SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Revised Strategic Plan for 2020/21 – 2024/25

APPROVED BY THE SAQA BOARD ON
24 OCTOBER 2019 (SAQA 02126/19)

REVISED ON 29 JANUARY 2021

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Executive Authority Statement

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Dr Blade Nzimande

Executive Authority: The South African Qualifications Authority

Accounting Officer Statement

SAQA, a section 3A public entity, has an unbroken record of unqualified audit opinions in its twenty-three-year history. During the last five years, SAQA reported to three different Ministers and saw two Board members resign. The Minister replaced one Board member in December 2018 and the second in April 2020. Nevertheless, the organisation continued to strive towards achieving a world-class National Qualifications Framework for South Africa. This period focused on implementing the NQF policies and consolidating SAQA's international footprint. Some of the highlights during this period included the reinstatement of the NQF Forum in 2018 and the establishment of the first NQF Stakeholder Forum. The latter event coincided with the National Qualifications Framework marking its twenty-first anniversary. SAQA also continued to show leadership internationally through its efforts to embed the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) into the NQF and to introduce a framework for recognising the achievements of refugees and asylum seekers.

During the last five years, the DPME led the process to evaluate the implementation of the NQF Act, 2008. The NQF Act Implementation Evaluation took place, in 2017 and the President signed the NQF Amendment Act in August 2019 and published it for information. SAQA expects the President to proclaim this Act during these five years. The President also signed the Addis Convention and deposited it with UNESCO. The Addis Convention came into effect on 15 December 2019.

SAQA worked closely with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) on the NQF Alignment Project. This project entailed aligning all registered qualifications to the ten-level NQF established by the NQF Act, 2008 from the old eight-level NQF under the SAQA Act, 1995. This project ended in March 2020. SAQA also undertook to "clean" the records on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) in preparation for implementing the NQF Act 2008, as amended.

SAQA's focus for the 2020/25 Planning Cycle is on streamlining and automating its processes to become more efficient in its service provision. The NQF Act 2008, as amended, gives SAQA more responsibility and authority. SAQA must ensure that it is ready to implement the Act as soon as the President proclaims it. It is also essential for SAQA to strengthen its leadership role.

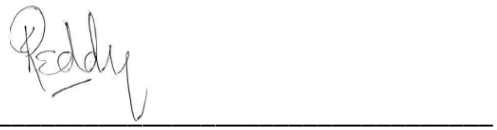
SAQA is also focusing on ensuring its financial sustainability through its paid-services. Furthermore, SAQA is consolidating its relationships with counterparts in SADC, on the African continent and globally.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown had severely hampered SAQA's ability to generate funding through its paid-services. Closure of South Africa's borders resulted in SAQA not receiving requests for the evaluation of foreign qualifications. National and provincial departments had also slowed down recruitment during this period, and therefore did not make use of SAQA's verification services. Professional bodies, like many organisations, suffered financial difficulties, and early indications were that SAQA would not receive professional body fees in 2020/21. Many professional bodies requested to be de-recognised so that they were not liable for the fee.

SAQA received forty-four percent of its funding from the fiscus in 2020/21. The Department of Higher Education and Training imposed a further budget cut of one million, two hundred and eighteen thousand rand (R 1,218 million). This cut, coupled with SAQA's inability to generate funding, resulted in SAQA not being able to balance its budget, and not being able to pay staff salaries from November 2020. SAQA faced the daunting possibility of staff retrenchments.

The current Board's term of office ends on 31 December 2020. I thank the Board for its leadership and look forward to the handover to the new Board.

Recruitment for a new CEO is underway. I take this opportunity to thank SAQA's staff for their continuous efforts in ensuring that SAQA meets its commitments. Despite the financial challenges and frozen posts, staff have taken on more responsibility to ensure that SAQA continues to contribute to the further development and implementation of the NQF.



Dr J Reddy

Acting Accounting Officer

The South African Qualifications Authority

Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the Management of SAQA under the guidance of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology;
- Takes into account all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which SAQA is responsible; and
- Accurately reflects the Impact, Outcomes and Outputs which SAQA will endeavour to achieve over the period 2020/21 – 2024/25.

Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3	Programme 4	Programme 5	Programme 6
Ms P Flanagan	Ms F Nyaka	Ms C Oelofsen	Ms N Coetzee	Dr H Bolton	Ms B Mahlalela
Mr J Ntsoia		Mr D Strydom			
Mr W Radu					

Ms P Mbingo Finance Director	Ms N Naidoo Director: Office of CEO (responsible for Planning)	Dr J Reddy Acting Accounting Officer / CEO

Approved by:

Dr B Nzimande
Minister: Higher Education, Science and Technology

SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Revised Strategic Plan for 2020/21 to 2024/2025

Part A: Our Mandate

1. Constitutional Mandate

1.1 The Bill of Rights, in Section 29 of the **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996**, provides for Education:

1. Everyone has the right
   a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
   b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

2. Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. To ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account
   a) equity;
   b) practicability; and
   c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

3. Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that
   a) do not discriminate based on race;
   b) are registered with the state, and
   c) maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.

4. Subsection (3) does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institutions.

5. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, No. 67 of 2008 (as amended by the Higher Education Laws Amendment Acts 26 of 2010), provides for the NQF as follows:

(1) The objectives of the NQF are to—

(a) Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements;

(b) Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths;

(c) Enhance the quality of education and training; and

(d) Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

(2) The objectives of the NQF are designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

(3) SAQA and the Quality Councils (QCs) must seek to achieve the objectives of the NQF by—
(a) Developing, fostering and maintaining an integrated and transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements;
(b) Ensuring that South African qualifications meet appropriate criteria, determined by the Minister as contemplated in section 8, and are internationally comparable; and
(c) Ensuring that South African qualifications are of acceptable quality.

2. Legislative and Policy Mandates

2.1 National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008 as amended)

SAQA was established under the SAQA Act, No. 58 of 1995 and continues to exist under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, No. 67 of 2008 (as amended by the Higher Education Laws Amendment Acts 26 of 2010 and the NQF Amendment Act, No 12 of 2019). The functions of SAQA are set out in sections 5(3) and 13 of the NQF Act, which became effective on 1 June 2009. It positions SAQA as the oversight body of the NQF and the custodian of its values. In summary, SAQA must:

- Advise the relevant Ministers and decision-makers on NQF matters, oversee the implementation of the NQF, liaise and consult with the QCs on issues relating to the implementation of the NQF;
- Develop policies and criteria for the registration of qualifications, assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer, recognising a professional body and registering a professional designation, and develop level descriptors;
- Maintain a National Learners' Records Database (NLRD), to ensure that South African qualifications are of acceptable quality, to provide an evaluation and advisory service with respect to foreign qualifications; and
- Conduct or commission research into NQF related matters, to collaborate with international counterparts, and to initiate and drive a clear, coordinated communication and advocacy strategy to assist providers, learners and the public at large in knowing, understanding and valuing the NQF architecture, and how it benefits them.

The NQF Amendment Act, No 12 of 2019 that was signed by the President on 13 August 2019 and published for information, further adds to SAQA's mandate.

"The purpose of the NQF Amendment Act is:

- To amend the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008, so as to amend and insert certain definitions;
- to provide for the verification of all qualifications or part-qualifications by the SAQA;
- to provide for the formulation of criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications;
- to provide for the establishment and maintenance of separate registers of misrepresented or fraudulent qualifications or part-qualifications;
- to provide for a separate register for professional designations;
- to provide for the referral of qualifications or part-qualifications to the SAQA for verification and evaluation;
- to provide for offences and penalties which have a bearing on fraudulent qualifications; and
- to provide for matters connected therewith.

Source: NQF Amendment Act, 2019

The NQF Amendment Act "seeks to create an enabling mechanism for the South African Qualifications Authority (''SAQA'') and the three Quality Councils (''QCs'') to have legislative competence to address challenges with regard to fraudulent or misrepresented qualifications or part-qualifications. In this regard, a provision is made for the referral of all qualifications or part-qualifications presented for study, employment or appointment to the SAQA for verification or evaluation. Furthermore, a provision is also made for the referral of fraudulent qualifications or part-qualifications to the relevant professional body. A provision has also been made for offences in respect of fraudulent qualifications or part-qualifications.

The SAQA is also empowered to establish and maintain separate registers for professional designations, misrepresented qualifications and part-qualifications, and fraudulent qualifications and part-qualifications. The SAQA is also empowered to evaluate foreign qualifications or part-qualifications and to formulate and publish criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications or part-qualifications.

A provision has also been made to allow the SAQA, as the body with overall responsibility for the National Qualifications Framework (''NQF'') and for the coordination of the sub-frameworks, to be consulted when the QCs advise the Minister on matters relating to their sub-frameworks. The rationale for this amendment is to mitigate the current situation where QCs do not consult with the SAQA about issues pertaining to the development and management of their sub-frameworks and other matters related to their quality assurance role. This situation creates a risk for the enduring public credibility of the NQF and the quality assurance regime."

Source: MEMORANDUM ON THE OBJECTS OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT BILL, 2018 presented to Parliament.

The Public Finance Management Act (1999)

SAQA commits to sound corporate governance, integrity, efficiency, and compliance. This Strategic Plan considers section 30.1 of the Treasury Regulations, 2005, promulgated under the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (PFMA) as well as the Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, issued by the DPME in June 2019.

2.2 Policy Mandates

SAQA has direct responsibility for implementing, managing or overseeing the following Policy mandates:

- The White Paper on Post- School Education and Training (November 2013)
- Priorities and Guidelines for the NQF and other directives issued by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology

Concerning the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013): the implementation of this document finds expression in the Draft National Plan for Post-School Education and Training discussed below.

In terms of the Ministerial Guidelines: The Minister: Higher Education, Science and Technology, may publish guidelines that highlight priorities that SAQA and the QCs must consider. The Minister did not publish Guidelines in 2019 as the NQF Act Implementation Evaluation Improvement Plan replaced the 2019 Guidelines. SAQA considered the contents of the latter in the development of this Strategic Plan.

3 Institutional Policies and Strategies over the Five-Year Planning Period

3.1 National Development Plan 2030

Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan (NDP) deals with IMPROVING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION. In its focus on the **Youth and Education,** the NDP lists the following targets:

(i) Improve the school system, including increasing the number of students achieving above 50 per cent in literacy and mathematics, increasing learner retention rates to 90 per cent and bolstering teacher training.

(ii) Strengthen youth service programmes and introduce new, community-based programmes to offer young people life-skills training, entrepreneurship training and opportunities to participate in community development programmes.

