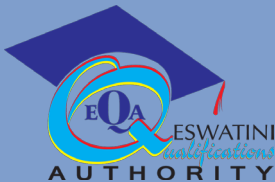


KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING

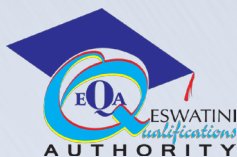
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy



April 2026

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

*“Recognising Learning, Unlocking Potential,
Transforming Lives”*



P.O. Box 39
Mbabane
Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2408 8484
Website: <https://eqa.co.sz>

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Foreword.....	5
Acronyms and Abbreviations	7
1. Introduction.....	11
2. Problem Statement and Rationale	11
2.1 Background to the Issue	11
2.2 Causes of the Current Issue.....	11
2.3 Scope and Severity of the Problem	12
2.4 Outcomes of Prior efforts to solve the problem	13
2.5 Other Government Initiatives Affected	14
3. Overall Policy Goal and Objectives	15
3.1 Enhance Equitable Access to Qualification.....	15
3.2 Promote Lifelong Learning and Skills Mobility.....	15
3.3 Strengthen Quality and Credibility of RPL Process.....	16
3.4 Support Progression and Articulation within the Education and Training System.....	16
3.5 Enhance Employability and Workforce Development.....	16
3.6 Build Institutional Capacity and Awareness for Effective RPL Implementation	16
3.7 Promote Inclusion and Social Justice	16
3.8 Enhance Employability and Workforce Development.....	16
3.9 Build Institutional Capacity and Awareness for Effective RPL Implementation.....	16
3.10 Strengthen Coordination and Monitoring of RPL Implementation.....	16
4. Scope of the Policy	18
4.1 Coverage of Learning Pathways.....	18
4.2 Application across the ESQF	18
4.3 Institutions and bodies to which the policy applies.....	19
4.4 Types of RPL assessments covered.....	19
4.5 Limitations and Exclusions.....	20

4.6	Alignment with Regional and International Framework.....	20
4.7	Duration of Applicability.....	20
5.	Guiding Principles of the Policy.....	21
5.1	Equity and Fair Access.....	21
5.2	Transparency and Consistency.....	21
5.3	Validity and Reliability of Assessment.....	21
5.4	Quality Assurance.....	21
5.5	Learner-Centredness.....	22
5.6	Lifelong Learning Orientation.....	22
5.7	Credibility and Integrity.....	22
5.8	Inclusivity and Responsiveness.....	22
5.9	Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement.....	22
5.10	Confidentiality and Ethical Conduct.....	23
5.11	Cost-Effectiveness and Efficiency.....	23
5.12	Continuous Improvement.....	23
6.	Policy Alignment.....	24
6.1	Alignment with Domestic Legislation and Policies.....	24
6.2	Alignment with Regional and Continental Frameworks.....	25
6.3	Alignment with International Instruments and Best Practice.....	26
6.4	Alignment with Institutional Policies and Procedures.....	26
6.5	Alignment with National Skills and Economic Priorities.....	27
7.	Key Issues and Policy Statements.....	28
7.1	Limited opportunities for formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning.....	28
7.2	Limited coverage of RPL across education sectors.....	28
7.3	Fragmented institutional framework for RPL delivery.....	29
7.4	Inconsistent quality assurance and weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.....	17
7.5	Insufficient funding and resources for RPL.....	18
7.6	Limited access to RPL for marginalized groups.....	18
7.7	Lack of awareness and understanding of RPL.....	18
7.8	Language barriers in RPL access.....	18

7.9 Capacity gaps among guidance officers and assessors	18
7.10 Insufficient alignment with labour market needs	18
7.11 Limited integration of digital systems and e-assessment tools	19
7.12 Weak stakeholder engagement and limited recognition of RPL outcomes ..	19
7.13 Fragmented admission through Mature Age Entry	19
8. Implementation Arrangements and Coordination	33
8.1 Strategic and Action Plan for Implementation	33
8.2 Establishment of the Comprehensive National RPL Centre	33
8.3 Functions of the National RPL Center	34
8.4 Decentralized Access and Institutional Linkages	34
8.5 Roles and Responsibilities	35
8.6 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	36
8.7 Resource Mobilization and Sustainability	36
8.8 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	37
8.9 Pilot Implementation and Phased Rollout	37
8.10 Risk Management and Opportunities	38
9. RPL Implementation Plan	39

Foreword

Education and skills development are fundamental drivers of socio-economic growth, personal development, and national transformation. In an era of rapid technological change, evolving labour markets, and increasing demand for lifelong learning, it is essential that all forms of knowledge, skills, and competencies are recognised, valued, and leveraged for individual and societal benefit.

The Government of Eswatini recognises that learning occurs in diverse contexts – within formal education, the workplace, communities, and through life experiences. However, historically, not all learning outcomes have been formally acknowledged, limiting access to further education, training, and employment opportunities. This Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy seeks to address these challenges by establishing a coherent, inclusive, and nationally harmonised system for recognising prior learning.

This policy provides a framework for identifying, documenting, assessing, and certifying learning outcomes, irrespective of how, where, or when they were acquired. It aims to create second-chance opportunities for individuals to achieve qualifications, enhance access to education and training, support lifelong learning, and promote mobility within both the education system and the labour market. Importantly, the policy also recognises the role of RPL in enhancing employability, supporting self-employment, and enabling individuals to demonstrate their competencies to society and the labour market.

The development of this policy was informed by extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including government ministries, education and training providers, employers, industry representatives, quality assurance agencies, and community organisations. Their collective input has ensured that the policy is relevant, practical, and aligned with the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

I commend this policy as a significant step towards an inclusive, equitable, and flexible education and training system. It is my hope that all stakeholders – learners, education providers, employers, and regulatory bodies – will work collaboratively to implement

this policy effectively, ensuring that the knowledge and skills of every individual are recognised, valued, and utilised for personal development and national growth.



Honourable Owen S. Nxumalo
Minister for Education and Training

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AU	African Union
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
DIVT	Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training
EQA	Eswatini Qualifications Authority
ESHEC	Eswatini Higher Education Council
ESQF	Eswatini Qualifications Framework
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
ETF	European Training Foundation
GoE	Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQF	SADC Qualifications Framework
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VNFIL	Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

1. Introduction

The Government of Eswatini envisions an inclusive, equitable, and flexible education and training system that recognises and values all forms of learning. Guided by this vision, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy seeks to strengthen the interconnections between formal, non-formal, and informal learning pathways by ensuring that learning outcomes acquired through any mode of learning are identified, validated, and recognised within the national qualifications system. Through this policy, the Government reaffirms its commitment to promoting lifelong learning, enhancing access to education and training, and enabling all citizens to realise their full potential in both education and employment contexts.

