



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Our Independent Auditors

Mark Daniels Chartered Accountants
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CoL	Commonwealth of Learning
HEA	Higher Education Authority
ICT	Information Communications Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NOS	National Occupational Standards
QMIS	Qualifications Management Information System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQF	Southern Africa Development Community Qualifications Framework
SADC TCCA	Southern African Development Community Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation
TEVETA	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UQP	UNESCO Qualifications Passport
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority
ZQF	Zambia Qualifications Framework

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Vision:

"A credible regulator of national qualifications for comparability."



Mission:

"To manage the Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF) and ensure recognition and comparability of qualifications."



OUR CORE VALUES



Excellence:

We provide superior and meritorious services beyond our clients' expectations.



Integrity:

We put the obligations of the Authority above one's personal interests and conduct ourselves in a manner that is beyond reproach.



Teamwork:

We cooperate with others and work to the best of our abilities, despite any personal conflict that may arise between individuals to foster unity of purpose.



Confidentiality:

We are trustworthy by not revealing or disclosing privileged information to unauthorised persons.



PICTURES OF SOME ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED DURING THE YEAR





ZQA staff exhibits at
Agricultural Commercial Show



Independence Day Celebrations



The National Technical
Working Group for the review of the Zambia
Qualifications Framework at the
meeting held in Lusaka



ZQA participates in Uniforms Day
organised by the Ministry of Education



ZQA Staff pose for a photo with the Hon Minister of Education
Mr Douglas Syakalima and the Permanent Secretary for Administration
Mrs Noriana Muneku at the Uniform Day

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

of the Zambia Qualifications Authority.



Dr John Chileshe
Acting Board Chairperson
(Civil Society)



Mr. William Nyundu
Ministry of Education



Mrs. Jacqueline C.M Chikwama
(Zambia Institute of Human
Resource Management)



Mr. Zechariah Luhanga
(Ministry of Labour and
Social Security)



Ms Precious M. Lisulo
(Ministry of science and
Technology)



Mr. William Ngoma
(Zambia Air Services
Training Institute)



Prof. Boniface Namangala
(Public Universities)



Mr. Anthony Bwembya
(Zambia Institute of Chartered
Accountants)



Prof. Kasonde Bowa
(Private Universities)

ZAQA MANAGEMENT

The Authority's Management at the end of 2025
was made up of the following members:



Mrs. Mercy M. Ngoma
Director General



Mr. Fidelis Cheelo
Director - Qualification Services



Mr. Ronald Chulu
Director – Finance & ICT



Mr. Conrad Simatimbe
Manager ICT



Mrs. Stella Z. C Akalemwa
Manager - Verification Services



Mr. Jericho Kashiya
Manager - Standards & Inspections



Mr Preston Mukofu
Manager – Human
Capital Strategy & Administration



Mr Aaron Tembo
Legal Counsel and Board Secretary

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT



It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Zambia Qualifications Authority Board of Directors to present the Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2025.

In the year under review, the Authority's operations were anchored on the new legislative framework the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No 8 of 2024. In addition, the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan as well as the Annual Workplans and Budgets guided the strategic direction of the Authority. The Plan sets out the direction and establishes key priorities in relation to the mandate of the Authority as provided in the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 8 of 2024. Further, the Authority aligned its programmes to the Eighth National Development Plan for the period 2022-2026.

In the implementation of programmes and activities in the year 2025, the Authority focussed on excellence in the management of qualifications. Excellence in the management of qualifications meant ensuring that Zambia qualification continue being globally recognised and comparable. The Authority also focussed on Operational Excellence. This meant ensuring the provision of quality services to clients and the general public.

In all these focus areas, the Board continued to provide its strategic oversight.

The enhancement of the quality of the qualifications being issued in Zambia and the effective management of the Zambia Qualifications Framework require collaboration with key stakeholders. I am glad to note that in the year under review, the Authority continued to work constructively with appropriate authorities, awarding bodies, professional bodies, academia, and industry. In particular, during the year, in collaboration with stakeholders, the Authority was able to develop several more National Occupational Standards, pertaining to key sectors in the Eighth National Development Plan.

It is also gratifying to note that the number of local awarding bodies submitting leaner achievement records continued to increase in 2025. This made the verification process of local qualifications easier hence reducing the turnaround time.

During the year, the Authority with support from the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) completed the revision of the National Qualifications Framework among other strategic programmes and activities aimed at improving the recognition of Zambian qualifications. Cognisant of the role the Authority plays in the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework, the Authority continued key stakeholder engagements aimed at improving the recognition of qualifications, such as participation in activities of the African Continental Qualifications Framework, participation in meetings organised in the implementation of the SADC Qualifications Framework and engagements on the implementation of the UNESCO Qualifications Passport Project which is aimed at recognising qualifications of refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

The results achieved by the Authority in the year under review were due, in large measure, to the policy direction and support rendered by the Ministry of Education, for which we are grateful. In particular, through the Ministry's support, the Authority was able to receive the 2025 budgeted funding in full and an additional supplementary funding.

I also wish to express appreciation to the Management and staff for their conscientious dedication to duty and resourcefulness, thus enabling the results achieved during the year. The Authority continued to encounter challenges in the implementation of its activities. Of great concern, is the inertia by awarding bodies in submitting qualifications, in their sub-frameworks, for registration by the Authority. This not only undermines the work of the Authority, but poses a risk to the nation, in that external stakeholders may start to question the quality of Zambian qualifications if they do not appear on our list of registered qualifications. I am glad to note that Management is actively engaging with the awarding bodies to ensure adherence to the law.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all stakeholders for the continued patience, support, and feedback. I wish to assure you all of our continued commitment to improving the international recognition of Zambia's qualifications, and to ensure that we have an appropriately qualified and skilled workforce that will effectively contribute to national development



Dr. John Chileshe
ACTING BOARD CHAIRPERSON

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT



Introduction

The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Education. The Authority was established by the repealed Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 13 of 2011 and continues to exist under the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No 8 of 2024. The overarching mandate of the Authority is to develop, oversee and maintain a national qualifications framework for Zambia. The detailed functions of the Authority are outlined in Section 9(1) of the ZAQA Act. The Authority is also guided by Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 4 of 2018 on Accreditation, Validation and Evaluation of Qualifications.

During the year under review, the Authority fully implemented the new Act, the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No 8 of 2024. However, some provisions of the Act will further require regulations in order to operationalise them. These provisions include the establishment of the inspectorate Unit of the Authority and its powers and functions, variation of a qualification and refunds among others. The Authority developed a layman's draft for consideration by the Minister of Education and it is that the regulation will be issued by the Minister in due course.

