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Explanatory note:	The QAF TVET KEN is developed under the above project as output 1. The objective of the output is that a TVET Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and Quality Assurance System (QAS) supporting the implementation of the TVET Act is developed and tested. The QAF will specifically outline and specify the quality assurance roles of TVETA.

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Kenya TVET Quality Assurance Framework (KEN TVET QAF)

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Introduction

This paper aims to present a comprehensive Technical and Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework for Kenya (KEN TVET QAF). The purpose of this document is to outline the role of TVET quality assurance at national and sub-national level and the conceptual design for KEN TVET QAF.

Why focus on TVET quality?

- ✓ High quality programs provide strong links between institutions and industry leading to better employability of graduates;
- ✓ High quality programs make TVET more attractive and give status;
- ✓ Quality assurance frameworks serve as a common reference to ensure consistency amongst different actors at all levels;
- ✓ Quality systems have transparent processes and procedures to ensure mutual understanding and trust between different actors;
- ✓ Better industry and labour market orientation;
- ✓ Trainers, assessors and other QA related personnel are well-qualified and familiar with workplace practices;
- ✓ Facilities and technologies utilised reflect industry requirements and technologies.

The framework presented in this paper consists of an overview of agencies and quality assurance (QA) stakeholders, principles, guidelines and tools to assist the TVET community of Kenya to develop, improve and assess the quality of the TVET system and to give orientation of all parties, including external stakeholders on all issues of quality assurance of TVET in Kenya. The TVET Quality Assurance Framework is focused on providing confidence that quality requirements in relation to training and educational services will be fulfilled. Quality assurance refers to planned and systematic processes that provide confidence in education and training services provided by training institutions under the remit of relevant authorities or bodies.

Although, specific elements of quality can be defined and targeted, there is no formula or a unified model for a standard TVET quality assurance system. National TVET systems originated having operated under different government ministries or departments and different sets of qualifications and quality assurance arrangements. The stage of development and maturity of TVET systems differs from country to country. Therefore, the task of establishing a quality assurance framework for TVET is not standardised.

The form in which countries develop their quality assurance systems for education and training depends on the specific country contexts, which include traditions and governance culture, the extent to which general education, tertiary education and TVET, the existence and strength of apprenticeship systems, the integration of workplace experience in TVET (industry partnership) and the specific economic contexts.

Different quality assurance mechanisms for TVET are established. Different systems apply different combinations of these principles depending on the specific country context. Quality assurance systems commonly vary around the **principles**:

- a) Compliance or evaluative based; or
- b) Context, input, process and/or output based.

TVET quality assurance systems should have a balance within these sets of principles so that they ensure accountability, minimum standards for the delivery and outcomes encouraging quality improvement and innovation. The goal is to assure quality and relevance of TVET measured in competence standards and provider capacity as well as quality of competences of graduates. Detailing the principles above the following **four basic approaches to quality** should be in the focus of a TVET quality assurance framework fully or partly in a balanced combination:

- 1) **Establishment of competence based education and training and assessment standards** and mechanisms ensuring compliance of training delivery and outcome assessment;
- 2) **Focus on input quality**; Systems ensure the quality and capacity of TVET providers and the training and experience of trainers and other input factors. External quality assurance with mechanisms such as registration, approval, accreditation or licensing of institutions, providers, trainers and curricula as well as regular external evaluations and audits assure compliance with input quality standards;
- 3) **Focus on output quality**; appropriate, reliable and robust procedures and mechanisms ensure the validity and authenticity of the assessments and awards. A characteristic of this approach is that it usually engages the key stakeholders, especially employers and trainees, which helps to confirm the relevance of competences acquired;
- 4) All quality assurance frameworks should include the important aspect of **continuous improvement based on continuous input, output and outcome monitoring and evaluation**, which instils a certain and necessary quality culture in the system.

A number of agencies and bodies usually supports TVET quality assurance frameworks. These agencies and bodies can be government run, independent bodies established through legislation (legally mandated bodies) or industry / professional bodies with a strong national and/or international reputation for quality in their fields of competence.