The policy was developed through an extensive consultative process involving a broad range of stakeholders across the education, training, and labour market sectors. The development process included a comprehensive review of existing RPL practices, the identification of gaps and inconsistencies, and the design of a unified national framework that aligns with the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) and other related national policies. This participatory approach ensured that the policy is grounded in national realities while fostering consensus, ownership, and alignment among implementing partners.

Key stakeholders engaged in this process included the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA), higher education and TVET institutions, employers, industry representatives, community-based organisations, and other social partners. Their inputs ensured that the policy is credible, practical, and responsive to the needs of learners, providers, employers, and the broader socio-economic environment.

The overall aim of this policy is to establish a coherent and harmonised national system for the identification, documentation, assessment, and certification of learning outcomes, regardless of where or how learning occurred – be it formal, non-formal, or informal. It seeks to promote parity of esteem among all forms of learning and to enable the full implementation of the ESQF as an instrument for lifelong learning, mobility, and employability. The purpose of the policy is to create opportunities for individuals to achieve recognised qualifications through the validation of learning outcomes acquired from prior experiences.

Specifically, it aims to:

- Facilitate learner progression within and across ESQF-aligned qualifications, including for those without formal qualifications;
- Affirm the value of all learning by ensuring that learning outcomes are benchmarked against qualification and occupational standards;
- Provide clear national guidelines for consistent and effective RPL implementation; and
- Establish a foundation for continuous improvement and sustainability of the RPL system in alignment with the ESQF and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

The scope of this policy covers all education and training sectors that issue ESQF-aligned qualifications, as well as labour market occupations that utilise these qualifications for recruitment, promotion, or occupational mobility. It equally applies to self-employment, recognising that a qualification serves as formal evidence of the knowledge and skills possessed by self-employed individuals seeking to attract clients or business opportunities.

The terminology used in this policy is designed to be broad and applicable to both the education and employment sectors. It is envisaged that stakeholders across Eswatini will reach a shared understanding of key concepts rather than rigidly adhering to specific terms. To this end, the policy benefits from the common language established through the development of the ESQF by the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA). A comprehensive glossary, consistent with terminology used in both the ESQF and the ACQF, is appended to this policy document.

The main users of the policy include organisations registered for awarding qualifications – typically education and training providers – learners, employers, industry sector stakeholders, sectoral ministries, quality assurance agencies and other regulatory bodies. These users are encouraged to apply the policy as a guiding framework for effectively utilising RPL to help individuals access formal education and training, resume studies, or re-enter the labour market. Essentially, the policy is intended for all individuals and institutions committed to recognising and valuing learning outcomes, irrespective of how and where they were acquired.

The implementation and monitoring of this policy are the responsibility of the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA), working in collaboration with the accrediting agencies within each education and training sector. EQA will oversee the coordination, tracking, and periodic review of RPL implementation to ensure consistent application, quality assurance, and continuous improvement across all sectors.

In essence, this policy serves as a cornerstone for promoting inclusivity, equity, and lifelong learning in Eswatini. It positions RPL as a strategic mechanism for recognising the diverse knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals –supporting their personal development, enhancing employability, and contributing to national human capital development and socio-economic transformation.

2. Problem Statement and Rationale

2.1 Background to the Issue

In Eswatini, a significant proportion of the population has acquired valuable knowledge and skills through non-formal and informal means, yet lacks formal recognition of the corresponding learning outcomes. This has resulted in limited access to formal education pathways and, above all, employment opportunities for many individuals. Among existing initiatives, the Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training (DIVT) has put in place a mechanism for recognising skills acquired through non-formal pathways, primarily by means of trade tests. These trade tests serve as an important entry point for validating experiential skills, particularly for individuals who have not gone through formal TVET programmes. However, the scope of this mechanism remains limited. At present, it covers only about thirty trades, most of which fall within the engineering and construction fields.

The demand for trade testing is high, reflecting the scale of the skills–qualification gap in the country. Each year, approximately 5,000 applications are received by the DIVT from individuals seeking recognition of their skills. Yet, due to resource constraints, institutional capacity challenges, and the limited coverage of trades, only about 1,700 applicants are actually registered and tested annually. This means that nearly two-thirds of applicants (about 66%) are left out every year, despite having demonstrable skills that could be recognised and formalised. This situation underscores both the urgency and the importance of developing a broader, nationally harmonised RPL policy. While the DIVT's trade tests represent a valuable starting point, their restricted focus and limited absorption capacity highlight the need for an expanded system that cuts across sectors and occupations, ensures inclusivity, and recognises a wider spectrum of learning outcomes beyond the thirty trades currently covered.

2.2 Causes of the Current Issue

The absence of a standardised, nationally recognised RPL system has created barriers for individuals seeking to validate all their learning outcomes. This has led to inconsistencies in how prior learning outcomes are recognised across different sectors, limiting the potential for these individuals to contribute fully to the economy of Eswatini.

2.3 Scope and Severity of the Problem

The absence of a coherent and nationally harmonised Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in Eswatini is not just an education sector challenge; it is a broader human capital development issue that affects the country's socio-economic transformation. Key indicators highlight the severity of the problem:

(a) Educational Attainment and Completion Rates

Only 30% of the population completes upper secondary education, and less than half complete junior secondary schooling. This means that the majority of the population does not hold a qualification that provides access to higher education or quality employment opportunities.

Dropout rates are particularly high in rural areas due to poverty (financial barriers), early marriage, pregnancy and limited access to schools. Without RPL, these individuals remain locked out of pathways to re-enter education and training.

(b) Human Capital Development Index (HCI)

According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index, a child born in Eswatini today will only be about 37% as productive as they could be if they had full access to education and health.

This low HCI underscores the need for alternative qualification pathways such as RPL, which can compensate for missed opportunities in formal education by validating skills acquired informally or non-formally.

(c) Labour Market and Skills Mismatch

Eswatini's unemployment rate, particularly youth unemployment, remains persistently high (over 50% among youth). Many young people possess skills gained through informal apprenticeships, community work, or self-learning but lack recognised qualifications to enter formal employment.

