



European Training Foundation

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE: ETF2023OP0009

ACQF Qualifications and Credentials
Platform



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PART A – TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Summary of service requested	
Title of procurement procedure	ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform
Maximum budget available	900,000 Euro (for the maximum contract duration)
Contract type	Multiple framework contract in cascade with maximum two economic operators
Expected start date	December 2023
Duration	12 months, renewable maximum 3 times for periods of 12 months

Given the subject of the contract, participation in this procurement procedure is open to all natural and legal persons that are established (domicile or headquarters respectively) in the EU, the ETF partner countries and countries directly involved in this action i.e. African Union (for the full list see the tender dossier or visit www.etf.europa.eu), Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein and to international organisations.

For UK tenderers: Please note that you may *not* participate to this procurement procedure.

Tenderers must ensure that none of the involved entities are subject to EU restrictive measures adopted under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) or Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)¹, consisting of a prohibition to make available or transfer funds or economic resources or to provide financing or financial assistance to them directly or indirectly or an asset freeze. The prohibition applies throughout the whole performance of the contract.

1. Background

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is the European Union Agency that supports countries outside the EU in improving their human capital development, in the context of European Union (EU) external relations policies². Currently the ETF cooperates at country and regional level with the countries of the EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions, and in Central Asia, as well as contributing to the EU external policies and programmes at Pan-African level.

¹ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list of entities subject to restrictive measures and, in case of conflict, it prevails over the list of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

² For more details the ETF multi-annual programming document and annual work programmes can be found on the [ETF website](#)

The European Training Foundation has been entrusted by the EU Delegation to African Union (AU) with implementation of the project “Support to the implementation of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) – (further: ACQF-II). Implementation period: 45 months, from 1 April 2023 until end December 2026.

The ETF works in cooperation with the African Union Commission (AU Commission) ESTI department Division for Education, with the ACQF Advisory Group, and institutions and stakeholders relevant for the project at national and regional levels.

Comprehensive information on the ACQF development process, and outputs, such guidelines, NQF inventory, capacity development programme including support to countries training modules, is accessible on the [ACQF website](#).

The ACQF Policy Document has been validated and is now operational. At a conference held at headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, on 11-13 July 2023, the ACQF Policy Document³ was validated by the African Union Member States. The ACQF is now officially a recognised policy instrument, and implementation is starting.

The ACQF-II project, supports implementation of the ACQF as a policy instrument: the objectives, outputs and activities of the ACQF-II project are oriented to implement the seven areas of activity defined in the ACQF Policy Document. These seven areas are: 1) referencing to ACQF; 2) support recognition of prior learning; 3) ACQF Qualifications Platform; 4) Qualifications – common profiles of qualifications; 5) Capacity development; 6) advocacy, communication; 7) analysis, monitoring.

The ACQF Qualifications Platform is one of the most important and strategic outputs of the ACQF-II project. The ACQF Qualifications Platform will be a ground-breaking initiative in Africa, providing stakeholders and users of all categories access to updated and credible information and data on qualifications and credentials of all connected countries, through a user-friendly, interactive digital instrument and visualisation platform.

Rationale of the ACQF as a policy instrument

Establishment of the ACQF is a policy initiative of the African Union (AU), required by key continental integration strategies and initiatives in the fields of education and training, free movement of persons and free trade.

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) contributes to development and implementation of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks, in accordance with the objectives of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025) and other AU policies and strategies.

The initial ACQF development process (2020-2022) involved over 40 African countries in the different types of activities, from the initial mapping study to the programme of capacity development and knowledge-sharing, and support to countries.

³ ACQF Policy Document (2022), validated by the African Union Member States. https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/webinars/inaugural-event-acqf-ii-11-13-july-2023-headquarters-of-the-african-union-addis/acqf-policy-document_for-validation-process_17nov2022_en_sent.pdf/@_@display-file/file/acqf-policy-document_for-validation-process_17nov2022_en_sent.pdf.pdf

1.2 Objectives of the project ACQF-II

The Overall Objective (Impact) of the ACQF-II project is to contribute to improved mobility and lifelong learning opportunities for African youth, as a result of enhanced comparability and transparency of qualifications, recognition of skills and diplomas, improved mutual trust and information-sharing between qualifications frameworks and systems on the continent.

Main planned outcomes and outputs:

Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities at national, regional and continental levels to develop and implement qualifications frameworks (NQF) and systems and cooperate with ACQF.

Activities include: training programmes (country-specific and multi-country), conferences, study visits, thematic webinars, peer-sharing on lessons learned and good practice and other modalities. Communication and advocacy activities are essential to generate take-up and visibility of the ACQF for institutions and end-users.

Outcome 2: National Qualifications Frameworks developed and implemented in African countries

Outcome 3: ACQF implemented

Output 3.1: Consolidated governance of ACQF and launched ACQF Qualifications Platform; cooperation and networking with other regional and international qualifications frameworks and with relevant Conventions (such as UNESCO recognition conventions) and relevant Networks.

Output 3.2: NQFs referenced to ACQF

Output 3.3: RPL campaign supporting policies and practices at national and regional levels; and wider dissemination and outreach to different users groups.

Output 3.4: Developed common profiles of qualifications relevant for emerging occupations, green and digital skills and free trade in Africa.

These technical specifications are focused on the ACQF Qualifications Platform, a key component of the Output 3.1.

Scope, objectives and principles of the ACQF

The ACQF is defined as an overarching reference qualifications framework of ten levels, serving as a connector and translation device between different qualifications frameworks or systems and their levels.

ACQF is a policy and instrument of continental scope to deliver on the objectives of enhanced transparency and comparability of qualifications and mutual trust between qualifications frameworks and systems for lifelong learning in Africa. ACQF contributes to quality and recognition of skills and qualifications and supports parity of esteem of all modalities of learning and certification throughout life. The ACQF is inclusive of all levels and types of qualifications, open to innovation to address new demands and developments from the digital and green transformation, enables stakeholder participation and learning from relevant national, regional and global experiences.

The ACQF is a comprehensive meta-referencing qualifications framework, designed to support a holistic and systemic vision of learning, qualifications, and credentials. The ACQF is oriented to lifelong learning and supports parity of esteem of learning outcomes acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts, and all levels of education and training.

The ACQF is open to cooperate and undertake referencing activities with all countries and qualifications frameworks and systems, and to compare with other regional qualifications frameworks globally, following transparent and fair criteria and processes.

The ACQF will deliver on the areas of activity defined in this policy document, namely: a) referencing between qualifications frameworks; b) recognition of prior learning campaign; c) digital qualifications platform (database); d) common profiles of qualifications; e) capacity development and support to national qualifications frameworks; f) networking, communication, and advocacy; g) analysis, monitoring, and evaluation.

The ACQF will establish a continental platform open for publication and dissemination of information on national qualifications and credentials of NQFs referenced to the ACQF, and on other qualifications, profiles, and standards relevant for AU integration policies, in accordance with guidelines and decisions of the ACQF governing structure. This platform will support data analysis, and sharing with education, labour market, career guidance and skills matching institutions and stakeholders, and with institutions delivering on relevant AU policies (e.g., social affairs, migration, free trade, environment, and agriculture).

1.3 The ACQF Qualifications Platform

The general objectives and main orientations on the future ACQF Qualifications Platform (database) are formulated in the [ACQF Policy Document](#) (pages 16 and 30), and in the [ACQF Guideline 6](#) (On registers of qualifications). The [Brief ACQF Handbook](#) contains a synthesis of the ACQF Guideline 6, among others.