The KEN TVET QAF takes a hands-on approach to a set of seven **quality elements** in TVET and puts them in the national context. The presented framework consists of a set of principles, guidelines and tools to assist the Kenyan TVET community to improve and assess the quality of the TVET system in general and specifically at each point of TVET service provision. The KEN TVET QAF forms a coherent set of elements and indicators guiding the design and implementation of measures to strengthen quality assurance at all national TVET levels as well as providing a basis for international benchmarking of TVET systems.

The KEN TVET QAF presented in this paper is a comprehensive visualized tool and orientation guiding the compliance with mandatory requirements and best practices as well as the design and implementation of measures to strengthen TVET quality assurance at national level. It also includes important comprehensive but concise explanations of the different quality assurance framework elements. The TVET QAF is also providing a basis for the orientation and alignment with other national TVET systems, especially at regional and continental levels.

The TVET QAF is incorporating major policy and regulatory directions and settings facilitating the alignment of all TVET stakeholders and orientation in the complex TVET landscape of Kenya. Quality and a profound quality culture have to be inherent in all parts of the TVET system. This includes

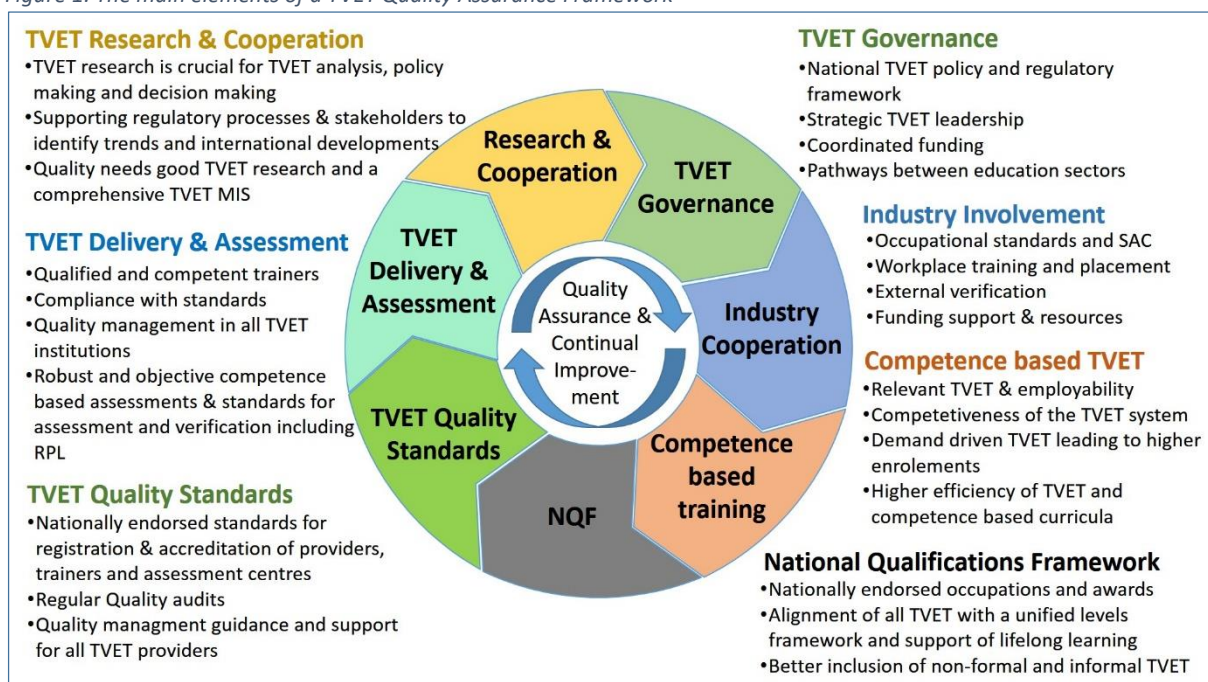
governance and TVET research, industry involvement, competence based occupational, training and curriculum standards, a comprehensive and inclusive qualifications framework, a sound system of quality standards for all aspects of TVET, a robust and quality assured assessment and certification system as well as participatory involvement of all TVET stakeholders and cooperation.

