

Harmonisation, Quality Assurance
and Accreditation in Africa



ACTS Pilot Phase

FINAL MODULE

Developing national academic mobility and recognition roadmaps



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The Final Module marks the consolidation stage of the online programme under the HAQAA3 ACTS Pilot Phase. Building on the reflections developed throughout Modules 1–3 on academic credits and curricula, mobility and credit transfer, and recognition practices, it brings participating countries and institutions together to develop national academic mobility and recognition roadmaps.

The exercise aims to build consensus around a limited number of national priorities and practical actions to improve academic mobility, credit accumulation and transfer, and the recognition of partial studies / periods of study. It encourages national teams to identify what can realistically be strengthened, which actors should be involved, and where regional or continental cooperation could add value, while respecting the diversity and specificities of African higher education systems and promoting reciprocity and quality assurance.

The roadmap is conceived as a practical joint reflection rather than a comprehensive national strategy, formal implementation plan or policy commitment. It is intended to provide a basis for further national, regional and continental discussion and political action.

There are no new study materials, videos or written reflection activities in this module. Its final activity consists of preparing the national roadmap using the template provided and the work already undertaken during the ACTS Pilot online programme.

A. THE CONTEXT

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) was adopted in 2013 as a framework document to guide the continent towards integration, prosperity and peace during the 50-year period ending in 2063. Among the seven major aspirations included in the document there is an insistence on the free movement of people and economic integration through

mechanisms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the unleashing of the potential of women and youth.

These concerns are well-appreciated when placed in context. Today's 1.6 billion Africans will become 2 billion in 2036, representing 22% of the world's population. The median age in Africa is 19.3, and 75% of Africans are under 35, potentially constituting the continent's greatest asset, a possible key to economic growth, innovation and sustainable development if they are well-trained and equipped with the right skills. Enabling young Africans to study, develop skills and move across national borders is therefore essential to building the human capital, professional networks and mutual understanding needed to advance continental integration and realize the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area.

That is why education initiatives constitute an absolute priority for the continent today and why CESA (Continental Education Strategy for Africa) was created to oversee the integration of AU education initiatives. Currently in its second action plan, CESA 26–35 builds on the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) to further AU education policy. Higher education has a particularly strategic role in this agenda, through the development of advanced skills, research and innovation capacities, and the preparation of professionals able to contribute to economic transformation and cooperation across the continent. Facilitating academic mobility and the recognition of learning across borders is an important condition for fulfilling this role.

Additionally, the AU has endorsed the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) to facilitate mobility of students and staff, promoting integration through common standards for quality, accreditation and degree recognition. The African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) is one of PAQAF's key action areas, addressing the comparability, accumulation and transfer of academic credits and the recognition of periods of study. This continental ambition is aligned with initiatives pursued by Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to develop credit accumulation and transfer systems adapted to their respective regional contexts. An active contributor to this dynamic has been the EU-funded Harmonization, Quality Assurance and Accreditation in African Higher Education (HAQAA) initiative, now in its third phase. ACTS is one of the five pillars of HAQAA3, which has worked to promote the development of common values through the mobilization of African stakeholders in governments and universities, at both the national and regional levels.

SCOPE: WHAT RECOGNITION MEANS IN THIS EXERCISE

Recognition can refer to different policy issues and processes.

In the specific context of ACTS, this roadmap focuses on the academic recognition of partial studies / periods of study undertaken in the context of student mobility, particularly at undergraduate level.

The exercise therefore intends to clarify how, in order to make student mobility possible, the academic credit accumulation and transfer system can be used by the home institution in order to recognize partial studies completed elsewhere.

It does not ask countries to develop a general roadmap for the recognition of full qualifications or for professional recognition.

WHY THE ROADMAPS MATTER

Each national roadmap should first be useful to the country that develops it. It provides a concise way of bringing together the perspectives of national authorities, higher education institutions and other relevant actors and translating the work of the Pilot into a small number of priorities and possible next steps.

Their collective value is equally important. Read together, the roadmaps will provide evidence on common challenges, enabling conditions, existing practices and areas where regional or continental cooperation is needed. For this reason, the contribution of every participating country is important: the continental picture can only emerge from the diversity of national experiences.