The scope, objectives and characteristics of the ACQF Qualifications Platform defined in these sources are the fundamental specifications for this procurement procedure, and they are quoted hereafter.

The ACQF Policy Document defines the issues to be addressed, the rationale and the uses of the ACQF Qualifications Platform (pages 16-18).

a) Issues to be addressed by the ACQF Qualifications Platform

“The African continent is marked by a wide diversity of education and qualifications systems, with different structures and limited updated information on quality assured qualifications in the public domain. International qualifications related to dynamic professional sectors, technologies and global companies gain ground, but often are not linked with qualifications frameworks and systems. A range of new transversal, digital and green skills are required for people to adapt and be employable in the context of the transformation of work and learning, digitalisation of public and private organisations and demands for a greener and sustainable economy. Migrants and refugees carry potentialities, skills, hope for safer life and work – but often no qualifications documents. Furthermore, continental free trade has started operations in a range of sectors, a process likely to trigger demand for new skills and qualifications and more efficient recognition processes. The informal sector of the economy shows

no signs of abating and there is a vast need for good quality programmes of recognition of prior learning and access to modular skills development opportunities with certification.

b) Uses, benefits and scope of the ACQF Qualifications Platform

The ACQF and the Qualifications Platform will provide a contribution of continental scope to address these issues, complementing and enhancing national policies and systems and regional cooperation on these matters.

As a transparency instrument for users' information and guidance, the ACQF Qualifications Platform will serve and support the national qualifications authorities and the awarding bodies, end-users (for example, learners, employers, career counsellors, teachers, and trainers) and in wider terms, the countries, regions, and the continent as a whole.

The ACQF Qualifications Platform will be conceived for distinct use cases, each supported by adequate and transparent procedures, to be developed.

The scope of the ACQF Qualifications Platform will notably support the following uses, herewith proposed as an initial concept, to be further supported by a technical and feasibility analysis:

- a) Use by national qualifications frameworks or systems – notably in two ways:
- Information sharing on national qualifications included in NQFs referenced to the ACQF. The ACQF offers the infrastructure as a free public service for NQFs that have referenced to the ACQF. These NQFs may link their qualifications databases to the ACQF Platform. Having referenced to ACQF levels, the national qualifications of these NQFs and national registers are automatically associated with the ACQF levels. This information is shared publicly.
 - The ACQF Platform can be used at national level – countries may adopt the technology and infrastructure provided by the ACQF Platform as a free service to list and manage their national qualifications. The national qualifications database is managed by the competent national authorities but can be built on the infrastructure provided by the ACQF Qualifications Platform, upon the necessary feasibility analysis and agreement on terms and conditions.
- b) International qualifications with high labour market, societal, technological value and currency can contribute to AU policies of economic integration, growth, and innovation. International qualifications are awarded by a legally established international body (association, organisation, professional sector, or company) or by a national body acting on behalf of an international body, are used in more than one country and include learning outcomes assessed with reference to standards established by an international body. Such qualifications may not be included in the NQF and may not have a NQF level. Inclusion of international qualifications in the ACQF Qualifications Platform (database) contributes to transparency and trust, and their listing builds on transparent procedures based on accepted state-of-the-art practice, on relevant aspects of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA), and other relevant guidelines and regulations.
- c) Common continental qualifications profiles related to priorities and sectors of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other AU policies. Such qualifications profiles/standards should focus on high labour market, societal, technological value for the continent and be developed by multi-country teams on the basis of an agreed methodology

and quality assurance to ensure acceptability and endorsement across borders in Africa. These common profiles are free for countries to use to design national courses and programmes in secondary and tertiary education, continuing training, and employment training. The related full qualifications are awarded by the countries' competent bodies.

Other uses of ACQF Qualifications Platform will be proposed as relevant.

The goal of registration and databases of qualifications is to enhance transparency, mutual understanding, acceptability and recognition of qualifications amongst Member States across the African Continent. This will promote access to reliable information on courses and qualifications, mobility and portability of qualifications hence creating opportunities for access to learning, transfer of learning and progression in learning among Member States nationals.

Registration of qualifications is an important measure that enhances quality and regulation of qualifications. It provides greater protection for the public and employers as key information required for recognition purposes is made available on the platform/database.”

d) Data model of the ACQF Qualifications Platform: basic elements

Annex 3 of the ACQF Policy document (page 30) recommends the minimum elements and data fields in qualifications design and structure, as quoted hereafter. These elements shall be taken into consideration in design of the metadata and taxonomy attached to the ACQF.

“Contribution to enhanced transparency, quality and comparability of qualifications is a major objective of the ACQF. Across the continent, the information described in existing qualifications documents and databases varies in terms of structure, data fields and format of the main learning outcomes. The rich diversity of qualifications systems on the continent is not an impediment on the way towards comparability and readability of qualifications, but this recommendation will contribute to harmonise the information and data fields used by different countries in structuring their qualifications and registers or databases of qualifications. Such harmonisation will contribute to ease recognition of qualifications of all levels, and consequently mobility of learners and workers, and access to employment in jobs matching the acquired qualification.

ACQF countries are invited to consider the following elements in structuring the information on qualifications included in the NQF/NQS referenced to the ACQF, and in the national qualifications registers. The ACQF implementation structure will provide practical guidance to national qualifications institutions on the implementation of this recommendation.

The elements of the recommended data model, underpinning the structuring of qualifications on ACQF Qualifications Platform, are listed under paragraph 2.1, point 5.

1.4 Overview of qualifications registers and databases in Africa

This brief overview is based on a web search (online registers and databases), the ACQF feasibility report (2021) and ACQF Mapping study (2021). It identifies some cases with different features and is not an exhaustive study. This brief overview explores two main questions:

- What can we learn from NQF registers and databases?
- Which qualifications are included in NQF registers and databases – by levels and by sectors?

Table 1: Overview on registers / databases of qualifications (associated with the NQFs) in some African countries

Country	Register / database of qualifications	Qualifications included	Key features
Botswana	Botswana Qualifications Authority – Register of qualifications	822 full qualifications - all levels of NCQF (03/07/2023)	The register is searchable by title of qualification (search by key word tool). Qualifications documents can be viewed and downloaded. The online register publishes a list of qualifications (title, type, level, field, document). All registered qualifications are formatted based on a standardised model. Section B of the model - Qualifications Specifications contains graduate profile (learning outcomes) and the associated assessment criteria (detail and clarify the learning outcomes).
Cape Verde	National Catalogue of Qualifications	64 full qualifications (levels 2 to 5 of the NQF) 7 standards for recognition of prior learning (RPL)	The digital online Catalogue is accessible as a repository of PDFs. These qualifications are standards recommended to all providers and can be combined in training programmes for double certification (leading to a vocational certificate and a general education certificate / diploma). All qualifications are structured based on a standardised format, including professional profile, units of competence (learning outcomes and assessment criteria), training programme (modules) and training module in the real context of work. The qualifications in the Catalogue are distributed in 15 professional families. The Catalogue includes also seven Standards for Recognition of Prior Learning, and a new Transversal Training Module of 3 units (entrepreneurial competences).
Mauritius MQA	National Qualifications and Unit Standards Maintained and managed by MQA	190 qualifications distributed in 22 sectors As of 03/07/2023: 113 qualifications	The digital online database of National Qualifications and Unit Standards is accessible as a repository of qualifications files in PDF format. Qualifications at all levels (1—6) are structured in unit standards, described as learning outcomes. All qualifications files are structured