(iii) Strengthen and expand the number of FET colleges to increase the participation rate to 25 per cent.
(iv) Increase the graduation rate of FET colleges to 75 per cent.
(v) Provide full funding assistance covering tuition, books, accommodation and living allowance to students from poor families.
(vi) Provide a tax incentive to employers to reduce the initial cost of hiring young labour-market entrants.
(vii) Subsidise the placement sector to identify, prepare and place matric graduates into work. The subsidy will be paid upon successful placement.
(viii) Expand learnerships and make training vouchers directly available to job seekers.
(ix) Formalise the graduate recruitment scheme for the public service to attract highly skilled people.
(x) Expand the role of state-owned enterprises in training artisans and technical professionals.

Enabling milestones

(i) Increase the quality of education so that all children have at least two years of preschool education, and all children in grade 3 can read and write.
(ii) Broaden social cohesion and unity while redressing the inequities of the past.

Critical actions

An education accountability chain, with lines of responsibility from the state to the classroom.

In line with the priorities of the plan, **people with disabilities** must have enhanced access to quality education and employment. Efforts to ensure relevant and accessible skills development programmes for people with disabilities, coupled with equal opportunities for their productive and gainful employment, must be prioritised.

3.2 National Development Plan Five-Year Implementation Plan

Government has identified seven priorities derived from the Electoral Mandate and the 2019 State of the Nation Address:

- Priority 1: Economic Transformation and Job Creation
- **Priority 2: Education, Skills and Health**
- Priority 3: Consolidating the Social Wage through Reliable and Quality Basic Services
- Priority 4: Spatial Integration, Human Settlements and Local Government
- Priority 5: Social Cohesion and Safe Communities
- Priority 6: A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State
- Priority 7: A better Africa and World

Priority 2, namely, *Education, Skills and Health,* is relevant to the Department of Higher Education and Training. This priority contributes to pillar 2 of the 3 NDP pillars, which is *Capabilities of South Africans.*

The DHET's NDP five-year Implementation Plan does not specify any direct contribution from SAQA.

3.3 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)

DHET's five-year MTSF refers to the following outcomes:

- Access;
- Quality;
- Responsiveness;
- Success; and
- Efficiency.

DHET has recommended that SAQA and the QCs consider the following three outcomes in their Strategic Plans:

- Improved quality;
- Expanded access (RPL and Articulation); and
- Improved efficiency.

3.4 National Spatial Development Plan

SAQA awaits the publication of this document.

3.5 Draft National Plan for Post-School Education and Training

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training of 2013 sets out a vision for a post-school education system that enriches lives, promotes social justice and overcomes historical inequalities. This Draft National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (the Plan) gives effect to that vision.

The post-school education and training (PSET) system provide for three main types of public education and training institutions: community education and training (CET) colleges, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges and higher education institutions, each with an important role to play in the system. The Plan provides for an expanded and differentiated public system, in which the TVET and the CET sectors should enrol 3.5 million students by 2030 or well over two-thirds of all public PSET students. All colleges and universities that provide post-school education and training opportunities across the sector will work closely with skills development providers, as identified in the National Skills Development Strategy (2030).

The sections of the Plan that are relevant to SAQA are detailed below.

Goal	Objective	Outcomes	Strategies
Goal 1: An integrated and coordinated PSET system	To build a PSET system that is integrated and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and improve the effectiveness	1.1 Clear and streamlined roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders and role players	1.1 The roles, responsibilities, functions and funding frameworks of the quality councils, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) are being refined to reduce duplication and improve efficiency.
		1.3 A simplified National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	• The DHET will work with SAQA and the Quality Councils to address **all NQF-related issues**, including, among other things, **simplifying occupational qualification nomenclature and developing policies on NQF matters**. • The quality councils and SAQA will **simplify accreditation and registration processes**. • The sub-frameworks, in particular, the higher education qualifications sub-framework (HEQSF) and the occupational qualifications sub-framework (OQSF), should be reviewed to ensure **alignment** and reduce the **proliferation** of programmes leading to qualifications. • NQF-related **policies** will be **reviewed** to eliminate contradictions.

			• The **NQF Act** will be **reviewed**, considering the recommendations of the report of the NQF evaluation undertaken by the Department in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME).
		1.4 Increased articulation for students between and within the NQF sub-frameworks, and between and within institutions	Unnecessary and unfair barriers to student articulation between programmes and NQF levels will be addressed through a joined-up planning process between the DHET, Department of Basic Education (DBE), Council on Higher Education (CHE), QCTO and Umalusi.
		1.5 Aligned policy and legislation	Policy and legislation will be reviewed to consider the implications of this Plan.
Goal 3: A responsive PSET system	To provide qualifications, programmes and curricula that are responsive to the needs of the world of work, society and students	3.1 A diverse range of programmes relevant to the aspirations and needs of the locality and responsive to community needs	• CET colleges will offer skills/occupational programmes, community education programmes, general or academic programmes (particularly the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults [GETCA] and the National Senior Certificate for Adults [NASCA]) and foundational learning programmes. • By 2030, TVET colleges will offer general vocational programmes (particularly the National Certificate Vocational [NCV]), skills/occupational certificate programmes, foundational learning programmes, higher certificate programmes (initially in partnership with universities), advanced certificate programmes, and, beyond that, those with capacity will offer diplomas. • Higher education colleges will offer a range of undergraduate certificate, diploma and degree programmes in specific niche areas. • Universities will offer general formative programmes, professional programmes and career-focused programmes at the undergraduate level, all of which may be offered through extended curriculum programmes, as well as a range of postgraduate professional and research-oriented programmes. • Universities will be supported to develop engagement policies and strategies (with the CHE advising on policy, reporting, monitoring and sharing of good practice) and to integrate these into teaching, learning and research.

			• Through the Internationalisation Policy Framework, outbound scholarship and academic exchange opportunities will be broadened, and foreign postgraduate enrolments encouraged.
		3.2 A diverse range of programmes responsive to the world of work	• CET colleges will analyse municipal local economic development plans and Labour Market Intelligence Unit (LMIU) data to assess demand and develop programmes, including programmes which articulate with TVET studies, and skills development programmes where needed by other government departments. • SAQA and the QCTO will **review** all **NQF Level 2 and 3 occupational certificates and NQF Level 4 National Occupational Certificates (NOCs)** with particular regard to the possibility of simulated workplace-based experience components, as there are limitations currently with placements for WPBL. • TVET Centres of Specialisation will initially focus on 13 priority trades in demand and will extend to other trades as identified in the pilot review. • University enrolment and Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) planning will be reviewed to ensure that they are clear and responsive to the changing national and global contexts. • Occupational programmes will be responsive to global technological advancements.

3.6 NQF Act Implementation Evaluation Improvement Plan, 2018

DPME evaluated the implementation of the NQF Act in 2016. The findings of the evaluation resulted in the development of the NQF Act Implementation Evaluation Improvement Plan, 2018. The purpose of the Improvement Plan is to ensure that the relevant stakeholders address the evaluation findings. SAQA has included its commitments from the Improvement Plan for this planning period, in the Strategic Plan.

Below is an extract of the Improvement Plan highlighting SAQA's deliverables.

Recommendation	Outputs to achieve the objective	Activity to produce output	Deadline	Target
Specify the roles and responsibilities of the NQF Forum, [CEO Committee] and Inter-Departmental NQF Steering Committee in greater detail. Particular emphasis should	SAQA, after consultation, strengthens the System of Collaboration:	Review the System of Collaboration	31 December 2020	Amendments to the NQF Act are taken into account when the

Recommendation	Outputs to achieve the objective	Activity to produce output	Deadline	Target
be placed on defining the scope and authority for a decision of each structure, their accountability and reporting lines.	R4.1 - Roles and responsibilities specified in the NQF Act to strengthen the System of Collaboration.			review of the System of Collaboration is done.
Ensure that the NQF Forum is again held on at least an annual basis. For this to happen, SAQA will require the support from the M: HET and DG: HET. It is important to note that for the forum to achieve its goals, it needs to be attended by the right policymakers who have the authority to address the complex issues being raised.	A dedicated channel created for CEO Committee to engage DHET and DBE on policy issues	Amend System of Collaboration, and in particular the Terms of Reference of the CEO Committee	31 December 2020	Amendments to the NQF Act are taken into account when a review of the System of Collaboration is done.
The DHET should clarify and document the role of the NQF Directorate in the policy framework, and review its location within the department.	Establish monitoring mechanisms and report on the functioning of the System of Collaboration	Use DHET's Guidelines on M&E to establish a monitoring and evaluation protocol for the System of Collaboration	1 April 2021	The new M&E protocol is ready for implementation in the next financial year
There is currently no implementation of the registered qualifications designed for adults, i.e. the NASCA and the GETC. In this regard, Umalusi, DHET and the DBE must clarify the status of the NASCA and the GETC, in terms of where in the system the qualifications are to be offered, how they will be funded and what upwards	Provide advice to the Minister about the transfer of the quality assurance of N1-N3 qualifications	SAQA will coordinate meetings between the QCTO and Umalusi to draft a proposal on the transfer of the quality assurance of N1-N3 qualifications to the QCTO	31 March 2021	Develop a project plan on the transitional transfer arrangements

Recommendation	Outputs to achieve the objective	Activity to produce output	Deadline	Target
articulation possibilities exist for those completing the NASCA and the GETC. SAQA, after consultation with the QCTO and Umalusi, will advise the Minister about the transfer of the quality assurance of N1-N3 qualifications to the QCTO.				
Based on the theories of change, DHET in collaboration with the DBE, SAQA and Quality Councils, must develop a detailed implementation plan that outlines the key activities, outputs and outcomes that the NQF is expected to achieve over a five-year period.	Analyses and reporting on trends in data relating to key policy initiatives, in terms of the indicators and performance metrics	SAQA reports on the analyses on trends in data relating to key policy initiatives.	31 March 2021	NLRD trends reporting on analyses relating to key policy initiatives
SAQA after consultation with the Quality Councils must issue guidelines clarifying what a part-qualification is in the context of their sub-framework and specify what is allowable or not in terms of a part-qualification (e.g. will a part-qualification require a workplace component in the OQSF.	Guidelines issued on registration of part-qualifications in line with policy and criteria requirements	Guidelines published	30 September 2020	Guidelines published
SAQA must use the data from the NLRD to track and monitor policy changes and developments across the NQF. The indicators and performance metrics could be defined by the CEO Committee, after consultation with the Inter-Departmental NQF Steering Committee.	Establish an NQF-wide workflow system to track and monitor the status of qualifications and part-qualifications submitted to the	Develop and implement the MIS tracking system for qualifications and part-qualifications submitted to the QCs for accreditation	31 March 2020	MIS tracking system developed and implemented (subject to budget availability)

Recommendation	Outputs to achieve the objective	Activity to produce output	Deadline	Target
	QCs for accreditation and to SAQA for registration on the NQF	and to SAQA for registration on the NQF		

3.7 Policy Initiatives

SAQA, the apex organisation responsible for overseeing the further development and implementation of the NQF, will work with its NQF Partners to ensure implementation of the following NQF-related Policies and Criteria:

- National Qualifications Framework(NQF) Level Descriptors;
- Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the purpose of the National Qualification Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008;
- Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part- Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework;
- National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa;
- National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (amended);
- National Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer(CAT) within the National Qualifications Framework(NQF);
- Amended Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African NQF;
- Addendum on the Recognition of Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers;
- NQF Implementation Framework 2020-2025;
- The Articulation Policy for the Post-School Education and Training System of South Africa; and
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Coordination Policy.

