

Assessing the Impact of the South African NQF: Challenges and Opportunities

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Presentation to CEDFOP Peer Learning Conference on: “Do
NQFs make a difference? Measuring and Evaluating NQF
Impact”

9-10 November 2017, Thessaloniki, Greece

Taking Off!



21 Years Old Today!



DEVELOPMENT
RECOGNITION
QUALIFICATION
EXCELLENCE
QUALITY
VALUES
LEARN
NATION
INTEGRATED
QUALITY
ETHICS
KNOWLEDGE
GOALS
EDUCATION
FRAMEWORK
NATIONAL

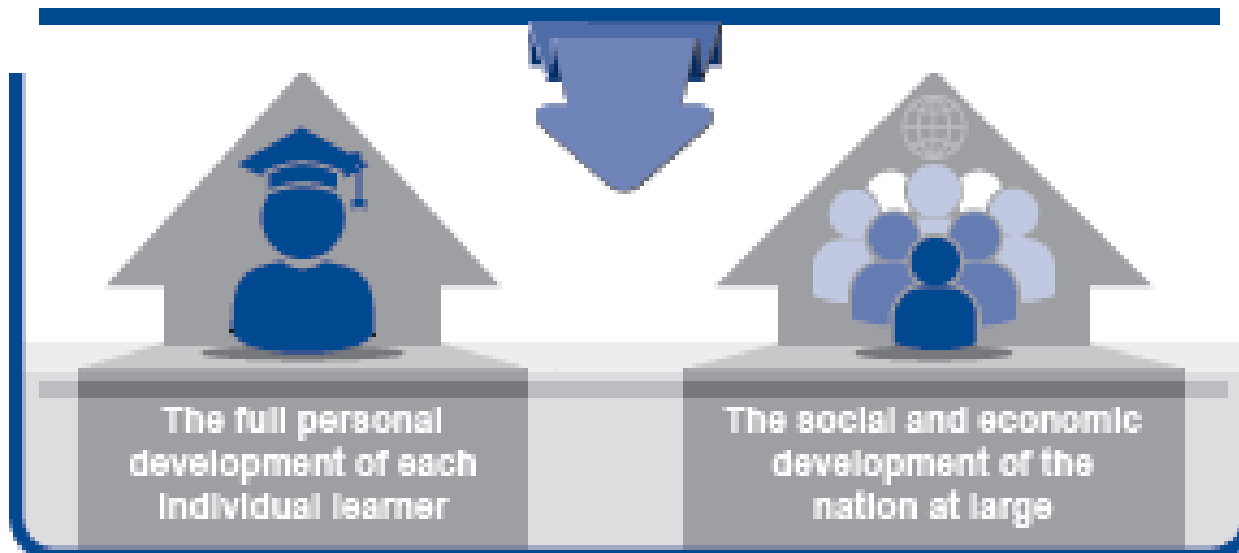
QUALITY
KNOWLEDGE
TRAINING
EXCELLENCE
QUALITY
LEARN
NATION
PROGRAMME
SOCIAL
ECONOMIC
CAREER
GOALS
INTEGRATED
LEARNERS

Celebrating **21 YEARS** of building a world-class NQF that serves lifelong learners

Objectives of the NQF

The objectives of the NQF

- Create a single integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths;
- Enhance the quality of education and training; and
- Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.



Focus of Presentation



SAQA's Impact Study



Implementation Evaluation of the NQF Act

NQF Impact Study



Designed to be developmental

- Purpose: Research that supports the implementation and further development of the NQF

NQF Impact Study



Mandated by NQF
Act

Conducted every 3
years

First study in 2002

NQF Impact Study

2014

- Systemic integration?
- Redress and learner access, success, progression?
- Systemic transparency and quality?