		are published, 77 under review Includes: qualifications of levels 1 to 6 of NQF.	following harmonized format. The qualification files on the database include data on level, credits, review date, access to qualification including through RPL, list of unit standard titles and respective credits, and brief description of the purpose of the qualification.
Morocco	a) Vocational training in figures (2019-2020) b) OFPPT Website « My Way »: Trouver une formation	352 TVET programmes leading to qualifications in 4 levels of NQF	a) Summary of all registered qualifications maintained by TVET Department. Annual update. Distribution of programmes by levels of qualification and sectors: - 4 levels: specialization, qualification, technician, technician specialist - 21 sectors b) The website “My Way” of OFPPT provides easily accessible information and guidance for users / learners, and contains 412 programmes leading to different levels of qualification in vocational education and training. The information published online by qualification is structured in the following data fields: admission conditions, related occupations, training assessment, selection of candidates, organisation of training and training profile (expected learning outcomes).
Mozambique	National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications Managed and maintained by ANEP	164 qualifications registered, at levels 2 to 5. Published on the online Catalogue (03/07/2023): 153. 19 independent modules	The digital online Catalogue is accessible as a repository of PDFs. All qualifications are structured based on a standardised format, including general information, units of general competencies, units of vocational competencies, training modules (general and vocational), training programme (modules) and training module in the real context of work. The qualifications in the Catalogue are distributed in 16 professional families. Moreover, the Catalogue also includes 19 independent modules.
South Africa	SAQA: register of qualifications and part-qualifications Managed and maintained by SAQA	Large number of qualifications of all levels (over 22,000)	SAQA online register contains separate searchable databases: 1. All qualifications and unit standards (no matter their status) 2. Registered qualifications and unit standards (NQF qualifications) 3. Qualifications and unit standards that have passed their registration end date

			4. Professional Bodies and Professional Designations
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In these six cases the terms used to designate a collection of qualifications vary, as highlighted below:

- “Register” (in Botswana, South Africa, Kenya)
- “Catalogue of qualifications” (“Catálogo de qualificações”) (in Cabo Verde and Mozambique)
- Répertoire (in Morocco)

In five out of six (exception: Morocco) above indicated countries, the qualifications register / database is a component of the NQF ecosystem, and collects qualifications included in the NQF following national regulations. In the case of Botswana and South Africa the qualifications included in the register are the individual qualifications of providers, hence the very large number in the register. In the other mentioned countries (Mauritius, Mozambique, Cabo Verde) the register / catalogue contains standards of qualifications recommended for use by different providers. These five registers are digital and accessible online, at the website of the respective national qualifications agency / authority.

In Morocco the NQF is not yet approved in legislation and there is no online repertoire of existing qualifications standards and programmes approved by the national authorities. Information on these qualifications in Morocco can be obtained from the relevant authorities. A unique source on programmes and courses on offer is the website of [OFPPT](#), which is linked to “My Way”, a space dedicated to information on all courses on offer in vocational education and training.

Overview of qualifications registers and databases in other parts of the world

Most industrialised countries and some communities of countries developed and continue improving their management information systems of qualifications, credentials and courses. A few cases are summarised: Europe (EQF and Europass), United States, New Zealand, Australia, and Hong-Kong.

Europe: European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and Europass

Table 2: Main outcomes of EQF implementation (as of June 2023)

Feature	EQF
Region / community	European Union and other countries with specific status of cooperation 41 countries: 27 EU Member States and 14 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine).
Scope and levels	- Comprehensive; Inclusive of all sub-sectors and modes of learning (including non-formal and informal). - 8 levels - Descriptors: knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy
Countries that referenced / aligned NQFs to RQF	36 countries (out of 41) referenced to EQF and 32 of these reports are published .

	6 countries have updated referencing reports in the period 2019-June 2023 (The Netherlands, Latvia, Ireland, France, Italy, Belgium-FI)
Use of EQF levels by countries	34 (out of 41) use EQF levels on their qualifications documents (diplomas, certificates, supplements) 25 use EQF levels on their national qualifications databases
Transparency of information on qualifications	21 countries: connected national databases / registers with the Qualifications Database Register (QDR) and publication of qualifications on Europass
Qualifications registers and databases	The large majority of EQF countries have their qualifications databases accessible online, with search functions to discover the characteristics of national qualifications and credentials.

Table 3: Qualifications registers / databases of a sample of EQF countries

Country / NQF	Database / register of qualifications
Austria	Qualifications Register Connected to Europass
Belgium (French speaking)	Qualifications register Connected to Europass
Belgium (Flandres)	VKS Database Connected to Europass
Czech Republic	National Register of Qualifications Connected to Europass 1 455 qualifications (July 2023)
Denmark	UddannelsesGuiden (Education Guide)
Estonia	Qualifications Register-search Connected to Europass 4 533 qualifications (July 2023)
France	RNCP – search Connected to Europass
Germany	Qualifications Register-search Connected to Europass
Greece	Qualifications Register-search Connected to Europass 1048 qualifications (04/07/2023)
Ireland	Irish Register of Qualifications - QQI Connected to Europass
Latvia	Latvian Qualifications Database Connected to Europass 2404 qualifications
Lithuania	AIKOS – register of qualifications Connected to Europass 2173 qualifications (04/07/2023)
Hungary	Hungarian Qualifications Framework – register

	Connected to Europass 3438 qualifications of all levels (04/07/2023)
Malta	Malta Qualifications Database Connected to Europass 828 qualifications of all levels (04/07/2023)
Netherlands	NLQF Qualifications Database Connected to Europass
Poland	Integrated Qualifications Register 15150 qualifications (04/07/2023) Connected to Europass
Portugal	Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações Connected to Europass 392 qualifications (levels 2-5), 3 979 competence units, 8 665 units of short-duration training (04/07/2023)
Slovenia	SQF Register Connected to Europass
Slovakia	SOK Register of qualifications

In the context of the successive skills agendas, the EU developed and continuously improves the Europass, which hosts the qualifications data managed by the Qualifications Database Register. Supported by the [Europass Decision](#) and other initiatives, the European Commission developed [ESCO](#), as the multilingual taxonomy of skills and occupations of the EU. Moreover the [European Learning Model](#) (ELM) was developed as the first multilingual data model for learning globally speaking. These instruments contribute to transparency, comparability and interoperability of skills, qualifications and credentials, and to [European Skills Agenda](#), the [European Education Area](#) and the [Digital Education Action Plan](#). The European Commission launched in 2023 the European Learning Model v.3 (ELM v.3). This first multilingual data model for learning is an exciting new development in the field of knowledge and skills data exchange, opening new possibilities for interoperability and credential exchange. With over 480 properties, the ELM allows for the capture and validation of all learning related data, including formal, non-formal and informal learning. It caters for the needs of general education, Vocational Education and Training, higher education, adult learning, and labour market trainings. This allows for the creation and portability of rich data, for instance for [European Digital Credentials for Learning](#). Its uses are not limited to a single sector and addresses actors in Employment, Skills, Education and Training alike.

United States

- [Credential Engine](#) (United States) developed a technology, services and analytical capabilities. Credential Engine created the Credential Transparency Description Language, [CTDL](#) schema, a common language for any organisation to use with their information systems to empower learners, workers, educators, employers, and policymakers. CTDL is a large dictionary of terms and the family of de facto standards for making descriptions of credentials and other resources available as data for search and discovery and cross-system interoperability.
 - o [Credential Finder](#): is a tool for exploring all of the information published to the Credential Registry.
 - o [Credential Publisher](#): Publish to the Credential Publisher

New Zealand

- The search tool to find qualifications is integrated in the website of NZQA - [New Zealand Qualifications Authority](#).
- The [register of NZQA-approved Micro-Credentials](#) contains over 220 micro-credentials at different levels of the NQF (levels 3 to 7).