An essential element of a quality assured TVET system is ensuring that TVET provision meets identified needs and demands and is preparing TVET graduates for lifelong learning in changing national and globalised economies. A TVET system producing quality manifests in the following **characteristics**:

- ✓ Quality of providers of TVET and of the qualifications issued;
- ✓ Sufficient funding (both public and private),
- ✓ Good governance and a pro-active organising structure;
- ✓ A sound and comprehensive legal framework for education and training, which ensures the social protection and economic interests of TVET trainees and apprentices and provides clear mechanisms for TVET quality assurance;
- ✓ Strong applied TVET research;
- ✓ Comprehensive public labour market and TVET information systems on skill needs, career paths, programmes and providers supporting meaningful decision making and choices by authorities, individuals and employers;
- ✓ A national qualifications framework (NQF), which is implemented and actively employed to align qualifications with framework levels nationally and internationally. The NQF can be used as a means to systematise, integrate and link TVET qualifications within broader contexts.

It is this last issue of the assurance of quality of providers and of qualifications awarded, which is the focus of this paper. However, in reviewing quality assurance other aspects of a quality TVET provision need to be considered, including the setting of standards for qualifications that may be covered by the NQF and the public provision of information on performance.

Figure 1: The main elements of a TVET Quality Assurance Framework



The figure aggregates and systematises the main elements of a national TVET QAF. This model will be further expanded for the specific conditions, under which the Kenyan TVET system is operating.

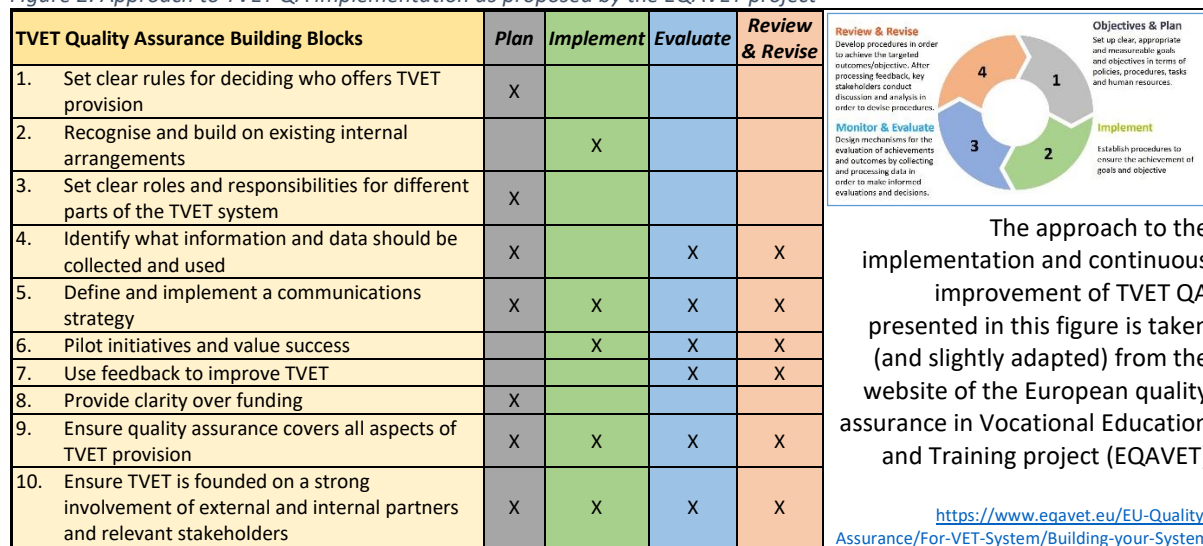
TVET Quality can be assessed against the seven key elements of TVET quality presented above by using operational standards and indicators. Looking at the different elements one by one and deriving measurable indicators for all levels of TVET conclusions and recommendations can be made for further development and improvement of each of the elements and the system as a whole.

In relation to TVET, quality assurance is a set of measures and activities to ensure that education and training services satisfy identified needs of industry, trainees and society in a systematic, reliable way. Quality assurance of the seven quality elements does not guarantee the resulting quality of TVET, but marks the pre-conditions to produce TVET quality. However, effective TVET quality assurance focused on the seven elements presented above provides confidence that the quality criteria set for all elements are fulfilled.