SAQA reviews its policies periodically to ensure currency and alignment to legislation. During this period, SAQA will finalise its Policy on the Misrepresentation of Qualifications, which will be in line with the latest amendments to the NQF Act, 2008.

4 Relevant Court Rulings

In the matter between *Accelerated Christian Education South Africa* (ACE) (Applicant) and *South African Qualifications Authority* (SAQA) (1st respondent); *Council for Further Education and Training Quality Assurance* (Umalusi) (2nd respondent):

ACE provides education programmes through many schools known as the Schools of Tomorrow (SOT). ACE lodged an urgent application against SAQA and Umalusi on 3 March 2017. The essence of the application was to restrain SAQA and Umalusi from informing the public that the SOT Grade 12 College Entrance Certificate (ACE Certificate):

a. Has not been registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GENFETQSF);
b. That the ACE certificate has been de-registered; and
c. That the qualification is invalid.

SAQA, supported by Umalusi, launched a counter application that sought declaratory orders that:

a. The provisional accreditation granted by Umalusi to ACE has been terminated;
b. ACE has been operating unlawfully as an assessment body of qualifications;
c. ACE be prohibited from acting as an assessment body;
d. ACE be ordered to inform ACE students that it may not enrol new students until it has been accredited by Umalusi;
e. It is declared that ACE has been operating unlawfully since 15 September 2016 and continues to operate unlawfully, in that it has been acting as an assessment body of certain identified qualifications without having been accredited as an assessment body by Umalusi.

Final Order:

(i) It is declared that the ACE Grade 12 qualification awarded by independent schools to learners at any date prior to this order is registered and is a valid qualification;

(ii) It is declared that the ACE qualification presently being offered by independent schools to learners who had enrolled for the learning programme leading to the qualification before 30 June 2016, is a qualification registered on the NQF as a qualification that has passed its end date, i.e. with the last date of enrolment is 30 June 2016 and the last date for achievement being 30 June 2019;

(iii) SAQA is interdicted and restrained from informing the public anything different than what is provided for in (i) and (ii) above; and

(iv) It is declared that ACE's Grade 12 qualification offered through independent schools has never been assessed by Umalusi or an accredited assessment body, and ACE's qualifications, therefore, do not comply with the 2012 and 2017 Umalusi Policies, which fact does not impact on the validity or registration of the qualifications, and consequently, the qualifications already obtained and to be awarded to learners who had enrolled for the learning programmes leading to qualifications before 30 June 2016, will have the same status as the qualifications had before 30 June 2015, and should be treated accordingly.

Part B: Our Strategic Focus

5 Vision

A world-class National Qualifications Framework that works for the People in South Africa

6 Mission

Oversee the further development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and advance its objectives, which contribute to the full development of each lifelong learner and to the social and economic development of the nation at large

7 Values

SAQA regards the NQF as a framework for communication, coordination and collaboration across education, training, development and work. SAQA's staff commitment expressed in the SAQA Staff Declaration underpins its work. SAQA staff commits to serve the life-long learner by:

- Building a dynamic, responsive, internationally respected and living NQF;
- Developing a visionary, influential and reflective leadership who cares;
- Registering quality qualifications and professional designations that articulate;
- Building a competent, skilled and caring staff component; and
- Increasing the visibility, understanding and appreciation of the NQF through advocacy and communication over the next five years.

"We also commit to being more accountable, listen more attentively, and to be more respectful and accepting of one another. We pledge to be more aware of the work that we do as an organisation and to appreciate how each of us contributes to serving all people, particularly the poor, rural and marginalised".

"We commit to creating a sustainable environment, where new ideas are encouraged and given due consideration. We commit to reflect on our practices and strive to communicate without fear, favour or prejudice."

Extracts from the Staff Declaration 2019

8 Situational Analysis

The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown had severely hampered SAQA's ability to generate funding through its paid-services. Closure of South Africa's borders resulted in SAQA not receiving requests for the evaluation of foreign qualifications. National and provincial departments have also slowed down recruitment during this period, and therefore did not make use of SAQA's verification services. Professional bodies, like many organisations, suffered financial difficulties, and early indications were that SAQA would not receive professional body fees in 2020/21. Many professional bodies had requested to be de-recognised so that they are not liable for the fee.
SAQA received forty-four percent of its funding from the fiscus for 2020/21. The Department of Higher Education and Training imposed a further budget cut of one million, two hundred and eighteen thousand rand (R 1,218 million). This cut, coupled with SAQA's inability to generate funding, resulted in SAQA not being able to balance its budget and not being able to pay staff salaries from November 2020. SAQA faced the daunting possibility of staff retrenchments.

The environment in which SAQA operates is below.

a) The strategic focus over the five-year planning period

SAQA, as the custodian of the NQF and its values, strives for:

- A dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning;
- Visionary and influential leadership that drives a clear, evidence-based NQF Agenda;
- Well-articulated quality-assured-qualifications and relevant professional designations that instil trust and meet the needs of the people;
- A competent and capable team, dedicated and resourced to develop and maintain the NQF; and
- Stakeholders and role-players who are aligned to deliver on the NQF.

SAQA has incorporated DHET's outcomes as follows:

SAQA's Outcome Statements	DHET's Outcome Statements
A dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning	Expanded Access
Visionary and influential leadership that drives a clear, evidence-based NQF Agenda	Improved Quality; Improved Efficiency; Expanded Access
Well-articulated quality-assured-qualifications and relevant professional designations that instil trust and meet the needs of the people	Improved Quality; Expanded Access
A competent and capable team, dedicated and resourced to develop and maintain the NQF	Improved Efficiency
Stakeholders and role-players who are aligned to deliver on the NQF	Improved Efficiency

In light of these priorities, SAQA will ensure that it:

- Registers **quality** qualifications;
- Coordinates **Articulation and RPL** initiatives;
- Lobbies to strengthen and align relevant **legislation;** and
- Continues to **Simplify** the NQF.

b) The medium and long term policy environment

The President signed the NQF Amendment Act in August 2019 but has not proclaimed it yet. The NQF Amendment Act, No. 12 of 2019 gives SAQA additional responsibilities in terms of verifying national qualifications, reporting on misrepresented and fraudulent qualifications, and advising the Minister on the sub-frameworks.

The NQF Act will change further within these five years. The NQF Act Implementation Evaluation identified the need for further changes to the Act, and the NQF Act Implementation Evaluation Improvement Plan captures this recommendation.

The recommendations state: "The DHET, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), SAQA and the Quality Councils must, as a matter of priority, revise the objectives of the NQF set out in the Act to ensure that they describe the specific contribution of the NQF to the systemic goals. To do this, the DHET, SAQA and Quality Councils must consider the following actions. SAQA, DHET and the Quality Councils must create theories of change or log frames as tools to clarify the following:

(a) The aims and objectives of the NQF, and how these will contribute to the broader goals of the education and training system, and
(b) How implementers will achieve the specific NQF objectives.
This will inform the required changes to the objectives of the NQF Act."

Another area for proposed amendments is on the roles and responsibilities of the NQF structures. Proposed changes include strengthening SAQA's position as the apex body within the NQF space.

A change in the NQF Act will probably result in a shift in SAQA's strategy.

c) Challenges experienced by the institution in the performance environment and mechanisms to address the challenges over the planning period

SAQA's biggest challenge is **financial sustainability**. Its allocation of voted funds comprise less than half (44%) of its conservative budget.

The lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic had severely affected SAQA's ability to generate revenue for services rendered. SAQA has three sources of revenue generation:

- The evaluation of foreign qualifications;
- The verification of national qualifications; and
- Services offered to recognised professional bodies.

With South Africa's borders closed, SAQA had not received any requests for the evaluation of foreign qualifications in the first quarter. There is uncertainty over when travel into South Africa for work or study purposes will resume. SAQA verifies national qualifications mainly for national and provincial departments. There has been little demand for this service in the first quarter, and with further budget cuts in the public service, SAQA does not expect to match the number of requests for this service in 2019/20. Professional bodies find themselves experiencing financial difficulties, and many had indicated that they are unable to pay SAQA their annual fee.

This leaves SAQA facing serious financial challenges. The unbudgeted costs of preparing the workplace for staff to return to work under tightly regulated and controlled lockdown measures had cost SAQA over one million rand and DHET had cut SAQA's budget further by one million, two hundred and eighteen thousand rand. Despite SAQA's best efforts, it could not balance the revised budget. Early indications are that SAQA will not be in a position to continue as a financially viable entity. To mitigate its dire financial situation, SAQA has already imposed a freeze on filling non-essential vacancies and is considering a retrenchment plan as it goes through a re-structure process.

Many of SAQA's processes are manual, outdated and time-consuming. With adequate resources, we will be able to automate and streamline processes; employ artificial intelligence to repetitive processes; improve our productivity; and develop innovative and effective solutions to complex problems. .

In the period, SAQA will continue to look for alternative sources of funding for specific projects and will continue to charge for services rendered, where possible.

The second challenge is SAQA's ability to manage the **transition** to the NQF Act. The NQF Act passed in 2008 and came into effect in June 2009. SAQA is still dealing with some of the transitional issues from the SAQA Act, 1995 to the NQF Act, 2008. This challenge exists because of SAQA's limited resources to deal with the problems and the differences in understandings of the NQF Act among entities in the NQF family. The amendments to the NQF Act worsens this problem and further changes expected in the next five-year period will compound this further.

SAQA's approach will be to phase in the implementation of the amendments to the NQF Act and only to take on funded-functions.

d) Emerging priorities and opportunities implemented during the planning period

The latest amendments to the NQF Act, 2008 adds to SAQA's mandate. Implementation of these amendments will be phased in during the planning period. In addition to this, SAQA plans to do the following:

- Develop a Strategy and **Plan for SAQA's sustainability**;
- In its efforts to improve efficiency: develop a **plan for automating processes** across SAQA; and
- Develop an **Organisational Development Plan** that will include the re-configuration of SAQA's structure in light of the amendments to the NQF Act and planned automation.