2017

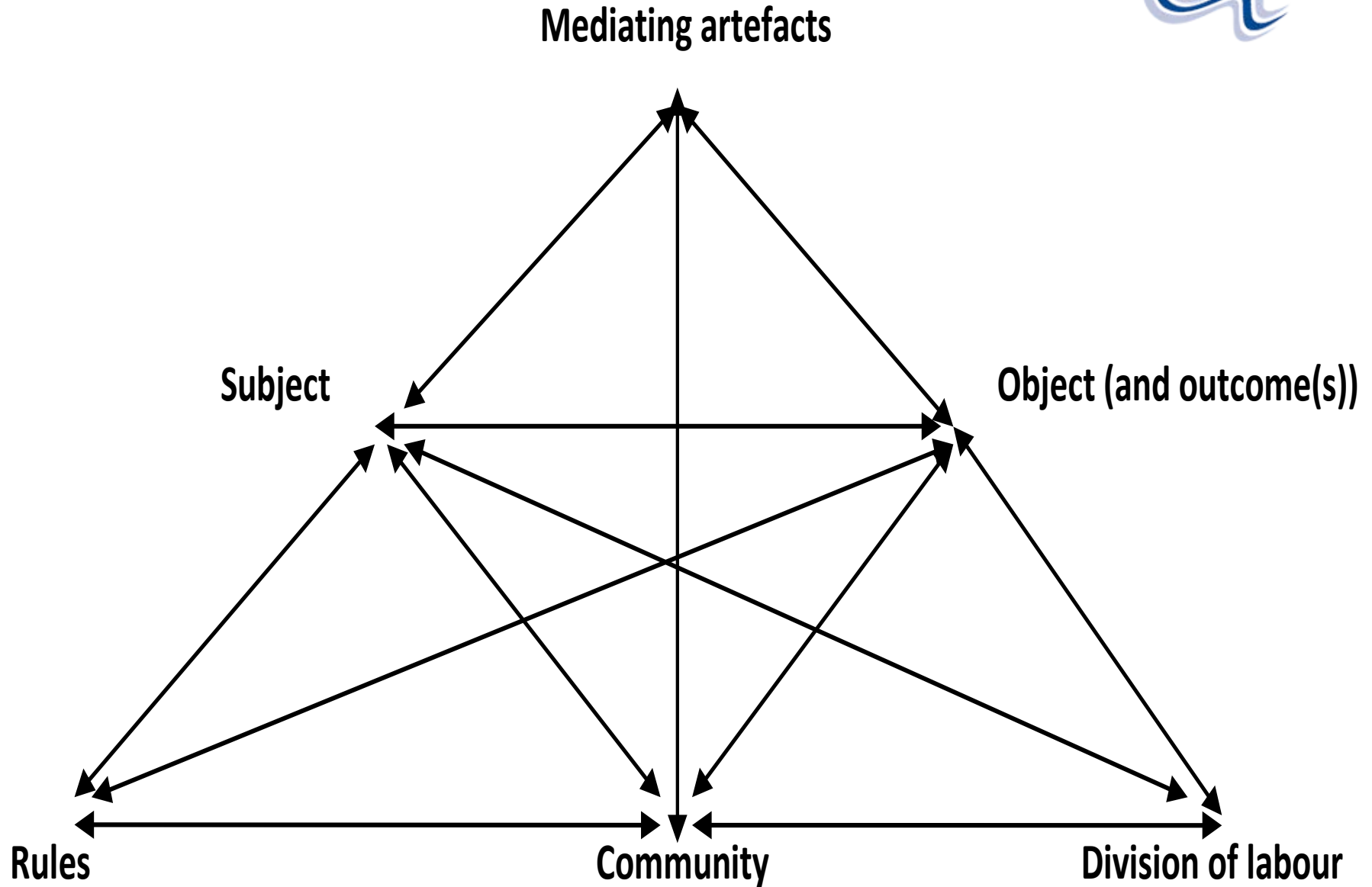
- Alignment of all NQF policies and with Act
- NQF Information system
- Integration and Articulation among public and private HEIs
- Occupational qualifications

