



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority



The Pacific Qualifications Recognition project 2024-2028

Supporting education quality in the Pacific region

NZQA + EQAP for the PACER Plus Implementation Unit workshop on
regional skills development

July 2024

Our talanoa

- The link between education quality and qualifications recognition – what is qualifications recognition?
- The Pacific Qualifications Recognition project: why strengthen the Pacific Qualifications Framework to support Pacific qualifications recognition?
- SPC and NZQA – how we are partnering, and our focus for the project
- The project implementation phase – who, what, when and how?
- Talanoa, questions and answers

New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) functions include:

- Stewardship of the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework
- Quality assuring non-university tertiary education
- National Certificates of Educational Achievement

And:

- working to ensure the recognition of New Zealand qualifications overseas, and
- recognising overseas educational and vocational qualifications for immigration (and professional registration for teachers)



Why 'recognise' qualifications?

A qualification is :

- a set of skills, designed to meet a skill gap in industry
- held by an individual person who has completed formal training, and received an award
- Quality assured

For employment: qualifications aid understanding of a person's base skills and knowledge

Another way of thinking of qualifications is that they can act as a formal 'passport for skills', that enable skills to be more easily transferrable into:

- Further study
- New employment
- New professions



Why 'recognise' qualifications?



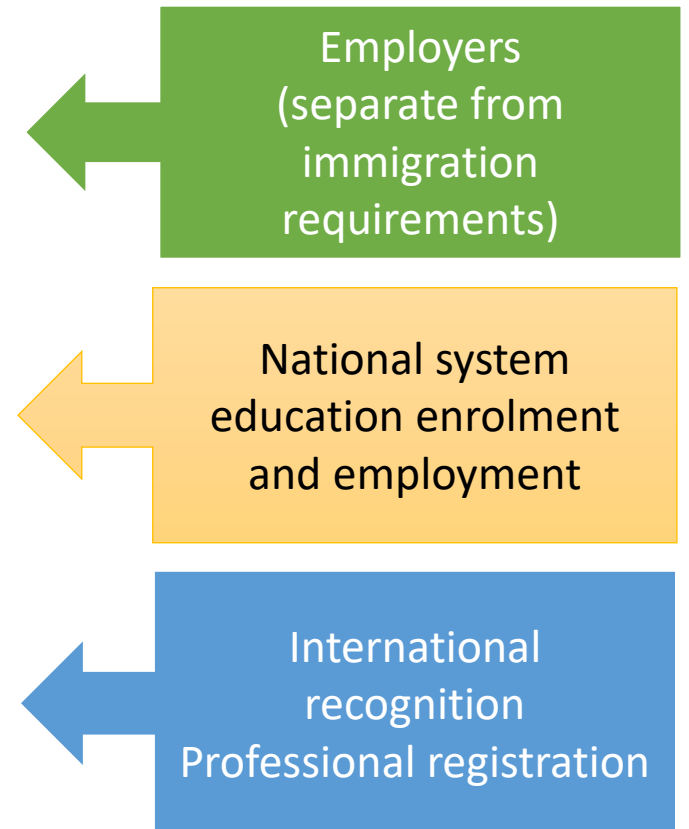
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- Qualifications in a national education system are (usually) designed to meet local skill needs
- Regional qualifications are designed to meet regional skill needs, in consultation with national stakeholders across a region, and can be used in national contexts
- Qualifications need to be 'recognised' – assessed to understand what knowledge, skills and capabilities a person has - when people need to transfer skills to a new context:
 - To move to another country for work or study
 - To work in a regulated occupation or profession in another country
 - To support 'trade in services' between countries under a trade agreement
- 'Recognition' activities are carried out by recognition authorities, professional regulators, education providers, and employers – but often in different ways

What do we mean by 'recognition'?