A national exercise with a continental purpose

The national roadmaps are not isolated final products. Together, they will help identify what is needed for ACTS to respond to different national contexts while supporting greater transparency, compatibility and trust across African higher education systems.

HOW THE ROADMAPS WILL INFORM THE NEXT PHASE OF ACTS

Following their submission, the national roadmaps will be reviewed by the ACTS Expert Team, with feedback provided to national focal points where further refinement is needed.

The roadmaps and the experiences generated through the Pilot will contribute to:

- The ACTS User's Guide, by identifying practical experiences, challenges and support needs to be addressed in a continental guide.
- The ACTS Ambassadors Network, by identifying active contributors who can support peer exchange, dissemination and follow-up. ACTS Ambassadors will be recognised and invited to a launch meeting in mid-2027, where the roadmaps will be discussed and follow-up and monitoring strategies developed.
- The ACTS Virtual Space, where Pilot materials, examples and results will remain available to other countries and institutions.
- A compendium of national roadmaps, bringing together the results of the exercise for wider dissemination.
- European Commission programming, particularly the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme (MOBAF) and relevant initiatives such as Study and Research in Africa.
- African Union and regional policy processes, through contributions to the CESA Higher Education Cluster and presentations at relevant ministerial events of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), where pertinent.

B. NATIONAL ROADMAPS: THE DRAFTING EXERCISE

The roadmap should be developed as a joint national reflection. National authorities should coordinate the exercise, but higher education institutions are essential contributors because they are the main actors in guaranteeing how mobility, credit transfer and recognition actually work in practice. Quality assurance or qualifications bodies, student representatives and other relevant actors may also contribute where appropriate.

Countries do not need to create a new formal structure for this exercise. They may use the group of authorities, institutions and experts already engaged in the ACTS Pilot and organise the work in the way that is most practical in their context.

The national roadmaps will be developed in three stages:

Before the joint live session on 10 November	National teams are invited to prepare Sections 1 and 2 of the roadmap: <i>Where are we now?</i> and <i>Where do we want to go?</i> These sections do not need to be submitted in advance.
During the live session on November 10	Each national team will have dedicated space during the live session to present its initial diagnosis, main challenges and emerging priorities. The joint live session on November 10 will provide an opportunity to discuss these national perspectives collectively and connect them with the next phase of ACTS. The session will be led by Prof. Wail Benjelloun, together with the experts who will guide the preparation of the ACTS User's Guide. Based on the issues emerging from the national contributions, they will provide guidance for the preparation of Sections 3 and 4: <i>How do we get there?</i> and <i>What requires cooperation beyond the national level?</i>
Following the live session on November 10	National teams should complete Sections 3 and 4 and finalise the full roadmap. Need support? The HAQAA Team and ACTS Experts will remain available throughout this period so that, where useful, national virtual meetings can be organised with authorities, participating higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders to discuss specific issues, bring together national and institutional perspectives, and support the preparation of the roadmap.

What, how and when to submit	1 completed national roadmap + Annex 2 (contributors and contact person). Annex 1 practice examples / case studies: optional and encouraged. Submission is expected through the ACTS website. Deadline: Friday, 27 November 2026 After submission, the ACTS Expert Team will carry out a technical review of the roadmaps. Where needed, feedback will be provided to clarify or further develop the national input.
What happens after submission	The collective evidence generated through the roadmaps will feed directly into the preparation of the ACTS User's Guide, which is expected to be collectively validated at a major ACTS policy event in 2027. Key contributors to the Pilot will be invited to participate in this next stage and to join the ACTS Ambassadors Network, to be launched in connection with this process.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE FOUR SECTIONS

Section 1. Where are we now?

Provide a concise shared starting point. Concerning the facilitation of student mobility through the use of an academic credit accumulation and transfer system for recognition of partial studies completed in another institution, identify what is already in place nationally, how it works in practice in institutions, and the main challenges. Do not attempt to describe the entire national system. Challenges may relate to regulation, procedures, coordination, information, capacity, trust, resources or practical mobility conditions.

Section 2. Where do we want to go?

