South African Qualifications Authority

Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

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Executive Authority Statement

I am delighted to present the South African Qualifications Authority Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. As the Minister of Higher Education, I fully endorse SAQA's mission to enhance the integrity and credibility of the National Qualifications Framework, for a knowledgeable and equitable society.

Skills development is a cornerstone in addressing the persistent challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality in our nation. For South Africa to address these challenges it requires a skilled and flexible workforce ready to adopt new technologies and processes. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) plays a vital role in promoting collaboration among government, the private sector, and civil society to develop a competent and adaptable labour force. For the 2025/26 fiscal year, a key focus of SAQA is on strengthening the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to ensure it effectively supports skills development and aligns with the needs of our evolving economy.

The Strategic Plan for 2025-30 delineates SAQA's strategic outcomes and performance benchmarks for the five-year period and together with the Annual Performance Plan 2025/26 further outlines the outputs that SAQA aims to achieve in the 2025/26 financial year. These encompass bolstering the governance, sustainability and efficacy of the organisation, modernizing the ICT systems, undertaking capacity-building endeavours for staff; engaging with stakeholders; and focusing on advocacy initiatives. Furthermore, SAQA will embark on research studies and use evidence-based information to enhance the NQF implementation, improve institutional co-ordination and coherence within an integrated PSET system.

I urge everyone interested to engage with SAQA and support its efforts to further develop and implement the NQF. By collaborating, we can build a more prosperous and equitable society for all. We are dedicated to maintaining continuous engagement with key stakeholders from the government, business community, quality councils and training providers to ensure coordinated efforts and the achievement of our goals. Our priorities remain focused on empowering vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as women, young people, and people with disabilities. With the unwavering commitment of our stakeholders and the steadfast dedication of SAQA staff, I am confident that the outcomes will be achieved. Let's work together towards the common goal of a skilled and successful South Africa.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the dedicated staff of SAQA for their unwavering dedication and hard work, as well as to all our valued stakeholders for their invaluable support. With full confidence, I endorse this Strategic Plan 2025-2030 and affirm my unwavering commitment to its effective implementation.

Dr N Nkabane
Minister of Higher Education
Executive Authority

Accounting Authority Statement

SAQA is well poised to play its unique part in responding to the key challenges faced by a South Africa that is located within a global context that is seeing unprecedented social, political, economic and technological changes. The new SAQA Strategy, referred to as "Renaissance 2025-2030", is grounded in the reality of the challenges and opportunities that face South Africa, while it also looks to a future context where qualifications and credentials are becoming increasingly digital and interoperable in this changing environment.

At a national level SAQA's new strategy aims to contribute to the three priorities adopted by the Government of National Unity (GNU), which include driving inclusive growth and job creation, reduction of poverty, and building a capable and ethical developmental state. At a continental level, our work supports and advances Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), while working actively with African counterparts to implement the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications on Higher Education in African States (also referred to as the Addis Convention). The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) remains a key priority for member states, and SAQA will continue to play an active role in this regard. Several global qualifications initiatives will also be supported by SAQA.

The South African NQF was established in 1995 and has been held up as an example in Africa and internationally, but it also needs to evolve as the local, continental and global contexts have changed. In order to move SAQA and the NQF into this new context, Renaissance 2025-2030 will have as its overarching goal "A simplified, responsive and future-focused NQF that works for the people". We have learnt much from the last few decades of implementation, and there is a clear commitment to an NQF that is able to bridge supply and demand sides of the skills ecosystem in South Africa. This NQF must also be accessible and meaningful for all of our people, also for our most rural citizens, as we were reminded by our previous chairperson Prof. Peliwe Lolwana on many occasions. Her sudden departure in December 2023 is still felt by the Board and staff of SAQA as we remain committed to fulfilling her vision for the future.

Under the capable leadership of Nadia Starr as CEO and her team, SAQA is investing in the new jobs and capacities required to enable the implementation of the NQF as a part of the next generation of national qualifications frameworks. This will include a renewed focus on research and development (R&D), in-house technological expertise, qualifications and credentials experts, and the ability to do advocacy better. In the next five years SAQA will strive to position itself as a thought leader while playing a stronger coordinating and supportive role between its key stakeholders. The entity also intends to deepen its commitment to serving the public, to be an organization that puts public service at its centre. Some of this will take

the form of greater targeted engagement with our key stakeholders and partners, with a particular focus on the grassroots.

As SAQA embarks on this new and exciting phase in its journey, it does so with the full support of a Board that is serious about the renaissance of both SAQA and the NQF.

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Dr James Keevy
Interim Board Chairperson
The South African Qualifications Authority

Chief Executive Officer Statement

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present SAQA's new Strategic plan for the period 2025 – 2030. This 'Renaissance' strategy in many ways honours the legacy of our late Chairperson, Prof. Peliwe Lolwana, whose vision it was to see an NQF that works for all the people in South Africa.

SAQA's Renaissance Strategy 2025-30 aims to reassert the entity as a thought leader in relation to the NQF and the NQF as a critical component of the regional and global qualifications ecosystems. The plan also acknowledges that to do so, we have to build and maintain an entity oriented towards excellence, service and impact. The Strategy aligns with key national priorities, as well as regional and continental development goals.

SAQA's vision over the next five years is: A world-class National Qualifications Framework that works for the people, and our mission is: To advance the integrity and credibility of the National Qualifications Framework for a knowledgeable and more equitable society. Our vision and mission underscore our focus on advancing the authenticity and recognition of South African qualifications, but also our commitment to an inclusive and fair society, that underpins everything we do.

This Renaissance strategy outlines four broad outcomes for achievement in the strategic period;

1. SAQA is an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence;

2. Research and development drive the advancement and awareness of the NQF;

3. A Coordinated Lifelong learning ecosystem; and

4. An NQF that serves society.

These outcomes aim to build on our capacity as a learning and research organisation with a mandate for coordination and redress. With three of the Outcomes being more outward looking, SAQA will also be looking inward, focusing on maintaining a stable organisation underpinned by excellence and growth. We acknowledge that the successful implementation of this strategy rests largely on the strength, commitment and passion of SAQA's highly skilled

and professional staff complement. Therefore, during this strategic period, we will be focusing on further staff development as well as building and leveraging internal expertise in the fields of ICT, advocacy and communications, as well as verifications, and foreign qualification evaluation.

We look forward to working closely with the Minister and Department of Higher Education and Training and with our key stakeholders, partners and constituents.

Appreciation finally, for the support and ongoing guidance of the SAQA Board, which leaves us sure footed for a successful five-year strategic period.

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Ms Nadia Starr
Accounting Officer
The South African Qualifications Authority

Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the management of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) under the guidance of the Board and the Minister of Higher Education;
- Takes into account all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which SAQA is responsible.
- Accurately reflects the impact and outcomes which SAQA will endeavour to achieve over the period 2025-2030.

Dr M Makhafola — Signature: _____
Chief Operating Officer

Mr I Gumbochuma — Signature: _____
Chief Finance Officer

Ms Bolekwa Maseti — Signature: _____
Senior Manager: People Management

Mr J Nel — Signature:
Senior Manager: Registration and Recognition

Ms A Janse van Rensburg — Signature: _____
Senior Manager: Authentication Services

Dr H Bolton — Signature: _____
Senior Manager: Research

Ms Nolusindiso Kayi — Signature: _____
Senior Manager: Research Projects

Ms Martha Pendu Signature:_____
Senior Manager: ICT

Mr R Mazana Signature: _____
Senior Manager: ICT Project

Ms N Kgomo Signature: _____
Senior Manager: Legal, Governance, Risk and Compliance

Mr Jeremy Thomas Signature: _____
Senior Manager: Supply Chain Management

Dr L Matsau
Manager: Strategy, Reporting and M&E Signature:_____

Ms N Starr Signature: _____
Chief Executive Officer

Approved by:

Dr N Nkabane Signature: _____
Minister: Higher Education
Executive Authority

Table of contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acronyms

ACRONYMS	DESCRIPTION
4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
5IR	Fifth Industrial Revolution
AET	Adult Education and Training
AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CET	Community Education and Training
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
DPSA	Disabled People South Africa
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DoT	Department of Transport
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EO	Executive Officer
ERRP	South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan
ESSEC	École Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales
ETDP-SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
EXCO	Executive Committee
FQ	Foreign Qualifications
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTAC	Government Technical Advisory Centre
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HERESA	Higher Education Reform Experts of South Africa
HEQCIS	Higher Education Quality Committee Information System
HR	Human Resource
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

ID	Identity
IMF	International Monitory Fund
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information Systems
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
MTEF	The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Persons who are not in employment, education, or training
NLRD	National Learners Records Database
NOC	National Occupation Classification
NPPSET	National Plan for Post-School Education and Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSG	National School of Government
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental Analysis
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
POPI	Protection of Personal Information
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PSETA	Public Service Education and Training Authority
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
R&R	Registration & Recognition
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SA	South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SADCQF	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SDL	Skills Development Levy
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
SP	Strategic Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UPSET	Unfurling Post School Education and Training
WEO	World Economic Outlook
WES	Word Education Services
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
WP-PSET	White Paper on Post School Education and Training

Part A: Our Mandate

1. Constitutional mandate

The Constitution, 1996 of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), as the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa along with the Bill of Rights, forms the legal foundation of a democratic South Africa setting out the rights and duties of its citizens and defines the structure of Government. All laws of the country must be consistent with the Constitution, and it further requires that all spheres of government work together to address poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation of individuals and communities and other legacies of apartheid. All government institutions, entities and municipalities ultimately derive their mandate from the Constitution.

The derivation of the mandate of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is informed by the Bill of Rights in Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which guarantees that everyone has the right to:

- Basic education, including adult basic education;
- Further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible;
- 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; and
- 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. This does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institutions.

2. Legislative and policy mandates

Legislative Mandates:

2.1. National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008)

In terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, No. 67 of 2008, which became effective on 1 June 2009, SAQA is positioned as the oversight body of the NQF and the custodian of its values.

The objectives of the NQF are set out in section 5(3) of the NQF Act. SAQA must seek to achieve the objectives of the NQF by –

- Developing, fostering and maintaining an integrated and transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements;
- Ensuring that South African qualifications meet appropriate criteria, determined by the Minister as, and are internationally comparable; and
- Ensuring that South African qualifications are of acceptable quality.

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. The role of SAQA, as stipulated in the NQF Act, 2008, is to advance the objectives of the NQF, oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF, and co-ordinate the sub-frameworks.

The functions of SAQA are set out in sections 13 and 15 of the NQF Act, 2008, which in summary mandates SAQA to:

- Oversee the implementation of the NQF and ensure the achievement of its objectives
- Enhance the quality of education and training
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths

Section 13 (h) Qualifications:

- Implement policy and criteria for the development, registration and publications of qualifications and part-qualifications
- Register qualifications and part-qualifications recommended by QCs if they meet relevant criteria
- Verify all qualifications or part-qualifications

Section 13(l) Maintain a national learners' records database.

S13(m) Foreign qualifications –

- provide a verification or an evaluation and advisory service
- evaluate all foreign qualifications referred to it
- formulate and publish criteria for evaluating foreign qualifications

Section 15 (1A): When verifying or evaluating qualifications SAQA is to consider whether-

- provider/institution is registered;
- qualification is authentic; and
- complies with the policy and criteria.

Section 13(1B) Misrepresented or inauthentic qualification after verification:

i. inform the requester and the holder of the qualification or part-qualification of the finding;
ii. record such finding in the register of misrepresented qualifications and part-qualifications or fraudulent qualifications and part-qualifications.

