

# MESSAGE OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
(Office of the Minister)



## **MESSAGE**

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, I am delighted to have this opportunity to commend the Mauritius Qualifications Authority for its contribution in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

It is indeed an immense pleasure and a privilege to be associated with the publication of this Souvenir Magazine which marks the 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority. The MQA has come a far way since its inception in 2002. Our education and training standards are improving yearly and we are making rapid progress in increasing access and building capacity through the development of qualifications which not only reflect a world class standard but also meet the demands of our local economy.

Building on the vision of Government and in line with the Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020, the MQA is dedicated to promoting the culture of life-long learning, ensuring the assurance of quality in training and of a certified skilled workforce. I am confident that, with strong support from the Government and Stakeholders, the MQA will play its meaningful role in the society and achieve its noble objectives.

I would also like to congratulate the Director and staff of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority for successfully implementing the National Qualifications Framework and the Recognition of Prior Learning.

In conclusion I would like to stress that the MQA under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, is paving the way for our future generations by ensuring that Standards and Quality prevail and that Education and Training become accessible to all, including those who were previously deprived of certain facilities.

**Dr. Vasant K. Bunwaree**  
Minister

10 November, 2010

## MESSAGE OF THE AG. CHAIRMAN, MQA



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES



### Message from Mr G Gunesh, Ag Chairman, Mauritius Qualifications Authority

It is indeed a great honour for me to be associated with the launching of the Commemorative issue of the magazine.

The enactment of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act has given rise in 2002 to the Mauritius Qualifications Authority. The MQA, with the development of a comprehensive regulatory framework upholding quality assurance norms, heralded a new era for Technical Vocational Education and Training. The MQA created the necessary conditions for the involvement of stakeholders in the development of qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), an essential tool in the rationalization of qualifications, was eventually developed. The MQA has now embarked on a major venture to recognize and validate competencies through the Recognition of Prior Learning process to promote lifelong learning.

In 2009, in view of its lead role to enhance training and skill development, the International Federation of Training and Development Organisation (IFTDO) conferred on the MQA the prestigious Knowledge Management Award.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Board Members of MQA and to the competent personnel for working in synergy for the achievements of the Authority.

Over the short span of eight years, the MQA, through its professionalism and unrelenting effort, is acknowledged as a Reference Regulatory Institution in the field of Technical Vocational Education and Training which will contribute significantly to transform our country into a Regional Knowledge hub.

I would wish to pay tribute to the MQA for its initiative to release the commemorative magazine to mark the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Authority and I convey my wish for the Authority to progress further to attain new heights of development.

  
G Gunesh  
Ag Chairman

Mauritius Qualifications Authority

## MESSAGE OF THE DIRECTOR, MQA

It is indeed with great pleasure that I am addressing this message on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA). An anniversary is always the time to reflect on the achievements of the organisation and also an occasion to plan for the challenges lying ahead. In order to meet those new challenges, I am sure the MQA can rely on the continued collaboration with its key partners in the training sector.



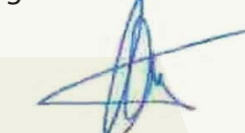
The reliability and soundness of the Mauritian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been recognized internationally and the Mauritian NQF has been described as "one of the most established qualifications frameworks in Africa and indeed in the world." In addition, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has now successfully been implemented in Mauritius with the collaboration of reputed international institutions, namely the Commonwealth of Learning, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and L'Académie de la Réunion. In so doing, MQA has become the pioneer in launching RPL in Africa.

During the eight years of existence, the MQA also consolidated its legal framework through the coming into force of new Registration Regulations to supersede those regulations that were promulgated in the beginning. By the end of June 2010, the MQA has recorded a cumulative registration of 519 Training Institutions and 5780 Trainers, accreditation of 1366 Award Programmes, approval of 4327 non-award courses, processing of 200 applications of recognition of qualifications and 289 requests for the equivalence of qualifications. As at end of June 2010, the MQA has also generated 2547 Unit Standards and 100 National Qualifications.

The success of the MQA in the TVET sector, specifically in the area of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has also been recognized on the international scene. As a result of its remarkable progress, the Mauritian RPL model is being used as a basis for the implementation of this concept in a number of countries selected by the Commonwealth of Learning. MQA has, in this context, been appointed as the Lead Partner for the implementation of RPL in Pan African countries.

The expertise of the MQA was further recognized internationally when we were elected to the position of Chairperson of the Management Committee for the setting up of a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), under the aegis of the Commonwealth of Learning. The TQF is a meta-framework which will be used by 32 Small States of the Commonwealth for better communication between their respective local qualifications frameworks, and would be a basis for mutual recognition of qualifications, whilst promoting mobility of labour.

All these developments over the years have been possible with the hard work and contribution of one and all and I look forward to the continued collaboration and dedication of all stakeholders in maintaining the MQA as a worthy institution in the training sector.



Kaylash Allgoo, O.S.K  
Director

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Since its coming into operation in 2002, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority has shown steady progress at all levels. However, in the recent years the Mauritius Qualifications Authority has experienced prominent development in its major activities in the TVET sector and these are summarized as follows:

1. The implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been one of the major achievements of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority;
2. The implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which is a means to validate and recognize the competences of workers/people who did not have the opportunity to follow the formal education but who have acquired skills over the years;
3. The Recognition of Prior Learning Mauritian model now serves as model for its implementation in different countries earmarked by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL).
4. The Director of MQA is currently chairing the Management Committee for the setting up of the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).
5. The major increase in the number of accredited programmes over the years;
6. The constant increase in the approval of non award courses;
7. Reinforcement in the procedures and requirements for registering and accrediting training institutions in Mauritius;
8. Implementation of the Quality Assurance Standards;
9. Recognition and Equivalence of qualifications in the Technical and Vocational sector;
10. Setting up of ITACs in different sectors for the development of Unit Standards and Qualifications.

The engine of continuous progress and innovation has already been started at the MQA and we will continue to maintain the quality of service to the educational and training sector and at the same time emphasizing on our own operational excellence. It is this dedicated effort and hard work that have allowed the MQA to earn a number of excellence awards both locally and at international level.

The international recognition of the MQA is becoming increasingly important and we will focus on promoting MQA internationally by increasing the level of cooperation with countries in different regions of the world.

The MQA has a bright future ahead and with its committed workforce, there is no doubt that the Authority will realize its long-term vision.

Finally, it is worthy to mention here that this Souvenir Magazine has been made possible thanks to the collaboration of all MQA valued stakeholders, generous sponsors and our dedicated staff at all levels.

Long Live the MQA

# PREFACE

Upgrading the quality of education and training is a common pursuit of providers and practitioners of this underpinning sector of the economy in the developed and developing worlds. Indicative of the prevalence of the quest for quality has been the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) to promote and enhance lifelong learning. The aim of the NQF is to progressively standardise qualifications in Mauritius and it presents different pathways for progressing to the highest level.

Perhaps nowhere is the pursuit more evident in an era of technological developments, demographic changes and globalisation, where both the NQF and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) serve as models for their implementation in emerging countries around the world.

As an initiative to mark the 8th anniversary of the MQA, this Souvenir Magazine brings forward a new approach in the training sector. Its main aim is to create in stakeholders and readers adequate awareness of the role, functions and activities of the MQA and how the organisation has evolved over the past eight years. We believe that this magazine, presented in a coherent and consistent manner, will be an excellent resource tool for all those involved in training in Mauritius. We also recommend it to be used as a reference document by other related authorities and organisations around the world.

## AN OVERVIEW ABOUT MQA

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) was set up as a corporate body following enactment of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001. The MQA became operational as from 08 May 2002 and is presently under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

The main objectives of the MQA are to develop, implement and maintain a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), to ensure compliance with provisions for registration and accreditation of training institutions and to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable.



Since its inception, the MQA has played an important role in the registration, accreditation and the quality assurance of training institutions. Over the years, the MQA has registered an increasing number of training institutions. The number of training institutions has risen from 247 in June 2006 to 519 in June 2010. This indicates that the MQA has been able to properly administer

the delivery of training and has properly harnessed the increasing demand for TVET courses while strengthening requirements for registering and accrediting training institutions in Mauritius. Besides, in 2009 the MQA had new Registration Regulations promulgated to strengthen its legal framework.

Additionally, the number of accredited Award Programmes has been on the rise, with 487 in June 2006 to reach 1366 in June 2010, representing an increase of more than 175% over this period. Likewise, for the same period, the number of approved non-award courses has increased from 2570 to 4327, representing a growth of about 68%.

The primary objective of the MQA is to strengthen and maintain the National Qualifications Framework and the Authority has had the responsibility of putting a qualifications framework into force. The NQF was thus set up with the twin objectives:

- (i) to rationalize qualifications in Mauritius; and
- (ii) to be responsible for the changing educational and training imperatives.

The MQA has been empowered by the Mauritius Qualifications Act to build the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and as from 2006, it began the process of implementing and maintaining the NQF. The reliability and soundness of the Mauritian NQF is widely recognized and it is being described as "one of the most established qualifications frameworks in Africa."

During the period 2006 to date, the MQA went a step ahead and successfully researched on, tested and implemented the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Mauritius, in collaboration with international institutions namely the Commonwealth of Learning, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and L'Académie de la Réunion. In so doing, MQA became the pioneer in launching the RPL in Africa. RPL is a strong means to recognize and validate competencies obtained outside the formal education and training systems for purposes of certification. The four fields in which RPL has been launched at national level in Mauritius are Tourism, Construction,

Printing and Plumbing. Five more fields, namely Electrical Installation Works, Panel Beating, Spray Painting, Agriculture and Adult Literacy are scheduled for national launching this year.

The MQA is also mandated to generate unit standards and qualifications in all sectors of the economy. In this connection, during the period 2006 to 2010, a number of Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) have been set up in various sectors to develop Unit Standards which can be grouped into Qualifications. As at June 2010, 2547 such Unit Standards and 100 National Qualifications have been generated, as compared to 111 and 12 respectively in 2006.

With the promulgation of The Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005, the MQA was also entrusted with the task of looking into and granting recognition of and equivalence to qualifications in the TVET sector. The number of applications processed for recognition and equivalence of qualifications have increased over the years, from only 23 and 53 respectively in June 2006 to reach 200 and 289 correspondingly in June 2010.

