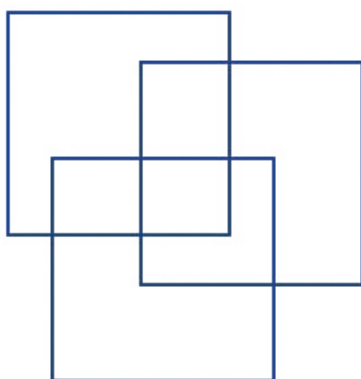


Assessment of the readiness of ASEAN Member States for implementation of the commitment to the free flow of skilled labour within the ASEAN Economic Community from 2015



ILO Tripartite Action for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ASEAN TRIANGLE Project)

ILO Decent Work Technical Team, Bangkok

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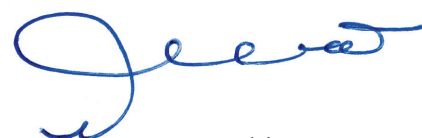
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Foreword

The recognition of the skills of migrant workers within ASEAN will be an important feature of the ASEAN Economic Community, with potentially significant benefits economically and socially for both sending and receiving ASEAN Member States (AMS). It is envisaged that over time the entire region will become more competitive globally, and increasingly attractive to international investors on the hunt for countries with a skilled workforce in which to do business. Achieving systematic skills and qualifications recognition by other member states will require a sustained effort on the part of AMS. Members will need to be confident that, throughout ASEAN, skill standards are internationally accepted and up to date; that teaching and learning materials are of high quality; and that assessment and certification are well established. There is much to do in a very short time as 2015 approaches. For most, it is clear that the full achievement of skills recognition will take several years, but that solid progress can be made in priority sectors by 2015.

This study reflects an analysis of progress in all 10 AMS as of March—June 2013. Inevitably further progress will have been made since that date, so the document should be read in that context. The study was carried out through document analysis and through brief visits to key agencies and stakeholders in all 10 member states. As far as possible, and to promote accuracy, the findings were validated with concerned institutions in the AMS, the draft text was edited and subsequently corrected during every visit to principal stakeholders.

It is hoped that this study of the readiness of AMS to implement the commitment to the free flow of skilled labour in the selected professions within the ASEAN Economic Community from 2015 and beyond will be a useful resource as AMS work towards the important goal of regional integration.



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Abbreviations

AANZFTA	ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AMCHAM	American Chamber of Commerce
AMS	ASEAN Member States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APSDEP	Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme
AQRF	ASEAN Regional Qualifications Reference Framework
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BDNAC	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council
BDQF	Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework
BNSP	Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan [National Education Standards Board, Indonesia]
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas [Central Bank of the Philippines]
CAC	Competency Assessment and Certification
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBT	Competency Based Training
CET	Continuing Education and Training [Singapore]
CHED	Commission on Higher Education [Philippines]
CLMV[/T]	Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Viet Nam [and Thailand]
CPE	Council of Private Education [Singapore]
CQF	Cambodia Qualifications Framework
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
DepEd	Department of Education [Philippines]
DGTVET	Directorate General of Technical/Vocational Education and Training

DSD	Department of Skills Development [Malaysia]
DSD	Department of Skills Development [Thailand]
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDVT	General Department of Vocational Training [Viet Nam]
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [Germany's international development agency]
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-Region
HRD	Human resource development
IDR	Indonesian rupiah [currency]
ILO	International Labour Organization
IQF	Indonesian Qualifications Framework
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification Occupations
ISTC	Industry Skills and Training Councils [Singapore]
ITE	Institute of Technical Education [Singapore]
LSPs	Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi [professional certification institutes, Indonesia]
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training [Cambodia]
MOLES	Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security [Myanmar]
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs [Viet Nam]
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
MRA	Mutual recognition arrangements
MRA-TP	Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals
NITEC	National Institute for Technical Education Certificate [Singapore]

NOSS	National Occupational Skills Standards
NQF	National qualifications framework
NSSA	National Skills Standards Authority [Myanmar]
NTB	National Training Board [Cambodia]
PQF	Philippines Qualifications Framework
PRC	Professional Regulations Commission [Philippines]
PTQF	Philippines TVET Qualifications Framework
PUK	Centre of Competency Test [Indonesia]
RMCS	Regional Model Competency Standards
RQF	Regional qualifications framework
RQUAT	Regional Quality Assessment Team [Philippines]
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPN21	National Education System for the 21 st Century [Brunei]
STVET	Strengthening Technical and Vocational Training [ADB Project]
TCCA	Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority [Philippines]
TPQI	Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute
TQF	Transnational Qualifications Framework
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UMAP	University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific
UMFCCI	Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WDA	Workforce Development Agency [Singapore]
WSQ	Workforce Skills Qualifications [Singapore]

1. Background

During the 12th Summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in January 2007, the leaders affirmed their strong commitment to accelerate the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015, and signed the Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015. The ASEAN Leaders, therefore, agreed to hasten the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and a freer flow of capital.

Under the AEC, ASEAN will be established as a single market and production base, making ASEAN more dynamic and competitive; introducing new mechanisms and measures to strengthen the implementation of its existing economic initiatives; accelerating regional integration in the priority sectors; facilitating the movement of business persons, skilled labour and talent; and strengthening the institutional mechanisms of ASEAN. As a first step towards realizing the AEC, ASEAN has been implementing the recommendations of the High Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration contained in the Bali Concord II.

The ASEAN Community as whole will remain outward looking, and the AEC foresees: (a) a single market and production base; (b) a highly competitive economic region; (c) a region of equitable economic development; and (d) a region fully integrated into the global economy. These characteristics are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and will be incorporated into one blueprint to ensure consistency and coherence as well as to ensure proper implementation and proper coordination among relevant stakeholders.

As part of this process, the AEC will address the development divide and accelerate the integration of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV) through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and other regional initiatives. Some proposed areas of cooperation are also to be incorporated, such as human resources development and capacity building; recognition of professional qualifications; closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies; trade financing measures; enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity; development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN; integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing; and enhancing private sector involvement for the building of the AEC.

In terms of the free flow of skilled labour, in allowing a managed mobility or facilitated entry for the movement of natural persons engaged in trade in goods, services, and investments (according to the prevailing regulations of the receiving country), the ASEAN Member States will be working to:

1. facilitate the issuance of visas and employment passes for ASEAN professionals and skilled labour who are engaged in cross-border trade and investment related activities;
2. facilitate the free flow of services (by 2015) by working towards harmonization and standardization, with a view to facilitate their movement within the region;
3. enhance cooperation among ASEAN University Network members to increase mobility for both students and staff within the region;
4. develop core competencies and qualifications for job/occupational and trainers skills required in the priority services sectors (by 2009); and in other services sectors (from 2010-15); and

5. strengthen the research capabilities of each ASEAN member country in terms of promoting skills, job placements, and developing labour market information networks among ASEAN Member States.

To support this further, in 2010, the ASEAN Leaders declared a commitment to:

“Develop national skills frameworks in ASEAN member States through sharing of experiences and best practices as an important strategy to strengthen HRD [human resource development] and management and to enable member States to raise their respective levels of skills standards, as an incremental approach towards an ASEAN skills recognition framework” (ASEAN, 2010, para. 11).

Since 2015 is fast approaching, it is important to take stock of developments on the AEC goal of the free flow of skilled labour in the ASEAN Member States and assess the present state and directions to which such goals can be achieved. Such assessment of development should lead to determining the possible next steps in ASEAN.

In the light of these concerns, a scoping and assessment study with recommendations sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is to be carried out. The study will specifically cover the following:

1. review the status of activities on the AEC in ASEAN countries in relation to the goal of the free flow of skilled labour with respect to the mutual recognition agreements and core competencies developed for job/occupations in priority sectors;
2. overall country programmes and activities with respect to promoting the mutual recognition of the skills of departing and returning migrant workers;
3. identify the issues and challenges in implementing AEC goals on recognizing the skills of migrant workers;
4. analyse the current skills standards and national testing and certification system that is in place for implementing the mutual recognition for skilled labour and promoting worker mobility throughout ASEAN; and
5. meet with concerned Government agencies or Ministries in all countries responsible for skills recognition and immigration and migrant labour issues.

2. Introduction

In its ASEAN Business Outlook Survey 2012-13, the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) in Singapore, in association with AMCHAM Thailand and other ASEAN nations, summarized its findings with the following conclusions:

- The outlook on investment opportunities in ASEAN is good across the region, with 92 per cent of respondents indicating a positive outlook and 70 per cent of respondents planning to expand their business in ASEAN.
- Expansion is expected to continue region-wide. The most popular location for expansion is Viet Nam, followed by Thailand.
- Companies view ASEAN economic integration as very important, yet are sceptical that ASEAN will achieve its ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) goals by 2015.
- Fewer than half of the respondents say they can utilize the provisions of ASEAN's free trade agreements with major trading partners, including China, India, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea; but large majorities indicate that those agreements are important to their future investment plans in the region.
- Corruption continues to be the most significant concern across the region. In addition, housing costs emerged as a new concern this year, most prominently in Singapore (AMCHAM Singapore & US Chamber of Commerce, 2012).

Given the hugely ambitious intentions of the AEC (the free movement of goods, services, investments, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital), it is likely that full integration across all 10 Member States will take several years. Clearly not all members will be ready to recognize the skills and professional qualifications of all migrant workers from 2015. However, by 2015, all countries will have at least begun the journey.

3. International developments in regional skills recognition

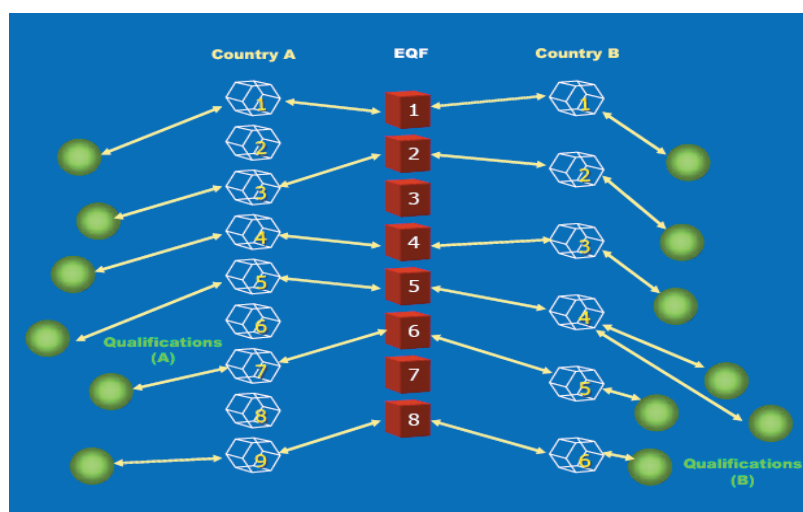
Other regions of the world are using, or are planning to use, a regional qualifications framework to promote the recognition, and consequently the mobility, of skilled labour and professionals.

