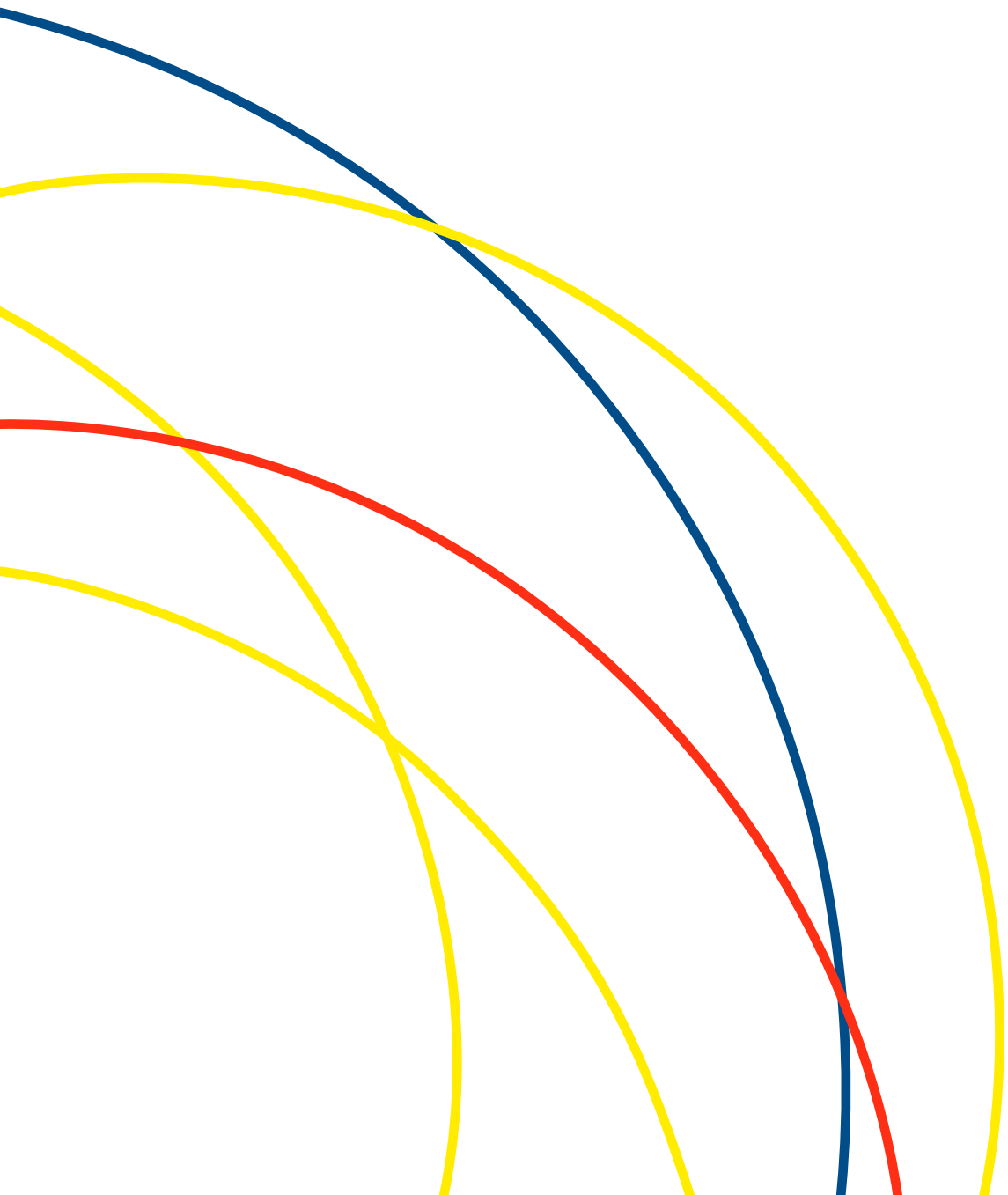
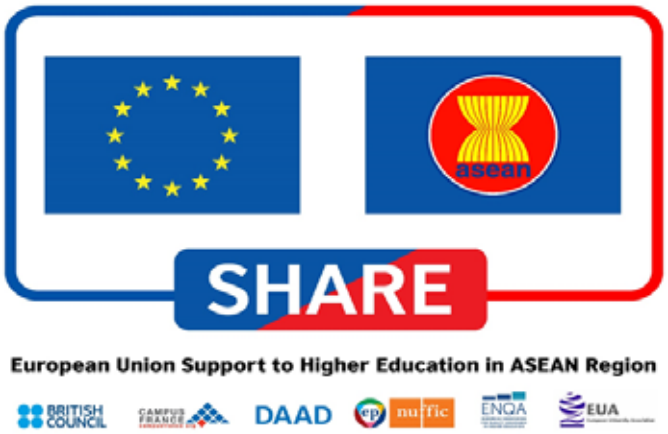
ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
and National Qualifications Frameworks

State of Play Report

October 2015





SHARE, the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region, is a four-year initiative by the EU and ASEAN. They have entrusted the implementation of SHARE to a consortium of British Council (leader), Campus France, DAAD, EP-Nuffic, ENQA, and EUA. Launched in Jakarta in May 2015, SHARE aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European expertise. It does this through strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing the quality, competitiveness, and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education for institutions and students, and thereby contributing to a closer ASEAN Community in 2015 and beyond.

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Foreword

Education is a cornerstone of every nation's social and economic development, and universities play an indispensable part in education, research, and innovation. If harmonised at the regional level, higher education can reinforce the strengths of communities like the EU and ASEAN and effectively contribute to overall regional policies. Thus, higher education serves 'as one of the catalysts in accelerating ASEAN's economic, political, and sociocultural development agenda', as stated by the chairman of the 27th ASEAN Summit in 2015.

In 2015, ASEAN and the European Union launched the EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) programme, which aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European experiences. The EU has entrusted the implementation of SHARE to a consortium composed of British Council, Campus France, EP-Nuffic, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the European University Association (EUA), and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

SHARE is commissioning several studies in order to provide a solid foundation for informed decision-making; among them is this report on the state of play for qualifications framework developments in the ASEAN region. SHARE supports the further development of the overarching ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), as well as the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). These frameworks are tools that make academic achievements readable and comparable in order to facilitate exchange and cooperation.

This report on the state of play of the AQRF and NQFs was commissioned by the SHARE Consortium Partner DAAD. This document is available on the Internet: http://www.share-asean.eu/published-materials/reports/

We hope this study will support joint efforts to promote and enhance the quality, internationalisation, and competitiveness of higher education in ASEAN.

The SHARE Team

Jakarta, Indonesia, December 2015

I. Background

The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) is a regional common reference framework. The AQRF functions as a device to enable comparisons of qualifications across ASEAN Member States. The scope of the framework is all education and training sectors and a key objective is the promotion of lifelong learning.

The basis for an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework is derived from the ASEAN Charter signed by the ten ASEAN leaders in Singapore on 20 November 2007, where the aspiration to become a single entity, that is an ASEAN Community, was reinforced. In 2007, the ASEAN Economic Blueprint (ASEAN 2007) was signed by Member States calling for areas of cooperation, including the recognition of professional qualifications (ASEAN 2007), such as Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and the creation of a free flow of skilled labour through 'harmonisation and standardisation' (ASEAN 2007:18), particularly in preparation for the ASEAN Economic Community 2015.

The AQRF has been specified following a collaborative process between ASEAN Member States and supported by Australia and New Zealand through the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Co-operation Work Programme (ECWP).

The global objective of the European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE) project is to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance the quality, regional competitiveness, and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students, contributing to an ASEAN Community beyond 2015. At the core of this action is the aim to enhance cooperation between the EU and the ASEAN Economic Community and to create lasting benefits from the harmonisation of higher education across ASEAN.

A consortium of the British Council (lead), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), EP-Nuffic, Campus France, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the European University Association (EUA) works with ASEAN counterparts to implement the SHARE project between 2015 and 2018.

This report aims to inform the consortium on the current state of play of both the AQRF and different NQFs and provide advice for supporting the future development of the AQRF and NQFs. Specifically, the goal of this study was to serve three distinct functions:

1. Describe the status quo of development and implementation of AQRF and NQFs in ASEAN and detail the efforts already undertaken to link the national systems to AQRF (e.g. referencing processes, responsible bodies, level-to-level linkages);

2. Assess the NQFs and the AQRF draft against the background of respective EU experiences:

    - Present the state and most significant impacts of the implementation of NQFs (where they are in place); present plans and drafts of NQFs (where NQF is not in place yet);

    - Explore the potential of developing a sectoral framework for higher education in ASEAN and assess whether this may benefit the general acceptance and implementation of the AQRF; and analyse plans for further development and implementation of AQRF;

3. Make recommendations for the future development of AQRF and NQFs, with a particular focus on areas in need of capacity building. A specific focus was given to higher education and the extent to which higher education systems may be articulated through NQFs.

The key questions posed include:

1. What is the state of play of the NQFs in ASEAN Member States? Describe and analyse frameworks, responsible bodies, agents, their interests, weaknesses, and strengths.

2. Taking into account the different starting points of different ASEAN countries, what kind of developmental activities are still needed? Make suggestions on possible technical assistance for NQF and on further institutional capacity building for some ASEAN Member States.

3. Taking into account the development of the different NQFs, what are the potential linkages and, if already in place, referencing processes to the AQRF? How might these processes be enhanced?

4. What is the state of play regarding the working governance structure at the ASEAN level, such as the AQRF Task Force (e.g. the responsible body, its scope and responsibilities, such as providing guidance for Member States)?

5. In what ways do quality assurance processes in different countries relate to the development of NQFs (if at all)? How do regional ASEAN QA processes and priorities relate to the AQRF?

6. Is there awareness at higher education institution level of the NQF (where they exist) and a general understanding of their utility at the national and international level?

7. How does the existing AQRF relate to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF and EHEA-QF)?

8. Is there a voluntary code of practice (planned) in order to maintain commitment to the framework?

9. Are monitoring arrangements in place?

10. What results have been achieved by the AANZFTA project? Where can SHARE add value?

This report is in four sections:

- The first section outlines the AQRF, its key features, governance arrangements, and plans for implementation;
- The second section outlines the status of NQFs in the region;
- The third section outlines identified implementation issues; and
- The final section outlines recommendations for future assistance.

A summary of the methodology is included in Appendix 1. Country overviews are provided in Appendix 2. A list of individuals who contributed to the each country summary is included in Appendix 3.

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III. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronyms	Description
AANZFTA	ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area
AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EAS	East Asia Summit
ECWP	Economic Co-operation Work Programme
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training

IV. ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)

Overview

The initial concept proposal for the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework was developed in 2010 through the Project on Education and Training Governance: Capacity Building for National Qualifications Frameworks. This project was part of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Co-operation Work Programme (ECWP), specifically under ECWP's services component. In 2012, a multi-sector task force was established to develop the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). Through various iterations and in-country consultations, the framework was finalised in late 2014 and endorsed by all relevant ASEAN Ministers in mid 2015.

The AQRF, as endorsed, is a common reference framework that will function as a device to enable comparisons of qualifications across ASEAN Member States.[1] The scope of the framework is all education and training sectors and a key objective is the promotion of lifelong learning.

The AQRF is based on a set of principles, especially that it invites voluntary engagement from the countries, it aims to be a neutral influence on National Qualifications Frameworks of ASEAN Member States and that member states can determine when they will undertake the referencing process.

ASEAN Member States have discussed the development of a code of practice. Currently, the most advanced formulation for a code of practice is embodied in the endorsed AQRF specification where principles for the operation of the AQRF are laid out as a procedure for referencing. It was resolved that the principles and criteria for referencing were, for the time being, the 'code of practice'.

The referencing process requires that ASEAN Member States describe their education and training quality assurance systems and refer to established quality assurance frameworks. These frameworks are to be the benchmark for evaluating those quality assurance systems for the relevant education and training sectors. The benchmarks for evaluating quality assurance processes noted in the endorsed AQRF specifications include, but are not limited to, the following quality assurance frameworks:

- East Asia Summit Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework (includes the quality principles, agency quality standards, and quality indicators);
- The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Guidelines of Good Practice for Quality Assurance;[2]
- ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education.[3]

The AQRF endorses the notion of learning outcomes and requires referencing Member States, in time, to have National Qualifications Frameworks or qualifications to be demonstrably based on learning outcomes. The framework is based on eight levels of learning complexity, utilising level descriptors that include the notion of competence. The notion of competence is defined as ability that extends beyond the possession of knowledge and skills. This includes:

- Cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially;
- Functional competence (skills or know-how) involving those things that people should be able to do when they work in a given area;

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1 ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, March 2014, p. 3.

2 Requirements for full member.

3 Requirements for full member.

- Personal competence involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; ethical competence involving the possession of certain personal and professional values[4].