Employers report difficulties in recruiting workers with the right qualifications despite evident skills in the workforce. This “skills–qualification gap” directly limits productivity and economic growth.

(d) Rural–Urban Divide

Less than 25% of the population lives in urban areas, where most formal education and training institutions are concentrated. The majority of the rural population relies on non-formal and experiential learning (e.g., in agriculture, crafts, or informal businesses). The absence of RPL entrenches rural disadvantage by failing to convert this learning into qualifications that can open up opportunities.

(e) Poverty and Inequality

Eswatini continues to face high poverty rates, with about 58% of the population living below the national poverty line. RPL has the potential to address poverty by unlocking access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for those whose skills are currently invisible and unrecognized in the labour market.

(f) Human Capital Wastage

A significant proportion of working-age adults in Eswatini remain underemployed or employed in low-value sectors such as subsistence agriculture, despite having valuable experiential skills. Without a recognized qualification, their potential contribution to national productivity remains underutilized.

2.4 Outcomes of Prior Efforts to Solve the Problem

Previous efforts to address the recognition of prior learning have been fragmented, with various institutions adopting different approaches. This has led to mixed results and a lack of credibility in the RPL process across sectors.

2.5 Other Government Initiatives Affected

The development of a national RPL policy is aligned with the broader goals of the Government's Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF), which aim to increase equitable access to quality and relevant lifelong learning opportunities. Upon certification through RPL, people will be employable thus alleviating unemployment.

3. Overall Policy Goal and Objectives

3.1 General Goal

The primary goal of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy is **to provide a second chance for individuals to achieve recognised qualifications by validating and recognising all prior learning outcomes-regardless of where, how, or when such learning was acquired.** The policy seeks to bridge the gap between learning and recognition by enabling individuals to transform their knowledge, skills, and competencies-gained through formal education, work experience, or life experiences-into qualifications that hold value within the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) and across the broader regional context.

In doing so, the policy directly addresses barriers that have historically limited access to education, training, and employment opportunities for many citizens. It contributes to building an inclusive education and training system that recognizes the dignity and potential of every learner, thereby supporting national human capital development and the Government's broader vision of equitable and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

3.2 Policy Objectives

To realize the above goal, the RPL Policy sets out the following **specific objectives**, which are coherent with Eswatini's national vision for inclusive education and skills development and aligned with the ESQF framework:

3.3 Enhance Equitable Access to Qualifications

Facilitate the recognition and accreditation of learning acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal means, thereby expanding access to education and training opportunities, especially for individuals from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds who were previously excluded from formal systems.

3.4 Promote Lifelong Learning and Skills Mobility

Foster a culture of continuous learning by ensuring that all forms of learning outcomes—regardless of source—are valued within the ESQF and hold currency in the national and regional labour markets, including the SADC region.

3.5 Strengthen Quality and Credibility of RPL Processes

Establish a transparent, fair, and credible national system for RPL that is underpinned by clear quality assurance mechanisms, consistent assessment standards, and defined institutional responsibilities.

3.6 Support Progression and Articulation within the Education and Training System

Enable learners to use recognized prior learning to gain entry into further education and training programs or to progress horizontally and vertically within ESQF-aligned qualifications, thus supporting flexible learning and career pathways.

3.7 Promote Inclusion and Social Justice

Ensure that all individuals – regardless of gender, socio-economic background, or geographical location – have equitable opportunities to have their learning recognized and valued, contributing to social inclusion and empowerment.

3.8 Enhance Employability and Workforce Development

Enable individuals to use RPL as a means of improving employability, supporting career advancement, and facilitating occupational mobility, including for self-employed workers who can use recognised qualifications as proof of their competencies.

3.9 Build Institutional Capacity and Awareness for Effective RPL Implementation:

Develop the capacity of institutions, assessors, and quality assurance bodies to implement RPL consistently and effectively, and promote awareness among stakeholders about its value, processes, and benefits.

3.10 Strengthen Coordination and Monitoring of RPL Implementation:

Establish effective coordination mechanisms under the leadership of the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA), supported by accrediting authorities and other relevant bodies, to ensure consistent monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of RPL implementation.

Together, these objectives operationalize the policy's general goal and give clear direction to all implementing stakeholders. They reflect the Government of Eswatini's vision for an inclusive and dynamic education and training system that values all learning, enhances human capital development, and supports national socio-economic growth.

4. Scope of the Policy

This section outlines the coverage, applicability, and boundaries of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy. It defines the qualifications, learning pathways, institutions, and processes to which the Policy applies within the national education, training, and skills development system.

4.1 Coverage of Learning Pathways

This Policy applies to the recognition of learning acquired through:

- **Formal learning:** structured programmes leading to qualifications issued by recognised education and training providers.
- **Non-formal learning:** organized learning activities that do not lead to formal certification, including workplace training, professional development, and community-based programmes.
- **Informal learning:** experiential learning acquired through work, life experience, volunteering, self-study, or other activities outside structured programmes.

4.2 Application across the ESQF

The Policy covers all qualification levels and types registered on the **Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF)**, including:

- General Education
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
- Higher Education
- Occupational Qualifications
- Professional Qualifications
- Micro-credentials and short courses recognized within the ESQF architecture

RPL may be used for **access, credit transfer, advanced standing, or full or partial award of a qualification**, subject to the standards and regulations governing each qualification type.

4.3 Institutions and bodies to which the policy applies

This Policy applies to all institutions, bodies, and stakeholders involved in the delivery, assessment, quality assurance, and recognition of learning, including:

- Registered education and training providers
- TVET institutions
- Directorate of Industrial Vocational Training (DIVT)
- Higher education institutions
- Professional and regulatory bodies
- Industry and employer organisations involved in workplace assessment
- RPL units and the National RPL Centre
- Assessment centres accredited for RPL purposes
- Quality assurance bodies, including the EQA, ESHEC, and future TVET Quality Assurance Authority

All listed bodies are required to comply with the principles, processes, and quality requirements articulated in this Policy.

4.4 Types of RPL assessments covered

This Policy governs the following forms of RPL assessment:

- **RPL for Access:** Admission into a programme or qualification based on prior learning.
- **RPL for Credit:** Award of credits towards a qualification based on demonstrated competencies.
- **RPL for advanced standing:** Progression to a higher level in a programme without repeating previously mastered content.
- **RPL for qualification award:** Full or partial achievement of a qualification based on recognition of existing competencies.
- **RPL for occupational competence:** Recognition of competencies aligned to national occupational standards.