When implementing the QAF, it is important distinguishing responsibilities for quality sensitive TVET functions and processes, such as standards setting and awarding, registration and accreditation of TVET institution, and the assessment. Lack of clarity in these arrangements can lead to a lack of transparency and consistency, and contestation over territory by different agencies or bodies.

The European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training project (www.eqavet.eu) offers an interesting approach to the implementation of quality assurance, which includes ten building blocks and a plan-do-check-act approach (PDCA) of continual improvement, is presented below. The PDCA approach is incorporated in the presented TVET QAF model for Kenya.

Figure 2: Approach to TVET QA implementation as proposed by the EQAVET project



1. Concept of the KEN TVET QAF

The model of the TVET QAF presented in this paper approaches the issue of TVET quality assurance from two directions as follows.

- Firstly, it explores the purpose, principles and elements describing TVET quality incorporating general approaches used across the globe as appropriate for the different national TVET systems.

- Secondly, it provides a simple, but comprehensive visualised national TVET QAF for Kenya consisting of a set of principles, key elements of quality and fundamental quality indicators to underpin quality assurance of TVET.

The key aim of the KEN TVET QAF is to develop mutual understanding amongst regulators and government agencies, TVET institutions, society and other stakeholders as well as regionally and internationally about what TVET quality assurance in Kenya includes. The KEN TVET QAF shall be seen as:

- 1) an instrument to promote and monitor status and improvement of the Kenyan TVET system;
- 2) a reference instrument that outlines the crucial elements of quality and helps the users to assess whether measures improving the quality of the national TVET system are targeted and effective;
- 3) an assessment instrument that can include internal and external assessment on different levels from national to provider.

The Kenya QAF and all its elements should incorporate and facilitate the following:

- ✓ Measure quality– Current TVET performance against expected standards;
- ✓ Continually improve quality closing the gap between current and expected levels of quality;
- ✓ Keep the methodology as simple as possible;
- ✓ Economic, ecological and social sustainability.

For more insight on the quality aspects of TVET, the TVETA manuals on quality assurance and quality management systems can be consulted.

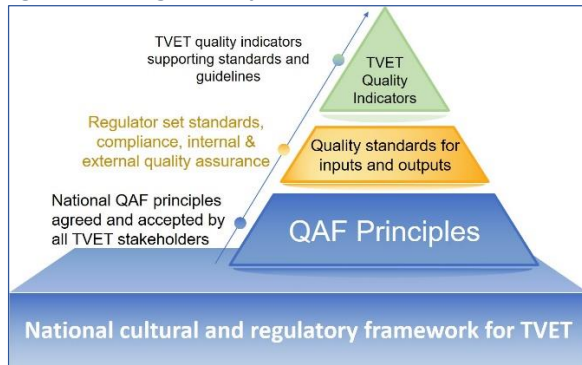
The national TVET system shall support the development of the required competences and assist workers to develop in their occupations, acquire new competences and advance their careers. TVET has to achieve these outcomes and to adjust its capacity in a responsive manner at the increasing pace of change in industry and technology. Industries and enterprises require workers who can acquire the skills needed for new technologies, processes, products and quality standards in a process of lifelong learning. Therefore, workers need to have both general and specific competences as well as the capacity to adapt these competences to new industrial demands.

The national industries today, in an increasingly competitive international environment, must be able to compete in international markets. The capacity of the national TVET system to provide quality education and training influences greatly the competitiveness of the national economy. Quality and relevance of TVET contributes to attract investments. Due to internationalisation and globalisation of economic activities, integration processes have intensified towards multilateral mechanisms for improving international connectivity, especially in the area of occupational standards and qualifications. This leads to the development of qualifications frameworks, and the formalisation of quality assurance systems in an international context facilitating the international flow of trainees and workers with increased demands for recognition across economic regions.

The seven quality elements need to be reflected in the KEN TVET QAF, which must be centred on fundamental quality principles, industry needs, and the national qualifications system (KNQF).