Australia

- The Australian Skills Quality Authority ([ASQA](#)) publishes information on registered providers of education, course accreditation. [Training.gov.au](#) is the official national register of information on vocational education and training (VET) in Australia.

Hong Kong

- [Qualifications Register](#) (QR).
- QR is a centralised online database containing information on quality assured qualifications and their operators and assessment agencies for Recognition of Prior Learning. All qualifications listed on the QR are quality-assured and recognised under the [Qualifications Framework](#). Under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance, the [Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications](#) is specified as the QR Authority.

2. Objectives and expected results of the service

The objective of this procurement procedure is to develop, test and operationalise the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (Database) (ACQF QCP). The types of services that will be contracted under this framework contract are described above in Section **1.3 The ACQF Qualifications Platform** notably: the wider issues to be addressed, purposes, scope and the basis data model of the ACQF QCP. These characteristics are defined in the main sources of the ACQF as a policy instrument, which are validated by the African Union and the Member States and represent the orientation and guidance for the activities of the project ACQF-II. The requirements described hereafter are based and aligned with these characteristics.

These technical specifications use the internationally accepted definitions and concept of “qualifications”, “credentials”, “micro-credentials”, “National Qualifications Frameworks”, “National qualifications systems”, “Registers of qualifications”, “Quality assurance”, “Accreditation”, as endorsed or published by UNESCO-UNEVOC, European Commission, European Qualifications Framework, Europass, Cedefop, and mentioned by the ACQF Thematic Brief 1⁴.

2.1 Main characteristics

1. **Designation:** the ACQF Qualifications Platform (Database) will be called [ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform \(ACQF QCP\)](#), to ensure it will be appropriately designed to ingest, process, classify, compare and visualize information and data on different categories of qualifications of all sub-sectors of education and training of the involved countries, and bodies / institutions.

⁴ ACQF Thematic Brief 1: <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/thematic-briefs/acqf-thematic-brief-1-concepts-and-definitions>

2. **The ACQF QCP is a system comprising:** databases, data storage safe and scalable environment; interoperability tools and functions; tools for classification, comparison and linkage of the qualifications data; search function; visualization platform for end users' access to the search and discovery functions and other functions designed in the data system (e.g.: comparison, intelligence). For real-time and linked data analysis, the ACQF QCP can be enhanced with relevant machine-learning / AI techniques, as adequate for the scope of work and wider context.
3. **Scope:** the ACQF QCP shall comprise two main layers of interconnected databases: a) national and b) continental.
 - a. **Databases of national qualifications**, accessible and manageable by the relevant national institutions, such as: national qualifications authorities, ministries of education, or other departments entrusted with the responsibility to register national qualifications. The databases of national qualifications shall be structured, built and interconnected on the basis of common harmonized design and data model.

Countries interested to use this database to register and manage their national quality assured qualifications will be indicated. Participation in development of national interconnected databases is voluntary, but the ACQF-II shall communicate the necessary and adequate information to ensure mutual trust and buy-in of the countries.

Countries that can be part of a pilot group for the construction of national qualifications databases under the ACQF-II: a group of up to 10 countries will cooperate with the ACQF-II project on development and implementation of their NQFs and related policies. These are the primary target countries for piloting this initiative: Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia, and South Sudan. The list of countries is indicative and could change depending on the progress with NQF development and implementation.

- b. **Wider (Continental) database of qualifications and credentials:** structured and built on the basis of the data model proposed in chapter 1.2.2.1 (see hereafter) and conceived to be a Network of qualifications databases for Africa, using the potentialities and functionalities of interoperability. This wider level of the ACQF QCP shall connect national databases of qualifications, and other databases meeting the criteria of quality, credibility and legitimacy internationally applied for such databases of qualifications. The national databases to be **connected** with the continental database can be: a) the databases developed and established by this project under these ToRs; b) other already existing national qualifications databases, if their technical characteristics are appropriate.

Moreover, the continental database will contain other types of qualifications and credentials, not necessarily linked to national databases, such as: international qualifications (international organisations, corporations, vendors, following criteria of quality and credibility), micro-credentials, courses and learning opportunities of digital platforms and providers. This part of the database is conceived for systematisation and information-sharing and does not attribute any quality labels. The criteria and methodology to collect, classify and visualize this data on the continental layer of the ACQF QCP will be defined with the ACQF stakeholders and Advisory Group.

4. **Services provided by ACQF QCP (two layers):** in general terms, advanced qualifications databases go beyond the simple function of being repositories of documents or of static information on courses and qualifications. Modern qualifications databases provide a range of services, such as registration, discovery, comparison, guidance, and intelligence. The ACQF QCP has the ambition to be such a modern data system and visualization instrument for users. The contractor will analyse and assess the functions that can be realistically deployed in the period of time of this project (until end 2026). The minimum functions required by this tender are: registration, classification, connection and interoperability, discovery (search and visualize), and some elements of comparison and minimum data analysis (such as total number of qualifications registered by country).
5. **Data model:** the basic elements of the data model are listed hereafter. These elements can be adjusted to the local context and design of the database. These elements are to be used in structuring the national and the continental databases that constitute the ACQF QCP. The countries participating in and benefiting of the ACQF QCP may negotiate some minimal adjustments of the minimum data fields applied to their database, for ex. in case the data field is irrelevant or non-existing in the national qualifications system. Countries may request use of complementary data fields, e.g.: reference or code of the qualification in the national register or in the official journal.

Required elements of the data model

- Title of qualification
- Field of education and training (according to ISCED-2013, fields of education and training – ISCED-F 2013)⁵
- Country code
- NQF level – ACQF level
- Awarding body or competent authority
- Provider (different types: training centres, schools, higher education institutions, others as authorised by the involved countries and institutions)
- Description of the qualification: short statements on the learning outcomes – what the learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do
- Credit points/notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (if available)
- Links of the qualification (partly or fully) to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL, VAE, VNFIL)
- Expiry date (if available)
- Link to qualifications database (if available)

Optional elements

- External quality assurance/regulatory body
- Ways to acquire the qualification
- Relationship to occupations or occupational classification.”

⁵ ISCED-F 2013, at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-en.pdf>

6. Technical aspects:

- a. The data system of the ACQF QCP is to be based on Linked Open Data, and on Open Source software.
- b. The data system should be compatible with Europass, operate with internet security protocols, and take into account the adequate data protection legislation.
- c. Consider lessons learned from relevant international practice.
- d. Consider existing taxonomies and classifications, especially ISCED-2011 and ESCO in designing the data model, and in planning and implementing correspondence and crosswalks between pre-existing classifications (for ex.: national qualifications) and the ACQF QCP model, as adequate.

7. Governance aspects:

- a. The ACQF Advisory Group and the African Union Commission are the entities, which will be responsible to ensure the integrity and maintenance of the ACQF QCP after the completion of the current ACQF-II project (after end 2026). Other governance options are being studied, namely the creation of the Networks of African NQFs. The ACQF conference on 13/July endorsed and commended the proposal to establish such a Network during the course of the ACQF-II project.
- b. The ownership, rights and responsibilities linked with the maintenance, security and integrity of the ACQF QCP and all the data it will contain will be transferred to the governance setting indicated in 6.a.
- c. During the ACQF-II project (until end 2026) ETF, as contractor and implementation agency, ensures the maintenance, security, data protection and stability of the ACQF QCP through this tender.