The level descriptors do not make explicit reference to personal competence or ethical competence but are based on two domains:

- Knowledge and skills;
- Application and responsibility.

The referencing process is designed to be flexible enough to enable:

- Those countries with an NQF to broadly identify the best linkage between the levels of national frameworks with those of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework;
- Those countries without an NQF to identify their national qualification types and their link to a level of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework;
- Include confirmation that the accrediting and registering agencies meet agreed quality principles and broad quality standards.

The referencing procedure included in the endorsed framework aims to provide a common approach to referencing and ensure that the process is transparent and the reporting structure is consistent. It includes eleven referencing criteria and a proposed structure for a national referencing report.

Throughout the AQRF development process the experience of the development and operation of the EQF has featured strongly. There is respect among member states for the EQF's simple nature, its lifelong learning approach, its association with shared quality assurance approaches, its voluntary nature of engagement, its support for the use of learning outcomes, and its validation of learning from outside formal education and training systems.

Governance

The issues related to governance arrangements for the AQRF were proposed in the initial draft concept paper. It was envisaged that governance arrangements would 'involve some mechanism of assessing whether it [the AQRF] is providing the enabling function for member economies' (Burke et al 2009).

Options were provided, and it was made clear that the responsible agency 'needs to have full acceptance of its authority amongst participating ASEAN countries and, importantly, a willingness of those countries to cooperate and provide the necessary data and information to fully evaluate the effectiveness or success of the framework'[5]. The role should also 'include the maintenance of the framework, as well as monitoring of the effectiveness of the framework and its implementation across member countries. Consideration needs to be given to the resource implications involved in such functions and the need for a strong knowledge base and expertise of its personnel'.[6]

At the drafting of this report, the final governance arrangements have yet to be finalised. However, it is proposed that Member States will establish an AQRF Advisory Committee, which will provide:

- A platform for strategic discussion between ASEAN Member States;
- Transparency and cooperation in the use of the AQRF; and
- Coherence in the way the AQRF is used by ASEAN Member States and international organisations.

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4 Coles & Werquin (2006), p. 23

5 Bateman, Keating, Burke, Coles & Vickers 2012, Vol II, p. 25.

6 ibid

Additionally, the task force has established a terms of reference that will link with national coordination points.

In terms of the European experience, the QF-EHEA has a governance arrangement that is based on an international panel of representatives (Bologna follow-up group QF-EHEA) and is convened by the Council of Europe. The EQF has an international managing panel from EU member states, associated countries, and European social partner organisations (EQF Advisory group) convened by the European Commission. The AQRF is likely to have an AMS representative group (e.g. AQRF Advisory Committee) convened by the ASEAN Secretariat.

The EQF and the QF-EHEA are compatible frameworks (the upper levels are the same), and the managing groups are now operating with increased cooperation.

The EQF support from the European Commission is extensive and includes servicing the EQF Advisory Group, funding developments, and representing the EQF in its interaction with other European developments (e.g. the links within the Directive on Professional Qualifications). For the AQRF, this kind of support is unlikely to materialise and, as a result, we see a strongly coordinated and closely managed EQF contrasting with an AQRF that could be lightly managed and coordinated.

Potential for a higher education framework in ASEAN

The research survey asked ASEAN Member States whether the AQRF met the needs of higher education and whether there was a need for a regional sectoral framework for higher education. ASEAN representatives did not support the regional sectoral framework idea, as a number of representatives were unfamiliar with such a framework, such as the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The model was explained, but still no representatives supported such a model; and considered that the AQRF was designed to meet all education and training sectors, at a minimum, the needs of both TVET and Higher Education. Some representatives commented that it would confuse the countries and current processes and add another layer of complexity.

Monitoring arrangements

Monitoring arrangements of the AQRF have been discussed with ASEAN Member States. The AQRF consultants have developed a consultation paper regarding the implementation of the AQRF (Bateman & Coles March 2015), which has become a progressive record of the AQRF Task Force's thinking within this area. However, no final decisions have been made.

The consultation paper notes that it is important to evaluate and update the AQRF. Any review would involve assessing its effectiveness and determining the extent to which it is providing the enabling function for member economies (Burke et al 2009). Monitoring and evaluation strategies will require that ASEAN Member States cooperate and provide the necessary data and information to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the framework.

The consultation paper (Bateman & Coles March 2015) suggests considering an annual survey of each participating ASEAN Member State and, after five years, an independent review by external experts. The focus of these reviews could include:

- Progress in relation to referencing;
- Progress in relation to addressing gaps identified in the referencing process;
- Feedback from ASEAN Member States in relation to the referencing process;
- Evaluating ASEAN Member States' feedback in relation to support and capacity development needs, including preparation of AQRF regional guidelines.

The consultation paper (Bateman & Coles March 2015) also notes that ASEAN Member States based on consensus may amend the AQRF as necessary. A procedure for amendments is to be developed in the future after the AQRF governing mechanism is established.

Capacity development activities in the design phase of the AQRF

From concept to endorsement of the AQRF, all Task Force meetings were accompanied by workshops involving capacity development activities. These activities included:

- Technical aspects of a regional framework;
- Referencing and lessons learnt from other regional frameworks (mainly the EQF);
- Country awareness and information sharing;
- Quality assurance and the link to NQF implementation;
- NQF implementation;
- A pre-referencing exercise to raise awareness of the process;
- Development of guidance for consistent application of AQRF;
- Discussion related to validation of informal and non-formal learning; and
- Discussion of the nature and implementation of learning outcomes.

It is proposed that the final AQRF workshop session (October 2015) will include undertaking a case study for referencing and also establishing agreed principles for recognition of prior learning.

Implementation strategies

The AQRF does not prescribe timelines for ASEAN Member States to reference national qualifications systems to the framework. However, the development process and a pre-referencing activity indicated that there are pre-conditions for referencing. To ensure that conditions are favourable for a successful referencing process, the AQRF Task Force confirmed that the following should be in place (although it is accepted that some of the preconditions will inevitably be established over a longer time):

1. The country accepts the development of the AQRF as an enhancement to regional cooperation: disseminate and examine perception and value (or otherwise) of the AQRF;
2. Governance and management structures are being formulated: these include determining responsibility for referencing, setting up competent committees, and organising the consultation and reporting processes;
3. Quality assurance in the qualifications system is seen as critically important: particularly, expanding current quality assurance systems toward the utilisation of NQFs;
4. Linkages with other contexts for quality assurance are clear: for example, considering how quality assurance works in programme design;
5. A pre-referencing process is undertaken: countries should consider their qualification and quality assurance systems in relation to referencing and should discuss their outcomes and experiences with other ASEAN Member States. It is not expected that the exploration be a formal first step in referencing, but rather it is experimental;
6. There is a raised awareness of linked projects (e.g. MRAs and other alignments): this requires understanding of the interdependence of the AQRF with relevant projects, which need to be scoped and understood.[7]

[7] Implementation of the AQRF Consultation Paper for ASEAN, Mike Coles and Andrea Bateman, For the 6th TF- AQRF, 3-5 March 2015, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Additionally, it was considered that the AQRF should be in the public domain, that the key concepts are understood, and that work on underpinning concepts (such as learning outcomes) is underway. Consideration was to be given to further capacity building, dissemination of accurate information, and a creation of an official portal and level of consultation with various agencies and bodies.

Next steps for the AQRF

The AQRF development is at a pivotal point between the design phase, with both political and technical dimensions, and its difficult implementation, which is just beginning. CEDEFOP has defined five stages in development[8]:

1. Policy discussions, no concrete implementation: for example, discussions about the best approach for recognising the qualifications of immigrants;
2. Policy, the direction is set, but again there is no concrete implementation: for example, passing a law to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
3. Implementation: putting the infrastructure for change in place, such as funding, management, and a communications strategy; for example, a body is set up to manage and coordinate the assessment and validation of experience in private companies;
4. (a). Practice through pilot schemes: people use the new arrangements; for example, a learner is taught and assessed according to a new modular programme and qualification;

   (b). Full-scale applied practice: all old methods are adapted to the new methods;
5. Effect: the new system delivers benefits to individuals, organisations, and society; for example, more adult learners are engaged in lifelong learning, and skills supply to the labour market is improved.

It can be argued that the AQRF has reached stage 3 on this scale. So what are the next steps toward practice?

Agreement is needed for the finishing touches on governance arrangements and the carrying through of transition plans from project to substantive, new permanent architecture. The establishment of a secretariat to manage and sustain the development of the AQRF is also a priority. Additional work needs to be done on international and national communication strategies to raise awareness of AQRF and its potential to add value. One aspect is clarification of the linkages between the AQRF and related initiatives/agreements (e.g., MRAs).

In more concrete terms, the draft Guidelines for Referencing and the implementation plan, while both reflecting the spirit of voluntary engagement and development approach to referencing, need to be finalised, agreed, and operationalised. This includes endorsement of the Guidelines by the relevant ministries.

It has been discussed that further clarification is needed on the meaning of learning outcomes and that a long-term strategy for the adoption of a learning outcomes-based approach is necessary.

Challenges facing the AQRF

It is important to continue clarifying and disseminating the roles of the AQRF in a world where lifelong learning and international relevance is the common goal. How does it help in the interconnections between learner centred education, mobility, qualifications, international standards, frameworks, quality assurance procedures, and the growing range of multi-level and multi-sectoral stakeholders?

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8 CEDEFOP, 2010, Changing Qualifications – a review of qualifications processes and practices, CEDEFOP Reference series; 84, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

In relation to this, how will the AQRF extend the currently, very limited appreciation of the context, philosophy, and operationalisation of learning outcomes?

There are some more concrete challenges as well: how will the membership, organisation, and orientation of the AQRF Advisory Committee/National AQRF Committees be achieved? This will be made more difficult when we consider that within the AMS development of NQFs is uneven.

The referencing process will generate the need for NQF levels to be substantiated. In some countries, producing evidence to show levels corresponding with those of the AQRF will be challenging since the levels are based on generations of experience and traditional (national) values.

In the long term, the AQRF will need to become part of a wider set of tools for recognition; its added value depends on it. How will it relate to Mutual Recognition Agreements for accounting services, dental practitioners, engineering services, nursing services, surveying qualifications, architectural services, and tourism services? In higher education, the AQRF needs to be consistent with the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Degrees in Higher Education (as amended in 2011).

Relationship of the AQRF to EQF and QF-EHEA

The broad architecture of AQRF levels corresponds with those of the EQF and the QF-EHEA. However, there are significant differences in the broad domains of achievement covered by the AQRF and the level descriptors themselves. There are some differences in the referencing process; however, these are presentational rather than substantial. The governance of the AQRF is not yet defined but is likely to be more light touch than those of the European frameworks.

Origins

The origins of the AQRF and the EQF are similar. The developments were driven by the need for greater transparency in qualifications systems that would support mobility of people and trade. The diversity of qualifications approaches, the differences in languages, and the proliferation of bilateral trade agreements were considered to be obstacles to developing a regional identity that would support social and economic policies. Both frameworks aimed to support lifelong learning. The QF-EHEA came from different needs; the differences in higher education qualifications and how they were achieved were considered to be issues needing harmonisation across different countries. However, the AQRF and the EQF are not aiming toward harmonisation. So the major difference between the three meta frameworks is that the QF-EHEA is a singular, international qualifications structure, which countries use to model their qualifications levels, whereas the other two are frameworks that national qualifications systems must relate to rather than transform into.

Structure

Both the EQF and the AQRF have eight levels, and the top levels of the EQF correspond with the levels of the QF-EHEA.

Domains

The domains of descriptors that determine the eight levels vary considerably. The QF-EHEA has no explicit domains; however, within the Dublin Descriptors, some common types of descriptors are clear, such as knowledge and skills. The EQF has three domains: Knowledge, Skills, and Competences. The AQRF has two domains: Knowledge and Skills plus Application and Responsibility. While there are differences in the titles of domains, they cover similar territory.

Level descriptors

The level descriptors of the three frameworks vary. The key difference is that the QF-EHEA descriptors apply to learning at the end of the learning cycle for a specific qualification type, whereas the EQF and the AQRF apply to generic levels of learning with no reference to specific types of qualifications. The descriptors for the EQF and the AQRF need to be read across domains to get an idea of the demand of each level. In the EQF and the AQRF, the descriptors are cumulative, that is, those at the higher level can be understood to subsume those at the lower levels.

Referencing process

All three frameworks require a referencing process based on agreed processes and criteria. These processes and criteria are remarkably similar. However, in one way, the referencing process for the QF-EHEA is distinctly different to that of the other frameworks. It is based on processes and criteria that each country certifies as having been met without reference to other countries. In the other two frameworks, countries must describe how they regard the criteria to be met and must convince the other member countries that this is the case. In other words, for the EQF and the AQRF, there is a peer review process.