Research questions 2014

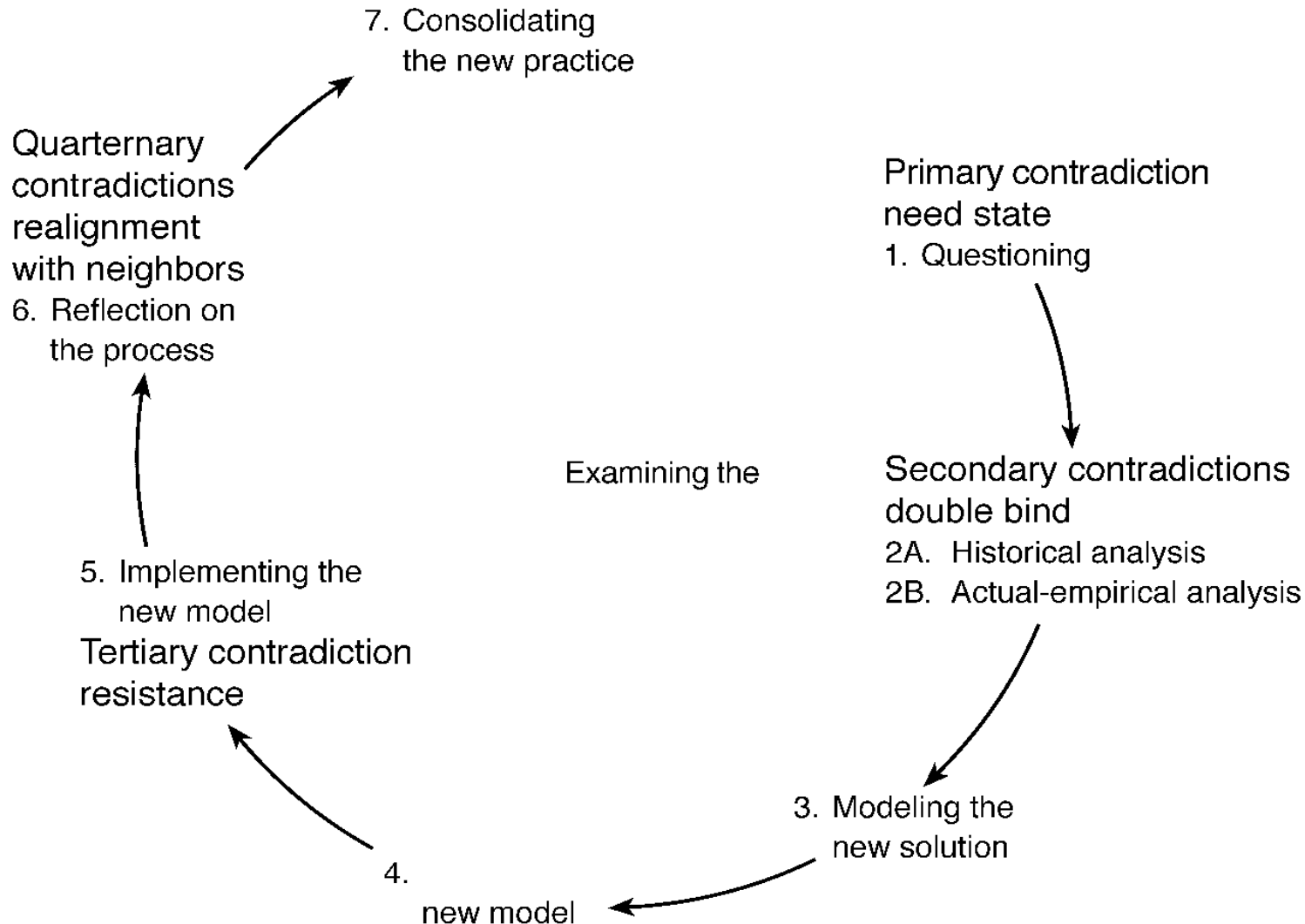


- What is the impact of the NQF?
- What is the impact of the NQF on the integration of the education and training system in South Africa?
- What progress regarding redress and learner access, success, progression?
- What initiatives are underway to enhance inclusivity, and how effective have they been?
- How have systemic transparency and quality been enhanced, what are the challenges, and how effective have developments been?
- Re the NQF, what are the gains/ shifts over the past 20 years, and what are the areas for improvement?

Figure 1: CHAT 'activity triangle' (Engestrom 1987)



Theory of change: Expansive learning



NQF Impact Study 2014 Findings



- Shifts in understandings of SYSTEMIC INTEGRATION over time
- Shifts in understandings/developments regarding REDRESS over time
- Shifts in understandings/developments regarding ACCESS, SUCCESS, PROGRESSION over time
- Shifts in NQF Communities of Practice over time
- Systemic contradictions, expansive learning, and transformation over time