Assessment methods may include portfolios, workplace assessment, challenge tests, interviews, simulations, demonstrations, or other methods approved by the relevant quality assurance body.

4.5 Limitations and Exclusions

The RPL Policy **does not** apply to:

- Qualifications or programmes not registered on the ESQF.
- Providers not registered or accredited by the relevant authority.
- Assessment of learning that cannot be validated or authenticated.
- Licensing or statutory certification processes governed exclusively by professional or regulatory bodies (unless such bodies integrate RPL into their own frameworks).

Where professional bodies have jurisdiction over certain qualifications or competencies, RPL decisions are subject to sectoral regulations and licensing requirements.

4.6 Alignment with Regional and International Frameworks

The scope of this Policy extends to facilitating recognition of learning for purposes of:

- Regional mobility through SADC and ACQF referencing
- International comparability of qualifications
- Cross-border recognition of skills for employment and study

RPL processes shall support the portability of skills within and outside Eswatini.

4.7 Duration of Applicability

This Policy applies from its effective date and remains in force until revised or replaced by the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA). All institutions must align their internal RPL procedures with this Policy within timelines set by the EQA.

5. Guiding Principles of the Policy

The implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Eswatini shall be grounded in the following guiding principles. These principles ensure that RPL processes are credible, fair, transparent, and aligned with the objectives of the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) and international good practice.

5.1 Equity and Fair Access

RPL shall promote equitable access to assessment and recognition opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their background, gender, age, socio-economic status, geographic location, employment status, or mode of prior learning. Barriers to access shall be minimised to enable broad participation.

5.2 Transparency and Consistency

All RPL processes, criteria, and decision-making procedures shall be clearly defined, publicly available, and consistently applied across all institutions, qualifications, and sectors. Learners shall have access to accurate information on requirements, timelines, costs, and expected outcomes.

5.3 Validity and Reliability of Assessment

Assessment for RPL purposes shall be based on authentic, current, valid, and sufficient evidence that demonstrates achievement of the required learning outcomes or competencies. Assessment decisions shall be reliable, verifiable, and subject to moderation and external quality assurance.

5.4 Quality Assurance

RPL shall be implemented within a comprehensive quality assurance framework overseen by the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA) and relevant quality assurance bodies. RPL assessment, moderation, and verification processes shall meet the same standards applied to conventional learning pathways. Mechanisms for appeals, complaints, and review shall be established and maintained.

5.5 Learner-Centredness

RPL shall be designed and implemented with the needs of the learner at the centre. Institutions and assessors shall provide guidance, support, and flexible options to enable learners to prepare, present, and demonstrate their prior learning effectively.

5.6 Lifelong Learning Orientation

RPL shall support lifelong learning by enabling individuals to progress or transition between qualifications, levels, and learning pathways. The system shall facilitate learner mobility, employability, and recognition of both formal and non-formal learning.

5.7 Credibility and Integrity

The RPL system shall uphold the integrity of the ESQF by ensuring that all decisions are based on rigorous assessment and that recognised learning is comparable in quality and value to learning achieved through traditional routes. Ethical practice and accountability shall be maintained at all stages of the process.

5.8 Inclusivity and Responsiveness

RPL shall be responsive to national human capital and skills development needs. The system shall cater for diverse groups, including working adults, unemployed individuals, informal sector workers, rural populations, and persons with disabilities. Processes shall be adaptable to sector-specific requirements and labour market demands.

5.9 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

Successful RPL implementation requires coordinated efforts among stakeholders, including education and training providers, employers, industry bodies, professional councils, quality assurance agencies, and community structures. Stakeholders shall work collaboratively to support the credibility and acceptance of RPL outcomes.

5.10 Confidentiality and Ethical Conduct

Information and evidence submitted by learners during the RPL process shall be treated with confidentiality. Assessors and RPL practitioners shall adhere to ethical standards that ensure fairness, impartiality, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

5.11 Cost-Effectiveness and Efficiency

RPL systems and processes shall be designed to be efficient, streamlined, and cost-effective for both learners and providers. Administrative requirements shall be proportionate and shall not impose unnecessary burdens.

5.12 Continuous Improvement

The RPL system shall be subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation. Data from implementation, stakeholder feedback, and tracer studies shall be used to refine processes, enhance quality, and ensure relevance to national development priorities.

6. Policy Alignment

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy aligns with key domestic legislation, national policies, and international and regional frameworks that guide qualifications, education, training, and skills development. The alignment ensures that RPL implementation in Eswatini is coherent, credible, and consistent with global best practice.

6.1 Alignment with Domestic Legislation and Policies

(a) The National Development Strategy (NDS) and Successor Frameworks

The Policy supports national aspirations for human capital development, economic growth, and social inclusion. RPL contributes to widening access to education and training, improving employability, and recognizing skills acquired in both formal and informal sectors.

(b) Education and Training Sector Policy

This Policy aligns with the ETSP's emphasis on lifelong learning, equitable access, quality assurance, and diversification of learning pathways. RPL provides an alternative route for learners to access, progress, and complete programmes.

(c) The Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF)

The Policy operationalizes ESQF objectives by enabling recognition of learning outcomes at all levels. It reinforces ESQF standards on comparability, quality assurance, credit accumulation and transfer, and portability of skills.

(d) Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA) Mandate

The Policy directly supports the EQA's mandate to manage the ESQF, ensure the quality and relevance of qualifications, and facilitate recognition of skills. RPL processes, assessment, and quality assurance are implemented in line with EQA standards and regulatory instruments.

(e) Higher Education Act and ESHEC Mandate

The Policy aligns with the requirement that higher education institutions (HEIs) adopt quality-assured processes for programme delivery and assessment. RPL is recognised as an alternative access and progression pathway in HEIs, subject to ESHEC's quality assurance systems.

(f) TVET Regulatory Framework (including future TVET Authority)

The Policy aligns with national efforts to strengthen TVET quality assurance, occupational standards, and competency-based training. RPL supports the validation of workplace and experiential learning aligned to national unit standards and occupational qualifications.

(g) National Employment and Labour Market Policies

RPL contributes to skills development objectives, labour mobility, and improved recognition of workers' competencies – particularly in the informal economy, which is significant in Eswatini.