A regional qualifications framework is being developed for Southern Africa and has been established across the European Union (EU) and the Caribbean, although the approaches and contexts differ markedly. The European development has taken place through major commitments to a single European Union. The Southern African proposal, through the Southern African Development Community, envisages much stronger harmonization of national systems, than is proposed in Europe. The small States of the Pacific are also working together to create a regional qualifications framework; as are the small States of the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly the British Commonwealth). There are plans for a regional qualifications framework among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: the six Arab States of the Persian Gulf.

3.1 European qualifications framework

EU Heads of Government at their meeting in Brussels in March 2005 requested the development of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The Framework (see Figure 3.1) was established to be a common reference point to enable qualifications frameworks and systems at national and sectoral levels to be related to one another. The principal functions of the EQF are to strengthen mutual trust, to reduce barriers to learning, and to promote labour market mobility across borders. The core of the EQF is a structure of learning outcomes (incorporating knowledge, skills, and wider personal and professional competencies) in an eight-level hierarchy. Individual qualifications awarded at a national or sectoral level now contain a clear reference to the EQF, for the benefit of citizens. The EQF has a common set of principles and procedures, notably on quality assurance, validation, guidance, and key competencies.

Figure 3.1 EQF qualification translation mechanism



Source: European Commission, 2007.

The EQF has not been developed as a way of standardizing national structures, which may, for example, require adoption of a smaller or greater number of levels. Ireland prepared a referencing of the Irish Framework to the EQF levels, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Cross-reference of levels within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Ireland and those of the EQF

NQF (Ireland) levels	EQF levels
1&2	1
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5
7&8	6
9	7
10	8

Source: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2009.

Within the EU, Directive 2005/36/EC is the main legal instrument organizing the recognition of professional qualifications. This Directive covers all regulated professions, except professions for which the recognition of professional qualifications is governed by specific legal provisions at the European level (e.g., sailors, statutory auditors, insurance intermediaries, air traffic controllers, some professions in the field of transport, and those linked to activities involving toxic products). The Directive defines the conditions for the recognition of professional qualifications in cases of permanent establishment in another Member State, as well as the conditions for moving to another Member State on a temporary basis. Under the establishment regime, the Directive includes three different recognition systems. Seven professions (doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, vets, architects) benefit from "automatic recognition" on the basis of harmonized minimum training requirements. Other professions (in the craft, trade, and industry sectors) benefit from "automatic recognition" on the basis of certain number of years of professional experience. All other professions fall under the "general system", which foresees a case-by-case assessment of the training contents supporting the qualification of a professional.

The rules of recognition defined in this Directive are contained in a User Guide published at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/guide/users_guide_en.pdf.

An evaluation of this Directive in 2010/2011 and the evaluation report can be consulted online: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/news/20110706-evaluation-directive-200536ec_en.pdf. The evaluation report also includes information on the development of the legislation in this area and provides some statistics on recognition decisions. The EU is currently discussing a modernization of this Directive. The Commission's proposal for modernizing the Directive was presented in December 2011, and discussions are ongoing in the Council and European Parliament.

3.2 Southern African Development Community regional qualifications framework

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a regional grouping of 14 countries in the Southern African region. The aim of the SADC is to promote regional cooperation and integration and to enable its members to develop in the context of a globalizing world. One goal of the community is to achieve equivalence, harmonization and standardization of education and training systems in the region. One benefit of this is considered to be worker and student mobility.

The SADC approach to establishing a regional qualifications framework is very focussed on harmonizing the inputs to the awarding of qualifications. The EU approach, through the EQF outlined above, concentrates on declaring mutual recognition of certificated outcomes. The SADC commitment is to develop a single system of standards and qualifications for skills development across the entire Southern African region. On 23 September 2011, Ministers responsible for education and training in the SADC approved the establishment of the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF).

This SADC RQF will be a reference framework described by level descriptors and will include:

- Quality assurance guidelines that set minimum standards for quality assurance in the region; and
- An SADC Qualifications Portal that will incorporate full and part-time qualifications that are formally recognized in SADC Member States.

The SADC RQF is expected to contribute to the efforts of developing a continental qualifications framework for mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications in higher education.

The establishment of the SADC RQF is the culmination of a journey that began in 2001, when SADC Member States called for a regional qualifications framework during a Sectoral Ministers Meeting held in Mauritius. At that time, Ministers and Senior Officials of SADC Member States agreed that a regional qualifications framework offered an important mechanism to enhance mobility, harmonization, and recognition of qualifications across the region. A SADC RQF concept paper was developed in 2005 following consultation with stakeholders. The paper was then revised in 2011. The concept paper outlines the background and rationale and key components of the SADC RQF.

The SADC RQF is a 10-level framework, and it will have broad level descriptors that will make for easy referencing, as most countries in the region use a 10-level framework. The level descriptors that have been agreed upon will be further developed to include quality descriptors and qualification types.

To ensure that these developments take place, SADC Member States have been tasked with translating the 10-level descriptors to their existing qualification systems.

Elements of quality assurance will also be included in the SADC RQF to ensure that there is trust, confidence, and credibility. It will have agreed upon quality assurance guidelines that set minimum standards for quality assurance in the region. Countries will benchmark their own quality assurance systems through a process of peer review.

The Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) will oversee the implementation of the SADC RQF. The TCCA will be expanded to include representatives of the private sector and students. Currently, the TCCA is comprised mainly of representatives from the qualification authorities in SADC Member States.

The objective of the TCCA is to facilitate the development, implementation, and harmonization of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) in the region, including the development of the SADC RQF. To ensure the day-to-day implementation, SADC Ministers recommended that an Implementation Unit comprised of a Programme Officer, an IT Specialist, and a Marketing Officer be established at the SADC Secretariat by 2013.

Meanwhile, the SADC Ministers responsible for Education have mandated the TCCA to study and benchmark the SADC RQF with other regional and transnational qualifications frameworks that have been developed, such as those in the Asia-Pacific region, the Caribbean, Europe, and small states of the Commonwealth.

3.3 Regional qualifications framework for the Caribbean Community

One of the recent developments of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), which makes it imperative that qualifications awarded at institutions in the region are aligned with regional and extra-regional standards, and as such, the development of an RQF for participating States also became important (Ali, 2008). The CSME is a regional economic bloc that was created to encourage free movement of persons, goods, and capital. In 2004, CARICOM initiated the establishment of an RQF as a measure for ensuring that all academic and vocational qualifications awarded within each Member State would allow for persons to have their credentials assessed and be eligible to receive CARICOM Skills Recognition Certificates. This certification would then enable these skilled workers to move comfortably within the region for the purposes of employment. University graduates, sports personnel, artists, and media workers already enjoyed such privileges. However there was no formal means for assessment, and so the qualifications awarded needed to be benchmarked for comparability and equivalence to allow for the formal recognition needed to facilitate worker movement. The RQF started as a five-level classification system documenting all qualification types, general competencies, and academic/vocational/technical education or training entry requirements and outcomes. This was subsequently concerted into a seven-level framework during a technical meeting in May 2007 organized by CARICOM. Table 3.2 below presents a simplified version of the emerging RQF with seven classification levels.

Table 3.2: Detail of classification levels within the CARICOM RQF

Level	Description	Qualifications
Level 7	Learner displays ability to create and interpret new knowledge, and the ability to conceptualize, design, and implement projects for the generation and application of new knowledge. They will have mastered the skills and techniques of research and advanced academic enquiry	Academic Doctorates, e.g., PhD Professional Doctorates, e.g.. DBA; DM; EdD
Level 6	Learner displays a mastery of knowledge, all of which are from current frontiers of discovery and understanding in an academic or professional discipline. They will have conceptual understanding that will enable them to evaluate critically current research and new knowledge. Their conceptual abilities will support decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts, involving professional judgment.	Master's Degrees; Postgraduate Diplomas; Professional qualifications for accounting, legal, and other professions
Level 5	Learner has moved from empirical to conceptual approaches to problem solving. Able to apply knowledge and skills to difficult and complex problems requiring initiative and motivation. There is some mastery of academic knowledge as measured by research and development	Baccalaureate; Bachelor's Degrees; Honours Degrees; Graduate Diploma

Level 4	Learner has developed cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to support decision making. Acquired set of occupational skills to apply to specific occupational area.	Associate Degree; Higher Diploma; Advanced Diploma
Level 3	Learner has developed knowledge and skills of evaluation and interpretation that will support decision making, such as solving problems in the workplace or academic studies	Undergraduate Diploma
Level 2	Learner demonstrates comprehension of underpinning principles of particular occupational or academic area, such as learning how and why things are done in particular ways	Advanced Certificate
Level 1	Learner has acquired basic knowledge and skills for occupational competence at the entry level to a profession or will progress to tertiary education at higher levels	Certificate

Source: Ali, 2008.

3.4 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries

The six Arab states of the Persian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) all share similar socio-economic challenges and visions, providing an ideal context for a regional meta-framework of qualifications. The United Arab Emirates is taking the lead through the establishment of its own framework and is drafting the GCC Meta-Framework.

3.5 The Pacific

The Pacific Forum Island Countries' Ministers of Education are committed to the development of a Pacific Regional Qualifications Register covering basic, primary, secondary, and tertiary education as well as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) benchmarked against appropriate international standards and qualifications. The Register will include formal qualifications that are quality assured through qualifications authorities and Ministries of Education. There will be an agreed format for qualifications (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: The Pacific Regional Qualifications Register

Accredited qualifications	Other domains
10 Doctoral Degree	Professional and Occupational standards
9 Master’s Degree	
8 Bachelor’s Degree (honours)	
7 Bachelor’s Degree	
6 Diploma	Traditional skills
5 Diploma	Indigenous knowledge
4 Certificate	
3 Certificate	
2 Certificate	
1 Certificate	
Basic and primary education regional benchmarks	

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, 2011.