In order to ensure that the National Qualifications Framework aligns with the structural changes contained in the 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF), the Authority, with the support of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) completed the alignment process of the NQF in 2025. The NQF review process was also anchored on the wider and national aspirations to continuously improve comparability, transparency, portability, and articulation of all national qualifications (types and levels) for an inclusive and effective lifelong learning system in Zambia as well as adapting to new demands and types of learning and certification, notably micro-credentials, and to development of new skills for emerging occupations, technologies and global competitiveness. The revised NQF was approved by the Minister of Education and gazetted on 31st October 2025.

Operational Overview

The operations of the Authority during the year under review were guided by the 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan and the Annual Work Plan and Budget, whose focus was on the implementation of the ZQF.

A total of 246 qualifications were registered in 2025 bringing the cumulative number of accredited qualifications to 942.

Challenges in registering qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework included the slow pace at which Awarding Bodies submitted qualifications to the Authority for registration as well as poor quality of some of the submissions resulting in qualifications being sent back for corrections. The Authority continued with stakeholder engagement efforts in order to address this identified challenge.

Further, the Authority verified and evaluated a total of 61,877 qualifications in the year under review. A total of 1,994 non-recognition certificates were issued for misrepresented qualifications. This represented 3.2 % of processed qualifications. A total of 10,590 qualifications were pending verification and evaluation as at end of the year. The Authority continued to experience challenges in verifying and evaluating foreign qualifications, which included delayed responses by awarding bodies to verification requests. To address this challenge, the Authority has continued engaging qualification verification agencies and embassies to help with the verification of foreign qualifications. On a positive note, local awarding bodies are now complying with the provisions of the ZAQA Act regarding the submission of learner achievement records to the Authority. This has improved the turn-around time on verification of local qualifications.

Stakeholder Engagements

The Authority continued to engage stakeholders on the mandate of the Authority. Engagements with cooperating partners were also enhanced in the period under review.

Corporate Governance

In the year under review, the tenure of the Board came to an end on 16th February. However, the Ministry of Education continued to provide strategic guidance and oversight to the Authority. The Authority was optimistic that the new Board of Directors would soon be appointed in accordance with section 6(1) of the ZAQA Act. 8 of 2024.

Financial Performance

In the year under review, the Authority recorded an operating surplus of ZMW 10,065,324.

Total revenue recorded amounted to ZMW 47,825,200 while expenditure amounted to ZMW 37,759,876. The revenue comprised the full grant for the year amounting to ZMW 19,162,186, funds from user fees for the Authority's services amounting to ZMW 25,540,800, supplementary funding amounting to ZMW 3,000,000 and other revenue amounting to ZMW 122,214.



Mercy M. Ngoma (Mrs)
DIRECTOR GENERAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MANDATE

The mandate of the Zambia Qualifications Authority in line with the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 8 of 2024 is to develop and implement a national qualifications framework. Specific functions of the Authority are to:

- (a) develop, oversee and maintain a National Qualifications Framework;
- (b) develop and implement policy and criteria, in consultation with the appropriate authorities, for the development, registration and publication of qualifications which shall include the following requirements: (i) the relevant sub-framework shall be identified on any document relating to the registration and publication of a qualification; and (ii) each sub-framework shall have a distinct nomenclature for its qualification type which is appropriate to the relevant sub framework and consistent with international practice;
- (c) register a qualification, if that qualification meets the relevant criteria;
- (d) develop policy and criteria in consultation with the appropriate authorities for the recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer system;
- (e) develop the content of level descriptors for each level of the National Qualifications Framework and agree with the appropriate authorities on the content of the level descriptions;
- (f) publish the agreed level descriptors in the Gazette and ensure that the levels remain current and appropriate;
- (g) ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable;
- (h) develop, publish and maintain national occupational standards for occupations in the Republic in consultation with the relevant stakeholders;
- (i) verify a local qualification in consultation with an awarding body;
- (j) verify and evaluate foreign qualifications in consultation with a competent authority in the foreign jurisdiction;
- (k) collaborate with other international institutions or organisations on all matters of mutual interest concerning qualification frameworks;
- (l) establish and maintain a database of learning achievements in the Republic;
- (m) monitor and evaluate compliance of appropriate authorities with the National Qualifications Framework standards;
- (n) inform the appropriate authorities and stakeholders on international practice in the development and management of the National Qualifications Framework;

- (o) conduct assessments on the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, including periodic studies of the impact of the National Qualifications Framework on education, training and employment; and
- (p) advise the Minister on matters relating to the National Qualifications Framework.

The Authority is further guided by the Zambia Qualifications (Accreditation, Validation and Evaluation of Qualifications) Regulations, 2018

2.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The Board of Directors of the Authority continued to provide strategic oversight of the Authority during the year 2025. However, the tenure of the Board came to an end in February 2025, in line with transitional arrangements in the ZAQA Act No. 8 of 2024.

The list of Board Members and the number of meetings they attended in the year are included in Table 1:

Table 1: Meeting attendance by Board Members

No	Board Member	No. of Scheduled Meetings	No. of Meetings Attended
1.	Dr. John Chileshe	5	1
2.	Professor Kasonde Bowa	5	1
3.	Professor Boniface Namangala	5	1
4.	Mr. Zechariah Luhanga	5	1
5.	Mrs. Jacqueline C. M Chikwama	5	1
6.	Mr. Anthony Bwembya	5	0
7.	Mr. William Nyundu	5	1
8.	Ms. Precious Lisulo	5	1
9.	Mr. William Ngoma	5	1

The Board has the authority to put in place Board Committees to assist with corporate governance matters in specific areas of operation. Attendance by the Members of the various Committees was as follows:

Table 2: Registration and Accreditation Committee

No	Committee Member	No. of Scheduled Meetings	No. of Meetings Attended
1.	Dr. John Chileshe	6	1
2.	Mrs. Jane Chinkusu <i>(Appointed May 2023)</i>	6	1
3.	Mr. Succeed Mubanga	6	1
4.	Mr. Zechariah Luhanga	6	1 proxy
5.	Mr. William Ngoma	6	1

Table 3: Audit and Risk Committee

No	Committee Member	No. of Scheduled Meetings	No. of Meetings Attended
1.	Mrs. Jacqueline C. M Chikwama	4	1
2.	Mr. Walubita Luwabelwa	4	1
3.	Mr. Thomas Kaunda	4	1
4.	Mr. Elijah Chabu	4	1