As regards Professional Bodies SAQA is to:

- implement policy and criteria for recognising a professional body and registering a professional designation; and
- recognise a professional body and register its professional designation.

Section l3 (1A), SAQA should:

- Maintain a separate register of professional designations;
- Register of misrepresented qualifications and part-qualifications; and
- Register of fraudulent qualifications and part-qualifications.

Section 13(k): Research

- Conduct or commission investigations on issues of importance to the development and implementation of the NQF; and
- Publish research findings.

Section 13 (j) International Relations:

- Collaborate with international counterparts on all matters of mutual interest concerning qualifications frameworks; and
- Inform the QCs and other interested parties about international practice in the development and management of qualifications frameworks.

Subsection 13(n)(i) inform the public about the NQF.

The NQF Act is currently undergoing a review which will further inform SAQA on the implementation over the next five years.

2.2. The Public Finance Management Act (1999) and Treasury Regulations

SAQA commits to sound corporate governance, integrity, efficiency, and compliance. Chapter 6 of the PFMA and the Treasury Regulations have reference to SAQA which is schedule 3A public entity.

2.3. Protection of Personal Information Act, (Act No 4 of 2013)

SAQA commits to protect natural and juristic persons from harm by protecting their personal information aligned to the eight conditions for the lawful processing of personal information as set out in the Act.

2.4 Promotion of Administrative Justice (Act 3 of 2000) (PAJA)

SAQA commits to ensuring that any administrative action it takes, that adversely affects the public or any person, is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

Policy Mandates

There are several policy documents that have relevance to the work of SAQA. They are as follows:

National Development Plan 2030: "The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society" (NDP, 2011). Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan (NDP) outlines educational objectives that must be achieved by 2030 if South Africa is to succeed as a nation. The NDP's vision for education and training is to ensure that all children have the benefit of a high-quality education, especially with regards to languages, mathematics and science – with the ultimate aim of ensuring that 90% of learners pass these subjects with at least 50% by 2030.

In addition, the post-school sector has to meet the education and training needs of individuals over 18. Together with the higher-education sector, the reform of the Basic Education system will play a critical role in producing the skills and knowledge required to drive South Africa's economic and social development. The NDP recognises that education is the cornerstone upon which a nation that provides opportunities for social mobility, equity, social justice and democracy will depend.

SAQA plays a pivotal role in advancing the objectives of the NQF in South Africa. SAQA contributes to the NDP in the following ways:

Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications:

- SAQA ensures the quality, credibility, and recognition of qualifications issued within the country.
- It oversees the registration of qualifications on the NQF, ensuring appropriate alignment with national standards.
- By maintaining the integrity of qualifications, SAQA supports the NDP's goal of a skilled and capable workforce.

Alignment with Socio-Cultural and Labor Market Needs:

- SAQA's role includes addressing continental, national, and regional labour market needs.
- By doing so, it contributes to the NDP's vision of inclusive economic growth and social development.
- SAQA ensures that qualifications meet the demands of various sectors, including government, private industry, and nonprofit organizations.

Thus, SAQA's functions contribute to the NDP by promoting education, skills development and governance, ultimately supporting South Africa's sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, the contents of the NDP have generally informed and continues to inform the work of many entities in the education, training, and development space, e.g.,

- DBE Task Team for HRD in ECD;
- DBE focus on strengthening ECD;
- DBE foci on strengthening Basic Education through LOLT, 3-Stream Model;
- National work on WIL (HERESA, NSA, QCTO, CHE);
- Strengthening learning pathways (CD, CYC, ECD, Engineering, Tourism, Citizen Science, Local Government, Work at Height) (DSD, DBE, DOT, QCs, UPSET);
- Inter-Departmental Task Team for RPL (RPL for the Public Service & National RPL Framework) (DHET, DSI, COGTA, NSG, DPSA, **SAQA**, QCs); and
- Continental developments (SADCQF, ACQF, Addis Convention) etc.

Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) (2024-2029)

The Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) (2024-2029) in the implementation plan of the National Development Plan (NDP) and outlines the key priorities for South Africa's development. The documents align the goals and objectives of the NDP and Programme of Priorities of the Government of National Unity. The MTDP's three strategic priorities are:

1. Inclusive growth & job creation;
2. Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living;
3. Build a capable, ethical & developmental state.

SAQA contributes to all three strategic priorities.

Alignment to National Priorities

Building a capable, ethical and developmental state is also one of the three priorities identified by the President of the Republic at the Opening of Parliament Address of the 7 Administration in 2024, along with (i) *driving growth and job creation and* (ii) *reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living*.

Although our work indirectly benefits job creation and reducing poverty, we believe we have a more direct contribution to supporting the growth of a capable, ethical and developmental state. Furthermore, one of the key interventions identified in the MTDP for implementation by

Government Departments and Public Entities is *A Professional, meritocratic and ethical public administration*. "The MTSF period foregrounds the government's strategic commitment to build a capable, ethical and developmental state," (NSG, 2022:7). The professionalisation of our public administration is a key tool for building a capable state, and to this end the Government has developed a National Framework Towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service, which "aims to build a state that better serves our people, that is insulated from undue political interference and where appointments are made based on merit" (NSG, 2022:3). The Framework was gazetted in October 2023 and requires implementation from April 2024 and identifies the following five pillars in the value chain for the professionalisation of the public sector:

1. Pre-entry, recruitment and selection;
2. Induction and onboarding;
3. Planning and performance management;
4. Continuous learning and professional development; and
5. Career development and incidents.

SAQA has operationalised most of the requirements under the five pillars identified above. SAQA's recruitment and selection policies support employment equity and follows a merit-based system. All new employees undergo a workplace orientation to better understand the culture and the dynamics of the organisation. SAQA has implemented a performance management system to ensure that every financial year all employees from all levels sign a performance contract on which they are assessed at the end of that financial year. When signing a performance contract, employees and their line managers must identify appropriate training and learning pathways to help carry out their duties. SAQA is also in the process of developing implementation plans for some of the recommendations from the Framework, in compliance with the Directive on Human Resources Management and Development for Public Service Professionalisation, issued by the Minister for Public Service and Administration.

Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans

The Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans is vital for SAQA as it provides a comprehensive, structured, and transparent approach to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating its activities. This ensures that SAQA remains effective, accountable, and aligned with planning priorities and with the national education and training objectives for the country.

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 then Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation
- The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NPPSET, 2023)

The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NPPSET) sets out a roadmap for implementing the policy vision of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. The NPPSET sets out key system goals, objectives, outcomes and strategies aimed at achieving an integrated, coordinated, expanded, responsive, cooperative, quality, efficient,

successful and articulated post-school education and training (PSET) system over the period 2022/2023 to 2029/2030. The following goals, objectives and outcomes impact the work of SAQA:

Goals	Objectives	Outcomes
1: Developing an integrated, coordinated and articulated PSET system	1.To build a PSET system that is integrated, coordinated and articulated to achieve efficiencies and improve effectiveness	1.1. Clear and streamlined roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and role players
		1.2. Improved capability for integration, coordination and articulation in the PSET system
		1.3. A simplified NQF
		1.4. Increased articulation for students between and within the NQF sub-frameworks, and between and within institutions
		1.5. Aligned policy and legislation
5. Improved quality of PSET provision	To ensure qualifications programmes and curricula that are responsive to the needs of the world of work, society and students	3.2. A diverse range of programmes responsive to the world of work
5.Improving the quality of PSET provision	To build the capacity of PSET provider institutions to provide quality education and training	5.5. Improved quality assurance capability
		*Provision of adequate fiscus funding to education and training institutions and supporting institutions

SAQA will work with various stakeholders to operationalize these objectives and achieve the stipulated outcomes.

The strategies (emanating from the NPPSET) to be employed to address the above outcomes over the period of this Strategic Plan 2025-2030 are discussed below:

Developing an integrated, coordinated and articulated PSET system	
Outcome	**Strategy**
1.1. [1]Clear and streamlined roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and role players	• The duplication of key regulatory processes that has characterised the work of the quality councils – the Council on Higher Education (CHE), Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), as well as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) – must be addressed and will require a review and possible amendment of the NQF Act, to refine their roles, responsibilities, functions and funding frameworks and enhance their efficiency.
1.2: Improved capability for integration, coordination and articulation in the PSET system	• The Department, in liaison with the DBE, QCTO, SAQA and Umalusi, will review all NQF Level 4 general vocational qualifications (including their purposes, and design); • The data verification process jointly underway between the Department, SAQA and the CHE to ensure alignment of qualification nomenclature and terminology on the NLRD and correct all administrative errors with respect to the registration of accredited programmes, will be replicated for TVET and CET.
1.3: A simplified NQF	• The Department will work together with SAQA and the quality councils to address all NQF-related issues, including development of policies on NQF matters, confirmation and refinement of qualifications, and simplification of NQF nomenclature. • The quality councils, together with SAQA, will simplify the accreditation and registration processes.
1.4. Increased articulation for students between and within the NQF sub-frameworks, and between and within institutions	• The capacity of SAQA to gather and track reliable systemic data through the NLRD will be developed. • The Department will investigate establishing a mechanism to monitor articulation blockages and make recommendations for improvement. • A communications strategy will be implemented, focusing on developing an understanding of the NQF as a framework and what it means to articulate from one qualification to another in a cognate knowledge/practice area, etc. • The Department will investigate an integrated quality assurance and data system that spans across SAQA and the quality councils
1.5. Aligned policy and legislation	• Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of SAQA and the quality councils will require a review of the NQF Act. • The collection of unit record data will need to be aligned with the Protection of Personal Information Act. • The NQF Act will be reviewed, considering the recommendations of the report of the NQF evaluation undertaken by the Department in collaboration with the DPME. • NQF-related policies will be reviewed to eliminate contradictions.

[1] Numbering of the outcomes are aligned to the National Plan for Post-School Education and Training: 2021–2030

Developing an integrated, coordinated and articulated PSET system	
Outcome	**Strategy**
Improving the quality of PSET provision	
3.2. A diverse range of programmes responsive to the world of work	• The QCTO and SAQA will review all NQF Level 2 and 3 certificates and NQF Level 4 NOCs regarding the relative proportions of their theoretical, practical and workplace experience components, and whether in some cases simulated workplace experience would constitute an appropriate and feasible substitute for actual workplace experience. This would require an amendment to the SDA definition of occupational programmes.
5.5 Improved quality assurance capability	• A review of the CHE will be undertaken with respect to its functions in relation to the roles and functions of the DHET, other quality councils and SAQA, with a view to simplifying and streamlining the NQF.
Provision of adequate fiscus funding to education and training institutions and supporting institutions	A study will be undertaken to evaluate how fiscal and SDL funds are currently, and in future could be better, distributed to SAQA, the QCTO, the CHE and Umalusi. It will also take into account the planned streamlining of institutional quality assurance roles and responsibilities currently under way and the funding needs of other supporting institutions (such as the HRDC).

National Priorities for the 2025-2030 Planning Period:

- South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP)
- New Growth Path: To support economic policy and the driver of the country's job strategy
- Human Resource Strategy of South Africa, 2030 (HRDS-SA), as Amended
- White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation
- Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Decadal Plan (2022 - 2032)
- National Plan for PSET (NPPSET)

Long Range development Priorities

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- African Union Agenda 2063

Other Policy Considerations:

- National Youth Policy (2020-2030)
- White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016)

3. Institutional Policies and Strategies over the five-year planning period

SAQA, 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;
- 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;

- National Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
- Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African NQF;
- The Articulation Policy for the Post-School Education and Training System of South Africa; and
- National RPL Framework (forthcoming)

4. Relevant Court Rulings

N/A.