There are different kinds – informal, trusted, and formal

| 'Face-value' – based on the information about the qualification provided by the qualification holder – often not checked or verified | Informal |
|--|----------|
| 'Local' – where a qualification or provider is known and understood, detailed checking or verification may not be needed | Trusted |
| 'Formal' – qualifications and skillsets are systemically checked, verified, and consistent recognition outcomes are offered | Formal |



Steps in formal recognition

Trusting the qualifications and quality assurance systems that supported the qualification design and delivery

Need information about

- quality assurance of qualifications system
- design of qualifications

Identifying the individual is who they say they are

Need identifying information for individual

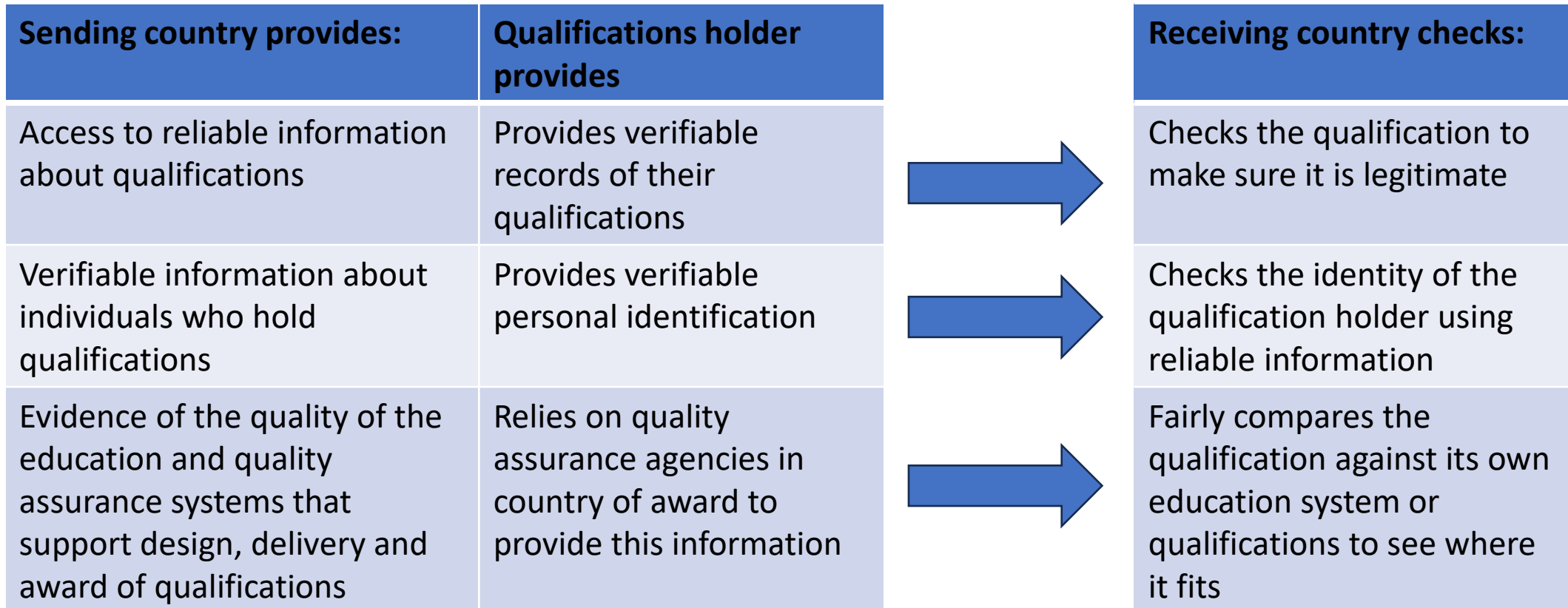
Verifying the legitimacy of the qualification

Need confirmation that qualification is real and it was awarded to the person

Recognising what's in the qualification (and how it compares to the local context)

Detailed information about what is in the qualification, learning outcomes

Qualifications recognition – sending and receiving



Quality education and quality assurance enables qualifications recognition



How can qualifications frameworks help with qualifications recognition?

| | National | Regional |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Main function | To act as a benchmark for the level of learning recognised on the national qualifications system + provide quality assurance | To act as a translation device to enable comparison of levels of qualifications across member countries |
| Developed by | National governments, in many cases through national agencies set up for the purpose | Countries in a regional acting jointly, mostly facilitated by a regional body or association |
| Sensitive to | Local, market, and regional priorities (such as labour market needs) | Collective priorities across member countries (such as enabling movement of workers across borders) |

How can qualifications frameworks help with qualifications recognition?