Table 4: Finance, Administration and Human Resources

No	Committee Member	No. of Scheduled Meetings	No. of Meetings Attended
1.	Mr. Anthony Bwembya	4	1
2.	Mr. Kasonde Mwila <i>(appointed April 2023)</i>	4	1
3.	Mr. Tom Thewo	4	1
4.	Professor Kasonde Bowa	4	1
5.	Mr. Jacob Mkandawire	4	1

Table 5: Standards Setting Committee

No	Committee Member	No. of Scheduled Meetings	No. of Meetings Attended
1.	Mr. William Nyundu	4	1
2.	Ms. Precious Lisulo	4	1
3.	Dr. Micheal Chilala	4	1
4.	Mr. Cleophas Takaiza	4	0
5.	Professor Boniface Namangala	4	1
6.	Professor Boniface Namangala	4	0

3.0 OPERATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE YEAR 2025

The Authority continued the implementation of its Strategic Plan for the period 2022 to 2026. In this regard, programmes and activities were anchored on the strategic objectives espoused in the Strategic Plan. In the year 2025, the following milestones were made under each strategic objective:

3.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Under this Strategic Objective, the Authority committed to focusing on improving the management of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In achieving this objective, the Authority applied various interventions to enhance the verification and evaluation of qualifications, enforce the registration of qualifications and enhance the implementation of the NQF.

3.1.1 Enhance the recognition of Zambian Qualifications

3.1.1.1 Review of the National Qualifications Framework and Level Descriptors

During the year under consideration, the Authority together with key stakeholders revised the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) structure and its level descriptors and was gazetted by the Minister of Education on 31st October 2025. The New NQF and level descriptors incorporated all qualification levels offered in the country making it easier for recognition of qualifications. The major changes included introduction of the Advanced Level Secondary School Certificate at level 4, Bachelors of Honors Degree and Post Graduate Certificate at level 8.

3.1.1.2 International Collaborations

- ✓ During the period under review, the Authority continued to actively participate in activities under the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). Zambia forms part of the ACQF Network Presidency, together with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), providing strategic leadership for the Network. Key activities included participation in the ACQF Network webinar, which introduced the newly elected Presidency, reviewed the 2025 work plan, and discussed governance arrangements and sustainability of the Network. ZAQQA also contributed to continental discussions on the development of technical clusters, progress on the Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP), and ongoing referencing work aimed at strengthening transparency and comparability of qualifications across Africa.

- ✓ The Authority also participated in the ACQF fifth Forum under the theme Transparency, Comparability and Mobility across national and regional qualifications systems. The forum focused on sharing good practices and peer learning among country ACQF Country members. The Forum was held in Sandton Johannesburg South Africa in July 2025.
- ✓ The Authority also participated in the ACQF six Forum which was held in September 2025 in Mauritius under the theme: “Building Future ready Qualifications Systems for Africa”. The forum focused on sharing good practices and peer learning among country ACQF Country members.
- ✓ The Authority participated at the 3rd Meeting of the Addis Convention Committee scheduled for 17–18 December 2025 in Marrakech, Morocco. The meeting brought together States Parties to the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (Addis Convention), together with UNESCO and key regional stakeholders. The Addis Convention provides a continental legal framework aimed at promoting fair, transparent and reliable recognition of higher education qualifications across Africa. Its implementation supports academic mobility, strengthens cooperation among universities and quality assurance bodies, and contributes to advancing the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. Zambia was appointed as Rapporteur to the Addis Convention Bureau.
- ✓ The Authority participated in the 2025 meeting of the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF), held on 24th and 25th April 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting brought together representatives from Member States and regional experts to review progress in implementing the SADCQF and to discuss priorities under the 2023–2026 roadmap. The SADCQF is a regional mechanism designed to promote comparability, transparency and mutual recognition of qualifications across SADC Member States, while supporting credit transfer, harmonisation of qualifications and strengthened quality assurance systems.
- ✓ The Authority continued to work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other partners in implementing the UNESCO Qualifications Passport (UQP) Project. The UNESCO Qualifications Passport provides for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees and other displaced persons.

In the year under review, UNESCO in collaboration with the ZAQA, Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Higher Education Loans and Scholarship Board (HELSB) convened a five-day workshop to develop a roadmap for the regularisation of the legal framework under which the UQP is implemented in Zambia. The workshop brought together representatives from government agencies, higher education institutions, regulatory bodies, refugee and labour stakeholders and international partners.

UNESCO in collaboration with UQP stakeholders held a National Implementation Committee (NIC) meeting on 20th November 2025 to review progress, governance arrangements for the UQP Initiative. This meeting built on earlier engagements, including the Document Review Workshop held from 2nd – 6th June 2025. Key objectives included reviewing UQP legal framework, implementation status, reviewing NIC membership and leadership structure, amending the NIC Terms of Reference, reviewing the 2026 Activity Plan, and agreeing on the roadmap for sustainable implementation.

The NIC Meeting resulted in the successful adoption of the revised ToRs, confirmation of leadership structure, and approval of the 2026 Activity Plan marking significant progress towards sustainable UQP implementation. With strengthened coordination and national ownership, Zambia is well-positioned to advance qualification recognition for refugees and vulnerable migrants.

3.1.1.3 Collaboration with other institutions

The Authority continued to collaborate with international counterparts as follows:

In February 2025, The Authority through the Director General attended and chaired the GAIN network meeting in her capacity as Director General. She highlighted ZAQA's mandate in overseeing the National Qualifications Framework, developing standards, registering and evaluating qualifications, developing National Occupational Standards, and advancing policies on Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems. She welcomed new members from Poland, Lithuania, and Azerbaijan and guided brief introductory presentations from each agency. The meeting focused on Research Integrity, featuring presentations from representatives of various institutions who discussed the integration of research integrity into quality assurance and research evaluation processes.

During the period under review, the Authority undertook working missions to India and Zimbabwe to strengthen cooperation with key institutions involved in the verification and recognition of qualifications.

The visit to India included engagements and discussions on the growing number of qualifications from Indian institutions requiring verification in Zambia. The mission provided an opportunity to clarify verification procedures, present the mandate of ZAQA, and explore potential partnerships aimed at improving information sharing and strengthening verification processes. In addition, ZAQA undertook a mission to Zimbabwe to strengthen institutional linkages and address matters relating to the verification of Zimbabwean qualifications. During the visit, the Authority engaged Expert Decision Systems Zimbabwe (XDS) as a potential verification partner and confirmed that the institution had the technical capacity to support verification processes, subject to completion of due diligence. Meetings were also held with the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) and the Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO) to discuss accreditation, recognition, and verification matters.