3.6 The Commonwealth of Nations

The Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) being developed by the 32 small states of the Commonwealth of Nations is not intended to replace any of the existing qualifications frameworks in Member States but rather provides a means by which the differing existing frameworks can be compared and related. The TQF is to be a “translation instrument” (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Levels within the Commonwealth of Nations TQF

Level	Qualification
Level 10	Doctoral Degree
Level 9	Master’s Degree
Level 8	Post Graduate Certificate and Diploma; Bachelor’s Degree with honours
Level 7	Bachelor’s Degree; Graduate Certificate and Diploma
Level 6	Advanced/ Higher Diploma; Associate/ Foundation Degree
Level 5	Diploma
Level 4	Advanced Certificate
Level 3	Certificate III
Level 2	Certificate II
Level 1	Certificate I

Source: Commonwealth of Learning, 2010.

4. Key features of a qualifications framework

Qualifications frameworks are commonly established to support a national response to pressures caused by significant workplace and labour market changes. Globalization has resulted in many industries being restructured and in the development of new services and products. In addition, the nature of work has often changed, with a greater demand for flexible, multi-skilled workers who can take responsibility for quality, and who can work in teams in a flat management structure. Demarcations between traditional occupations have been removed, resulting in the need to rebalance the focus of education and training from fixed occupations to broader industries. In addition, there is now an increased desire in many economies to cater for the unemployed, young school leavers, and older workers displaced as a result of structural changes in industry; and to respond to pressures for a more inclusive approach to education and training, giving all people, including women and traditionally disadvantaged groups more equitable access to the workforce.

Qualifications frameworks respond to a wish for education and training to be available life-long not only in formal institutions, but also in the workplace and the community; with valid certification being achievable for the acquisition of all skills and knowledge, no matter how modest. This formal certification should be open to those in the informal economy, many of whom may have skills but no formal qualification, thereby enabling them to be competitive while remaining in the informal economy. Consequently, fully developed frameworks have qualifications:

- with a “whole of industry” focus rather than being based on a single occupation or job with a restricted and static skill-set;
- which are the basis for life-long learning and continuing flexible skills acquisition;
- which integrate the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values; and
- which give workers options as the nature of work changes and the effects of globalization become even more apparent.

At its most simple, a qualifications framework will provide a sensible structure for qualifications, promoting high quality and relevance. A qualifications framework should be seen as just one component, and not the totality, of a wider human resources development strategy. The features of the desired qualifications framework should be determined in that context by stakeholders after considering what is feasible and affordable given the available human and other resources and in line with major national policy ambitions. A single unified national qualifications structure commonly promotes life-long learning and international mutual recognition. The framework can be thought of as a skills recognition system that makes clear the learning outcomes to be achieved and through which all achievements can be recognized. Such a framework can encourage the systematic development by stakeholders of skill standards and qualifications across all levels of the skills value chain. Assessments may take place in institutions, workplaces and community locations, and recognition of prior learning can be a component of the assessment process. A framework should aim to promote a multi-skilled, flexible workforce and have a resolute focus on supporting the national skill development strategy.

The establishment of a qualifications framework, with the strong involvement of industry, professional bodies, and community stakeholders, will provide governments with a strategic platform that they have not had previously for ensuring that all of the TVET strategies are

linked to one another and supporting national development objectives. Export earnings and rewarding employment opportunities, domestically and internationally, can be increased through proactive sector-wide industry planning and development strategies stimulated by the vocational qualifications framework, through which stakeholders can identify the required workforce and professional standards at all levels.

Having qualifications linked together across all levels can create value chains of skills development and industry investment. For example, in the forestry sector, the value chain could promote increasing returns, beginning with initial harvesting and extending to transportation, milling, the development of specialty products such as composites, and furniture manufacturing; and then including business management and marketing. Increasingly high-level skills are needed, and value is added to the harvested timber at each point along the value chain. A qualifications framework has the potential to provide the planning “connectivity” for a forestry sector-wide skills and capability needs analysis that can be linked directly to market opportunities and ultimately to applied research; that establishes the potential to minimize transfer costs between each step; and that promotes education and training at all levels. A similar approach can be applied to traditional areas such as agriculture, as well as to tourism, to the development of new technology-based industries, or perhaps to national initiatives aimed at meeting international labour market opportunities in targeted areas (such as information technology), thereby creating employment and remittance potential for individuals and families.

4.1 ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

An ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) will mean either that all ASEAN countries have established the same qualifications structure, or (and this is more realistic) it means that existing frameworks and training systems at the national level will be able to be related to one another. This will increase transparency, support mutual trust, and consequently, facilitate the transfer and the mutual recognition of the skills and qualifications of workers through the acceptance of broad equivalence or comparability of outcomes of national qualifications. ASEAN countries can still adopt the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, in whole or in part, for their own qualifications arrangements. The regional framework will serve as a translation device or grid among the systems of participating ASEAN countries. It will provide a common reference point for member countries as they attempt to compare the qualifications and skills of migrant workers. In the interests of further promoting mutual trust in national qualifications, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework will also need to provide guidance in such areas as the setting of standards for skills and wider personal and professional competencies, as well as the quality assurance of training, student assessment, and certification. The regional model should make it possible for modules or smaller sets of skills, and not just full qualifications, to be recognized. This will promote the mobility of workers with fair recognition of their competencies. Given the diversity across ASEAN in training structures and organization, it is the learning outcomes and competencies acquired through training programmes, through structured training in the workplace or in the community, or through experiential learning, that should be regarded as important for determining the comparability of skills and qualifications.

There are several important purposes for an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework:

- It will provide a common reference point only, not restraining the diversity of national training and qualifications systems.
- It will strengthen mutual trust and cooperation among ASEAN nations.
- It will inform and support reform in individual countries, providing guidance and promoting good international policy and practice in HRD.
- It will facilitate commonality of qualifications systems among the countries in the region.
- It will accommodate national requirements and not force a standardized system onto all ASEAN countries.
- It will reduce barriers to the mutual recognition of skills and qualifications.
- It will promote labour market mobility with fair recognition of competencies.

5. Functional and practical arrangements

Four ASEAN Member States were visited by the author of this report in March–April 2013, and the remaining six, along with the ASEAN Secretariat, were visited in May–June 2013. In all countries and at the ASEAN Secretariat the author was made very welcome and given full briefings.

5.1 Schedule of country study visits, March-June 2012

7 March:	ASEAN Economic Integration and Labour Migration training programme, Bangkok
8–14 March:	Thailand
15–19 March:	Cambodia
21–25 March:	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
27 March–2 April:	Myanmar
19–25 May:	Indonesia (including ASEAN Secretariat)
27–30 May:	Malaysia
31 May – 4 June:	Singapore
5–9 June:	Brunei Darussalam
10–15 June:	Philippines
17–20 June:	Viet Nam
21 June:	Verbal report to ILO Bangkok

6. Promoting freer movement of skilled labour in the AEC through mutual recognition arrangements and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

A measured approach is being adopted to fully implement the AEC commitment to the free movement of skilled labour. Hopefully, this approach will mitigate any potentially negative social and employment consequences for Member States that might result from a sudden and massive unrestricted increase in the numbers of migrant workers in ASEAN.

Skilled labour mobility is, however, seen to be essential for effective implementation of services liberalization, as well as a goal in itself for deeper economic integration in the AEC.

As ASEAN countries move up the technology ladder, demand for skills will increase. Foreign talent will be needed to augment the domestic pool, as well as to create the competitive synergy for domestic talents. Strategic actions on the free flow of skilled labour outlined in the AEC Blueprint include: facilitating the issuance of visas and employment passes; mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) for major professional services; core concordance of services skills and qualifications; and enhancing cooperation among ASEAN universities to increase regional mobility for students and staff.

The MRA is therefore a major instrument for skilled labour mobility in ASEAN. However, recognition of each other's qualifications and experience does not ensure market access. Policies and regulatory frameworks that constrain and impede skilled labour mobility include: requirements and procedures for employment visas and employment passes; any constitutional provisions reserving jobs for nationals; policies that close or impose numerical caps on foreign professionals and skills in sectors and occupations; economic and labour market tests that constrain employment of foreigners and requiring to have them to be replaced by locals within a stipulated period; licensing regulations of professional associations; and language proficiency requirements.

There are three strands of activity in ASEAN promoting this medium-term goal of freer movement of skilled labour. The first two will produce early results to support the AEC from 2015. The third strand will take somewhat longer to establish in all 10 ASEAN countries.

6.1 Establishment of MRAs in key areas of professional services

The following MRAs have been agreed upon:

- MRA on Engineering Services (9 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
- MRA on Nursing Services (8 December 2006 in Cebu, the Philippines)
- MRA on Architectural Services (19 November 2007 in Singapore)
- Framework Arrangement for the Mutual Recognition of Surveying Qualifications (19 November 2007 in Singapore)
- MRA on Medical Practitioners (26 February 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand)
- MRA on Dental Practitioners (26 February 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand)

- MRA Framework on Accountancy Services (26 February 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand)

All 10 ASEAN Member States are already participating members of these seven MRAs. Different mechanisms are being established to administer the implementation of the MRAs in the services sector to ensure that professionals across the ASEAN region derive tangible benefits from the agreements. The MRAs for engineers and architects provide a coordinating mechanism, while the MRAs for medical and dental practitioners focus on cooperation, with the aim of facilitating the recognition of qualified practitioners in other ASEAN Member States. The MRAs on accountancy and surveying services provide a framework of broad principles for further bilateral and multilateral negotiations among ASEAN Member States.

In all seven professions, work is proceeding to promote common competencies so as to encourage throughout the 10 ASEAN countries the adoption and harmonization of accepted standards and procedures.

6.2 Establishment of the MRA on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP)

The MRA on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) aims to facilitate the mobility of tourism professionals within ASEAN based on competence-based tourism qualifications, and at the same time, improve the quality of services delivered by tourism professionals.

The ASEAN MRA-TP provides a mechanism for agreement on the equivalence of tourism certification procedures and qualifications across ASEAN. When ASEAN nations mutually recognize one another's qualifications they will encourage a free and open market for tourism labour across the region and boost the competitiveness of the tourism sector in ASEAN nations, while at the same time attracting needed talent to meet local skills shortages. The eligibility to work in a host country will still be subject to the prevailing domestic laws and regulations of the host country.

In order for a foreign tourism professional to be recognized by other ASEAN Member States and to be eligible to work in a host country, the professional will need to possess a valid tourism competency certificate in a specific tourism job title as specified in the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum issued by the Tourism Professional Certification Board in an ASEAN Member State. There are 32 job titles covered under this MRA, ranging from housekeeping, front office, food and beverage services, and food production for the hotel division; to travel agencies and tour operators for the travel division. Qualifications for tourism professionals are at five levels (three levels of certificate, followed by two diploma levels).