Despite having these plans in place, SAQA will not be able to implement its automation plan, without funding

e) Information on the capacity of the institution to deliver on its mandate

The SAQA Board approved SAQA's new microstructure for implementation, in January 2021. Only once the microstructure has been implemented, monitoring and evaluation completed to identify and fill gaps, will the Board approve the final microstructure. The Board expects to approve this microstructure by July 2021.

At this stage, it seems that the new structure accommodates eighty-one posts.

SAQA has a staff complement of **81** members. The distribution of staff is as follows:
CEO plus support = 2
Programme 1: Governance, Strategy, Legal, People, Communications & Stakeholder Relations: 16
Programme 1: Finance and Administration: 15
Programmes 2 – 5: NQF Operations: 48

The current capacity is the minimum structure required to carry out SAQA's functions. SAQA's approach to managing unexpected and short-term crises, is to make use of short-term contract staff. Also, SAQA will be considering ways to automate processes so that capacity is available to deal with more complex functions.

SAQA's new structure will be implemented on 1 April 2021, and may change following monitoring and evaluation. The SAQA Board is expected to approve the final structure in July 2021.

f) Relevant stakeholders that contribute to the institution's achievement of its outcomes

SAQA has a Board that is appointed by the Minister: Higher Education, Science and Technology. The Board delegates some of its work to various committees, but maintains overall responsibility. The Board sets the strategy and monitors its implementation. The current Board's term of office ends on 31 December 2020.

The NQF family (SAQA, the QCs, DHET and DBE) are the primary stakeholders responsible for implementing the NQF Act. The SETAs, private education and training providers, professional bodies, universities, TVET and community colleges, and private and public schools, indirectly contribute to SAQA's achievements through their association with SAQA and members of the NQF family.

The Departments of Justice, Home Affairs and International Relations also play a role in SAQA's achievements by contributing to SAQA's evaluation of foreign qualifications role and in SAQA's ability to create and maintain the Register of Fraudulent Qualifications. The South African Police Services play their part by investigating cases of misrepresented qualifications.

8.1 External Environment Analysis

SAQA operates in a complex and challenging environment. A description of the external environment follows.

a) Background information on factors contributing to the performance of policy and regulatory institutions

SAQA is a Schedule 3A public entity. Approximately half of its funding comes from the state coffers. SAQA is expected to raise the balance of funds through the provision of paid services. This impacts on SAQA's ability to fully deliver on its mandate as the funds generated through paid services are limited. The services offered by SAQA arise from SAQA's mandate described in the NQF Act. The activities in which SAQA engages also align with the functions and powers given to SAQA by this Act.

In addition to the NQF and Public Finance Management Acts, SAQA also subscribes to the King Code on Good Corporate Governance (King IV) and has sound governance practices. SAQA has had unqualified audit opinions from the Auditor-General throughout its twenty-three-year history.

b) Background information on the demand for services and other factors that inform this Strategic Plan

At the heart of SAQA is a directorate that is responsible for registering qualifications and part-qualifications, recognising professional bodies and registering professional designations. The demand for these services continues to grow as the learning and work environments change. An institution should not offer a qualification if SAQA did not register it on the NQF. No person may use a designation registered with SAQA if s/he is not a member of the respective professional body that registered the designation. SAQA recognises professional bodies for five years. If they no longer comply with SAQA's Policy and Criteria, the professional bodies are de-recognised and their designations de-registered. A recognised professional body, among other criteria, must ensure that they load records of all members who have achieved professional designations on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD).

The NLRD is a national treasure in that it is the largest and only official database for all records of learning in the country. The NQF Act requires the QCs to maintain a database of learner achievement and submit that data to the NLRD. In terms of the Amendment Act, QCs are expected to load learner records onto the NLRD within 30 days of the data being quality assured. The NLRD also contains registers of all registered qualifications and part-qualifications, providers who are accredited to offer these qualifications and a separate register for professional designations. Separate databases also exist for all foreign qualification holders and their qualifications if they used SAQA's Evaluation service; and all national qualifications that were verified by SAQA, but are not currently on the main NLRD database. The Registers of Misrepresented and Fraudulent Qualifications are new additions to the NLRD. SAQA must establish the Registers in these five years. All the registers of the NLRD that comply with the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act are available to the public through SAQA's website.

The latest amendments to the NQF Act provide for the referral of all qualifications or part-qualifications presented for study, employment or appointment to SAQA for verification or evaluation. Learner achievements on the NLRD are used to verify national qualification achievements.

The NQF Act 2008, as amended also provides for the QCs to consult SAQA when the QCs advise the Minister on matters relating to their sub-frameworks. This provision makes sense because SAQA is the body with overall responsibility for the National Qualifications Framework and the coordination of the sub-frameworks. The amendment responds to the current situation where QCs advise the Minister about their sub-frameworks and other matters related to their quality assurance role independently of SAQA. The advice does not necessarily take into account its effect across the system. SAQA must be responsive and quickly act when QCs request advice.

SAQA also has a responsibility to provide the public with information about the NQF. To this end, SAQA makes use of its website and social media platforms to communicate with the public. SAQA also provides printed information to policymakers and implementers at its various seminars, workshops, conferences and information-sharing events.

c) Identify challenges and provide interventions

Registration of qualifications: One of the reasons for delays in the registration process is that SAQA does not receive all the required information or SAQA receives incorrect information. The root cause of this problem is that SAQA and the QCs use independent systems with which to carry out their work. The NQF Act Implementation Evaluation highlighted the problem and recommended remedial action in the accompanying Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan lists as a deliverable, the development and implementation of an end-to-end workflow system that will allow providers to load information once for both SAQA and the QCs. This intervention requires additional funding that DHET has committed to secure. In light of SAQA's financial situation, this project will be delayed until funding becomes available.

Professional bodies: the most significant challenge is to resolve the issue of old legislation that governs statutory professional bodies, which conflicts with the NQF Act. The risk to SAQA is that statutory bodies encroach on SAQA's role or are in conflict with the Quality Councils, and these matters require the courts to resolve them. As a result, SAQA becomes embroiled in unnecessary litigation. At the NQF Stakeholders Forum held on 2 March 2019, the previous Minister of Higher Education and Training, recommended setting up a Ministerial Task Team to resolve this matter. SAQA hopes that the current Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, takes up this baton.

The NLRD: the most significant challenge is the incomplete or missing data sets on the NLRD. Since the NLRD is the official management information system of the NQF, it is critical to ensure that the NLRD has a complete set of all learner achievements. SAQA will meet this objective if:

(i) SAQA ensures that the QCs, through their data suppliers, load information onto the NLRD timeously; and
(ii) SAQA locates historical records, digitises these records and loads them onto the NLRD.

The digitisation process requires additional resources. . Amendments to the NQF Act, once enforced, will hopefully ensure that data is provided to SAQA timeously. In light of SAQA's current financial situation, the Digitisation Project will be put on hold.

The verification and evaluation of qualifications: While SAQA currently verifies national and evaluates foreign qualifications, the NQF Act, 2008, as amended is expected to increase demand for these services. These are paid-services, and SAQA uses this revenue to supplement its government funding. SAQA does not have the resources to increase head-count any further in these areas. It is therefore essential to automate and streamline processes as far as funding permits so that these services are offered timeously and in line with service standards. In light of SAQA's serious financial predicament, some staff in these areas may be retrenched. The demand for these services is very low, but will increase once the economy fully opens. This would be an ideal time to automate systems so as to offer a streamlined and more efficient service when the demand increases. Unfortunately, SAQA has to place this project on hold, until funds become available.

The QCs must consult SAQA whenever they advise the Minister on matters relating to their sub-frameworks: The QCs are not happy with this clause in the amendments to the NQF Act, 2008. Their reluctance to give up their right to communicate directly with the Minister: Higher Education, Science and Technology, could prove challenging. SAQA must strengthen its relationships with the leadership of the QCs and be more responsive when asked to comment on advice for the Minister. In time, SAQA hopes to resolve this impasse.

SAQA provides information about the NQF to the public: it is the responsibility of the NQF family to provide information to the public. The challenge is that at times, institutions convey conflicting messages to the public. The public is also confused about which organisation is responsible for what services. It is therefore crucial for SAQA to drive the advocacy and communication strategy and ensure that the NQF family communicates with one voice. There should be one portal with information about all the entities, and some planned joint campaigns.

d) Findings of internal or external evaluations

The NQF Act Implementation Evaluation study, undertaken by DHET in collaboration with the DPME, was concluded in 2017. Subsequently, the NQF Act Implementation Evaluation Improvement Plan was developed to address the findings of the Evaluation. The Improvement Plan is a critical document used in compiling this Strategic Plan.

e) Information from the political environment which may impact on the implementation of the Strategic Plan

SAQA had three Ministers in the last five-year period. With political uncertainty comes uncertainty in the implementation of policies, notably if a new Minister does not support its entities current plans. The current Minister was a previous Minister of Higher Education and Training, so SAQA does not envisage any policy shift that may affect SAQA's strategy.

8.2 Internal Environment Analysis

SAQA's structure and its configuration to deliver on its mandate

A board governs SAQA. The 6th Board's term of office ends on 31 December 2020, and the Minister appointed a new Board on 1 January 2021.

Functions of the Board and Corporate Governance

According to Section 14 (3) (a) of the NQF Act, the SAQA Board is appointed by the Minister (Higher Education, Science and Technology) following a public nomination process. The functions of the Board are set out in sections 5(3), 11, and 13 of the NQF Act.

SAQA is a National Public Entity listed under Schedule 3(a) of PFMA. Therefore, in addition to its responsibilities as set out in the NQF Act, the Board also fulfils the role of the Accounting Authority in terms of section 49 of the PFMA.

As the Accounting Authority, the Board acts in a fiduciary capacity and is responsible for ensuring that:

- Effective, efficient and transparent systems of financial and risk management and internal control, internal audit and procurement are in place;
- Steps are taken to collect outstanding debts; prevent irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure; and recoup losses from criminal conduct and spending resulting from non-compliance with operational policies;
- Effective and efficient management is in place which will include ensuring the safeguarding of the assets of SAQA and controlling its liabilities, revenues and expenditures;
- SAQA complies with applicable legislation and regulations;
- An effective and appropriate disciplinary system is in place to deal with failures to comply with the PFMA and the internal control system;
- Budgets, significant contracts and other commitments are approved;
- Finances are well-controlled; and
- SAQA operates ethically.

The SAQA Board sets strategy and policy. Management formulates strategy and makes policy proposals for the Board's consideration. Management also implements the decisions made by the Board and maintains systems of internal control as well as accounting and information systems. The Board monitors Management's performance.