The success of the MQA in the TVET sector has not been confined to the local boundaries. The know-how and expertise of the Authority are being recognized on the international scene in various ways. Hence, as a result of its success, the Mauritian RPL model has been used as a basis for the implementation of this concept in a number of countries earmarked by the Commonwealth of Learning. MQA has, in this context, been appointed as Lead Partner for the implementation of RPL in Pan African countries. Similarly, the MQA is an active member in the setting up of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) for the SADC.

The expertise of the MQA was again recognized through the election of its Director as Chairperson of the Management Committee for the setting up of a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), under the aegis of the Commonwealth of Learning. The TQF is a meta-framework which will be used by 32 Small States of the Commonwealth for better

communication between their respective local qualifications frameworks, and would be a means of mutual recognition of qualifications, while allowing one country to run the qualifications developed by another member countries. This mutual recognition of qualification would further promote mobility of labour between these Small States. This is yet another landmark in the history of MQA.

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Mr Grish Gunesh  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education and  
Human Resources



Mr Grish Gunesh



Dr Azad Jeetun

### Vice Chairperson

Dr Azad Jeetun  
Director  
Mauritius Employers' Federation

### Members

Dr Praveen Mohadeb  
Executive Director  
Tertiary Education Commission



Dr Praveen Mohadeb



Mr Roland Dubois

Mr Roland Dubois  
Director  
Mauritius Institute of  
Training and Development

Mr Girish Nuckchady  
Representative of Registered  
Private Training Institutions



Mr Girish Nuckchady



Mr M Serge Axel Cyril  
Pellegrin

## THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK VIEWED AT MICRO AND MACRO LEVELS

### The NQF – An Indispensable Tool

The MQA has developed a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) consisting of 10 levels starting from CPE to Doctorate with appropriate descriptors for each level. The NQF presents different pathways for progressing from one level to the next. The aim of the NQF is to gradually standardize qualifications and certification in Mauritius and to promote lifelong learning. Moreover it provides parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications. The Tertiary Education Commission is also accrediting programmes and granting equivalence to qualifications on the basis of level descriptors on the NQF.

The NQF is shown in the figure below.

| LEVEL | PRIMARY/<br>SECONDARY<br>EDUCATION     | TVET/<br>WORKPLACE | TERTIARY EDUCATION   | LEVEL |
|-------|--|--------------------|--|-------|
| 10    |  |                    | Doctorate  | 10    |
| 9     |  |                    | Masters Degrees eg MA, MSc, M Phil<br>Post-Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma | 9     |
| 8     |  |                    | Bachelor degree with Honours, Conversion Programmes                                    | 8     |
| 7     |  |                    | Bachelor (Ordinary Degree)   | 7     |
| 6     |  | Diploma            | Diploma  | 6     |
| 5     | HSC / GCE<br>'A' LEVEL /<br>BAC / IBAC | Certificate        | Certificate  | 5     |
| 4     |  |                    |  | 4     |
| 3     | SC / GCE 'O'<br>LEVEL                  |                    |  | 3     |
| 2     |  |                    |  | 2     |
| 1     | Certificate of Primary Education       |                    |  | 1     |

### National Qualifications Framework

The NQF also helps learners to make informed decisions about the qualifications they need. It is a system consisting of 10 levels designed to recognize attainment of knowledge, understanding and skills of Mauritians. The aim of the NQF is to gradually standardize qualifications and certification in Mauritius.

The growing reliance of the economy on human capital presupposes a trained population. In this respect, the operationalisation of the NQF became imperative so as to equate the level of skills acquired by each and every citizen on the Framework. Learners and employers can now measure the skills and knowledge that their investments have achieved by mapping their qualifications on the different levels of the NQF.

As it is undisputable that investment in skills and knowledge development whether by individuals, companies or Government is critical to national development, the MQA is thus keeping an effective Register of Qualifications where the respective level of each of these qualifications mapped on the NQF are also recorded. It therefore becomes imperative for the Authority to focus on the establishment and promotion of qualifications that support economic and social development of the country and the NQF can thus be seen as a pre-defined path for life-long learning.

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority also uses the NQF for Quality Assurance purposes related to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Hence, award programmes leading to TVET qualifications are assessed against set criteria and are pitched at the appropriate level on the NQF.



Similarly, applications from prospective trainers are assessed and the applicants' qualifications and experience are assessed and set against a particular level of the NQF. This implies that a particular trainer can provide training up to that level on the NQF. As a general rule, Trainers are allowed to provide training only at a level lower than their own qualifications. It is worthy to note that Trainers are registered as well on the basis of experience in certain scarcity areas.

The MQA further uses the NQF while recognizing foreign qualifications and while establishing equivalence of foreign qualifications against local ones. The qualifications under study are assessed and pitched at the appropriate level on the NQF, thereby giving an indication of the applicant's level of learning, and also of the educational path/route for further progression, thereby promoting the concept of life-long learning.

Finally, the MQA uses the NQF in the assessment and pitching of qualifications obtained as a result of the Mauritian Model of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This is a model where an applicant's previous experience and learning is assessed, by means of a portfolio and interview, against the expected learning outcome of someone having completed a formal educational programme. Satisfactory evidence of having met the required level then entitles the applicant to obtain the same qualification. The MQA has launched the RPL in Mauritius in 2009 and it is currently fully operational in Construction, Tourism, Printing and Plumbing.

## The NQF - A National Perspective

The world is currently witnessing the global 'tsunami' of National Qualifications Framework (NQF). More than 130 countries have either developed their NQF or are in the process of doing so. The pace of the NQF movement is very fast. The Mauritian NQF was set up in 2002 as per the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001. Since then, the NQF has gradually evolved and it is worth mentioning again that the Mauritian NQF has been identified as "one of the most established qualifications framework in Africa and indeed in the world".

In broad terms, the NQF can be seen as an institutional framework for ensuring that there are qualifications available to meet the individual, social and economic needs of a country. Central to the NQF, lies the principles underpinning the NQF. It is basically argued that the NQF is based on the following underlying principles:-

- To better understand the education and training sector of a country,
- To classify and rationalise qualifications within a common classification system,
- To enhance quality of education and training,
- To acknowledge and mirror the reality of social differentiation in terms of job hierarchies and learning outcomes,
- To provide clear learning pathways,
- To provide wider access to education and training,
- To enable Recognition of Prior Learning,
- To provide a national system of credit accumulation and transfer.

Notwithstanding the above, it becomes clear that the underlying principles of the NQF indirectly implies a transformation of the education and training sector. In the same way, the Mauritian NQF has been set up to gradually transform the TVET sector with a view to further promoting same by addressing the underpinning principles of the NQF.

As a means to rationalise qualifications in Mauritius, various qualifications are being generated and also to provide clearer learning pathways to all learners. In generating such qualifications under the NQF, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority has set up 19 Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) and 2 additional committees that encompass all the sectors of the Mauritian economy namely, Agro, Automotive, Adult Literacy, Beauty Care and Hairdressing, Building Construction and Civil Works, Early Childhood Education and Care, Electrical & Electronics Engineering, Furniture Making, Handicraft, Health & Social Care, ICT, Jewellery, Language, Management, Mechanical Engineering, Printing, Seafood and Marine Industry, Textile & Apparel, Tourism & Hospitality Management and Transport & Logistics.

Thus far, MQA has generated some 100 qualifications in various fields and some 2600 Unit Standards. It is essential to point out that the Unit Standards are not curriculum or training programmes but are rather the building blocks of the National Qualifications. In other words, the Unit Standards provide the learning outcomes.

The number of Unit Standards varies from qualification to qualification ranging from 25 to 40. Each Unit Standard bears a certain number of credits which usually ranges from 1 credit to more than 7 credits depending upon the complexity of the subject matter. It is worth

noting that one credit is equivalent to 10 hours of notional learning. Notional learning hours comprises time spent in classroom, practical, reading, researching and assignments amongst others.

This new concept allows learners to acquire credits and to accumulate same towards a full qualification. The number of credits allocated to qualifications at different levels is as follows:-

| Level | Number of Credits | Number of notional hours of learning |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2     | 60– 80            | 600– 800                             |
| 3     | 100– 120          | 1000– 1200                           |
| 4     | 100– 120          | 1000– 1200                           |
| 5     | 100– 120          | 1000– 1200                           |
| 6     | 200– 240          | 2000– 2400                           |

It is worth noting that several countries have adopted a similar credit structure, In addition, the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the VUSSC which is intended for some 32 States of the Commonwealth has been developed on a similar structure of credits.

Providers, both public and private would have to mount their curriculum or training programme based on the Unit Standards. Subsequently providers would have to apply for accreditation at the MQA prior to deliver same.

Presently, the awarding bodies for the National Qualifications are the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), the Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES).

NQF has enabled the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL is defined as “the acknowledgment through evaluation of a person’s skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credit in a unit standard or a module”. Following the pilot projects conducted in 2007 and 2008, the MQA launched RPL in 4 disciplines namely, Hospitality and Tourism, Construction, Printing and Plumbing. This year, MQA will be extending RPL in Agriculture, Automotive Mechanics, Panel Beating, Spray Painting, Adult Literacy, and Electricians. In the coming years, RPL will be extended to nearly all sectors of the Mauritian economy.

Mauritius has substantially evolved in the worldwide NQF movement. Many challenges are yet to overcome, in particular, further development of qualifications and pathways for all learners as well as alignment with the TQF and SADC Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF).

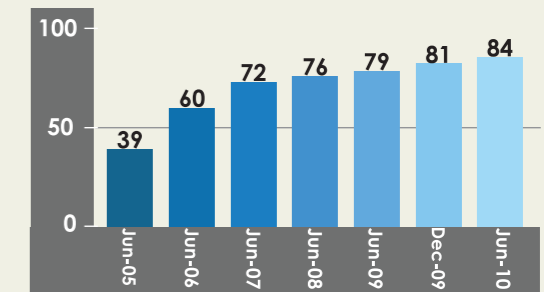
## THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MQA

### Accreditation of award programmes

One of the functions of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority is to register and accredit training institutions in Mauritius.