In the case of the EQF, the referencing process has become more demanding, and scrutiny for how a country meets the criteria has intensified. Twenty-six countries have referenced to the EQF so far, and an exploratory process for Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong is underway. The process for the AQRF is only beginning.

Links with other frameworks

There are now seven regional frameworks in existence or in development, and several of these are available in the ASEAN geographic region, such as the Pacific Qualifications Framework and the potential APEC framework. Currently, the AQRF is not linked to any other framework.

V. National Qualifications Frameworks

Overview

The development of NQFs has been a prominent feature within national education and training systems over the past two decades.[9] There has been a rapid expansion especially in Europe, which is generally accepted to be the result of the establishment of the EQF. This trend is reflected in ASEAN countries with many recently establishing or planning an NQF as a direct result of the need for international economic focus but also because of the recent establishment of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework.

NQF level of establishment

Each ASEAN country is at a different stage of planning or implementation of an NQF. The development of an NQF can be categorised according to the following general categories:

1. No intent;
2. Desired but no progress made;
3. Background planning underway;
4. Initial development and design completed;
5. Some structures and processes agreed and documented;
6. Some structures and processes established and operational;
7. Structures and processes established for five years;
8. Review of structures and processes proposed or underway.[10]

The table below outlines the level of establishment of NQFs in the region.

Table 1 – NQF summary

Country	Level of establishment	Stage
Brunei Darussalam	Inaugurated 2013, implemented	6
Cambodia	Inaugurated 2012, initial stages of implementation	5
Indonesia	Inaugurated 2012, initial stages of implementation	6
Lao PDR	Planned	3
Malaysia	Inaugurated 2007, fully implemented and at review stage	8
Myanmar	Planned	3
Philippines	Inaugurated 2012, initial stages of implementation	5
Singapore	Sector QF – Workforce Skills Qualifications system, Inaugurated 2003	7
Thailand	Inaugurated 2014, initial stages of implementation, 3 established sub frameworks (i.e. skills, professional, and higher education)	4
Vietnam	Planned	3

9 Coles, Keevy, Bateman & Keating 2014.

10 These categories were utilised in the initial research for the development of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, Bateman, Keating, Burke, Coles & Vickers (Vol IV, 2012) based on a scale developed by James Keevy, Borhene Chakroun & Arjen Deij (2010).

Governance of NQFs

NQFs are established through various processes which may include legislation or legislative instruments specifically related to the framework or to a responsible agency; or achieved through collaboration of various agencies and stakeholders (e.g. Australian Qualifications Framework).

Within the ASEAN region, three frameworks[11] are directly linked to a responsible agency. The Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework has been documented since 2008, with its existence tentatively stipulated in the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 provides the legislative basis for the framework; and in Singapore, the Skills Framework is implicit in the functions of the Singapore Workforce Development Agency Act.

Two frameworks were established through a legislative instrument that was directly related to the framework (e.g. Cambodia and Indonesia). Thailand's meta framework was approved by Cabinet; in the Philippines, it was established through an Executive Order.

The legislative basis of the framework also affects the governance of the framework, how it will be monitored and maintained as well as how implementation of the framework will be monitored. For some countries, such as Cambodia and Indonesia, no clear lines of responsibility exist for the management and monitoring of the NQF. In the Philippines, the Executive Order established a coordinating committee. In Thailand the Office of Education is the responsible body, and for Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam a key quality assurance agency has the remit of the NQF or sector QF.

For a number of the frameworks, much of the detail (such as qualification descriptors, volume measures, validation of non-formal and informal recognition rules, and entry and exit advice) are documented in supporting legislation, guidelines or policy documents. Although there is nothing inherently weak in this approach, in some countries there are a significant number of legislative instruments and/or guidelines, which means in some instances the frameworks lack transparency making it difficult for domestic stakeholders and international observers to understand.

NQF purposes

Countries develop qualifications frameworks for a range of purposes. Coles et al (2014) indicate that the main function of a National Qualifications Framework is 'to act as a benchmark for the level of learning recognised in the national qualifications system' (p. 22). Bjørnåvold & Grm (August 2010) identified the following purposes in a review of NQFs across Europe:

- Make national qualifications systems easier to understand and overview;
- Strengthen coherence of qualifications systems by connecting different parts of education and training and making it easier to understand;
- Clarifying and strengthening the links between qualifications within systems;
- Support lifelong learning by making learning pathways visible and by aiding access, participation and progression;
- Aid recognition of a broader range of learning outcomes (including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning);
- Strengthen the link and improve the communication between education and training, and the labour market;

[11] NQF or sector QF

- Open up national qualifications systems to qualifications awarded outside of formal education and training;
- Create a platform for cooperation and dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders; and
- Provide a reference point for quality assurance'.[12]

Of the ASEAN countries that have documented a NQF, the following purposes were identified:

- For Brunei Darussalam, the purposes are extensive and include:
    - Quality assuring the qualifications, certification;
    - Establishing a credit-based system to facilitate credit accumulation and transfer and to facilitate progression;
    - Encouraging collaboration between public and private sector higher education providers and skills training providers;
    - Encouraging parity of esteem among academic, professional, technical, vocational, and skills qualifications;
    - Providing clear and accessible public information on programmes or qualifications in higher education; and
    - Articulating links with qualifications from outside Brunei.
- For Cambodia, the purposes are multi-faceted. The aim of the Cambodian Qualifications Framework is to bring all recognised qualifications into a unified, interconnected structure. Its main purposes include:
    - Facilitating student and learner support, protection, and reporting;
    - Facilitating the recognition of Cambodian qualifications and articulating links with other regional qualifications; and
    - Contributing to the personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the country as a whole.
- For Malaysia, the Malaysian Qualifications Framework is an instrument that develops and classifies qualifications; it aims to provide pathways by linking qualifications.
- For Indonesia, the Indonesian Qualifications Framework is stated to be a framework for levelling qualifications.
- For the Philippines, the key objectives of the framework included supporting the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies and aligning the PQF with international qualifications frameworks for purposes of student and labour mobility.

Common themes among these identified purposes include the ordering and specification of qualifications and the promotion of multiple pathways for learners and international recognition.

[12] Bateman, Keating, Burke, Coles & Vickers 2012, Vol II, p. 6

NQF structure

The structure of NQFs varies. Bateman & Coles (2013) indicate that the variations can relate to:

- Coverage: including sectors and qualification types;
- Purpose and vision of NQFs: for example, reflecting the status quo, reforming, increasing transparency, mobility, regional solidarity, national identity, coherence of education, and training levels;
- Domains for descriptors;
- Volume measures;
- Associated functions, such as improving quality assurance and validating non-formal and informal learning, and credit; and
- Level of regulation and governance.

Bateman, Keating, Burke, Coles & Vickers (2012, Vol II, pp. 7-8) indicate that there are some identifiable core elements of NQFs, which include:

- Levels of learning complexity, which tend to range between six and twelve levels;
- Descriptor of learning inputs and/or outcomes across these levels or of qualification type, with a trend towards NQFs being outcomes-based;
- Rules or guidelines for linking qualifications, either at the same level or between levels; and
- Rules or guidelines for the volume of learning that contribute toward a qualification.

Of the participating ASEAN countries that have implemented or have documented an NQF, the majority of these core elements are clearly articulated. However, the depth of information in the key document that describes the NQF varies across countries. In some instances, the majority of all information pertaining to the NQF is in one document, and in other countries, it is dispersed across many documents. These documents need to be accessed to get a complete picture of qualification type descriptors, volume measures, associated functions (such as improving quality assurance and validating non-formal and informal learning), credit transfer, and recognition of prior learning.

The more recent and proposed NQFs are reflective of the eight level structure of the AQRF. In fact, this is the case in Europe, where most of the thirty-eight countries with NQFs have introduced eight level frameworks; three exceptions to this are the recently developed frameworks of Iceland and Norway, which have seven levels, and Slovenia, which uses ten levels.[13] This tendency is often explained as a signal of the need for countries to establish international comparability.

The table below outlines the key features of current and proposed NQFs.

[13] CEDEFOP, 2015, National Qualifications Developments in Europe, Thessaloniki

Table 2 – Summary of NQF architecture

Country	Levels	Domains	Credit-based
Brunei Darussalam	8	• Knowledge and skills (the types of knowledge and skills involved); • Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding (the context in which the knowledge and skills are applied); • Generic Cognitive Skills; • Communications, ICT and Numeracy Skills; • Autonomy, Accountability and Working with others (the level of independence).	H Ed – 40 hours of national learning = 1 TVET – 10 hours of national learning = 1
Cambodia	8	• Knowledge; • Cognitive skills; • Psychomotor skills; • Interpersonal skills and responsibility; • Communication, information technology and numerical skills.	Varies depending on methodology
Indonesia	9	Consists of 2 parts: • General – characteristics, personalities, working attitudes, ethics and morality • Specific: 1. Skills in fulfilling the job and competence; 2. Science/knowledge; 3. Methods and level of competence in applying science/knowledge; 4. Management skills#	Yes – in Higher Education+
Lao PDR*	8	• Knowledge; • Skills application; • Social skills.	-
Malaysia	8	• Knowledge; • Practical skills; • Social skills and responsibilities, values, attitudes and professionalism; • Communication, leadership and team skills; • Problem solving and scientific skills; • Information management and lifelong learning skills; • Managerial and entrepreneurial skills.	40 hours = 1 credit point
Myanmar*	8	• Knowledge and skills; • Application and competence; • Responsibility.	-
Philippines	8	• Knowledge, skills and values; • Application; • Degree of independence (autonomy and responsibility)	-
Singapore	6	• Level of knowledge and skills involved; • Level of application of the knowledge and skills; • Level of accountability, independence, self organisation or organisation of others that is required to solve problems or complete tasks; • Cognisant of the occupational levels and range, and depth of the knowledge and skills required of the jobs which the qualifications relates to.	1 WSQ credit value (cv) is equivalent to 10 recommended training and assessment hours. (1 cv = 10 hrs)
Thailand	9	• Knowledge; • Skills; • Attributes.	Yes
Vietnam*	8	• Knowledge; • Skills; • Autonomy and responsibility.	1 = 30 hours of notional learning.

Note: * = proposed, # = Directorate General of Higher Education 2012, +not included in decree
Source: Country overviews.

NQF processes

Underpinning the AQRF is the promotion of facilitating lifelong learning and also the validation of non-formal and informal learning (e.g. recognition of prior learning). A significant number of the documented frameworks within the region also support these concepts.

In terms of recognition of prior learning, there is limited evidence of fully documented and implemented recognition of prior learning processes across the countries. For most countries with fledgling NQFs, the acknowledgement of learning through other than formal means is not well accepted, and there is minimal capacity to implement recognition processes.

Malaysia was the only country to provide details of recognition of prior learning processes. Both credit transfer and recognition of prior learning are included in the MQF. Guidelines for accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) are provided as a supplementary document. This document limits the percentage of students that can be assessed for APEL. In addition, there are policies for accessing higher education through APEL (by age, work experience, levels, portfolio, assessment, and interviews). There is no limit on the number of applications, but there is a limit of 5% intake per year of APEL certified candidates for traditional universities (5% of total enrolment per annum).[14]

A number of frameworks have applied a credit point system. For those using a credit based system, the purpose does not necessarily relate to the accumulation and recognition of credit points for credit transfer, but rather it relates to systematising the construction of qualifications. The Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework, however, explicitly refers to establishing a credit transfer system. Across the region, it appears, at this stage, that the country framework credit transfer systems are neither implemented nor in the early stages of implementation.

In Europe, two European level credit systems are available: the European Credit Transfer system (ECTS), mainly used in higher education, and the European Credit transfer system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). ECTS is more established than ECVET but is not used by all institutions in every country. The two systems signal a commitment at European level for easier and more transparent transferring of accumulation and credit for learning in different countries. Within countries, there is often some measure of volume of learning through unit assessments, modular reporting of learning, and a transcript (a learning and achievement record). However, in most European countries, a national credit system is a work in progress. Outside higher education, where ECTS is available and national approaches can supplement ECTS, credit systems might be used in one sector, such as VET or general education, and remain distinctive to that sector, as opposed to being linked to a coordinated, national system. In this sense, for most countries, a national coordinated credit systems remain a goal rather than a reality.

Level of awareness of NQF

Most higher education institutions will have people with some awareness of qualifications frameworks. In general, this will not be deep knowledge but will centre on knowledge of higher education qualification agreements, such as the Bologna Process (a largely European development) and the Washington Accord (for the recognition of engineering qualifications). Where faculties admit international students, there will be recognition arrangements that increasingly refer to home country NQF levels where these exist. Additionally, most faculties will have some kind of discipline based qualification hierarchy that is devised and used by the professional bodies representing that community of practice.