Section 16 (1) of the NQF Act allows the Board to establish committees to assist in the execution of its fiduciary responsibilities. The SAQA Board utilises the following committee structures:

- Executive Committee
- Remuneration and Human Resources Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Information and Information Technology Committee
- NQF Qualifications Committee
- Professional Bodies Committee
- National and Foreign Qualifications Appeals Committee
- Professional Body Appeals Committee

Each of these committees operates within Board-approved Terms of Reference. The Board assesses the responsibilities of all committees and evaluates their performance annually. The committees also self-evaluate their performance each year. The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee is not a Board member. Board members chair all other Committees, and at least one other Board member is a member of each committee. Twelve of the sixteen Board members are independent non-executive members. Three Board members are the CEO's of the QCs, and the last Board member is the CEO of SAQA. At least 2 Board members come from organised labour.

SAQA's Board has committed to the principles of openness, integrity, efficiency, accountability and compliance reflected in the King Code of Governance Principles 2009 (King IV). SAQA, even though it is not a private corporation, subscribes to the principles of King IV and continuously works towards the further enhancement of its excellent governance processes.

a) SAQA's capacity to deliver on its mandate

Human Resources

The SAQA Board approved SAQA's new microstructure for implementation, in January 2021. Only once the microstructure has been implemented, monitoring and evaluation completed to identify and fill gaps, will the Board approve the final microstructure. The Board expects to approve this microstructure by July 2021.

At this stage, it seems that the new structure accommodates eighty-one posts. The areas most impacted are the following:

- NQF Advisory Services – closure of this service
- Foreign Qualifications Walk-in Centre – closure of this service

- Advocacy, Communications and Advisory Services – closure of this Directorate and a more streamlined function focusing on the media and communication with stakeholders via social media platforms will emerge.
- NLRD – closure of this Directorate. The database itself will be managed by IT, and the MIS unit will have minimal staff to ensure the integrity of the information on the database.
- International Relations – closure of this Directorate and a more streamlined function is considered under Stakeholder Relations.
- Combining the Verifications Project (Programme 3) with the Foreign Qualifications Evaluations and Advisory Service (Programme 4) for a more streamlined service provision with less staff and an investment in automation if funding allows.

Information Technology

The IT Directorate focuses mainly on managing the various service level agreements with suppliers and ensuring that staff have the necessary tools to perform their job functions. SAQA conforms to the Government-Wide ICT Strategy and relevant Cobit standards. IT is an area of deficiency within SAQA. SAQA's strategy is to remain current and relevant by employing ICT to streamline processes and to automate where possible. Human and financial resources to implement this strategy fully is lacking. In light of SAQA's current financial situation, this project has been put on hold.

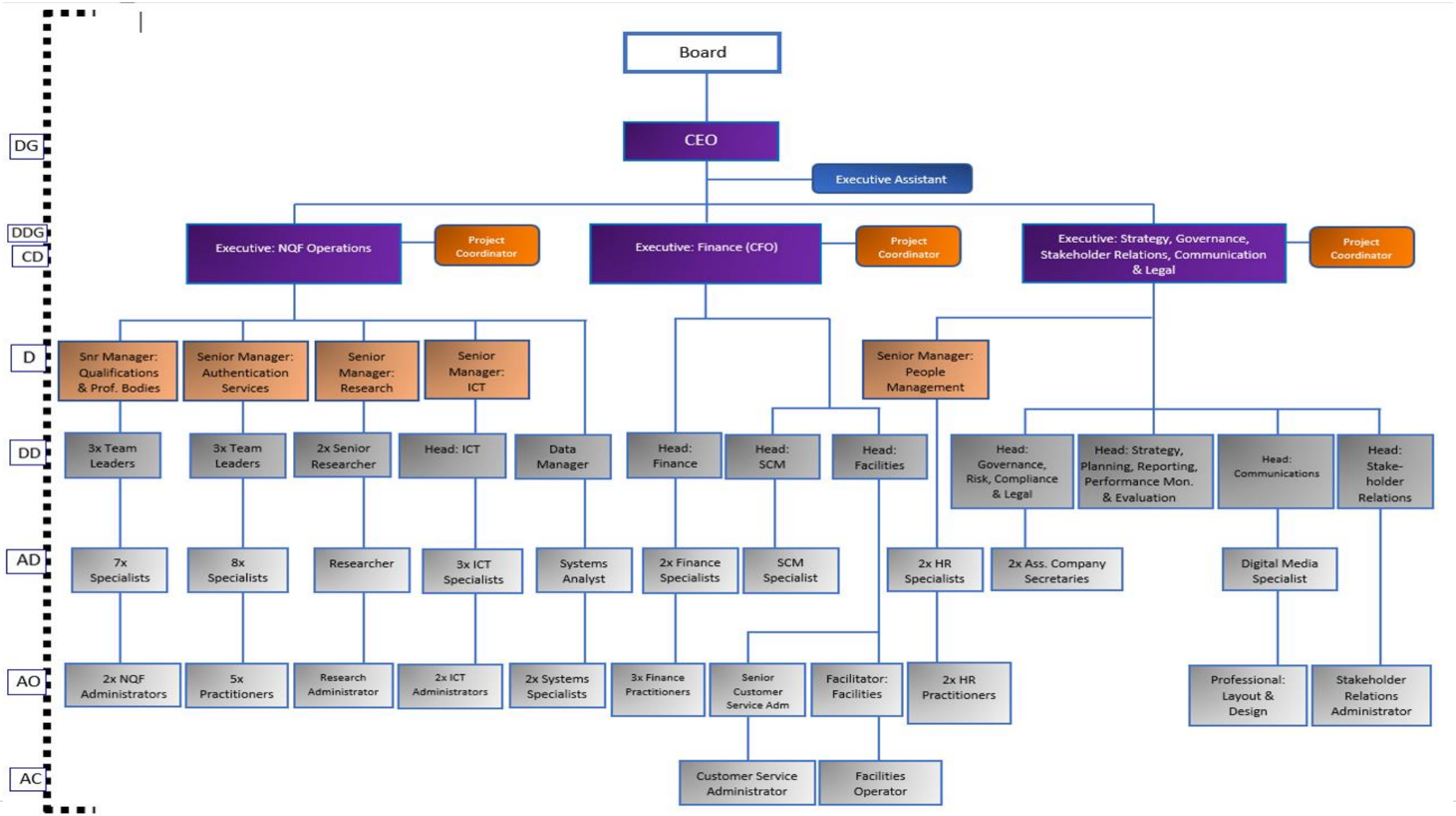
Finance and Administration

This Directorate manages all SAQA's contracts, ensures that staff comply with SCM regulations, manages SAQA's financial resources and maintains the building. SAQA fully complies with the PFMA, and the twenty-three years of consecutive unqualified audit opinions bear testimony to this. SAQA has established a realistic baseline budget in line with the MTEF. Previously several donors and sponsors provided the necessary resources. The primary sources of income currently are:

- Voted funds through the Department of Higher Education and Training; and
- Self-funded projects through paid services

SAQA has an old building that requires significant maintenance. This matter must be a priority during these five years.

Below is SAQA's new microstructure. This microstructure will be implemented on 1 April 2021. The microstructure currently accommodates eighty-one posts. This may change during implementation. Approximately one hundred and six employees will be retrenched during this process.


Board
CEO
Executive Assistant
DG
DDG
CD
Executive: NQF Operations
Project Coordinator
Executive: Finance (CFO)
Project Coordinator
Executive: Strategy, Governance, Stakeholder Relations, Communication & Legal
Project Coordinator
D
Snr Manager: Qualifications & Prof. Bodies
Senior Manager: Authentication Services
Senior Manager: Research
Senior Manager: ICT
Senior Manager: People Management
DD
3x Team Leaders
3x Team Leaders
2x Senior Researcher
Head: ICT
Data Manager
Head: Finance
Head: SCM
Head: Facilities
Head: Governance, Risk, Compliance & Legal
Head: Strategy, Planning, Reporting, Performance Mon. & Evaluation
Head: Communications
Head: Stake-holder Relations
AD
7x Specialists
8x Specialists
Researcher
3x ICT Specialists
Systems Analyst
2x Finance Specialists
SCM Specialist
2x HR Specialists
2x Ass. Company Secretaries
Digital Media Specialist
AO
2x NQF Administrators
5x Practitioners
Research Administrator
2x ICT Administrators
2x Systems Specialists
3x Finance Practitioners
Senior Customer Service Adm
Facilitator: Facilities
2x HR Practitioners
Professional: Layout & Design
Stakeholder Relations Administrator
AC
Customer Service Administrator
Facilities Operator

b) The status of the institution regarding compliance with the BBBEE Act

SAQA's subscribes to the Employment Equity Act.
Below is the SAQA EMPLOYMENT EQUITY statistics as of 30 June 2019.
Notes to the table below: **The Employment Equity Plan (Target) is based on the National EAP for Top, Senior and Professional levels. The provincial EAP is applicable for Skilled, Semi-Skilled and Unskilled levels, according to Statistics SA.

c) The status of the institution regarding women, youth and people with disabilities

Occupational Categories	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		Total SAQA Actual Status	Total Approved Positions*	Total Vacant Positions	Persons with Disabilities ***		
	A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W	M	F				M	F	Total
Target %	35,1%	5,3%	1,8%	4,2%	40,8%	4,5%	4%	5,3%	0	0	100%					
Top Management (CEO & DCEO)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0			
Senior Management (Directors)	1	0	0	1	3	1	1	3	1	0	11	11	0	1		1
Professionally Qualified/experienced specialist/mid-management (DD)	6	1	0	1	5	1	2	0	1	1	18	21	3			
Total SAQA Actual Status	8	1	0	2	8	2	4	3	2	1	31	34	3			
% SAQA Actual Status	26%	3%	0%	6%	26%	6%	13%	10%	6%	3%	91%		9%			
Target %	35,2%	1,3%	1,1%	6,3%	44,8%	1,7%	1,8%	7,9%	0%	0%	100%					
Approved Positions	69	2	2	12	56	2	1	9	0	0	153					
Skilled technically and academically qualified workers, junior management/supervisors (AD,AO)	37	1	1	3	48	2	1	5	0	2	100	103	3	0	2	2
Semi-skilled and discretionary decion-making(,AC,Secretary)	12	0	0	0	40	1	0	0	1	0	54	57	3	1		1
Total Actual Status (AD & Below)	49	1	1	3	88	3	1	5	1	2	154	160	6	2	2	4
% Actual status (AD and Below)	32%	1%	1%	2%	57%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	96%		5%	1%	1%	2,06%
Total Approved Positions & Total Vacancies												194	9			
Total Filled Positions & SAQA % Vacancy Rate											185		4,64%			
Learners and Interns	6	1	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	14					
GRAND TOTAL											14					

63% of staff are women. 2% of the team are people with disabilities. The youth (35 years old and below) represent **45%** of staff.