Accreditation of an award programme is a multi-step activity, all of which are defined in the Quality Assurance Standards of the Authority. The criteria for the accreditation, in short, comprise:

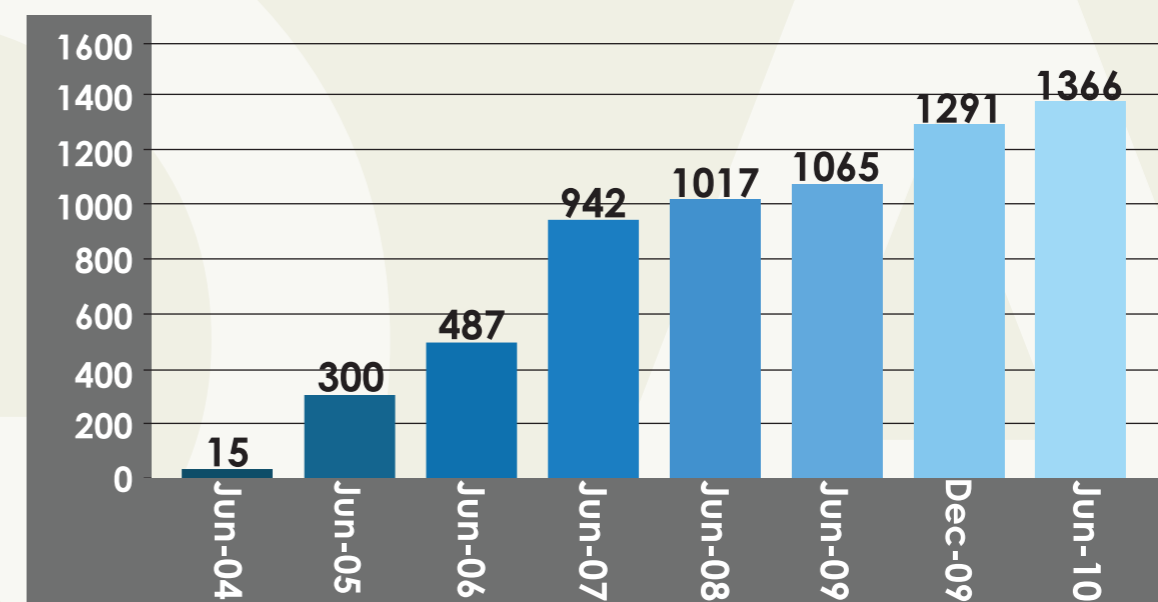
- 1) Course detail requirements;
- 2) Course delivery requirements;
- 3) Course evaluation;
- 4) Institutional requirements;
- 5) Quality Assurance requirements; and
- 6) Collaborative arrangement requirements.



No. of Accredited Training Institutions

The outcome of the programme is the award of a certificate to successful candidates after a formal assessment exercise. This certificate is approved and recognized as formal learning. Award programmes are pitched on specific levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), enabling students to know their learning pathway, should they want to study further.

Award programmes have become increasingly in demand over the years, with the number standing at 1366 in June 2010 as compared to only 15 in June 2004. The trend of accredited programmes at the MQA is as shown in the figure below.



No. of Award Programmes



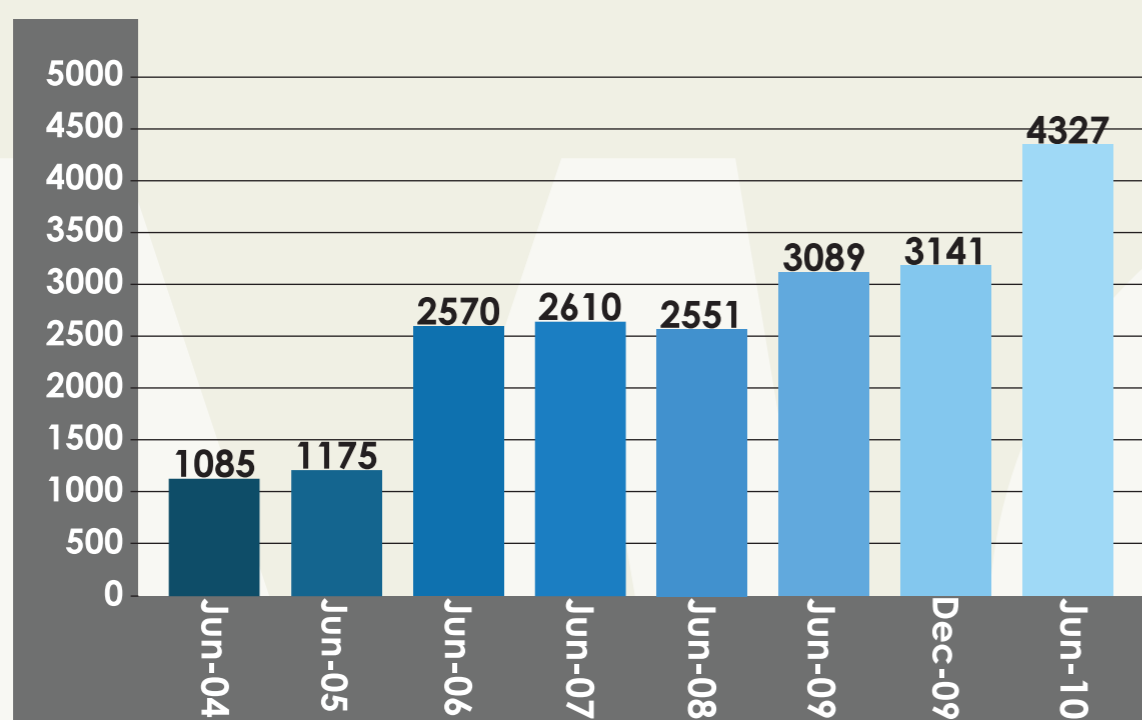
## Approval of non-award courses

Along with award courses, the MQA also deals with applications for the approval of short courses, commonly termed as “non-award courses”. These are generally awareness courses, without any formal assessment of the learning achieved, and usually culminate in the conferring of a certificate of attendance. Non-award courses can be dispensed by duly MQA registered training institutions, companies or be run in-house subject to prior approval of these said courses by the Authority.

The procedure for the approval of non-award courses is also defined in the MQA Quality Assurance Standards, and is mainly in terms of:

- 1) Courseware and teachware; and
- 2) Course delivery requirements, i.e. staff and facilities.

Approval of non-award courses takes a maximum of 5 working days after submission of documentary evidences. The number of non-award courses is also on the rise in Mauritius, with 4327 such courses being approved as at June 2010. The trend for such approval by the MQA is shown in the figure below for the years 2004 to 2010 showing an increase of more than 250% over the years.



No. of Non-Award Programmes

## Registration of Training Institutions

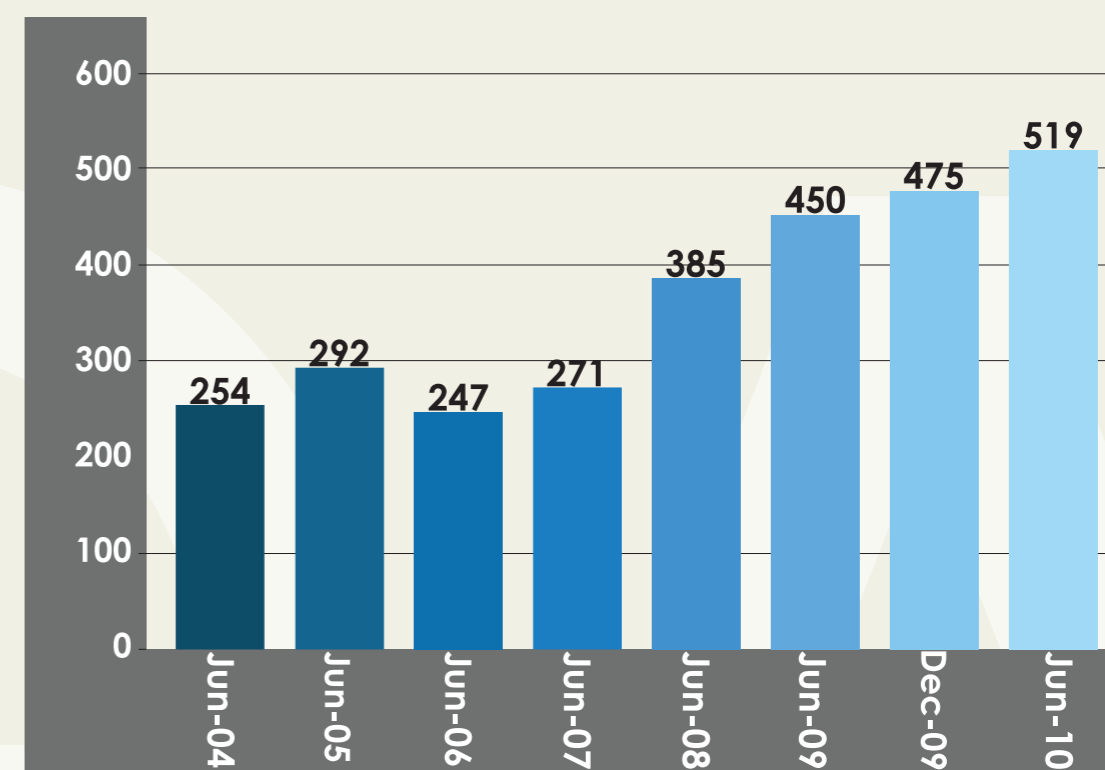
The MQA also registers and accredits training institutions in Mauritius. As at June 2010, 519 such training institutions were registered with the MQA.

Training Institutions have to meet strict requirements of safety, security, financial standing, and availability of equipments, resources and infrastructure, amongst others, prior to consideration being given to their application. All the criteria are specified in the Authority’s Quality Assurance Standards, available for download from the MQA’s website at [www.mqa.mu](http://www.mqa.mu).

Since 2006, there has been a significant increase in the number of training institutions from 254 in 2004 to 519 in April 2010, as indicated in the diagram below.

The conclusions from this trend are two-folds:

- 1) Business people are interested in investing in the TVET sector, i.e. they see a monetary benefit which can be derived from it; and
- 2) There is an increasing demand for TVET courses.