Part B: Our Strategic Focus

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan articulates SAQA's strategic focus: its vision, mission, values, impact statement and outcomes, activities and inputs as follows:

Figure 1: SAQA Strategic Framework

5. Vision

A world-class National Qualifications Framework that works for the people.

6. Mission

To advance the integrity and credibility of the National Qualifications Framework for a knowledgeable and more equitable society.

7. Values

Value	Description
Integrity	The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change
Client service excellence	Customer service excellence is the practice of consistently exceeding customer expectations in service delivery
Accountability	The fact of being responsible for what you do and able to give a satisfactory reason for it, or the degree to which this happens
Inclusivity	The practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or intellectual disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.
Mutual respect	Mutual respect is a reciprocal form of respect between two or more people, where everyone shows respect to one another

Table 1: Value definitions

8. Situational Analysis

This section presents a thorough situational analysis of both the external and internal environments of SAQA and considers how salient shifts in the environment may influence SAQA operations. A synthesis of this information, further assisted in identifying strategic priorities and informing decision-making, to ensure the organization is well-positioned to achieve its outcomes and navigate future challenges.

8.1. External Environment Analysis

Global trends

Global inflation is expected to decline faster than previously expected due to softening labour markets, lower energy prices and easing supply-side constraints. The IMF expects inflation in

advanced economies to fall from 4.6% in 2023 to 2.6% in 2024 and 2% in 2025. The pace of disinflation has raised expectations that central banks in advanced economies will begin cutting interest rates in 2024 and continue into 2025.

As global monetary conditions become more favourable, the US dollar is expected to depreciate, supporting moderate improvements in the foreign exchange value of the rand. Despite the improved global outlook for 2024, South Africa's near-term growth prospects remain hamstrung by subdued prices for key export commodities and domestic supply side constraints[2].

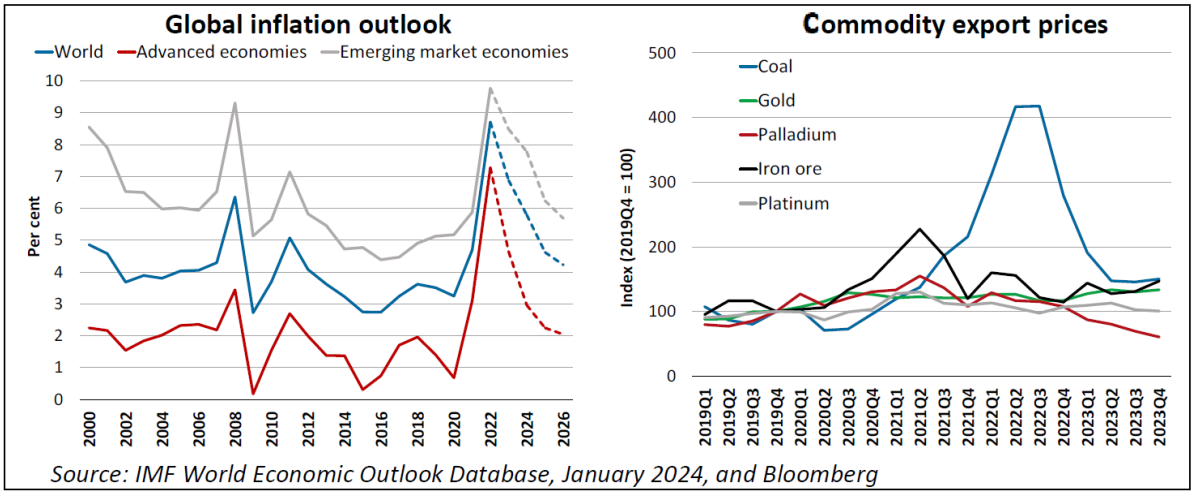


Figure 2: Global Inflation Outlook

Downside risks remain from potential spikes in the global oil price if the conflict in the Middle East escalates and if growth falters in China – the country's largest trade partner – due to its continuing real estate crisis.

[2] IMF World Economic Outlook April 2024

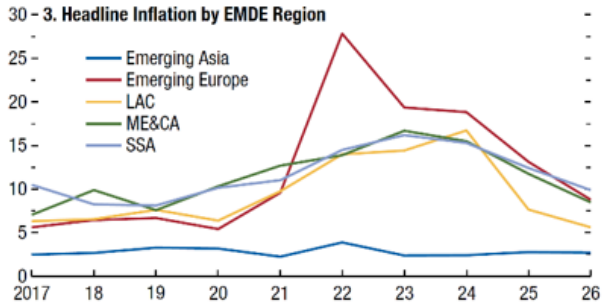
Region/country	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percentage	Actual	Estimate	Forecast	
World	**3.5**	**3.1**	**3.1**	**3.2**
Advanced economies	**2.6**	**1.6**	**1.5**	**1.8**
United States	1.9	2.5	2.1	1.7
Euro area	3.4	0.5	0.9	1.7
United Kingdom	4.3	0.5	0.6	1.6
Japan	1.0	1.9	0.9	0.8
Emerging and developing countries	**4.1**	**4.1**	**4.1**	**4.2**
Brazil	3.0	3.1	1.7	1.9
Russia	-1.2	3.0	2.6	1.1
India	7.2	6.7	6.5	6.5
China	3.0	5.2	4.6	4.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	**4.0**	**3.3**	**3.8**	**4.1**
Nigeria	3.3	2.8	3.0	3.1
South Africa[1]	1.9	0.6	1.3	1.6
World trade volumes	**5.2**	**0.4**	**3.3**	**3.6**

1. National Treasury forecast
Source: IMF World Economic Outlook, January 2024

Figure 3: Economic growth in selected countries

In emerging markets and developing economies, growth is expected to be stable at 4.2% in 2024 and 2025, with a moderation in emerging and developing Asia offset mainly by rising growth for economies in the Middle East and Central Asia and for sub-Saharan Africa. Low-income developing countries are expected to experience gradually increasing growth, from 4.0% in 2023 to 4.7% in 2024 and 5.2% in 2025, as some constraints on near-term growth ease.

Growth in **sub-Saharan Africa**, growth is projected to rise from an estimated 3.4% in 2023 to 3.8% in 2024 and 4.0% in 2025, as the negative effects of earlier weather shocks subside and supply issues gradually improve. The forecast is unchanged for 2024 from the January 2024 WEO Update, as a downward revision to Angola owing to a contraction in the oil sector.



Source: *World Economic Outlook*, IMF staff calculations.
Note: Core inflation excludes volatile food and energy prices. AEs = advanced economies; EMDEs = emerging market and developing economies; LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; ME&CA = Middle East and Central Asia; SSA = sub-Saharan Africa; WEO = *World Economic Outlook*.

Figure 4: Inflation Outlook

South Africa

GDP[3] growth is projected to average 1.6% from 2024 to 2026 as the frequency of power cuts declines, lower inflation supports household consumption, and employment and credit extension recover gradually. New energy projects will improve fixed investment and business sentiment. Joblessness remains extremely high, with the pace of employment creation expected to moderate in 2024. To date, the jobs recovery has been led by the community and social services sector. Faster economic growth is needed for a significant and sustainable increase in private-sector jobs.

Headline inflation is projected to moderate from 6% in 2023 to 4.9% in 2024 and 4.6% in 2025 as food and fuel inflation continue to decline. Higher vehicle and insurance prices, which have contributed to core inflation pressure, are easing slowly. Near-term inflation may increase if global crude oil prices rise due to an escalation in the Middle East conflict and a weaker rand exchange rate. Elevated administered prices, including water and electricity, also pose an upside risk to the medium-term outlook.

Household consumption remains under significant pressure after contracting for two consecutive quarters in 2023. This reflects the effects of inflation and borrowing costs, weak consumer confidence and shrinking real incomes. Risks to the near-term outlook remain skewed to the downside due to the possibility of food prices remaining elevated for a large percentage of households even as inflation declines and tight credit conditions ease. Improvements in confidence, employment and real incomes, alongside an anticipated easing of interest rates by the end of 2024, will sustainably raise household spending over the medium term.

Investment growth is estimated to have slowed to 4.2% in 2023 and is expected to decline to 3.7% in 2024, due to challenging business conditions including high borrowing costs and low confidence. Machinery and equipment spending will benefit from renewable energy and Transnet's port investments, supporting overall investment.

Percentage change	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Actual			Estimate	Forecast		
Final household consumption	-6.1	5.8	2.5	0.7	1.3	1.8	1.7
Final government consumption	0.9	0.5	1.0	1.8	-0.7	-0.2	-0.2
Gross fixed-capital formation	-14.6	0.6	4.8	4.2	3.7	4.0	3.6
Gross domestic expenditure	-7.6	4.8	3.9	1.1	1.2	1.7	1.7
Exports	-12.0	9.1	7.4	3.2	2.1	2.5	3.2
Imports	-17.6	9.6	14.9	4.8	1.9	2.6	2.6
Real GDP growth	**-6.0**	**4.7**	**1.9**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**1.6**	**1.8**
GDP inflation	5.3	6.5	4.8	4.6	4.0	4.5	4.5
GDP at current prices (R billion)	**5 568**	**6 209**	**6 629**	**6 972**	**7 346**	**7 801**	**8 298**
CPI inflation	3.3	4.6	6.9	6.0	4.9	4.6	4.6
Current account balance (% of GDP)	1.9	3.7	-0.5	-1.8	-2.8	-3.0	-3.0

Sources: National Treasury, Reserve Bank and Statistics South Africa

Table 2: GDP Growth

[3] National Treasury 2024 Budget Review

Changing Educational Landscape:

A focus on mobility

The changing needs of leaners has drawn the attention of the Post School Education and Training community. These include the changing demographics of learners, learners dropping in and out of education, increased demand for flexible learning provisioning and increased mobility. The challenges around mobility were brought into stark relief during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the number of mobile learners exceeded 6 million globally. In response to this, UNESCO adopted the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, in its 40th meeting. The Convention is a global framework established by UNESCO aimed at promoting the recognition of higher education qualifications worldwide. It aims to enhance international mobility for students and professionals by setting common standards for recognizing qualifications. South Africa became the first country in the SADC region to ratify the Convention.

The Addis Convention, officially known as the “Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States,” was adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2014. This convention is a revision of the Arusha Convention (1981) and aims to address the specific needs and challenges faced by African countries in the recognition of qualifications. It is regional in nature, designed to improve the mobility of students, academics, and professionals across the African continent. The Addis Convention sets out principles for mutual recognition of academic qualifications within Africa and is a step towards harmonising education systems in the region, helping to bridge disparities between the educational standards of different countries. The convention promotes cross-border student mobility and encourages cooperation between African higher education institutions, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of education across the continent. By fostering recognition mechanisms, the Addis Convention allows African students to transfer their qualifications more easily when they move between countries for further study or employment. This can reduce the brain drain by encouraging skilled individuals to remain within Africa, thus contributing to local and regional development. It also strengthens intra-Africa cooperation, allowing for the sharing of knowledge and skills that can lead to sustainable economic growth. The Department of Higher Education and Training is working with SAQA and other entities to implement the Addis Convention. This is currently an unfunded mandate, so SAQA’s successful implementation will require designated financial resources.

