average, how long does this verification take?</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th>Less than a month</th><th>3 to 6 Months</th><th>More than 6 Months</th><th>I don't know</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>Angola</td><td>Count</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Botswana</td><td>Count</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>40.0%</td><td>40.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>20.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Comoros</td><td>Count</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Congo</td><td>Count</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Eswatini (formerly Swaziland)</td><td>Count</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lesotho</td><td>Count</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Malawi</td><td>Count</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mauritius</td><td>Count</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>25.0%</td><td>25.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>50.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mozambique</td><td>Count</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>6</td><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>27.3%</td><td>9.1%</td><td>9.1%</td><td>54.5%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Namibia</td><td>Count</td><td>3</td><td>8</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>16</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>18.8%</td><td>50.0%</td><td>6.3%</td><td>25.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Seychelles</td><td>Count</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>80.0%</td><td>20.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>South Africa</td><td>Count</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>9</td><td>23</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>26.1%</td><td>21.7%</td><td>13.0%</td><td>39.1%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tanzania</td><td>Count</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>75.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>25.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Zambia</td><td>Count</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>60.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>40.0%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Zimbabwe</td><td>Count</td><td>11</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>15</td></tr>
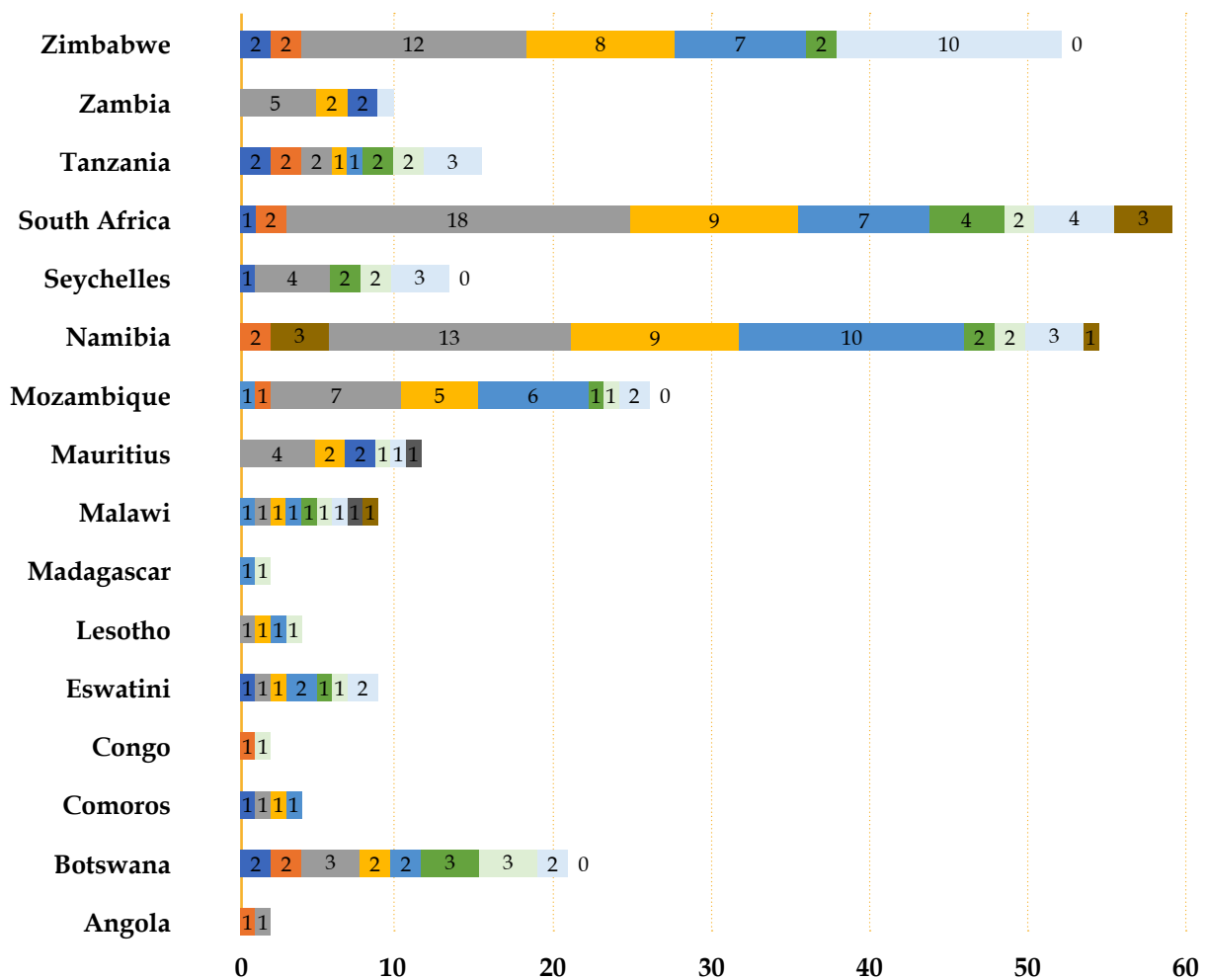<tr><td></td><td>%</td><td>73.3%</td><td>13.3%</td><td>0.0%</td><td>13.3%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
</table>

Total	Count	38	22	7	27	94
	%	40.4%	23.4%	7.4%	28.7%	100.9%

We also explored the requirements for accessing further learning as well as the labour market. A closer look at the responses with respect to accessing the labour market finds that there is a very mixed picture although there are a few responses that are more consistently mentioned: these include that: Qualifications have to be verified by professional associations for some occupations and consistent with the regional comparisons there is a strong focus on: Their qualification must be verified by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level on our qualifications framework, that the curriculum was adequate, and to check if the duration of the learning programme was sufficient.

Further, what is evident is that it is not automatic and that in many countries' employers have minimal input in this regard.

When someone from a country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants their qualification to be recognized in order to access labour markets, the following statements apply:

Note: here we are talking about the recognition of qualifications for:

◆ If they have a national qualifications framework, recognition is automatic.

◆ Recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is an industry and/or bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in.

◆ Their qualifications must be verified by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level on our qualifications framework.

◆ Their qualifications must be verified by a national agency to

◆ Their qualifications must be verified by a national agency to

◆ Employers decide if individuals have the appropriate

◆ In some fields there are national requirements, but in others employers are free to hire as they see fit.

◆ Qualifications have to be verified by professional associations for some accupations.

◆ Counselling and support are offered to assist individuals with

◆ I don't know anything about qualification recognition for access to labour markets

As evidenced from Table 15 below, the majority of respondents across countries indicate that the process of accessing the labour market takes less than a month with Malawi as an outlier as respondents indicate that it takes more than 6 months:

Table 15: *Recognition of qualifications for labour market access by SADC country*

On average, how long does this verification take?						
		Less than a month	3 to 6 Months	More than 6 Months	I don't know	Total
Angola	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Botswana	Count	2	1	0	2	5
	%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Comoros	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Congo	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

On average, how long does this verification take?						
		Less than a month	3 to 6 Months	More than 6 Months	I don't know	Total
Eswatini (formerly Swaziland)	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Lesotho	Count	1	0	0	0	1
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Malawi	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Mauritius	Count	1	1	0	2	4
	%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Mozambique	Count	3	1	1	6	11
	%	27.3%	9.1%	9.1%	54.5%	100.0%
Namibia	Count	3	9	0	3	15
	%	20%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Seychelles	Count	4	0	0	1	5
	%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%
South Africa	Count	4	6	3	7	20
	%	20.0%	30%	15.0%	35.0%	100.0%
Tanzania	Count	3	0	1	0	4
	%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Zambia	Count	2	1	0	2	5
	%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Zimbabwe	Count	3	5	0	5	13
	%	23.1%	38.5%	0.0%	38.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	25	6	29	88
	%	31.8%	28.4%	6.8%	33.0%	100.0%

During the interviews we attempted to gain insight into the actual processes undertaken. The authorities in the different countries have detailed rules in place, some of which are briefly outlined below. What stands out is that qualifications authorities have lists of approved (accredited) institutions from other countries, and that status is an important issue for them. In other words, the awarding institution and its status in the country of origin seems to be the major factor in the speed of processing qualifications, and not relationships between national qualifications frameworks and the regional qualifications framework.

The Seychelles Qualification Authority indicated that they have outlined the procedures for recognition and evaluation of foreign qualifications in a document entitled, Policy and Criteria for Recognition and Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications. This document was revised and approved in March 2019. It explains that the recognition and evaluation process requires submission of documents to the SQA. These include: Identity Document, Proof of Change of name if applicable, completed application, original qualifications, academic records, statement of notional hours

of the programme or credits and a syllabus of programme prescription (if academic records are not available). They stipulate that copies of qualifications and academic records must be certified by authorised persons/awarding institutions/ competent authorities in the country of origin before they are submitted to the SQA. If the original documents are lost and certified copies of the originals are not available, an official statement from the awarding institution or authorised national or international body to the effect that the qualification was awarded to the applicant must be provided. The process of recognition and evaluation begins only after the applicant has submitted all the required documents. This process is supported by research conducted by the SQA, which establishes the status of the awarding institutions and programmes. The Authority liaises with Quality Assurance Bodies overseas for information on the status of providers and programmes. It also has membership on the ECCTIS, the national database of recognised institutions of the United Kingdom and indicate that, "responses to our enquiry to the ECCTIS Team are normally provided within five working days". The respondent also indicated that," the programme of study leading to the qualification shall be considered: minimum entry requirements; credit transfer; date of completion of programme and date of issue of the qualification; programme duration (years, notional hours and/or credits)."

A respondent from Seychelles observed that the majority of the submissions for recognition and evaluation are qualifications and that requests to evaluate smaller units of learning are very low.

Another respondent, from a regulatory institution in Seychelles, stated that "what is important is that the institution is accredited and is fully recognized as if not then it will become a problem".

In Botswana a respondent from a regulatory body explained that:

> If you want to work in Botswana you have to have your qualification evaluated by us – we are the only organisation mandated to do this – thereafter you can apply for a work or study permit. We start the process. If an artisan, for example, they have to come to us first or a if you want to be registered with a professional body you have to come to us first.