The depth of understanding will be deeper in the higher education in countries where an NQF has been developed and deeper still where higher education has either led the development or has been the first sector to engage with the national framework.

The extent of the development of NQFs, and the process of self-certification, is described in the Bologna implementation report 2015.

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14 Malaysia summary, refer to Appendix 3.

Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Scotland) have fulfilled all the steps in implementation of qualifications frameworks and have the self-certification report that can be consulted on a public website. Austria, Croatia, Iceland, Lithuania and Portugal miss only the step of providing information on qualifications frameworks on a public website.[15]

It is generally the case that even in countries developing an NQF for the purpose of structuring and recognising TVET qualifications, the support of higher education will be sought in the development process.

The issue for raising awareness of NQFs in higher education faculties is that the understandings disseminated are likely to wither, unless it can prove useful in the admission process or in promoting the institution and its quality of work. This means that the NQF must be widely used in the country, and its levels must have a natural presence in public discourse. Therefore SHARE could focus itself on two domains:

1. In countries with an advanced and active NQF, it can work with higher education to optimise use; and
2. In other countries, with an emergent NQF, it can support interested higher education parties by engaging in the development of the NQF.

Related quality assurance processes

NQFs can be seen as part of the quality assurance process in that they can act as regulators of quality of the qualifications included in the NQF. In this way, NQFs can support a wider and deeper set of quality assurance processes. Sometimes, quality assurance arrangements do not reference an NQF and the NQF is simply seen as a catalogue or classifier of all qualifications in the country, with no reference to the quality of these qualifications. In ASEAN, NQFs usually incorporate or are linked with established quality assurance procedures, but in some countries (potential and emerging NQFs), the link to quality assurance processes is not clear. More mature NQFs are generally linked to more established and transparent quality assurance processes.

Quality assurance of education and training generally centres on:

- Approval and monitoring of the product, such as curriculum or programme design;
- Approval and monitoring of the provider, such as universities and other higher education providers;
- Monitoring of assessment, certification, and graduation procedures and outcomes;
- System wide evaluations of quality; and
- Provision of public information on the performance of providers.[16]

In some countries, approval and monitoring of qualifications rests with a quality assurance agency or with the education provider (with or without oversight or guidelines established at the national level). The approval and monitoring of providers varies from assumed for particular providers (e.g. public universities), structured (e.g. private universities), and not mandated or not mandated for all.

In many instances, the requirements for provider approval are documented in legislation or in government regulations and, in some instances, include quality standards. Some countries noted the degree of effort to implement quality assurance strategies across all higher education providers,

15 Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2015, p. 67.

16 Bateman, Keating, Gillis, Dyson, Burke & Coles 2012, p. 8 & 9.

especially given the range and number of providers in some countries. For some ASEAN Member States, there is a growing interest for developing the capacity of institutions to implement internal evaluation and other quality assurance approaches. There is not a strong history in some countries of external evaluation across all types of higher education providers.

International linkages

One of the key purposes cited by ASEAN countries that had an NQF was the potential for linking to international qualifications frameworks for student and labour mobility purposes.

In general, for ASEAN countries, international linkages are generally focussed on the mutual recognition agreements, which are currently, or in the process of, being agreed. A range of mutual recognition arrangements have been negotiated for engineering, nursing, architecture, surveying, medical practitioners, dental practitioners and accountancy. The most recent agreement was on tourism professionals, which was confirmed in 2012. The mutual recognition arrangements are linked to labour mobility across the region. The agreement addresses the minimum competency standards and qualifications for hotel and travel services and links the recognition of these qualifications to labour mobility. The agreement also outlines the roles of national tourism boards, national certification boards, and the ASEAN monitoring committee. Anecdotally, progress for implementation across the arrangements is arguably slow, except for engineering, accounting, and tourism.

On an individual basis, some countries have agreements or undertaken referencing activities, such as Malaysia and New Zealand, which are reviewing the comparability of specific qualification types.[17] A number of ASEAN countries and individual agencies noted that agreements or MOUs have been negotiated, such as Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

In terms of cross border provision, including incoming international providers, not all countries have processes in place or experience with international providers. Of those that have international providers within their country, the same conditions or special processes apply. Not all countries have a documented process for assessing incoming individuals' qualifications.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (UNESCO 2012) aims to 'ensure that studies, diplomas, and degrees in higher education are recognised as widely as possible, considering the great diversity of educational systems in the Asia- Pacific region and the richness of its cultural, social, political, religious, and economic backgrounds'.[18]

For incoming evaluations of international qualifications, very few ASEAN Member States have established recognition processes and emerging NQFs are not linked with any recognition processes. Given that all ASEAN countries are potential signatories to the Convention (UNESCO 2012), the lack of internal processes is a barrier to signing the convention.

The current version of the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (UNESCO 2012) on the UNESCO website indicates that two ASEAN countries have signed this agreement: Cambodia and Lao PDR. The preparedness of ASEAN Member States to facilitate recognition of labour mobility outside of MRAs is limited until such recognition tools and facilities are established.

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17 http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/our-role-in-international-education/country-specific-recognition-arrangements/malayasia/

18 http://www.unescobkk.org/education/higher-education/promotion-of-academic-mobility/asia-pacific-regional-convention-on-the-recognition-of-qualifications-in-higher-education-an-overview/

VI. AQRF Implementation – national issues

Timelines for referencing

The AQRF indicates that ASEAN Member States can determine the most appropriate time for referencing their national or sectoral framework or qualifications. The success of the AQRF lies with the member states and their capacity and willingness to reference all or part of their national qualifications systems to the AQRF. The timing and scope of the referencing process is determined by each member state.

For many ASEAN countries, it is too early for referencing their NQF to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. However, at the Fifth Meeting of the Task Force on ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (5th TF-AQRF), the AMS agreed that the latest date for referencing is 2018.

The research for this report indicated that for five countries, the implementation date for referencing was to be 2017 or 2018. However, a number of these countries are anticipating, given their current level of implementation, a start date of 2020. Two countries indicated that referencing would start in 2016, one stated 'when ready', one did not respond to this question, and one country would not commit to a timeline for referencing. These responses are indicative of the level of support from the ASEAN Community required for implementation of NQF and of assistance in the referencing process.

Some countries with emerging NQFs or those in the initial stages of implementation (except for one country) did not provide documented national implementation plans for all sectors; although one country did document a plan for only higher education. For some countries, there was a corresponding lack of commitment and understanding. In these countries, referencing to the AQRF will be much more difficult.

Most European countries have referenced their frameworks to the EQF and the FQ-EHEA. Since 2009, twenty-six countries have referenced qualifications systems to the EQF. Some of these have updated their reports following developments in their qualifications systems (Malta, Estonia, and Bulgaria). Three countries are in the process of finalising their reports after submission to the EQF (Greece, Cyprus, and Romania); six countries have scheduled dates for submission to the EQF AG (Liechtenstein, Turkey, Macedonia, Sweden, Spain, and Belgium [German part]). Finland has yet to agree upon a date.

In addition to the thirty-six countries in the EQF community, some countries outside Europe have 'aligned' their frameworks to the EQF in collaboration with the European Commission (Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong). Several other countries have indicated that in the future, they wish to engage in the process, such as India.

Barriers and obstacles

Each participating ASEAN country was asked to identify barriers and obstacles to implementing NQFs or qualifications systems within their country. Some countries responded specifically in relation to the TVET sector and/or Higher Education sector and others in relation to the NQF. Others included general concerns. However, the barriers and issues were reasonably consistent across the ASEAN countries and related to a specific number of critical issues, including:

- Pre-conditions not in place;
- Lack of connections and coordination between sectors;
- Limited staff capacity to support initiatives;
- Limited awareness of staff and stakeholders, including ministerial staff in relation to quality assurance strategies and the concept and importance of an NQF;
- Inadequate finances to devote to implementation; and
- Limited capacity of providers.

The table below summarises the issues and barriers identified by participating ASEAN countries in the SHARE survey or through interviews. The issues listed also include those identified through the AQRF Task Force Workshops and activities.

Table 3 – Issues and barriers

Theme	Details
Progress for implementation	Progress of implementation was cited both as a barrier but also as a consequence of other issues, such as: quality assurance and NQFs being unfamiliar concepts; the number and variety of providers to be quality assured; and recognition of the time taken to implement and embed strategies into the system. In addition, the need for pre-conditions, such as a fully implemented NQF and quality assurance processes, were also cited as a barrier to referencing.
Connections with other sectors	Almost all participating ASEAN countries raised concerns with various linkages across education sectors, especially between vocational training and higher education; another was the lack of recognition or credit between sectors and lack of harmonising legislation.
Level of engagement	Almost all participating ASEAN countries referred to the lack of: understanding and awareness of NQF's importance at various levels of government and stakeholders; commitment to its implementation of responsible agency staff; and of legislative basis to implement the NQF or quality assurance strategies.
Staff capacity (in responsible agencies)	Concerns were related to the capacity of quality assurance staff: to implement NQF related strategies; to develop or understand the potential of an NQF; for the development of learning outcomes-based curriculum or standards; for programme accreditation processes; for institutional accreditation processes, including auditing and monitoring of providers; and to the lack of capacity of staff to undertake referencing.
Financial support	Multiple countries commented on issues with limited budget support for initiatives.
Adequacy of providers	Another issue was the capacity of staff to understand and implement NQF and quality assurance strategies, such as internal evaluation and implementing a learning outcomes approach within the provider.
Other	Other issues included long term planning for implementation of the NQF, developing a credit transfer system, and finalising an NQF.

VII. The way forward

Achievements to date

The AQRF concept design was first documented in 2011, with a task force established to progress development in 2012 and endorsement by relevant ASEAN Ministers[19] achieved in mid 2015. Success of the framework's establishment has meant that:

- A concrete eight level framework has been agreed;
- ASEAN Member States have committed to using learning outcomes in the future;
- ASEAN Member States have committed to validating learning achieved outside of formal education and training systems;
- A procedure for referencing has been agreed; and
- An agreed position on quality assurance for the AQRF has been developed.

In addition, the process has established a zone of trust between the ten ASEAN Member States in the field of qualifications, which should strengthen over time.

Areas for future development

The following key areas of development are important for further development in all ASEAN Member States:

1. Expanding the use of learning outcomes (applies to all countries);
2. Continuing to develop the NQFs (some countries have them, but they are always ready for further development and use); and
3. Planning the referencing to the AQRF (all countries need to do it whether through an NQF or not).

Higher education's engagement in using the AQRF and the NQFs will be critically important to the wider development of frameworks across all sectors of education and training. Part of this engagement will be the development of practices in higher education that can serve as models for other sectors, such as in applying quality assurance, referencing higher education qualification types, and leading credit/recognition between sectors.

In relation to the AQRF, there are some critical preconditions to its successful implementation that are important.

1. The AQRF needs to be seen by countries as an enhancement to regional cooperation and a process must be underway to disseminate and examine perceptions about the value of the AQRF. Part of this process is to use public events and publications to undertake capacity building with regard to understanding and using the AQRF, including the creation of a place within an official portal and arranging a series of consultation meetings with various agencies and bodies. Some countries have undertaken very little socialisation of the AQRF;
2. Governance and management structures for the implementation of the AQRF need to be designed and agreed upon. This includes determining responsibility for referencing and of setting up competent committees;
3. Quality assurance arrangements for qualifications need to be reviewed to determine whether expanding current quality assurance systems is necessary to incorporate and capitalise on learning outcomes and NQFs;

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19 Labour, economic and education.

4. For the sake of presenting consistent messages and avoiding confusion, there needs to be an analysis of contingent work, such as on MRAs and other alignments. The scale of interdependencies between the AQRF and relevant projects needs to be scoped and understood.

Creating the right conditions for a referencing process can take time, and there will always be more that could be done. In some instances, the kinds of activities listed above can be seen as an ongoing process that will ensure that the AQRF makes a positive impact on the portability and quality of qualifications.

Support by SHARE

In terms of support and capacity at the ASEAN level, SHARE needs to establish contact with the ASEAN Secretariat to determine any future needs regarding monitoring structures and resources. It is not possible to be more specific with regard to support structures, as governance arrangements or general action plans are still being formulated at this stage.

In general, there is a need across all countries for authoritative information and guidance on how frameworks (national and regional) can support transparency, mobility, flexible progression routes, and higher levels of achievement. The relationship of frameworks with existing formal agreements across the region could also be summarised. Furthermore, generic material including case studies of frameworks in action could be prepared for national use.

Regional stakeholder conferences, seminars, and workshops will help with capacity building and implementation of the frameworks. These should tie in with plans from national authorities and international bodies.

A short study on how best to review quality assurance arrangements, so that NQFs can play their part in a national qualifications system, could be carried out and disseminated. Such a study could draw on existing literature on this subject.