Implementation Evaluation of the NQF Act



**Jointly commissioned
by DPME and DHET**

Purpose: NQF Act Evaluation

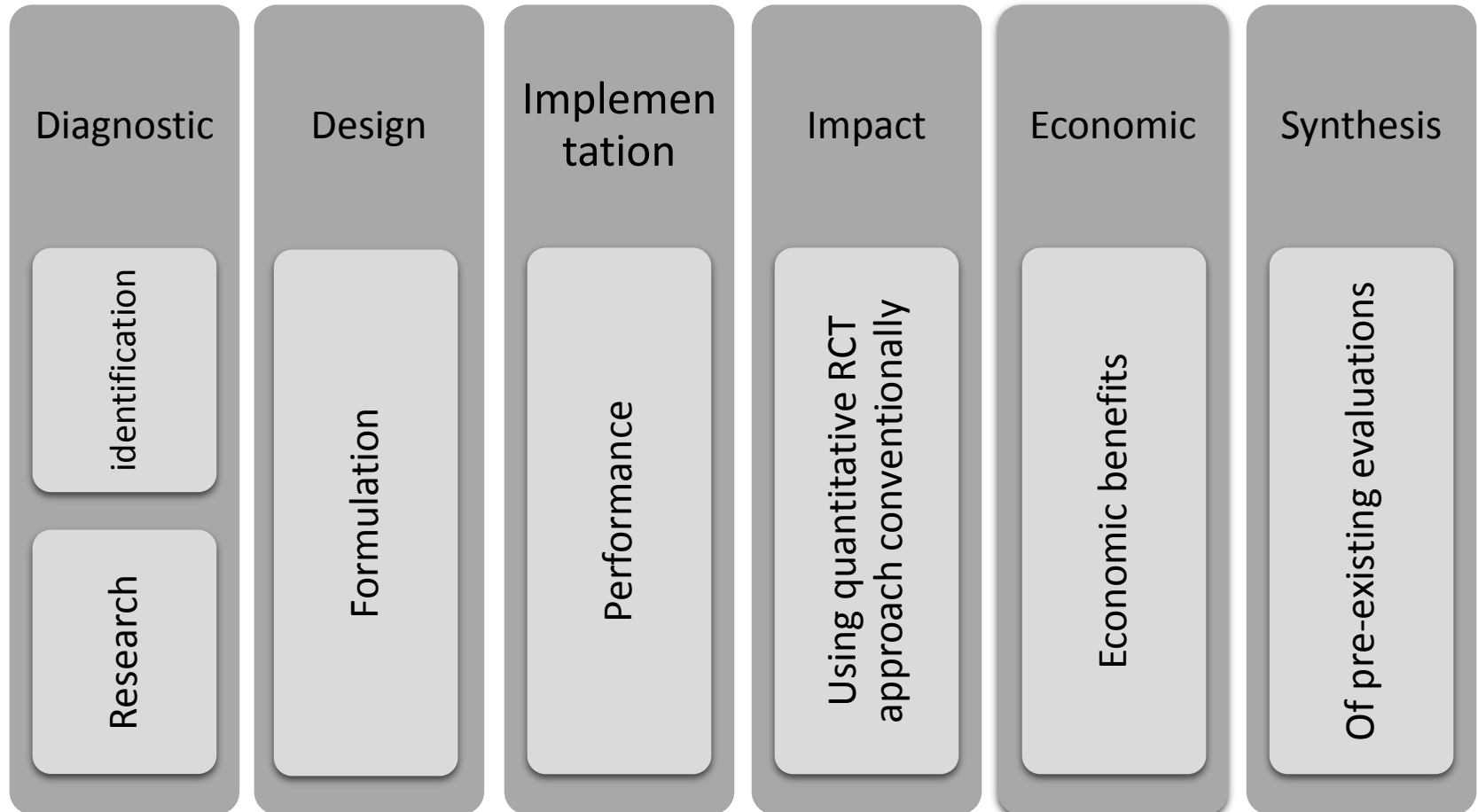


Purpose

To assess implementation of the NQF Act relative to its goal(s) and objectives

To identify implementation successes and challenges and offer recommendations

Types of Evaluations



Typical Impact Evaluation Approach



1. Results framework

- Policy
- Goals
- Results

2. Logic

- Theory of Change
- Log Frame
- Operational Strategy
- “Nesting”

3. Evidence

- Literature
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Survey
- Databases