6.2 Alignment with Regional and Continental Frameworks**(a) African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)**

The Policy fully aligns with ACQF principles on transparency, quality assurance, mutual recognition, learner mobility, and lifelong learning. RPL is recognized as a core mechanism for skills recognition and comparability across the continent.

(b) SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)

The Policy supports regional harmonization of qualifications and recognition of skills across SADC Member States. RPL contributes to cross-border mobility, regional workforce development, and recognition of occupational standards aligned to SADCQF descriptors.

(c) SADC Protocol on Education and Training

The Policy aligns with commitments to promote access, quality, and equivalence of educational qualifications, including mechanisms for assessing and recognizing prior learning.

6.3 Alignment with International Instruments and Best Practice

(a) UNESCO Guidelines for Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA)

The Policy adopts UNESCO's principles on inclusivity, transparency, equity, and quality assurance in the recognition of learning. It promotes the recognition of all forms of learning – formal, non-formal, and informal.

(b) International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and Skills Frameworks

The Policy aligns with ILO recommendations on skills development, decent work, and recognition of competencies gained through work experience, especially for informal sector workers and youth.

(c) Global Best Practice in RPL Systems

The Policy is informed by global benchmarks from established RPL systems (e.g., Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, EU RPL Guidelines). These influence its structure on assessment, quality assurance, learner-centred approaches, and governance.

6.4 Alignment with Institutional Policies and Procedures

All education and training providers, assessment centres, and RPL Centres are required to:

- Align their internal RPL policies and procedures with this national Policy;
- Ensure that institutional practices comply with EQA standards, ESHEC guidelines, and TVET quality assurance requirements;
- Integrate RPL into admission, credit accumulation and transfer, progression, and certification processes.

This alignment ensures coherence, comparability of RPL outcomes, and fairness across institutions and sectors.

6.5 Alignment with National Skills and Economic Priorities

The Policy supports national strategies focused on:

- Reducing youth unemployment;
- Addressing skills shortages;
- Enhancing productivity in priority economic sectors;
- Supporting entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Recognising skills of migrant workers returning to Eswatini.

RPL contributes to national development by unlocking the value of skills and knowledge that individuals possess but have not yet formalised.

7. Key Issues and Policy Statements

This chapter presents the main policy issues that justify the introduction and strengthening of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Eswatini. Each issue is accompanied by a policy statement that outlines the country's response and direction. The issues and statements are aligned with the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) and national education and training priorities.

7.1 Limited opportunities for formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning

In Eswatini, many individuals, especially workers and self-learners, possess valuable skills and knowledge acquired through work experience, practice, and informal learning. However, because these competencies are undocumented, individuals are unable to fully benefit from them in the labour market. Some workers even depend on colleagues with recognised qualifications to validate their work, limiting their ability to advance professionally and contribute to national development.

Policy Statement: All credentials under the ESQF will provide opportunities for full or partial awards through RPL, ensuring that individuals with undocumented learning outcomes have their skills formally recognised.

7.2 Limited coverage of RPL across education sectors

Currently, RPL is not consistently visible or applied across general education, TVET, and higher education. This uneven coverage restricts RPL's potential to serve as an alternative and second-chance pathway for those excluded from formal learning systems.

Policy Statement: RPL will be offered across all education sectors – including higher education, TVET, and general education – in order to broaden participation and expand qualification opportunities.

7.3 Fragmented institutional framework for RPL delivery

RPL delivery in Eswatini is characterized by fragmented institutional practices, with different institutions developing uncoordinated guidelines. This creates confusion for applicants and undermines the credibility of RPL as a nationally recognized process.

Policy Statement: A coordinated national approach to RPL delivery will be established across institutions, ministries, and all sectors awarding qualifications.

7.4 Inconsistent quality assurance and weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Concerns have been raised about the quality and consistency of RPL assessments. Variations in methods, criteria, and standards across institutions and assessors weaken the reliability of outcomes and may erode stakeholder confidence.

Policy Statement: A consistent quality assurance framework will be established for RPL, supported by effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms across all education and training sub-systems.

7.5 Insufficient funding and resources for RPL

Access to RPL is constrained by resource shortages, income and gender inequalities, and lack of institutional capacity. Without sustainable funding, RPL risks remaining out of reach for many individuals who would benefit most.

Policy Statement: Adequate and sustainable funding for RPL will be secured through government support, donor partnerships, and integration of RPL into national education budgets and sector strategic plans.

7.6 Limited access to RPL for marginalized groups

Disadvantaged groups such as women, youth, rural communities, and people with disabilities face additional barriers in accessing RPL. Factors such as geographical location, lack of information, and insufficient support structures further marginalise them.

Policy Statement: RPL processes will be made more inclusive and accessible through mobile assessment units, community-based RPL centres, and gender-sensitive programmes.

7.7 Lack of awareness and understanding of RPL

Awareness of RPL remains low in Eswatini, particularly in rural areas. Many individuals are not aware of the opportunities RPL provides for further education and employment, leading to underutilisation of the system.

Policy Statement: RPL will be actively promoted through awareness campaigns, multilingual informational materials, and integration into community outreach programmes.

7.8 Language barriers in RPL access

Many candidates face difficulties in demonstrating their skills during assessments because RPL processes are primarily conducted in languages they are not proficient in. Over-reliance on academic or official languages excludes individuals who have acquired skills in community or workplace contexts.

Policy Statement: Language will not be a barrier to RPL participation. Assessments will be available in Siswati and English, with interpretation services and accessible materials provided as needed.

7.9 Capacity gaps among guidance officers and assessors

RPL requires trained practitioners to provide guidance, conduct assessments, and ensure fair, valid, and reliable outcomes. Currently, there is a shortage of qualified guidance officers and assessors, limiting the quality of RPL delivery.

Policy Statement: Guidance officers and assessors will receive continuous professional development, training, and certification to maintain high-quality RPL services.

7.10 Insufficient alignment with labour market needs

RPL assessments and qualification standards sometimes fail to match evolving labour market demands. This creates mismatches between recognised skills and industry needs, reducing the employability and value of RPL outcomes.

Policy Statement: RPL will be aligned with Eswatini's labour market needs and economic development priorities, with active employer engagement and accelerated development of occupational and qualification standards.

7.11 Limited integration of digital systems and e-assessment tools

Rural and remote communities face particular challenges in accessing RPL opportunities. Without the use of digital platforms and tools, geographical barriers persist, limiting the inclusivity of RPL.