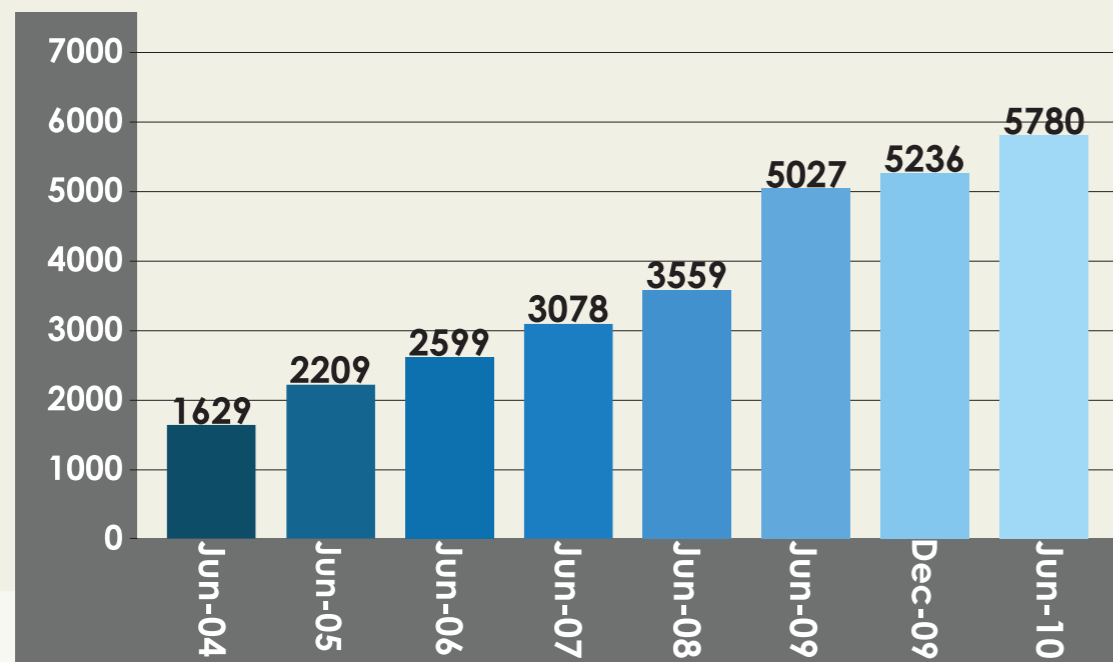


No. of Registered Training Institutions

## Registration of Trainers

One major element in dispensing training is the human resources. The MQA registers trainers in different sectors and at different levels on the National Qualifications Framework. Registration of trainers is based on the field of competence.

MQA has as at June 2010, 5780 registered trainers in different fields as compared to only 1629 in 2004. The chronological progression of people registering as Trainers at the MQA is indicated in the figure below.



No. of Registered Trainers

## New Quality Assurance Standards

In order to bring quality education and training in Mauritius, much emphasis has been laid in the quality assurance system. This initiative is in line with the Business Facilitation Act 2006 where emphasis is laid on post compliance. Quality Assurance Standards have been implemented since June 2007 and are now being updated to meet the current legislations. The number of registered training institutions, trainers, and course approval are all increasing, thereby putting Mauritius on the right path to become a knowledge hub in the region.

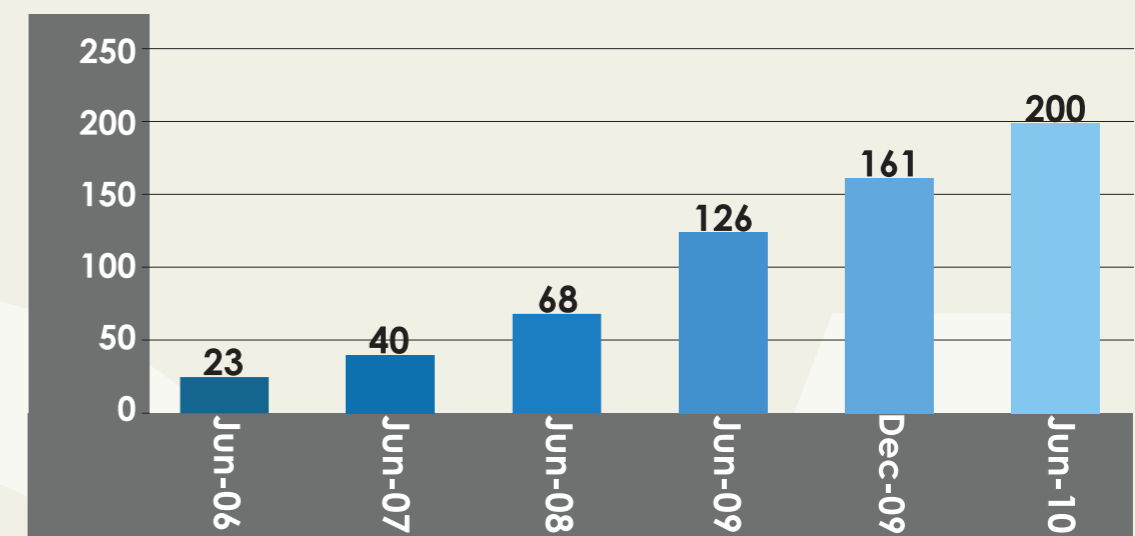
## Recognition and Equivalence

Following the enactment of The Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005, MQA was entrusted in July 2005 the responsibility to cater for the recognition and equivalence of qualifications in the technical and vocational sector.

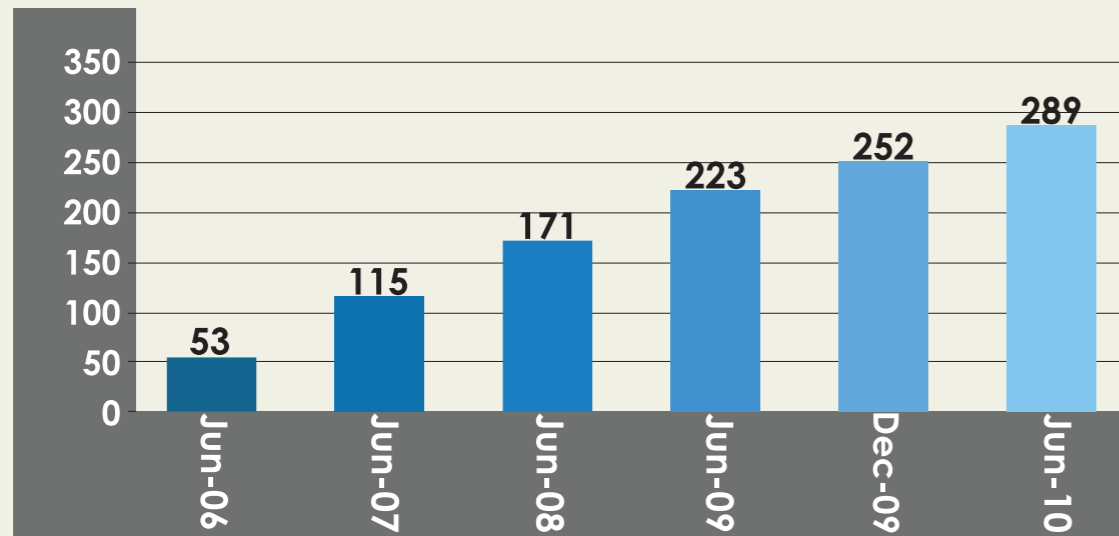
During the past few years, the MQA has been pursuing the recognition of qualifications which involves the evaluation and validation of qualifications in the TVET sector thereby giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to further higher education and/or employment activities.

The MQA has also been looking after equivalence of qualifications in the TVET sector whereby the Authority formally establishes two qualifications that are of comparable standard or level with a view to allowing access to educational and/or employment activities.

Until June 2010, the number of cases attended is as follows:



Cumulative No. of Cases of Recognition



**Cumulative No. of Cases of Equivalence**

### Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC)

The role of the ITAC is to generate Unit Standards and Qualifications at various levels of the NQF. Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) comprise representatives from private and public sector.

Nineteen ITACs and two committees have been set up in various sectors and have started to generate Unit Standards and Qualifications with a view to rationalizing qualifications. The objective behind this initiative is to consolidate the existing ITACs and to set up the other ITACs to generate Unit Standards and Qualifications in all sectors of the Mauritian economy and subsequently to build the National Qualifications Framework.

The MQA has met its target of having fifteen ITACs fully functional in year 2008/2009 and as at June 2010, five other ITACs have been established. ITACs have been set up in the following sectors of the economy:

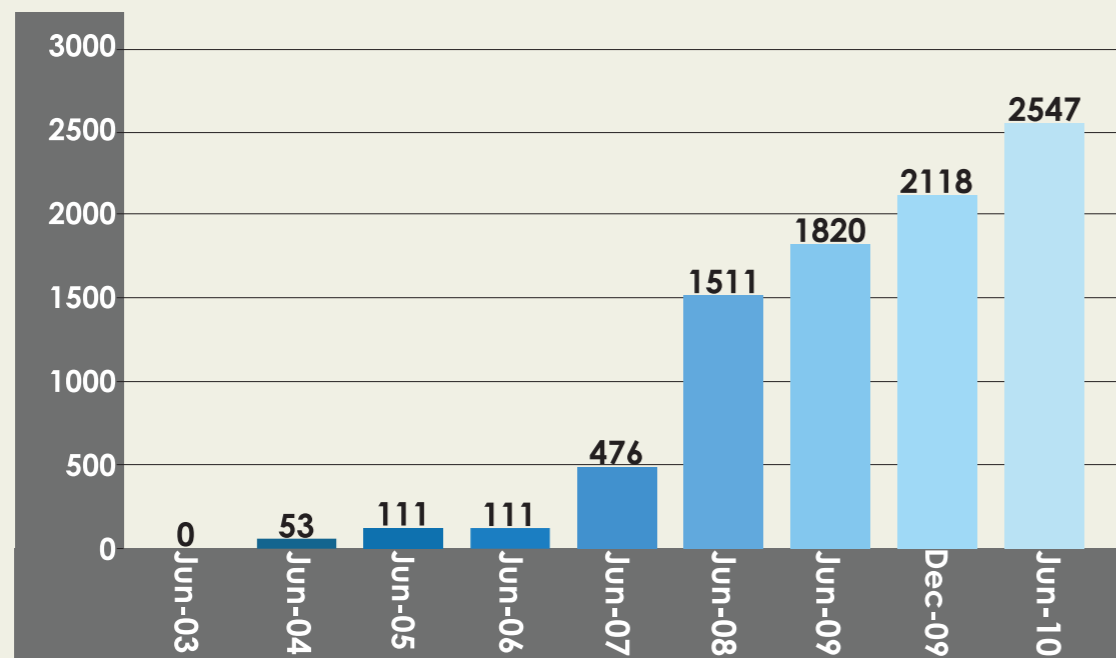
| Period          | Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC)  |
|-----------------|--|
| 2002– 2005      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospitality &amp; Tourism Management</li> <li>• Information &amp; Communication Technology</li> <li>• Printing</li> </ul>   |
| 2006– 2009      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Literacy</li> <li>• Agro Industry</li> <li>• Automotive</li> <li>• Beauty Care and Hairdressing</li> <li>• Building Construction &amp; Civil Engineering</li> <li>• Early Childhood Education and Care</li> <li>• Electrical &amp; Electronic Engineering</li> <li>• Health &amp; Social Care</li> <li>• Jewellery</li> <li>• Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>• Seafood &amp; Marine Industry</li> <li>• Textile &amp; Apparel</li> </ul> |
| 2009– June 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automotive &amp; Robotics</li> <li>• Furniture Making</li> <li>• Handicraft</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Transport &amp; Logistics</li> </ul>   |

### Unit Standards

A Unit Standard is a registered statement of the learning outcomes, the type and quality of evidence that represents performance worthy of the award of credits, and the contexts in which that evidence should be demonstrated.