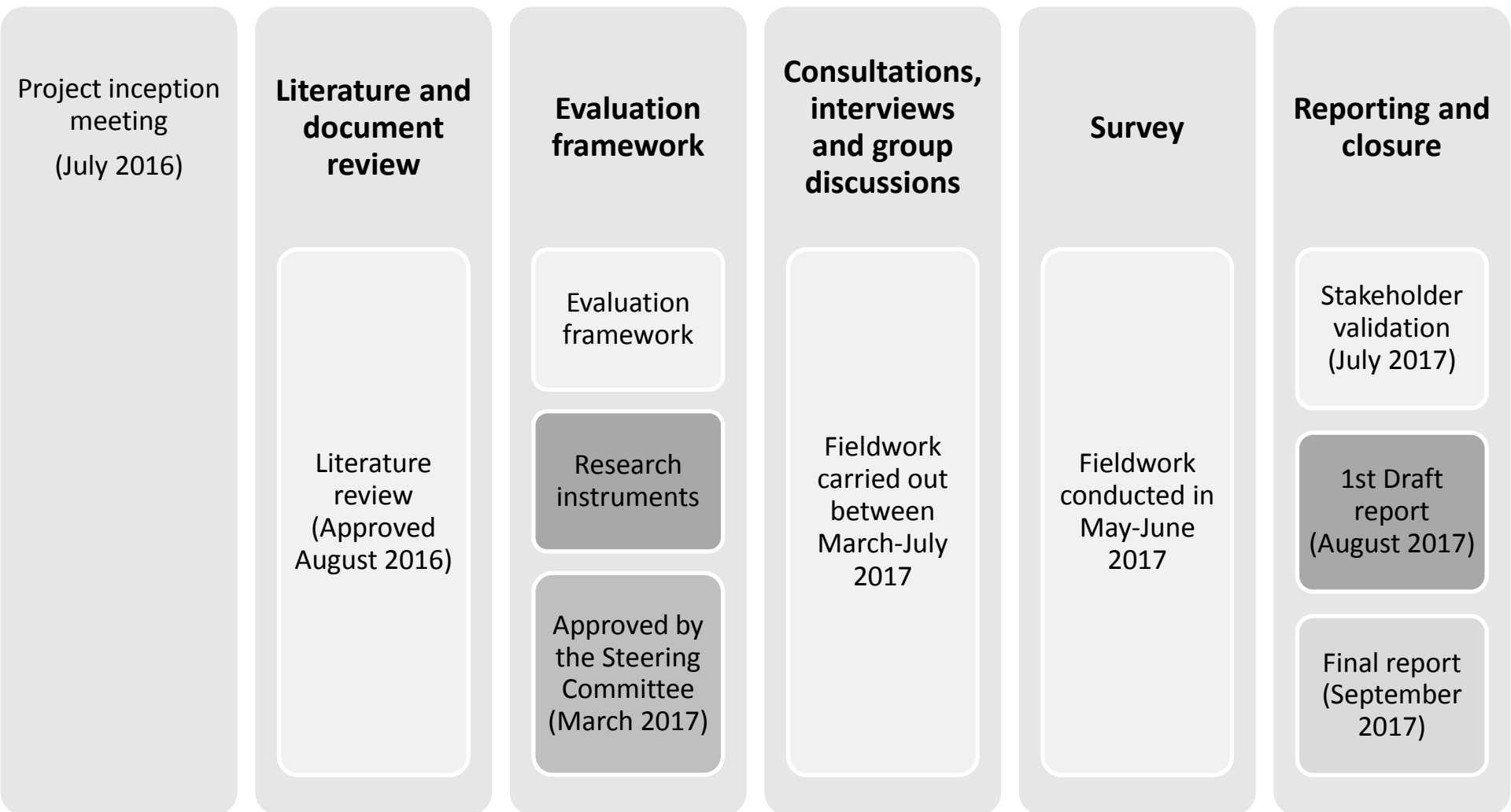
4 Assessment

- Policy Narrative
- Evidence
- Analysis
- Results
- Conclusions

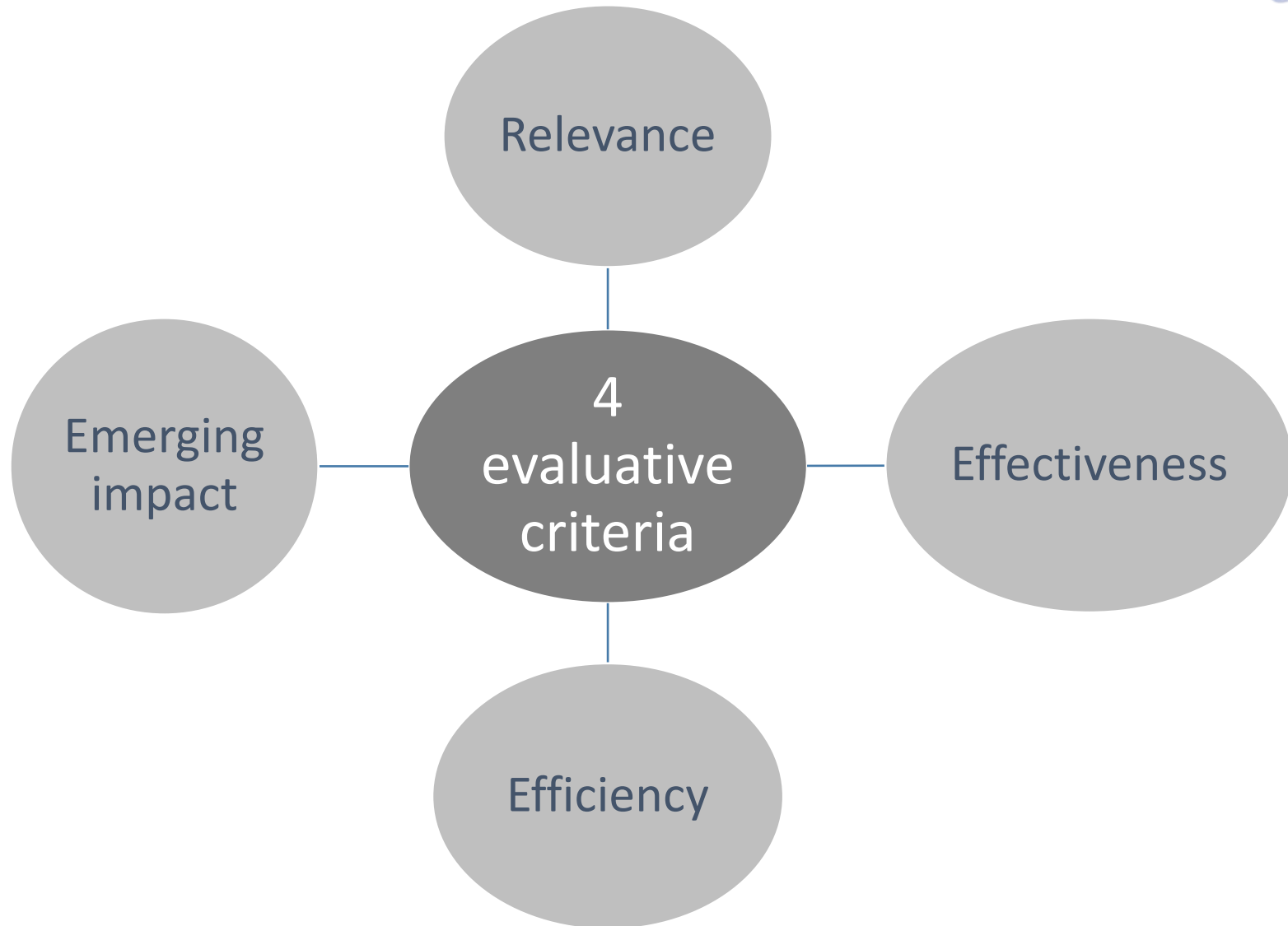
5. Recommendations

- Sound
- Specific
- Evidence-based

Methodology



Evaluation Framework



Respondents

94 consultative
interviews

122 completed
survey questionnaires

71% response rate

Sample



☐ Policy makers

☐ Institutions

☐ NQF bodies

☐ Experts

Major milestones in the policy and legislative framework



Questions: Relevance



Problem solving

To what extent did the NQF Act address the problems identified at the time?

Objectives

Were the objectives of the NQF Act relevant to identified national needs and priorities?

Theory of Change

Was there a clear Theory of Change connecting activities and outputs with the outcomes and impacts?

Assumptions

What are the assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change?

Coherence

To what extent has policy coherence been achieved?

Questions: Effectiveness

Implementation

Was the Act implemented as intended and planned?



Corrective Action

Was timely corrective action taken where necessary?



Achievements

Were the intended results achieved?



Influencers

What factors influenced the achievement and non-achievement of objectives?

Questions: Efficiency

Timeliness

Were the outputs of the NQF delivered on time?

Resources

Did the institutions established by the NQF Act have sufficient resources to deliver their results?