Additionally, the SHARE project can add value to the following areas across the region:

- Anything to do with implementation, such as capacity building in relation to the use of learning outcomes and referencing;
- Establishing the official AQRF portal;
- Encouraging higher education to use the AQRF;
- Facilitating exchange between ASEAN Member States;
- Helping develop a monitoring and evaluation function and a procedure for amendment, as part of the AQRF architecture; and
- Assisting in the preparedness of ASEAN Member States to facilitate recognition of labour mobility outside of MRAs, which is limited until recognition facilities and strategies are established.

More specifically, in addition to the possible general support outlined above the following three areas are identified:

1. The use of learning outcomes

Firstly, work is already planned or is being carried out in the AMS, and as countries are in different positions, a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for dissemination of good practice, exchange of ideas, and high quality authoritative input.

The road to full implementation of a learning outcomes approach is a long one. It also needs to be remembered that there is always scope for input-based approaches to be used in tandem with some learning outcomes. One issue with implementation concerns the interdependency of the various forms of learning outcomes (educational standards, occupational standards, qualification standards, framework descriptors, and representation of learning in CVs). Another issue is that the value of using learning outcomes takes time to materialise and consistency of approach during the journey to a mature and beneficial use of learning outcomes is essential.

For SHARE, the approach could be to support policy discussion is this area, nationally and internationally, through the AQRF implementation, as well as providing capacity development for the responsible agency and institution academic staff.

2. The development of NQFs

The countries are in different stages of implementation and the NQFs are seen to be different in terms of aims and structure. Essentially, there is a choice between dealing with each country separately and categorising the countries into four sets, such as:

- Established NQF;
- New NQF;
- Emerging NQF; and
- No NQF.

There are arguments for both approaches, but on balance a national approach is likely to be more effective. Countries will value support in such areas as: devising and maintaining good governance arrangements; developing quality assurance for higher education approaches that an NQF enables; capacity development in relation to internal and external quality assurance in higher education; revising higher education qualifications to better fit a qualifications framework; and most importantly, devising new and valued progression routes.

3. Referencing to the AQRF

Countries will need support in the process of referencing. All the evidence to date suggests that they see this as challenging, even in the countries with more advanced NQFs. The ASEAN Secretariat is already supporting this work through official published guidelines, but these guidelines will be challenging for some countries. Work will need to be done to familiarise countries with possible approaches and planning a referencing process. There is scope for SHARE to work with countries individually and to offer generic help through the ASEAN Secretariat. The European experience is likely to be useful to underpin this work.

VIII. Appendix 1: Methodology

Research for this project was undertaken with the ten ASEAN Member States based on a survey developed and provided to EAS countries through the Australian Government East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework, which began in 2012.

For this project, the survey was refined to focus on the development of an NQF, and its related architecture and structures. Additionally, the survey was expanded to include questions pertaining to the AQRF and referencing timelines as well as the potential for a higher education sectoral framework in the ASEAN region.

In some instances, some countries built upon and updated the existing country overview provided during the East Asia Summit project.

The survey included a series of questions pertaining to:

1. Qualifications system overview;
2. National Qualifications Framework;
3. Transnational and cross border linkages; and
4. Issues and barriers to implementation and referencing to the AQRF.

For four countries, a face-to-face interview was undertaken to assist in the completion or update of the country overview. All countries were provided with a finalised country summary for confirmation.

IX. Appendix 2: Summary of NQF overviews

1. Brunei Darussalam

Framework Overview

Brunei Darussalam officially launched its National Qualifications Framework, the Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework (BDQF), in 2013. Development of the BDQF commenced in 2008, and its existence has been tentatively stipulated in the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011 (BDNAC Order 2011).

Established by the Ministry of Education through the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council, the framework was expected to strengthen the existing education system by providing clear guidelines for programme design, systematic naming of qualifications, and the elimination of any confusion on the meaning of each qualification.

The BDQF classifies and streamlines all academic, TVET, and higher education qualifications offered in the Sultanate. It has been used as a tool to develop guidelines that categorise qualifications based on criteria agreed at the national level. It will also explain the levels of learning, achieved learning outcomes of study areas, and a credit system based on student academic load. The BDQF criteria will apply to all the qualifications recognised in Brunei, thereby integrating and linking all qualifications offered and recognised within the nation.

By linking systematic qualifications, the BDQF would provide education pathways and enable individuals to progress to higher education.

It was also hoped that the understanding and confidence of various parties (students, parents, employers, government and non-government agencies, education providers, and quality assurance agencies) in the qualification awarding system be enhanced.

The framework will be considered a “living document” that would be continuously reviewed and updated in accordance with the latest education developments and changes.

Framework Purpose

The purposes of the BDQF include:

- To secure standards of qualifications and reinforce policies on quality assurance;
- To promote accuracy or consistency of nomenclature of qualifications;
- To provide mechanisms for the progression or interrelation between qualifications, including non-degree and degree qualifications;
- To encourage collaboration between public and private sector higher education providers and skills training providers;
- To encourage parity of esteem among academic, professional, technical, vocational, and skills qualifications;
- To establish a credit system to facilitate credit accumulation and transfer which is acceptable within and outside Brunei;
- To provide a clear and accessible public information on programmes or qualifications in higher education;
- To promote, where applicable, the presentation of qualifications in forms that facilitate their evaluation by person, including government agencies, higher education providers, student bodies, academic staff, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, professional bodies, examination bodies, and employers;
- To articulate links with qualifications from outside Brunei; and
- To generally provide basic criteria, criteria on qualifications / awards, criteria on institutions, and criteria on professional bodies’ (BQF 2014).

Framework Architecture

The BDQF includes an eight level framework, upon which all qualification types are placed (refer to Table 4).

The level descriptors are independent of the qualification type descriptors. The levels are based on five taxonomies: Knowledge and Skills (the types of knowledge and skills involved); Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding (the context in which the knowledge and skills are applied); Generic Cognitive Skills; Communications, ICT and Numeracy Skills; and Autonomy, Accountability and Working with others (the level of independence).

Qualification type descriptors are brief statements of purpose and alignment to the levels and volume of learning measure. The framework indicates that the programmes and qualifications are to be based on learning outcomes.

There are two volume of learning measures:

- Forty hours of notional student learning time is valued as one credit for the Higher Education Sector qualification; and
- Ten hours of notional student learning is valued as one credit for the Technical and Vocational Sector qualification.

There are no credit values allocated to level 8 (PhD) or the Certificate 1 (refer to Table 5.).

Framework Governance

The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC) has the role of managing and monitoring the framework. The BDQF (2014) notes that the Minister of Education as Chairman of the BDNAC may make directions as to changes to the framework from time to time. The BDNAC is the sole accrediting agency in Brunei Darussalam.

Framework Processes

The socialisation and implementation of the BDQF is in progress. The BDQF emphasises facilitating pathways through the provision of credits and recognition of prior learning. However, it does not provide further advice as to how this could be achieved.

Currently, certification arrangement, recognition tools, naming rules, and other conventions for qualifications are in progress. Each higher education institution is responsible for evaluating the complexity and quantity of qualifications.

Framework Links

The BDQF is linked to the Energy Industry Competency Framework (EICF), which is focussed on the oil industry's competency qualifications in the country.

The BDNAC works closely with the Energy Department of Prime Minister Office (EDPMO) to set up an audit committee to ensure that all programmes offered by the Registered Training Organisation, and the qualifications they award, comply with the BDQF and EICF requirements.

The BDQF has not been linked to any other NQF. There is no facility at this stage to be able to assess and recognise qualifications from other countries.

References

Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework (BDQF), 2014, Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council.

Table 4 – Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework (BDQF)

Level	Schools Sector Qualifications	Technical and Vocational Education Sector Qualifications	Higher Education Sector Qualifications
8			Doctoral Degree
7			Master's Degree Post Graduate Diploma Post Graduate Certificate
6			Bachelor's Degree
5		Advanced Diploma Higher National Diploma (HND)	Foundation Degree Advanced Diploma Higher National Diploma (HND)
4	GCE "A" Level IGCSE "A" Level IB Diploma STPU	Diploma Higher National Technical Education Certificate (HNTec)	
3	GCE "O" Level (Grades A-C) IGCSE and GCSE "O" Level (Grade A* - C) SPU (Grades A-C) BTEC level 2 Diploma	Skills Certificate 3 (SC3) National Technical Education Certificate (NTec)	
2	GCE "O" Level (Grades D-E) IGCSE "O" Level (Grade D-E) SPU (grades D) BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate	Skills Certificate 2 (SC2) Industrial Skills Qualifications (ISQ)	
1	BTEC Level Introductory Certificate	Skills Certificate 1 (SC1)	

Table 5 – BDQF Credit values

Level	Qualification	Credit points
8	Doctoral	No credit value
7	Master (Taught) Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate	45 40 30
6	Bachelor	120
5	Foundation Degree Advance Diploma	60
4	Diploma	160
3	Skill Certificate 3 (SC3)	60
2	Skill Certificate 2 (SC2)	60
1	Skill Certificate 1 (SC1)	N/A

2. Cambodia

Framework Overview

The Cambodian Qualifications Framework (CQF) is intended to ensure equivalent comparison in the standards of national qualifications and regional qualifications. The CQF provides a comprehensive, nationally consistent yet flexible framework for all qualifications in education and training (CQF 2012, p. 1), addressing both technical and vocational training and higher education.

Framework Purpose

The CQF indicates that the purposes include:

- Providing nationally consistent recognition of outcomes achieved in each qualification of education and training;
- Helping with developing flexible pathways, which assist people with moving more easily between the education and training sectors, and between those sectors and the labour market, by providing the basis for recognition of prior learning, including credit transfer, experience, and current competency;
- Offering flexibility to suit the diversity of purposes of education and training;
- Encouraging individuals to progress through education and training by improving access to qualifications, clearly defining avenues for achievement, and generally contributing to lifelong learning;
- Encouraging the provision of more and higher quality vocational education and training through qualifications that meet individual, workplace, and vocational needs, thus contributing to national economic performance;
- Promoting national and international recognition of qualifications offered in the Kingdom of Cambodia; and
- Facilitating the regional mobilisation of skills workforce (CQF 2012).

Framework Architecture

The principal elements in the CQF are: levels, credits, learning outcomes, and study and admission criteria.

The CQF is based on eight levels, with the TVET sub framework covering eight levels and the higher education sub framework covering four levels. Qualification titles (sector specific titles) are positioned on the eight levels (refer to table 6).

The CQF incorporates level descriptors that are based on learning outcomes. The level descriptors cover the following areas:

- Knowledge;
- Cognitive skills;
- Psychomotor skills;
- Interpersonal skills and responsibility; and
- Communication skills, information technology skills, and numeracy skills.

There are qualification type descriptors that outline the level descriptors' taxonomies, purpose statement, pathways statements (including entry requirements if relevant), and volume of learning. Volume of learning is defined as '15 hours for 1 credit is taken as a measure of the amount of teaching and instruction, 30 hours for 1 credit is taken as a measure of the amount

of Laboratory/workshop teaching activities, and 45 hours for 1 credit is taken as a measure of the amount of field work or internship training activities. The credit is taken as a measure of the amount of teaching and instruction normally expected for a fulltime student at undergraduate levels in a semester and 30 credit hours in an academic year' (CQF 2012, p. 3). Volume of learning is applied at qualification level.

Additional information for some qualification types is included on other decrees.

Table 6 – Cambodian Qualifications Framework

CQF Levels	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Higher Education (H.E)	Minimum credit points
8	Doctoral Degree of Technology/ Business Education	Doctoral Degree	54
7	Master Degree of Technology/Business Education	Master Degree	45
6	Bachelor of Technology/Business Education	Bachelor Degree	120
5	Higher Diploma/Associate Degree of Technology/Business Education	Associate Degree	60
4	Technical and Vocational Certificate 3		30
3	Technical and Vocational Certificate 2		30
2	Technical and Vocational Certificate 1		30
1	Vocational Certificate		30

Source: CQF 2012

Framework Governance

The CQF has been established through the sub-decree No. 153 ANK.BK, 28 March 2014. Currently, there is no body with the formal remit responsible for managing and monitoring the NQF. The National Training Board appears the most likely entity as membership includes all the key ministries (Labour, Education, Social Affairs), the Chamber of Commerce (an employer association), and the Committee of Accreditation. The MoLVT and MoEYS have remit over implementation in their respective sectors.

Framework Processes

The CQF provides some level of information in relation to naming conventions for qualifications:

- Qualification titles used in technical and vocational education are to include the terms 'technical' or 'technology'; these terms are not to be included in higher education qualification titles;
- Use of field descriptors e.g. agriculture and in higher education 'arts' and 'sciences';
- Titling conventions in the use of 'of' for all titles.