(ZAQA) participated in the Third Ordinary Meeting of the Addis Ababa Committee held in Marrakech, Morocco.

3.1.1.4 Local Collaborations

The Authority in consultation with the Business Regulatory Review Agency (BRRA) successfully completed the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for the development of the Statutory Instrument under the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 8 of 2024 and submitted the draft Statutory Instrument to the Ministry of Education. This milestone positions the Authority for the effective operationalisation of the Act upon approval and gazetting.



Attendees of the new ZAQAACT No.8 of 2024 Sensitisation Meeting

3.1.2 Intended results 1: Increased Registration of qualifications.

During the year 2025, the Authority received 307 qualifications for registration on the NQF. A total of 246 qualifications were registered, 44 were returned to the awarding bodies due to some inadequacies and 26 44 qualifications were carried forward to 2026. As at 31st December 2025, the total number of qualifications registered on the NQF was 942. The Table below presents the breakdown:

Table 6: Number of Qualifications Received and Registered in 2025 compared to 2024.

	2024	2023
Brought Forward from previous year	1	0
Qualifications Received	351	216
Qualifications Registered	246	108
Qualifications Rejected	44	23
Qualifications returned to the awarding bodies due to incompleteness	36	84
Pending Registration as at 31 December	26	1

3.1.2.1 Challenges in the Registration of Qualifications

- i) The Authority did not register the annual target of 546 qualifications due to the slow pace at which Appropriate Authorities and Awarding Bodies were submitting qualifications for registration; and
- ii) Qualifications submitted for registration not meeting the standards of the NQF.

3.1.2.2 Strategies to Address the Challenges identified above.

The following strategies were put in place to address the challenges identified above:

- i) Engaged Appropriate Authorities and Awarding Bodies on the need to submit qualifications for registration on the NQF;
- ii) Sensitised Appropriate Authorities and Awarding Bodies on the implications of offering qualifications not registered on the NQF;
- iii) Oriented awarding bodies on Guidelines and Criteria for Registration of qualifications on the NQF.



The National Technical Working Group for the review of the Zambia Qualifications Framework at the meeting held in Lusaka

3.1.3 Intended results 2: Increased verification and evaluation of qualifications.

In the year 2025, the Authority received a total of 67,608 applications for verification and evaluation of qualifications. A total of 61,877 qualifications were verified and evaluated in the year. The verified and evaluated qualifications were distributed as shown in Figure 1.

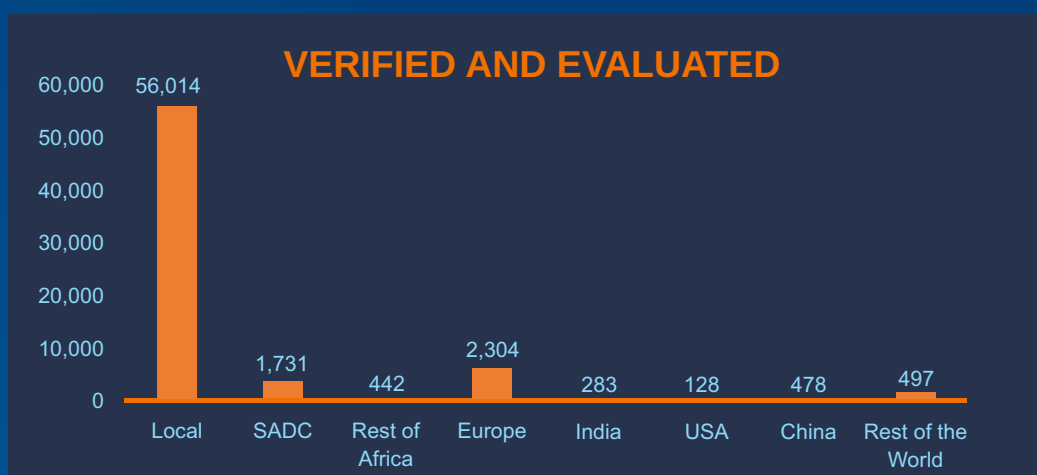


Figure 1: Distribution of verified and evaluated qualifications.

The Authority recorded a total of 1,994 misrepresented qualifications in the year, representing 3.2% of verified and evaluated qualifications. The misrepresented qualifications were distributed as follows:

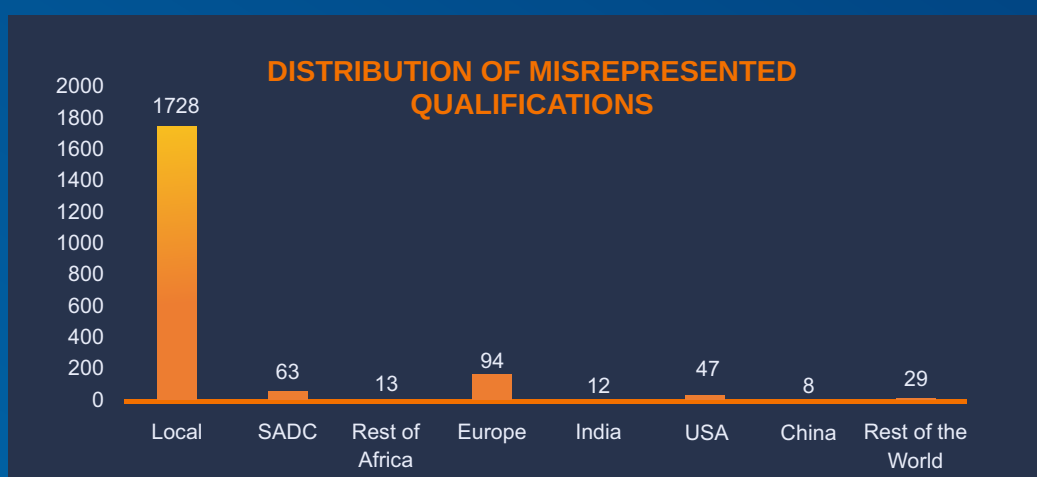


Figure 2: Distribution of misrepresented qualifications

The distribution of received, verified and evaluated, as well as pending qualifications was as represented in Table 7.

	2024	2023
Qualifications Brought Forward from previous year	4,859	824
Qualifications Received	67,608	14,757
Qualifications verified & evaluated	61,877	10,722
Pending as at 31 December	10,590	4,859

The trend in the verification of qualifications from 2021 to 2025 is indicated in Figure 3.