Collaboration and coordination with ACQF-II project coordination

The contractor(s) will work in close collaboration with the content coordinator of ACQF-II project, notably to discuss and agree the deliverables and their milestones, access the most relevant ACQF stakeholders, address issues and agree contextualised solutions and enable effective coordination with the other activities and milestones of the ACQF-II project. Communication and advocacy messages and actions related with the ACQF QCP will be agreed and pre-authorised by the content coordinator of ACQF-II project. Regular progress report meetings will be conducted to ensure efficiency in the flow of work and mutual trust with the African Union and stakeholders.

The contractor(s) is responsible for providing the deliverables and implementing the related activities, directly contributing to the achievement of the objective(s) and result(s) described above.

The contractor(s) will guarantee the timely provision of all the requested deliverables by ensuring a high quality of both the content and language (e.g., easy to read English).

2.2 Main activities and related outputs envisaged

1. **Develop a proof of concept of the ACQF QCP, taking account of the context, resources, expectations and needs of the ACQF:** develop a comprehensive report presenting the strategic (purposes, benefits, uses), taking into account the findings from the baseline analysis and stakeholders consultation and the conceptual, technological and methodological underpinnings and components of the ACQF QCP, the main digital tools and protocols necessary for a functional and user friendly product meeting the scope, purposes and uses defined in Section 1.2 of these technical specifications. **Concept and architecture of the ACQF QCP:** develop a comprehensive report presenting the strategic (purposes, benefits, uses), conceptual, technological and methodological underpinnings and components of the ACQF QCP, the main digital tools and protocols necessary for a functional and user-friendly product meeting the scope, purposes and uses defined in section 1.2 of these technical specifications.

Output: report defining the concept, scope, issues and proposed solutions; with generic technical schemes and specifications. Up to 3 months upon signature of the contract.

2. **Baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation:** in addition to the concise information on qualifications databases and registers discovered by the ACQF project in a few countries, it is important to conduct a wider identification of existing practice in other countries and assess the degree of maturity of the existing databases, the willingness and readiness to share data on qualifications and several technical viability matters. It is recommended that a small working group be created, composed of between two - four ACQF-II stakeholders to support the consultation and exchanges, provide advice on contextual matters and learn from the contacts and development process of the ACQF QCP. The findings of this output can feed into output 1 (Concept and architecture of the ACQF QCP).

Output: report with conclusions addressing the needs of contextualized and impact-oriented implementation. Up to 3 months upon signature of the contract.

3. **Develop, test, launch and operationalize the ACQF QCP:** Conduct the technical development of the systems for the ACQF QCP, with software and interoperability mechanisms, database functionalities, classification tools, visualization front-end, storage, data quality monitoring, testing tools – addressing both layers of the ACQF QCP (national and continental databases, interoperable). The structural elements of the visualization tool and the back-end user interface (e.g. to upload qualifications data by national authorities) should be available in 3 languages (English, French, Portuguese).

Output:

- i) ACQF QCP – first stage, functional database and demonstration. Up to 12 months after signature of the contract.
- ii) ACQF QCP – 2nd stage, functional database with some qualifications data, and demonstration of main functionalities. Up to 18 months after signature of the contract.
- iii) ACQF QCP – 3rd stage, fully functional, with data and demonstration of all functionalities. All layers (national and continental) are operational, and functions flawless after testing. Up to 26 months after signature of the contract (before March 2026).

4. **Operationalise and scale the ACQF QCP:** the operationalization of the ACQF QCP is a milestone of high practical and political importance, both for the AU and the EU / ETF. This stage is the main output of this contract. The planning, design, and organisation of this stage should take account of all technical, political and human drivers and foundations of such a novel and large-scale initiative as the ACQF QCP. Ensure Cloud storage or equivalent. Link ACQF QCP to ACQF website / domain (www.acqf.africa), as adequate and viable.

It is recommended to organise a phased operationalization stage and process, which includes: comprehensive and holistic plan; testing phase; data collection into databases (national / continental); data processing, classification; checking, identification of problems and inconsistencies at technical, human levels; application of corrective measures; review of the initial planning; full scale launch of the ACQF QCP (both layers: national and continental; consider the possibility and opportunity of an intermediate layer of QCP, of regional scope for smaller groups of countries, e.g. East Africa Community – 7 countries).

Data collection in the national databases developed as part of the ACQF QCP: as a rule, should be managed and done by national institutions, with the necessary support, training and coaching by the contractor's experts, and following the adopted data model. In exceptional cases, the contractor will propose alternative solutions. Some countries will need technical and human support to implement the data collection in the database.

Maintain, check, and improve: elaborate the plan, adequate set of protocols and written help for technical staff - to maintain and ensure functioning, identification of problems, application of corrective and preventive measures. This set of tools and procedures should contribute to support sustainability of the ACQF QCP after completion of the project ACQF-II (end 2026).

Feedback, analysis: a functional system to collect feedback of the involved countries, allowing the project ACQF-II to regularly monitor the status of progress, take account of main challenges and collect information on good practice and lessons learned from the process of development and operationalization of the ACQF QCP.

Handbook of the ACQF QCP: comprehensive manual for users at national and continental levels. Detailed description of the architecture and used technology, Open-source software, classification, data model, data quality monitoring, interoperability (different relevant categories), FAQ. Handbook in English, French, Portuguese.

5. **Capacity development and advocacy:** the development, testing and operationalization of the ACQF QCP will be supported by capacity development actions, aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding and skills of the stakeholders and beneficiaries on all relevant aspects of the functionalities, benefits and consolidation of the ACQF QCP. Capacity development activities will be planned, designed and implemented taking account of the needs and level of knowledge of the key participants. A combination of online-onsite activities is recommended, as adequate for the available resources and time.

Output:

- i) Developed training manual and simple but effective pedagogic videos for users. Up to six months after signature of the contract.

- ii) Planned and conducted training programme in different modalities for the main users and stakeholders at national, regional and continental levels. The number of training sessions will depend on the number of countries, institutions and persons dealing with the national and continental database. In the period of 2 years upon signature of the contract.
- iii) Learners' feedback analysed – brief report. Up to 26 months upon signature of the contract.

6. Prepare the protocols and technical recommendations for hand-over of the ACQF QCP to African Union stakeholders or equivalent.

2.3 Areas and level of expertise

To effectively manage the contract and implement all the requested activities, the contractor will deploy a range of experts in different thematic and technical areas:

- Thematic expert(s)

Thematic expertise in skills and qualifications from e.g a qualifications agency, awarding body or national authority or a consultancy company with relevant experience with qualifications databases and implementing studies and evaluations.

- IT expert(s)

With relevant experience in development and maintenance of databases, Linked Open Data, application of interoperability mechanisms (technical, semantic), data science and analytics, use of artificial intelligence / algorithms for automation of processes; recent experience with developing and operationalising state of the art qualifications database, and networks of qualifications registers, compatible with Europass experience. Experience in developing and operationalising user-friendly and easy to use visualisation platforms / front-ends, ensuring optimal user experience. Experience in developing data models for management of qualifications and learning opportunities. Experience with provision of functional prototype environment is required. Proven experience in development of Handbooks and support materials to support effective communication and understanding of all specificities of the database / network of databases (ACQF QCP) by the relevant users (at national and network / continental level).

- Trainers and tutors

Experience with training and coaching users (back-end functions, data ingestion / collection), conducting stakeholder's consultation meetings and communication activities.

The experts should have possibilities to communicate with the stakeholders in the 3 languages of the African Union: English, French and Portuguese. This is especially important for training and coaching of users, and consultation meetings.