1.1 TVET quality principles, standards and guidelines in Kenya

Figure 3: Building blocks of the KEN TVET QAF



The KEN TVET QAF builds on a balance between the four basic approaches to TVET quality presented in the introduction, which include competence based education and training (CBET) input quality, output quality and continuous improvement. The main legally mandated body and regulator for setting quality standards in TVET and external quality assurance is TVETA. TVETA is setting mandatory standards nationalising these standards.

This partly in cooperation with the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS). In the framework of the national institutional and cultural characteristics, TVETA sets the government policies for development of the TVET system and influences significantly the balance point for the different approaches to TVET quality in the KEN TVET QAF. However, TVETA recognises the importance of cooperation and stakeholder involvement in all aspects of TVET delivery and quality assurance. Acceptance of quality principles, standards and guidelines are a precondition for their effective implementation. The four basic approaches mentioned above manifest among others in the TVET standards and guidelines and the criteria and indicators connected to these standards and guidelines.

1.1.1 QAF objectives and principles

The purpose of the quality objectives is to specify what the quality assurance system aims to achieve. The objectives are more specific than goals and should serve as the basis for creating policy and evaluating performance at a national, county or agency level. How do we define Quality? What is our concern? What are our core processes and how do we design them? How can we check the results? How can we continuously improve our results? The quality objectives should act as basic tools that underlie all planning and strategic activities.

The adherence to common principles, which are incorporated in the KEN TVET QAF and which should be adopted by all stakeholders, are seen as very important for a functioning and effective TVET QAF. Quality Principles form the foundation underpinning the QAF. They are statements, based on the objectives, that should be applied to all schemes and strategies that support quality and quality improvement including quality standards and operating processes.

- 1) Transparency and accountability including public presentation and reporting of processes and results and the evaluation of against performance measures;
- 2) Comparability enabling that TVET programs and institutions can be measured based on comparable standards;
- 3) Flexibility and responsiveness to change;
- 4) Balance of approaches (the right mix);
- 5) Continuity and consistency in facilitating confidence of stakeholders;
- 6) Minimum standards for inputs and outputs;
- 7) Assurance and improvement ensuring effective internal and external quality assurance and promoting improvements.

Quality assurance/management principles for TVET institutions

- ✓ **Quality management** – the management develops the mission, vision and values of the organization following a participatory processes and develops the quality management handbook (the sum of all policies and procedures, strategic and operational plans and documentation regarding quality management) and monitors the implementation of the procedures.
- ✓ **Management responsibilities** – the management gets actively involved in quality assurance of TVET programmes. Partnerships with stakeholders are developed and maintained. Relevant information is collected, stored and analysed regularly and communicated to stakeholders.
- ✓ **Resource management (physical and human)** – the organization provides students with a safe and supportive environment. The learning spaces are properly equipped and meet the collective and individual needs of students. The resources, teaching methods and the related premises allow the access and active participation of all students. Staff is employed according to clear criteria (minimum standards regarding qualifications and experience) of recruitment and selection, the organization defines job descriptions, evaluation of staff performance is transparent; there is a staff policy, that includes induction procedure and continuous training programmes. There is an effective financial management.
- ✓ **Design, development and revision of learning programmes** – the organization is permanently concerned with the improvement of learning programmes, to meet the needs of students and staff (internal stakeholders) and of employers and the community (external stakeholders). The learning programmes are centred on the student.
- ✓ **Training and learning** – the TVET institution provides equal access to programmes and supports all trainees, preventing any form of discrimination. Students receive complete information about the training provision and benefit from effective counselling and career guidance. Trainees' rights and responsibilities are clearly defined. Trainee-centred training methods are mainly used. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their own learning process.
- ✓ **Assessment and certification** – the institution develops and uses effective processes of assessment and monitoring of learning, in order to support students' progress. Teachers participate regularly in activities of standardization of competence-based assessment. Assessment and certification complies with standards and regulatory requirements.
- ✓ **Evaluation and improvement of quality** – the performance of the institution is evaluated and monitored. Improvement measures are developed based on monitoring and evaluation.