Policy Statement: RPL will integrate digital platforms, e-portfolios, and online assessment tools to expand access, especially in remote areas, while ensuring data security and practitioner training.

7.12 Weak stakeholder engagement and limited recognition of RPL outcomes

Employers, professional associations, and some institutions have reservations about recognising qualifications awarded through RPL, due to concerns about quality and standards. Without stakeholder buy-in, the value of RPL outcomes remains limited.

Policy Statement: RPL implementation will actively foster stakeholder engagement at community and national levels, ensuring acceptance of RPL outcomes by employers, industry bodies, and education and training institutions.

7.13 Fragmented admission through Mature Age Entry

Mature age entry into higher education institutions is currently not regulated. This situation creates inconsistent admission standards across institutions; potential compromise of academic standards; tension between institutional autonomy and the national qualifications integrity; disputes during qualifications verification, particularly where learners do not meet formal entry requirements aligned to the ESQF. The absence of regulation risks undermining public confidence in the credibility of qualifications registered on the ESQF.

Policy Statement: Mature age entry into formal education and training programmes shall be recognized and regulated as a form of RPL. Age alone shall not constitute sufficient grounds for admission. Admission shall be based on demonstrated competence aligned to minimum entry requirements and relevant ESQF level descriptors. An institution shall not admit more than ten percent (10%) of the approved annual intake of any programme through Mature Age Entry in a given academic year. Institutions shall report annually to EQA on the number and proportion of learners admitted through Mature Age Entry for each programme.

8. Implementation Arrangements and Coordination

The effective implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy requires a well-coordinated institutional framework, clear roles and responsibilities, robust quality assurance, and adequate resources. This section outlines the strategic arrangements and coordination mechanisms to ensure that RPL implementation in Eswatini is coherent, inclusive, and sustainable.

8.1 Strategic and Action Plan for Implementation

Implementation of the RPL Policy will follow a phased and structured approach. The Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA), working closely with relevant ministries, education and training institutions, industry, and community stakeholders, will develop a Strategic and Action Plan for RPL Implementation.

The plan will be guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness to national human resource development needs.

It will:

- Outline short-, medium-, and long-term activities to operationalise RPL nationally.
- Define measurable outcomes, timelines, and indicators for monitoring progress.
- Provide a framework for capacity development and stakeholder engagement.
- Include pilot projects in selected sectors to test and refine the RPL model prior to national rollout.

The implementation strategy will be pragmatic, incremental, and enabling, allowing for continuous learning and system improvement through feedback from pilots and evaluations.

8.2 Establishment of the Comprehensive National RPL Centre

To strengthen coordination and ensure uniformity and quality in the implementation of RPL, Eswatini will establish a Comprehensive National RPL Centre under the oversight of the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA).

The Centre will serve as the national hub for RPL coordination, implementation, quality assurance, and innovation, consolidating fragmented RPL initiatives and providing a one-stop service for all RPL-related activities.

8.3 Functions of the National RPL Centre

The Centre will:

- Coordinate national RPL implementation across all education and training sub-sectors.
- Develop and maintain national RPL guidelines, tools, and standards aligned with the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF).
- Deliver and quality assure RPL assessments, including the validation and certification of learning outcomes.
- Build capacity through the training, accreditation, and professional development of RPL practitioners (assessors, guidance officers, and moderators).
- Operate a national RPL information system and database linked to the ESQF, learner records, and labour market information.
- Promote RPL awareness and provide information and guidance services to the public, including through digital and mobile platforms.
- Foster partnerships with education and training institutions, employers, professional bodies, and community organisations to ensure the recognition and uptake of RPL outcomes.
- Pilot and evaluate innovative RPL models and support continuous improvement of the RPL system.

8.4 Decentralized Access and Institutional Linkages

While the National RPL Centre will provide overall coordination and oversight, access to RPL services will be decentralized through a network of institutional and regional points:

- Institutional RPL Units within TVET and higher education institutions will provide candidate guidance, evidence preparation support, and sector-based assessments under the supervision of the Centre.
- Regional or Mobile RPL Units will extend access to rural and disadvantaged communities, ensuring inclusiveness and equity.

This hybrid structure will combine centralized coordination and quality assurance with decentralised accessibility and participation, creating a coherent, responsive, and sustainable national RPL system.

8.5 Roles and Responsibilities

RPL implementation requires collaboration among multiple actors. The following delineates the primary responsibilities:

- **Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA)**
Lead coordination and oversight of RPL policy implementation; establish and manage the National RPL Centre; develop national standards, guidelines, and quality assurance frameworks; manage national RPL data and reporting; and monitor and evaluate implementation outcomes.
- **Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)**
Provide policy direction and ensure integration of RPL into national education strategies and budgets. Facilitate collaboration across departments and support awareness initiatives.
- **Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS)**
Align RPL outcomes with labour market and employment policies; facilitate employer participation and labour market recognition of RPL credentials.
- **Education and Training Institutions (TVET and Higher Education)** Provide institutional RPL support services, host RPL units, and facilitate access to assessment and top-up learning opportunities for candidates.
- **Employers and Industry Bodies**
Collaborate in defining occupational and qualification standards; identify workers eligible for RPL; and recognise RPL outcomes for recruitment, progression, and promotion.
- **Professional Associations and Sector Skills Councils**
Ensure professional recognition of RPL outcomes and contribute to the development and periodic review of occupational standards.

- Community Organisations and NGOs
Promote awareness, identify candidates from marginalised groups, and provide local support for RPL access and participation.

8.6 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will form an integral component of RPL implementation to ensure effectiveness, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The EQA will establish a national RPL M&E framework that includes:

- Clear performance indicators such as the number of applicants assessed, qualifications awarded, trained RPL practitioners, and employment outcomes.
- Data collection and analysis mechanisms for tracking progress at institutional and national levels.
- Feedback loops to inform policy refinement and strategic adjustments.

Evaluation reports will be produced annually, and a comprehensive system review will be conducted every five years to assess the policy's impact on access, equity, and employability.

8.7 Resource Mobilization and Sustainability

The sustainability of RPL implementation depends on sufficient and predictable resources. A comprehensive resource mobilisation plan will be developed by EQA in collaboration with MoET and the Ministry of Finance.