The ITACs set up have as at June 2010 generated 2547 Unit Standards and 100 Qualifications in various sectors of the economy and at various levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The figure below shows the cumulative number of Unit Standards developed over the years.

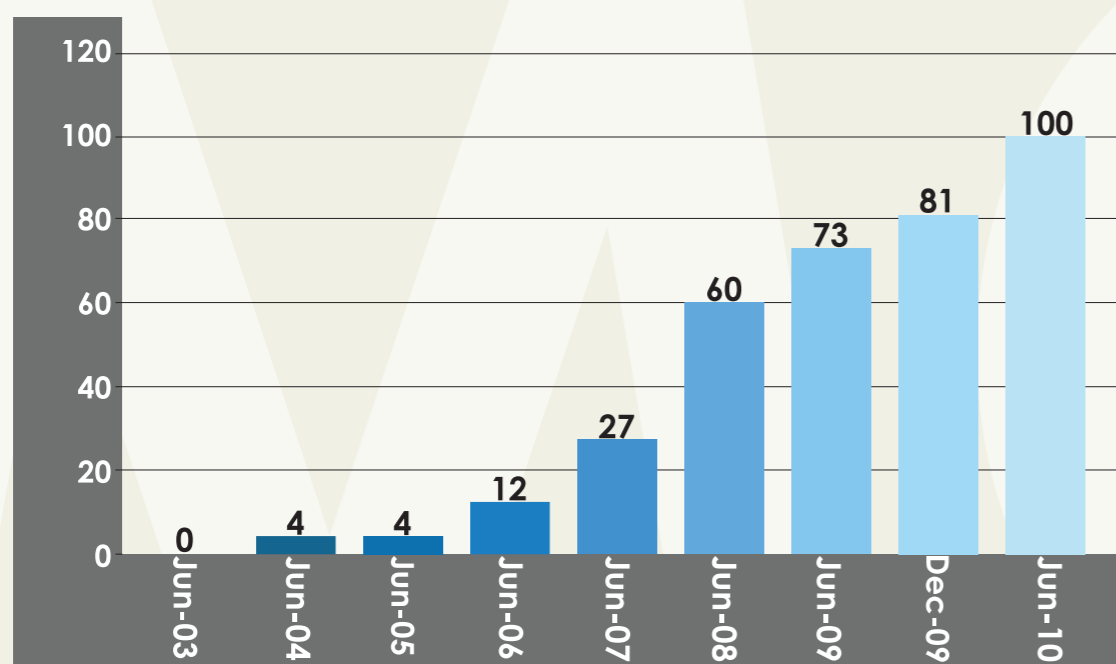
Unit Standards and Qualifications will help the Mauritian labour to acquire qualifications that are relevant to labour market with a view to having a versatile and knowledgeable workforce thus entailing the mobility of labour and allowing for retraining of retrenched workers.



**Cumulative No. of Unit Standards Developed**

### Qualifications

All Qualifications developed by the MQA are national qualifications, meeting the local context and can be run by any registered training institution. It is interesting to note that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions has launched the National Certificate in Care for the Elderly Level 3 that was developed by the MQA and awarded by the Mauritius Institute of Health. Additionally, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is awarding the National Certificate in Literacy at Level 1, which is pitched at the same level as the CPE. The figure below shows the number of qualifications developed over the years.



**Cumulative No. of Qualifications Developed**

### Tourism

| Qualification                                     | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|---|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Bakery                    | 3     | 26                       |
| National Certificate in Beauty Therapy            | 3     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Food Production           | 3     | 60                       |
| National Certificate in Food Production           | 4     | 29                       |
| National Certificate in Front Office              | 3     | 24                       |
| National Certificate in Front Office              | 4     | 24                       |
| National Certificate in Housekeeping              | 3     | 25                       |
| National Certificate in Housekeeping              | 4     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Laundry                   | 3     | 26                       |
| National Certificate in Leisure and Entertainment | 4     | 34                       |
| National Certificate in Pastry                    | 3     | 32                       |
| National Certificate in Pastry                    | 4     | 33                       |
| National Certificate in Restaurant & Bar Services | 3     | 19                       |
| National Certificate in Restaurant & Bar Services | 2     | 21                       |
| National Certificate in Restaurant & Bar Services | 4     | 24                       |
| National Certificate in Tour Guiding              | 3     | 22                       |
| National Certificate in Travel & Tourism          | 4     | 28                       |
| National Certificate in Hospitality Management    | 5     | 39                       |

### ICT

| Qualification   | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|---|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Computing                             | 2     | 11                       |
| National Certificate in Computing                             | 3     | 28                       |
| National Certificate in Computing                             | 4     | 16                       |
| National Certificate in Computing                             | 5     | 13                       |
| National Certificate in Contact Centre Operations             | 3     | 29                       |
| National Certificate in Contact Centre Supervisory Management | 4     | 21                       |
| National Certificate in Contact Centre Management             | 5     | 35                       |
| National Certificate in Computer Applications                 | 3     | 27                       |
| National Certificate in Hardware & Support                    | 2     | 12                       |

## Printing

| Qualification   | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|---|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Plate Making and Machine Printing | 3     | 26                       |
| National Certificate in Plate making and Machine Printing | 4     | 23                       |
| National Certificate in Pre Press                         | 4     | 17                       |
| National Certificate in Print Finishing                   | 4     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Printing (Pre Press)              | 3     | 17                       |
| National Certificate in Printing (Print Finishing)        | 3     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Printing Administration           | 5     | 25                       |

## Jewellery

| Qualification                            | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Casting          | 3     | 27                       |
| National Certificate in Stone Setting    | 3     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Jewellery Making | 3     | 27                       |

## Adult Literacy

| Qualification  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Adult Literacy               | 1     | 13                       |
| National Certificate in Adult Literacy for Educators | 5     | 13                       |

## Health & Social Care

| Qualification   | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|---|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate for Care of Elderly and Disabled | 3     | 41                       |
| National Certificate in Early Childhood Care          | 3     | 32                       |
| National Certificate in Health & Social Care          | 2     | 33                       |
| National Certificate in Health Care Assistant         | 4     | 50                       |
| National Diploma in Nursing                           | 6     | 128                      |

## Building Construction & Civil Engineering

| Qualification  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Carpentry Formwork & Shuttering  | 3     | 27                       |
| National Certificate in Carpentry: Formwork & Shuttering | 4     | 25                       |
| National Certificate in Construction                     | 4     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Construction (Supervisor)        | 5     | 21                       |
| National Certificate in Draughtsmanship                  | 4     | 31                       |
| National Certificate in Masonry                          | 2     | 25                       |
| National Certificate in Masonry                          | 3     | 34                       |
| National Certificate in Painting                         | 3     | 16                       |
| National Certificate in Painting                         | 4     | 22                       |

## Textile and Apparel

| Qualification                              | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Knitting: Knitwear | 3     | 22                       |
| National Certificate in Sewing             | 3     | 29                       |
| National Certificate in Textile Dyeing     | 3     | 30                       |
| National Certificate in Textile Testing    | 3     | 12                       |
| National Certificate in Weaving            | 3     | 20                       |
| National Certificate in Garment Making     | 3     | 28                       |

## Mechanical Engineering

| Qualification  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Craft Practice Mechanics           | 3     | 23                       |
| National Certificate in Plumbing                           | 3     | 33                       |
| National Certificate in Plumbing                           | 4     | 26                       |
| National Certificate in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning | 3     | 33                       |
| National Certificate in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning | 4     | 25                       |
| National Certificate in Welding                            | 3     | 26                       |
| National Certificate in Welding                            | 4     | 25                       |
| National Certificate in Maintenance Fitting                | 3     | 27                       |
| National Certificate in Sheet Metal Fabrication            | 3     | 24                       |
| National Certificate in Aluminium and U-PVC Joinery        | 3     | 24                       |

### Electrical & Electronics Engineering

| Qualification  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Consumer Electronics                 | 4     | 31                       |
| National Certificate in Electrical Installation Works        | 3     | 31                       |
| National Certificate in Electrical Installation Works        | 4     | 44                       |
| National Certificate in Extra Low Voltage Installation Works | 4     | 28                       |

### Seafood & Marine Industry

| Qualification                              | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Seafood Processing | 3     | 16                       |
| National Certificate in Seafood Processing | 2     | 34                       |
| National Certificate in Seafood Processing | 4     | 23                       |
| National Certificate in Aquaculture        | 2     | 18                       |
| National Certificate in Fish Handling      | 2     | 21                       |

### Early Childhood Education and Care

| Qualification  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care | 2     | 11                       |
| National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care | 3     | 17                       |

### Agro-Industry

| Qualification                        | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Horticulture | 3     | 46                       |

### Automotive

| Qualification  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Automotive Mechanics                   | 3     | 54                       |
| National Certificate in Automotive Electricity and Electronics | 3     | 41                       |
| National Certificate in Tractor and Heavy Vehicle Mechanics    | 3     | 49                       |
| National Certificate in Automotive Body Repairs & Painting     | 3     | 39                       |

### Beauty Care and Hairdressing

| Qualification                          | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Beauty Therapy | 3     | 14                       |
| National Certificate in Hairdressing   | 3     | 19                       |

### Management

| Qualification                                  | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|--|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Supervisory Management | 4     | 21                       |

### Security Services

| Qualification                             | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|---|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Security Services | 3     | 21                       |

### Wood Trades

| Qualification                       | Level | Number of Unit Standards |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| National Certificate in Wood Trades | 3     | 36                       |



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY



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## HARNESSING QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR EFFECTIVE TRAINING IN THE TVET SECTOR

It would probably be injudicious to argue that quality has an end. In fact, it would rather be accepted that sky is the limit in quality assurance. For ensuring effective training in Mauritius, Government has taken a strong political will to leave no stone unturned in this endeavor so that over the last decade the education and training sector has been continually re-evaluated and re-assured. Hence, a new quality assurance landscape has been drawn with the setting up of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority.