Qualifications frameworks can make qualifications systems – and the qualifications in those systems - easier to navigate, understand, and trust for:

- People working within a qualifications system, who need to design, deliver, assess, award and quality assure qualifications
- People who need to benefit from a qualifications system: employers, industries, government, local communities, and learners

Strongly functioning qualifications frameworks, supported by quality assurance can also enable the recognition of qualifications by other countries

SPC and the Pacific Qualifications Framework

- The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) is part of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- EQAP manages a regional quality assurance agency that supports some Pacific countries
- Operationalises the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF), including the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS)
- Facilitates training and provides support on the development, implementation and review of national qualifications and quality assurance frameworks
- Leads development and implementation of quality assured regional qualifications, listed on the PRQS

PQF – Pacific Qualifications Framework

- Established in 2009 as a regional qualifications framework
- Underpinned by Supported by the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS) and the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF)
- Purpose of PQF (like other regional qualifications frameworks):
 - enable trust in qualifications from the Pacific region,
 - create transparency on the operation of quality assurance in the Pacific and
 - act as a translation device for qualifications between national systems



PACIFIC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

**Educational Quality and Assessment
Programme (EQAP)
Pacific Community (SPC)**

Why strengthen the PQF?

- Established, with supporting structures – ready for review and next steps
- If it builds stronger, trusted relationships national systems and regional education providers, and
- It provides connection between a network of strongly functioning Pacific national quality assurance organisations and frameworks
- and becomes more transparent, and visible in its operation,
- could be used to support recognition of Pacific qualifications more effectively



PACIFIC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

**Educational Quality and Assessment
Programme (EQAP)
Pacific Community (SPC)**

- 5-year project: 2024 – 2028
- Implementing Partners: SPC (EQAP) and NZQA
- Participating countries: Cook Islands; Kiribati; Nauru; Niue; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu
- Other SPC-supported countries who are also members of the Pacific Qualifications Advisory Board (PQAB): Fiji and PNG
- Supporting organisation: South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (Self-funded)
- Funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), establishment phase 2019-2022 led by NZQA
- Intended outcomes: strengthened Pacific qualifications and quality assurance systems that improve recognition of Pacific qualifications to enable learner and skilled labour mobility

SPC-EQAP and NZQA: our partnership to support the region

In working together and with national partners to support Pacific qualifications recognition we will:

- Demonstrate respect and show understanding – between ourselves and national partner agencies
- Take a strategic approach
- Develop and support sustainable solutions
- Demonstrate commitment to achieving the project outcomes



Project phases

| | |
|---|---|
| Phase One April 2024-late 2025 | <p>In the first phase of the project we will carry out an initial ‘referencing’ of national qualifications frameworks and ‘benchmarking’ of national qualifications and quality assurance systems – including the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) to the Pacific Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>We will use the outcomes of this process to plan for the national and regional systems strengthening work to be carried out in the last part of the project.</p> |
| Phase Two Early 2026-end 2028 | <p>In the remaining three years of the project we will focus on strengthening systems to support improved recognition of Pacific qualifications, based on the barriers to qualifications recognition identified through the initial referencing and benchmarking process.</p> |

Why Referencing/Benchmarking

Transparent and reliable
information on the
comparability of frameworks
between countries

Builds trust

Supports understanding of
education quality

Supports qualifications
recognition

Support by NZQA on strengthening of PQF and national systems

- Supporting SPC to strengthen the operation of the PQF Secretariat so that it is able to better support connections between the PQF and Pacific national qualifications systems
- Capability building, training and mentoring of staff (SPC and representatives of participating countries)
- Providing support on the strengthening of the regional and national systems
- Supporting SPC to build member countries' trust and confidence in the PQF as an instrument that can enable the recognition of Pacific qualifications