The respondent explained that it is the same process for a TVET institution or a university, but what is important is that if the institution does not have good record management as then the process may take longer. The respondent also observes that it is an easy process if the person has a qualification but it is a challenge, "if the person only has a part qualification as currently we do not do that but what we do do is a process around the recognition of prior learning".

One respondent from a regulatory authority in Botswana stated that:

> We form part of the qualifications department. And we do recognition of foreign qualifications. We use our NQF for in this process, there is a set of criteria that guides how we deal with a foreign qualification. We compare it to our system, which is the NQF …. And the characteristics for the different types of qualifications to align those qualifications that come from outside. The NQF doesn't make specific reference to migrants, but our framework allow us to recognize foreign qualifications coming from other countries in general.

In Mauritius, respondents from the regulatory body indicate that the Qualification Authority is responsible for the recognition of the qualifications of migrants. All applications are received online, reviewed and then the Qualification Authority goes to the Qualification Authority in the country of origin to find out more about the qualification and once satisfied the qualification is approved. The respondent indicated that this process could take up to a month but this can be extended if they cannot access the relevant information. In Tanzania they explain that the process depends on the kind of qualification that the person has:

> … If you come from SA and have a degree we check if against ours to see if it is similar and in that process we talk to the "owner" of that award if recognised in the country of origin. This process does not take long and could be a maximum of a week. If the process is straight forward then it can be done almost immediately.

They indicate that before you can apply for a work permit you have to have your qualification verified – so the work permit is dependent on that but also on whether the expertise is available locally or not. So for example, if an investor wants to invest and comes with his own employees – the company has to justify and establish whether that expertise is available locally – if it is then they have to employ local. But if the company is able to justify the need to bring in specific skills, then they have to have their qualifications recognised and then apply for a work permit.

In Namibia a respondent from a regulatory body explained that they use align all foreign qualifications against their NQF regardless of whether it is a national or a migrant:

> the NQF doesn't make specific reference to the migrants, but our framework allow us to recognize foreign qualifications coming from other countries in general. If you look at document qualification, fraud, We do the verification of the award with the awarding body in the country of origin. And all this information needs to be obtained before we can actually give an outcome of that specific award... But the first layer is we to confirm authenticity of that award. And then after that, we do the comparability.

Reflecting on these findings suggests that the times to process the applications, that are indicated in the survey, are somewhat optimistic. Seychelles respondents indicated that applications are processed between fifteen (15) and sixty (60) working days, depending on the specificity of each case. This is longer than is suggested in the survey and is perhaps a more realistic indication of the length of time. Similarly in Botswana, as indicated above, the respondent states that the process is supposed to take 30 working days but explained that this is only in the best case scenario. This is again longer than the time suggested in the survey. This is supposed to take 30 working days but this depends on "where the qualification is acquired from." It is noted that one respondent (in SA) stated that, "In terms of these positions we have to go through the SAQA and ECSA processes and on average it takes between 18 to 24 months before we can get these qualifications ratified." In contrast to this a regional respondent observed that there has been progress made stating that:

> In terms of qualifications authorities. In the past most countries did not have a qualification authority or framework and then we would have to send our applications to SAQA for verifications. So in terms of qualification verification there is a lot of improvement.

The responses provided, as reflected above, reinforces the concern raised in the literature about the extent to which these processes would be possible for migrants that may not have been able to bring their documents with them or secure original documents from the institutions where they completed their studies. Further it speaks to the extent to which the system continues to preference institutions with whom they have relationships and the difficulties experienced when migrants have attended an institution that is not 'recognised' in a database consulted by the relevant quality assurance body. One regional respondent suggested that these kinds of challenges, coupled with the difficulties in accessing visas outside of occupations that are considered scarce skills, 'force' migrants to entire as irregular migrants and work in low skill jobs.

Finding #12:

Qualification recognition systems and rules appear to add complexity instead of facilitating migration

There appears to be an inverse relationship between the extent to which policy mechanisms such as qualifications frameworks are in place, and the complexity and cumbersomeness of processes and systems for verification of skills and qualifications, with implications for visa processes. Further, we found that the awarding institution and its status in the country of origin seems to be the major factor in the speed of processing qualifications, and not relationships between national qualifications frameworks and the regional qualifications framework

6.3. Overarching perceptions about the role of qualifications frameworks in facilitating recognition of skills and qualifications

What emerges from interviews is a strong belief that the regional qualification frameworks will – in the future – support the abilities of countries in the region to recognise the skills of individuals and that this in turn would be valuable for broader economic development. The importance of existing relationships to enable the

success of the regional qualification framework was also highlighted. However, a key point which stands out here is a strong argument that qualification recognition is complex, needs more attention and that its success is dependent on wider political processes. Some employers express a hope that qualifications frameworks and formal qualifications can formalize work; this is seen as important in order to be able to evaluate skills, as currently it is only formal qualifications that are recognized.

6.3.1   Aspirations for the regional framework

One REC respondent emphasised the hope that regional players have for the regional qualification frameworks. The respondent observed that:

> A regional qualifications framework would definitely improve the ease of recognising each other skills, we would probably move faster within the trade and service negotiations as well but at the same time we need to take a step approach and build up to it coming up with the regional framework would be the big activity.

One REC respondent emphasised the hope that regional players have for the regional qualification frameworks. The respondent observed that:

> The qualifications framework makes provision for recognizing a qualification that is recognized in their country of origin. So if you are coming from whatever country with a certain level of qualification and you would like to register on certain program, you will then be required to have proof of recognition from that institution and then on that basis you know it'll just be benched.

A respondent from Tanzania stated that:

> we are a member of SADC and secondly, our borders are porous and people move from one country to another we wanted to have a common qualifications framework so that it can allow freedom of movement – and to make recognition agreements easier.

A respondent from a Seychelles stated that they anticipated that the regional qualification framework would assist to reinforce the relationships between qualification authorities, which are helpful in facilitating these recognition arrangements:

> The fact that we are talking the same language and the fact that this is especially between our Qualification Authority and the South African Qualification Authority in South Africa so it is a process of recognition …. there are certain skills some countries are well known for, eg Mauritius has strong financial people therefore for you are more willing to accept them.

A respondent from Mauritius stated that the regional qualifications framework will be important:

> to facilitate mobility of those coming in and out of the country and to ensure more alignment – a good guide and so everyone is aligned.

Another interviewee from Botswana regulatory body stated that:

> To what extent does your National Qualifications Framework enable the recognition of migrants coming to your country? Remember, my previous conversation was that Botswana is one of the few countries in the region where we have made strides in outlining our qualification ….. And I believe that South Africa has also done so. And basically, we believe that by aligning we are also recognizing other qualification frameworks. And therefore, this should also be very easy for any migrant from whatever, not only in Africa, from beyond the region, to be able to be accepted and be recognized in the qualification.

Beyond the aspirations relating to the system respondents also indicated their hopes for the system for individual migrants, for employers and for society.

Comments include:

> From the perspective of individual migrant, it would probable solve or reduce the complications that comes from migration. It is a long way for them (individual migrants) to send qualifications to be confirmed and they are less likely to be rejected as well if you've got regional framework. From a cost perspective as well, it's very expensive for migrants to have their qualifications reviewed and it takes a while, a regional framework would address the time and anxiety it takes.
>
> For migrants primarily working in low skill jobs, their own personal security would be addressed, we have been struggling especially with domestic work there are horrifying stories coming from some of these other countries. They should understand the environment they are going to offering some level of protection it will be very difficult coming up with a central skills recognition especially when it comes to low skills but then you have artisans, electricians and plumbers there should be a standard in the region of that kind of work builders, brick layers and others but then domestic are completely different category itself because those are lowest skills so they need some level of protection when they travel.

> From the perspective of employers …. you'd find that you have employers in member states who are looking for a specific skill but unfortunately it's not within that member state so we will resolve that by increasing our own GDP within the region as opposed to exporting the money that we are making we are now circulating the wealth amongst ourselves
>
> I hope the institution has links to the institutions of learning it means they will start teaching the skills that are looked for so that there is a match between what is being looked for and what is being offered within the member state so people have access to these things..
>
> At country level, the regional qualification framework would address unemployment, gender equality and skills gaps in the region even at a secretariat level we have to hire expertise from Europe sometimes and those are skills gaps even issues of regional stability if you are employed you not really willing to go and fight.

These aspirations reflect the ways in which respondents believe that the regional qualification framework could assist individuals, employers and the country. However there was a view expressed by a few respondents that these aspirations are rooted in a commitment to participating in certain policy processes. One respondent commented that, "I fear that it is being done because it's a policy of SADC and so we do it. At times – you are needs based or you create the needs.' The respondent observed that this does not negate the possibility that this process could "prompt people in the region to be available to meet the needs of the regions and maybe that's useful". Further respondents acknowledge the complexities associated with achieving these objectives. These challenges are outlined further below.

6.3.2   Challenges identified at the regional level in this early design phase

One REC respondent highlighted the challenges that are experienced in bringing together the systems of English speaking countries and French speaking countries in Africa into an integrated framework.

The respondent commented that:

> We've been struggling with recognition on French speaking countries because their system is a bit different from the English speaking countries so I find that unofficially because the Anglo countries are uniform, Although we have a standardised system of schooling, we do struggle with French and Arabic here and there but then countries like Egypt are very advanced in terms of education. What we call a diploma is not a diploma in the French speaking countries, for them a diploma is an undergrad degree.

A respondent from Tanzania stated that:

> The only challenge if countries are at different levels of development in terms of education and training. So, for example, in terms of the east African experience of developing a framework we found that some countries have 10 levels and others have 8 and we are trying to see how we can harmonise the levels and trying to consolidate them.

There was also a view, which resonated with the points raised previously about the reality that countries tend to limit the recognition of skills to those that they need: this argument recognises that there is a need to recognise the inter-relationship between the political imperatives of countries in the region and the extent to which recognition arrangements are facilitated.