As from year 2005, new institutional framework has given a new boost to training and as well as technical and vocational, and the registration and accreditation of training institutions. Previously, training providers had to fulfill a list of criteria subject to which registration was granted. These fixed criteria were very much prescriptive in nature and as a result they were limitative in promoting quality Training Institutions. Nevertheless, this first generation of quality assurance has been to some extent beneficial to spur the setting up of training providers, registration of trainers, accreditation and approval of training programmes in critical sectors pertinent to the economy of the late 1990's.

In essence, the new Quality Assurance Scheme resides on principle of transparency, responsibility and accountability. It requires a paradigm shift from a merely regulatory to a more developmental principle which is depicted by the figure showing the change from old to new school of thought in terms of requirements.

| OLD                       | NEW                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Compliance-based          | Improvement oriented |
| Minimal                   | Aspirational         |
| Prescriptive              | Adaptive criteria    |
| Quantitative              | Qualitative          |
| Inputs-Processes oriented | Outcome oriented     |
| Comprehensive             | Focused              |

\*Standard sms rates of Emtel and Orange apply



In effect, training providers are subject to a streamlined procedure but with the responsibility to adhere to the Quality Standards as laid down by the MQA. This mechanism will nurture the desired principle and attitude for post compliance.

At the end of the day, what matters in Quality Assurance is its sustainability over time.

In the last decade, training practices have evolved and are becoming more technologically driven. The use of electronic platform and other virtual media are impacting on current regulations.

In implementing the new Quality Assurance procedures, the MQA has not only improved attractiveness of TVET but has as well led to achieve a high status. The number of registered Training Institutions has increased from 254 in June 2004 to 519 in June 2010 and TVET now is no longer being seen as the “last choice education”.

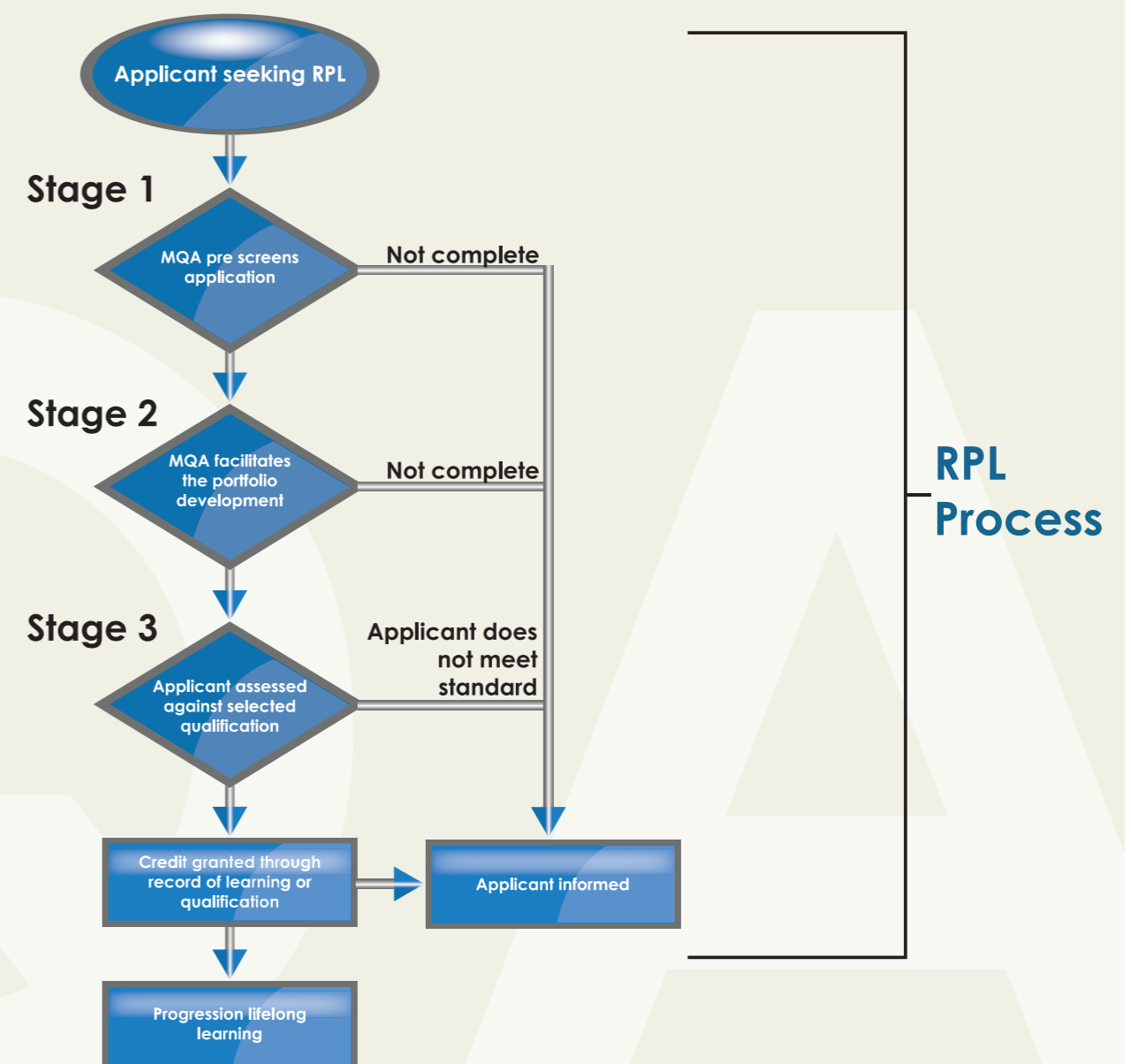
With an established TVET framework, Mauritius can be considered among the lead countries having good reputation of quality TVET Programmes, thereby meeting the needs of the changing workplace.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MAURITIAN RPL MODEL

The MQA is mandated to validate and recognize competencies obtained outside the formal education and training systems. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is arguably the most pressing issue around vocational education and training. It has been coming constantly on the forefront of the Government agenda as a means to validate and recognize the competences of workers/people who did not have the opportunity to follow the formal education but who have acquired skills over the years.

The MQA has defined RPL as “the acknowledgment through evaluation of a person’s skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credit in a unit standard or a module”.

## THE MAURITIUS RPL MODEL



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RPL acknowledges learning occurred in different contexts, namely work, involvement in social and community activities, or learning through life experience generally. Much of this non-formal or informal learning is relevant to the competency outcomes of standard as developed by the MQA and pitched on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The main focus of RPL is therefore the learning outcomes, in the form of skills and knowledge of experiences, and not how, when or where the learning occurred.

The concept of RPL is thus to translate prior learning and experience into a qualification, thereby allowing more people to acquire a duly recognized qualification. RPL is critical to the development of an open, accessible and integrated education and training system and is the foundation stone for lifelong learning policies which encourage individuals to participate in learning pathways including formal, non-formal and informal learning.

RPL is therefore a holistic approach where both the social and the learning context of the learner are taken into consideration. This approach will thus avoid the assessment from becoming a purely technical application.

It is with this endeavour that the MQA has embarked during 2007 on the implementation of RPL on a pilot basis in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry, followed by a second pilot project in the Construction sector in 2008. From the first pilot project, 5 candidates obtained full qualification while 3 applicants were awarded a partial qualification. With regard to the second pilot project, out of 22 candidates who submitted their respective portfolio to the MQA, 19 candidates were awarded a full qualification while 3 candidates were awarded a partial qualification.

Following the success of the pilot projects, an international workshop was organized by the MQA in 2009, where the Recognition of Prior Learning was launched at national level in the following four sectors namely Tourism, Construction, Printing and Plumbing.



## Training of RPL Facilitators and RPL Assessors

In order to acquire further experience of international best practices in the field of RPL and to benchmark the RPL policy against international norms, the MQA in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning organized a workshop in May 2007 which was conducted by three foreign Resource Persons.

Subsequently, the MQA initiated actions to launch RPL on a national scale. Thus, expertise from UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) was sought to develop the policy on RPL. In this context, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning provided training to MQA Staff and the RPL process for the Mauritian context was defined.

Three representatives of the MQA effected a visit to Réunion Island in August 2007 where more hands-on experience was acquired for the implementation of RPL in Mauritius. Following the visit effected, Académie de la Réunion extended a helping hand to MQA to successfully implement the pilot project in RPL. Subsequently, MQA entered into an agreement with L'Académie de La Reunion where the latter agreed to train RPL Facilitators as well as RPL Assessors. The aim of the training was to define RPL and the RPL Process, to learn how to judge the suitability of RPL Candidates, to explain the RPL evidence requirements, to help candidates in

portfolio development, and to facilitate the RPL process.

L'Académie de la Réunion helped the MQA in the training of more than 50 RPL Facilitators and Assessors since August 2007 for the Tourism, Construction, Plumbing, Electrical, Printing and Literacy sectors.

Additionally, the French Embassy helped in linking MQA with competent bodies in Reunion Island while also sponsoring the air fare and accommodation expenses for consultants and MQA staff.

Members of the different MQA ITACs working closely with MQA staff for the first RPL pilot project in the Tourism Sector were also trained as RPL facilitators.

The MQA in collaboration with L'Académie de La Reunion also trained 20 RPL Assessors in November 2007.

A specific hands-on training on RPL Assessment was also conducted in April 2008 by the Groupement d'Interet Public Formation Continue, Insertion Professionnelle, L'Académie de La Reunion. Twenty-nine persons from different organisations were trained. At the end of the workshop, the participants came up with a valuable tool that would be used for the RPL Assessment.

## Development in RPL

So far, RPL has been launched in the Hospitality, Construction, Plumbing and Printing sectors. RPL is due to be launched shortly in Electrical Installation works, Panel Beating, Spray painting and Agriculture.