Small Units of Learning

In response to the changing needs of learners, the world is moving towards the recognition of micro-credentials. The recognition of micro-credentials has the potential to contribute to the goals of South Africa's National Development Plan by providing more flexible learning pathways for existing qualifications registered on the NQF. The recognition of micro-

credentials can also assist with additional access to education and training and facilitating lifelong learning, by allowing micro-credentials to be stacked to achieve the credits required for the award of a summative qualification. It should be noted in the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework and Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework several providers are offering short courses, short learning programmes, or small units of learning, part-qualifications and skills programmes. SAQA continuously conducts research to ensure the relevance of the NQF that is responsive to the changing needs of the learners.

SAQA's macro-environment was further assessed using the **PESTLE** analysis. These trends have informed the development of the impact statement, outcomes, and outcome indicators to steer SAQA on its path to deliver on its mandate.

PESTLE Analysis	
1. Political	**2. Economic**
• Change in government following the 2024 elections. Appointment of a new Minister responsible for higher education may change the landscape. This brings uncertainty but may also provide potential opportunity. • International relations: Partnerships and agreements with other countries can expand SAQA's reach and influence, but also introduce new challenges where geopolitics is concerned. • Changing political priorities influences the direction of governmental actions and resource allocation. • Changing policies and leadership can lead to shifts in governance approaches and decision-making processes. • The government's drive for digitization reflects its commitment to modernizing public services and infrastructure. • Limited government funding constrains the implementation of political agendas and the delivery of public services. • Insufficient understanding of the complexity of technological change	• Stagnant economy (inflation; fiscal constraints; recession etc) - Low economic growth hampers overall prosperity and opportunities. • Global skill demands - keeping up with international skill demands and evolving industries is crucial for SAQA to ensure its qualifications remain relevant. • Jobs displacement due to technology impacts on the labour market and economic stability. • Unemployment rates contribute to economic strain and social challenges. • Underemployment limits income potential and economic participation. • Not in education or employment (NEETs) indicate potential economic disengagement. • Decreased investment undermines economic expansion and development. • Lack of job opportunities constrains income generation and poverty alleviation efforts. • Lack of opportunities for SMMEs, cooperatives, startups, and informal traders stifles entrepreneurial growth and economic diversification.

may result in ineffective policies and strategies for technological development. • The trend to address vulnerable and excluded groups demonstrates political efforts to promote social equity and inclusion. • The district development model aims to decentralize governance and empower local communities in political decision-making processes. • Instability within political institutions causes a lack of continuity in policy implementation and governance initiatives. • Political-administrative interface challenges impede effective coordination and cooperation between government branches, affecting policy implementation and service delivery. • A trust deficit between citizens and political leaders undermines public confidence in governance institutions and decision-making processes.	• The trend towards more social models affects economic structures and market dynamics. • Increasing opportunities in the digital economy drive economic innovation and growth. • Misalignment between skills and the job market creates inefficiencies and labour market mismatches. • Slow implementation of infrastructure projects, such as electricity and fibre, delays economic progress and connectivity. • Lack of optimization of township/village economies hinders local economic development. • Insufficient transformation/reform impedes economic inclusivity and sustainability. • Jobless growth exacerbates inequality and social tensions. • Lack of coordination among stakeholders undermines economic efficiency and progress. • The changing world of work requires adaptive economic forecasting and planning.
3. Social	**4. Technological**
• Increasingly desperate and demanding clients due to poverty, unemployment, inequality. • War and displacement. • Overinvestment in education and underinvestment in labour (review human capital approach). • Changing demographics, workforce needs, and societal values towards education and qualifications. • Global skill demands - keeping up with international skill demands and evolving industries is crucial for SAQA to ensure its qualifications remain relevant.	• Block chain, AI, lack of technological infrastructure, influence of technology on education provisioning and SAQA processes. • Opportunities for interoperability and automated systems. • Use of technology in academic fraud. • Explore was to align with digital ID (DID). • Advancements in educational technology, data management for qualifications, and digital learning platforms. • Data security and privacy - protecting personal data collected

• Foreign qualifications and critical skills in SA – more demand for evaluation services. • Increased use of social media has endangered privacy and security. • Challenges relating to the combination of poverty and inequality persist. • High levels of crime plague the nation. • The global health pandemic continues to impact communities - infectious diseases pose a threat to public health. • Gender-based violence remains a pressing issue. • Racial prejudice continues to be a significant societal challenge. • Poor educational outcomes hinder progress. • The youth face poor social outcomes. • Over-35-year-olds are neglected in skills development programs. • Cultural and societal expectations significantly influence career choices. • Lack of access to mentors and career development services is a concern. • Lack of civic education contributes to societal challenges.	through SAQA services is crucial for SAQA. • The wide availability of digital devices signifies a technological shift in South Africa. • Insufficient understanding of future technologies like 4IR and 5IR hampers technological advancement. • Virtual reality is emerging as a technological tool for various applications. • Artificial intelligence is transforming industries and processes - the changing world of work is driven by technological innovations. • Online training solutions leverage technology to enhance learning opportunities. • High data costs impede widespread digital access and usage. • The cost of training in technology-related fields presents financial barriers. • Unequitable connectivity disparities highlight technological inequities.
5. Legal	**6. Environmental**
• SAQA is a 3A Public entity - competing and overlapping legislation/misusing legislation; NQF Further Amendments Bill in progress. • Regulations governing education, qualifications framework, and international agreements on qualifications recognition. • Protection of copyright and intellectual property is essential under South African law to	• Climate change (carbon footprint tax) • SAQA is a green organisation and is influencing the “greening” of education. • Sustainability in educational practices, impact of environmental policies on education infrastructure and resources. • Natural disasters, pandemics – impacts education.

safeguard creators' rights and encourage innovation. • POPI Act establishes legal requirements for the processing and protection of personal data in South Africa – SAQA must comply. • A supportive legislative framework provides the necessary legal structure to promote economic growth, protect citizens' rights, and ensure social justice in South Africa. • Autonomy, within the legal context, refers to the principle of self-governance and independence, which is upheld and protected by South African laws and regulations. • Corporate citizenship is regulated by South African laws, ensuring that businesses operate ethically, responsibly, and in compliance with legal requirements while contributing positively to society. • Regulation of politically exposed persons is governed by South African laws aimed at preventing corruption, ensuring transparency, and maintaining the integrity of public officeholders.	• Sustainable development needs to feature in qualifications • Solar/Energy crisis. • The green economy promotes environmentally sustainable practices and resource management in South Africa. • The blue economy focuses on harnessing the potential of oceans and water bodies while ensuring their conservation and sustainability. • Smart cities integrate technology and data-driven solutions to optimize resource usage and reduce environmental impact. • Rapid urbanization poses challenges to environmental conservation and sustainability as it leads to increased demand for resources and infrastructure development. • Environmental degradation threatens South Africa's ecosystems and biodiversity, impacting both human well-being and economic stability. • Waste disposal challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure and illegal dumping, contribute to environmental pollution and degradation. • Beneficial use of waste promotes recycling, upcycling, and resource recovery to minimize waste generation and environmental pollution. • Climate change exacerbates environmental challenges in South Africa, including water scarcity, extreme weather events, and habitat loss.

Table 3: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental Analysis (PESTLE)

SAQA will continue to monitor the ongoing changes in its external environment in order to respond timeously, appropriately and with relevance to any significant shifts or changes.

8.2. Internal Environment Analysis

To offer a foundation for realigning, reordering, and honing SAQA's priorities, the internal and external opportunities and threats were assessed together with SAQA's strengths and weaknesses. SAQA's objectives are to maximize recognized strengths, seize opportunities, counter known weaknesses, and lessen dangers. The SWOT analysis has further informed the formulation of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	
Internal Strengths	**The implication of SAQA's strengths on planning for 2025-30**
• Clear vision, comprehensive mission. • Resource management, including human resources (HR) management with capable and committed staff, and financial management practices contribute to SAQA's sustainability and performance. • Regulatory status (SAQA powers are protected in legislation) • First generation status - credibility (internationally)- strong competence and expertise in framework development • Strong collaboration with local and global stakeholders and partners. Stakeholder consultation and networking efforts enable SAQA to gather diverse perspectives and ensure the relevance and applicability of its services. • Influence – nationally & internationally in scholarship. • Social media presence - Corporate communication and branding initiatives enhance the visibility and	• A clear vision and mission provide a foundation for aligning all strategic initiatives. Strategic plans can focus on initiatives that directly contribute to achieving the vision and mission, helping to prioritize resources and efforts effectively. • With a specialized workforce, SAQA can pursue innovative projects and continuous improvement initiatives, leveraging internal expertise to stay ahead in the sector. Strategic planning should focus on optimizing HR management practices to attract, retain, and develop capable staff, as well as implementing sound financial management strategies to ensure sustainable funding and resource allocation. • Legislative backing provides operational stability, allowing for long-term strategic planning without concerns about regulatory changes undermining SAQA's authority. • SAQA can build on its legacy to lead new initiatives in the education sector. Strategic plans can emphasize

Strengths	
Internal Strengths	**The implication of SAQA's strengths on planning for 2025-30**
credibility of SAQA, promoting greater public trust and engagement. • Infrastructure, systems and processes – e.g., NLRD; evidence-based verification and evaluation services. SAQA's commitment to sound research methodologies and evidence-based advice enhances the quality and reliability of its services and products. .	maintaining and enhancing this leadership position. SAQA can capitalize on its experience to innovate and set trends in education quality assurance. • Leveraging relationships can help SAQA influence education quality standards both locally and globally, positioning the organization as a key player in the international education landscape. • A strong social media presence allows for effective stakeholder engagement and outreach. Social media can be used to strengthen SAQA's brand. Strategic plans can leverage social media to enhance communication, promote transparency, and gather feedback. • Planning efforts should emphasize continued investment in research methodologies and data collection techniques to uphold the quality and reliability of statistical outputs and inform evidence-based decision-making.

Table 4: SAQA Strengths and implications for planning

Weaknesses	
Internal Weaknesses	**The implication of SAQA's weaknesses on planning for 2025-30**
• Slow adaptation to technological advancements and educational trends - aging infrastructure and most processes are manual. • Gaps in NLRD - information/knowledge management within SAQA needs improvement to	• Planning efforts should prioritize technological advancements within the organization. • Planning efforts should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive information and knowledge management systems

Weaknesses	
Internal Weaknesses	**The implication of SAQA's weaknesses on planning for 2025-30**
enhance data organization, accessibility, and utilization. • Insufficient capacity (human and financial). • Credibility (national) - Not known to the public. • Overly bureaucratic and inflexible (e.g., PM link to DPSA, is this necessary/beneficial?) (outdated processes). • Ministerial advice provided by SAQA may lack effectiveness or clarity, requiring enhancement in communication and advisory processes. • Promotion of best practices by SAQA may be lacking, indicating a need for more proactive efforts to disseminate and encourage the adoption of effective methodologies and approaches. • Partnership development initiatives by SAQA may be limited, highlighting the need to enhance collaboration and engagement with relevant stakeholders and partners. • Regulatory status (SAQA powers are protected in legislation).	e.g., NLRD to improve data organization, accessibility, and utilization. • Planning should focus on enhancing communication and advisory processes to ensure that ministerial advice provided by SAQA is clear, timely, and effective in informing policy decisions. • Planning efforts should prioritize capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the core and support within SAQA, ensuring efficient operations and effective implementation of planned activities. • For SAQA to evaluate the success of its collaborations and engagement initiatives, planning should entail the creation of reliable methods for tracking and assessing stakeholder involvement and results. • Planning should incorporate proactive strategies to promote best practices within SAQA and among its stakeholders, including the development of dissemination plans and capacity-building activities to encourage the adoption of effective methodologies and approaches. • Planning efforts should focus on enhancing partnership development initiatives, including the identification of key stakeholders, the establishment of clear objectives and expectations, and the implementation of strategies to foster collaboration and engagement with relevant partners.