The MRA-TP is an important driver in raising standards of tourism and improving the qualifications of the tourism workforce in the ASEAN region. Tourism and hospitality professionals are being encouraged to review their existing qualifications if they wish to consider working overseas in the future AEC.

6.3 Development of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

Development of the reference framework is being undertaken through a project of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA). It has two main objectives:

- increase trade in services, particularly education services and the temporary movement of natural persons, through the development of mutually comparable national qualifications frameworks based on a common reference framework; and
- strengthen education and training systems within each country through the development of policy frameworks for national qualifications frameworks.

A Multi-sectoral Working Group was established in 2012 to design the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and comprised of officials from the AANZFTA Committee on Trade in Services, staff from Ministries of Education, Labour, Manpower Development, and other relevant ministries and agencies involved with skills recognition. The Chair is the Philippines, with Indonesia as the Vice Chair.

Phase I of the AANZFTA project aimed to scope the basic requirements for a regional reference framework and to complete a stocktake of relevant developments in all 10 countries. Phase II has established a Task Force (May 2012) to further develop and agree on the regional reference framework initially scoped out in Phase I.

There is a general consensus regarding the importance of a common reference framework for the purposes of transparency as well as learner and labour mobility. ASEAN Member States have affirmed that national frameworks and the regional reference framework are excellent tools to assist individual economies, but are only credible if linked to national quality assurance systems. Moreover, it is also acknowledged that there is still significant work to be done across the countries regarding the understanding of the purpose and functions of a common reference framework.

Phase III will support ASEAN countries as they implement their own qualifications frameworks in the context of the regional recognition framework. Thailand is to be the pilot. This phase will supplement specific capacity-building being undertaken in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar.

Indonesia (through its National Education Standards Board, or BNSP) has proposed further work to support all ASEAN Member States to benchmark their qualifications systems with the regional reference framework. Three main objectives have been proposed for conducting this further assignment:

1. to develop ASEAN Guidelines for Qualifications and Skill Recognition Arrangements;
2. to determine concrete actions among ASEAN countries to realize harmonization of competence standards and certification systems for implementation of Skills Recognition; and
3. to achieve a qualified, competent and well prepared ASEAN labour force supporting the ASEAN Economic Community.

The proposed ASEAN Guidelines (see objective 1. above) on the development of national qualifications frameworks will be synchronized with the on-going AANZFTA project.

7. Readiness of ASEAN Member States

7.1 Brunei Darussalam

A tiny country with a small population, Brunei Darussalam became independent in 1984, and thanks to its large reserves of oil and gas, now has one of the highest standards of living in the world. It is a country of dense forests and mangrove swamps whose people enjoy high subsidies and pay no taxes. Brunei is highly dependent on imports. Despite its immense wealth, most of the country outside the capital remains undeveloped and unexploited. While oil and gas exports account for the bulk of government revenues, reserves are dwindling and Brunei is moving to diversify its economy. It markets itself as a financial centre and as a destination for upmarket tourism and eco-tourism. The ASEAN website notes that Bruneians are predominantly Malay, though significant Chinese, Indian and indigenous Bornean populations add to the cultural makeup of Brunei.

Crude oil and natural gas production account for 60 per cent of GDP and more than 90 per cent of exports (CIA, 2013). Per capita GDP is among the highest in Asia, and substantial income from overseas investment supplements income from domestic production. The Government provides for all medical services and subsidizes rice and housing. A new monetary authority was established in January 2011 with responsibilities that include monetary policy, monitoring of financial institutions, and currency trading activities.

Recognizing the constraints of the small workforce in the country, the Government of Brunei has a flexible policy to allow companies to recruit foreign workers for their operations. Foreign workers, mainly from Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and South Asia, account for over a third of the total workforce. The *Brunei Statistical Yearbook, 2010*, estimated the total population as 414,400. The US Department of State estimated in June 2012 that there were 100,000 migrant workers in Brunei.

All citizens from the age of five years are offered free government schooling. Tuition, textbooks, food, transport where necessary, and accommodation for students from rural areas are provided free to all pupils. Non-citizens who attend government schools are charged a nominal fee for secondary tuition. Further and higher education is provided for those who are academically eligible and pursuing relevant subject areas, in the light of the national need. Students are also sponsored by the State to study overseas if the studies concerned are not available locally. However, especially since the attainment of independence, a number of tertiary institutions have been established to meet middle- to high-level workforce requirements. These include four universities, including the University Brunei Darussalam, and several technical and vocational institutions.

The Government has adopted a long-term national development strategy, the *Wawasan Brunei Darussalam 2035* (or *Brunei Vision 2035*), through which it *“aims to transform Brunei Darussalam by 2035 as a nation widely recognized for the accomplishment of its well-educated and highly skilled people as measured by the highest international standards and a quality of life that is among the top 10 nations in the world [...]”*

One component of this long-term development strategy is the adoption of the Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework (BDQF), which has been promulgated in the Constitution of Brunei Darussalam [Order made under Article 83(3)], Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011, Part III, Section 21 - 23, Page 576 - 577.

The objectives of the new qualifications framework include the following:

- a. to secure the standards of qualifications and reinforce policies on quality assurance;
- b. to promote accuracy and consistency in the use of nomenclature of qualifications;
- c. to provide mechanisms for the progression and inter-relationship between qualifications, including non-degree and degree qualifications;
- d. to encourage collaboration between public and private sector higher education providers and skill training providers;
- e. to encourage parity of esteem among academic, professional, technical, vocational, and skill qualifications;
- f. to establish a credit system to facilitate credit accumulation and transfers that are acceptable within and outside Brunei;
- g. to provide clear and accessible public information on programmes and qualifications in higher education;
- h. to promote the presentation of qualifications in a form that facilitates their evaluation by any person, including agencies of the Government, higher education providers, student bodies academic staff, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, and employers;
- i. to articulate links with qualifications outside Brunei, and
- j. to generally provide basic criteria, criteria on qualification awards, criteria on institutions, and criteria on professional bodies and institutions (Government of Brunei, 2013).

As noted above, the BDQF aims to support national economic, social, and cultural development goals, as envisaged in Brunei Vision 2035, of building a first class education system, as well as the Ministry of Education's reforms to the National Education System for the 21st Century (known as the SPN21). The BDQF aims to secure the standards of the nation's qualifications; reinforces the need to have policies to promote the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment; ensures accuracy and consistency in the use of nomenclature for qualifications; supports flexible learning, fair credit transfer, and the recognition of prior learning; encourages partnerships among the providers of education and training centres; links technical and vocational with undergraduate and postgraduate learning; and encourages parity of esteem among academic, professional, religious, and vocational qualifications. The BDQF acts as an internationally referenced qualifications framework to provide a platform to facilitate the articulation of links with qualifications from other countries. The BDQF helps to strengthen quality assurance in all institutions and training centres so as to promote continuous improvement based on the establishment of strong institutional quality management and external quality assurance, including institutional registration, programme accreditation, and institutional quality audits.

One of the key features of the BDQF is that all qualifications listed in the framework will be interrelated to increase the relevance and quality of post-school education and training in Brunei Darussalam. Specifically the BDQF focuses on the following:

- greater alignment of education and training to national development goals;
- Strengthened linkages with business and other stakeholders;
- increased responsiveness to the needs of all learners, as well as wider access for all learners;
- more future-oriented education and training strategies;

- improved international linkages and recognition;
- collaboration and rationalization among training agencies;
- increased quality, relevance, performance, effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency; and
- an education and training culture of responsiveness and excellence.

The BDQF is therefore an instrument that develops and classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria agreed upon nationally and benchmarked with international practices. The BDQF includes all formal qualifications: those awarded through public and private secondary schools, technical and vocational institutions, and higher education institutions; and through structured workplace training. The BDQF brings all recognized qualifications in Brunei Darussalam within a single unified structure with underpinning systems for national competency standards setting, quality assurance of teaching, assessment and certification, as well as student and learner support and reporting. This will enable local qualifications awarded by institutions of higher learning in Brunei Darussalam to achieve international recognition more easily in an increasingly globalized and competitive world.

The BDQF clarifies the academic levels, learning outcomes, and credit system based on student academic load. These criteria are accepted and will be used progressively for all qualifications awarded by higher education providers. Therefore, the BDQF integrates and links all national qualifications in Brunei Darussalam. This will enable an individual student to progress in higher education through transfer of credits and recognition of prior learning acquired from formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

The internationally benchmarked definitions, policies and processes adopted by the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC) in developing the BDQF will give credibility to credentials issued in Brunei.

The BDQF incorporates more clearly qualifications in the school sector, technical and vocational sector, and higher education sector. Thus, it promotes lifelong learning and provides multiple pathways for learners across the sectors by taking into consideration or recognizing prior learning, credit accumulation and transfer, and national and international recognition of the skills and knowledge of students and workers. The BDQF is internationally benchmarked, flexible, responsive to the national economic and social development of Brunei, and consistent with the SPN21.

When fully implemented, the BDQF will contain information on every qualification useful for various parties such as students, parents, employers, the government, education providers, quality assurance agencies, accrediting agencies, and industries, both local and international. Therefore, the BDQF promotes understanding and enhances public confidence in the standards and systems of awarding qualifications in Brunei Darussalam. The BDQF will involve other Ministries and agencies involved in post-school education and training. For example, the Energy Department is establishing an Energy Industry Competency Framework which will be aligned to the BDQF.

The BDQF supports the existing system of education by providing clear guidelines for programme design, naming qualifications systematically and eliminating confusion as to the meaning of a qualification. Its strong relationship with the employment market promotes the development of relevant educational programmes. The BDQF supports open access to education and provides social groups for individuals who have missed higher education

opportunities to enable them to progress and enter the knowledge arena through education pathways and enjoy the diverse fields of education and training for life, both within and outside Brunei Darussalam. Thus, it provides a foundation to realize the lifelong learning policy, which is important in the development of a knowledge-based society and economy, to face competition and new technology as well as to enhance unity, justice, and the quality of life.