1.1.2 QAF standards

Quality Standards operating nationally act as the benchmark for all activity in TVET. These standards provide national reference points for all stakeholders operating within the TVET system and against which performance is set.

TVET quality standards at different levels and stages of TVET delivery, which are based on the QAF principles, are core building blocks of TVET quality. These TVET quality standards are established in relation to inputs and outputs of the TVET system and are used at institutional and regulatory levels.

In Kenya, these standards manifest among others in the CBET standards and guidelines, the audit criteria for external quality audits, the competence standards for QA related personnel including the registration, accreditation and licensing standards, the Trainer Qualifications Framework, the minimum standards for equipment and facilities and other quality related principles, standards and guidelines. Documentation of such standards is achieved through the development of sets of indicators for inputs and outputs in line with the KNQF. Compliance with minimum quality standards (manifestations of indicators) is a precondition for TVET provision.

1.2 The elements of the KEN TVET QAF

The proposed KEN TVET QAF includes the seven elements included in figure 1. These elements are the national context of TVET in Kenya following:

1. TVET governance

- Kenya has adopted a clear governance structure in TVET. The TVET Act includes important provisions regarding the quality assurance in TVET and mandates TVETA to assure quality in this education and training sub-sector;
- Other acts and regulatory instruments are complementing the TVET Act in specific areas, such as the KNQF.

2. Industry involvement in TVET at all stages

- Industry involvement is foreseen at all stages of TVET provision. A general principle of TVET in Kenya is that TVET should be demand and industry driven beginning from the development of occupational competence standards. A means to involve industry at an early stage are the Sector Skills Advisory Councils (SSAC). Workplace experience (industrial attachments) are an integral part of TVET delivery. External verifiers with industrial background are ensuring that assessments are reliable and robust. Beside the mentioned aspects, industry involvement is encouraged at all levels. TVETA as the main regulator of TVET in Kenya is a driver for industry and stakeholder involvement.

3. Competence based education and training (CBET) as the fundamental delivery mode and 'philosophy' of TVET in Kenya

- Kenya has adopted the competence-based approach to education and training (CBET) on all stages of TVET provision. The approach is also at the core of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). TVETA has established the CBET Standards and Guidelines for TVET provision, including curricula development, assessment and standard development. The occupational standards, which are at the foundation of TVET provision, are competence based and rooted in the needs of industry.

4. Alignment of TVET, awards and qualifications with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF)

- Kenya has adopted a National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and established a body in charge of maintaining the KNQF, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is a body corporate, established by the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 22 of 2014. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority involves multiple stakeholders.
- The KNQF is based on an 'outcomes-based' approach, which means that a qualification is awarded once an individual has completed and been assessed against a specific competence standard. The design of the KNQF is based on the definition of Learning outcomes (descriptors of competence criteria), assessment criteria and a credit framework
 - ❖ Learning outcomes in the KNQF define the learning that an individual has to do to achieve a particular qualification. Learning outcomes are defined as knowledge, skills and aspects of competence. The relative proportion of these in a specific qualification will determine whether it is academic or more practical in nature. For example, a qualification that primarily includes knowledge will be academic, whereas a qualification that requires the individual to show what they can do at work will be practical, or vocational.
 - ❖ Assessment criteria define the requirement the learner has to demonstrate to show that they have achieved the learning specified in the learning outcome. Typically, for each learning outcome, there will be two or three assessment criteria. A qualification cannot be awarded until the learner has demonstrated they can achieve all the assessment criteria.
- The competence-based approach is aligning and guiding the entire TVET system along the lines of identified current and future needs equipping trainees with the competences, which will be in demand by industry and support lifelong learning.

5. Introduction and compliance with national quality standards in TVET

- TVETA establishes input and output standards and guidelines and introduces procedures for external quality assurance in TVET. These standards and guidelines cover TVET institutions, TVET provision and TVET personnel.