Table 5: SAQA Weaknesses and implications for planning

Opportunities	
Internal Opportunities	**The implication of SAQA's Opportunities on planning for 2025 - 30**
• To leverage technology – enhance information and knowledge management (records management) and educational evidence-based verification processes. • Source external funding. • Establish strategic partnerships/bilaterals/multilaterals (national and international). • Thought leadership in emerging trends/unregulated spaces/take our space. • Enhance credibility (nationally); influence (nationally). • Create value proposition • Strategic repositioning - 7th Administration. • Alignment with the PSET system presents an opportunity for SAQA to synchronize its efforts with other stakeholders in the education and training sector, fostering collaboration and coherence in skills development initiatives. • Partnerships with other PSET stakeholders offer SAQA the chance to leverage complementary expertise and resources, enhancing the effectiveness and reach of its initiatives. • Increased recognition of SAQA's positioning as a thought leader provides an opportunity for SAQA to influence policy, shape agendas, and drive innovation. • The establishment and maintenance of a repository or knowledge hub of information (NLRD) enables SAQA to centralize and disseminate valuable insights, research, and best practices, enhancing access to	• Planning efforts should prioritize coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders in the PSET system, ensuring that SAQA initiatives are aligned with broader education and training objectives and strategies. • Planning should include strategies for developing and nurturing partnerships with various PSET stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, and industry associations, to leverage collective expertise and resources. • Planning should focus on enhancing SAQA's visibility and reputation as a thought leader on the NQF. • Planning should align with national priorities for economic recovery and development, identifying and prioritizing skills areas where SAQA can play a strategic role in supporting economic growth and resilience.

Opportunities	
Internal Opportunities	**The implication of SAQA's Opportunities on planning for 2025 - 30**
relevant information for stakeholders. • Increased opportunities in the digital economy offer SAQA a chance to develop and implement data-driven solutions to support workforce development in emerging industries.	

Table 6: SAQA Opportunities and implications for planning

Threats	
Internal Threats	**The implication of SAQA's Threats on planning for 2025 - 30**
• Political-administrative changes and shifting political priorities pose a threat to the stability and continuity of SAQA's initiatives e.g., lack of political will. • Financial constraints limit SAQA's ability to execute all necessary projects effectively, potentially compromising the quality and scope of its activities. • Limitations of SAQA's mandate restricts its authority and capacity to address emerging challenges and fulfill evolving demands in the field • Weak stakeholder fora undermine collaboration and engagement with key partners, reducing the effectiveness and impact of SAQA's efforts. • Insufficient experts in the field of National Qualifications Frameworks, pose a threat to the quality and effectiveness of development programs, hindering the achievement of desired outcomes.	• Planning activities should account for potential disruptions caused by political - administrative changes, including the need for flexible strategies and contingency plans to ensure continuity and adaptability in SAQA operations and initiatives. • Planning should prioritize resource allocation and budgeting to maximize the impact of available funds, focusing on core priorities and strategic objectives while seeking alternative funding sources and cost-saving measures. • Strategic planning should involve advocacy and engagement with relevant stakeholders to address and mitigate the limitations of SAQA's mandate, including efforts to expand or clarify its authority and responsibilities in line with emerging needs and challenges in the field. • Planning efforts should include advocacy and collaboration with policymakers and relevant

Threats	
Internal Threats	**The implication of SAQA's Threats on planning for 2025 - 30**
• Loss of key staff unnecessarily (to better packages) • Reputational harm (social media presence, backlogs) • Emergence of competitors - competition from other qualifications recognition bodies globally and locally e.g., MIE & QCs • Lack of differentiation of verification/evaluation services • Lack of compliance (gaps in NRLD; admissions to universities without verification) • Unfunded mandate • Shared services • New procurement regulations which can be misinterpreted resulting in audit findings • Rapid technological change requiring constant system updates • Cyber attacks • Legal actions from users of SAQA services	authorities to address inadequacies in legislation and regulations, advocating for necessary amendments or reforms to enhance SAQA's authority and effectiveness in executing its mandate. • Planning should prioritize strengthening stakeholder engagement mechanisms and forums to foster collaboration, communication, and partnership with key stakeholders, enhancing SAQA's ability to address challenges and achieve its outcomes. • Planning activities should involve capacity-building initiatives to address insufficiencies in the number of resources in the field of the NQF ensuring the delivery of high-quality experts aligned with priorities. • Planning efforts should prioritise acquisition of state-of-the-art technologies to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.

Table 7: SAQA Threats and implications for planning

Stakeholder Analysis

Securing societal and political acceptance stands as a paramount challenge in managing and executing SAQA's mandate. Therefore, prioritising meaningful public participation and stakeholder engagement is essential. SAQA has developed a stakeholder management strategy that aligns the promotion of enhanced stakeholder involvement with corporate transparency efforts. Tailored to regional specifics and cultural diversities, this strategy includes confidence-building measures and policies.

The Stakeholder Analysis Matrix presented below illustrates the range of stakeholders who wield significant influence on SAQA's operations. The expectations of each of these stakeholders are listed in the table below and must be met:

Stakeholder	Influence	Expectation
Organised Labour	• Policy Setting • Productivity	• Framework for engagement • Willingness to work • Transparency • Communication • Fairness • Enabling environment for association
Public/Public interest groups	• Operations • Strategy • Culture	• Transparency • Fairness • Consistent delivery • Integrity • Values orientation • Information sharing • CSI
Suppliers	• Risk • Effectiveness • Turnaround	• Transparency • Fairness • Consistency • Ethical behaviour
Funding partners (GIZ, WES)	• Support	• Collaboration • Sustainable funding • Framework for engagement • Transparency • Enabling environment for association • Governance, integrity, ethics • Contribution to national priorities • Provision of direction
Department of Higher Education and Training	• Legislation • Policy setting • Funding	• Conformance • Governance continuity and reporting • Fulfilment of legislative mandate • Openness and transparency • Synergy and effective collaboration

Stakeholder	Influence	Expectation
ETDP-SETA; PSETA, SASSETA and HSRC	• Forster a Learning Organization. • Support (e.g., staff)	• Marketable • Collaboration • Host organisation for internship with SETA's
Training Providers	• Productivity • Performance Effectiveness	• Competent • Development of Staff
Professional Bodies	• Qualification development • Skills development	• Collaboration • Compliance to SAQA policy and criteria • Protection of public interest
External clients (e.g., DPSA, QCs)	• Benchmarking of salaries • Policies	• Partnerships • Collaboration
Media	• Public perception	• Sharing of information, advocacy and lobbying • Consistent feedback • Access to information
Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education	• Sanction • Oversight on budget and reporting	• Accountability • Governance, integrity, ethics • Contribution to national priorities • Provision of direction
The Board and Governance Committees	• Strategic direction	• Transparency • Accountability • Governance, integrity, ethics
National Treasury (NT)	• Regulatory environment • Financial prudency • Budgeting	• Governance • Compliance
Auditor General (AG)	• Regulatory environment • Compliance	• Governance • SETAs Audit outcomes • Performance
International bodies	• Policy frameworks • Guidance • Benchmarking	• Implement international best practice • Capacity building • Research and development

Stakeholder	Influence	Expectation
		• Collaboration
Quality Councils	• Sub-framework management	• System of collaboration
Scientific and Academic Institutions e.g., CSIR	• Research agenda	• Partnerships • Collaboration • Compliment the research and development mandate
Staff	• Productivity • Morale • Public Perception • Performance Effectiveness	• Fairness • Respect of Worker Rights • Equity • Involvement • Best Practice HRM policies/practices • Conducive work environment • Adequate resourcing • Transparency • Ethical behaviour

Table 8: Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

SAQA will continue to engage with these stakeholders to understand their needs, interests, and perspectives and to identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership. By working together, stakeholders can help to ensure that the National Skills Development agenda is responsive, effective, and aligned with the needs of learners, employers, and society.

8.3. Organisational Structure

SAQA is a Schedule 3A public entity that reports to the Executive Authority i.e., the Minister of Higher Education. According to Section 14 (3) (a) of the NQF Act, the SAQA Board is appointed by the Minister following a public nomination process. The functions of the Board are set out in sections 5(3), 11, and 13 of the NQF Act. 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.

Good governance is crucial to business sustainability and growth of SAQA. 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; Audit and Risk Committee; Information and Information Technology Committee; NQF Qualifications 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 CEO, assisted by the management and staff, is responsible for the day-to-day running of SAQA. SAQA has been adjusting to the reality of being a smaller and more streamlined structure following an organisational redesign process in 2022. The approved organisational structure has a total of eighty-seven positions. Four positions were filled during the 2024/25 financial year. This translates to 92% capacitation of the organisational structure. For SAQA to be at 100% capacity, additional seven positions will need to be filled during the 2025/26 financial year. SAQA's primary focus for the 2025-2030 Planning Cycle, is to continue streamlining and automating its operational processes to become more efficient in its service provision. There will also be a strong focus on human capital development within the organization to improve effectiveness in the execution of the varied activities expected of SAQA.

The current organisational structure of SAQA is set out in the organogram below:

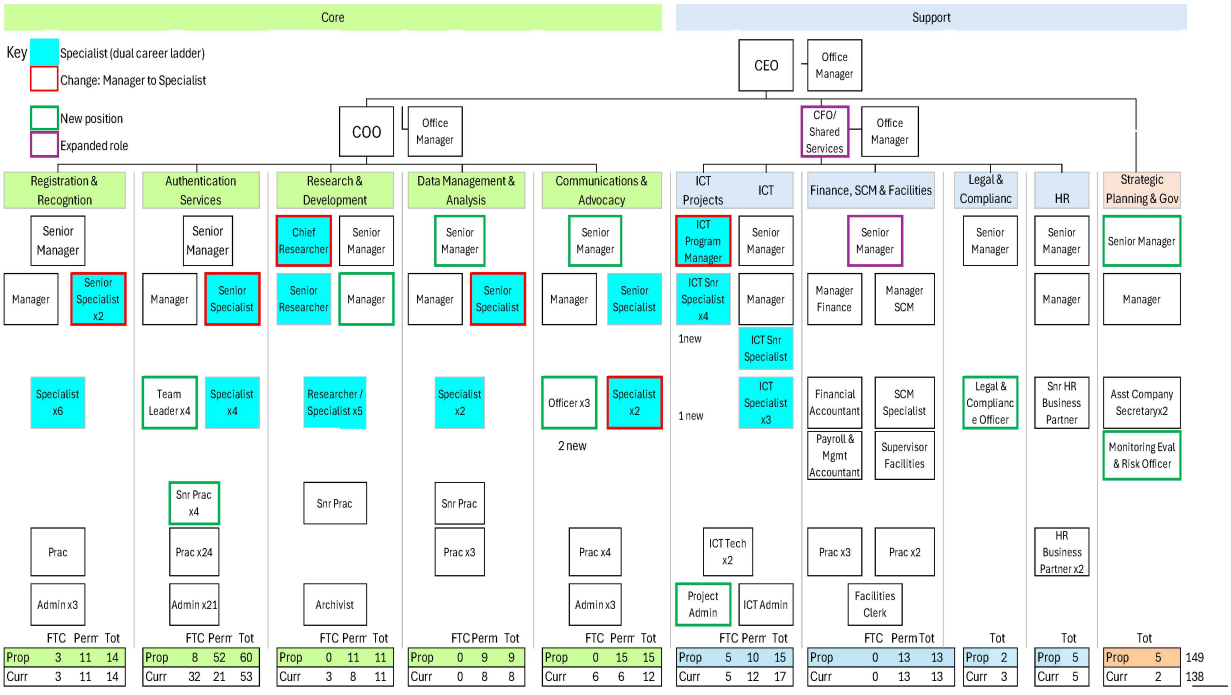


Figure 5. SAQA Structure as at 20 March 2025

Part C: Measuring Our Performance

9.Institutional Performance Information

SAQA is constituted by the following five programmes and aligned business functions, which informs the packaging of this Strategic Plan.