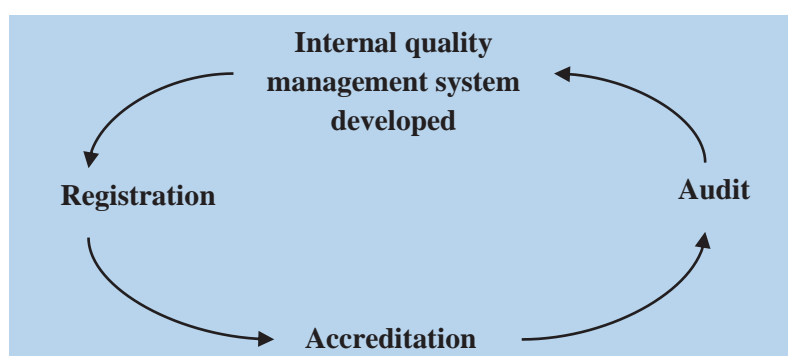
The BDQF was developed and established after extensive consultation with various stakeholders throughout the nation. The BDQF can be benchmarked against the main national qualifications frameworks worldwide, such as those of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland; Australia; Scotland; New Zealand; Malaysia; the Maldives; and the European Union. The European Qualifications Framework is now the umbrella framework for European Union countries, and was accepted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the Lisbon Convention, which included signatories from Europe, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Therefore, the BDQF facilitates communication with the various frameworks and higher education systems of major countries worldwide. It is planned that benchmarking will take place with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework that is currently under development.

Quality assurance is considered fundamental to all aspects of the BDQF. In particular this applies to the determination of the technical and vocational competency standards and qualifications developed by industry and professional bodies through the employment sector; their delivery to learners on and off the job; student or worker assessment; and the awarding of certificates. All qualifications will be consistent with the new national education system (SPN21). Qualifications should be assigned a qualification title and level consistent with the level descriptors; have their curriculum written broadly in an outcome format; and demonstrate industry support. This will provide pathways and coherence across all training programmes in Brunei Darussalam. Thus, the BDQF will promote opportunities for articulation among qualifications, with these qualifications based on competency standards.

The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC), as the sole accrediting agency in the country, shall include a full listing of all approved programmes on its website, with their level and purpose as a point of reference and value-added information for learners and employers. Higher education qualifications will match the level descriptors and their associated requirements. Foreign qualifications delivered in Brunei Darussalam will be accommodated within the BDQF, and will be assigned to an appropriate level.

A quality assurance model has been adopted based on institutional self-assessment and continuous improvement. Therefore the BDNAC proposes three clusters of activities to support the new national qualifications arrangements, where qualifications are delivered through training institutions: (i) the establishing of a quality management system at the time of registration; (ii) programme accreditation; and (iii) ongoing monitoring and institutional quality audits (see Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Illustration of the quality assurance model utilized by the BDNAC



The BDNAC requires that all training agencies and higher education institutions take responsibility for excellent performance. The institutions need to demonstrate to the BDNAC and stakeholders that their quality management systems are robust and meet, or exceed, minimum requirements that have been set out by the BDNAC. As such, all training providers or institutions of higher learning should develop their own coherent quality management system of organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, and resources for setting and implementing quality policies. The system will ensure that the training providers or institutions of higher learning have the capability to establish and maintain an environment fit for delivering education and training that meets or exceeds the specified standards required by the BDNAC. As a result, the BDQF helps to strengthen quality assurance in all institutions so as to promote continuous improvement based on the establishment of strong institutional quality management and external quality assurance, including institutional registration, programme accreditation, and institutional quality audit.

The BDQF has eight levels of qualifications with internationally referenced level descriptors and qualifications definitions (Table 7.1). The definitions for qualifications at each level in all three sectors – schools, technical and vocational education, and higher education – are derived from international good practice. The qualification titles are considered to be common examples only, to encourage flexibility and the accurate assignment of qualifications to a level. For example, the learning outcomes of a highly specialized qualification may meet the descriptor for level 6, but not involve the credit volume requirements needed to be termed a degree.

Certificates awarded at the schools sector are placed at **Level 1 – 4**; that is, BTEC Edexcel Certificates, GCE “O” Level, GCE “A” Level, IGCSE “O” & “A” Levels, IB Diploma, SPU, and STPU, which certify the completion of secondary education.

The **Skills Certificate (SC1, SC2, and SC3)** awarded at **Level 1 – 3** under the technical and vocational sector are used to prepare students for both employment and further education.

Table 7.1: Detail of the levels within the BDQF

BDQF levels	Schools sector	Technical and vocational education sector	Higher education sector
8			Doctoral Degree
7			Master's Degree Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate
6			Bachelor's Degree
5		Advanced Diploma	Foundation Degree Advanced Diploma
4	GCE "A" Level; IGCSE "A" Level; IB Diploma; STPU	Diploma	
3	GCE "O" Level (grades A-C); IGCSE and GCSE "O" Level (grade A* - C); SPU (grades A-C)	Skills Certificate 3 (SC3)	
2	GCE "O" Level (grades D-E); GCSE (grade D-G) "O" Level; SPU (grades D); BTEC Edexcel Level 2 First Certificate	Skills Certificate 2 (SC2)	Certificate & Diploma
1	BTEC Edexcel Level 1 Introductory Certificate	Skills Certificate 1 (SC1)	

Source: Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam, 2012.

The SC1 recognizes the acquisition of core entry-level skills for a new worker. The SC2 and SC3 recognize increasing levels of capability and competence up through to the fully qualified tradesperson.

A **Diploma, awarded at Level 4**, is a qualification that commonly has a wider theoretical base than a certificate and more specialized, technical, professional, or managerial competencies. A Diploma recognizes technician, technologist, and semi-professional level skills and knowledge.

An Advanced Diploma and Foundation Degree (Level 5) consist of programmes designed to facilitate a student's successful progression to a full degree or directly to employment. These degrees focus on learning within a work context, underpinned by both vocational and academic understanding, and enable learners to demonstrate learning outcomes that are explicitly relevant to employment and professional requirements. An Advanced Diploma or Foundation Degree recognizes technician, technologist, managerial, and professional level skills and knowledge.

A Bachelor's Degree, awarded at Level 6, is a systematic, research-based, coherent introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, basic research methods, and analytical and problem-solving techniques of a recognized major subject or subjects. A programme leading to this qualification usually involves major studies in which significant knowledge is available. Programme content is taken to a significant depth and progressively developed to a high level, which can provide a basis for post-graduate study and professional careers.

A Master's Degree, postgraduate diploma, and postgraduate certificate are awarded at Level 7. These are normally designed to extend the principal subject or subjects of the qualifying degree or may build on relevant knowledge and skills derived from advanced occupational experience. A Master's Degree contains a significant element of supervised research, normally embodied in a thesis, dissertation, or substantial research paper. The Master's Degree is a minimum one year of full time study.

A Doctoral Degree, awarded at Level 8, is a research qualification that is at a level significantly higher than the Master's Degree, reflecting scholarly independence, and is awarded in recognition of research that has made a substantial and original contribution to knowledge. The doctoral programme will be equivalent to a minimum of three years of full-time study.

Level descriptors have been developed for all eight levels within the BDQF, setting out the characteristic generic outcomes of learning at every level in terms of the knowledge and skills; practice; applied knowledge and understanding; cognitive skills; communications, ICT and numeracy skills; as well as autonomy, accountability, and working with others. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of every level. They are not intended to be totally prescriptive or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every unit and qualification should have all the characteristics.

The Advisory Board of the BDQF includes a range of stakeholders who bring the necessary expertise to provide advice on the implementation and monitoring of the framework. Accordingly, the Advisory Board includes:

- The Chairman will be the Permanent Secretary (Higher Education).
- The Vice-Chairman is the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Higher Education).
- Members are:
 - two representatives of each of the education and training sectors (schools, vocational education and training institutions, higher education institutions);
 - four community representatives (two from industry and two representing the public);

- a representative from the Ministry of Education (Higher Education Division, Scholarship Section, Department of Technical Education and BDTVEC¹);
- a representative from Public Service Department and the Public Service Commission.

The Secretariat of the BDNAC is also the BDQF Secretariat.

The BDQF Advisory Board will report to the BDNAC. This board is the means of promoting and monitoring implementation and further development of the Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework. The BDQF Advisory Board is responsible to the BDNAC to:

- review and revise BDQF qualifications criteria and guidelines;
- monitor the operation of the BDQF with particular emphasis on the cross-sector interface and national policy implications, and undertake qualifications-related research;
- promote the quality assurance processes in place in each sector to protect BDQF provider standards;
- maintain registers of bodies authorized by the Government to accredit courses, recognize institutions, and issue qualifications;
- monitor international changes in qualifications and their implications for the BDQF;
- provide relevant advice on the BDQF to all interested stakeholders;
- maintain liaisons with the school sector, technical and vocational education sector, and higher education sector.
- maintain liaisons with international and overseas bodies to receive and provide advice; and
- advise the BDNAC on the operation of the BDQF, including on compliance issues, and recommend any appropriate changes to the framework and its operation.

The ILO has noted that:

- a) Brunei Darussalam is currently implementing its national qualifications framework, which should be readily open to benchmarking with the emerging ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework.
- b) Significant reforms are underway in vocational education and training in Brunei Darussalam.

7.1.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

The challenge now is for the BDQF to be progressively fully implemented within Brunei Darussalam. Benchmarking with the emerging ASEAN Qualifications Framework should not be complex once the BDQF is operational. A major task will be the implementation of the revised national regulatory quality assurance policies foreshadowed by the BDQF policy handbook.

¹ The BDTVEC is the Brunei Darussalam Technical and Vocational Education Council.

Significant reform is also planned for the TVET sector through advice and consultancy from the former Director of the Institute of Technical Education in Singapore. This has the potential to transform technical and vocational education and training in Brunei Darussalam.

7.2 Cambodia

Currently, 124,890 Cambodians are working legally in Malaysia, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, and Japan, according to 2012 figures of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT). Workers in Thailand are reported to be mostly housemaids or in fishing, farming, and manufacturing. These migrant workers send home about \$200 million a year. The ILO estimates that between 250,000 to 300,000 young citizens of Cambodia seek to enter the job market every year. As there is a shortage of jobs in the country, some of these young citizens have no option but to seek jobs in foreign countries. The situation of migrant fishers is an issue of concern to a number of ASEAN Member States. Working hours in the fishing sector are long, wages are often determined according to the catch, working conditions are difficult, and there are a number of hazards involved. In addition, there is limited inspection of working conditions, either at shore or on the boats. Many of those working in the sector are migrants (including many from Cambodia), often with irregular status, and therefore with limited access to grievance procedures.

The skills of the work force are seen as an important contributor to the economic and social development of Cambodia. There is therefore a need for continuous expansion and improvement in work force skills to increase the rate of economic growth. The Royal Government of Cambodia's Rectangle Strategy is the approved national economic development framework, and a five-year National Strategic Development Plan is in place. Both of these documents show a strong commitment to skills development.

The National Training Board (NTB) has the mandate to respond to the National Strategic Development Plan with a National TVET Development Plan. The Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DGTVE) in the MoLVT is required to manage the national implementation of the NTB strategy.