6. Quality of TVET provision and assessments

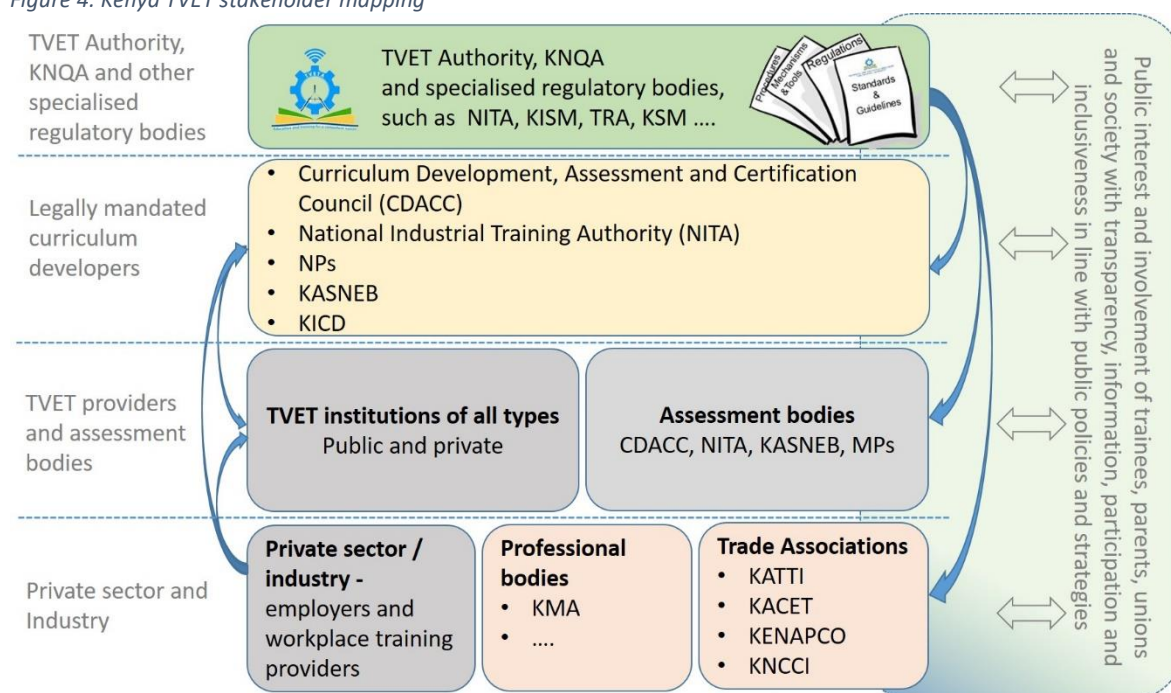
- Assured in Kenya by the establishment and implementation of nationally recognised input and output standards and regular procedures of internal and external quality assurance (registration, approval, accreditation and licensing of QA personnel, TVET institutions, assessment centres, programmes and courses)

7. TVET research (including information systems) and cooperation for sustainable TVET development and effective decision making

- For the Kenyan TVET system to continuously improve and develop, it is imperative that research and development activities are up to the task. Networking and partnerships are proliferating and enhancing research activities;
- Quality assurance of TVET and good decision-making depends upon the availability, validity, reliability of TVET data, information, and meaningful input and output indicators of quality. The effect and impact of a systematic TVET information system must build on the systematic collection of TVET data and information in support of the indicators to be monitored and evaluated and their validity and reliability, the applied use of the research information produced. Indicators and research results can be used to assure the public and stakeholders regarding TVET funding;
- Quality indicators are statistical measures that give an indication of output quality. However, some quality indicators can also give an indication of process quality. Just as quality assurance mechanisms can be categorised into frontend (input) and back-end (output) mechanisms so can quality indicators including:
 - those that focus on the inputs to and process of training (front-end);
 - those that focus on outcomes or outputs of training (back-end);
 - quality indicators that provide different information depending on the priorities of the QAF.
- Indicators must be endorsed by industry, associations, TVET institutions and stakeholders and should (at least partly) be internationally comparable;
- TVETA has established a TVET research unit, which will initiate a broad cooperation and will be modelled after best international practices. As a member of the UNEVOC network TVETA has established strong connections to leading TVET agencies worldwide.