Programme Number	Programme Name	Business Functions
Programme 1	Administration	**Office of the CEO** • Strategic Planning and Governance **Finance, SCM & Facilities** • Legal & Compliance • Facilities • Financial Management • Supply Chain Management • Human Resources **Communications & Advocacy**
Programme 2	Registration and Recognition	• Registration and Recognition
Programme 3	ICT and Data Management & Analysis	• ICT • Data Management & Analysis
Programme 4	Authentication Services	• Authentication Services
Programme 5	Research & Development	• Research & Development

SAQA's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan outlines the key strategic focus areas and outcomes for the five years, aligned to the NDP 2030, MTDP 2025-29, and the Department's strategic planning priorities. The above Programmes then contribute to the attainment of the outcomes through programme level outputs, output indicators, and annual and quarterly targets, as reflected in the sections below.

Programme 1: Administration
Programme Purpose:

The Administration Programme is responsible for ensuring that functions that support the core operations run effectively, and that the organisation is sustainable. The Administration Programme covers the work of the following business functions:

Business Function	Purpose
Office of the CEO	To provide effective and efficient strategic support to the Chief Executive Officer and the executive team in order to achieve the mandate and strategic outcomes of SAQA.

Strategic Planning & Governance	To coordinate the strategy development process, business planning process and ensuring strategy alignment across all operational areas, as well as monitoring and evaluation of strategy implementation. Coordinate the strategic corporate risk register and mitigating strategies to ensure they are successfully managed. Create, promote and maintain the culture of risk awareness and accountability within the organisation. To provide effective and efficient Board and Committee support, administrative services, and the provision of advice to ensure the effective functioning of the Board.
Legal and Compliance	To provide cutting-edge legal support and advisory services in order to protect the interests of SAQA.
Human Resources	To support SAQA functions by attracting and retaining suitably qualified individuals
Finance SCM & Facilities	To ensure that functions that support the core operations run effectively and that the organisation is sustainable. The Office of the CFO has the following functions: •Supply Chain Management •Revenue Management •Expenditure Management •Budgeting and Financial Reporting •Facilities Management
Communications & Advocacy	To manage internal and external communication, including public relations, internal communications, brand management, and crisis communication. It ensures clear, consistent messaging, stakeholder engagement, and supports marketing, event management, and content creation to maintain a positive organisational image.

Programme 2: Registration and Recognition
Programme Purpose:

This programme is responsible for registering qualifications and part-qualifications, recognising professional bodies, and registering professional designations. The key focus for this Programme over the Strategic Plan 2025-30 period is to develop a streamlined workflow to register qualifications faster; create clear policies and guidelines for registering national qualifications; reduce the number of qualifications on the NQF by encouraging the QCs to recommend national qualifications instead of provider qualifications; and automate and streamline processes for efficient, professional body recognition and monitoring; amongst others.

Business Function	Purpose
Registration and Recognition	This programme is responsible for registering qualifications and part-qualifications, recognising professional bodies, and registering professional designations.

Programme 3: ICT and Data Management & Analysis (DMA)

Programme Purpose:

This programme covers the work of the ICT unit and the DMA unit. The ICT unit drives SAQA's plans to employ 4IR technologies by enabling the automation of operations across the organisation and developing end-to-end workflows where required. The DMA unit's five-year focus is on: Securing and loading legacy learner achievements; ensuring that QCs load records within thirty days of the information being in the public domain; creating and maintaining the Registers of Misrepresented Qualifications; and publishing public databases of qualifications and related information for public consumption.

Business Function	Purpose
ICT	It is responsible for ensuring effective ICT governance and the aligned development of ICT infrastructural resources to support the achievement of organisational outcomes and business processes. The ICT unit drives SAQA's plans to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution by enabling the automation of operations across the organisation and developing end-to-end workflows where required.
DMA	The DMA unit comprising the NLRD is responsible for maintaining and further developing SAQA's MIS as the critical national source of information for human resource and skills development in policy, infrastructure, and planning.

Programme 4: Authentication Services

Programme Purpose:

The Authentication Services unit is responsible for verifying the authenticity South African qualifications and evaluating foreign qualifications. It also locates foreign qualifications on the SA NQF by comparing them to the relevant national qualifications.

Business Function	Purpose
Authentication Services	The Authentication Services unit verifies the authenticity of South African qualifications and evaluates foreign ones. It also compares foreign qualifications to the South African National Qualifications Framework (SA NQF).

Programme 5: Research & Development

Programme Purpose:

The unit is responsible for conducting and commissioning evidence-based research on issues of importance for the development and implementation of the NQF and to evaluate the impact of the NQF on South African education, training, and employment. The focus over the five-year period will be on: Recommending amendments to current NQF Policies based on research; producing specific Study Reports; establishing and continuing research partnership work; reporting on progress made with implementing the revised NQF policies, amongst

others. In addition, the unit will focus on future oriented studies, exploring theory, methodology and implementation of the NQF, with the aim of positioning SAQA as a thought leader, both nationally and internationally.

Business Function	Purpose
Research & Development	The unit is responsible for conducting, commissioning, managing, and participating in evidence-based research on issues of importance for the development and implementation of the NQF and evaluating the impact of the NQF on South African education, training, and employment.

9.1. Measuring the impact

Impact Statement	A simplified, responsive and future-focused NQF.

9.2. Measuring outcomes

Medium Term Development Plan Priority			
Outcomes	**Outcome Indicator**	**Baseline**	**Five-year targets**
1. SAQA is an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence	1.1. Unqualified audit opinions	4	5
	1.2. Report annually on alternate revenue streams		5
	1.3. Number of organisational reviews completed	New	1
2. Research and development drives the advancement and awareness of the NQF	2.1. Number of research outputs generated by SAQA	3	15
	2.2. Number of events held to disseminate research outputs (conferences, seminars/webinars)	New	5
	2.3 Number of interventions resulting	New	1

	from research and development		
3.Co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem	3.1. Number of Planned co-ordinated initiatives involving the sub-frameworks completed	New	10
	3.2. Number of strategic consultations (DHA, Finance Department, DoL or international consultations that we might do for SADC or ACQF)	New	1
	3.3. Number of regional or continental initiatives participated in	New	10
4. An NQF that serves society	4.1. Interventions for lifelong learning	New	5
	4.2. Number of provinces reached	New	9

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

a) The outcomes contribute to the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) by strengthening the education and skills development landscape in South Africa. "SAQA is an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence" fosters continuous improvement in the quality of education, aligning with the MTDP priorities of inclusive growth and job creation; reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; and build a capable, ethical and developmental state. Furthermore, SAQA is the custodian of the national learner repository through the National Learner Records Database (NLRD), despite this, learner and student data remains decentralised, held in various databases across the sector. This hampers quality and efficiency in the system. In support of Strategic Priority 1, SAQA aims to play a crucial part of the value chain in developing and registering Just Energy Transition skills and qualifications. Using the NLRD data, SAQA aims to go beyond the registration of qualifications, and begin to direct the qualification more explicitly. By advancing research in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the outcomes promote skills that enhance economic participation and resilience, particularly in marginalized communities, supporting the broader provincial priorities of inclusive development.

   The outcomes also align with the mandate of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) by ensuring a well-coordinated and accessible qualifications system. A "co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem" supports SAQA's goal of developing a unified education system that facilitates lifelong learning and recognizes various types of learning and qualifications. These outcomes ensure that women, children, and people with disabilities have improved access to education, in line with SAQA's commitment to equity, inclusivity, and social justice, advancing the empowerment of vulnerable groups in society.

   Lastly, the outcomes contribute to the Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Decadal Plan by fostering research and technological development within the qualifications ecosystem. "A co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem aligns with the STI priority of creating a knowledge-based society, where research and innovation are central to social and economic development. The focus on research and sustainable excellence supports the provincial priorities of innovation and capacity-building, positioning South Africa as a global competitor in science, technology, and education.

b) The rationale for the choice of the outcome indicators relevant to the outcomes are outlined in the table below:

Outcome	Outcome Indicator as per Strategic Plan	Rationale for the Outcome Indicator
1.SAQA is an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence	1.1. Unqualified audit opinions	The indicator measures performance against predetermined criteria as well as compliance with rules and regulations, and is an indicator of good governance, financial sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency.

Outcome	Outcome Indicator as per Strategic Plan	Rationale for the Outcome Indicator
	1.2. Report annually on the alternate revenue streams	In an undoubtably constrained financial context, building resilience through diversifying income sources is essential. Exploring innovative revenue generation opportunities will ensure SAQA's long-term financial sustainability and ability to adapt to changing circumstances.
	1.3. Number of organisational reviews completed	This is a strong indicator which reflects a commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, employee engagement, adaptability, and strategic alignment. Regular reviews help identify best practices, optimize resources, manage risks, and foster a culture of innovation. They also provide valuable data for benchmarking and performance measurement, ensuring that the organization remains responsive to changes and consistently strives for excellence.
2. Research and development drives the advancement and awareness of the NQF	2.1. Research outputs generated by SAQA	The indicator demonstrates active engagement in knowledge creation, dissemination, and integration into policy development and implementation. High quality research outputs indicate robust intellectual activity, continuous exploration of new ideas, and evidence-based improvements in NQF policy development and implementation. This work contributes to the further strengthening of the NQF by ensuring that it is informed by the latest empirical research findings, trends, and innovations, in ways that enhance the quality and relevance of qualifications. The number of research outputs and engagements indicates the organisation's commitment to excellence in policy development and implementation, and knowledge creation – towards enhancing education, training, and development in South Africa, for the benefit of all and for social justice in particular. Research outputs are planned align with SAQA's vision as outlined in its five-year strategy.