Collaboration

To what extent has effective coordination and collaboration between institutions been achieved?

Questions: Emerging Impact

Immediate Outcomes

- Enhanced quality of education & training
- Public credibility of the NQF system
- Improved access to skilled foreign labour

Impacts

- Past unfair discrimination is redressed
- Social & economic development of nation
- Full personal development of learners

Emerging Impact

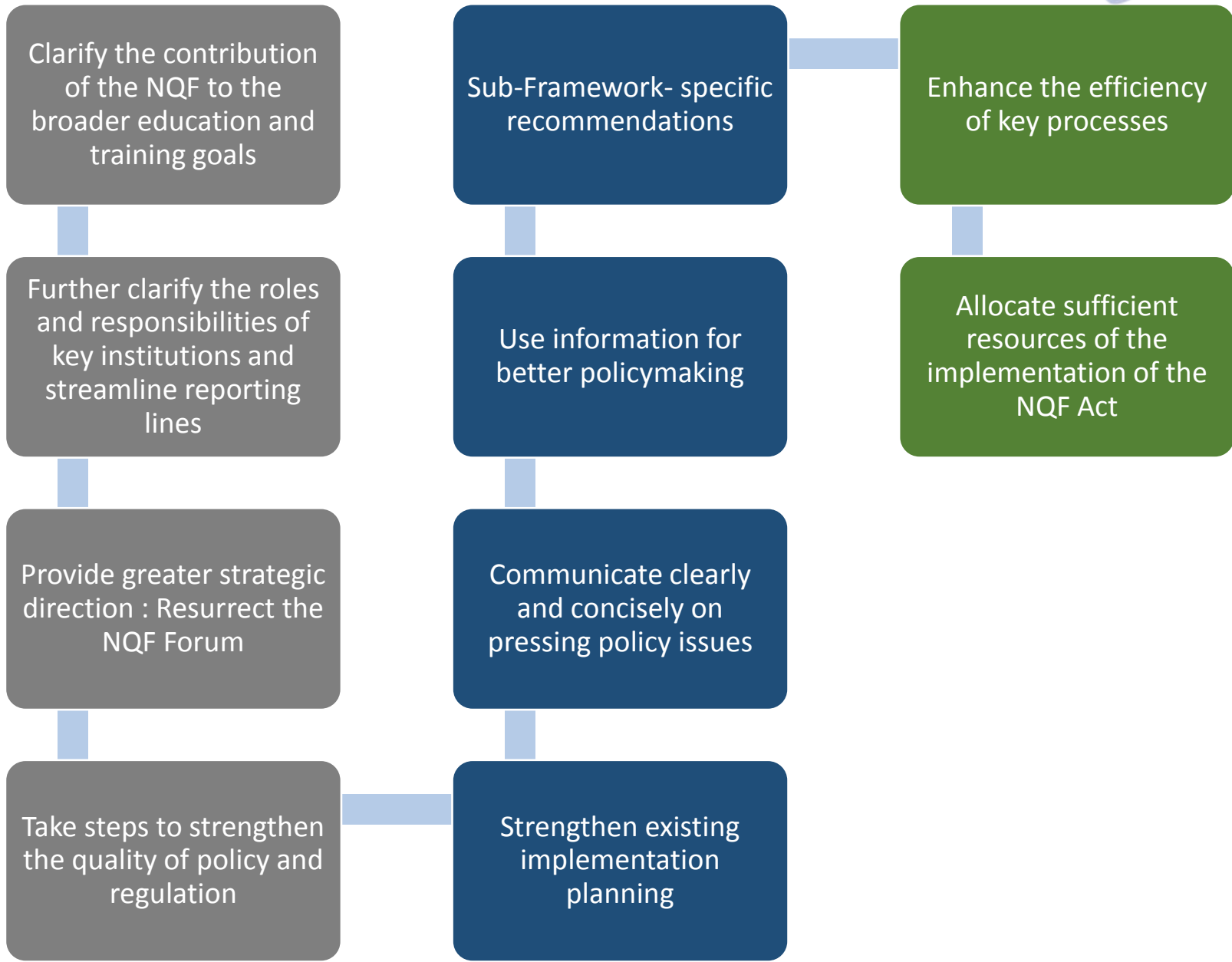
Findings

- Reforms envisaged beginning to embed themselves
- Expanded capacity developed to address quality assurance in institutions

