

ICFF Weekly

Connect

By Ingrid Du Buisson, CEO – ICFF

The ICFF cautions Industry on expired Qualifications – The Impact

The Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding has been working very closely with industry associations and training institutions to ensure that this sector has a capable, valid and a focused approach to developing our employees in this sector, and to ensure that we develop a quality talent pipeline to address the skills gaps.

This has been motivated by various disruptions across the education and training value chain of this sector, and it became apparent to the ICFF as the industry Professional Body that we had to take the initiative and lead the way for industry to have a more stable and reliable training ecosystem guided by industry for industry. Without this stability we cannot professionalize this sector.

Over the last few months, the unfortunate situation that SETA's find themselves in, and the lack of funding being awarded to industry for qualifications development, just highlighted the urgent need for the ICFF to take ownership and oversight of the education and training value chain of this industry to ensure the credibility and relevance of our education and training. The biggest concern and risk for us is that most of this sector's occupational qualifications that are on the NQF have been **allowed to lapse** and some are **soon to expire**. Without the required funding from the SETA to update and reregister these qualifications with the QCTO the industry has a dilemma in addressing the training needs of their employees, as well as the legislative requirement on **Employment Equity** and **BBBEE Skills Development Pillar**.

This has also had a tremendous effect on the SETA accredited training providers, whom now have very limited qualifications or skills programs to offer the sector. The ICFF cautions industry to be aware of the expiry of these qualifications, and to ensure that they check the **validity of any qualification** or program they plan to embark on. See below *Figure 1 on redundant qualifications in the QCTO space*:

Ecosystem for Professionalization – Occupational Stream



Figure 1 (Ingrid Du Buisson, 2025)

The Professional Ecosystem for the Industry

The ICFF has since developed a professional ecosystem for this sector, in partnership with various training providers and institutions. Our focus is to steer away from the occupational qualifications as referred to above and rather focus on the Higher Education stream and CPD Programs endorsed by the ICFF, and which are SAQA recognised. Refer to Figure 2 on the Higher Education Training stream

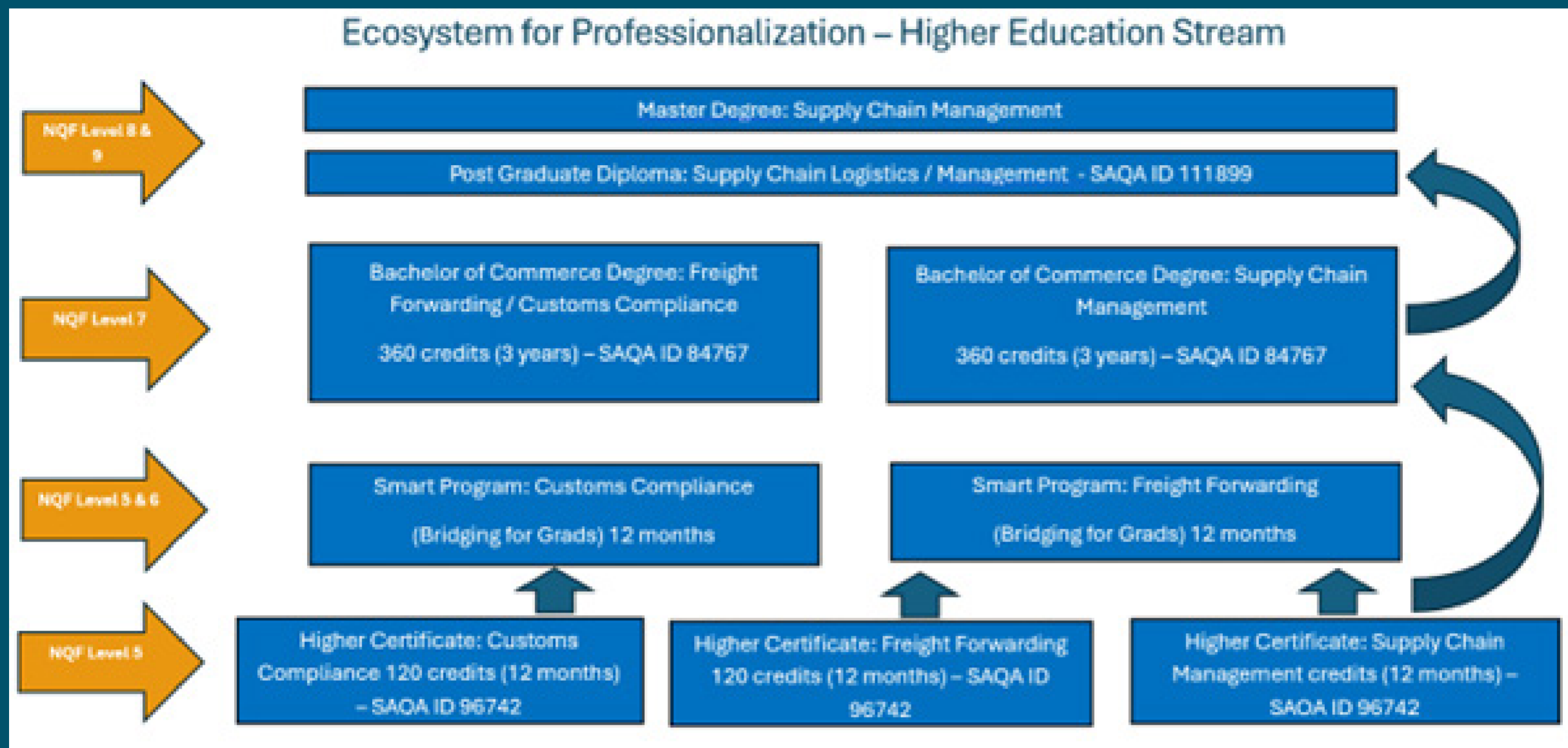


Figure 2 (Ingrid Du Buisson, 2025)