The CQF refers to the provision of recognition of prior learning and the provision of advanced standing or credit and the ability to proceed to further studies in a flexible way. The CQF places the responsibility for outlining guidelines and processes at the authority level.

The CQF provides some advice as to how to determine volume of learning measures. It notes that a semester is approximately 15-18 credit points with a maximum of 21 credit points. It does not provide any additional advice.

There are no recognition tools (e.g. Diploma Supplement documents) mentioned within the CQF. The CQF also includes certification information in relation to the format of the testamur (including name, code, and logo of issuing body; name of person receiving the qualification; nomenclature as in the Framework, e.g. Certificate I, Diploma; date issued; and authorised signatory). It also includes additional descriptors for TVET: industry descriptor (e.g. engineering); occupational or functional stream in brackets, (e.g. fabrication); and the words, 'the qualification certified herein is recognised within CQF'.

Framework Links

The CQF notes that the programmes at the four-year bachelor degree level are to be developed as equivalent to bachelor's degrees in other countries in the Arab region, the degree of Bachelor with Honours in the United Kingdom, or the bachelor's degrees in Europe, North America, Australia, and elsewhere in the world.

There is no formal linking of the CQF to other qualification frameworks. For higher education, there is no process to check qualifications. The ministry can check equivalency of diplomas and above but not certify the content or the salary level; the CQF has not been used to do this.

References

Cambodia Country Overview draft 2014, based on an overview provided by Cambodia for the East Asia Summit Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework project managed by Australia Commonwealth Government 2012; and updated as part of a World Bank Study on Standards and Qualifications Framework in ASEAN+ Countries, 2014 – 2015.

Cambodia Qualifications Framework (CQF) (English version, unofficial draft copy 2012).

CAMBODIA, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, accessed June 2015 http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UIL_Global_Inventory_of_NQFs_Cambodia.pdf

3. Indonesia

Framework Overview

The Indonesian Qualifications Framework is outlined in Presidential Decree Number 8, Year 2012. The Presidential Decree indicates that:

> '*(1) The implementation of* Indonesian National Qualification Framework *in each sector or professional fields is determined by ministries or regulating bodies relevant to the institutions' authorities*;
>
> *(2) The implementation of* Indonesian National Qualification Framework *at each sector or professional fields as stated in paragraph (1) refers to the description of IQF qualification levels as described in the Exhibit of this Presidential Decree*;
>
> *(3) Further stipulations related to the implementation of* Indonesian National Qualification Framework *is governed by the Minister handling labor issues and the Minister in charge of education affairs, both jointly as well as in their own respective areas of responsibilities.'*[20]

Framework Purpose

The Presidential Decree Number 8, Year 2012 (p. 2) defines the framework as

> '*…a framework of competency qualification levelling which corresponds, equalises and incorporates educational fields with work training fields and work experience in order to provide work competency recognition according to the work structure in various sectors.*'

In addition,

> *'The Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF) is a reflection of a continuing development of human resources quality in Indonesia. In the national scope, IQF acts as a national reference to match and harmonise learning outcomes resulted from formal and non-formal education, or acquired through job experiences. At the international level, IQF serves as a device to translate international workforce and students qualifications to meet the Indonesian qualification system.'*[21]

Framework Architecture

Presidential Decree Number 8, Year 2012, outlines a nine level framework with a general description and nine level descriptors, which are outcomes statements, based on skills, knowledge, and responsibility and accountability taxonomies. These descriptors are level descriptors and in the Decree are independent from qualifications or qualification type descriptors.

The IQF was stipulated under The Presidential Decree Number 8, Year 2012. Therefore, all ministries implement this policy accordingly. For instance, the role and responsibilities of various agencies in implementing IQF are as follows:

- Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education has the responsibility of coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating higher education providers conducted by this ministry, other technical ministries, as well as the private sector. Higher education institutions have the responsibility to produce professional and skilled labour through higher degree programmes. The programme outcomes are in accordance with the IQF descriptors from level three up to nine;

20 Presidential Decree Number 8, Year 2012, Article 9.

21 Indonesian Qualifications Framework - Implication and Implementation Strategies- By Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia - ISBN 978-602-9290-17-2

- Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education – Ministry of Education and Culture has the responsibility of coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating primary and secondary providers conducted by this ministry as well as the private sector. Although schools outcomes are in accordance with the IQF descriptors at level one and two, they are not expected to enter the workplace;
- Directorate General of Early Childhood, Non-Formal and Informal Education - Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating training providers conducted by this ministry as well as the private sector. Training outcomes are in accordance with the IQF descriptors at level 1 to 5;
- Ministry of Man Power has the responsibility of coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating training providers conducted by this ministry and the private sector. Training outcomes are in accordance with the IQF descriptors at level 1 to 5;
- National Professional Certification Board and various professional bodies are responsible for issuing certificates of competencies and/or certificates of profession in accordance with IQF levels;
- National Board of Accreditation and private accreditation boards are responsible for the quality assurance of all education providers based on qualifications;
- National Standard of Education Board is mandated to set up various standards. Graduate outcome standards are derived from IQF descriptors; and
- Other technical ministries have the responsibility of mapping the professional and human capital planning for supporting the ministries according to IQF levels.

The ministry responsible for education has developed the following:

- Higher Education Act 12/2012;
- Ministerial Regulation 49/2014 National Standards of Higher Education;
- Ministerial Regulation 73/2013 Implementation of the IQF;
- Ministerial Regulation 81/2014 Diploma & Certificate Competency, and professional certificate in Higher Education; and
- *Indonesian Qualification Framework: Implications and Implementation Strategies* 2012, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture.

The ministry responsible for labour (or others) has developed the following:

- Manpower Act 13/*2003;*
- *Government Regulation23/2004 about Agency National Professional Certification (BNSP);*
- *Ministerial Regulation 5/2012 Manpower concerning Work Competency System; and*
- *Ministerial Regula*tion 21/2014 Manpower concerning Guidelines for the IQF Implementation.

The Ministry of Manpower facilitates the process for competency and occupational standards development, which are based on the notion of competence.

Framework Governance

Currently, there is an ACDP funded project underway in Indonesia to provide advice for the establishment of IQF governance arrangements.

Framework Processes

Implementing the Presidential Decree is the remit of the relevant ministry. For example, in terms of supplementary processes in the higher education sector, there is:

- Recognition of prior learning in the *Indonesian Qualification Framework: Implications and Implementation Strategies* (2012, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture) includes comments in relation to recognition of prior learning and to improving access arrangements across different education streams (academic, vocational, and professional) including provision for multi-entry and exit points;
- Titling conventions for qualifications are included in the Higher Education Act 12/2012;
- Recognition tools, such as a Diploma Supplement, is included in a ministerial regulation 81/2014; and
- Certification arrangements, in terms of information to be included on testamurs, is included in a ministerial regulation 81/2014.

The volume of learning of various learning programmes has been determined by the educational processes track record. For example, there is strong agreement that a bachelor normally takes three to four years; a master is two years after a bachelor, etc. Such guidelines have been established and utilised since Indonesia established its first university.

Framework Links

Currently, the framework is not linked to another framework. Additionally, relevant ministries carry out assessment and recognition of qualifications from other economies in accordance with their needs. For example, the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education is responsible for overseas diploma recognition. IQB is expected to coordinate this matter.

Implementation

There is no national plan for implementation of the IQF; however, the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education has a plan for implementation.

References

Indonesia Country Overview draft 2014, based on an overview provided by Indonesia for the East Asia Summit Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework project managed by Australia Commonwealth Government 2012; and updated as part of a World Bank Study on Standards and Qualifications Framework in ASEAN+ Countries, 2014 – 2015.

INDONESIA, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, accessed June 2015 http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UIL_Global_Inventory_of_NQFs_Indonesia.pdf

Decree of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Number 8, Year 2012 on the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (INQF), Government of Indonesia

Indonesian Qualification Framework: Implications and Implementation Strategies 2012, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture

4. Lao PDR

Framework Overview

There is currently no overall National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that links all levels of education, training, and qualifications and identifies the pathways between them; although, there are discussions underway.

Education Law 2015 includes an Article about the NQF; a general statement. The proposed framework will address higher education, TVET, and skills sectors. Therefore, the proposal needs to be cognisant of TVET and Labour or Skills laws.

Framework Purpose

It is proposed that the main purpose of the NQF is to facilitate lifelong learning and linkages.

Framework Architecture

The proposed framework is based on eight levels, with the level descriptors based on the following domains: knowledge, skills, application, and social skills. As of yet, there are no qualification type descriptors developed.

The most recent draft of the NQF proposed the following structure:

Level 1-3	Certificate for vocational training (C1, C2, C3)
Level 4	TVET Diploma: C3+1 year and vocational education diploma 9+3
Level 5	Associate degree / Associate Diploma / High TVET-Diploma / Skills Level IV*
Level 6	Bachelor Degree/craft master
Level 7	Master Degree
Level 8	Doctoral Degree

However, for the Skills Sector there is no clear placement of short courses and Skills Level IV, or craft master. It is still to be discussed whether the Skills Sector and the TVET Sector should be the same in terms of qualifications. TVET and Skills sectors will have certificates from 1 – 4, and there will be a diploma at level 5. Professional qualifications are placed at level 6.

Framework Governance

There is no clear proposal in place as to who will take governance of the NQF. The Education Law of 2015 does not mention who will be responsible. There are essentially two ministries with remit of the three main sectors: labour, education (including schools), and training. It is proposed that the legislative basis will be a Presidential or Prime Ministerial decree. It is not clear yet if governance of the NQF will be placed within a quality assurance agency.

Framework Processes

It is proposed that the NQF will be based on learning outcomes. The framework will be credit based and is intended to have a credit transfer system. There is currently a credit point system in Higher Education but not as yet for TVET or Skills sectors. It is proposed that the finalised NQF include policy statements on RPL and credit. At this stage, there are no naming rules or conventions, certification arrangements, or qualification type descriptors outlined.

Framework Links

There are no linkages at this stage as there is no NQF.

Implementation

The aim is to complete the drafting and agreement of the NQF by the end of 2015.

References

Lao PDR Country Overview draft 2014, based on an overview provided by Indonesia for the East Asia Summit Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework project managed by Australia Commonwealth Government 2012; and updated as part of a World Bank Study on Standards and Qualifications Framework in ASEAN+ Countries, 2014 – 2015.

5. Malaysia

Framework Overview

The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) was established under the Malaysian Qualifications Authority Act 2007. MQF covers all sectors, such as skills, technical/vocational, and academic sectors. MQF is an umbrella framework that covers all levels, sectors and credits.

Note that there is a Malaysian Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (MOSQF) under the remit of the Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Human Resources.

Framework Purpose

The main purposes of the MQF are noted in the Malaysian Qualifications Authority Act 2007, including:

- To secure standards of qualifications and reinforce policies of quality assurance;
- To promote accuracy or consistency of nomenclature of qualifications;
- To provide mechanisms for the progression or inter-relation between qualifications;
- To encourage collaboration between public and private sector higher education providers and skills training providers;
- To encourage parity of esteem among academic, professional, technical, vocational, and skills qualifications;
- To establish a credit system to facilitate credit accumulation and transfer, which is acceptable within and outside Malaysia;
- To provide clear and accessible public information on programmes or qualifications in higher education;
- To promote, where applicable, the presentation of qualifications in forms that facilitate their evaluation by any key stakeholders; and
- To articulate links with qualifications from outside Malaysia.

Framework Architecture

The MQF is defined in supplementary documentation to the Act. The MQF is an eight level framework, and qualifications are placed on these levels (refer to Appendix 1). The levels are not described according to taxonomies; instead the qualification types are described according to the following capabilities:

- Depth, complexity, and comprehension of knowledge;
- Application of knowledge and skills;
- Degree of autonomy and creativity in decision making;
- Communication skills; and
- Breadth and sophistication of practices.

Each level of qualifications has its own learning outcomes based on the eight learning outcomes domains in MQF. The MQF focuses on eight domains of learning outcomes:

- Knowledge;
- Practical skills;
- Social skills and responsibilities;
- Values, attitudes, and professionalism;
- Communication, leadership, and team skills;

- Problem solving and scientific skills;
- Information management and lifelong learning skills; and
- Managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

The MQF is a credit-based framework; 40 hours of notional student learning time is valued as one credit. The MQF makes reference to assisting pathways and enabling recognition of prior learning and credit transfer processes.