Identify a maximum of five national priorities. Priorities should reflect what would make the greatest practical difference and may build on existing practices rather than requiring entirely new arrangements. Explain briefly why each priority matters in the national context.

Section 3. How do we get there?

Translate the priorities into a small number of practical actions. Identify who should be involved, an indicative short-, medium- or long-term timeframe, and the existing assets or additional support that could help. This is not a formal implementation plan: budgets, detailed indicators, milestones and formal institutional commitments are not required.

Section 4. What requires cooperation beyond the national level?

Identify issues that would benefit from regional or continental cooperation. Consider where common principles, compatible information, shared tools, peer learning or stronger trust between systems and institutions could make mobility and recognition easier. Indicate how ACTS, its tools or its community could contribute.

PRACTICE EXAMPLES / CASE STUDIES

Higher education institutions and other participating organisations are encouraged to add concrete examples showing how academic mobility, credit transfer or recognition of partial studies works in practice. These examples are **optional**, and countries may include as many as they consider useful.

A practice example does not need to be a formal case study or a success story. It may describe an established practice, a useful solution, or a difficulty that an institution is currently trying to address. The purpose is to make visible the practical reality behind the national roadmap and to identify experiences from which other institutions or countries may learn.

Where relevant, institutions may also share public documents, procedures, templates or other tools that illustrate the example. Particularly useful cases may inform the ACTS User's Guide or be shared through the ACTS Virtual Space.

CONTRIBUTORS AND THE FUTURE ACTS COMMUNITY

Annex 2 of the template is an essential part of the exercise. Countries should list the people and institutions that contributed to the preparation of the roadmap and identify a contact person for future ACTS follow-up. This is important both to recognise the joint national effort and to identify the community of practitioners and stakeholders that can continue the process after the Pilot. These contributors will provide the basis for the future ACTS Ambassadors Network, connecting people with practical experience of the use for student mobility of an academic credit accumulation and transfer system for recognition of partial studies completed in another institution. Note that future ACTS Ambassadors are required to contribute to this exercise, as part of the criteria for the award of the status.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL ROADMAP

The roadmap should build on the reflections, discussions and evidence generated during Modules 1–3. There is no need to undertake new research or consultations. The following tips can guide national teams:

- **Build on what already exists.** Revisit the findings from Modules 1–3 and identify existing national frameworks, institutional practices, tools and experiences that could be strengthened, connected or adapted.
- **Connect policy and practice.** Consider how national rules and frameworks operate in practice, recognising that implementation may vary across institutions

and that useful institutional practices may exist even where national arrangements are limited.

- **Keep the student mobility journey in focus.** Consider how credits are accumulated and transferred, and how periods of study completed elsewhere can be recognised towards a student's programme at their home institution, from mobility planning through to academic recognition.
- **Prioritise feasible progress.** Select a limited number of issues where improvement would make a practical difference. For each priority, identify realistic actions, relevant actors, indicative timeframes and available resources or support.
- **Make responsibilities visible.** Identify the contributions needed from national authorities, higher education institutions, quality assurance and qualifications bodies, students and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Aim for interoperability, not uniformity.** Identify how transparency, compatibility and mutual trust can help different systems work together, respecting national and institutional diversity.
- **Identify opportunities for regional and continental cooperation.** Highlight barriers that cannot be addressed nationally and where common tools, shared principles or peer learning could add value.
- **Document contributors and useful practices.** Record everyone involved in developing the roadmap and, where relevant, include concrete institutional examples or case studies that can inform the further development of ACTS.

TIMELINE

Date	Task
Before 10 November	Prepare roadmap Sections 1 and 2 (<i>Where are we now? / Where do we want to go?</i>). No advance submission required.
10 November	Joint live session: national presentations, collective discussion and expert guidance for Sections 3 and 4.
11–26 November	Complete Sections 3 and 4 and finalise the roadmap. National virtual support meetings available upon request.
27 November	Submission deadline: completed roadmap + mandatory Annex 2 (contributors and contact person). Annex 1 (case studies) optional. Submit via the ACTS website .
After submission	Technical review by the ACTS Expert Team and feedback where needed.
2027	ACTS User's Guide development and collective validation at a major policy event; engagement of key contributors and launch of the ACTS Ambassadors Network.