One respondent commented that:

> There is a lot of back and forth on this but then again how do we now do this without trade and services being fully negotiated so that we know which skills you want to hone at a regional level so I think we not quite there yet there is still some base work that we need to do. A regional body would be fantastic but at the same time you need to know which skills you want to hone so that that regional body is effective, unless you give a blanket approach. I also think that will not work as not all member states will be willing to give up all sectors.

This view was echoed by another REC respondent who observed that while these processes are very important they rely on a political commitment from countries to enable migrants to both have their qualifications recognised and to be able to access employment that uses these skills.

With respect to other challenges respondents from qualifications authority state that they are committed to discussing challenges that may emerge with other roleplayers and also see their role as educating the public about the value of recognising the qualifications thereby creating a virtuous cycle.

Finding #13:

There are extremely high hopes and aspirations for what a regional qualifications framework can achieve.

Read in relation to findings twelve, this suggests a concerning disjunct between policy aspirations and the experiences of implantation to-date. This appears in part to relate to the complexity of these processes and the tensions between national and regional interests and in part appears to relate Further, it appears to relate to a disconnect between the problem that is being addressed, the needs of different migrants and the policy decisions that are taken, which appear to over-ride systems and intentions with regard to qualification recognition systems.

6.3.3 The way in which recognition differs across levels (Higher vs TVET)

While respondents have explained that most of the national qualifications frameworks in the region are comprehensive and include schooling, TVET and Higher education a number of respondents commented on the differences between the processes related to the recognition of qualifications from HE and TVET.

One REC respondent stated that:

> There are differences with migrants who have higher education (versus TVET) because universities are worldwide registered and you find that there are a lot of colleges that are not formally registered internationally there is a problem with regulating them.

A respondent from a regulatory body in Mauritius stated that the real difference is that many more of the higher education institutions are recognised as compared to TVET institutions:

> In terms of differences between TVET/university – no real difference as if the institutions have the relevant data then no issues but if for example, the person was at an institution a long time ago there might be challenges.

This view was reinforced by a respondent from Tanzania:

> From our experience, it is sometimes easier to verify qualifications from universities than from TVET colleges – so sometimes it takes longer in relation to TVET qualifications. In the case of professionals, once we or another structure recognises the qualification then you have to go to the professional body to be registered so as to operate in that sector. For example, the engineering registration board is involved.

The example below is a stark indication of the issues raised in the previous section about the challenges linked to the environment and the level of resistance to issue work permits to migrants (references to country name and institutions are removed to preserve anonymity).

The respondent explained that this is particularly a challenge in occupations that are not considered highly skilled. This response while lengthy provides important insights about the complexity of resolving the problem relating to the recognition of skills:

> Yes our sector employs migrants: a lot of mechanics, technicians and artisanal roles-petrol mechanic, diesel mechanic or fitting and turning mechanic, aircon and refrigeration technicians, generator technicians etc. Unfortunately, the migrants occupy positions in the informal sector – sometimes in a formal sector in the informal way. This is because the [government department responsible for labour] doesn't approve of foreign nationals occupying these positions. The challenge is you may find that the skills or qualifications produced in [our country] are not on the same standard or level as other countries and this is evident in the performance of these technicians in the workplace. I know what I am saying is controversial – but this is what we see. Although the department would frown upon the appointment of these people in these technician level positions in the formal sector, the migrants are still getting employed but the problem is that HR cannot then ratify the qualifications in terms of equivalence. But we continue with the appointment because for us its really about competence.

Two further and related observations were also made by respondents: firstly that prior to the qualification frameworks institutions were working together and so it is natural that these relationships are strong and in many cases are the primary consideration, and, secondly that while there is a recognition that it is more difficult to access recognition for a TVET qualification than a higher education one – in part because of the institutional issue and in part because of the political challenges – it is even more complex seeking recognition for a part qualification or a unit of learning. These issues challenge the extent to which the regional framework can currently effectively address the problem that migrants with lower levels of skills find it more difficult to receive recognition and access the labour market.

Finding #14:

The biggest challenges are for recognition and hiring of workers with mid-level (TVET) skills

Interviews confirm that qualification recognition systems strongly focus on higher-level skills, and that the biggest challenges in terms of recognition of qualifications and skills are for mid-skilled workers as well as for the recognition of skills that only relate to some aspect of work within a particular occupation. Again, political considerations over-ride the potential logic of qualification recognition systems.

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6.3.4 The relationship between the qualification recognition and employment process

Respondents from both RECs as well as country respondents emphasised that the relationships between certain countries within the region is the primary factor that determines access to work permits and with this the ability of migrants to use their skills in their employment. An interviewee from Namibia explained that recognition from professional bodies, which is required in some instances, is additional to the recognition that must be obtained from the qualifications authority:

> … we also have other bodies that have a mandate for recognition and these are our professional bodies, they are mandated to recognize for professional registration purposes. So this recognition is slightly different from what the NQA recognition looks like. So, they also consider our recognition because they, they require that comparability as well as the confirmation of authenticity. And however, they then take this award or qualification, and they consider it for recognition, specifically for purpose of work practice, and professional practice and registration to be able to practice. So what they have their own set of criteria and requirements that they will expect any holder of a qualification to still meet before you can be okay to do the, you know, to practice that specific profession. But that is really currently the professional bodies.

Another interviewee from Tanzania confirmed the requirement for qualification verification with respect to professional registration:

> They have to come to us as it is a requirement that if people want to work in the country they have to have their qualifications verified especially for professionals who need to register with a professional association. If they want to access training after their qualification has been recognised they can do so.

A respondent from Botswana reiterated the interplay between the recognition and employment processes stating that:

> Firstly, it is not a problematic process and yes they need to have their qualifications verified so that they can be registered with the professional body and this is generally in relation to more skilled workers. However, it is not necessarily a precondition for employment from employers – where it becomes an issue is if someone needs to apply for a work permit then as a precondition for that they have to have their qualifications recognised by the authority and then once that has happened they can get registered with the professional body. … We engage with government if necessary especially in relation to permits but not in terms of the recognition process – that is generally not an issue.

Interviewees also indicate that building on existing relationships between countries makes it easier to align qualification frameworks as a basis for the recognition of qualifications.

As observed by one respondent:

> Yes, East Africa recognises their qualifications within East Africa, but we have to look at it historically: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi we all benefited from each other's systems so it's very easy to recognise those qualifications and practically speaking EAC already has moved quite quickly there for the countries that are within COMESA they have a framework that has already been setup and already you can find out that in East Africa, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda they are already moving amongst themselves and already have some kind of skills recognition framework. If we can look at that and learn from it, the best way would be to group countries that have a historical relationship so it's easier to implement.

When employers surveyed were asked to indicate whether employment is dependent on the recognition of qualifications (32 responded to this question and 15 said yes), as show in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: *Perceptions of the importance of qualification recognition for employment, employer survey*
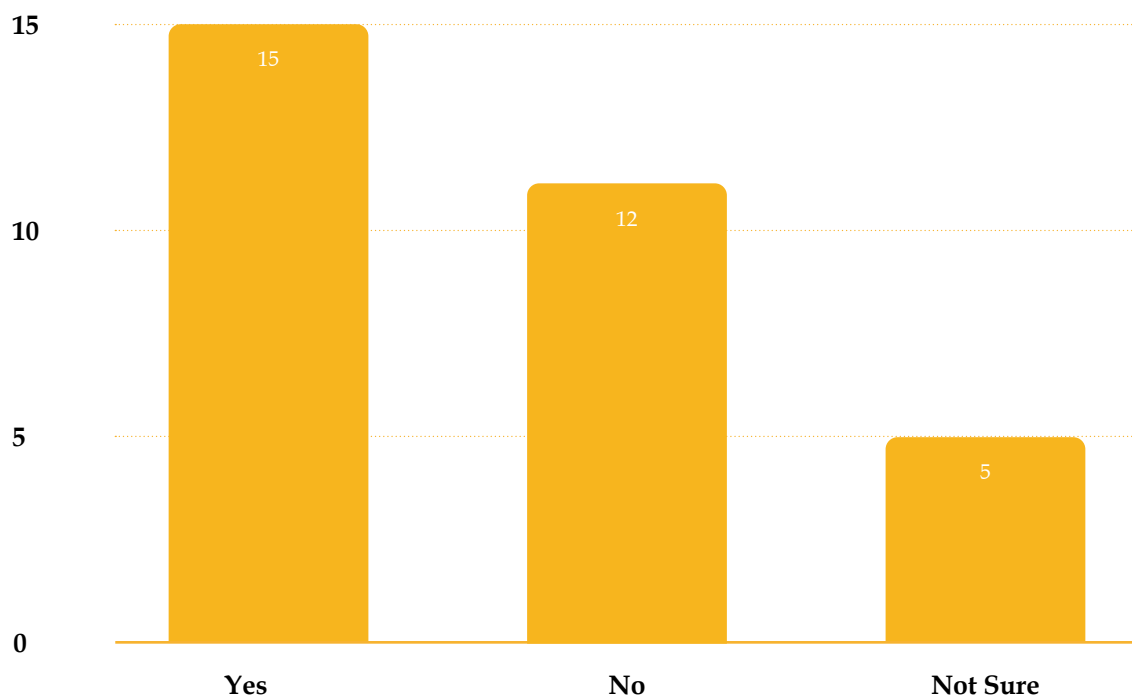
One employer from SA who was interviewed commented on the importance of this recognition stating that:

> I support the National qualification framework …. the formalisation of jobs like waiters, barmen, cooks and cleaners. Instead of doing short skilled sets for these staff the stronger the qualification becomes the stronger the grading system we use to grade service within restaurants … so we thinking of grading waiters as opposed to establishments. The ability to grade waiter staff to be one star, two star and three star waiters will depend on which environment they are working and the amount of experience and skill sets they have to meet the standards within the establishments. Having your service graded will take away a lot of the abuse that happens within the industry where waiters will not be shouted at because they haven't been given the necessary skill sets.

However, not-with-standing these factors that enable the recognition of qualifications, employers indicate that it is difficult to employ migrants (the specific challenges relating to skills lists are alluded to below).