Part C: Measuring Our Performance

9 Institutional Performance Information

9.1 Measuring the Impact

Impact Statement	An integrated and transparent national qualifications framework that facilitates access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths

9.2 Measuring Outcomes

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-year Target
We have a dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning	1. NQF Policies that support the changing needs of life-long learning	Amended the Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the SA NQF Amended the Policy and Criteria for Recognising Professional Bodies and Registering Professional Designations Developed and implemented the Addendum on Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Review five NQF Policies and amend them as required
	2. Amended NQF Policies are implemented		Monitor the implementation of the reviewed NQF Policies

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-year Target
		Amended the RPL Policy	
We have visionary and influential leadership that drives a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda	3. SAQA influences and shapes national and international discourses	SAQA aligned the SA NQF to the SADC Qualifications Framework. SAQA participated in the development of the Addis Convention and the Global Convention.	Align the SA NQF to the proposed African Continental Qualifications Framework. Implement the Addis Convention.
	4. SAQA's work through the CEO Committee shows the results of a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda	SAQA addressed all transitional arrangements listed in section 36 except: 36(c) "the regulations made under the SAQA Act continue to exist to the extent that they are consistent with this Act until they are repealed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette." SAQA performs its oversight role through a Tracking Grid. The current System of Collaboration only includes SAQA and the QCs.	Conclude all transitional arrangements listed in section 36 of the NQF Act, 2008 Strengthen the System of Collaboration and NQF structures.
	5. SAQA's activities promote a world-class NQF that is well	Stakeholders interact with information about the NQF.	SAQA reaches 5 000 000 people through its advocacy and communication initiatives.

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-year Target
	understood and benefits all stakeholders	2 000 000 impressions are currently made on SAQA's online and social media platforms	
		There are 19 million learner achievements on the NLRD. The NLRD aims to have all national learner achievement records on the database. This is a slow and tedious process as missing records are identified, located, digitised and loaded on the NLRD.	The NLRD reflects 24 million learner achievements
We have well-articulated quality-assured qualifications and relevant professional designations that instil trust and meet the needs of the people	6. There are well-defined systemic, specific or individual Articulation pathways within and across Sub-Frameworks	SAQA published the Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part- Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework in March 2013 and amended it in March 2020. SAQA registered 13 179 qualifications since 1 April 2014. Of these, 2 143 (16%) do not have articulation options.	All qualifications registered on the NQF after 1 January 2014 have at least one Articulation pathway within or across Sub-Frameworks
	7. There is a clear understanding of the types of professional	SAQA recognises 17 statutory professional bodies and 89 non-statutory	Clearly define the roles of statutory and non-statutory professional

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-year Target
	bodies, their designations and their value-add in the changing NQF landscape	professional bodies. There is a need to refine SAQA's understanding of the different types of professional bodies and what they do within the changing context.	bodies and use the research findings to amend the Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation.
We have a competent and capable team, dedicated and resourced to further develop and maintain the NQF	8. SAQA's structure is aligned to deliver on its strategy	There is currently an uneven spread of workload across the organisation. There is a duplication of functions in some directorates. With the introduction of automation across the organisation, SAQA must look at a more streamlined organisational design to support delivery on its strategy.	Re-design SAQA's structure to better suit delivery on its strategy.
	9. SAQA develops and trains its staff	Every staff member has at least one learning intervention per year.	Every staff member has at least two learning interventions per year.
We have stakeholders and role-players who are aligned to deliver on the NQF	10. The NQF value chain works efficiently	SAQA returns approximately 30% of qualifications recommended by QCs for registration that do not meet all SAQA's criteria. This delays the registration process. If the QCs provided all the information required, the registration process could be faster.	Develop a functional system that allows for the efficient registration of qualifications within 3 weeks.

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-year Target
		Approximately 75% of learner achievements verified against registered qualifications and part-qualifications appear on the NLRD.	SAQA identifies all historical (legacy) datasets that are not on the NLRD, secures and loads it on the NLRD. 90% of national learner achievements submitted for verification appear on the NLRD.
		SAQA only just began monitoring professional bodies for their data loads. Going forward, all professional bodies that fail to load professional designation information annually will be de-recognised.	All recognised professional bodies load information about their members with professional designations on the NLRD annually

9.3 Explanation of Planned Performance over the Five-Year Planning Period

SAQA plans to refine further South Africa's integrated and transparent national qualifications framework that facilitates access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths. The Board identified five outcomes that contribute to the desired impact.

SAQA's vision is: A world-class National Qualifications Framework that works for the People in South Africa

a) The contribution of outcomes towards the achievement of the NDP Five-Year Implementation Plan

Priority 2, namely, Education, Skills and Health, is relevant to the Department of Higher Education and Training and SAQA. This priority contributes to pillar 2 of the 3 NDP pillars, which is 'Capabilities of South Africans'. DHET did not include any specific deliverables for SAQA in the NDP Five-Year Implementation Plan. However, DHET lists Outcome 4 in the NDP Implementation Plan as *a responsive PSET system*. Target 7 is to *improve the responsiveness of the PSET System to the world of work by 2024*. The planned interventions are to *develop a Critical Skills List for the Department of Home Affairs* and to *develop a Priority Skills Plan*. SAQA can assist DHET with these interventions by providing information about registered qualifications and learner achievements from the NLRD and from holders of foreign qualifications who apply to SAQA to evaluate their qualifications.

b) The rationale for the choice of the Outcome Indicators relevant to the respective Outcomes

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Rationale
We have a dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning	NQF Policies that support the changing needs of life-long learning	NQF policies drive the implementation of the NQF. By conducting research, and reviewing and updating its policies regularly, it will be supporting the changing needs of life-long learning. It is not enough for SAQA to publish policies. SAQA must also ensure that stakeholders implement these policies.
	Amended NQF Policies are implemented	
We have visionary and influential leadership that drives a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda	SAQA influences and shapes national and international discourses	The NQF Amendment Act gives SAQA more powers than the NQF Act, 2008. SAQA must work within its mandate to influence both national and international agendas for the benefit of all the people in South Africa. It is important for South Africa's NQF to be benchmarked against regional NQFs so that we are assured of internationally accepted qualifications. The benchmarking also allows SAQA to compare international qualifications to qualifications registered on the SA NQF.

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Rationale
	SAQA's work through the CEO Committee shows the results of a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda	The CEO Committee is an important NQF structure comprising the CEOs of SAQA and the QCs. Members of DHET and the DBE attend on invitation. This forum drives the NQF agenda and ensures that the stakeholder value chain works efficiently. SAQA uses this forum to oversee implementation of NQF priorities. The System of Collaboration describes how members of the CEO Committee work together and how they will handle disputes, if they occur. It is important to strengthen the System of Collaboration to align to further amendments to the NQF Act 2008, as amended. This Committee also has the power to recommend to the Minister: HEST that he ends the transitional arrangements.
	SAQA's activities promote a world-class NQF that is well understood and benefits all stakeholders	SAQA's challenge is to simplify the NQF and to explain the NQF simply so that stakeholders understand and know how to use information about the NQF. It is important for SAQA to work with NQF partners so that everyone provides similar messaging that do not contradict one another. Ideally, SAQA, DHET and the QCs should have one common portal for all information about the NQF. SAQA measures the success of its activities and campaigns through impressions on its electronic and social media

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Rationale
		platforms. If stakeholders are seen to be interacting with information about the NQF, then it can be assumed that they know, understand and value the information. The NLRD is the largest database of learner achievements in the country and the official management information system of the NQF. It is important for learners to have their information on the NLRD so that it can be quickly verified for work and study opportunities. If SAQA wants a world-class NQF, then its management information system should contain all the information related to the NQF. The NLRD is an indicator of learners' benefitting from the NQF.
We have well-articulated quality-assured qualifications and relevant professional designations that instil trust and meet the needs of the people	There are well-defined systemic, specific or individual Articulation pathways within and across Sub-Frameworks	The Minister's Articulation Policy supports the idea of systemic, specific and individual Articulation pathways. SAQA will not register a qualification that does not have clear horizontal and vertical Articulation pathways. SAQA published the Policy and Criteria for registering a Qualification and Part-Qualification on the NQF in March 2013. SAQA will now monitor implementation of this Policy by identifying qualifications that it registered from 1 January 2014, that do not have Articulation pathways and requesting the missing information from the QCs.
	There is a clear understanding of the types of professional bodies,	SAQA and other NQF entities do not fully understand the differences between statutory and non-statutory professional bodies in the changing NQF context. This impacts on SAQA's

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Rationale
	their designations and their value-add in the changing NQF landscape	ability to recognise professional bodies, register their designations and provide services to them. If SAQA is clear about this, then it will better market its services to professional bodies and ensure that the registered designations meet the needs of the people.
We have a competent and capable team, dedicated and resourced to further develop and maintain the NQF	SAQA's structure is aligned to deliver on its strategy	SAQA has a new five-year strategy. The amendments to the NQF Act, 2008 gives SAQA more responsibility. SAQA is also planning on automating repetitive processes throughout the organisation. Budgetary constraints are also putting pressure on SAQA to re-look at its organisational design.
	SAQA develops and trains its staff	SAQA relies on the intellectual capital of its staff. It takes years to build the depth of knowledge required to make a real difference. SAQA has, therefore prioritised its talent attraction and retention strategy. Every staff member must have at least two learning interventions each year.
We have stakeholders and role-players who are aligned to deliver on the NQF	The NQF value chain works efficiently	Many stakeholders are involved in implementing the NQF. If the NQF value chain works efficiently, then it would mean that the stakeholders and role-players are aligned to deliver on the NQF.

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Rationale
		There are definite gaps in the NQF's management information system, the NLRD. Stakeholders must provide this information to SAQA timeously. A complete set of information on the NLRD will allow beneficiaries to use the information to gain access to work and further study opportunities.

c) Explanation of enablers to achieve the five-year targets

The following will be enablers to the achievement of SAQA's five-year objectives:

- The President proclaims the NQF Amendment Act, 2019;
- The stakeholders agree on further amendments to the NQF Amendment Act, 2019; and
- SAQA raises sufficient funds to implement this Strategy fully.

d) How the Outcomes contribute to the achievement of the Impact

Impact Statement	An integrated and transparent national qualifications framework that facilitates access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths
Outcome Statement	**Link to Impact**
We have a dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning	A dynamic NQF facilitates access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.