The first National TVET Development Plan was approved by the NTB in March 2006. This plan outlined a two track development approach to TVET with an immediate priority on poverty reduction. Substantial progress has been made in implementing activities focussed on poverty reduction. Two financial mechanisms are in place: the National Training Fund supported by funds of Government (now the Programme Based Fund) and the Education Sector Development Programme supported by a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The first National TVET Development Plan prepared by the Directorate General for TVET was tabled with the NTB for the year 2005. Two subsequent updates of this plan have now been approved, affirming the 14 Policies of the original plan and introducing new implementation strategies each year based on the growing capacity of Directorate General for TVET.

The Directorate General for TVET has a number of important responsibilities. The structure includes a new entity that will be responsible for all standardized competency assessments as well as monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance. The responsibilities of the Directorate General for TVET can be summarized as follows:

- coordinate with the National Employment Agency (NEA);
- develop and approve the national (TVET) qualifications framework;
- inform and update the NTB regularly on goals and achievements; and
- coordinate to reduce overlap and support convergence between the development projects and other Ministry initiatives with donors and other programmes.

The membership of the NTB reflects the Government's commitment to a partnership among those involved in the skills development process. By engaging labour and enterprise with government and private training providers as members of the Board, a stable mechanism was created for building the long-term plan required to match workforce skills with the needs of the employment community. But more than this, by giving the NTB responsibility for developing Provincial Training Boards, a strong mechanism for decentralized planning of skills training was created. The plan would recognize the varied needs of different regions and the vastly different rates and styles of growth from province to province.

With its partnership-based membership, the NTB can help integrate workplace and institutional training solutions as the opportunities emerge. It can make sure that national competency standards are developed within a national TVET qualifications framework. The Board can approve and endorse pilot projects to test out innovative and cost effective ways of providing training and can support the development of training in new technologies as the economy moves ahead. It can look beyond schools and colleges to view the workplace itself as a provider of learning opportunities.

The NTB gives direction to the Directorate General of TVET in policy and the provision of skills development through the Directorate's 40 institutions. The NTB creates an environment that supports training by private sector providers to ensure the balanced growth of the national TVET system. Soon, the NTB will also be in a position to accredit trainers so that learners in the community can be assured of minimum standards of training.

The NTB has a major commitment to expanding accessibility to skills development. Balancing the needs for growth in manufacturing in the national capital region with the developing needs of family-based work in many provinces and tourism in others, requires careful consideration of many inputs. This will soon be possible with the new Labour Market Information System providing much more detailed planning data on a provincial basis.

Finally the NTB has a direct responsibility to advance the status of TVET as a demand-driven system responsive to the needs of the economy. It is charged with the task of ensuring that all training leads towards credit in a national framework and the greatest number of Cambodians have access to skills development to build better lives for their families.

As discussed above, the NTB in Cambodia acts as the main policy making body in the TVET sector and provides overall guidance to the on policy and strategic directions, and ensures coordination with concerned ministries and institutions. It was established under the previous ADB-financed Basic Skills Project. The NTB was reconstituted under Sub-decree 790 dated 14 October 2005, which was further revised under Sub-decree 1066 dated 15 June 2009, with H.E. Sok Ann, Deputy Prime Minister, as the Chairperson. The reconstituted NTB has 35 members, including the Chairperson; five Vice-Chairpersons from the MoLVT, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Affairs (each represented by a Secretary of State), the Chamber of Professional and Micro-enterprises of Cambodia, and the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (represented by their Chairpersons);

representatives from 17 other Ministries; and 12 representatives from employers (four), employees (two), public training providers (three), and international organizations (three).

Three sub-committees were established under the NTB on 10 October 2008. These are a Labour Market Information Sub-Committee; a Skills Standards and Testing Sub-Committee; and a TVET Course, Programme, and Institution Accreditation Sub-Committee. The National Employment Agency was then established on 27 April 2009.

To support the National TVET Development Plan, the Cambodia Qualifications Framework comprising eight levels was finalized (see Table 7.2); presented at the sixth meeting of the NTB; and approved at the Board's eight meeting on 17 February 2012.

Table 7.2: The Cambodia Qualifications Framework (CQF)

CQF levels	Technical vocational education and training	Higher education
8	Doctoral Degree of Technology/Business	Doctoral Degree
7	Master's Degree of Technology/Business	Master's Degree
6	Bachelors of Technology/Engineering/Business	Bachelor's Degree
5	Higher Diploma of Technology/Business	Associate's Degree
4	Technical and Vocational Certificate 3	
3	Technical and Vocational Certificate 2	
2	Technical and Vocational Certificate 1	
1	Vocational Certificate	

Source: Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

The NTB approves technical and vocational qualifications. The Cambodia Accreditation Committee oversees the quality of academic qualifications. Both are currently chaired by H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Sok An. Consequently, in the longer term a fully integrated national qualifications structure should be achievable across all Ministries involved in human resources development.

Since February 2012, Cambodia has made steady progress with the development of competency standards and new technical and vocational qualifications, and with the establishment of institutional quality management. However the overall architecture of a functioning TVET system based on the new CQF has not yet been implemented. Support is required to operationalize regulatory accreditation of training institutions and to open up all the delivery modes that a competency-based system makes possible:

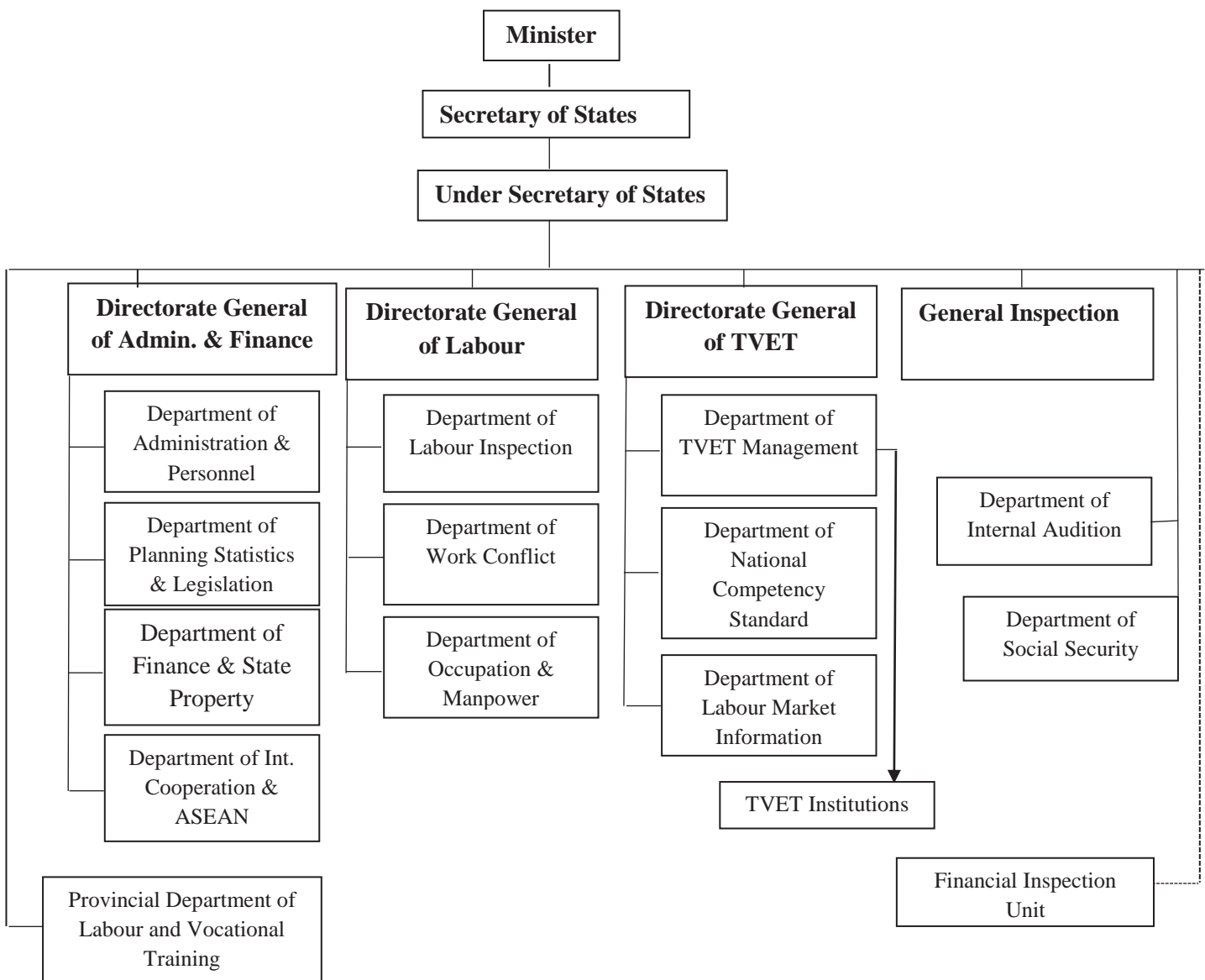
- skills acquisition from training through public and private institutions;
- skills acquisition from structured training in the workplace;
- skills recognition from assessed informal training through NGOs and community-based agencies; and
- skills recognition through direct assessment to recognize prior learning.

The level descriptors used for assigning qualifications to the eight levels of the CQF cover knowledge, cognitive skills, psychomotor skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, communication, information technology and numerical skills, and application.

The chart in Figure 7.2 below summarizes the overall management and administrative arrangements for TVET in Cambodia.