Besides, the MQA has also generated a qualification in adult literacy, namely the National Certificate in Adult Literacy which is pitched at Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This qualification is meant for those who have failed the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) or have never completed that examination. Upon completion of this qualification, learners will be able to pursue further in education/training whereby they would become eligible to follow any courses in the TVET sector. This will in effect promote lifelong learning and Mauritius will have more skilled labour force.

## Award of qualifications

The Mauritian RPL model has been attracting a number of foreign reputable awarding bodies. Recently, these awarding bodies have expressed their interest in having their courses awarded to Mauritian RPL candidates.

## Benefits of RPL

The benefits of RPL can be attributed to three main stakeholders namely the learners, the employers and the country at large. For the learners, RPL can ease the transition from informal to formal learning by enabling them to value their achievements and to recognize the importance of their learning through experience. The learners can thus prepare or plan for further learning for personal or for a career development. They can gain entry to a programme of study (if they do not have the normal entry qualifications) and acquire a record of learning thus gaining a competitive edge. They can also gain credit towards a unit standard or qualification thus allowing them to join a higher level training and at the same time shortening the period of study.

At employers level, RPL can support training and staff development strategies of employers by increasing motivation and interest in workplace practice on the part of the employee/learner, reducing the amount of time needed to complete a qualification and therefore requiring less time away from the workplace, improving employee retention and reducing recruitment and training costs and finally allowing workplace skills planning process.

At national level, RPL helps to have a Certified Skilled workforce, empowers the population (mobile people/multi-skilled people), attracts investors to position Mauritius in the global village, reduces the cost of training people, optimizes the use of human capital and reduces the mismatch of skills requirements (e.g. call centre).



## RPL for PAN African countries

The MQA is also promoting recognition of prior learning at international level within the Pan African Countries. The RPL Mauritian model would now serve as the model for its implementation in different countries earmarked by the Commonwealth of Learning. The reliability of the RPL model is ensured by the fact that it has been formulated after extensive consultation, discussion and collaboration with international stakeholders. The MQA has been since last year entrusted with the role of the leading institution in the implementation of RPL in Pan African Countries.



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## INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

At international level, MQA is seeking collaboration with other Qualifications Authorities and organizations abroad with a view to forming strategic alliances/partnerships in order to ensure comparability with international standards and harmonize qualifications.

Cooperation across the international TVET community can foster a number of collaborative efforts that will not only support the programmes, but will further uplift the quality of training and education at national level activities such as professional and student exchange programmes can facilitate the exchange of information and encourage mobility of students.

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority has signed different Memoranda of Technical Cooperation and Partnership (MTCP) with a view to adopting international best practices in the training system. The MTCPs signal an increased level of cooperation between Mauritius and those countries namely Namibia, Botswana, Seychelles, Ghana and Tanzania and the areas of common interest that are particularly addressed are the alignment of the National Qualifications Framework and related activities and the setting and defining of standards for qualifications as well as the sharing and exchange with regard to key policies. The MTCP will also allow Mauritius and these countries to develop a common mechanism for evaluation of qualifications.



*Address of the Director of MQA on the occasion of the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Technical Cooperation and Partnership with the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Education of Ghana*

Aside from these MTCPs, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has also been signed with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Académie de la Réunion to inter alia formulate a sound Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Mauritius.

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) is also a member of the International Vocational Education and Training Association (IVETA) and the International Federation of Training and Development Organizations (IFTDO). It is worthy to mention here that the MQA is also working in close collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in the areas of RPL, Adult Literacy for Lifelong Learning, Research, Capacity Building and International Cooperation.

MQA is also active in the SADC region and is fully involved in the setting up of the Regional Qualifications Framework, which will be a smaller scale model of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

### Commonwealth of Learning

MQA had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in February 2008 with a view to gaining and sharing expertise in the field of RPL in Commonwealth countries.

Several workshops were conducted in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) namely in Kenya and Ghana. During the international conference held in Zambia in July 2008, MQA had been identified as the lead partner in mentoring selected countries to implement RPL. MQA will mentor Namibia shortly in the development of RPL.

### L'Académie de La Reunion

MQA had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with L'Académie de La Reunion and subsequently MQA in collaboration with L'Académie de La Réunion has trained a number of RPL Facilitators and Assessors from September 2007 to June 2010 and assisted the portfolio development of applicants which had been forwarded to the MQA.

An audit exercise of the RPL pilot project was also carried out by the Groupement d'Intérêt Public Formation Continue, Insertion Professionnelle (GIP FCIP), of L'Académie de la Réunion in February 2008.

### Support from the French Embassy

The French Embassy has constantly supported the MQA during the pilot phase of the RPL project. So far, the French Embassy has provided tremendous help in linking MQA with competent bodies in Reunion Island. It is worth mentioning that the air fare and accommodation expenses for consultants and MQA staff were borne by the French Embassy.

### Protocol on qualifications

The MQA has worked in close collaboration with the French Embassy in order to review the existing protocol on qualifications between Mauritius and France. MQA is currently drafting the amendments to be made to the new Protocol between France and Mauritius in relation to qualifications. Similarly, MQA has signed Protocols of cooperation with India, China and Russia.

### UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)

MQA has been collaborating with UIL in the implementation of the RPL pilot project. The collaboration between the MQA and UIL is being reinforced.

### International membership

MQA has become a member with the International Vocational Education and Training Association (IVETA) and the International Federation of Training and Development Organizations (IFTDO) since 2007.

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## Visits from international collaborators

Over the years, the MQA has received a number of its international collaborators. Details of some of them are listed below:

| Date      | Name                      | Particulars   |
|-----------|---------------------------|---|
| 10-Feb-06 | Fred Hayward              | World Bank Consultant   |
| 07-Jun-06 | Dora Timar                | City & Guilds, London   |
| 23-Mar-07 | Moira Mckerracher         | Scottish Qualifications Authority   |
| 09-May-07 | Haroun Ali Suleiman       | Minister of Education & Vocational Training, Zanzibar   |
| 09-May-07 | Joshua Mallet             | Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada   |
| 15-May-07 | James Keevy               | South African Qualifications Authority  |
| 17-May-07 | Franz E Gertze            | Director, Namibia Qualifications Authority  |
| 18-May-07 | Tracy Lee                 | Workforce Development Agency (WDA), Singapore   |
| 06-Jun-07 | Fay Chung                 | SADC Conusltant, Zimbabwe   |
| 27-Jul-07 | Madhu Singh               | UNESCO  |
| 04-Apr-08 | Ms Marie-ClaudeGuyon      | Director, Groupement d'Interet Public Formation Continue, Insertion Professionnelle, L'Académie de La Reunion |
| 03-Jun-08 | Issaskar Igaoseb          | Namibia Qualifications Authority  |
| 24-Jun-08 | Jean Michel Domingue      | Executive Director, Seychelles Qualifications Authority   |
| 26-Jun-08 | Asamoah Duodu             | Ghana Education Service   |
| 26-Jun-08 | Gabriel M Muthwale        | CAPA Board and Chief Principal, Kemp Polytechnic University, Nairobi  |
| 18-Feb-09 | Schmutz Aine              | GIP/FCIP, Reunion   |
| 02-Mar-09 | Peter Gabaratane          | BOTA, Botswana  |
| 03-Jun-09 | Peterson Dlamunu          | Swaziland   |
| 25-Jun-09 | Simon Ingram-Hill         | Director, British Council, Mauritius  |
| 01-Sep-09 | Joleen Rugg               | City & Guilds, South Africa   |
| 12-Dec-09 | Mustafa Fourar            | Recteur de L'Academie de la Reunion   |
| 23-Feb-10 | Andrew Molwane            | Ministry of Educatia & Skills Development, Botswana   |
| 23-Feb-10 | Joanna Collymore          | Ministry of Education & Skills Development, Botswana  |
| 23-Mar-10 | Atty Freddie R Taylor, Jr | President, Liberia Chamber of Commerce  |
| 23-Mar-10 | Massa R Lansanah          | Secretary General, Liberia Chamber of Commerce  |
| 24-Mar-10 | Margaret Baiketsi         | Tertiary Education Council, Botswana  |
| 24-Mar-10 | Richard Neill             | Tertiary Education Council, Botswana  |
| 23-Apr-10 | Dan Baffour Awuah         | Executive Director, Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Ghana                        |

## Reconnaissance Visit by Delegates from the Namibia Qualifications Authority

In the spirit of cooperation and assistance, a delegation consisting of two senior members from the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) visited the MQA in June 2008 with a view to observing and acquainting themselves with technical specifications with regard to the Management Information System (MIS) installed at the MQA.

## Study Tour by Delegates from the Ministry of Education & Skills Development, Botswana

A delegation comprising five people from the Ministry of Education & Skills Development of Botswana were on a three-day study tour at the MQA in February 2010. The visit was effected with the objective to obtaining an overview of the MQA with a specific focus on the operations of the Authority and its functions.

In this context, the delegates were apprised of the functions of the Quality Assurance Services Division and the Corporate Services Division of the MQA as well as of the Framework Services Division in respect of the National Qualifications Framework, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition & Equivalence of Qualifications.

## Study Visit by Delegation from the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Education of Ghana



A study visit was effected in April 2010 at the MQA by a delegation from the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Education of Ghana comprising three high officials. The aim of the visit was to gauge the Mauritian experience and expertise in respect of the NQF development and systems issues including quality assurance, standards setting, recognition and evaluation of qualifications and recognition of prior learning (RPL) in view of their forthcoming implementation of the RPL in their country

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## THE VUSSC AND THE TRANSNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (TQF)

The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is a collaborative network building on the support of Ministers of Education across small states of the British Commonwealth, specifically in three regions – Africa and the Mediterranean; Asia and the Pacific; and, the Caribbean. The creation of VUSSC was in direct response to a need identified by Commonwealth Ministers of Education at a meeting in Halifax, Canada in December 2000 and was endorsed at the 15th Commonwealth Conference of Ministers of Education in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2003.

Today, VUSSC is a growing network committed to the collaborative development of free content resources for education and training. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is facilitating the VUSSC initiative by managing the funding and providing for its implementation.

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth is not a university in the conventional sense of the term; it is essentially an informal network of ministries of education and public institutions supported by the Commonwealth of Learning. In 2007, member states of the VUSSC decided to develop a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) and same was officially launched in May 2010 in Namibia.