Outcome	Outcome Indicator as per Strategic Plan	Rationale for the Outcome Indicator
	2.2. Events held to disseminate research outputs	The indicator measures the effectiveness SAQA's stakeholder engagements around research findings and integrating research into policy development and implementation. It supports the advancement of the National Qualifications Framework by promoting knowledge dissemination, fostering stakeholder engagement, and encouraging the application of research in decision-making and policy development and implementation. These events are designed to contribute to capacity building for NQF implementation, ensuring that the research driving the NQF is visible and impactful.
	2.3 Number of interventions resulting from research and development	This indicator assesses the tangible outcomes that emerge from R&D activities, reflecting their real-world developments, impact and relevance to the NQF objectives. SAQA seeks to apply and test research findings in the context of real-world challenges, testing and validating the effectiveness of NQF-related policies and practices. This work will ensure that research contributes to the enhancement and inclusivity of education, training, development and work in South Africa and the benefit of society at large.
3.Co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem	3.1. Planned co-ordinated initiatives involving the sub-frameworks completed	This is a strong indicator of effective sub-framework coordination as it measures successful collaboration, goal achievement, and process integration. It demonstrates accountability, efficient resource utilization, system coherence, and provides a clear measure of progress in coordination efforts in the lifelong ecosystem. This ensures that the sub-frameworks work together harmoniously and effectively.
	3.2. Number of strategic consultations	The outcome indicator signals and cements SAQA's position as a key coordinating structure in the PSET system. SAQA will create and coordinate platforms for consultation and collaboration among NQF partners. This will involve engaging stakeholders from various sectors, including government, industry, and civil society.
	3.3. Number of regional or continental	The outcome indicator foregrounds SAQA's desire to play a more influential role on the African continent on NQF related matters. SAQA will provide regional and continental leadership on, sharing best

Outcome	Outcome Indicator as per Strategic Plan	Rationale for the Outcome Indicator
	initiatives participated in	practices and contributing to the development of harmonized qualifications frameworks across the African continent.
4.An NQF that serves society	4.1. Interventions for lifelong learning	The outcome indicator measures the effectiveness of promoting continuous learning opportunities within society. It reflects how well the NQF supports lifelong learning by enhancing the accessibility of learning and development, empowering individuals, and fostering skills development for personal and social development and contributing to economic growth. This indicator helps assess progress toward creating an NQF that serves society by embedding a culture of lifelong learning and ensuring education and skills development across all life stages.
	4.2. Number of provinces reached	SAQA wants to take the NQF to the people, ensuring that the NQF is understood by and is accessible to all citizens. The indicator measures the number of South African provinces reached by SAQA. The aim is to ensure that all nine of the country's provinces are reached through the various planned interventions, facilitating representation and inclusive participation in the NQF's development and implementation.

c) The enablers for each outcome are identified and explained in the table below:

Outcome	Key Enablers
1.SAQA is a innovative and sustainable hub of excellence	Achieving the outcome of becoming an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates the following: A clear and compelling vision and mission; strong leadership; robust governance structures to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective decision-making; efficient management systems; a skilled and knowledgeable workforce; continuous professional development; adoption of technologies; a culture of innovation; diverse funding sources; sound financial management; maintaining high standards in all operations and services to ensure credibility and trustworthiness; continuous quality improvement; stakeholder engagement and collaboration; policy and regulatory support; research and development; and sustainability practices.
2.Research and development drives the	The following key enablers are of importance: developing a clear research agenda aligned with strategic outcomes, fostering committed leadership, and establishing robust governance and management systems. SAQA should invest in skilled researchers, continuous professional development,

Outcome	Key Enablers
advancement and awareness of the NQF	and advanced research tools, while promoting an innovation culture. Securing diverse funding sources and efficient resource allocation is essential for financial sustainability. Maintaining high research quality standards through peer review and ensuring strong stakeholder engagement and collaboration with academic, industry, and government partners are crucial. Supporting policies, regulatory compliance, and prioritizing applied research with effective knowledge transfer mechanisms will further enhance research impact. Lastly, implementing effective dissemination strategies, continuous monitoring, and feedback mechanisms will ensure that research activities significantly contribute to the advancement of the NQF.
3.A co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem	Key enablers are: dedicated leadership, integrated governance structures, standardized procedures, hiring qualified staff and offering cross-framework training, investing in interoperable technologies and cultivating an innovation culture, obtaining sufficient funding and effectively managing resources, upholding uniform quality standards and holding frequent reviews, forming strong alliances and channels of communication, advocating for policies that are supportive and ensuring regulatory alignment, putting in place continuous monitoring and feedback mechanisms, and encouraging knowledge sharing and cooperative research. Together, these will allow for efficient coordination and integration within the lifelong learning ecosystem.
4.An NQF that serves society	Key enablers include strong policy support, active stakeholder engagement, and flexible learning pathways that accommodate diverse needs. Robust quality assurance, accessible learning opportunities (i.e., including digital learning, non-formal, informal and formal learning), and public awareness are crucial for ensuring that the NQF is effective and widely embraced. Adequate funding and resources, along with ongoing data collection and empirical research, are essential to support the implementation and continuous improvement of lifelong learning initiatives within the NQF, ensuring it meets evolving societal needs.

d) Explanation of the outcomes' contribution to the achievement of the impact.

Outcome	Contribution to the achievement of impact
1.SAQA is an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence	The establishment of SAQA as an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence contributes significantly to SAQA's impact statement of a simplified, responsive, and future-focused NQF by serving as a centralized platform for innovation, best practices, and continuous improvement in education and training. This hub (SAQA) will foster collaboration among stakeholders, streamline processes, and integrate cutting-edge technologies, ensuring that the NQF remains adaptable to evolving educational and workforce demands. By enhancing the efficiency, relevance, and accessibility of qualifications, SAQA ensures the NQF is

Outcome	Contribution to the achievement of impact
	both current and forward-looking, meeting the needs of a dynamic and ever-changing landscape.
2. Research and development drives the advancement and awareness of the NQF	This outcome significantly contributes SAQA's impact statement by ensuring that decision-making and policy development are informed by robust, evidence-based insights. By prioritizing research, SAQA can identify emerging trends, skills demand, and educational innovations, enabling the NQF to adapt proactively to changes in the educational landscape and labour market. This focus on research allows for the continuous simplification and optimisation of processes, ensuring that the NQF remains relevant, efficient, and aligned with future needs, thereby enhancing its responsiveness and sustainability.
3.Co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem	The outcome contributes to the impact statement by promoting coherence and alignment among various educational and training systems. By ensuring that different qualifications, standards, and quality assurance processes are harmonised, coordinated frameworks streamline the NQF, making it more straightforward and easier to navigate for stakeholders. This coordination facilitates smoother transitions between different levels and types of education, enhances responsiveness to the evolving needs of learners and the job market, and supports the integration of innovative practices. Consequently, the NQF becomes more agile and capable of addressing future challenges, maintaining its relevance and efficacy in the changing educational field.
4.An NQF that serves society	The outcome directly supports the impact statement by ensuring that the framework is designed to meet the diverse needs of all societal stakeholders. By focusing on societal benefits, the NQF prioritises inclusivity, accessibility, and relevance, making qualifications more understandable and attainable for everyone. This societal focus drives the simplification of processes and the removal of barriers to education and employment. Additionally, by responding to the evolving needs of the community and the labour market, the NQF ensures that individuals are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for future challenges, thereby fostering a more educated, adaptable, and empowered society.

10. Key Risks

The table below sets out key risks as identified, that may affect achievement of the planned outcomes and outputs, and risk mitigation factors.

OUTCOMES	KEY RISKS	RISK MITIGATION
SAQA is an innovative and sustainable hub of excellence	Financial constraints	Secure diversified funding sources, including government grants, partnerships with private sector entities, and international donors. Implement efficient budget management and prioritize critical projects to maximize impact with available resources.
	Resistance to change	Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement through regular training and development programs. Engage stakeholders early in the change process, ensuring transparent communication and demonstrating the benefits of new initiatives.
	Technological challenges	Invest in modern IT infrastructure and cybersecurity measures to support digital transformation. Provide ongoing technical training for staff to ensure they are proficient in new technologies and can leverage them effectively.
	Quality assurance issues	Establish robust quality assurance mechanisms and continuous monitoring systems to ensure high standards in all activities. Regularly review and update processes based on feedback and best practices.
	Stakeholder misalignment	Maintain open and regular communication channels with all stakeholders, including educators, employers, and policymakers. Develop collaborative frameworks and engage stakeholders in decision-making processes to align goals and expectations.
	Regulatory and policy changes	Stay informed about potential regulatory and policy changes through active engagement with policymakers and regulatory bodies. Develop flexible strategies that can adapt to new regulations and ensure compliance through proactive planning.
	Talent retention and development	Create a supportive work environment that values professional growth and recognizes achievements. Offer competitive compensation,

OUTCOMES	KEY RISKS	RISK MITIGATION
		opportunities for career advancement, and invest in continuous professional development to retain and attract top talent.
Research and development drives the advancement and awareness of the NQF	Insufficient funding for research	Diversify funding sources by seeking grants, partnerships, and collaborations with academic institutions, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations.
	Limited research capacity	Invest in building internal research capabilities by hiring qualified researchers, providing continuous training, and fostering collaborations with external research institutions. Establish partnerships to leverage external expertise and resources
	Data quality and accessibility issues	Develop robust data collection and management systems to ensure the accuracy and reliability of data. Implement standardized data protocols and ensure accessibility to high-quality, relevant data for research purposes.
	Slow translation of research into policy and practice	Establish clear mechanisms for translating research findings into actionable policies and practices. Engage policymakers and practitioners throughout the research process to ensure alignment with practical needs and timely implementation of recommendations.
	Resistance to evidence-based changes	Promote a culture that values evidence-based decision-making through education and advocacy. Demonstrate the benefits of research-driven changes and engage stakeholders in the process to build consensus and support.
	Ethical and confidentiality concerns	Adhere to strict ethical standards and confidentiality protocols in all research activities. Ensure transparency in research methodologies and maintain the trust of stakeholders by protecting sensitive information.
	Rapidly changing educational landscape	Conduct continuous and forward-looking research to anticipate and respond to emerging trends and challenges in the educational sector. Maintain flexibility in research agendas to adapt to new developments and ensure the NQF remains relevant and future-focused.
Co-ordinated lifelong learning ecosystem	Fragmented stakeholder interests	Facilitate regular stakeholder engagement sessions to ensure alignment of interests and objectives. Establish clear communication channels and collaborative platforms to foster cooperation and build consensus among diverse stakeholders.

OUTCOMES	KEY RISKS	RISK MITIGATION
	Inconsistent implementation across sectors	Develop standardized guidelines and protocols for implementing coordinated frameworks. Provide training and support to ensure consistent application across all sectors. Monitor and evaluate implementation to identify and address discrepancies.
	Regulatory and policy misalignment	Work closely with regulatory bodies and policymakers to ensure alignment of coordinated frameworks with existing and future regulations. Advocate for policy adjustments where necessary to support the implementation of a coordinated lifelong learning ecosystem.
	Resource limitations	Secure adequate funding and resources through government support, partnerships, and external funding opportunities.
	Technological barriers	Invest in modern IT infrastructure and interoperability solutions to support seamless integration of the lifelong learning ecosystem. Provide training for staff and stakeholders on the use of new technologies and ensure ongoing technical support.
	Resistance to change	Foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement by involving stakeholders in the development process. Communicate the benefits of a coordinated ecosystem and provide change management support to ease the transition.
	Complexity in harmonizing diverse frameworks	Conduct comprehensive mapping and analysis of existing frameworks to identify commonalities and differences. Develop a phased approach to harmonization, focusing on achievable milestones and gradual integration.
	Sustainability of coordinated frameworks	Implement continuous monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of a coordinated ecosystem. Establish mechanisms for regular updates and improvements based on feedback and emerging needs.
An NQF that serves society	Diminished public trust and credibility	Actively engage with the public and stakeholders to understand their needs and concerns. Implement transparent processes and regularly communicate the benefits and improvements of the NQF to rebuild and maintain trust.
	Increased inequality and social disparities	Ensure that the NQF is inclusive and accessible to all segments of society by developing policies that address barriers to education and training. Focus

OUTCOMES	KEY RISKS	RISK MITIGATION
		on creating opportunities for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.
	Irrelevance to labour market needs	Continuously engage with industry and labour market experts to align qualifications with current and future workforce demands. Incorporate feedback mechanisms to regularly update and revise qualifications based on market trends.
	Poor educational and career outcomes	Enhance the quality and relevance of educational programmes within the NQF. Implement robust quality assurance and continuous improvement processes to ensure that qualifications lead to meaningful educational and career advancements.
	Decreased participation in education and training	Develop flexible learning pathways that accommodate diverse learning (i.e., non-formal, informal and formal learning) needs and circumstances.
	Lack of international recognition	Ensure that the NQF meets international standards and benchmarks. Actively participate in international education and qualification networks to facilitate mutual recognition and enhance the global portability of qualifications.
	Fragmented education and training system	Foster collaboration and co-ordination among various stakeholders to create a cohesive and integrated system. Develop clear pathways and articulation agreements to ensure smooth transitions between different levels and types of education.