As alluded to in the methodology the majority of employer respondents surveyed indicated that they did not employ migrants and all respondents explained that:

- There is so much local unemployment – in our area probably over 70%. Rather employ local people than migrants, otherwise we just add to the ticking time bomb of frustration and poverty amongst local people.

- Most of our clients do not accept applications from foreigners even though they have the qualifications.

- South African workers do not like migrant workers.

- Due to the lengthy process on bringing in Migrant workers into SA, by the time we have the worker in the country most times we have lost the order.
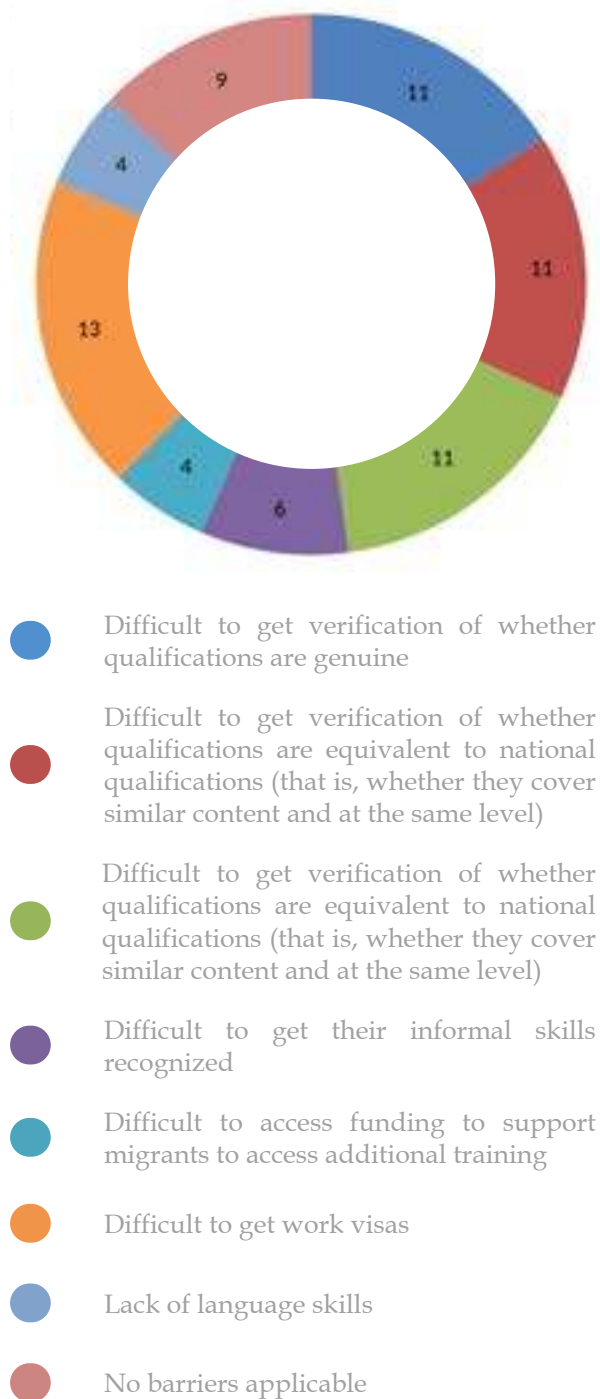
One respondent provided a contrasting view and stated that:

> Once we have the verified qualification for South African equivalent qualification, we have no problems of migrants employed in SA. But if the migrants are employed in SA but sub contracted to other countries in Africa we sometimes have a problem. Not sure what would improve the situation.

These challenges are illustrated in the following figure, which highlights the barriers that employers face when recruiting migrants. Based on this the views highlighted above are reinforced as the, main barrier that employers selected related to problems with work visas. This reason was followed by verification of qualifications both in terms of authenticity and comparability with local qualifications, as seen in Figure 10 below.

- **Difficult to get verification of whether qualifications are genuine**

- **Difficult to get verification of whether qualifications are equivalent to national qualifications (that is, whether they cover similar content and at the same level)**

- **Difficult to get verification of whether qualifications are equivalent to national qualifications (that is, whether they cover similar content and at the same level)**

- **Difficult to get their informal skills recognized**

- **Difficult to access funding to support migrants to access additional training**

- **Difficult to get work visas**

- **Lack of language skills**

- **No barriers applicable**

In the interviews employers from SA offered additional insights in this regard, It would be the responsibility of the employer who brought them here so they would be responsible for the entire process and would depend on what the company's recruitment policy and process are about. I think a lot of employers in

SA are putting this responsibility on the candidate. If the employer has headhunted the foreign national then they are likely to be more responsible for the process of verification of skills and qualifications, but when a migrant has applied for the job the responsibility to prove that your papers era are worthy in SA is theirs.

Respondents from Seychelles stated that, The large majority of recruitment of foreign employees is done by private companies, businesses and employers in the construction, commercial, hotel and agricultural sectors. The foreign employees being recruited have to secure a Gainful Occupation Permit (GOP) and it is required that their qualifications have to be recognised and evaluated by the Seychelles Qualifications Authority. The Certificate of Evaluation is then submitted to the Ministry of Employment and the Immigration Department for the necessary procedures for the GOP. Foreigners coming to work in the health sector have to get their qualifications recognised and evaluated in order to register with the Health Professional Council. In some private sectors namely in the construction, hotel and agriculture sectors where large numbers of foreign workers are recruited they will go directly in their field of work upon receiving the required approval by the government.

Foreigners who come to work in Seychelles are normally identified and recruited on the basis of their field of expertise and qualifications they have already been awarded. For example teachers will be recruited with the Bachelor Degree, doctors with the Doctor of Medicine qualification etc. The qualifications are recognised and evaluated by the SQA which enables them to enrol for employment in the identified areas. As and when necessary, work places (particularly in the hotel sector) organise training for their employees and foreign

workers will also benefit from those training.

Interviewees explained that formal qualification recognition is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for further study and work. Higher education institutions, the interviewee explained, would also do additional assessment of qualifications:

… they can say, you haven't met our admission requirements, because they have their own set criteria for say, for example, for admission to study.

A respondent from a REC stated that their recruitment continues to rely on the higher education institution that the individual attended,

… from a recruitment perspective we depend on the institutions that are recognised by the UN so when you are applying for a job on the UN there are specific universities which are already entered into their system and they are very recognisable. Those are the ones we normally consider.

Similarly, one respondent highlighted that the employer also has an additional layer of responsibility, once the verification process is complete, explaining that the employer "can (still) say, we don't have the you don't have everything that we are looking for." The respondent concludes that the formal recognition advice is "really a guiding advice, and it's really just an advice.' The respondent argues, "we don't you know, have any mandate over other bodies who also have their own recognition". However, while it is clear that no one is forced to accept a student or a potential employee just because their qualification has been verified, this notion of 'advice' does not seem to correctly characterize the process, given that it is obligatory to first have the qualification evaluated by the qualifications authority.

A respondent from Seychelles commented that the process is easier if employers are recruiting the foreign workers themselves for the benefit of the own companies and businesses.

These employers will do the necessary in terms of ensuring that the foreign migrant and his/her qualifications are certified as a true copy by authorised persons/awarding institutions in the country of origin and effect the payment for the evaluation process at the SQA. They will ensure that all documents required for evaluation are submitted to the SQA on behalf of the foreign migrant and these employers are also responsible to provide all required documents to relevant authorities/government ministries and departments.

Another employer respondent from SA observed that while they would like the recognition of skills and qualifications the reality is that what is important is that employers themselves recognise the skills.

> On the informal skills we do practical and then we bring them into our businesses we find that many of the staff stay with a establishment for close to 20 years and they grow within the business and work in the kitchen as a collaborated team and we find that waiters generally get experience in the lower restaurant then travel to up restaurants and make more money because they make commissions that are driven by tips and tips are driven by LSM groups in the top restaurants and they employ waiters with a big personality that are able to swift in between our teams and able to have good sales skill sets.

These findings have highlighted the importance of bilateral agreements and the relationships and arrangements that exist between countries. Over and above the points raised previously, respondents provided numerous examples where these agreements have strengthened the ability of individuals to access work permits. The respondents suggest that once they have the work permit they are then in a position to seek recognition for their skills. A respondent from Mauritius explained that they actively promote labour agreements with other countries:

> Government has signed a technical cooperation agreement with the Seychelles, a bilateral labour service cooperation agreement with China, and an Agreement on the Regulation of Manpower Employment with Qatar. In addition, labour migration agreements have been signed with France, Italy and with Canadian employers, universities and cultural associations to enable Mauritian workers to gain professional experience and training in these countries before returning to Mauritius.

Finding #15:

The political pressure to hire locally may be the biggest barrier to migrant employment

Respondents indicate that the key issue to address with respect to the recognition of migrants qualifications and skills pertains to legislation pertaining to work permits. This was confirmed in our limited sample of employers that were surveyed who suggest that political factors, including pressure from government and local communities to hire locally, is a more significant barrier than qualification recognition in terms of employing migrants. However, they observe that qualification recognition is still a concern.

6.3.5 What kinds of services support migrants with these transitions?

In the international review of the literature there was a discussion about ways to assist migrants to access recognition for their skills. This included a focus on the provision of employment services that support job searchers to assess their skills/aspirations, analyse work opportunities, introduce the migrants to the workplace and then engage in follow-up activities when the individual migrant accesses employment. However during this research interviewees observed that the resource constraints and the extent

of the demand from nationals in countries in Southern Africa, given the extent of the unemployment problem in the region, limits the possibilities in terms of provision work-seeker support to migrants.

With respect to work-seeker support respondents in the surveys suggested that support and counselling is a weak component of the recognition of the qualifications of migrants. During the interviews these views were reinforced:

> We've been supporting discussion groups on providing information for pre departure and post departure for migrants so that they understand where they are going because we've been having challenges with the whole of Africa going to Saudi-Arabia and finding that when they reach there they are not employed in what they have applied for or they are being abused within the context. We've been attending forums and having discussions on some of the issues and we also have to be mindful that member states do have to take the lead as much as regional.
>
> There is no specific approach, we advocate that member states should open up information media centres so that the migrants know where they are going, what to expect, what is available to them, the level of protection that they can get and who do they approach for grievances. Some member states in Northern Africa are very advanced in that because there are a lot of migrants going to Arab states.