The plan will:

- Integrate RPL funding into the national education and training budget.
- Explore the establishment of a Training and Skills Development Fund to support RPL delivery.
- Mobilise financial and technical support from development partners.
- Encourage co-financing and cost-sharing models involving employers, RPL providers, and beneficiaries.

A strong financial base will ensure that RPL services remain accessible, affordable, and sustainable across all sectors.

8.8 Coordination Mechanism

A National RPL Coordination Committee will be established, chaired by the EQA, to oversee multi-stakeholder coordination and promote policy coherence.

The Committee will comprise representatives from:

- EQA (Secretariat)
- MoET and MoLSS
- ESHEC and DIVT
- TVET and higher education institutions
- Employers' associations and industry bodies
- Professional and labour organisations
- Community-based organisations

The Committee will meet regularly to review progress, share experiences, address challenges, and make recommendations to improve implementation efficiency.

8.9 Pilot Implementation and Phased Rollout

The RPL system will be implemented through a phased and evidence-driven approach beginning with targeted vertical pilots in selected industry sectors where there is strong evidence of skills without certification.

The implementation phases will include:

- Scoping and Model Building – Identification of existing practices and priority sectors.
- Institutional Framework Development – Establishment of governance, regulations, and procedures.
- Capacity Building and Guideline Development – Training of assessors and guidance officers.
- Piloting and Evaluation – Full-cycle pilot implementation in selected sectors.
- Scaling Up – Expansion based on pilot results and lessons learned.

This phased approach will allow for progressive learning, risk management, and continuous system improvement.

8.10 Risk Management and Opportunities

Potential risks to implementation include insufficient stakeholder commitment, limited institutional capacity, funding constraints, and societal bias towards formal education pathways.

These will be mitigated through strong coordination mechanisms, sustained advocacy, continuous professional development, and policy alignment.

At the same time, RPL offers substantial opportunities for:

- Recognizing and utilizing existing skills in the economy.
- Enhancing employability and productivity.
- Promoting social inclusion and lifelong learning.
- Strengthening the link between education, training, and work.

9. RPL Implementation Plan

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
Limited opportunities for formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning	Objective 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Ensure that all credentials under ESQF provide (full or partial) award opportunities through RPL	- Develop national guidelines for RPL covering all ESQF qualifications and all education and training sub-systems to widen the opportunities for RPL. - Expand RPL procedures across sectors	- National RPL Guidelines approved and published % of ESQF qualifications with RPL access pathways - Number of sectors implementing RPL procedures - Annual number of candidates obtaining full or partial awards through RPL	EQA	Quarter 2 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	SZL 1,200,000 (once-off) + SZL 350,000 annually
Limited coverage of RPL in education sectors	Objective 3.1, 3.4.3.7	RPL should be offered across all education sectors including HE, TVET and general education.	Review sectoral regulations (e.g. in TVET, in higher Education, adult learning) to include wider use of RPL for access, credit, and full/partial awards.	- Number of education sub sectors formally adopting RPL regulations - Sector strategic plans including RPL targets - Number of sector specific procedures developed	EQA, Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Ministry of Labour TVET colleges, higher education institutions	Quarter 3 2026 – Quarter 4 2028 Quarter 3 2026 – Quarter 4 2027	SZL 2,400,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
			- Incorporate RPL-related goals and strategies in the education strategic frameworks for each sub-sector. - Develop sector-specific RPL procedures in line with national RPL guidelines. - Establish targets for RPL in the strategic plans of each of the education and training sub-sectors. - Carry out pilot projects expanding the use of RPL in all education and training subsectors.	- Number of RPL pilot projects implemented - Annual RPL enrolments disaggregated by HE, TVET & general education		Quarter 1 2027 – Quarter 3 2028 Quarter 4 2026 – Quarter 3 2028	

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
Fragmented institutional framework for RPL delivery	Objective 3.3, 3.7	Strengthen coordination of RPL across institutions and Ministries.	- Establish a National RPL Centre with clear governance structure - Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for institutional collaboration. - Deploy institutional RPL units and link them to national oversight structures	- National RPL Centre established and operational - Governance framework approved and implemented - Number of signed institutional MOUs supporting RPL collaboration % of awarding bodies with functional RPL units - Frequency of coordination meetings held annually	EQA, all responsible awarding bodies	Quarter 2 2027 – Quarter 2 2028 Quarter 4 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	E5,800,000 establishment + E2,100,000 annual operational
Weak Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms	Objective 3.3, 3.8	Establish and implement effective national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for RPL initiatives	Establish centralised monitoring framework and reporting mechanisms covering all education and training sub-systems.	- National RPL monitoring framework developed and adopted - Central RPL database operational - Annual national RPL performance report produced	EQA, MoET, Statistical Departments of all ministries involved, Create local monitoring units	Quarter 2 2026 – Quarter 4 2028 Quarter 4 2026 – Quarter 3 2029	E1,750,000 setup + E600,000 annually