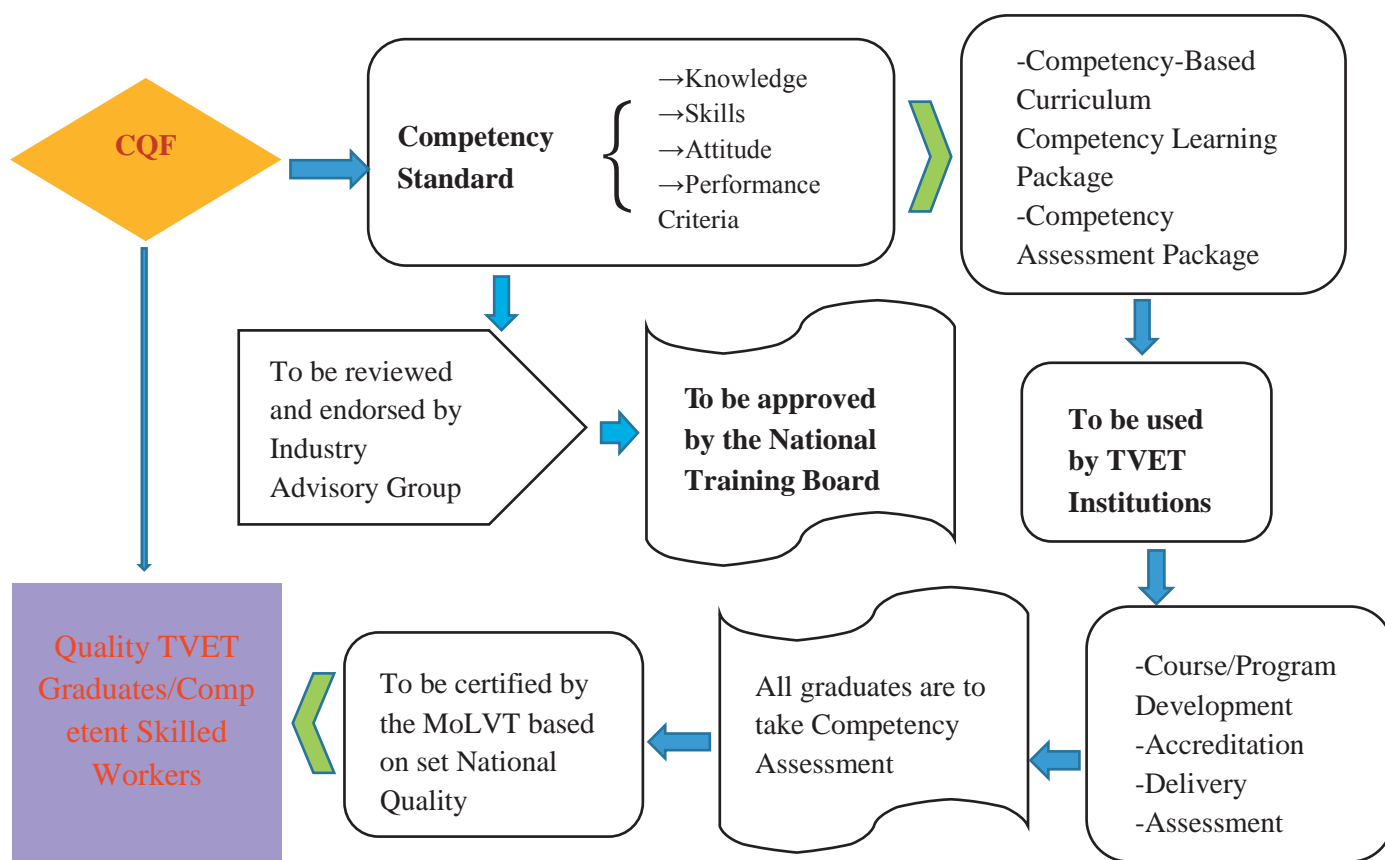
Figure 7.2: Management and administrative flowchart for TVET in Cambodia

The following diagram (Figure 7.3) is the Quality Assurance Framework of the new technical and vocational qualifications.



Source: Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training

Figure 7.3: Illustration of Quality Assurance Framework for vocational qualifications in Cambodia



Source: Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

Competency-Based Training Documents are being developed for selected job positions in three priority areas (mechanics, construction, and ICT/business). The documents produced include the competency standards, competency-based curriculum, competency based learning packages, and competency assessment packages for certificate levels 2, 3, and 4. All will be endorsed by industry. In all areas there are Industry Advisory Groups and Technical Working Groups. The shaded skill areas in Table 7.3 below are already completed.

Table 7.3: The 21 job positions developed in the three priority sectors for Cambodia

Construction	Mechanics (Automotive)	ICT & Business Service
1. Mason	1. Automotive servicing	1. Administrative specialist
2. Rough carpenter	2. Automotive electrical servicing	2. Computer technician
3. Finishing carpenter	3. Auto air conditioner servicing	3. HR specialist
4. Fabrication and fixing	4. Motorcycle servicing	4. Customer service specialist
5. Plumbing	5. Automotive body painting	5. Marketing services
6. Building and electrical wiring	6. Automotive body repairing	6. Sales services
7. Steel structural erection	7. Automotive engine rebuilding	7. Visual graphic designing

Source: Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

The overall objective of the current ADB Grant Project – Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (STVET) in Cambodia – is to support the Government’s strategies to reduce poverty and achieve socioeconomic development for all Cambodians through:

- promotion of vocational and skills training to ensure continuing improvement in national productivity;
- creation of jobs in the formal and non-formal sectors;
- an increase in agricultural productivity to create jobs in rural areas; and
- the establishment of TVET networks to assist both men and women – especially the poor, disabled, and vulnerable – to respond to labour market needs.

The STVET Project supports the Government’s socio-economic development programme through provision of an industry-endorsed TVET system (using a Competency Based Training (CBT) model) aligned with the basic and middle-level skills requirements of the formal and informal economies in three industry sectors, namely: mechanics, construction, and business services/ ICT. The project is expected to increase the employment-ready and qualified middle-level workforce both in rural and urban areas. It is expected that there will be at least a 30 per cent increase in the number of employees holding formal TVET qualifications, and greater employer satisfaction with employees holding new formal TVET qualifications.

The project is expected to produce three outputs: (a) more industry-relevant formal training programmes in mechanics, construction, and ICT and business; (b) expanded and better quality non-formal training; and (c) strengthened institutional capacity to plan and manage the TVET system.

Good progress has been made with strengthening quality in TVET institutions. A self-assessment and quality audit model has been adopted to provide a robust platform for future

regulatory quality assurance. More than 30 public and private TVET institutions have already installed their quality management system and have been externally audited. More training of institutional quality managers is needed.

Skills standards in the three defined priority sectors of mechanics, construction, and ICT and business are being endorsed by industry. In addition, curricula and learning materials for the new standards are in the process of production. The upgrading of the five designated TVET institutions into Regional Training Centres; the development of training curricula and learning materials based on skills standards; and to train the trainers, to increase industry involvement, and to strengthen the National Technical Training Institute, are all important sub-outputs of the STVET Project.

One area where further support is needed is the capacity building of TVET teachers in implementing the national competency standards and their subsequent curriculum documents (e.g., competency-based curriculum, learning packages, and competency assessment packages). Teachers of Regional Training Centres and Provincial Training Centres should be trained on the effective implementation of the approved competency-based curricula and learning materials to enhance the quality of the training programmes/courses that they will offer in pilot TVET institutions from Oct. 2013. The implementation of the CBT system will eventually increase employability of their graduates.

Business and industry in Cambodia support the AEC. In an interview with the General Manager of the Association of Banks, it was indicated that the AEC could open up regional work opportunities for moderately skilled workers, who would then return to Cambodia with higher skills. In addition, the thriving banking sector will benefit from having ASEAN highly skilled workers in Cambodia mentoring local staff. It was also noted that the AEC will likely increase investment in Cambodia from other ASEAN countries, which will further stimulate employment.

7.2.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

From the above it can be seen that the overall policy framework and the architecture of the system required to recognize technical and vocational qualifications are in place in Cambodia. Regional recognition will be achievable following robust implementation, but this is unlikely to be fully in place by 2015. What is now needed is support for implementation of the CQF. In particular this requires the establishment of a national assessment and certification system. Cambodian senior officials considered that this would be best achieved by having a small team undertake a structured work placement with a high performing agency in another ASEAN nation such as the Philippines, Malaysia, or Singapore. The Cambodian team would return well equipped to progressively implement in full the CQF.

It was requested that the ILO support in Cambodia the establishment of a modality to assess and recognize the skills of returning migrant workers so they can contribute more fully to national development. This would require the setting up of a national assessment centre, which would also be required for full implementation of the CQF.

A benchmarking exercise was also requested so that the CQF may be compared with the frameworks in other ASEAN countries and achieve recognition by other countries in ASEAN.

The ILO has noted that Cambodia has ongoing implementation support from the Asian Development Bank which will begin its second Phase soon.

7.3 Indonesia

Indonesia has a large and youthful workforce, with 50 per cent of the country's nearly 250 million person population reported to be under 30 years of age. Indonesia's ratification of the 1990 UN Convention of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (hereafter the "Migrant Workers Convention") will bring new protections for the millions of Indonesian migrant workers. The Indonesian Parliament adopted the international treaty on 12 April 2012, without reservations, in a plenary session. Indonesian migrant workers are concentrated in low-paying, often poorly regulated sectors, such as domestic work, agriculture, and construction, with the top destinations in 2011 being Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Taiwan (China), Hong Kong (China), and Singapore (ILO, 2013). Remittances in 2012 were US\$7 billion. There are approximately 4 million documented Indonesian migrant workers, with the total of those undocumented estimated to be two- or even fourfold higher, making Indonesia the country with the largest number of migrant workers.

"The Indonesian Government's ratification of the UN Migrant Workers Convention demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting its citizens as they are recruited and work abroad and when they return home," said Anis Hidayah, executive director at Migrant Care. "This is an extremely positive development for the migrant women and men who make extraordinary sacrifices to support their families, and who too often encounter abuse" (HRW, 2012). The Migrant Workers Convention guarantees migrants' human rights and promises government protection against abuse by employers, recruitment agents, and public officials. It is one of the nine core treaties of the international human rights system (HRW, 2012). Migrants' rights groups in Indonesia had campaigned for the Government to ratify the Convention since its adoption in 1990. The Government signed the Convention in September 2004, but was not legally bound to comply with its provisions until ratification. Migrant Care and Human Rights Watch have both documented how Indonesian recruiters may deceive women domestic workers about employment conditions abroad, confine them in training centres for months, and charge excessive recruitment fees that leave them badly indebted.

Indonesia has taken incremental steps to strengthen protections, including imposing a two-year ban on migration while negotiating a (now completed) Memorandum of Understanding with Malaysia that guarantees Indonesian domestic workers a weekly rest day and the ability to keep their passports. The Government has engaged in high-level diplomatic efforts in response to cases of physical abuse and killings of domestic workers in Saudi Arabia (HRW, 2012).

A recent UNESCO UNEVOC paper describes Indonesia's TVET system as being made up of two parts, namely the vocational education system (Sistem Pendidikan Kejuruan), which is a part of the National Education System (Sistem Pendidikan Nasional) governed by the Education Act (Law No. 20/2003), and the national training system for work (Sistem Pelatihan Kerja Nasional - Sislatkerna) under Government regulation PP No. 31/2006 (UNESCO & UNEVOC, 2011).