Specifically with respect to the assessment of skills through the Recognition of Prior Learning, interviewees highlighted that the qualification authorities are generally not able to recognise part qualifications or units of learning.

To address this limitation, respondents suggested RPL could be a valuable intervention.

Botswana
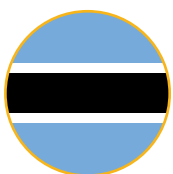
It is place for both locals and migrants stating that, With RPL – you have acquired skills informally and you did not get certificate and so you need to go to a recognised assessment centre and do an assessment to determine whether you meet the requirement if you do then you get a certificate – there are people who have acquired qualifications by having undergone RPL assessment – this process applies to migrants as well it is for everyone – no restriction and access to education is open. If you meet all requirements of the full qualification then they will get a full qualification and if they meet a few outcomes they will get recognised for skills acquired once having gone through the assessment process".

Mauritius

The RPL is in place for locals but not migrants with one respondent cautioning that their countries – and qualification authorities – "are not even getting RPL right for locals" so it seems unlikely that this is feasible for migrants.

Seychelles

The RPL exists and is actively promoted, while credit transfer is in its "early days". However, an interviewee from Seychelles suggested that this RPL is currently only available to nationals and not migrants.

South Africa

There are RPL initiatives underway in the country and indicate that there has been a RPL pilot for migrants.

Namibia

The processes for recognition of prior learning has been started by the Namibian Training Authority.

Zambia

They have RPL initiatives underway.

> **Finding #16:** **There is very little counselling and support for migrants' skills recognition**
>
> In line with a gap in the documentation, interviewees were not able to provide insight into any counselling and other support services available to individuals who need skills and qualifications recognized. Recognition of prior learning systems are seen as important, but in some cases are not available for migrants, and in most cases are fairly small scale.

6.4.   Perspectives on Impact

6.4.1   How does it help individuals?

We struggled to obtain evidence of impact from the document review and from the interviews. As stated, the reports which countries give to SADC simply report on the number of people who applied to have their qualification evaluated—and as noted above, this number is a tiny fraction of migrants in the countries in the study. The SADC 'Report on the Alignment of the SNQF and the SADCDQF 2018' says:

> The SADC regional framework has a positive impact on the processes of recognition of qualifications. It ensures effective comparability of qualifications and credits across SADC; facilitates mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States; harmonise qualifications and create acceptable regional standards.

It goes on to argue that all of this enhances mobility of learners and employees across the SADC Member States. However, it does not provide evidence of this.

> **Finding #17:** **There is little indication of impact of formal qualification recognition systems**
>
> Findings from interviews confirmed that institutions generally do not have any ability to analyze impact of qualification recognition, and have very little information on either the functionality of their systems or their impact.

6.5.   Institutional Capacity

One of the aims of this research was to explore if capacities of national administrations, Regional Economic Community secretariats (RECs), and skills systems need to be enhanced, and if so, which capacities should be the main focus. The findings raise some conundrums in this regard. It is clear that there are capacity gaps in all sorts of ways at all sorts of levels. But which should be strengthened is not as clear—particularly given the finding that the more extensive the systems are for evaluating qualifications, the more cumbersome and complex the processes appear to be. There is a danger that 'strengthening' capacity could make things worse, instead of better. This is because focusing capacity development on complex qualification systems could absorb energy and resources to little benefit particularly because the barriers that are highlighted suggest that, outside of migrants with scarce skills, this may be the wrong area to

focus capacity building on, given the other political and economic challenges that exist. However if the focus of the capacity building shifts to going back to the problem that is being solved for and simplifying the solutions to address these then this could be of real value

That many of the countries with the largest number of migrants are often not the countries that are most rigorously putting in place mechanisms to align with the regional qualification framework requires further interrogation. Have they found other ways to recognise the skills of migrants? Are there things that can be learned from this? And what kinds of support might they require in this regard? In this regard, it is suggested that consideration be given as to ways that the development of such a pragmatic approach could be developed. This may be encouraged by the sharing of learning across the region as to where these processes are having an impact and which interventions have been most useful in making changes that improve the lives of migrants and the economy.

What is of real concern is that while migration is a major phenomenon within SADC the data is very poor. Our first recommendation is that there is a need to strengthen the capacity within countries to collect, analyse and report data about migration, qualifications, and skills, including with regard to gender. This report has highlighted the challenges relating to the data that is collected: we were able to access information about the number of qualifications evaluated but there is no information on: the level of these qualifications (at country of origin and country of destination), the field of qualification and whether the individual is able to access employment in this field and at the relevant level (as suggested by the qualification), the age and gender of the individual whose qualification has been evaluated (and whether they are a national who studied elsewhere or are a migrant). Further, while we could access data about the number of migrants that each country receives and their country of origin this data is uneven and even more so when seeking to disaggregate this data in terms of sectors. Nor is there routine, system wide data about the occupations that migrants occupy in these sectors.

Beyond routine data there is also limited information about whether migrants are working in occupations and sectors that allow them to use their skills and where this is not the case what the major barriers are that need to be addressed. The inability of the qualification frameworks to provide data of the impact of their interventions to recognise qualifications, or units of learning if applicable, undermines the ability of the system to make evidence based decisions about the extent to which this process is improving the lives of migrants and their families, and what is required in this regard.

The nature of the capacity that is required in this regard will need to be considered in the context of regional initiatives that are already in place and that are being supported by the ILO and IOM in the region. This will need to augment the capacity within the region taking into account the limited resources within the regional structures. One respondent (from a REC) stated that, "we now have a migration statistician person unfortunately he just arrived and it's something we've just started". Across interviews it is evident that this is a gap and ways to support this capacity development will be important to consider.
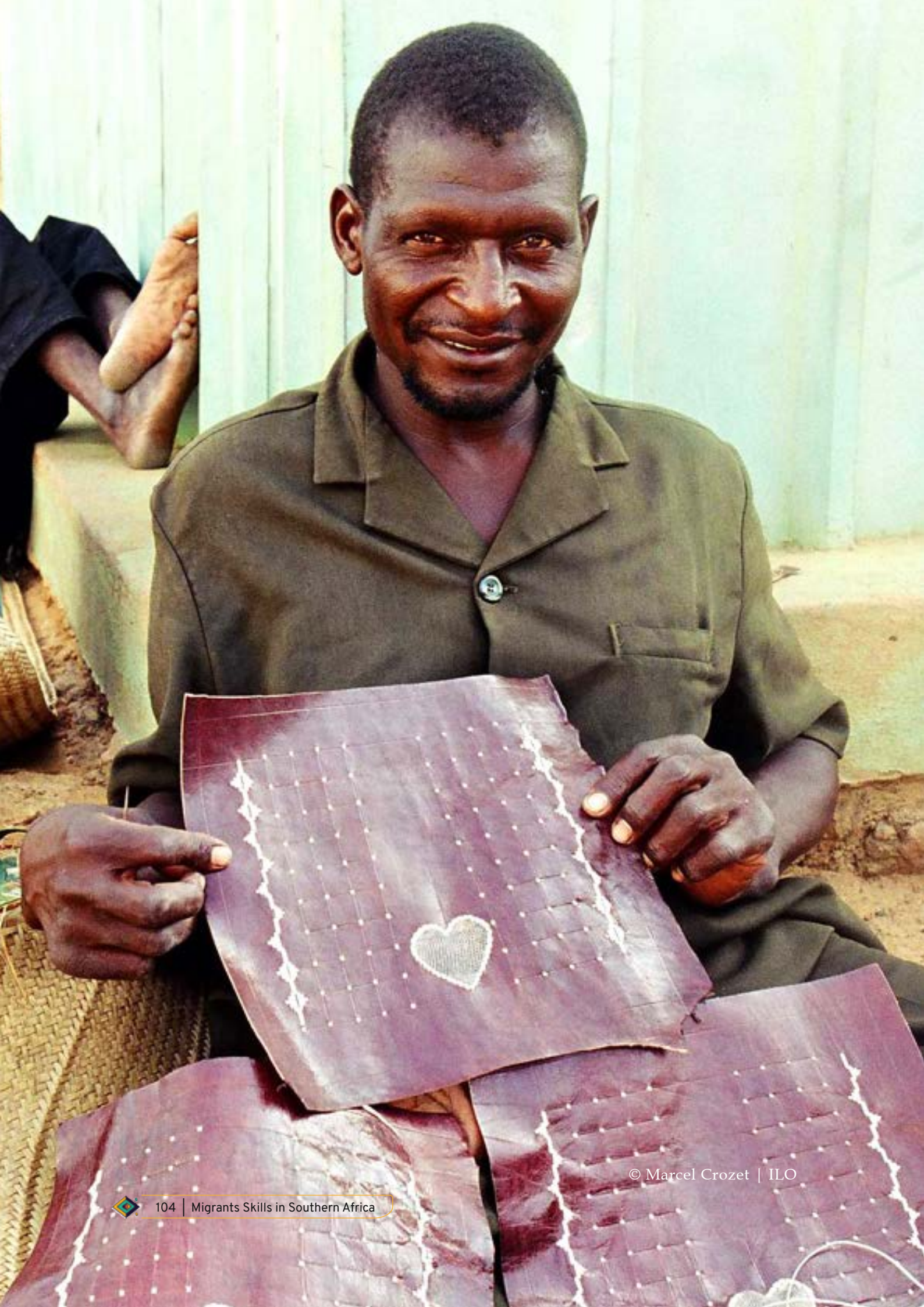
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The second recommendation pertains to the need to make the theory of change for the skills, qualifications and migration explicit: this requires a clear understanding of the problem/s that the intervention seeks to address, what interventions need to be put in place to achieve the objectives and the assumptions underpinning these interventions. This should also articulate the institutional mechanisms and bodies that are best positioned to influence the theory of change. Based on the findings from this review we are suggesting that that there is a need to develop a differentiated strategy for migrants with qualifications that have been identified as scarce by the destination country versus the strategy that is put in place for migrants that have lower level skills. This is described below:

In terms of skilled migrants: Given the demand for the recognition of qualifications of skilled migrants – from both individual migrants and employers - there is a need to consider how to streamline the recognition of qualifications that enable skilled migrant workers to access the labour market. Qualification Authorities made the following comments with respect to capacity:

> We have no challenge around capacity – the challenge in terms more of accessing information from other countries especially if institutions do not keep data – then it becomes a problem and delays the process.
>
> There are no capacity issues in the authority – the issues we face is more in relation to the permit process as well as if we need to get documentation from institutions from other countries and they do not keep good records then it is a challenge.