Table 9: Key Risks and Mitigation.

11. Public Entities

N/A

Part D: Technical Indicator Descriptions

Indicator title 1.1.	Unqualified audit opinions
Definition	An audit conducted by an independent, third-party auditor where the auditor did not identify any significant issues or discrepancies in the financial statements or operations of the organization (SAQA) being audited.
Source of data	Auditor-General Audit Report
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Opinion outcome of the Auditor-General
Assumptions	There is compliance with Accounting Standards, the PFMA, and National Treasury Regulations. The financial statements provide a true and fair view of the financial position, performance, and cash flows of the entity. The entity has effective internal controls in place to ensure the accuracy and reliability of its financial reporting. All transactions and events that should have been recorded are included in the financial statements. The assets, liabilities, and equity reported in the financial statements actually exist and are owned by the entity. The assets, liabilities, equity, revenues, and expenses are properly valued and allocated to the correct reporting periods. All necessary disclosures have been made in the financial statements, including related party transactions, contingent liabilities, and subsequent events. The entity is assumed to be a going concern, meaning it is expected to continue its operations for the foreseeable future without the need or intention to liquidate or significantly curtail its activities
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Target performance is desirable
Indicator Responsibility	CFO

Indicator title 1.2	Report annually on the alternate revenue streams
Definition	SAQA, like other public entities, is working within an increasingly financially constrained context, and as such alternate income generation, beyond what comes from the grant, is crucial for fiscal sustainability.
Source of data	Annual Financial Statements
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Evidence of funding that has been secured from other sources. This will include revenue recognised as per SAQA management accounts or Annual Financial Statements and any funding agreements that SAQA signed.
Assumptions	SAQA's service offerings are valued and SAQA has sufficient staff to take on additional projects.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Additional revenue is sourced
Indicator Responsibility	Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Indicator title 1.3	Number of organisational reviews completed
Definition	An organisational review refers to a systematic assessment conducted within SAQA to evaluate its processes, practices, and performance against predefined objectives or benchmarks. It typically involves analysing various aspects such as operational efficiency, resource utilisation, compliance with regulations, and overall effectiveness in achieving organisational goals. The purpose of such reviews is to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and potential risks, ultimately aiming to enhance operational effectiveness, strategic alignment, and overall performance of the organisation.
Source of data	Policies, employee feedback through surveys and interviews, performance metrics such as KPIs and productivity measures, financial data for fiscal health analysis, customer and stakeholder feedback for service quality insights, quality assurance and compliance reports, operational reviews for efficiency evaluations, benchmarking against industry standards, technology-driven data from analytics tools, or external consultations from experts.
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count

Assumptions	Conducting an internal organisational review assumes access to accurate and comprehensive data, including financial reports and stakeholder feedback, which are essential for informed decision making. It relies on employees' willingness to provide honest insights and cooperation during surveys and interviews. The process assumes adequate resources and a commitment to objective analysis, aiming for transparency across the organisation. It also assumes a proactive approach to leveraging review findings for continuous improvement, while considering external factors that may influence organisational performance and strategy. These assumptions collectively support a thorough and effective review process aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and strategic alignment.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Desired performance is to meet the target
Indicator Responsibility	Senior Manager: Strategic Planning & Governance

Indicator title 2.1	Research outputs generated by SAQA
Definition	Research outputs encompass a range of tangible outcomes resulting from scholarly investigations, the translation of research into accessible articles, and the infusion of research into policy and practice. Research outcomes include peer-reviewed publications like journal articles, books, and conference papers that disseminate research findings; accessible shorter articles; developing evidence-based policies; and disseminating research to inform practice. Research outputs can include datasets and databases innovations in policies, tools, and processes, policy briefs and policy and implementation-related recommendations, amongst others.
Source of data	Peer-reviewed journal articles, accessible articles, book chapters, conference papers, and technical reports serve as the primary evidence of research outputs. Additional items can include data, project reports, progress reports, and final research reports, amongst others.
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count of the number of outputs

Assumptions	The assumption is that initial planning is realistic and achievable, considering resources and timelines. Outputs rely on efficient execution of research projects without significant delays, supported by adequate resource allocation and the capacity of researchers to deliver within specified parameters. Assumptions also include stability in external factors such as regulatory environments, and effective collaboration among stakeholders to align outputs with broader research goals. Ultimately, the number of research outputs serves as a metric to gauge the successful completion of research endeavours, aiming to maximize their impact on knowledge advancement, innovation, and societal benefit.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly
Desired Performance	Desired performance is to meet or exceed the targets.
Indicator Responsibility	SM: Research & Development

Indicator title 2.2	Events held to disseminate research outputs
Definition	Refers to activities or events where researchers present their findings to a targeted audience. These events are structured to share new knowledge, insights, or innovations resulting from research endeavours. Events can include conferences, symposiums, seminars, workshops, webinars, and other types of meetings designed to facilitate the exchange of information among policy makers, implementers, and beneficiaries including researchers, scholars, education and training providers, and the public, amongst others. The primary goal is to communicate research outcomes, foster discussion, receive feedback, and potentially catalyze the enhancement of the research, and further research and development.
Source of data	Data can include some or all of the following: event invitations, programmes, attendance registers, presentations made, and reports on the events.
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count of the number of engagements

Assumptions	There is a clear definition of what constitutes an event and how research outputs are disseminated. There is accurate reporting and tracking ensuring all relevant events are accounted for. The events effectively engage target audiences to maximize impact.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Desired performance meets or exceeds the target
Indicator Responsibility	SM: Research & Development

Indicator title 2.3	Number of Interventions Resulting from Research and Development
Definition	This indicator measures the number of policy, programmatic, or operational interventions developed and implemented as a direct result of research and development (R&D) activities. These interventions may include policies, guidelines, strategies, systems, initiatives, frameworks, tools, methodologies or other initiatives aimed at improving public sector efficiency and effectiveness, service delivery, or governance. The focus is on ensuring that R&D efforts translate into actionable initiatives that enhance decision-making and institutional effectiveness.
Source of data	Research reports, papers, policies, guidelines, frameworks, conceptual records, reports on implementation, stakeholder engagement records, meeting minutes showing the research influencing decision-making, or other items produced within or overseen by the unit.
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Quantitative count: The total number of interventions developed and/or implemented based on research findings during the reporting period (as supported by research reports, papers, policies, guidelines, frameworks, conceptual records, reports on implementation, stakeholder engagement records, meeting minutes showing the research influencing decision-making, or other documented items that provide evidence of linking the research to implementation). Only interventions that have reached an approved stage (policy adoption, framework rollout, or program initiation) will be counted.
Assumptions	Research and development activities will produce actionable recommendations. Decision-makers will adopt and implement research-driven interventions. Adequate resources and stakeholder buy-in will support implementation.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A

Spatial transformation (where applicable)	n/a
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	The desired performance is to meet or exceed the annual target for the number of research-based interventions implemented, ensuring that research findings effectively contribute to policy and service delivery improvements aligned with NQF objectives.
Indicator Responsibility	Senior Manager: Research & Development

Indicator title 3.1	Planned co-ordinated initiatives involving the sub-frameworks completed
Definition	Refers to intentional efforts aimed at harmonizing and integrating different sub-frameworks within the overall NQF structure. These initiatives are strategically designed to promote coherence and collaboration among various sub-frameworks, such as those for different educational levels or sectors, ensuring consistency in standards, qualifications, and assessment practices across the entire framework. Examples include joint policy development, alignment of qualification standards, mutual recognition agreements, and collaborative research projects aimed at enhancing the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of qualifications within each sub-framework. Planned coordination initiatives facilitate effective governance, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement efforts within the NQF, ultimately supporting its role in promoting education, training, and development in South Africa.
Source of data	Policy documents and frameworks; meeting minutes or reports; collaboration agreements; qualification standards and assessments; research and evaluation reports; external reviews and audits
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Assumptions	Assumptions include stakeholders' commitment to collaboration and clear communication regarding roles and responsibilities. It assumes the availability of sufficient resources and alignment of initiatives with overarching NQF goals. Additionally, engagement from stakeholders, including educational institutions and industry bodies, is assumed, alongside flexibility to adapt plans based on feedback and changing priorities.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Desired performance is higher than target
Indicator Responsibility	CEO

Indicator title 3.2	Number of strategic consultations
Definition	SAQA will create and coordinate platforms for consultation and collaboration among NQF partners and key stakeholders. This will involve engaging stakeholders from various sectors, including government, industry, and civil society.
Source of data	Agendas, meeting reports, or minutes
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count of number of strategic consultations hosted by SAQA
Assumptions	Adequate funding to host events. Stakeholders willing to participate.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Desired performance is higher than target
Indicator Responsibility	COO

Indicator title 3.3	Number of regional or continental initiatives participated in
Definition	SAQA aims to play a more influential role on the African continent on NQF related matters. SAQA will provide regional and continental leadership on, sharing best practices and contributing to the development of harmonized qualifications frameworks across the African continent.
Source of data	Capacity building workshops/events; training manuals
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Assumptions	African counterparts are interested. Sufficient funds available.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A

Reporting Cycle	Annual
Desired Performance	Desired performance is higher than target
Indicator Responsibility	COO

Indicator title 4.1	Interventions for lifelong learning
Definition	The indicator measures the quantity of initiatives to promote lifelong learning. These interventions may include specific projects, new or revised policies, outreach campaigns, and the development of tools designed to facilitate lifelong learning, amongst others. Lifelong learning is the continuous, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge and skills throughout an individual's life. It encompasses formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities that occur in various contexts, such as education systems, workplaces, communities, and personal life. Lifelong learning is aimed at personal and social development, professional growth, and active citizenship, enabling individuals to adapt to changes, stay relevant in the workforce, and contribute meaningfully to society and the economy.
Source of data	Reports, surveys and questionnaires; interviews and focus groups; feedback forms and comment boxes; third-party feedback and reviews, and other evidence of the actions taken within initiatives.
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Assumptions	Assumptions include: interventions are consistently defined, relevant to lifelong learning, and assumed to be effective. Furthermore, that the count avoids duplication, includes various forms of interventions, relies on accurate reporting, and focuses on recent or ongoing efforts.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annually
Desired Performance	Desired performance is higher than target
Indicator Responsibility	COO

Indicator title 4.2	Number of provinces reached
Definition	SAQA aims to ensure that the NQF is understood and accessible by all citizens and will therefore be reaching out to all nine provinces of South Africa, ensuring representation and inclusive participation in the NQF's development and implementation.
Source of data	Event reports
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count of number of events per province
Assumptions	Sufficient funding to reach all provinces
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annually
Desired Performance	Desired performance is target is met
Indicator Responsibility	SM: Communications & Advocacy

Annexures to the Strategic Plan

Annexure A: NSDF and the District Delivery Model

SAQA does not have any interventions for the five-year period.

Area of intervention in the NSDF and DDM (Below examples)	Five Year Planning Period								
	Project name	Project Description	Budget Allocation	District Municipality	Specific location	Project Leader	Social partners	Longitude (East/West/+X)	Latitude (North/South/-Y)
Water									
Sanitation									
Roads									
Storm Water									
Electricity									
Environmental Management									