For the purposes of the contract implementation, the following are the minimum requirements for the different expert categories that will carry out the assignments:

Level of expert	Qualifications and skills	Professional experience	Language skills
Category I	Education at least up to Masters Degree level or equivalent.	at least 15 years of relevant professional experience of which at least 10 years related to the technical/thematic/ training area in the request for services.	An excellent command of English (Other language skills required notably French and Portuguese, for each assignment will be specified in the specific request for services)
Category II	Education at least up to Masters Degree level or equivalent.	at least 10 years of relevant professional experience of which at least 7 years related to the technical/thematic/ training area in the request for services.	
Category III	Education at least up to Bachelor Degree level.	at least 7 years relevant professional experience of which at least 5 years related to the technical/thematic/ training area in the request for services	
Category IV	Bachelor degree or equivalent.	at least 5 years of relevant professional experience of which at least 3 years related to the technical/thematic/ training area in the request for services.	
Category V	Certified skills and competences for the tasks in the request for services i.e data input, translation, etc	at least 3 years of relevant professional experience.	

3. How services will be contracted

As a result of this procurement procedure a multiple framework contract in cascade will be concluded with a maximum of two economic operators.

The contracting authority reserves the right to conclude a framework contract with one economic operator should only one tender satisfy the minimum requirements and pass the evaluation.

The framework contract in cascade applies a vertical system with the ranking of the two best tenders. Where the first ranked contractor does not accept the order or fails to observe the deadline for providing a specific tender i.e. is not available or interested in providing the services requested via a specific contract (or order form), the request is sent to the second ranked contractor.

The framework contract in cascade provides for a back-up in situations services need to be secured, either because of the scale or complexity of requirements, or because the service is urgent and timescales to respond are very short.

In principle, services will be ordered through a formal request for services and contracted using a specific contract/ order form. Each request for services will provide details of the service requested, the outputs and results expected, an estimated timeline and any additional requirements.

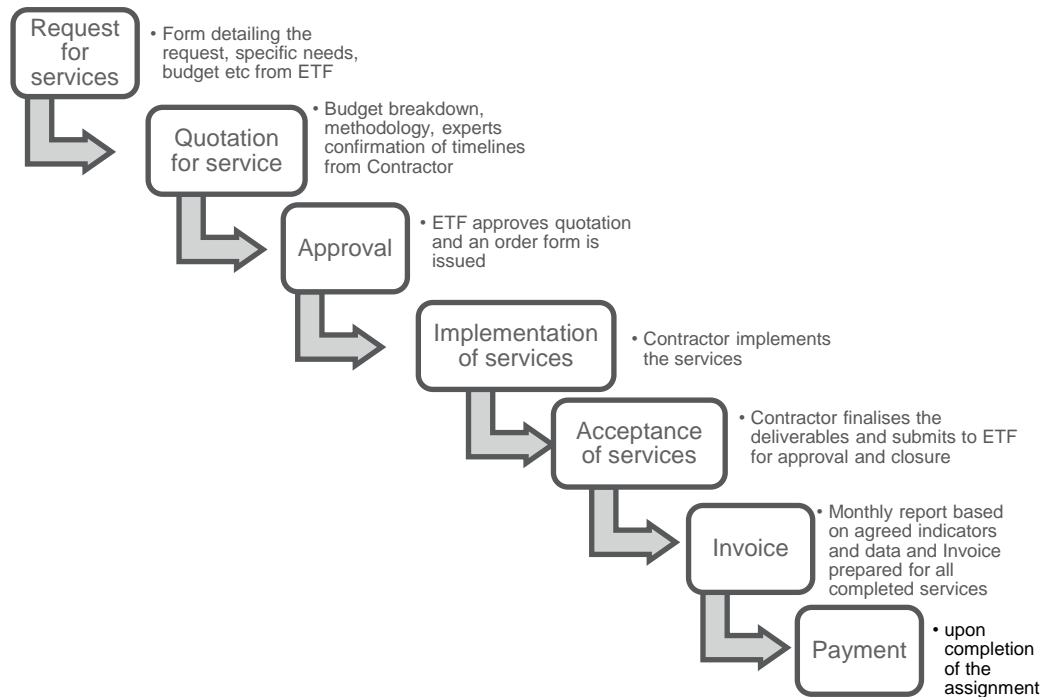
For the services related to the development of a proof of concept of the ACQF QCP and baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation (see paragraph 2.2, points 1 and 2) the contracting authority will issue a specific contract/ order form on the basis of the tender submitted for this procurement procedure and the related quoted fixed price.

For all other services, the procedure for concluding a specific contract/ order form is as follows:

1. The contracting authority will send a request for services with specific terms of reference for the assignment to the contractor together with the outputs and results expected, an estimated timeline and any additional requirements it considers relevant. The contracting authority may also request the CVs of the persons assigned to the task together with their back-ups;
2. The contractor will present to the contracting authority, within fourteen calendar days, a detailed methodology and description of the activities to be undertaken and the budget for the assignment, including if requested the CVs of the experts.
3. The contracting authority will send a signed specific contract/ order form to the contractor. The contractor will counter-sign and return the specific contracts/ order form to the contracting authority within three calendar days. Upon signature by both parties, the assignment can begin. Any additions or changes to the planned and agreed services need to be approved by the contracting authority before they are delivered.

Details on each step for requesting, implementing and paying for the services will be agreed in the first three months of implementation of the contract. At no stage in the process is the contracting authority legally bound to issue a specific contract/ order form.

SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE



Tenderers should bear in mind that at no stage in the process is the contracting authority legally bound to issue a specific contract/ order form.

The framework contract will have a duration of 12 months and be automatically renewable maximum three times for 12 months each. The detailed timeframe for the main activities and outputs is at paragraph 2.2 above.

4. Budget

The maximum budget available to issue specific contracts/ order forms under the multiple cascade framework contract is EUR 900,000 for the four-year period (maximum duration).

Assignments may be standalone tasks or as part of an ongoing activity. In some instances, a team of senior and junior experts will be required and in others one or more experts requested for specific tasks. The duration of the assignments will be variable and could be between less than three months or more than 12 consecutive months.

The total budget for each specific request for services will be that agreed between the contracting authority and the contractor in the signed specific contract/ order form. The budget cannot be exceeded unless agreed between both parties and a new amended specific contract/ order form is issued and counter-signed by both parties.

The assignment budget will be in the form of a lumpsum, covering experts working days and any other activities as stipulated in the request for services. Any other more specific requirements for the use of the budget may be mentioned in the specific terms of reference attached to the specific contract/ order form.

5. Monitoring progress

In addition to the deliverables as planned under each specific contract/ order form, the contractor will ensure regular communication with the contracting authority, in English, by phone and email, as necessary to ensure clarity on the progress of the contract and ongoing activities.

Upon completion of each assignment, the contractor will provide to the contracting authority an assignment closure report attaching all deliverables and confirming that these have been accepted and that the methodology/ownership has been transferred to the contracting authority.

Upon request, the contractor will provide brief ad-hoc progress reports during the life of the contract.

A financial report will also accompany the report, outlining the overall costs for all completed assignments.

6. Payment plan

The specific conditions for payment of specific contracts/ order forms under this framework contract are:

Payment	Amount of specific contract/ order form value	Milestone
Pre-financing	30%	Signature and invoice
Interim	40%	Acceptance of key deliverables and/or submission of interim progress report and invoice as outlined in the specific terms of reference. As appropriate the progress report/key deliverables will contain a list of all <i>pre-existing rights</i> to the <i>results</i> or parts of the <i>results</i> or a declaration stating that there are no such <i>pre-existing rights</i> .
Final	30%	Completion of the assignment and/or submission of final closure report and invoice as outlined in the specific terms of reference. As appropriate the closure report/key deliverables will contain a list of all <i>pre-existing rights</i> to the <i>results</i> or parts of the <i>results</i> or a declaration stating that there are no such <i>pre-existing rights</i> .