Figure 3: verified qualifications in the last five (5) years.

The sharp increase in the number of verified and evaluated qualifications in 2025 was attributed to the mandatory requirement for employers and tertiary education institutions to recruit and enrol applicants based on verified qualifications as provided in the ZAQA Act No. 8 of 2024.

3.1.3.1 Challenges in the verification and evaluation of Qualifications

The Authority encountered the following challenges during the period under review, which hindered the achievement of the intended results:

- i) The high cost of verification fees charged by some foreign awarding bodies such as ZIMSEC, some Indian Universities, and others.
- ii) Delays in receiving confirmations of qualifications from some foreign awarding bodies;
- iii) Introduction of strict data protection laws in countries like China, which were previously open;
- iv) Inadequate record-keeping systems among local awarding bodies, failing to submit Learner Achievement Records for legacy qualifications;
- v) The Qualifications Management Information System (QMIS) continued to underperform due to the increase in the number of applications being received and processed daily;
- vi) Slow internet to support the processing demand; and
- vii) The number of applications received daily is beyond the current team's capacity to process within the service charter time.



The ZAQA Management Team held talks with representatives from the World Bank and the Ministry of Science and Technology about collaboration in the Skills Training for Resilience and Industry – Valued Employment Project.

3.1.4 Intended results 3: Increased compliance to set Standards.

During the year under review, the Authority conducted the following activities aimed at increasing compliance to set standards.

3.1.4.1 Litigation and Compliance

The Authority did not record any litigation cases in the year 2025. Therefore, at the end of 2025, there were no cases in the Courts of Law against or commenced by ZAQA.

3.1.4.2 Contract Management

The Authority executed its Contracts in accordance with the Public Procurement Act, the Public Finance Management Act, and other applicable laws.

3.1.4.3 Quality Assurance

The Authority monitored and evaluated the compliance of Appropriate Authorities (Examinations Council of Zambia and the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority) with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) standards. The two Appropriate Authorities were found to be compliant with the NQF standards.

3.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE UPTAKE OF OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

The Authority continued to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) in key priority sectors identified in the Eighth National Development Plan. The NOS are Standards specifying the sphere of knowledge, skill/competency and autonomy levels that candidates should attain for effective performance in a specific job. The primary aim of NOS is to ensure that the outcome of the training system responds to industry needs. The Authority endeavoured to enforce the incorporation of NOS in the development of learning programmes that are submitted for registration as qualifications. The intended result is to increase the skills and competencies of graduates in line with industry expectations.

During the year under review, the Authority developed 6 additional NOS in the Water Sector namely: Hydro-geophysicist (Tracers), Hydrologist, Hydrogeologist, Waste Management Officer, Plumber and Pipe Fitter, and Hydro-Geomatic Engineer.



Stakeholders gathered in Ndola to give their views on the Draft ZAQA (Registration, Verification, and Evaluation) Regulations 2025

3.2.1 Challenges Encountered during the year under Review

- 3.2.1.2 Delayed nominations of experts by industry and academia to participate in the NOS Development activities; and
- 3.2.1.3 Inadequate financial resources to develop NOS for all occupations in the Republic.

3.2.2 Strategies to Address the Challenges

The following strategies were put in place to address challenges identified:

- 3.2.2.1 Engaged stakeholders on the need to promptly nominate experts to participate in NOS Development activities;
- 3.2.2.2 Lobbying for financial support from cooperating partners through the Ministry of Education: and
- 3.2.2.3 Lobbying the Ministry of Education for the need to increase the operational grant.

3.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Under this Strategic objective, it was expected that the Authority would strive to improve its funding sources and enhance financial management. To achieve this, ZAQQA would seek to increase its financial base, enhance internal control systems, and produce unqualified external audit reports. In the year under review, the following were achieved:

3.3.1 Intended Result I: Enhance Financial Accountability

- 3.3.1.1 The Internal Audit function continued to be outsourced to Acuitas Associates. However, with the directive by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning for State Institutions to have pre-audits, the Authority commenced the recruitment of the Manager – Internal Audit.
- 3.3.1.2 The statutory audit of the 2025 financial statements was conducted by external auditors, Mark Daniels Chartered Accountants. In the opinion of the auditors, the Authority's financial statements represented fairly, the performance of the Authority in 2025.

3.3.2 Intended Result II: Increase Financial Base

In 2025, the Authority recorded overall revenue growth of 101%. Revenue increased from ZMW 23,753,436 in 2024 to ZMW 47,702,986 in 2025. These figures represent an increase in the government grant from ZMW 16,162,186 to ZMW 19,162,186 in the same period. In addition, revenue from registration and verification of qualifications increased from ZMW 7,591,250 to ZMW 25,540,800. Further, the Authority continued to engage the Ministry of Education to increase the grant allocation and also with potential cooperating partners for financial support.

3.4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: ENHANCE CUSTOMER SERVICES

Through this Strategic Objective, ZAQA committed to building a positive corporate image and improving its visibility and accessibility. The Authority also committed to reducing customer complaints and increasing awareness of its services to the general public.

3.4.1 Intended Result 1: Positive corporate image.

The Authority launched a dedicated Call Centre to address the high volume of client inquiries and concerns. This initiative aims to provide timely responses, streamline communication, and improve overall client satisfaction while supporting the Authority's service delivery mandate.

3.4.2 Intended Result 2: Increased visibility of ZAQA Services

In an effort to increase the visibility of ZAQA and its services, the following activities were undertaken:

- i) In collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Media and the Management Development Division under Cabinet Office, the Authority developed a new Communications Strategy, which was planned to be finalised in 2026. The strategy aims to strengthen stakeholder engagement, enhance the visibility of the Authority's services and initiatives, and ensure consistent, clear, and effective communication with clients, partners, and the wider public.
- ii) The Authority held an end of year Media briefing to sensitize the General Public through the Media on the successes recorded and challenges encountered by the Authority in 2025.