We have visionary and influential leadership that drives a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF framework. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation in national and international discourses. Stakeholders who criticise the NQF do so on the basis that the public's understanding of the NQF is poor. SAQA will promote the NQF using simple and easy-to-understand language and tools so that stakeholders understand what the NQF is about and how it benefits them.
We have well-articulated quality-assured qualifications and relevant professional designations that instil trust and meet the needs of the people	The public can trust the NQF because of its value-add to the system of education, training and development goals of the country and transparency. SAQA publishes information about registered qualifications and its associated information on its website. If qualifications articulate well, then people can progress within education, training and the workplace. SAQA also publishes information about recognised professional bodies and their registered designations.
We have a competent and capable team, dedicated and resourced to further develop and maintain the NQF	People are required to implement and advance the NQF. Without the right people and skills and adequate resources, it would be challenging to implement the NQF. SAQA also needs the right structure to support its strategy.
We have stakeholders and role-players who are aligned to deliver on the NQF	It takes visionary and influential leadership to bring all the NQF role-players to the same level of understanding. The NQF value chain spans SAQA, the QCs, DHET and DBE, as well as all the institutions, entities and providers associated with each of these organisations. The stakeholders and beneficiaries will only see the full impact of the NQF if all the stakeholders work together to deliver on the NQF.

10.Key Risks

Outcome	Key Risk	Risk Mitigation
We have a dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning	The NQF as a system does not function optimally. The NQF does not respond to the needs of workers or learners. Proposed changes to the NQF Amendment Act may cause further confusion and contestations.	Implement the System of Collaboration to resolve contestations. Strengthen the NQF Act to place SAQA as the apex body. Continue to engage with stakeholders to meet the needs of workers and learners in terms of the NQF. SAQA must ensure that it fully participates in the processes to amend the NQF Amendment Act.
We have visionary and influential leadership that drives a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda	Stakeholders fight for turf. Each entity operates independently with its separate agenda. There is little or no co-operation among stakeholders.	Fully implement the NQF Amendment Act. Strengthen SAQA's role through amendments to the NQF Act so that SAQA is the apex body with authority to drive a common agenda. Implement the System of Collaboration to resolve contestations.
We have well-articulated quality-assured qualifications and relevant professional designations that instil trust and meet the needs of the people	Providers offer unregistered qualifications. The NLRD does not contain all learner achievement records.	Take action against institutions and providers who offer unregistered qualifications (supported by the NQF Amendment Act). Put strategies in place to ensure that providers load learner records timeously on the NLRD and that old learner achievement records are digitised and loaded on the NLRD.

Outcome	Key Risk	Risk Mitigation
	Qualifications are no longer recognised internationally. The NLRD contains "dirty data."	Ensure that all qualifications registered on the NQF adhere to SAQA's Policy and Criteria. Put processes in place to remove duplicate data and data that does not conform to the NLRD specifications
We have a competent and capable team, dedicated and resourced to further develop and maintain the NQF	Limited funding does not allow SAQA to recruit skilled staff. Staff morale is low. Institutional memory is lost as skilled staff retire or leave. Not all staff are willing to accept change. Due to the current financial situation, retrenchments are being considered as SAQA's structure is re-designed	Ensure continuous learning and development of staff Implement SAQA's policy on Appreciation and Recognition Put systems in place to retain institutional memory Introduce staff training to assist with change management. Additional funding from the fiscus will negate the need for staff retrenchments
We have stakeholders and role-players who are aligned to deliver on the NQF	Each entity communicates different messages, which leads to confusion among stakeholders	Work with the NQF family to develop common messages

11.Public Entities

Part D: Technical Indicator Description (TID)

Indicator Title	**1. NQF Policies that support the changing needs of life-long learning**
Definition	A dynamic NQF facilitates access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths. There are several NQF Policies that SAQA developed during the last strategic cycle. For South Africa to have a dynamic NQF that is responsive, adapts to, and supports the changing needs of life-long learning, the NQF policies must reflect current dynamics. This indicator is, therefore, about ensuring that NQF Policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the needs of learners and workers.
Source of Data	The Research Directorate will conduct research or draw on research reports that will inform possible amendments to the Policies. The team responsible for amending the Policy will consider the recommendations made by the Research team in their proposed changes. Evidence of changes are the published revised Policies and working documents leading up to the final approved revised Policies.
Method of calculation/assessment	The Research Directorate will conduct desktop research, interviews or use any other research methods, depending on the policy under review. The team will formulate a report on finds of the research and make recommendations on amendments to the Policy. The team responsible for reviewing the policy will consider the research report in its proposed amendments. Once the policies are amended, the SAQA Board approves them for publication for public comment. The team then considers the comments, revises the policies and gets Board approval before publishing the approved policies.
Assumptions	SAQA consulted its stakeholders during the review phase.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress against the five-year target

Desired performance	Review five NQF Policies and amend them as required over the five years. It is desirable to exceed the target in any given year if circumstances warrant more immediate policy amendments.
Indicator responsibility	Director: International Liaison, Director: Research

Indicator Title	**2. Amended NQF Policies are implemented**
Definition	A dynamic NQF facilitates access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths. Once SAQA has published its policies, it must also ensure that stakeholders implement these amended policies.
Source of Data	Tracker for Articulation, CAT and RPL; NQF Impact Studies; applications for professional body recognition; recommendations for qualification registration; application of policies in the Verifications Project and the Foreign Qualifications Evaluation unit.
Method of calculation/assessment	SAQA will generate a report on the implementation of the amended NQF Policies based on the information from the different sources.
Assumptions	SAQA's communication about the amended Policies reach all stakeholders
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress against the five-year target
Desired performance	SAQA monitors implementation of the five amended policies. The actual performance should be higher than the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: International Liaison

Indicator Title	3a. SAQA influences and shapes national and international discourses
Definition	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation in national and international discourses. SAQA will use this influence to align the SA NQF to the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). This indicator is about aligning the SA NQF to the proposed African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).
Source of Data	Evidence of alignment to the ACQF; Board approval of alignment document
Method of calculation/assessment	Once the ACQF is published, SAQA will embark on an alignment exercise. The exercise will require SAQA to compare and align the SA NQF to the ACQF. SAQA will produce a document outlining the alignment process and the outcome of the alignment.
Assumptions	The ACQF will be completed within the five-year period.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual
Desired performance	The SA NQF and the proposed African Continental Qualifications Framework are aligned
Indicator responsibility	Director: International Liaison

Indicator Title	3b. SAQA influences and shapes national and international discourses
Definition	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation on national and international discourses. The President ratified the Addis Convention in 2019 and deposited the instrument with UNESCO. The Addis Convention became active on 15 December 2019 after ten countries had ratified it. This indicator is about implementing the Addis Convention.
Source of Data	Addis Convention, SAQA's Policy and Criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications that is aligned to the Addis Convention; Implementation Plan.
Method of calculation/assessment	SAQA will use the source documents to develop and implement a plan for implementing the Addis Convention and track and report on progress.
Assumptions	There is sufficient funding available to fully implement the Addis Convention.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Foreign nationals, refugees and asylum seekers wishing to work or study in South Africa; and South Africans who studied outside the borders of SA.
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual
Desired performance	The Addis Convention is fully implemented
Indicator responsibility	Director: International Liaison

Indicator Title	**4a. SAQA's work through the CEO Committee shows the results of a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda**
Definition	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation on national and international discourses. SAQA addressed all transitional arrangements listed in section 36 of the NQF Act except: 36(c) "the regulations made under the SAQA Act continue to exist to the extent that they are consistent with this Act until they are repealed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette." This indicator is about concluding all transitional arrangements listed in section 36 of the NQF Act, 2008.
Source of Data	Analysis of qualifications still not complying the NQF Act; SAQA's efforts in encouraging the QCs to de-register qualifications that do not comply with the NQF Act and replace them with compliant qualifications; CEO Committee minutes on this issue; SAQA Board approval for the decision to end the transitional arrangements; and SAQA's advice to the Minister to end the transitional arrangements.
Method of calculation/assessment	Once SAQA is satisfied that the QCs have recommended all non-aligned qualifications for de-registration, SAQA will propose the end of the transitional arrangements to the CEO Committee, the Board and then the Minister: HEST.
Assumptions	The QCs are willing to end the transitional arrangements.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual
Desired performance	The Minister ends the transitional arrangements through a notice in the Government Gazette.

Indicator responsibility	CEO

Indicator Title	**4b. SAQA's work through the CEO Committee shows the results of a well-researched and clearly formulated NQF agenda**
Definition	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation on national and international discourses. SAQA performs its oversight role through a Tracking Grid. The current System of Collaboration only includes SAQA and the QCs. This indicator is about strengthening the System of Collaboration and NQF structures.
Source of Data	Further amendments to the NQF Act, 2008 as amended; report from the task team working on the proposed amendments to the System of Collaboration; CEO Committee recommendation regarding the System of Collaboration; SAQA Board approval of the amendments to the System of Collaboration.
Method of calculation/assessment	Once DHET has made the necessary changes to the NQF Act, and these changes have been signed into law by the President, SAQA will lead a task team to amend the System of Collaboration. Work may begin prior to the president's signature, but the document will only be implemented after the President signs the amendments to the NQF Act.
Assumptions	The DHET will make the amendments to the NQF, parliament will approve the amendments and the President will sign the Amended Act during this five-year period.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	This System of Collaboration affects SAQA, the QCs, DHET and the DBE.
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual
Desired performance	The System of Collaboration is amended during this five-year period.