PART B – ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

7. Timetable for the procurement procedure

The timetable for this procurement procedure and signature of the resulting contract is as follows:

	Date	Comments
Tender launch date	16/08/2023	Date publication sent to OJ
Deadline for request of clarifications	02/10/2023	To be submitted via e-Tendering portal using the “questions and answers” tab, by clicking on “create a question”
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the ETF	04/10/2023	Published on e-Tendering portal
Deadline for submission of tenders	10/10/2023 at 11:00 local time	To be submitted via e-Tendering portal using the “data” tab, by clicking on “submit a tender”
Opening session	11/10/2023 at 11:00 local time	
Evaluation of tenders	16/10/2023	Estimated starting date
Notification of award	November 2023	Estimated
Contract signature	November 2023	Estimated
Commencement date of activities	December 2023	Estimated

8. Preparing the tender: signing documents

Where a document needs to be signed, it is recommended to use a qualified electronic signature (QES) as defined in Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (the eIDAS Regulation).

Please find the link to trusted providers of QES signatures [Trusted List Browser \(europa.eu\)](#) and a general link with information on QES [Introduction to e-signature \(europa.eu\)](#).

In the event you do not possess QES, you may use hand-written signature and send documents scanned. However, during the evaluation the contracting authority will request that the original hand-written signed original is sent by post to the ETF address.

All documents must be signed by the signatories (when they are individuals) or by their duly authorised representatives.

9. Preparing the tender: administrative documents

9.1 Legal entity form

Tenderers must provide the legal entity form duly completed and signed with the related supporting documents (copy of company register, VAT declaration).

The standard form is available for download at the following address: [Legal entities \(europa.eu\)](#)

9.2 Tender checklist and contact details

Tenderers must provide the tender checklist at Annex A with all the requested administrative information and contact details.

9.3 Declaration on exclusion and selection criteria

Tenderers are required to provide the completed and signed 'Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria'.

This standard declaration form is available for downloading at the following address:

<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/about/procurement>

The ETF may request further documentary evidence to support the self-declaration before contract award. Please note that a request for evidence in no way implies that the tenderer has been successful.

9.3.1 Exclusion criteria

Tenderers will be excluded in case they are in any of the situations of exclusion listed in the declaration.

9.3.2 Selection criteria

Technical and professional capacity

You must have the following technical and professional capacity to perform the contract:

- At least three years' experience in provision of database development services similar to those described in the technical specifications in terms of technical complexity and size.

Evidence (to be provided upon request):

The ETF may request the following documentary evidence to support the self-declaration before contract award:

- A list of databases development services similar to those described in the technical specifications, implemented over the past three years, including start date and duration, short description and number of resources involved, level of technical complexity, size and value, names of recipients of the service.

The list should include as a minimum two database developments implemented over the past three years with an overall value of at least EUR 250,000 covering a technical complexity similar to the services requested under the technical specifications (across different countries and interoperability).

Economic and financial capacity

For each of the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed, the tenderer must have:

- A yearly turnover/ revenue of at least EUR 250,000.

- The ratio between short-term assets and short-term debts equal to or above 1.

Evidence (to be provided upon request)

- The presentation of financial statements for the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed signed by the legal representative.
- The table on the tenderer's financial stability (Annex C) duly filled in.

9.4 Joint offers and subcontracting

Joint offers

A joint offer is a situation where a tender is submitted by a group of economic operators, who are not required to adopt a particular legal form.

Documents to be provided in joint offers

The tender has to be signed by the lead member of the group which has been duly authorised by the other members of the grouping when the tenderers have not yet formed a legal entity.

The following documents have to be provided with the tender:

A power of attorney from all members to the lead member of the group

A document clearly stating which member will be carrying out which tasks as well as who has been appointed by the others as the lead member

The legal entity form and related supporting document(s) for all members

The "Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria" for all members.

Partners in a joint offer assume joint and several liability towards the ETF for the performance of the contract as a whole. This implies that all members have an equal standing towards the ETF in executing the contract.

The lead member shall sign the contract with the ETF, shall have full authority to bind and manage all members and shall be responsible for the overall administration of the contract. The power of attorney contained in the tender will be attached to the resulting contract.

Evaluation of the joint offer

Each member of the grouping must be from an eligible country. The exclusion of a member of the group leads to the exclusion of the tender.

The exclusion criteria will be assessed in relation to each economic operator individually. Each member of the group must be eligible. The exclusion of a member of the group leads to the exclusion of the tender.

The selection criteria will be assessed as follows:

The selection criteria for technical and professional capacity will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of all members of the group as a whole. The lead partner shall provide the required evidence on behalf of the group.

The selection criteria for economic and financial capacity will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of all members of the group as a whole. However, each member of group must provide the required evidence.

The award criteria will be assessed in relation to the tender, irrespective of whether it has been submitted by a single legal/natural person or as a joint offer.

Subcontracting

Sub-contracting is a situation where a contract has been or is to be established between ETF and a contractor and where the contractor, in order to carry out the contract, enters into legal commitments with other legal entities for performing part of the work, service or supply. The contractor shall retain full responsibility towards the ETF for the implementation of the contract. The ETF has no direct legal commitment with subcontractor(s).

An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them in order to contribute directly to the performance of the activities mentioned in the tender specifications.

Documents to be provided for subcontracting

For subcontracting exceeding 10% of the total value of the contract per subcontractor, the tenderer must provide the following additional documents:

A document from the tenderer clearly stating the identity, roles, activities and responsibilities of subcontractor(s) and specifying the volume/proportion for each subcontractor

A letter of intent by each subcontractor stating its unambiguous undertaking to collaborate with the tenderer if he wins the contract and the extent of the resources that it will put at the tenderer's disposal for the performance of the contract

If the above-mentioned documents are not provided, the ETF shall assume that the tenderer does not intend subcontracting or intends subcontracting below the 10% limit.

Evaluation of tender with subcontracting exceeding 10% of the contract value

The tenderer must be from an eligible country, subcontractors may be from non-eligible countries.

The exclusion criteria will be assessed in relation to the tenderer and to each subcontractor exceeding 10% of the total value of the contract. The tenderer and its subcontractors must be eligible and provide the required evidence. The exclusion of the tenderer leads to the exclusion of the tender. The exclusion of a subcontractor may lead to the exclusion of the tender.

The selection criteria will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of the tenderer and the subcontractor(s) to the extent that the subcontractor puts its resources at the disposal of the tenderer. The required evidence should be provided and signed by the tenderer only.

The award criteria will be assessed in relation to the tender.

10. Preparing the tender: technical and financial proposal

The tender must demonstrate an understanding of the ETF technical specifications and be presented in clear concise language.

10.1 Technical proposal

The technical proposal must include the following information and must be undersigned for acceptance:

A. Compliance with the technical specification (minimum requirements)

Tenderers are required to provide the completed and signed 'Declaration on honour on minimum requirements' in Annex B confirming that these requirements are being met. Tenderers not meeting the minimum requirements will be rejected and will not be evaluated against the award criteria.

B. Contract management team and methodology (max 5 pages including summary profiles)

Nominate a contract manager who will oversee and ensure efficient management of the contract and a team for the management all of the services requested. In addition, they will be the key contact person for all communication with the ETF and liaise with the experts to ensure timely completion of reports, invoices, deliverables and requested activities.

- Short profile of the contract manager confirming fluency in English - which will be the operational language for all formal communication between the contracting authority and the contractor.
- A clear description of the team composition, a short profile of each member, roles and responsibilities of the staff allocated to this contract must be provided, including any backstopping solution.