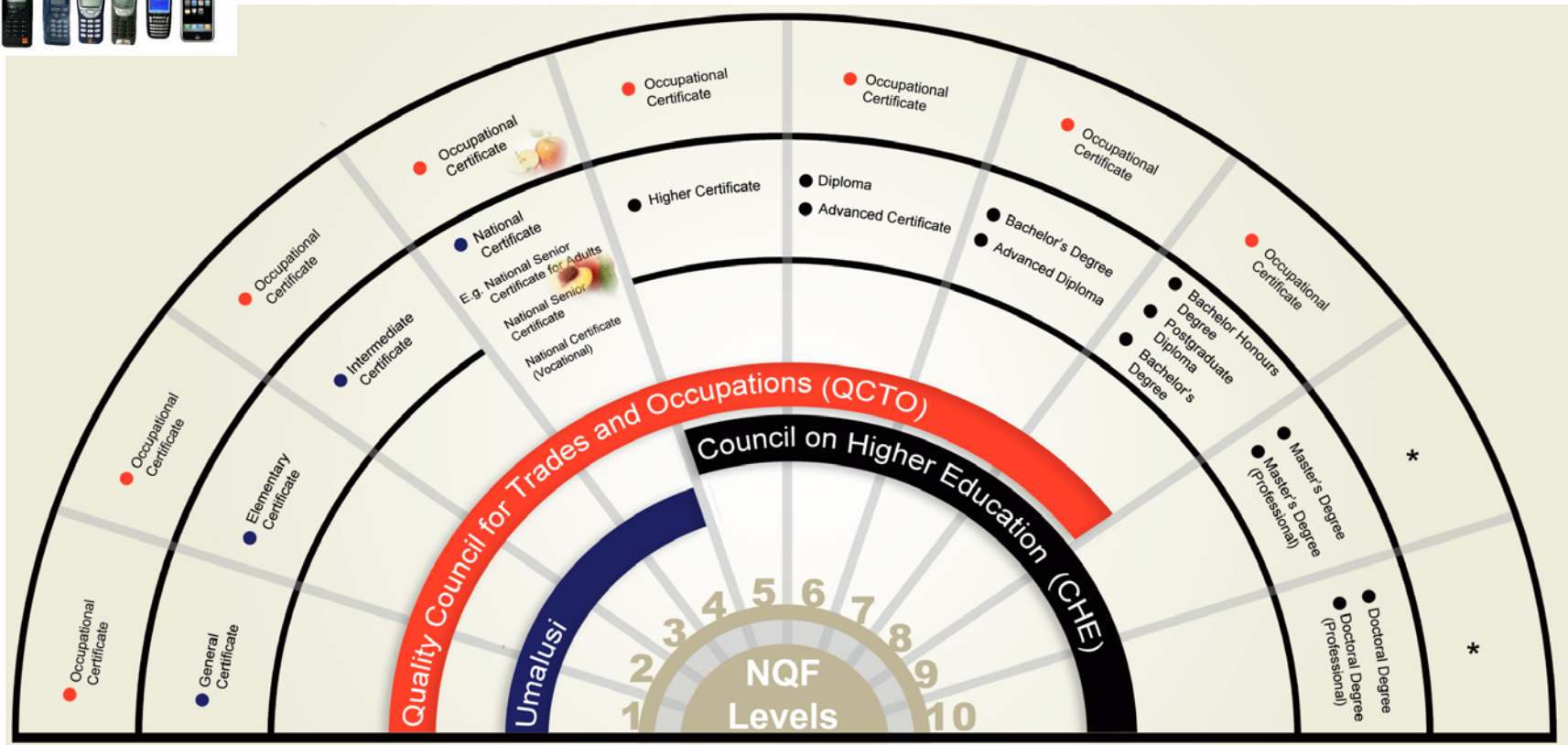
Findings

- Foreign qualifications more trusted if recognised by NQF Bodies
- Partnerships developing to improve access, articulation, RPL , portability reduce barriers,
- NQF qualifications being valued in the labour market

Recommendations



The NQF is a contested, 'living' object, realised in the 'ecology' of its implementation



Concluding reflections

Do NQFs
make
difference?

Concluding reflections

A large, solid grey circle is centered on the page. Inside the circle, the text 'Yes...!' is written in a white, sans-serif font.

Yes...!

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