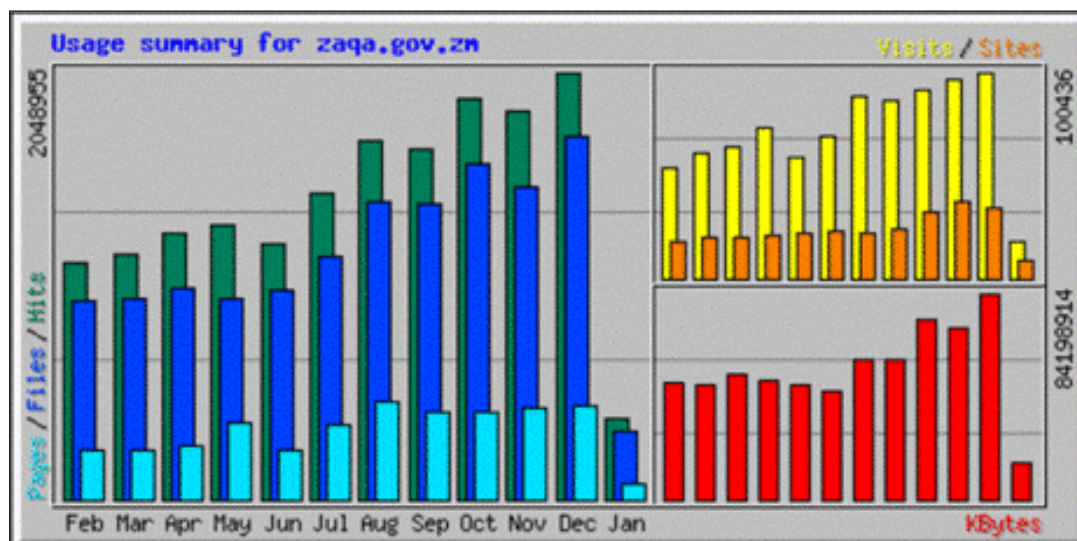
3.4.2.2 Social Media

The following were the social media statistics at the end of the year:

Platform	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Facebook	116k followers	116k followers	118k followers	129k followers
Twitter	773 followers	779 followers	798 followers	845 followers
LinkedIn	22,285 followers	23,793 followers	25,622 followers	26,200 followers

3.4.2.3 Website Report

Below are the statistics for the website traffic over a twelve-month period:



Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Jan 2026	64785	54644	13174	2924	8250	15172231	17547	79047	327865	388712
Dec 2025	66095	56309	14475	3239	34026	84198914	100436	448742	1745604	2048955
Nov 2025	62094	49831	14596	3213	37288	70073276	96398	437895	1494939	1862834
Oct 2025	62139	51821	13418	2966	32459	73273252	91967	415983	1606473	1926336
Sep 2025	56170	47248	13822	2871	23791	57549070	86131	414660	1417458	1685129
Aug 2025	55456	46002	15020	2852	22048	56975145	88415	465630	1426081	1719152
Jul 2025	47387	37487	11456	2217	22924	44239304	68743	355136	1162114	1468997
Jun 2025	40987	33617	7757	1976	22540	46806053	59294	232724	1008531	1229635
May 2025	42491	31063	11969	2351	21167	48971222	72883	371059	962971	1317224
Apr 2025	42597	33798	8705	2124	20179	51306227	63737	261177	1013948	1277939
Mar 2025	37862	31059	7685	1983	20054	47234028	61490	238250	962832	1173749
Feb 2025	40673	33942	8463	1938	18367	48053136	54287	236968	950388	1138861
Totals						643851858	861328	3957271	14079204	17237523



Ms. Mulenga Kasase – Information Education and Communication Specialist for The Zambia Qualifications Authority and Ms. Tizya Mukulama, Senior Public Education Office

3.5 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: IMPROVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Through this objective, the Authority delivered digital services that enhanced efficient and effective service delivery. In the period under review, the following activities were undertaken to improve management systems:

- i) The Authority reviewed and updated the ICT Risk Register to ensure business continuity and operational efficiency.
- ii) The Authority monitored the cybersecurity ecosystem to ensure a safe cyber space for all system users.
- iii) The Authority licensed all systems to optimize the operations of the Authority.
- iv) The Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance initiated the development of a robust Qualifications Management Information System (QMIS).
- v) The Authority digitalized the Register of registered qualifications to increase public access to the accredited learning programmes and registered qualifications in Zambia.
- vi) The Authority acquired an Enterprise Resource Package to automate business operations and reduce operational costs.
- vii) The Authority acquired and implemented a call centre system in order to enhance client engagements.

3.6 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: IMPROVE HUMAN RESOURCES

In line with Strategic Objective 6, the following activities were undertaken in 2025 in an effort to improve human resources:

3.6.1 Staff Complement

The number of staff at the close of the year was thirty-six (36), against a staff establishment of forty-eight (48), representing 75% achievement.

3.6.2 Gender Distribution

Out of the thirty-six (36) staff members, fifteen (15) were females while twenty-one (21) were males.

3.6.3 Staff Recruitment and Promotion

During the year under review, the Authority conducted recruitments and filled a total of fifteen (15) vacant positions. Of these, three (3) positions were filled through external recruitment: Accountant, Corporate Communications Specialist, and Driver.

The remaining positions were filled through internal recruitment. These included two (2) Verification Specialists, six (6) Verification Officers, one (1) Procurement Officer, one (1) Personal Assistant to the DG, and two (2) Client Service Assistants.

Additionally, the Human Capital, Strategy and Administration Specialist was promoted to the position of Manager – Human Capital, Strategy and Administration.

3.6.4 Staff Separations

During the year under review, a total of five (5) employees separated from the Authority. These were the Procurement Specialist, Accountant, Standards and Research Specialist, Legal Counsel and Board Secretary, and a Verification Officer. This represented the attrition rate of 14%.

3.6.5 Staff Capacity Development and Sensitisation

In its never-ending quest to continuously build capacity in the workforce, the Authority organised the following staff trainings in the year;

a) Departmental and Individual Workplans development: All members of staff with supervisory roles were trained in the development of department and individual workplans, conducted by Cabinet Office;

b) Customer Service Training: staff members with direct contact with the clients underwent customer service training conducted by the Authority; and

c) Integrity Committee Induction: Members of the Integrity Committee underwent an induction training which was conducted by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

3.6.6 Staff Health and Wellness Activities

The Authority organised several Health and Wellness activities during the year under review in fulfilment of the provisions of the Health and Wellness Policy. The following activities were undertaken:

- a) Physical Fitness Activities - A total of twelve sessions were conducted under the guidance of the physical fitness expert;
- b) Health Talk - A presentation was delivered to all members of staff by a health expert. Topics covered included workplace burnout and mental health; and
- c) Financial Literacy and Investment Opportunities - A presentation, exploring investment opportunities aimed at ensuring financial stability by all employees, was delivered.