N.B. The tenderer is not required to include full CVs in the technical proposal.

- Description of the methodology that will be used to prepare proposals for each request for services, identification and management of the team.
- The planned quality control measures that the tenderer uses to ensure high quality deliverables in implementing the services proposed.

Any changes in the nominated staff mentioned in the contractor's technical proposal, in the course of contract implementation, must be made known in writing to ETF for approval.

C. Development of the ACQF ACP proof of concept, baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation (max 10 pages including summary profiles)

The tenderer should make a proposal for the development of the proof of concept, the baseline analysis and the stakeholder consultation as described in paragraph 2.2, points 1 and 2 above which will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Quality of the proposed methodology for the proof of concept, baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation

The tenderer shall elaborate on the methodology based on their understanding of the technical specification and the broader policy objectives of the ACQF II project. This includes a detailed

methodology for the proof of concept for the platform, and for carrying out the baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation in the first three months of the contract.

Organisation of the work, resources (expertise and budget) and implementation plan

A description and rationale of the proposed resources together with the allocation of roles and responsibilities within the proposed team, including summary profiles of experts, and (in case of joint tenders, including subcontractors) of the different economic operators involved.

The global allocation of time and resources including a breakdown for each key task or deliverable, and an implementation plan including a brief outline of the main deliverables/ outputs, timeline and milestones.

Tenderers should also provide a detailed budget breakdown.

10.2 Financial proposal

Tenderers must use the following standard table to present their financial proposal.

The table, including the assumptions, should be completed in all its parts, provided on the tenderer's headed paper and should be signed by the legal representative.

General assumptions

- All prices must be quoted in Euro. If necessary, please use the conversion rates published in the Official Journal of the European Union on the day when the invitation to this tender was issued. This information is available on the following website of the European Central Bank: [Exchange rate \(InforEuro\) | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
- The maximum budget allocated to the framework contract may not be exceeded during its implementation.
- Prices must be quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges (including VAT) as the ETF is exempt from such charges under Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union for services rendered by tenderers having their place of business within the European Union.
- For tenderers outside the European Union in principle this exemption does not apply unless the applicable tax laws foresee an exemption when working with a body of the European Union. For this reason, for tenderers to whom the exemption does not apply are requested to provide the price exempt of taxes and the related amount for taxes. Please note that for the purpose of the evaluation the total price including taxes will be considered.
- The tenderer to whom the contract will be awarded will have the sole responsibility for complying with tax laws which apply to him in accordance with the draft contract.
- The financial proposal will take the following two forms:
 - Fixed prices for the services related to the development of the ACQF QCP proof of concept and the baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation.

- For all other services, lump-sum amounts agreed as the total cost for the implementation of the specific assignment in line with the request for services, based on the fixed fee rates per working day per type of expertise.
- Each price quoted will include all costs of implementation of the contractor's activities described in the technical specifications, including administrative and management costs such as, staff costs, overheads, backstopping, quality control, social security, taxes, bank charges, etc. incurred by the contractor and the expert(s) if relevant.

For the services related to the development of the ACQF QCP proof of concept and the baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation

Fixed price for all the activities envisaged. The fixed price should be based on the fees provided per type of expertise and reflected in the budget breakdown provided as part of the technical proposal.

Activities	Fixed price in EUR (1)	Taxes (incl. VAT) in EUR (2)	Total fixed price in EUR (1+2)
ACQF QCP proof of concept and baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation			

For all other services

Specific contracts/order forms will be based on the below prices however they will take the form of a lump-sum as a total cost for the implementation of the specific assignment as per request for service.

Expert category	Price in EUR (1) Daily fee	Taxes (incl. VAT) in EUR (2)	Total price in EUR (1+2) Daily fee
Category I	/day		/day
Category II	/day		/day
Category III	/day		/day
Category IV	/day		/day
Category V	/day		/day
SUM for evaluation purposes			

11. Evaluating the tender: award criteria

Following assessment of compliance against the minimum requirements of the technical specifications, the contracting authority will use the following award criteria to evaluate the tenders received.

Award criteria	Weighting (out of 100)
Technical award criteria	
Appropriateness and agility of the contract management team and methodology proposed, including quality assurance mechanisms	25
Relevance and quality of the methodology proposed for the ACQF QCP proof of concept, including effectiveness of organisation of the work, resources allocated (expertise and budget) and implementation plan resources	45
Financial award criteria	
Total fixed price for the services related to the development of the ACQF QCP proof of concept and the baseline analysis and stakeholders' consultation	15
Sum of expert fees for all other services	15

Compliance with minimum requirement of the technical specifications

Tenderers not meeting the minimum requirements will be rejected and will not be evaluated against the award criteria.

Quality threshold score against technical award criteria:

Tenderers scoring less than 50% of the points for any one of the technical award criteria will be excluded.

Evaluation on the basis of most economically advantageous tender:

The formula used by the ETF to calculate which tender represents the most economically advantageous tender incorporates the score for the technical quality and price as described in the Guidelines for ETF public procurement (<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/about/procurement>).

12. Draft contract

The draft contract, together with the technical specifications and the successful tender - technical and financial proposals – will form the legal agreement between the two parties for implementation of the contract, including all required administrative and financial conditions.

Any comments on the draft contract should be provided together with the proposal. Requests from the proposed winning tenderer to amend the contract following the award decision may lead to the exclusion of the offer.

ANNEX A – TENDER CHECKLIST AND CONTACT DETAILS

When submitting a tender you must have read and understood the Guidelines for ETF public procurement (<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/about/procurement>) and ensure that you have compiled your tender in accordance with the requirements.

Tender checklist

- You have read and understood the Guidelines for ETF public procurement
- You have read and accept the terms and conditions of the draft contract
- The tender is in one of the official languages of the European Union
- The documents are signed by your legal representative and you are preferably using qualified electronic signature
- You are submitted the tender within the stipulated deadline via e-Submission
- Your tender contains:
 - The submission report and receipt (documents generated by e-Submission and listing all the documents included in the tender)
 - The duly completed and signed Legal Entity Form and required supporting documents
 - The required Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria duly signed and dated
 - The required Declaration on honour for minimum requirements duly signed and dated
 - The signed technical proposal
 - The signed financial proposal in the required format
 - This checklist with your contact details

Tenderer's contact details

Full name of tenderer	
Full name of legal representative (person authorised to sign the contract)	
Date and signature	
Full name of contact person	
E-mail address	
Are you an SME?	YES/ NO
Are you a subsidiary of a holding company?	YES/NO If yes, provide full name of holding

For joint tenders, please fill in the table and add any additional lines for all members.

Please provide the administrative details for each member (full name, full name of legal representative, full name of contact person, e-mail address, if it is an SME or not, if it is a subsidiary of a holding company or not)

	% volume of work
Full name of lead member	
Full name of member	

Full name of member	
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For subcontracting exceeding 10% of the contract value, please fill in the following table and add any additional lines for all subcontractors.

	% volume of work
Full name of subcontractor	
Full name of subcontractor	

ANNEX B – DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

This is to confirm that the tender meets the following minimum requirements of the technical specifications.

- All technical requirements as laid down in the technical specifications for the relevant Lot.
- Compliance with applicable environmental, social and labour law obligations established by Union law, national legislation, collective agreements or the applicable international social and environmental conventions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU.
- Compliance with data protection obligations resulting from Regulation (EU) No 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of the natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725 of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

Full name of tenderer	
Full name of legal representative (person authorised to sign the contract)	
Date and signature	