### TQF Management Committee

The TQF Management Committee (TQFMC), comprising expert representatives from regions, was elected by the representatives of various senior officials of Ministries of Education who participated in a VUSSC TQF meeting in 2008, with a view to developing and ensuring the smooth implementation of the Transnational Qualifications Framework in the 32 Small States. The elected members were: (i) Africa & The Mediterranean: Kaylash Allgoo (Mauritius) and Franz Gertze (Namibia); (ii) The Caribbean: Michael Bradshaw (Trinidad & Tobago) and Yvonne Marshall (Jamaica) and (iii) Asia and Pacific: Richard Wah (Fiji) and Abdul Waheed (Maldives). The TQFMC elected its own chair and two vice chairs in the persons of Mr. Kaylash Allgoo as Chairperson and Mr Michael Bradshaw and Dr. Richard Wah as Vice-Chairperson respectively. In pursuance with the terms of reference of TQFMC, the persons were elected to office for an initial period of three years whilst a permanent administrator was appointed by COL. The Committee cooperates with the VUSSC Management Committee and the Chairman is ex-officio of the Management Committee of the VUSSC Initiative.

Some of the objectives of the TQF Management Committee are:

- To oversee the development and implementation of the TQF, including the development of concepts, policies, and guidelines.
- To oversee the evaluation of programmes to be registered on the VUSSC TQF.
- To report on a regular basis (but at least annually) to Ministers of Small States of the Commonwealth through COL on all matters related to the TQF.



- To communicate and advocate the TQF within Small States of the Commonwealth.
- To recommend the appointment of external observers, technical experts and external evaluators to COL when required.
- To develop and maintain appropriate strategic networks to enhance the objectives and performance of the TQF.

### The Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)

The TQF is a 'translation instrument' and is not intended to replace any existing qualifications frameworks or quality assurance systems which exist in any of the 32 Small States. It rather provides a means by which the different existing frameworks can be compared and related. The TQF is a unified qualifications framework that includes both higher education qualifications and technical and vocational qualifications offered through the VUSSC. (See Table below)

| LEVEL | QUALIFICATIONS TITLES   | MINIMUM CREDITS |
|-------|---|-----------------|
| 10    | Doctoral Degree   | 360             |
| 9     | Masters Degree  | 240             |
| 8     | Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma<br>Bachelors Degree with honours | 120             |
| 7     | Bachelors Degree<br>Graduate Certificate and Diploma                  | 360             |
| 6     | Advanced/ Higher Diploma<br>Associate Degree/ Foundation Degree       | 240             |
| 5     | Diploma   | 240             |
| 4     | Advanced Certificate  | 120             |
| 3     | Certificate III   | 40              |
| 2     | Certificate II  | 40              |
| 1     | Certificate I   | 40              |

The Transnational Qualifications Framework

Each national qualification framework needs to relate to the TQF levels so that the translation can be facilitated across all countries. One way to do this is through a national qualifications framework (NQF) where each NQF level corresponds to a level on the TQF.

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## Architecture and structure of the TQF

The TQF is first and foremost a translation instrument with no regulatory capacity. It is within this context that the approach of Guidelines (and not standards/criteria) for quality assurance at National Quality Assurance Agency (NQAA) is recommended.

The TQF is a ten (10) level qualifications framework and this is premised on the fact that most of the member states have or are developing NQFs with ten levels. The key mechanism of this ten level framework is backed by Quality Assurance Guidelines, Qualifications Guidelines, Level Descriptors, Recognition of Prior Learning and the maintenance of the VUSSC portal.

The VUSSC TQF qualifications will form a subset of qualifications already registered elsewhere. Guidelines for different qualification types, credits and translation criteria have also been established, while credit transfer is right now still outstanding; level descriptors in relation to the TQF refer to the statements describing the characteristics of the generic outcomes of each of the ten (10) levels in the TQF. Characteristics consist of the knowledge, skills/competencies and attributes that participants should possess or be able to demonstrate on completion of a programme/course/module.

Additionally, the TQF intends to build on the existing VUSSC electronic infrastructure, and the TQF portal will consist of a searchable database of registered qualifications (offered through the VUSSC) including details as registration on the TQF (level, credits, etc.), as well as details relating to the possible registration of the qualification on another qualifications framework; a searchable database of education and training providers that have been accredited (by sectoral, national and regional qualifications agencies) to offer TQF registered qualifications; and an interactive site, in the form of a Wiki, where agencies and providers can participate in informal discussions of TQF procedures and guidelines.

## Referencing the TQF

Despite the differences among countries, there appear to be some elements common to all NQFs. They all have reference levels describing types of skill and knowledge in various qualifications, quality assurance principles and guidelines, and methods for recognising learning gained in different programmes and contexts.

The core of the TQF are ten reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – 'learning outcomes'. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 10). It will therefore enable much easier comparison between national qualifications and should also mean that people do not have to repeat learning if they move to another country. An illustration using the Mauritian NQF is shown in the table below.

| Transnational Qualifications Framework |   |                        |            | Mauritian NQF  |           |
|--|---|------------------------|------------|--|-----------|
| TQF Level                              | Qualification Titles  | Minimum Credits of TQF | Hrs of TQF | Qualification Titles                                 | NQF Level |
| 10                                     | Doctoral Degree   | 360                    | 3600       | Doctorate  | 10        |
| 9                                      | Masters Degree  | 240                    | 2400       | Masters Degrees, e.g. MA, MSc, MPhil                 | 9         |
| 8                                      | Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma; Bachelors Degree with honours | 120                    | 1200       | Postgraduate Diploma<br>Postgraduate Certificate     | 8         |
|  |   |                        |            | Bachelor's Degree with Honours, Conversion Programme |           |
| 7                                      | Bachelors Degree<br>Graduate Certificate and Diploma;               | 360                    | 3600       | Bachelor Ordinary Degree                             | 7         |
| 6                                      | Advanced/ Higher Diploma<br>Associate Degree/<br>Foundation Degree  | 240                    | 2400       | Diploma  | 6         |
| 5                                      | Diploma   | 240                    | 2400       | Certificate  | 5         |
| 4                                      | Advanced Certificate  | 120                    | 1200       | Certificate  | 4         |
| 3                                      | Certificate III   | 40                     | 400        | Certificate  | 3         |
| 2                                      | Certificate II  | 40                     | 400        | Certificate  | 2         |
| 1                                      | Certificate I   | 40                     | 400        | Certificate  | 1         |

*Referencing the TQF*

The TQF should benefit individuals by increasing access to, and participation in, lifelong learning. By establishing a common reference point, the TQF will indicate how learning outcomes may be combined from different settings, for example formal study or work, and from different countries.

It is in this context that the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) provides a common reference framework which will assist in comparing the National Qualifications Systems and Frameworks at all levels and among the Small States. Additionally, the TQF could be used for harmonization with Regional Qualifications Framework and can hence be used as an instrument for the Education and Training system in all commonwealth countries and ultimately as an overarching Human Resource Development Strategy within regional grouping of countries. Harmonization will then imply access to reliable and transparent information, greater networking between all stakeholders in higher education, and the sharing of resources and models of good practices, with a view to promoting greater inter-regional mobility.



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## COMPUTERIZATION OF THE MQA

The MQA has had part of its business processes computerized since 2007. The present Management Information System (MIS) consists of the Registration and Monitoring module, Quality Assurance module, Human Resource/Payroll module, Accounting module (including Procurement & Stores), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) module and the Accreditation module.

Most of the core business processes of the Quality Assurance Services Division of the MQA have been computerized whereas those of the Framework Services Division are still in the process to be finalized.

With the implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning, MQA is enhancing its present MIS System by developing a new RPL module. The computerization of the RPL processes will facilitate the processing of applications for RPL Candidates and RPL Facilitators.

Moreover MQA is also improving its business processes by enhancing the module on Accreditation as per the new concepts in the current MIS system.

### Support to e-Government initiative

In support to the announced Government initiatives, the MQA has already taken measures to provide online application facilities for its services. Meanwhile, an interactive website has been set-up and constant update and improvement is being brought to it to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

Additionally, to contribute to the sustainable development project, MQA has been promoting the use of e-communication to reduce the use of paper.

### A National Qualifications Framework Information System (NQFIS): Learning Account for all Mauritians

The MQA is envisaging to set up a National Qualifications Framework Information System (NQFIS) which is an electronic management system that will facilitate the management of the NQF and will enable the MQA to report accurately on most aspects of the training system in our country. The NQFIS also includes a record of learning achievement for each Mauritian from primary to tertiary level including the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, while also providing useful and relevant information on the labour force.

Countries having Qualifications Framework Information System: South Africa, Scotland, Ireland

### Objectives of the NQFIS

1. Produce quality, timely and cost effective statistics;
2. Make informed policy decisions pertaining to training and education in Mauritius;
3. Provide useful information on labour force while attracting potential investors in Mauritius;
4. Provide a database for each Mauritian in terms of learning achievement; and
5. Promote lifelong learning.

## THE MQA STAFF WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Since 2006, the MQA has recognized the value of people and has endeavoured to ensure the welfare of its entire staff. Subsequently, the year 2008 saw the creation of a staff welfare association, which provides staff with get-togethers and time of relaxation to foster team building and a sense of belonging to the Authority.

### Major events organized by the MQA Staff Welfare Association

In 2008, in order to mark the 40th National Day Celebrations and with the spirit of care for the needy people, the staff of MQA organised an event which included a donation and lunch as well as a musical programme for the inmates of Shelter for Women and Children in Distress at Forest Side.



In 2009, a Dental Hygiene Campaign was organised by the MQA in collaboration with the Dental Unit of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life as well as with Childhope. The campaign was held at the Case Noyale Social Welfare Centre where a dental screening of 50 children was carried out. A dental hygiene pack as well as a lunch pack were offered to each child.



This year, in the context of the 8th anniversary of the MQA, another event was organised by the staff of this Authority for the 80 inmates of the Gandhi Breedh Ashram (Home for the Elderly) at Petit Raffray in June 2010. The event included a lunch and donation in kind. The Hon Minister Mookhesswur Choonee and the Hon Minister Ashit Kumar Gungah were our guests for the occasion.



*Mr Kaylash Allgoo, Director, Minister Choonee and Minister Gungah at the Gandhi Breedh Ashram, Petit Raffray*

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