ZAQA Staff during the Health and Wellness Activities

3.6.7 Annual Team Building

The Authority held a team-building lunch during the year



Participants at the UNESCO Qualifications Passport Policy Review workshop

3.6.8. Organisation Restructuring

The enactment of the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 8 of 2024 exponentially enhanced the mandate of the Authority by introducing mandatory provisions such as the requirement for employers to only appoint a person to an office whose qualification has been verified by the Authority, and the requirement for higher education institutions or an institution registered under the TEVET Act No. 13 of 1998 to only enrol a person in a programme of study whose qualification has been verified by the Authority. The enhanced mandate of the Authority led to an increase in the Authority's workload, necessitating the review of the structure to make it responsive to the new demands.

Further, the mid-term review of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan revealed that some strategies could not be effectively delivered using the organisational structure that existed at the time, hence the need to align the structure to the Plan. Against this background, ZAQA requested the Management Development Division (MDD) of Cabinet Office to facilitate the review of the organisational structure.

The organisational structure review resulted in an increase of 14 positions, from 34 positions to 48 positions.

3.6.9 Automation of the Performance Management System

The automation of the Performance Management System was successfully completed and deployed during the year. It is expected that the online system would be put to full use by the Authority in the year 2026.

3.6.10 Integrity Committee

The Authority established an Integrity Committee during the year 2025. The establishment of the Committee was in line with the Anti-Corruption Act No. 3 of 2012 and Guidelines. The Committee undertook the following activities during the year;

- i) Sensitization of all employees on the dangers of corruption and maladministration; and
- ii) Formulation of the Code of Ethics and Gifts and Benefits Policy.

3.7 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7: IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Through this objective, ZAQA is committed to improving institutional infrastructure in order to attain operational excellence. Further, ZAQA in collaboration with the Higher Education Authority, the Higher Education Loans & Scholarship Board and the Ministry of Education embarked on an infrastructure development project which is intended to provide suitable office space for the three Institutions and the Ministry of Education. This project when complete will help provide a conducive working environment for ZAQA employees.

However, during the mid-term strategic plan review it was observed that the objective was outside the control of the Authority and therefore unattainable. In this regard, it was recommended that the objective be discontinued.

3.8

THE OUTPUT MATRIX

PERFORMANCE AGAINST
THE SET TARGETS FOR THE YEAR
UNDER REVIEW.

Zambia Qualifications Authority | 2025 Annual Report

3.8 THE OUTPUT MATRIX - PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE SET TARGETS FOR THE Y

S/N	SECTION / UNIT	INTENDED RESULT	OUTPUT INDICATORS
01.	Qualifications Services	Increased verification & evaluation of qualifications	Number of applications for verification of local qualifications processed at the end of 2024.
02.			% of local qualifications verified within 14 days
03.	Qualifications Services	Increased Registration of qualifications	Number of applications received for Registration processed at the end of 2025.
04.			% of qualifications processed within 60 days
05.			
06.	Standards and Quality Assurance	Increased compliance to standards	Implementation of the revised NQF and level descriptors
07.	Standards and Quality Assurance		Percentage of National Development Plan key priority sectors with NOS.

YEAR UNDER REVIEW.

2025 PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGET	
2025 PLANNED TARGETS	2025 PERFORMANCE
verify at least 79,000 local applications received for verification by December 2025 90% of local qualifications received verified within 14 days	61,877 local qualifications were verified. 70% of the local qualifications verified were processed within 14 days.
Register at least 546 qualifications onto the NQF by December 2025 95% of received applications for registration processed within 60 days	3,592 foreign qualifications were verified and evaluated. 60% of the foreign qualifications verified and evaluated were processed within 30
Register at least 546 qualifications onto the NQF by December 2025 95% of received applications for registration processed within 60 days	on the NQF. 50% of the evaluated qualifications were processed within 60 days.
Publish / gazette registered qualifications	The List of qualifications registered on the NQF was published on the ZAQA Website.
Conduct 2 meetings to offer technical support to Appropriate Authorities	Engagement meetings were held between ZAQA and the three Appropriate Authorities.
Revise the NQF structure and level descriptors gazetted by 31 st December 2025.	The Authority together with key stakeholders revised the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) structure and its level descriptors and was gazetted by the Minister of Education on 31st October 2025.
3 Monitoring and Evaluation of compliance with NQF Standards by December 2025 100% of institutions audited	Monitoring and evaluation of compliance to NQF Standards was conducted on the following Appropriate Authorities: i. ECZ; and ii. TEVETA; The two institutions were monitored representing 66.6%.

S/N	SECTION / UNIT	INTENDED RESULT	OUTPUT INDICATORS
8.	Standards and Quality Assurance.		Percentage of National Development Plan key priority sectors with NOS.
9.	Standards and Quality Assurance.	Strengthened collaborations	Number of regional collaborative agreements
10.	Standards and Quality Assurance.	Number of local collaborative meetings	Number of regional collaborative agreements
11.	Standards and Quality Assurance.	Improved reporting	M&E Framework Reports

2024 PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGET

2024 PLANNED TARGETS

100% of National Development Plan key priority sectors with NOS.

6 NOS developed in each of the key priority sectors.

2024 PERFORMANCE

the Authority developed 6 additional NOS in the Water Sector namely: Hydro-geophysicist (Tracers), Hydrologist, Hydrogeologist, Waste Management Officer, Plumber and Pipe Fitter, and Hydro-Geomatic Engineer.

Limited financial resources hampered the development of NOS in all key sectors.

Engage in two regional Collaborative agreements.

Participate in at least 4 collaborative meetings;

- ✦ 2 study tours (validation, NOS);
- ✦ 2 International conferences by December 2025

The Authority participated in the 2025 meeting of the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF), held on 24th and 25th April 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Authority participated in the ACQF fifth Forum under the theme Transparency, Comparability and Mobility across national and regional qualifications systems. The Forum was held in Sandton Johannesburg South Africa in July 2025.

The Authority participated in the ACQF six Forum which was held in September 2025 in Mauritius under the theme: "Building Future ready Qualifications Systems for Africa".

The Authority also participated at the 3rd Meeting of the Addis Convention Committee held between 17th and 18th December 2025 in Marrakech, Morocco.

Hold at least two collaborative meetings on Quality Assurance with Appropriate Authorities managing the sub-framework by December, 2025

The Quality Assurance Agencies Coordination Meetings were held not held 2025.

Implementation of the M&E Framework

Four M&E Framework Quarterly reports were submitted for the first, second, third and fourth quarters of 2025.