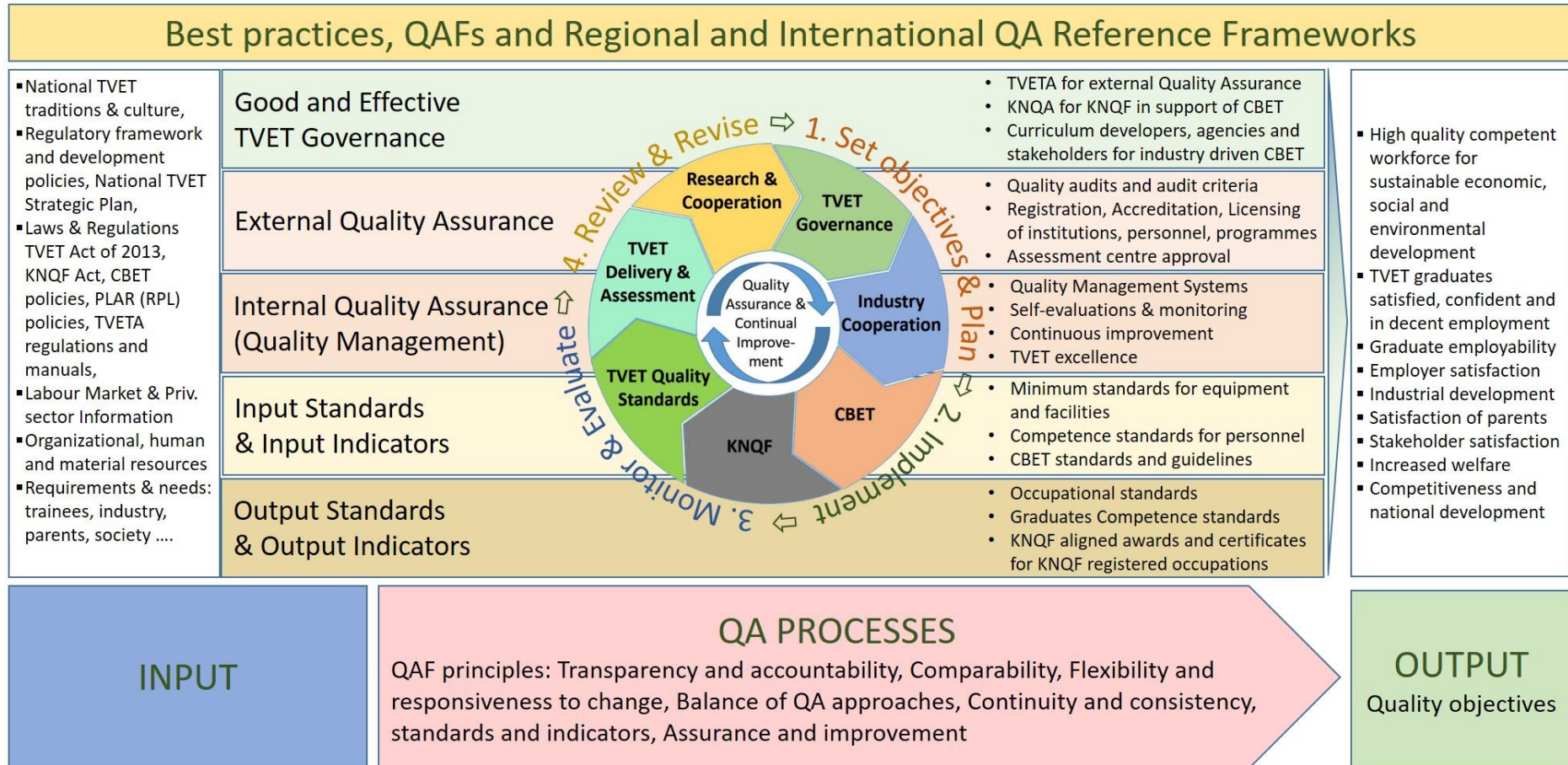
1.3 TVET QA stakeholders in Kenya – a mapping

Figure 4: Kenya TVET stakeholder mapping



2. The Kenya TVET Quality Assurance Framework Visualised

Figure 5: The Kenya TVET Quality Assurance Framework – A Model Visualised



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