It is evident from the surveys that even where the national qualification framework is aligned with the regional qualification framework, the process of reviewing the qualification remains complex and in reality SADC, which is the most advanced region in this regard, has the most number of different types of validation processes. While in the survey there is a suggestion that the process is not too lengthy in interviews it became evident that a quick turn-around is the aspiration, and happens when everything is seamless and nothing goes wrong – but it is mostly not. Support to national qualification framework bodies to enable a process of streamlining this process may be useful: thus beyond the need to verify that the qualification is genuine what else is required and how can this be informed by the needs of learning institutions and employers more directly. This may also include capacity support to some of the other players involved in this process – such as the professional bodies – when it is found that their capacity constraints is creating a bottle neck in the process.

There is then a need for a real think about what the demand is for lower level skills – who is the recognition for and what will be the most effective approach in this regard. There is evidence in this report that there has been limited focus on the recognition of lower level skills: this both in terms of demand and in terms of support for this recognition. The surveys highlight that there is almost no guidance or counselling in the system and there are only a few very small RPL processes with no evidence of the extent to which these processes enable individuals to continue

their learning or access the labour market. Nor does there appear to be any evidence of how women, or irregular migrants, are being specifically supported in this regard and the particular challenges that they face given the reality of the sectors where relatively unskilled migrant women work (including in private households) as well as the kinds of jobs that irregular migrants are able to access.

Regional respondents commented that, "in the lower (skill) categories there is a need to put more effort into how these assessments can be done" indicating that there is a need to consider what can be achieved through RPL using a participatory approach that includes the unions. A respondent indicated that, "from a labour point of view – around RPL. we need to be involved in the assessment committees around whether person has the skills for the job".

This last point highlights that all the activity and systems around skill and qualification recognition must be based on an analysis of where the real opportunities are for migrants with lower level skills in the destination countries and determine what kinds of interventions will best meet the needs of migrants in this context. It may be that these are not large scale but that they target certain sectors where there is employer demand as well as cohorts of migrants that could benefit from RPL in terms of the opportunities that this may create for these individuals.

Understanding and meeting demand, with a particular focus on the relationship of skills lists to visas, requires a review of the way in which the relationship between the visa system and the identification of skills shortages are established, including with respect to who is involved in the compilation of such a list (tripartite negotiations) and the regularity with which such a list is updated. Whether such a list is linked to vacancies that have not been filled within a reasonable period may also need to be considered: this could then be inclusive of low-skilled and semi-skilled occupations and encompass all economic sectors. Further, the kinds of recognition interventions that may be important in this context will also require consideration.

Other areas that require a particular focus in terms of institutional capacity include: improved coordination, including addressing political barriers, and a need to be realistic about what can and cannot be achieved.

Improved coordination across key partners—not only qualification partners—is required to ensure the objectives of this process are realised. The Regional Guide to Facilitate South-South Labour Mobility in Southern Africa suggests that there is a need for a coordinated approach in order to streamline the migration process in ways that address the problems related to the inequities of wages of migrants and the challenges they experience in accessing opportunities that recognise their skills.

The Guide proposes the following:

> That the Ministries of Labour and Employment should play a coordinative role with responsibilities that include inter alia: to link inward and outward labour mobility within the national employment and training policies, to provide clear and time-bound policy guidance on labour migration; and to develop regulations pertaining to the management of inward and outward labour migration (i.e. recruitment policies and standards for employment contracts, pre-departure briefing, skills training, monitoring of migrant workers, reintegration).

They further suggest that the different ministries/departments should play the roles listed in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: *The multiplicity of structures involved in the visa process*

National Institution	Responsibiity
Ministry of Home Affairs	- Monitoring of entry and residence of foreigners - Issuance of passports - Security checks
Ministry of Health	- Issuance of medical clearances for foreign residents and nationals - Addressing employment shortages in the medical sector
Ministry of Education/Training	- Recognition of qualifications of prior learning - Pre-departure upgrading - Development of skills transfer policy
Ministry of Social Security	- Development of social protection schemes for migrants - Integration of migrant workers
Statistics Office	- Collection of labour migration data, admnistering surveys and assessment of trends
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	- Negotiation of BLAs - Monitoring of intergration of nationals abroad through embassies
Ministry of Finance	- Provision of financial resources for the implementation of the labour migration policy - Development of financial incentives for the reintegration of nationals abroad
Ministry of Justice	- Vetting of all legal documents such as BLAs and employment contracts - Investigation into cases of exploitation and trafficking
Ministry of Labour	- Monitoring of PLAs - Ensuring the enforcement of rules and procedures for recruitment and hiring national labour force working abroad - Administration of the recruitment processes for the private sector

The Guide also suggests that other sectoral Ministries should be involved in the implementation of the labour migration policy in the targeted sector. The Guide also identifies responsibilities for other social parties.

These include:

- Business associations: Identification of labour and training needs within business networks; Representation of the interest of employment in policy development and the education of peers on ethical recruitment and employment

- Trade unions/Migrant welfare associations: Safeguarding the welfare of migrant workers and the defence of migrant workers' rights in litigation cases

- Academia/Research institutes: Provision of evidence on labour migration dynamics

- Central Bank: Examination of facilitated avenues for money transfers

While it is beyond the scope of this study to comment on the specific recommendations in terms of responsibilities, it is evident from our research that for the recognition of qualifications and skills to be meaningful, there is a need to address both political will and coordinative capacity in countries in the region. As observed by one respondent from business, "the only trouble is getting a work and resident permit from Home Affairs – not so much about the recognition of qualifications". Linked to this, another regional respondent indicated that the challenge is less about a lack of capacity but more about the need to find ways to improve accountability. Ways to ensure that these processes are more effectively embedded into these processes will be an important step in addressing the problems that lie at the centre of this study.

Finally, there is a need to be realistic about what can and cannot be achieved through the recognition of qualifications and the extent to which this is only possible if embedded in wider political processes. Reinforcing the point about the need for coordination, a REC respondent took this point further, and highlighted the challenge that emerged throughout this report:

In the issue of skills there are so many players so we can't just have immigration and just migration we need to have an inter-agency meeting and agree on these things but it will all be sustained from whatever is agreed under trade and services negotiation so that we have a focus targeted of approach. Unfortunately, we do not have a technical person on migration so you find that it gets implemented in a fragmented way and also I don't know if our governments are ready to be talking about skills recognition right now given the current challenges...

The complexity of address the competing political imperatives – of working towards regional integration on the one hand and on the other hand focusing on local employment – was highlighted by a regional respondent who commented on the competing views about migration. The respondent observed that, "within the unions (at a regional level) we are saying that we need to embrace migrants … but there are other unions (within Member States) that resist this".

Finding #18:

Four key priorities for capacity building

1. The most important area for capacity building is data gathering and analysis: there is an extreme lack of systematic data on migrant numbers from a range of perspectives, of which skills and qualifications are only one. Significantly, the activity and systems around skill and qualification recognition are not based on any analysis of where and what the demand is from employers, and flowing from this, the real needs of migrant workers and how the context impacts on this dynamic. This should include a focus on the sharing of learning and on evaluating and documenting impact.

2. There is a need to make the theory of change explicit for different migrants (skilled, unskilled, regular and irregular) and determine interventions that address these imperatives: this includes the needs to streamline the process of recognising qualifications for migrants with higher-level skills in priority sectors and develop interventions to support other migrants in ways that are meaningful

3. Countries and regions need assistance with high-level coordination with regard to migration systems.

4. There is a need for more realism about what can and cannot be achieved through qualification recognition systems.

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Appendix 1: Sectors in which migrants are employed

Table 16 below provides an overview of the numbers of non-citizens in the labour force of key sectors in the DRC. The number of non-citizens declined from 188 300 (LFS 2005) to 137 700 (LFS 2012). The number of non-citizens employed was 79 300 compared to 124 900 in LFS 2005. No data available in the LFS 2012 of the industries in which non-citizens were employed. In the table below the distribution of employed non-citizens across the different industries is drawn from LFS 2005 according to the SAMM final report[14].

Figure 16: *Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, DRC*

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting, & Forestry	67,300
Mining & Quarrying	64,000
Manufacturing	9,800
Construction	
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods	25,200
Hotels & Restaurants	
Transport, Storage, Communications	1,600
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	1,900
Education	4,100
Other community, social and personal services activities	2,400

Sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Agriculture, hunting and forestry (124 900); Mining and quarrying (64 300); Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods (25 200); and Manufacturing (9 800).

Angola[15]

Table 17 below provides an overview of the numbers for Angola. It shows that sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods (502 500); Agriculture, hunting and forestry (131 000; Public administration and defence, compulsory social security (113 500); Construction (89 600); Education (59 800); Transport (58 100); Other community, social and personal services activities (57 900); Health and social work (40 200) and Manufacture (38 800).

Figure 17: *Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, Angola*

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting, & Forestry	67,300
Mining & Quarrying	64,000
Manufacturing	9,800
Utilities (Electricity & Water Supply)	3, 000
Construction	89, 600

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14   Ibid
15   Final report for Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project stock-taking of work on labour migration in the southern African region, 2020

Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods	502,500
Hotels & Restaurants	10,900
Transport, Storage, Communications	58,100
Financial Intermediation	12,900
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	43,800
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	113,900
Education	59,800
Health & Social Work	40,200
Other community, social and personal services activities	57,900
Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households	37,900
Extraterritorial Organisations and bodies	20,800

Tanzania

Table 18 below provides an overview for Tanzania. Sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Agriculture, hunting and forestry (38 500); Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household good (17 700); Manufacturing (4 400) and Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households (2 200).