S/N	SECTION / UNIT	INTENDED RESULT	OUTPUT INDICATORS
12.	Corporate Services	Improved efficiency	Percentage of learner records uploaded on the QMIS by December 2025.
13.	Corporate Services	Improved Service Delivery	Develop and implement a service delivery charter
14.	Corporate Services	Positive Corporate Image	Percentage of adherence to ZAQA Core Values
15.	Corporate Services	Improved human resources	At least 80% of staff achieving 85% of their set targets
16.	Corporate Services	Improved service delivery	
17.	Corporate Services	Corporate ServicesImproved accountability	Unqualified audit report
18.	Corporate Services	Improved accountability	Percentage of activities conducted within approved budget
19.			% budget from other sources
20.	Corporate Services	Improved institutional infrastructure	Staff accommodated

2024 PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGET		
	2024 PLANNED TARGETS	2024 PERFORMANCE
	90% of awarding bodies submitting learner achievement records for 2025.	97 out of a total of 110 accredited awarding bodies representing 88% submitted learner achievement records in 2025.
	95% of activities conducted in line with the service delivery charter by December 2025	61% of services were delivered within the ZAQA Service Delivery Charter.
	100% adherence to ZAQA Core Values by all staff in 2025	Based on the performance assessment of staff for 2025, all staff adhered to ZAQA Core values 100%
	Develop and implement a staff Training Plan for 2025 by June 2025	A training plan was developed. Implementation was done partially due to financial challenges
	95% implementation of the organization structure by December 2025	As at end of the year, the Authority's establishment was 36 out of 48 (78%) 80.91% of Staff achieved 85% of the Targets in 2025
	Unqualified audit report by December 2025	The auditors issued an unqualified audit report after audit of the 2025 financial statements
	95% of 2025 activities conducted within approved budget.	100 % of activities in 2025 were conducted within budget
	25% of budget from other sources (other than GRZ)	54% of income in the year 2025 was from other sources other than the Government Grant
	Secure funds for infrastructure development	From the mid-term strategic plan review it was observed that the objective was outside the control of the Authority and therefore unattainable. In this regard, it was recommended that the objective be discontinued

4.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

The following activities were undertaken in order to mitigate risks in the year under review:

4.1 RISK REGISTER

The Authority developed a Risk Register which identified forty-six risks as indicated in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of Identified Risks, Risk Values and Colour Codes

Colour Code	Risk Value	Number of Risks Identified
Red	32-50	14
Orange	18-24	13
Yellow	10-16	10
Green	1-8	9

5.0 FINANCE

The following section presents the financial performance of the Authority in the year under review:

5.1 BUDGET PERFORMANCE

The total approved budget for 2025 was ZMW 53,423,142. Of the budgeted amount, the Authority recorded revenue of ZMW 44,825,200 as indicated in Table 9.

Table 9: 2025 Actual Revenue against Budget

Description of Revenue	2025 Budget Performance			
	Actual (ZMW)	Budget (ZMW)	Variance (ZMW)	% Variance
Government funding	19,162,186	19,162,188	(2)	0%
Registration of Qualifications	1,654,000	8,058,000	(6,404,000)	(79%)
Verification and Evaluation of Qualifications	23,886,800	20,300,000	3,586,800	18%
Other Income	122,214	5,902,954	(5,780,740)	(98%)
Government Supplementary Funding	3,000,000	0	3,000,000	100%
Total	47,825,200	53,423,142	(5,597,942)	(10%)

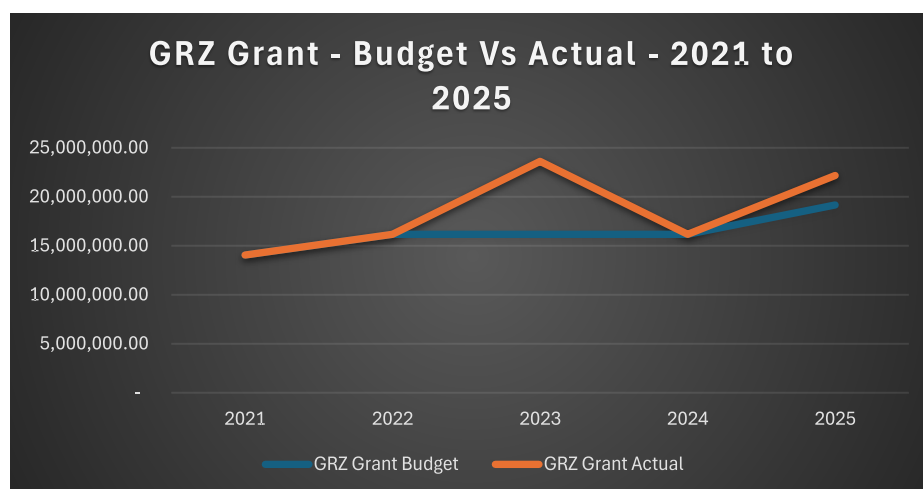
- 5.1.1 The Authority received all the funding allocated from the Treasury in the year under review. In addition, the Authority received ZMW 3 million as supplementary funding.
- 5.1.2 The Authority continued to experience challenges in receiving qualifications for registration from awarding bodies hence the number of qualifications targeted for registration could not be achieved. This impacted the revenue anticipated from the registration of qualifications.

Table 10 and Figure 4 shows total revenue performance for the last five (5) years:

Table 10: Revenue Trends for the past 5 years

Year	Actual Revenue	Budgeted Revenue	Variance	% variance
2021	19,051,263.00	28,569,892.00	(9,518,629.00)	(33%)
2022	19,554,871.00	29,175,004.00	(9,620,133.00)	(33%)
2023	27,792,108.00	27,926,361.00	(134,253.00)	(0.4%)
2024	24,291,332.00	29,637,476.00	(5,346,144.00)	(18%)
2025	47,825,200.00	53,423,142.00	(5,597,942.00)	(10%)

Figure 4: Revenue Trends for the past five years.



There was significant increase in the revenues of the Authority as a result of the mandatory verification of qualifications. In addition, the grant was increased from ZMW 16, 162, 186 in 2024 to ZMW 19, 162, 186 in 2025.

5.2 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Authority recorded an operating surplus of ZMW 10,065,324 (2024: deficit of **ZMW2, 747,888**) in the year under review. Total expenditure for the year amounted to ZMW 37,759, 876 (2024: ZMW27,039,220.) of which ZMW 2, 280, 391 (2024: ZMW 1,625,342) related to non-current assets.

NOTES

A decorative background featuring three large, overlapping, light blue circles. The circles are semi-transparent, allowing the horizontal lines to show through. The background is a light cream color, and the circles are arranged in a way that they overlap each other, creating a layered effect. The horizontal lines are thin and dark, running across the entire width of the page.

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