Qualifications developed under the MQF are unitised/modularised. Information pertaining to programme standards for field of study areas are included on the MQA website. Prior to the development of the MQF, there were norms for qualifications (established by policy and practices in the higher education and TVET sector). Prior to MQF existence, the Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (first formal QA body) had the function to streamline qualifications in the private sector in order to accredit the qualifications; the shadow of a bare framework was made by the National Higher Education Council. In 2002, work on the NQF aimed to streamline and to clarify qualifications values, characteristics, and systems. The more important objective of MQF was to transform higher education and address the quality of education and graduates to address national needs. The MQF does reflect the then existing characteristics (certificates, diplomas, bachelors, masters, and doctoral) of the public institutions because of its centralised nature. It also recognised the certification of skills to bring them under the MQF.

Framework Governance

The Malaysian Qualifications Authority Act 2007 gives the Malaysian Qualifications Authority the responsibility to implement and update the framework.

The MQA is responsible for the accreditation of TVET and higher education qualifications. The Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resource (DSD, MOHR) is responsible for the accreditation of skills qualifications.

The MQA is not responsible for registration of higher education or technical, vocational, and skills providers.

Framework Processes

Various quality documents have been developed to support and/or provide additional rules and regulations that need to be complied with by providers. The documents are:

1. Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA);
2. Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA);
3. Programme Standards (PS);
4. Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP) (various);
5. National Occupational Skill Standard (NOSS); and
6. Code of Practice for Skills Programme Accreditation.

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning are included in the MQF. Guidelines for accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) are provided as a supplementary document. This document limits the percentage of students that can be assessed for APEL. There are policies on access to higher education through APEL (by age, work experience, levels, portfolio, assessment, and interviews). There is no limit on the number of applications, but there is a limit of a 5% intake of APEL certified candidates for traditional universities per year (5% of total enrolment per annum).

The Malaysia Qualifications Statement is the agreed ‘diploma supplement’ to support certification processes. There are guidelines for the Statements provided by the MQA.

Programme standards for fields of study outline the programme design requirements in terms of credit value and the specific outcomes in line with the capabilities, domains, resources, and teacher requirements.

The MQF (nomenclature includes qualifier, field-major, etc.) and Programme Standards may provide guidelines for the nomenclatures requirement of awards. The MQA is developing specific guidelines for awards in the near future, as the MQF is currently under review.

The complexity and volume of learning of a qualification is defined by level descriptors and the minimum total credit for each qualification level. It is differentiated by the discipline requirements as found in the Programme Standards. The process for evaluating is based on the quality assurance standards for programme design and delivery in COPPA, which attempts to ensure that the appropriate complexity and quantity is provided.

MQF does not provide information on certification arrangements but is likely to include them in the current review of the MQF.

Framework Links

The MQF is not linked to any qualification framework since it is the only qualification framework in Malaysia; although recently, alignment of the framework and qualifications has been undertaken with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

MQF has been used as a reference point in assessing and supporting recognition of qualifications.

References

Malaysia Country Overview draft 2014, based on an overview provided by Cambodia for the East Asia Summit Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework project managed by Australia Commonwealth Government 2012; and updated as part of a World Bank Study on Standards and Qualifications Framework in ASEAN+ Countries, 2014 – 2015.

Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007, Law of Malaysia

MALAYASIA, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, accessed June 2015 http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UIL_Global_Inventory_of_NQFs_Malaysia.pdf

Malaysian Qualifications Framework: Point of reference and joint understanding of higher education qualifications in Malaysia, MQA, 200?

Table 7 - MQF qualifications and levels

MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK: QUALIFICATIONS AND LEVELS

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">MQF Levels</th><th colspan="3">Sectors</th><th rowspan="2">Lifelong Learning</th></tr>
<tr><th>Skills</th><th>Vocational and Technical</th><th>Higher Education</th></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="4"></td><td>Doctoral Degree</td><td rowspan="10">Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">7</td><td>Masters Degree</td></tr>
<tr><td>Posigraduate Certificate & Diploma</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">6</td><td>Bachelors Degree</td></tr>
<tr><td>Graduate Certificate & Diploma</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Advanced Diploma</td><td>Advanced Diploma</td><td>Advanced Diploma</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Diploma</td><td>Diploma</td><td>Diploma</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Skills Certificate 3</td><td rowspan="3">Vocational and Technical Certificate</td><td>Certificate</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Skills Certificate 2</td><td rowspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Skills Certificate 1</td></tr>
</table>

6. Myanmar

Framework Overview

Relevant legislation includes the National Education Law, 30 September 2014, and the Employment and Skills Development Law, 30 August 2013.

Myanmar started the development of an NQF in September 2013 by forming a working group comprised of twelve ministries. An initial draft was developed in July 2014, and a final first draft was completed in August 2014, which was circulated to over 300 stakeholders. The second draft was finalised in July 2015. It is expected that the final draft will be completed by the end of 2015.

The planned NQF will cover all sectors, from Basic Education through to TVET and Higher Education.

Framework Purpose

The objectives of the proposed NQF (second draft) are to:

- Reinforce policies on quality assurance and set the standards and learning outcomes of qualifications;
- Make qualifications transparent and comparable within and across national borders to be recognised by the international community;
- Support mobility of learners and employers by creating a credit transfer system and competency standards;
- Make qualifications quality assured by being more responsive to individual and employer needs, more relevant to industry and more trusted by the community;
- Support flexible education by providing a choice of educational pathways and recognising prior learning;
- Link certificates and diplomas with undergraduate and postgraduate degree level education;
- Encourage people to view academic and vocational qualifications as equally valid;
- Improve opportunities for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning; and
- Raise the quality (capacity and capability) of human resources in the country.

Framework Architecture

Currently it is proposed that the framework has eight levels based on learning outcomes. All qualification types are placed on the levels, and will address basic education, TVET and higher education. In basic education, the levels also currently include high school, middle school and primary school. There is no reference to certificates for these three school categories, whereas the rest of the framework refers to specific qualification types.

Table 8 - Myanmar's most current proposed version of the framework

Sectors				Lifelong Learning
Level	Basic Education	TVET	Higher Education	
8			Post-Doctoral Studies/ Doctoral Degrees	Recognition of Prior Learning (Assessment and validation) Non formal/informal
7			Post-Master Studies/ Master Degrees	
6		Degree	Post Graduate Diplomas, Bachelor Degrees	
5		Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diplomas	
4		Diploma/*V&T C/SC4		
3	High School	V&T C/SC3		
2	Middle School	V&T C/SC2		
1	Primary School	V&T C/SC1		

*Vocational and Technical Certificates/Skills Certificates

The draft level descriptors are based on three domains: knowledge and skills, application and competency, and responsibility. It is unclear if the qualification types will have descriptors. It is proposed that the framework include a credit-based system, but it is not clear at this stage how the volume measure will be determined and implemented.

Framework Governance

Currently, a working group is developing the NQF. It is anticipated that the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC) will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the NQF.

Framework Processes

The framework is described in eight level descriptors, based on learning outcomes. Currently, there are no nationally applied quality assurance processes in place or across the eighteen line ministries and education and training ministries in relation to:

- qualification construction;
- naming conventions;
- credit transfer and recognition of prior learning;
- volume or guidelines as to how to determine volume;
- recognition tools, such a diploma supplements; and
- certification arrangements.

It is assumed that much of this responsibility will be the role of the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee.

Framework Links

As the NQF is not established, it is not linked to any other frameworks.

Implementation

The final draft is to be finalised by the end of 2015. In addition, there have been two professional development sessions on referencing and another proposed in July 2015. The task force is also going to Malaysia in the NQF Phase III (AQRF funded project). The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee is to be established following the new Education Law.

References

Developing Myanmar National Qualifications Framework, PPT by Prof Tin Tun, Taugoo University, Myanmar.

7. Philippines

Framework Overview

Executive Order (EO 83 s 2012) established the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF)[22] as a national policy that aims to define educational qualifications and set the standards for qualification outcomes within the Philippine education system. The Executive Order is supported by implementation rules and regulations.

The PQF is stipulated in the legislation on the ladderisation of technical /vocational, and higher education in relevant disciplines that are amenable to such interface. Legislation to further institutionalise the framework is in progress.

Framework Purpose

The Executive Order (EO 83 s 2012, pp. 1 & 2) outlines the objectives of the PQF as being:

1. To adopt national standards and levels for outcomes of education;
2. To support the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies, which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market; and
3. To align the PQF with international qualifications frameworks to support the national and international mobility of workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications.

Framework Architecture

The Executive Order No. 83, s 2012 indicates that the PQF is an eight level framework defined in terms of: knowledge, skills and values, application, and degree of independence.

The Executive Order No. 83, s 2012 also indicates that the DepEd, TESDA, and CHED shall make detailed descriptors for each qualification level based on learning standards in basic education, competency standards of training regulations, and the policies and standards of higher education academic programmes. They shall jointly implement national pilot programmes to determine its relevance and applicability in all levels of education.

The TVET qualifications are learning outcomes based and unitised/modularised. Higher education qualifications are generally unitised. Modularised qualifications are usually translated into units.

As noted above, the Technical Committees and Panels of the Commission on Higher Education, following CMO 46 Series of 2012, are currently overseeing the process of making the higher education qualifications for different disciplinal and inter-/multi-disciplinal programmes at Levels 6 to 8 of the PQF learner outcomes based. The learning competency-based Policies, Standards and Guidelines for all the disciplines covered by the Technical Committees and Panels were expected to have been completed by mid-2015.

There are general descriptions of specific qualifications types (e.g. Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees). However, qualification type descriptors along the domains of the existing PQF are more explicit for the undergraduate programmes of industry-oriented disciplines, which have shifted to the learner outcomes-based system earlier than most (e.g. engineering, Information technology, maritime education).

There are volume measures for formal degree courses. The minimum number of units for various degrees is stipulated in the CHED Policies, Standards and Guidelines for 96 programmes, which are

[22] To ensure the proper implementation of the PQF, the National Coordinating Council of the PQF is currently working on the legislation of the PQF in the 16th Congress.

mostly undergraduate. At the undergraduate level, the units are generally reflective of the hours for lectures and practicum but underestimate the number of hours for laboratory courses, such as one unit equals two to three hours of laboratory.

For example, the undergraduate medical course has a duration of four years, divided into pre-clinical or basic sciences lasting three years, and a clinical year lasting one year. The volume measure uses both number of hours and number of corresponding units.

1. Pre-clinical component: 240 credit units based on 4320 hours divided by 18 hours per unit, from 1st year to 3rd year);
2. Clinical component: 2080 hours but this does not include duty hours in the hospital, with variation in the schedule every 2–4 days (4th year or clinical clerkship).

For postgraduate qualifications in medicine (specialisation), which in the Philippines is a post-baccalaureate programme, the volume measure is not in terms of units or hours but the number of rotations for the resident trainees. A rotation may take around two to four months in different settings (emergency room, outpatient department, hospital wards, etc.) and subspecialties (thoracocardiovasular surgery, neurosurgery, paediatric surgery, etc.) and is spread across different year levels. The number of years varies by specialisation; for example, paediatrics would require different rotations for three years while general surgery requires five years.

Until 2012, the higher education qualifications were not based on learner outcomes. However, CHED Memorandum Order 46 Series of 2012 has stipulated a shift to learner outcomes and learning competency-based education after two years of consultations and intense debates. The CMO prompted the ongoing revision of the Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) of ninety-six undergraduate programmes and five graduate programmes. The revision of other graduate qualifications will follow the completion of the revised PSGs.

Please note that the ongoing revisions preceded awareness of the Philippine Qualification Framework on the part of the Technical panels/Technical Committees: the expert group consisting of representatives of academia, industry, and professional regulatory bodies mandated by law to recommend the PSGs to the CHEC Commission. Hence, the ongoing revisions are being recast as substantiation of Levels 6 to 8 of the PQF.

Framework Governance

The Executive Order No. 83, 2 2012, establishes the PQF National Coordinating Committee (PQF-NCC). The PQF National Coordinating Committee is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd) with members representing Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Professional Regulations Commission (PRC). The role of the Committee is to develop the Implementing Rules and Regulations and provide regular feedback on the progress and accomplishments to the Office of the President with respect to the implementation of this EO.

The PQF-NCC is not responsible for the quality assurance of the various subsectors of tertiary education; however, its members include the trifocal regulatory agencies for quality assuring education. The Implementing Rules and Regulations to Executive Order No 8, s 2012, notes that the role of the Committee is to:

1. Create technical working groups in support of the detailing and implementation of the PQF;
2. Harmonise the levels of qualifications with all levels of education;
3. Align education standards and learning outcomes to the level descriptors contained herein;
4. Develop and recognise pathways and equivalencies;
5. Discuss and agree on the elements of the PQF, including but not limited to their principles, key features, definitions or terminologies, structure, and governance arrangements;
6. Review and update the PQF;

7. Provide information and guidelines in the implementation of the PQF;
8. Establish a quality assurance mechanism;
9. Maintain the national registry of qualified manpower;
10. Ensure the international alignment of the PQF with the qualification frameworks of other countries;
11. Represent the country in international fora or negotiations on qualification agreements and arrangements;
12. Provide regular feedback on the progress and accomplishments to the Office of the President with respect to the implementation of the Order; and
13. Perform such other functions that may be related to the implementation of the PQF.