Figure 18: *Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, Tanzania*

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting, & Forestry	38,500
Mining & Quarrying	800
Manufacturing	4,400
Utilities (Electricity & Water Supply)	
Construction	1,300
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods	17,700
Hotels & Restaurants	1,300
Transport, Storage, Communications	900
Financial Intermediation	800
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	700
Education	100
Health & Social Work	800
Other community, social and personal services activities	1,200
Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households	2,200
Administrative and Support Services Activities	1,800
Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities	200

Information & Communications	600

Namibia

Table 19 below shows that in Namibia, the sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households (9 600): Agriculture, hunting and forestry (9 300); Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household good (2 100); Manufacturing (1 900); Construction (1 700); Hotels and restaurants (1 600); Education (1 400) and Health and social work (1 200).

Figure 19: *Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, Namibia*

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting, & Forestry	9,300
Mining & Quarrying	500
Manufacturing	1,900
Utilities (Electricity & Water Supply)	
Construction	1,700
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods	2,100
Hotels & Restaurants	1,600
Transport, Storage, Communications	400
Financial Intermediation	400
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	
Education	1,400
Health & Social Work	1,200
Other community, social and personal services activities	100
Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households	9600
Extraterritorial Organisations and bodies	

Mauritius

Table 20 shows that the sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Manufacturing (16 100) and Construction (1 800).

Figure 20: *Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, Mauritius*

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting, & Forestry	100
Manufacturing	16,100
Utilities (Electricity & Water Supply)	
Construction	1,800
Hotels & Restaurants	

Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	900
Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households	9600

Seychelles

Finally, Table 21 shows that the sectors in which most non-citizens are located are: Hotels and restaurants (500); Construction (400); and Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods (400).

Figure 21: *Estimates of numbers of non-citizens per sector, Mauritius*

Industry	Other Country
Agriculture, Hunting, & Forestry	100
Mining & Quarrying	
Manufacturing	200
Utilities (Electricity & Water Supply)	
Construction	400
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of personal and household goods	400
Hotels & Restaurants	500
Transport, Storage, Communications	100
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	100
Education	200
Health & Social Work	100
Administrative and Support Services Activities	100
Activities of private households as employers and production activities of private households	
Information & Communications	100

Appendix 2: Survey Questions

When someone from a country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants their qualification to be recognized, the following statements apply: (Note: here we are concerned with qualifications authenticity and prevention of qualification fraud).

- There are no national processes to check qualifications. My country accepts qualifications from other countries.

- Their qualification needs to be verified as genuine.

- I don't know.

Please name the institution that is responsible for the verification of foreign qualifications.

On average, how long does this verification take?

- Less than a month
- More than 6 months

- 3 to 6 months
- I don't know

When someone from another country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants to study further, the following statements apply: (Note: here we are interested in the recognition of qualifications for further learning)

- If they have a national qualifications framework, recognition is automatic.

- Recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is a bilateral agreement with the country that the person studied in.

- The qualification must be recognized by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level that the curriculum was adequate.

- The qualification must be recognized by a national agency to check the duration of the learning programme was sufficient.

- The institution at which they want to study checks or recognizes their qualification against their

- Own requirements.

- Counseling and support are offered to assist individuals with all of these processes.

- I don't know anything about qualification recognition for further study.

(You can select more than one answer)

Please name any institutions involved in qualification recognition for further study:

- Qualification's authority Professional bodies Employer associations Education providers

- Government ministry responsible for internal affairs/migration

- Government ministry responsible for foreign affairs Government ministry responsible for labour affairs Government ministry responsible for education and training

- Companies Other

- I don't know

Which other institutions are involved in qualification recognition for access to further study?

On average, how long does this verification take?

- Less than a month
- More than 6 months

- 3 to 6 months
- I don't know

When someone from a country in my region of Africa moves to my country, and wants their qualification to be recognized in order to access labour markets, the following statements apply: (Note: here we are talking about the recognition of qualifications for access to labour markets.)

- If they have a national qualifications framework, recognition is automatic.

- Recognition of qualifications is automatic or easier if there is an industry and/or bilateral

- Agreement with the country that the person studied in.

- Their qualification must be verified by a national agency to ensure a match with learning outcomes and level on our qualifications framework.

- Their qualification must be verified by a national agency to ensure that the curriculum was adequate. Their qualification must be verified by a national agency to check if the duration of the learning programme was sufficient.

- Employers decide if individuals have the appropriate qualification.

- In some fields there are national requirements, but in others employers are free to hire as they see fit.

- Qualifications have to be verified by professional associations for some occupations.

- Counseling and support are offered to assist individuals with all of these processes.

- I don't know anything about qualification recognition for access to labour markets.

Please name any institutions involved in qualification recognition for access to study and/or labour markets (You can select more than one answer).

- Qualification's authority Professional bodies Employer associations Education providers

- Government ministry responsible for internal affairs/migration

- Government ministry responsible for foreign affairs Government ministry responsible for labour affairs Government ministry responsible for education and training

- Companies Other

- I don't know

On average, how long does this verification take?

- Less than a month
- More than 6 months

- 3 to 6 months
- I don't know

Which other institutions are involved in qualification recognition for access to study and/or labour markets?

Are there other initiatives in place to support the portability and recognition of skills of immigrant workers, such as recognition of prior learning? Please mention them briefly.

Are there any institutions that specifically support immigrant workers to your country, or workers from   your country wanting to emmigrate? Please mention them briefly.

In your view, do graduates of your vocational education and higher education programmes find it easy to have their qualifications recognized in other countries in

your region? (You can select more than one answer.)

- All countries in our region recognize qualifications from my country.

- It is easy to have qualifications recognized in some countries in the region but not others. It is easy if they are going to a country which has a national qualifications framework.

- It is easy if their national qualifications framework is benchmarked against the regional qualification's framework. Government ministry responsible for foreign affairs Government ministry responsible for labour affairs Government ministry responsible for education and training

- It is easy because our national qualifications framework is benchmarked against the regional qualification's framework.

- I don't how easy it is to have qualifications from my country recognized in other countries in the region.

As an expert, please comment on systems to support emigrating or immigrating workers in the country in which you are based, or for countries in your region of Africa or for Africa as a whole.

Appendix 3: Interview Instruments

ILO/IOM study focused on qualifications: Qualifications authorities in 3-4 SADC countries The aim of these interviews is to firstly, understand whether the skills and qualifications of migrants are formally recognised and through what mechanisms and secondly, to understand whether existing capacity is sufficient to achieve this.

Introduction

1. Do you have a qualification framework? If so, please describe your qualification framework in brief:
   * How many levels?
   * Does it cover only TVET or is it comprehensive?
   * Does it only recognise qualifications, or does it also recognise units of learning that are smaller than qualifications? (this could include occupational standards, competency standards, unit standards or part qualifications)

2. If they have a qualification framework - is there alignment between your national qualification framework and the regional qualification framework (the SADCQF)?
   * Where are you in the process, how long it has taken and what it has involved
   * What motivated you to align with the regional qualification framework and have your expectations been met thus far? That is, what has changed/is changing since this process of alignment? Has it made recognition arrangements easier?
   * What are the factors that impact positively or negatively on the extent to which the regional framework is able to support more effective recognition?
   * What has assisted your institution, or not, in terms of achieving this alignment and realising the intentions (in terms of ease of migration)? What support would you need in this regard?

Note: Some of the countries may be linking with more than one regional framework so please check that as you ask the above question. Overview of the recognition process followed by the qualification authority

3. Can you provide input on whether, and if so what role, that you as a qualifications authority play in recognising the skills and/or qualifications of migrants?
   * Please can you provide a description of the systems and processes that are used and an indication of who else is involved?
   * Could you please indicate how long it typically takes?
   * What is your perception of how easy is it to get the skills and/or qualifications of migrant workers recognised by the qualifications authority and any other relevant body? And is this different for countries that are aligned with the relevant regional qualification framework?

Note: To understand the response to this question please probe whether their responses apply only to qualifications and/or to smaller units of learning (if not – what is is in place for these smaller units of learning)

4. To what extent do these processes differ depending on the level and type of occupation?
   * Do migrants who are graduates from progammes at higher levels (such as from

universities) find it easier to have their qualifications recognised than those from TVET institutions?

- Are there other differences – for example for those who have professional qualifications? Or in occupations that are scarce in your country? Does it make a difference if occupations are regulated (perhaps electricians and plumbers)?

5. What are the other forms of recognition in your country and how do these arrangements work in practice? Have these forms of recognition changed since your national qualification framework was established and/or since the regional qualification framework? Have these frameworks made it easier or more difficult for migrants to have their skills and/or qualifications recognised? And in which ways

Note: Other kinds of recognition could include arrangements between institutions (institutional recognition arrangements) or might include bilateral agreements between countries/ between professional bodies or industry associations

6. What are the strengths and challenges in terms of the ways that these different processes work in practice?
   - From the perspective of the individual migrant? From the perspective of the employer? From the perspective of national government?
   - To what extent can any challenges that are identified be met by supporting additional capacity within the quality assurance body and/or within other role players?
   - To what extent are the challenges related to other factors (besides capacity)– if so – please describe these factors?

Support Provided

7. Do migrants – and in which case which categories of migrants - receive support to have their skills and qualifications recognised?
   - If so which institution supports this function?
   - What kinds of support does this include?
   - How does this differ for migrants that have formal recognition for their skills and qualifications/ for those who have formal recognition but no records/ and for those that do not have any form of recognition?

Impact

8. When people come to you to have their qualification recognised – why do they do it? Is it part of a national requirement/ institutional requirement/ etc?

9. Do you have a sense of the extent to which this recognition supports migrants with access to further and higher education and training and/or the labour market?

10. To what extent does the recognition offered by the qualification authority help address the challenge of migrants (including skilled ones) being employed below their skill level? Please explain your response?