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
			Develop data collection approach for RPL incorporating: questionnaires, longitudinal studies, feedback loops and stakeholder evaluations for transparent tracking.	% of institutions submitting RPL monitoring data on schedule - Number of stakeholder evaluation studies conducted			
Insufficient funding and resources for RPL	Objective 3.5, 3.7	Secure sufficient funding for RPL operations and capacity building and include it in the education sector strategic plans (for communication (for creating a regular demand)	- Integrate RPL into all relevant national policies - Include RPL in national education budgets based on the sectoral targets. - Develop partnerships with private sector and NGOs for co-funding.	- RPL included in national education policy documents - Annual government budget allocation specifically for RPL - Amount of donor / private funding secured for RPL programmes - Number institutional RPL unite funded	EQA liaising with: Ministry of Education, Labour Finance, Development Partners,	Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030 Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030 Quarter I 2026 Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	E900,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
		Ensure long-term sustainability of RPL through government, donor support, and broad communication (for creating a regular demand)	- Explore feasibility of establishing a Training Fund based on levy. - Explore international funding opportunities. - Develop costing tools for RPL implementation across institutions/RPL units	National RPL costing model developed and applied			
Inconsistent Quality Assurance in RPL Assessments	Objective 3.3	Establish consistent quality assurance for RPL assessments in line with RPL guidelines	- Develop National RPL Quality Framework. - Produce assessor and moderator training manuals - Conduct national assessor training and certification - Develop clear guidelines for appeals. - Establish independent review panels.	- National RPL quality framework approved and disseminated - Number of assessors or moderators trained and certified - Appeals procedures published and operational - Number of independent review panels functioning - Number of QA audits conducted annually on RPL Centres	EQA, TVET Councils, Assessors	Quarter I 2026 Quarter I 2026 Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	E900,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
			Carryout regular Quality assurance audits of RPL units				
Lack of Capacity on RPL for Guidance Officers and Assessors	Objective 3.7	Build capacity of guidance officers and assessors to maintain high-quality assessments	- Develop competency profiles for RPL practitioners. - Training workshops, specialised training programmes, certification programmes, and regular evaluations for RPL Practitioners.	- National competency framework for RPL practitioners approved - Number of training workshops conducted annually - Number of certified RPL practitioners by sub sector % of institutions with at least one trained RPL officer - Practitioner performance evaluation reports completed annually	EQA, MoET, TVET Institutions, universities	Quarter I 2026 Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	EI,600,000
Lack of Awareness and Understanding of RPL	Objective 3.5, 3.7	Ensure all stakeholders understand the purpose, benefits, and process of RPL	- Conduct awareness campaigns - Develop informational materials in multiple languages	- Number of national and regional awareness campaigns conducted - Number of RPL information materials produced and distributed.	EQA, DIVT, MoET, local administration NGOs, community organisations	Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	EI,350,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
		Ensure awareness of RPL processes among all stakeholders, especially in rural areas.	- Integrate RPL awareness into community outreach programmes, establish RPL support structures. - Partner with Chiefs and community leaders for rural outreach	- Availability of materials in Siswati and English - Number of community outreach events conducted annually. - Increase in RPL applications per year.			
Lack of standardised assessment frameworks and tools	Objective 3.3	Develop and use standardised assessment tools for each sub-sector to assure consistent evaluation across qualifications	- Create sector-specific RPL assessment tools. - Align assessments with ESQF. - Pilot and validate tools before national rollout, during RPL - Pilot for the qualifications piloted (i.e., in key industry sectors). - Create partnerships with the industry and employers	- Number of sector specific RPL tools developed. % of tools aligned to RPL standards. - Number of sector specific RPL tools developed. % of tools aligned to RPL standards. - Number of assessment tools piloted and validated. - Number of industry partnerships supporting workplace assessment.	EQA Future Sector Skills Councils when they come to life, ESHEC representatives of employers	Quarter 1 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	E400,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
			on technical platforms for assessment and assessment in the workplace.	User satisfaction ratings from assessors and candidates.			
Limited Access to RPL for Marginalised Groups	Objective 3.1, 3.5	Increase accessibility of RPL for marginalised groups (women, youth, and rural communities in Eswatini) Increase accessibility of RPL for marginalised groups (women, youth, and rural communities in Eswatini)	- Deploy mobile RPL units to rural and underserved areas - Establish RPL access points - Create mobile assessment - Create gender-sensitive RPL programmes	- Number of mobile RPL outreach units deployed - Number of rural RPL access points established - Number of mobile assessments conducted annually % of RPL participants for women, youth, rural communities - Number of gender responsive RPL initiatives implemented	EQA Ministry of Social Development, Local NGOs, Women's Organisations	Quarter 4 2027/2028	E1,200,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
Insufficient alignment with labour market needs	Objective 3.2,3.6	Align RPL outcomes with Eswatini's labour market needs and economic development goals	- Conduct Labour market analysis (surveys), employer engagement in RPL planning and assessment, and assessment approaches aligned with industry sectors' needs. - Accelerate development of occupational and qualification standards in the professions that are in-demand.	- Number of labour market surveys conducted - Number of employers participating in RPL assessments - Number of occupational standards developed and or revised % of RPL qualifications linked to priority economic sectors - Employment rate of RPL beneficiaries within 12 months	EQA, DIVT, NLMSP (ESHEC) Ministry of Labour, Employers' Associations, Industry Groups	Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030 Quarter I 2026	E1,450,000
Limited Digital RPL Systems and E-Assessment Tools	Objective 3.6, 3.7	Integrate technology for efficient RPL processes, especially in remote regions	- Develop Digital platforms, e-portfolios (with extended use of photos, videos, sounds), and online assessment tools (e.g., for rural access). - Train RPL practitioners the use of digital platforms for RPL processes.	- National digital RPL platform developed and operational - Number of institutions using e - portfolio systems % of RPL practitioners trained in digital tools - Data protection and security protocols implemented	EQA Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, RPL providers.	Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	E500,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
			- Ensure data security and digital literacy for participants. - Integrate monitoring mechanism in the digital platforms.	% of RPL applications digitally processed			
Weak Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration	Objective 3.7, 3.8	Foster stakeholder engagement for effective RPL implementation at community and national levels	- Establish a national stakeholder forum - Hold by-annual stakeholder summits - Develop partnerships with private sector employers	- National RPL stakeholder forum established - Number of stakeholder summits held per year - Number of formal partnerships signed with private sector - Stakeholder participation rate in RPL meetings - Annual stakeholder satisfaction stakeholder survey results	EQA MoLSS, Private Sector Associations, Community Leaders	Quarter I 2026 – Quarter 4 2030	E800,000

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
Language Barriers in RPL Access	Objective 3.1, 3.5	Ensure language is not a barrier to RPL participation	- Provide assessments in SiSwati and English. - Develop RPL materials in accessible formats. - Offer interpretation services during assessments. - Train assessors in culturally responsive assessment methods	- Availability of RPL assessments in SiSwati and English - Number of translated RPL guidance materials produced - Number of interpretation services provided annually % of assessors trained in culturally responsive assessment - Candidate satisfaction scores on language accessibility	EQA, MoET, Community-Based Organisations	Quarter 1 2026 – Quarter 4 2026	E450,000
Fragmented admission through Mature Age Entry	Objective 3.1, 3.5	Ensure harmonised mature-age entry admission	Develop mature age entry guidelines/framework	- National Mature Age entry framework approved - Number of institutions adopting and implementing the harmonised guidelines	EQA	Quarter 1 2026	E200,000.00

Policy Issues	Policy Objective Link	Policy Statement	Strategies	Indicators	Responsibilities	Timeline	Costing
				• % of Mature Age Admissions processed under the new framework • Reduction in institutional admission variation reports • Annual number of students admitted through mature age pathway			



P.O. Box 39

Mbabane

Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2408 8484

Website: <https://eqa.co.sz>