The NQF is not legislated and is based on Executive Order No. 83. However, the legislation is being proposed by the PQF-NCC.

Framework Processes

The implementation of the PQF is the remit of the three agencies. For TVET, naming conventions are the role of the agency; TESDA and the competencies and qualifications are developed centrally. There is a system of RPL between qualifications, and training is not mandatory. As a matter of policy, individuals who are believed to possess the competencies required by a particular qualification may submit themselves for competency assessment without formal training. If a person passes the competency assessment, that person is issued a National Certificate and/or Certificate of Competency. There is a process for evaluating the complexity and quantity of a qualification (such as those indicated in the level descriptors in knowledge, skills, and independence identified in the PQF and the nominal duration) for training to acquire the competencies of qualifications. Finally, TESDA Board promulgates the Training Regulations (TRs), which define the minimum requirements and information on qualifications. The TRs define the competency standards, training standards, trainers' qualifications, facilities, tools, and equipment. The programme on competency assessment and certification recognises qualification as evidenced in the issuance of the national certificate and/or certificate of competency. Qualifications are titled based on functional characteristics of the work being done.

For higher education, qualifications are generally titled along traditional disciplines. Higher education institutions usually initiate the naming of non-traditional fields that are usually multidisciplinary in character. Autonomous institutions (those evaluated to meet high standards of quality and have program centres of excellence) enjoy greater freedom to name the qualifications of new multidisciplinary fields or sub disciplines, being at the forefront of those disciplines. Non-autonomous institutions may initiate the naming of fields but are subject to CHED approval.

CHED has an Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) for a limited number of academic programmes (fifty-four) that recognise prior learning and experience. However, while there are policies, standards and guidelines governing credit transfer in ETEEAP, the system is in need of much improvement. Moreover, the ETEEAP is still a limited programme. There are processes for evaluating the complexity and quantity of a qualification, but it is currently implemented on a case by case basis from one higher education institution to another.

In general, equivalency and pathways represent a gap in the PQF. There is a current project to address this gap. PQF does not yet include information or guidelines related to credit transfer and/or recognition of prior learning at the higher education level. CHED recognises the urgency of filling the need for such guidelines.

In terms of evaluating the complexity and quantity (volume) of a qualification, the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program is still implemented on a case-to-case basis, and the criteria for evaluating complexity and quantity needs articulation and further

operationalisation. In higher education, the recognition tools have yet to be systematically developed. The plan to put up a National Information Centre for higher education under the aegis of UNESCO will speed up the development of such tools.

The legislation of the ladderised education will certainly facilitate and hasten the development of flexible pathways. The framework implies certification arrangements for formal courses that are regulated. For such courses, the regulatory bodies are represented in the Technical Committees and Technical Panels. Certification usually entails passing licensure examinations.

Framework Links

The PQF is being cross-referenced with other qualifications framework like the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF), but it is informal at this stage. The PQF is being cross-referenced through the various ASEAN MRAs.

Given the early progress of the PQF, this activity is relatively small as a process for assessing and recognising qualifications from other economies.

For TVET and skilled workers, TESDA is the body responsible for assessing and recognising qualifications from other economies. TESDA has established bilateral labour agreements with the various economies.

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8. Singapore

Framework Overview

Singapore does not have a National Qualifications Framework that covers the entire pre-employment training (PET) and Continuing Education and Training (CET). The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system is a national credential system that underpins the CET infrastructure; it is based on six qualification levels.

Framework Purpose

The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications is a national credential system. It trains, develops, assesses, and recognises individuals for the key competencies that companies look for in potential employees. The WSQ is based on national skills standards developed by WDA in collaboration with various industries comprising industry sectoral frameworks, which serve to:

- Professionalise the industry, particularly where recognition of CET qualifications are lacking; and
- Improve labour mobility, allowing companies in growing industries to easily recruit workers with the necessary skills whilst improving opportunities for workers to enter these industries.

Framework Architecture

The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications system has six qualifications levels with seven certifications, such as Certificate, Higher Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Diploma, Specialist Diploma, Graduate Certificate, and Graduate Diploma. The Singapore Workforce Development Agency is the main awarding body of WSQ credentials and qualifications. Qualifications under the WSQ credentials include the following:

1. **Statement of Attainment (SOA):** An SOA is awarded to workers who have successfully fulfilled the assessment requirement of an accredited assessment that is aligned to one WSQ competency standard. Each SOA has a corresponding WSQ credit value. One WSQ credit value is equivalent to ten recommended training and assessment hours (1 credit value = 10 hrs). The credit value is predetermined at the point of development.
2. **WSQ Qualifications:** WSQ Qualifications are awarded to workers who have successfully acquired all required SOAs as stipulated by the relevant qualification rules. There are six levels of WSQ qualifications and seven certifications. Each WSQ qualification level indicates the corresponding complexity of knowledge, depth of skills, and accountability of the occupation's demand. Each industry framework will have its own set of qualifications, the levels of qualification differing from industry to industry. All WSQ qualifications are guided by a set of qualification design rules and minimum credit values.

Table 9 - The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications

WSQ Qualification Levels	Certifications	Minimum Credit Value
6	Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate	15 15
5	Specialist Diploma	15
4	Diploma	20
3	Advanced Certificate	15
2	Higher Certificate	10
1	Certificate	10

The level descriptors are described as learning outcomes, according to the following:

- Level of knowledge and skills involved;
- Level of application of the knowledge and skills;
- Level of accountability, independence, self organisation or organisation of others that is required to solve problems or complete tasks; and
- Cognisant of the occupational levels and range and depth of the knowledge and skills required of the jobs which the qualifications relates to.

Key Features of WSQ System include:

- Competency-based programmes;
- Based on adult learning principles;
- Access based on work related knowledge and skills;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (work experience, credentials);
- Assessment is performance based;
- Flexible training, catering to both work based and off site;
- Learning that can be single module to fill competency gaps or built up to full qualifications;
- Industry agreed standards; and
- International Benchmarks.

Framework Governance

The management of the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system is the remit of the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) legislated by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency Act. WDA is the main awarding body of WSQ qualifications and credentials.

Framework Processes

As a national credentialing system, WSQ caters to workers who need skills upgrades or skills conversion. There are two pathways for workers to obtain WSQ qualifications:

- Train and assess pathway, which includes classroom delivery, e-learning, on the job training, facilitated learning, workplace assessment; and
- Assessment only pathway, which includes challenge testing and recognition of prior learning.

The complexity of qualifications is defined in the WSQ Qualification Level whilst the volume of learning is based on the established credit value. All WSQ Approved Training Organisations (ATOs) and WSQ Courses are required to undergo accreditation, which is managed by the WSQ Quality Assurance regime overseen by WDA.

Information about the WSQ qualification programmes are published publicly, on the WDA website http://www.wda.gov.sg/content/wdawebsite/L204-CourseDirectory.html.

Framework Links

At the systemic level, the WSQ system is not linked to other qualification frameworks. Articulation occurs at the programme to programme level, typically driven by the ATOs. The WSQ is not used as a means of assessing and recognising qualifications from other economies.

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9. Thailand

Framework Overview

The Cabinet of Thailand approved the NQF in January 2013 and its implementation in November 2014. The NQF covers all education sectors: secondary education, TVET, higher education, skills standards qualifications, and professional qualifications (TPQI qualifications), and non-formal learning.

Framework Purpose

The NQF aims to:

- Promote continuous improvement and lifelong learning by linking education qualifications into the same framework;
- Develop linkages between qualifications and levels of competency required by the labour market; and
- Improve education quality.

The main purposes of the NQF include:

- Making educational qualifications more relevant to industry needs, thus raising the quality of manpower in the manufacturing and services sectors;
- Raising the standard of Thai qualifications to the international level;
- Making qualifications transparent and comparable across national borders;
- Enhancing the competitiveness of both domestic and regional labour markets (UNESCO 2015, p.1).

Refer to Table 10.

Framework Architecture

The Thailand National Qualifications Framework has nine levels, with each level described by a level descriptor based on learning outcomes. Domains include knowledge, skills, and desirable characteristics (attributes and application).

In general, it is proposed that all qualifications will be based on learning outcomes and will be modularised. There will be a volume measure based on unit and qualification levels. There will be qualification type descriptors.

Framework Governance

The Office Education Council is responsible for the NQF implementation plan, monitoring, and evaluation.

Framework Processes

The NQF is still in the design phase and framework processes are still being developed, such as determining the complexity of volume of learning, certification processes, flexible pathways, and recognition of prior learning.

Framework Links

The OEC plans to link the NQF with other ASEAN countries. This is especially a priority in the TVET sector.

Implementation

The implementation plan includes the majority of activity in 2015, focusing on analysing qualifications, establishing linkages, raising public awareness, developing an operational plan, with 2016 involved with implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

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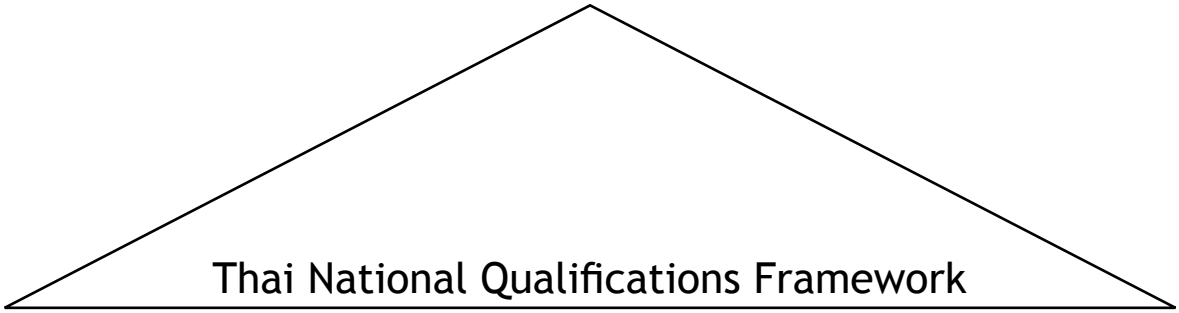
THAILAND, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, accessed June 2015, http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UIL_Global_Inventory_of_NQFs_Thailand.pdf

Table 10 - The Thailand National Qualifications Framework



Education Qualifications			NQF Level	Competency /Skill Standard		
Basic	TVET	Higher		TPQI	DSD	Ind./Inter
		Doctoral	9			
		M.+ Cert.	8			
		Master	7	7		
		B.+ Cert	6	6		
	Bachelor	Bachelor	5	5		
	Diploma	Associate	4	4	4	
	Certificate		3	3	3	
Upper Sec.			2	2	2	
Lower Sec.			1	1	1	

10. Vietnam

Framework Overview

The education system in Vietnam is mandated by the educational law 2005 (revised in 2009) and vocational training law (2007). The TVET system has recently changed because of a new TVET law endorsed by the parliament in November 2014 (validated 01 July 2015). Therefore, there will be no separate vocational training under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), or a subsystem under the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); however, there will be one college type, one secondary school type and one centre for TVET oversight. It has not yet been mandated who will take responsibility for TVET. The Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for monitoring higher education institutes (such as state, private, and academic colleges).

Currently, the Vietnamese TVET system has a five level National Occupational Skills Standards Framework (NOSS). Vietnam is now preparing the final draft for an NQF and a final proposal. The single framework will cover the higher education sector and the vocational training sector.

Framework Purpose

The main purposes of the proposed NQF are the promotion of lifelong learning and recognition.

Framework Architecture

The structure of the framework includes eight levels, based on the domains of knowledge, skills, autonomy, and responsibility. The framework will address TVET and higher education and will include three levels of certificates, diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor, masters, and doctorate qualification levels. It is anticipated that the framework will include a credit-based system of one credit point equalling 30 hours of notional learning. The framework is based on learning outcomes. Unitisation of qualifications is evident in both sectors, with units of competency utilised in TVET.

Framework Governance

A proposal is being prepared for the Prime Minister to recommend establishing an authority for monitoring, governance, and quality assurance of provision.

Framework Processes

There are limited processes attached to the framework at this early stage. Although RPL and ensuring pathways between qualifications and sectors will be a key component, certification arrangements are not yet clear.

Framework Links

There is no NQF currently in place.

Implementation

Currently, there is no plan documented for NQF implementation.

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X. Appendix 3: Acknowledgements

The country summaries are derived from extended country overviews, which have been part of a series of projects, including a survey developed and provided to EAS countries through the Australian Government East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework, which began in 2012.

The country overviews could not have been finalised without significant input from country representatives. The following people provided significant input for their respective country summaries in this particular report.

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