Exploring the impact in sectors

11. Based on the work of your qualifications authority, do you have an indication of which sectors have the most migrants? Does this differ when considering unskilled/semi-skilled to higher skills levels?

ILO/IOM study focused on qualifications: REC instrument (SADC, COMESA, IOC)

The focus of these interviews is to firstly, understand the extent to which the recognition and portability mechanisms are in place and are benefitting migrant workers and secondly, to explore which capacities of REC secretariats and skills systems need to be enhanced in this area

Introduction

1. What are the different visas that migrants can access if they will be working in another country (from their own) in the region?
    *   To what extent is this standardized or varied in the region?
    *   What underlies the decisions about these different visas?

2. What is the perception on the impact of these different types of visas and the very rough % of migrants in the region that rely on these mechanisms versus irregular migrants?

3. What is your understanding about the extent to which migrant workers' skills and/or qualifications are recognised in countries in your region and by whom?
    *   Probe whether this recognition takes place through national quality assurance bodies? Employers? Industry Bodies? Professional? Academic?

4. Do you have any idea as to whether there are qualifications that are more easily recognized in different countries in your region?
    *   For example, migrants who have higher education (versus TVET)? Or those who are in professional occupations or occupations where there is scarcity?
    *   Are there differences whether the migrant has qualifications (and with or without papers)/ whether they have units of learning (and again whether formally recognized or not)

5. Are there any initiatives that support migrants with these recognitions processes?
    *   Please describe how these target different categories of migrants and what the initiative includes?
    *   What do you think should be taking place? What is realistic for the region?

Regional Qualification Framework

6. What is the expectation of the regional qualification framework/s? (please indicate whether your regional structure relates to more than one regional qualification authority)

7. Are the different national qualification frameworks aligned/in process of aligning to the regional qualification framework/s?

Other forms of recognition

8. Are there any other mutual recognition agreements in your region?
    *   Probe the nature of these agreements: such as bilateral agreement between

countries/ agreements between professional bodies/ industry bodies/ institutions?
- Please describe these and how effective these are in enabling recognition and how these have changed in the light of the regional qualification framework? And again is this now easier or more difficult or both?

9. Are there any other initiatives to facilitate these different forms of recognition in the region?
- Again probe: the extent to which this might differ depending on the level and type of occupation and migrant status

Institutional capacity

10. Can you provide any input about the institutions that support the recognition and portability of skills in countries in your region (employable skills and certificates) and the processes and practices?
- Do you have an idea of the extent to which national recognition bodies have the capacity to facilitate the recognition and verification of migrant workers' skills and qualifications at various levels and occupations - this with a view to understanding the opportunities to enhance their capacities?

11. Which institution and governance structure are supporting the regional qualification framework and what role/s do they play in this regard?
- Are these arrangements working well - does this institution and the governance structure have the capacity to play the expected roles?
- What factors are enabling this and what makes it more difficult and how could this be addressed? This with a view to understanding the opportunities to enhance their capacities and also to understand possible limitations.

Impact

12. Reflecting on these questions and responses – can you indicate what problem is the regional qualification framework expected to solve for? From the perspective of individual migrants/ employers/ the country?
- Specifically probe whether it is anticipated that it will assist with the challenge relating to migrants primarily working in low skill jobs?

13. And to what extent does the regional qualification framework address these challenges/ does it seem poised to be able to do so?

14. To what extent are any challenges in this regard related to the capacity (or lack thereof) that is in place in the region to address these challenges and support different forms of recognition? Or are challenges related to other factors?

15. Does the region collect and analyse information about the number of migrants in each sector/at different levels/per country that have or have not received recognition of their qualifications and/or units of learning. If you have such data please could you share this?

16. Is there data about the rough % of migrants that seek this recognition (of total number of migrants) at a regional/country level– again if you have such data please could you share this?

ILO/IOM study focused on qualifications: Employer/Professional Bodies

The aim of these interviews is to understand whether these structures/bodies know:

- The extent to which there is a recognition of qualifications of migrants and whether they are able to access opportunities related to their qualifications at the level of their qualifications

- The process and mechanisms whereby the skills and qualifications of migrants are formally recognised – and whether there is a difference depending on level of qualifications

- The extent to which the sector recruits individuals from within SADC

- If associations/professional bodies require additional information

- Any data on the number of individuals in the sector who have sought recognition for their qualifications

Employer Bodies

1. Does your sector recruit migrants? If so, are the migrants typically from the SADC region, elsewhere in Africa or outside of Africa?
2. Typically what type of jobs/occupations do migrants occupy – low level of skill, medium high?
3. And what kind of qualifications/skills/experience do they typically require?
4. What are the kinds of requirements in place that have to be met for migrants to be employed by you (visa/qualification recognition/professional body? Trades body/other)
5. What are the mechanisms in place that assists with this process - please probe how well these mechanisms work and how long they typically take and what makes this process easier or harder?
6. Do migrants receive support from anyone in this process and if so, does this differ for migrants that have qualifications and papers/qualifications without papers/certificates for units of learning or skills but no certification?
7. Could you specifically talk about the role of the qualification framework in this process and whether this has assisted the process (and whether/easier or harder than what was done before – and what this was?)
8. Overall, what is your understanding about whether migrant workers' skills and/or qualifications are recognised in your country and the extent to which this enables migrants to access employment in a role that allows them to use their skills? And/or access further learning? And to what extent do these

processes allow companies in your sector to access the skills that they need?

9. What do you feel could assist to make this recognition easier? (processes, mechanisms, interventions)
10. And do you feel that the relevant bodies at regional level and national level have got the capacity they require to support these roles – what support might they need to play the requisite roles more effectively?

Is there any data you could share with regards to these processes and if so could you please share?

Would you be willing to send a short survey to your members in this regard?

Professional Body

1. To what extent does your sector employ migrants and typically what type of jobs/occupations do migrants occupy have – low level of skill, medium high? And what kind of qualifications/skills/experience do they typically require?
2. Do you deal with a lot of applications from migrants. If so, are the migrants typically from the SADC region, elsewhere in Africa or outside of Africa?
3. What is the process that you follow for recognition as a professional body/trade body/industry body and how does this relate to other recognition processes that are followed in your country?
4. How well do these processes work and do migrants get support in this regard? Please specifically probe how well these mechanisms work (and whether there is a process if documents cannot be accessed) / how long the process typically takes/ what makes it easier or harder?
5. Could you specifically talk about the role of the qualification framework in this process and whether this has assisted the process (and whether/easier or harder than what was done before – and what this was?
6. Overall what is your understanding about whether migrant workers' skills and/or qualifications are recognised in your country and the extent to which this enables migrants to access employment in a role that allows them to use their skills? And/or access further learning? And to what extent do these processes allow companies in your sector to access the skills that they need?
7. What do you feel could assist to make this recognition easier? (processes, mechanisms, interventions)
8. And do you feel that the relevant bodies at regional level and national level have got the capacity they require to support these roles – what support might they need to play the requisite roles more effectively?

Is there any data you could share with regards to these processes and if so could you please share?

Appendix 4: Employer Survey Instrument

ILO/SAMM study: Assessing the ability of the skills system to facilitate the recognition and verification of migrant worker's skills and qualifications at various levels

We are researching the extent to which employers in key sectors in SADC countries are able to employ migrants when required. In particular, we want to understand the extent to which migrant workers' skills and qualifications are recognised in your country, and whether this helps or hampers your recruitment processes.

The study is for the International Labour Organization (ILO), to support the implementation of the Southern African Migration Management Project (SAMM).

We would really appreciate it if your company could respond to the questions below. Please note that your responses will be totally confidential and only aggregated responses will be provided in the research report. Further, there is nothing in the tool that identifies the company, to ensure that it is not possible to identify your company in anyway.

We thank you in anticipation of your assistance in helping to contribute towards a body of research which could help with the portability of skills/qualifications in the region.

The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

For any questions please email: *Matseleng.Allais@wits.ac.za*

1. **In what country are you based?**

    ⚪ Botswana

    ⚪ South Africa

    ⚪ Mauritius

    ⚪ Other (please specify)

    [   ]

2. **What sector do you operate in?**

    ⚪ Hospitality

    ⚪ Manufacturing

    ⚪ Other (please specify)

    [   ]

3. **Does your company recruit migrants?**

    ⚪ Yes

    ⚪ No

    ⚪ Not sure

    [   ]

If yes, please fill in the table below, to indicate at what levels migrants are employed and provide examples of the kinds of jobs at the relevant levels, and whether any qualification is required for these jobs.

Unskilled:

Approximate % of migrants employed at this level

Examples of kinds of jobs at this level

Qualifications that might be required for these jobs

Semi-skilled:

Approximate % of migrants employed at this level

Examples of kinds of jobs at this level

Qualifications that might be required for these jobs

Skilled:

Approximate % of migrants employed at this level

Examples of kinds of jobs at this level

Qualifications that might be required for these jobs

4. **Is the employment of migrants' dependent on the recognition of their qualifications?**

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

   ◯ Not sure

○ Qualifications' Authority

○ Professional Bodies Employer Associations

○ Government ministry responsible for internal affairs/

○ Government ministry responsible for foreign affairs
Government ministry responsible for labour affairs

○ Gov ministry responsible for education and training

○ Companies

○ I don't know

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

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5. On average, how long does this recognition process take?

○ Less than a month

○ 3 to 6 months

○ More than 6 months

○ Not sure

6. Are there any barriers you face when recruiting migrants? Please tick the response/s that apply:

○ Difficult to get verification of whether qualifications are genuine

○ Difficult to get verification of whether qualifications are equivalent to national qualification (that is, whether they cover similar content and at the same level)

○ Difficult to get their informal skills recognized

○ Difficult to access funding to support migrants to access additional training Difficult to get work Visas

○ Lack of language skills No barriers applicable

Please provide your views about whether the process of recognising migrants' qualifications impacts on your company, in which ways and what would make it easier.

For more Information, please contact:

✉ samm-project@ilo.org

🌐 www.sammproject.org

🐦 @SammProject

International Labour Organization

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT

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