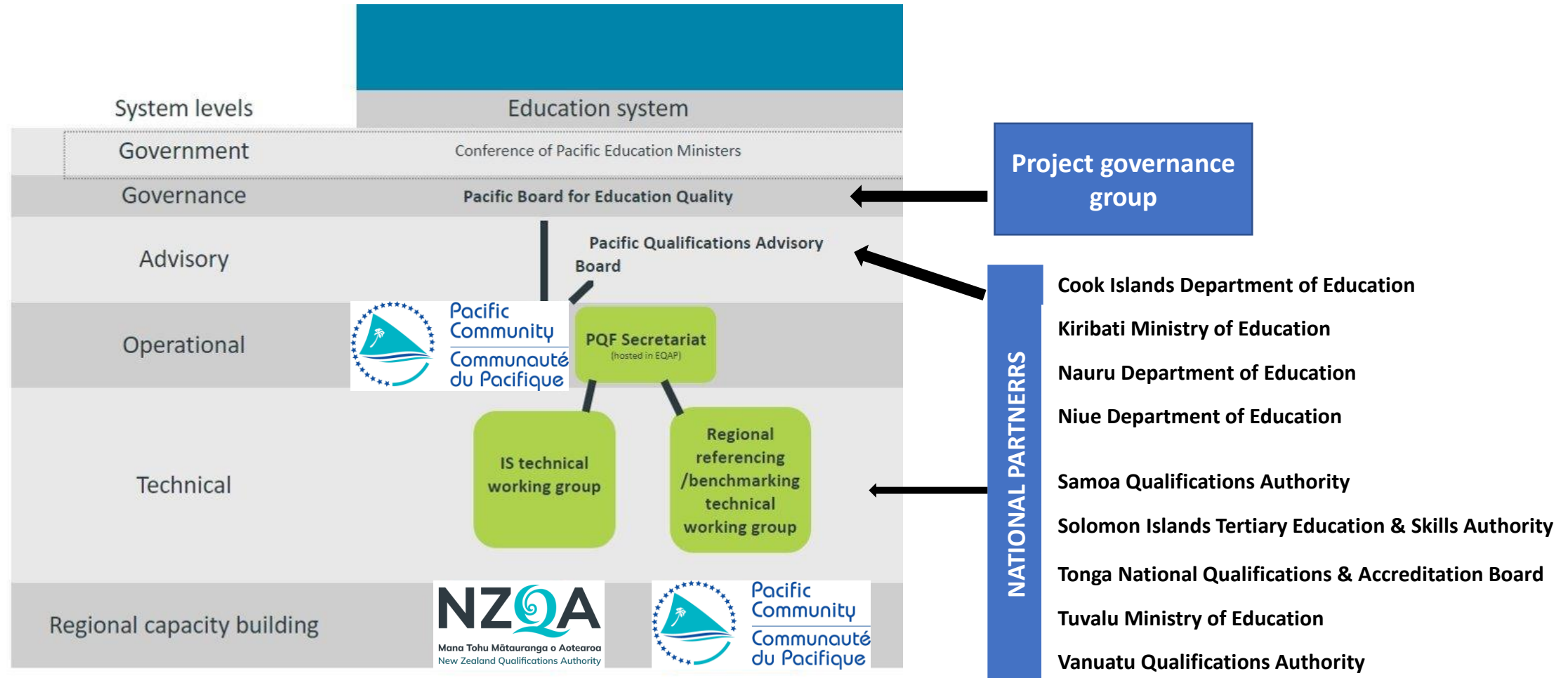


Building trust – NZQA's approach

- 'Walking alongside'
- Building and sustaining relationships with all Pacific partners
- Building understanding of key concepts with all partners – referencing, benchmarking, quality assurance, qualifications recognition
- Holding space for talanoa – about what is wanted, needed, and is 'for the Pacific by the Pacific'
- Supporting a process to identify, design, and build solutions with all partners



Project participation and governance



Regional leadership support: the Pacific Qualifications Advisory Board (PQAB)



- Members include heads of national quality assurance agencies (NQAAs) and representatives of ministries of education
- Will meet annually
- Will act as ‘owners’ of the PQF and will oversee the referencing and benchmarking process, and provide guidance and direction on the project
- Will scrutinise and approve the referencing and benchmarking reports and outcomes
- Will endorse the PQF and the NQF systems strengthening plans and process
- Has endorsed the reviewed referencing and benchmarking criteria, guidelines and process in November 2023

Kia ora and thank you



Meitaki Ma'ata, Kam Rabwa, Tankiu Tumas,
Fakaaue lahi, Fakafetai, Mālō 'aupito, Fa'afetai
tele, Vinaka vaka levu, Faiakse'ea, Tagio tumas,
Fakafetai lahi lele, Ngā mihi and thank you