Indicator responsibility	CEO

Indicator Title	**5a. SAQA's activities promote a world-class NQF that is well understood and benefits all stakeholders**
Definition	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation on national and international discourses. Stakeholders who criticise the NQF do so on the basis that the NQF is poorly understood. SAQA's focus will be on promoting the NQF with clear and simplified messages so that stakeholders understand what the NQF is about and how it benefits them. This indicator is about stakeholders interacting with information about the NQF. SAQA will reach 5 000 000 people through its advocacy and communication initiatives.
Source of Data	Reports from various advocacy and communication initiatives across platforms including online and social media platforms.
Method of calculation/assessment	The quarterly figures from various initiatives are added to give the annual totals and compared to the yearly targets. By the 5th year of this Plan, the annual total should meet the expected goal of having reached 5 000 000 people.
Assumptions	If stakeholders interact with information about the NQF, then it is assumed that they know, understand and see value in the information.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A

Reporting cycle	Annual progress against the five-year target
Desired performance	The target is to reach 5 000 000 people through SAQA's advocacy and communication initiatives. The actual performance should be higher than the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: Advocacy, Communication and Support

Indicator Title	**5b. SAQA's activities promote a world-class NQF that is well understood and benefits all stakeholders**
Definition	It requires visionary and influential leadership to ensure that the NQF family work in unison to achieve the objectives of the NQF. Visionary leaders identify areas for research and use the evidence gained from research to formulate an NQF agenda that supports an integrated and transparent NQF. SAQA's influence is visible through its participation on national and international discourses. Stakeholders who criticise the NQF do so on the basis that the NQF is poorly understood. SAQA's focus will be on promoting the NQF with simple and easy-to-understand language and tools so that stakeholders understand what the NQF is about and how it benefits them. The National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) is the largest and only official database of the NQF. Among other sets of information, the NLRD contains learner achievement data. The growth in the learner achievement data is a reflection of the NQF working for the people. The NLRD is an indicator of learners' benefitting from the NQF. The NQF Amendment Act, once promulgated, makes it a requirement for QCs to load all learner achievement data on the NLRD within 30 days of it being in the public domain. The target is for the NLRD to reflect 24 million learner achievements by 2025.
Source of Data	Quality Councils and information partners such as SETAs and professional bodies that load data onto the NLRD
Method of calculation/assessment	A report is drawn annually on the total number of learner achievements on the NLRD and compared to the previous year's learner achievement data. The NLRD should load one million or more learner achievements each year.
Assumptions	QCs, professional bodies and information partners continue to load data on the NLRD, in compliance with the NQF Act and the NQF Amendment Act once promulgated. Data cleaning does not result in net negative growth in numbers

Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress against the five-year target
Desired performance	The NLRD reflects 24 million or more learner achievements. The actual performance should exceed the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: NLRD

Indicator Title	**6. There are well-defined systemic, specific or individual Articulation pathways within and across Sub-Frameworks**
Definition	The public can trust the NQF because of its transparency. SAQA publishes information about registered qualifications and its associated information on its website. If qualifications articulate well, then people can progress within education, training and the workplace. The Minister's Articulation Policy supports the idea of systemic, specific and individual Articulation pathways. SAQA will not register a qualification that does not have clear Articulation pathways. SAQA published the Policy and Criteria for registering a Qualification and Part-Qualification on the NQF in March 2013. SAQA will now monitor implementation of this Policy by identifying qualifications that it registered from 1 January 2014, that do not have Articulation pathways and requesting the missing information from the QCs. The target is for all qualifications registered on the NQF after 1 January 2014 to have at least one Articulation pathway within or across Sub-Frameworks.
Source of Data	The NLRD. SAQA published the Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part- Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework in March 2013. SAQA registered 13 179 qualifications since 1 April 2014. Of these, 2

	143 (16%) do not have articulation options. SAQA must source the missing Articulation options for these qualifications from QCs and update the NLRD.
Method of calculation/assessment	Create a spreadsheet with the qualifications with no articulation options and track progress until the articulation options appear on the NLRD. SAQA will achieve the target once all qualifications registered from 1 January 2014 have articulation options.
Assumptions	Quality Councils provide the missing information when SAQA requests it.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual accumulated progress against the five-year target
Desired performance	All qualifications registered on the NQF after 1 January 2014 have at least one Articulation pathway within or across Sub-Frameworks. Actual performance should equal the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: Registration and Recognition and Director: NLRD

Indicator Title	**7. There is a clear understanding of the types of professional bodies, their designations and their value-add in the changing NQF landscape**
Definition	The public can trust the NQF because of its transparency. SAQA publishes information about recognised professional bodies and registered professional designations on its website. Qualifications underlie professional designations. SAQA does not fully understand the differences between statutory and non-statutory professional bodies in the changing NQF context. This impacts on SAQA's ability to recognise professional bodies, register their designations and provide services to them. If SAQA is clear about this, then it will better market its services to professional bodies and ensure that the registered designations meet the needs of the people. The target is to clearly define the roles of statutory and non-statutory professional bodies and use the research findings to amend the Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation.
Source of Data	Desktop research and a survey

Method of calculation/assessment	The Research Directorate must produce a report that clearly defines the roles of statutory and non-statutory professional bodies. SAQA must use the research findings to amend the Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation. The deliverables are the report on research findings and the amended Policy and Criteria.
Assumptions	SAQA can classify all professional bodies as either a statutory or non-statutory professional body.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress accumulates towards the five-year target
Desired performance	There is a Report that clearly defines the roles of statutory and non-statutory professional bodies. SAQA uses this Report to amend the Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation. The actual performance should equal the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: Registration and Recognition; and Director: Research

Indicator Title	**8. SAQA's structure is aligned to deliver on its strategy**
Definition	People are required to implement the NQF. Without the right people, skills and adequate resources, it would be challenging to implement the NQF. SAQA also needs the right structure to support its strategy. The target is to re-design SAQA's structure to better suit delivery on its strategy.
Source of Data	Strategy; proposed re-structure to deliver on strategy; evidence of consultation with staff; evidence of REMCO recommendation and Board approval.
Method of calculation/assessment	Approved organisational development design developed after staff consultation

Assumptions	The SAQA Board will be open to approving a new organisational structure
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual
Desired performance	The actual performance equals the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: Human Resources and CEO

Indicator Title	**9. SAQA develops and trains its staff**
Definition	People are required to implement the NQF. Without the right people and skills and adequate resources, it would be challenging to implement the NQF. SAQA also needs the right structure to support its strategy. SAQA relies on the intellectual capital of its staff. It takes years to develop the depth of knowledge required to make a real difference. The target is for every staff member to have at least two learning interventions each year.
Source of Data	Records of learning interventions managed by HR.
Method of calculation/assessment	HR records each staff member's learning and development initiatives on a spreadsheet. At the end of the year, HR analyses the information to confirm that all staff members engaged in at least two training and development initiatives.
Assumptions	Staff members on maternity or long term sick or study leave may not have completed two learning initiatives. Staff members who joined SAQA during the year may not have completed two learning initiatives. Training and development may be formal, informal or non-formal.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A

Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress measured discretely against the five-year target
Desired performance	Every staff member has at least two learning interventions per year. The actual performance should be higher than the targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Director: Human Resources

Indicator Title	**10.1 The NQF value chain works efficiently**
Definition	It takes visionary and influential leadership to bring all the NQF role-players to the same level of understanding. The NQF value chain spans SAQA, the QCs, DHET and DBE, as well as all the institutions, entities and providers associated with each of these organisations. The stakeholders and beneficiaries will only see the full impact of the NQF if all the stakeholders work together to deliver on the NQF. Many stakeholders are involved in implementing the NQF. If the NQF value chain works efficiently, then it would mean that the stakeholders and role-players are aligned to deliver on the NQF. This specific deliverable is about QCs recommending qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF. Currently, SAQA returns approximately 30% of qualifications to QCs because they do not comply with SAQA's Policy and Criteria. The QCs, in turn, must communicate with the providers to get the required information. This process causes unnecessary delays that QCs could avoid if they implement SAQA's Policy and Criteria correctly and if there is a common workflow between SAQA and the QCs. The target is to have a functional system that allows for the efficient registration of qualifications within 3 weeks of submission.
Source of Data	Qualifications and Part-Qualifications Tracking Grid; and letters sent to QCs
Method of calculation/assessment	The time difference between the Board approving the registration of qualifications and the date on which the compliant qualifications were received from the QCs ≤ 3 weeks.

Assumptions	The Directorate applies the Policy and Criteria consistently
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	Quality Councils
Reporting cycle	Quarterly beginning with 4 months leading up to the 5-year target of 3 weeks
Desired performance	It is desirable for QCs only to recommend fully compliant qualifications to SAQA so that it does not return any qualifications to the QCs. SAQA should reach its target of a three-week turnaround time before the fifth year.
Indicator responsibility	Director: Registration and Recognition; CEO

Indicator Title	**10.2 The NQF value chain works efficiently**
Definition	It takes visionary and influential leadership to bring all the NQF role-players to the same level of understanding. The NQF value chain spans SAQA, the QCs, DHET and DBE, as well as all the institutions, entities and providers associated with each of these organisations. The stakeholders and beneficiaries will only see the full impact of the NQF if all the stakeholders work together to deliver on the NQF. Many stakeholders are involved in implementing the NQF. If the NQF value chain works efficiently, then it would mean that the stakeholders and role-players are aligned to deliver on the NQF. This specific indicator is about verifying national qualification achievements against the learner achievements on the NLRD. Approximately 75% of learner achievements verified against registered qualifications and part-qualifications currently appear on the NLRD. As a result, the Verifications team must source 25% of its information from providers and education and training institutions, which results in delaying the verification outcomes to potential employers and learning institutions. The target is for SAQA to identify all historical (legacy) datasets that are not on the NLRD, secure and load it on the NLRD. 90% of national learner achievements submitted for verification appear on the NLRD.
Source of Data	The Verifications database; records of qualifications that were verified; the NLRD Tracking Grid of legacy datasets not on the NLRD

Method of calculation/assessment	The total number of learner achievements verified from the NLRD (x) as a percentage of the total number of verification requests received (y). x/y x 100 = ± 90%
Assumptions	The employer provides the correct information about the learner and the qualification achievement
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual reporting measured against the five-year target
Desired performance	Approximately 90% of learner achievements against registered qualifications and part-qualifications appear on the NLRD. The actual performance should exceed the planned execution.
Indicator responsibility	Director: NLRD; Director: Verifications Project

Indicator Title	**10.3 The NQF value chain works efficiently**
Definition	It takes visionary and influential leadership to bring all the NQF role-players to the same level of understanding. The NQF value chain spans SAQA, the QCs, DHET and DBE, as well as all the institutions, entities and providers associated with each of these organisations. The stakeholders and beneficiaries will only see the full impact of the NQF if all the stakeholders work together to deliver on the NQF. Many stakeholders are involved in implementing the NQF. If the NQF value chain works efficiently, then it would mean that the stakeholders and role-players are aligned to deliver on the NQF. SAQA only just began monitoring professional bodies for their data loads. Going forward, all professional bodies that fail to load professional designation information annually will be de-recognised.

	The target is for all recognised professional bodies to load information about their members with professional designations on the NLRD annually.
Source of Data	The Tracking Grid for recognised professional bodies; the NLRD data load report; letter sent to non-compliant professional bodies; SAQA Board decision to de-recognise non-compliant professional bodies
Method of calculation/assessment	The NLRD will report on all recognised professional bodies that do not load data in a given year. The Registration and Recognition Directorate will prepare letters for the CEO's signature, to these non-compliant professional bodies. If they fail to load data within the specified deadline and cannot provide an acceptable reason for the non-compliance, the SAQA will be requested to de-recognise these professional bodies.
Assumptions	The professional bodies recruit new members with additional designations each year.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual reporting measured against the five-year target
Desired performance	All recognised professional bodies load their professional designation information on the NLRD annually.
Indicator responsibility	Director: NLRD; Director: Registration and Recognition