The above ecosystem within the HET stream is more stable, reliable and is aligned to global industry standards. The Da Vinci Institute in partnership with the ICFF have developed industry specific qualifications and programs that are industry focused and complement management leadership development in a very structured manner, to ensure quality and stability. The above ecosystem also caters for Supply Chain Management qualifications, and which underpins the

Ecosystem for Professionalization – Continuous Professional Development Stream

The CPD Programs currently being developed by the ICFF Endorsed Training Providers, and which will form part of the CPD requirements once professionally designated will be SAQA recognised and will replace the SETA accredited programs which have expired.

CPD Programs aligned to Industry Critical Skills

- International shipping procedures
- Customs documentation and compliance
- Incoterms and trade agreements
- Freight management systems (e.g., Cargo Wise)
- Customer service and communication
- Data / Supply Chain Analytics
- Customs regulations and updates
- Freight cost optimization
- Dangerous goods handling
- Trade finance and documentation
- Use of digital freight platforms
- Forwarding Control (Logistics control)
- Customs broker: SARS and OGA focus – Regulatory environment
- Client relationship: Customer Service
- Sales: Canvas clients, with a link to a regulatory structure
- Trade finance: Understand the building blocks of trade finance
- Cargo handling and warehouse controller: handling of cargo
- Insurance and risk controller: Touch on Trading landscape
- Leadership and management

We urge employers to contact the ICFF for further information, as this will inevitably affect your organization's Learning & Development Strategy.

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Professionalizing South Africa's Logistics Sector

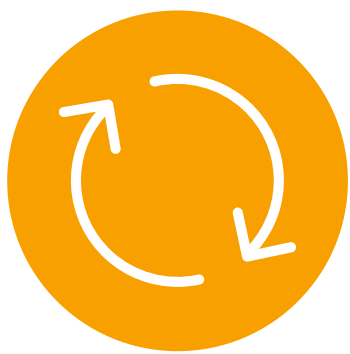
The Strategic Role of the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding

South Africa's road freight industry is the backbone of trade and logistics, connecting ports, borders, and inland markets. Yet, the sector faces persistent challenges: regulatory complexity, skills gaps, and the need for greater efficiency in cross-border operations. Professionalization can be defined as the process of raising standards, building skills, and embedding accountability, it is the key to unlocking resilience and competitiveness. The Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding (ICFF) is strategically positioned to drive this transformation across the logistics sector.

Why Professionalization Matters

For transport operators and suppliers, professionalization means fewer compliance errors, smoother border crossings, and stronger reputations. For policymakers, it ensures that regulations are implemented effectively and consistently, and for the industry as a whole, it builds trust, credibility, and global competitiveness.

Key benefits of professionalization include but is not limited to:

**Consistency:**

Standardized practices across operators and borders.

**Efficiency:**

Reduced delays through skilled handling of customs, freight forwarding and logistics processes.

**Credibility:**

Recognition of South Africa's logistics sector as globally competitive.

**Resilience:**

A workforce equipped to adapt to regulatory and technological changes in their operating environment.



ICFF's Strategic Impact

As a professional body, the ICFF plays a pivotal role in embedding professionalism across the logistics sector. Its strategic impact can be seen in several areas:

- **Recognition and Standards:** ICFF set professional standards for customs freight, forwarding and supply chain logistics, ensuring that operators meet recognized standards of competence and integrity.
- **Education and Training:** Through influencing and collaboration on the development of qualifications and structured programs, the ICFF equips freight forwarders, customs brokers, and logistics professionals with the skills needed to navigate complex regulations and digital platforms in partnership with ICFF endorsed training providers.
- **Capacity Building for SMEs, Exporters & Importers:** Smaller operators often struggle with compliance. ICFF provides targeted support through focused workshops, helping them professionalize and compete effectively.
- **Knowledge Leadership:** By publishing research, hosting forums, and disseminating best practices, ICFF ensures stakeholders remain informed and prepared for the changing environment.

Professionalization in Practice

For Operators:

- Reduced border delays through trained staff
- Improved compliance with customs regulations
- Enhanced reputation with clients and partners

For Policymakers:

- Easier implementation of trade agreements
- Stronger alignment with regional integration goals
- A professional workforce that supports regulatory consistency

For Suppliers:

- Reliable logistics partnerships
- Greater transparency in supply chains
- Confidence in compliance and delivery timelines

Building a Future-Ready Workforce

Professionalization is not just about compliance; it is about preparing the workforce for the future. ICFF's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs emphasize digital readiness, sustainability, and regional integration. By embedding these priorities into professional standards, the Institute ensures that South Africa's logistics sector is equipped for tomorrow's challenges.

Professionalization is the cornerstone of a competitive industry. By setting standards, building skills, and advocating for supportive policies, the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding is driving a transformation that benefits operators, suppliers, policymakers, and stakeholders alike. The question is why not professionalize the road freight sector?

The ICFF's strategic impact lies in its ability to bridge regulation, academia and practice, ensuring that South Africa's logistics sector is not only compliant but also professional, resilient, and globally competitive.