The Indonesian system of technical and vocational education and training is very complex and involves a number of different Government Ministries. Under the Ministry of National Education and Culture are the vocational secondary education schools that offer three years

of study in technical areas. Other industry-specific Ministries also offer technical education. There have been a number of problems with the current system in that the schools take an academic approach to training due to a lack of industry-relevant equipment. This, along with a lack of teacher experience in the vocational areas, a lack of industry-relevant curriculum, and a lack of linkages to industry, means that graduates are not job-ready. To reform the system and provide relevant skills, a number of measures have been enacted. In 2007 the Government introduced standards for vocational education and certification for teachers, including the need for a formal qualification.

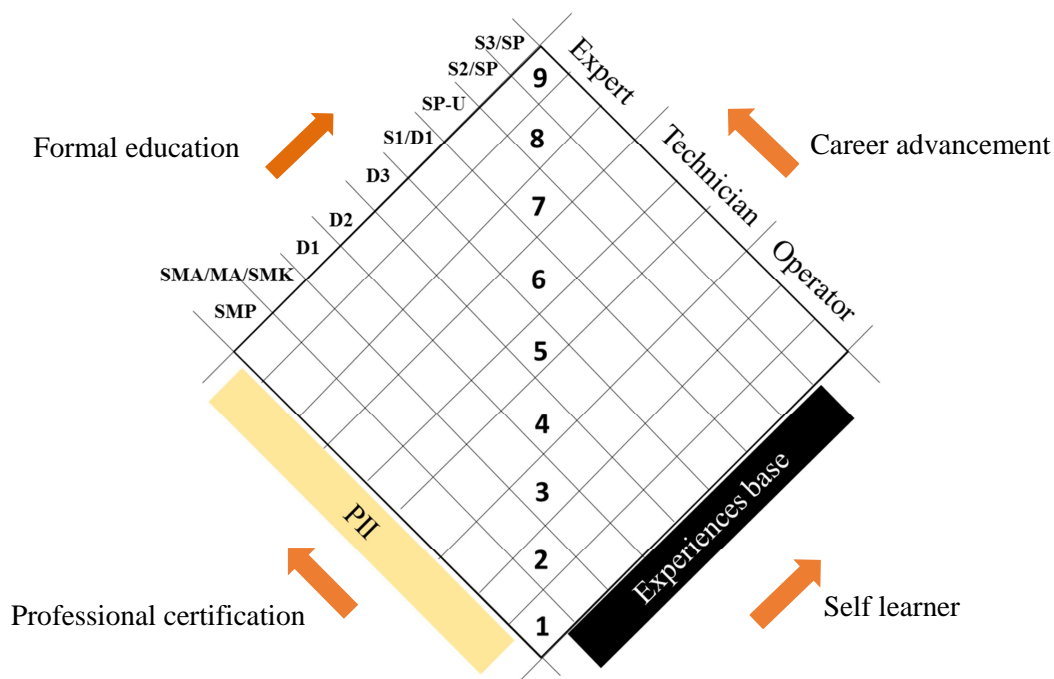
A nine level national qualifications framework has now been established: the Indonesian Qualifications Framework (IQF). The framework was announced in a Presidential Decree (No. 8/2012). In the education sector, the IQF is now firmly established through a Ministerial Decree (No. 73/2013) promulgated by the Ministry of National Education and Culture (Government of Indonesia, 2012). The huge challenge now is to finalize the detailed features of the nine level framework and to make it operational to support national economic and social development. Some of the issues which require addressing include:

- implementation of the level descriptors to promote consistent rating of qualifications offered through educational institutions and Ministries;
- development of qualifications definitions, especially for advanced qualifications, to promote international benchmarking;
- specification of the required outcomes format for higher qualifications;
- specification of the competency format for TVET qualifications;
- establishment of quality assurance requirements for all qualifications;
- decisions on required industry and professional body involvement in the development, maintenance, and updating of qualifications;
- national policies on student assessment and on the promotion of the national consistency of assessment;
- finalization of policies and operational processes for the recognition of prior learning;
- establishment of the central governance structure for the IQF (the Indonesian Qualifications Board) involving all key Ministries and national stakeholders;
- development of policies to achieve whole of Government participation to promote unified national human resources development; and
- establishment of a national website and database for ASEAN reference.

Once the overall detailed architecture for a functioning national TVET and higher education system based on the new IQF is in place, support will be required to operationalize regulatory accreditation of training institutions and to open up all the TVET delivery modes that a competency-based system makes possible (see Figure 7.4):

- skills acquisition from training through public and private institutions;
- skills acquisition from structured training in the workplace;
- skills recognition from assessed informal training through NGOs and community-based agencies; and
- skills recognition through direct assessment to recognize prior learning.

Figure 7.4 Improving IQF level through various pathways

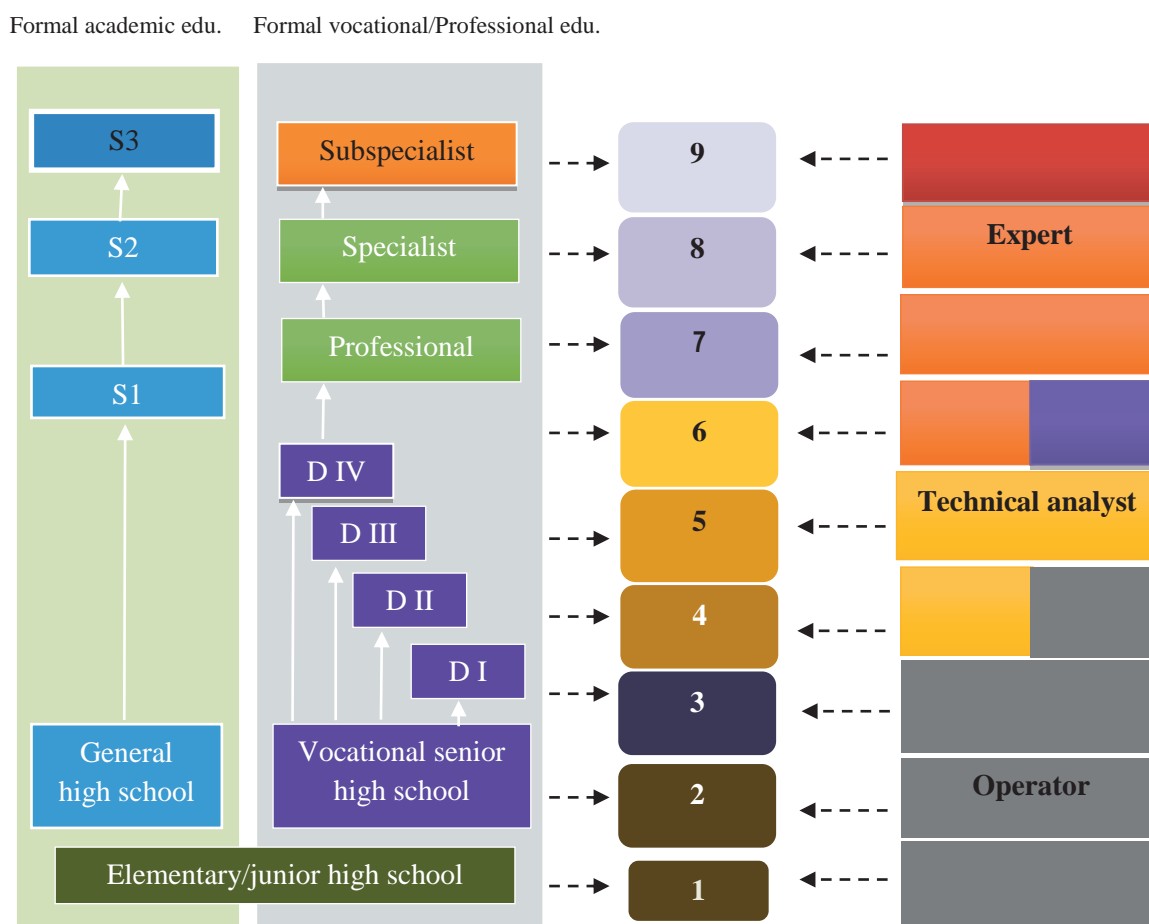


Source: Government of Indonesia (2013)².

This will take several years given the size of the population and the number of Ministries and training institutions involved. It is suggested that initially the focus be on TVET through two Ministries: the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and the Ministry of Industry. That initial focus will have an immediate impact on national economic and social development; and also provide certification opportunities for migrant workers within ASEAN.

² Interview with Dr Megawati Santoso, Government of Indonesia, Vice Chair ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Task Force, Team Leader IQF.

Figure 7.5 The Indonesian Qualifications Framework (IQF)



Source: Government of Indonesia, 2013.³

The national training system was introduced in parallel with the existing secondary school vocational education system to provide the training that was needed by industry (see Figure 7.5). This new system comes under the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and is based on the Manpower Act (No. 13/2003). The training legislation distinguishes training from vocational secondary education, with training taking place in a training centre or in the workplace with an emphasis on paid apprenticeships. Qualifications in the national training system must be under the national qualifications framework and based on competency standards approved by the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. Training providers must be accredited by the board established for that purpose (the Lembaga Akreditasi Lembaga Pelatihan Kerja) and graduates who pass a competence test will be presented with a certificate issued by one of many professional certification institutes (Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi, or LSPs). While the national Government leads the training system through legislation, rules, and policy, it is the local or regional authorities that provide the majority of

³Interview with Dr Megawati Santoso, Government of Indonesia, Vice Chair ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Task Force, Team Leader IQF.

TVET delivery, due to Indonesia's decentralization policies. While there are many private training providers, training is still delivered predominately by government institutions.

The Badan National Standar Pendidikan – National Education Standards Board (BNSP) is an independent body reporting to the President of Indonesia, and it is responsible for conducting national certification processes for professions as mandated by National Act No.13/2003 and Government Regulation PP No. 23/2004. The BNSP consists of 25 selected members: 15 representing the private sector from various industries and 10 representing government institutions from several ministries. The BNSP can conduct certification directly through the Centre of Competency Test (PUK), in addition to delegating its authority to the LSPs. Presently, there are 103 LSPs representing over 54 industries (healthcare, tourism, information technology, construction, banking and finance, maritime, etc.) awarding approximately 1.2 million certifications to professional workers across the nation. It is planned that eventually there be up to 500 LSPs covering almost all sectors of the economy.

National competency standards are developed using a functional analysis approach. Staff of the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration convene industry expert stakeholders to identify units of competency for packaging into vocational qualifications. So far, 288 packages of national competency standards have been completed, covering nine sectors:

- Agriculture and land based industries;
- Electrical, mining, energy;
- Manufacturing;
- Telecommunications and transport;
- Tourism;
- Healthcare;
- Finance and banking;
- Construction; and
- Retail and services.

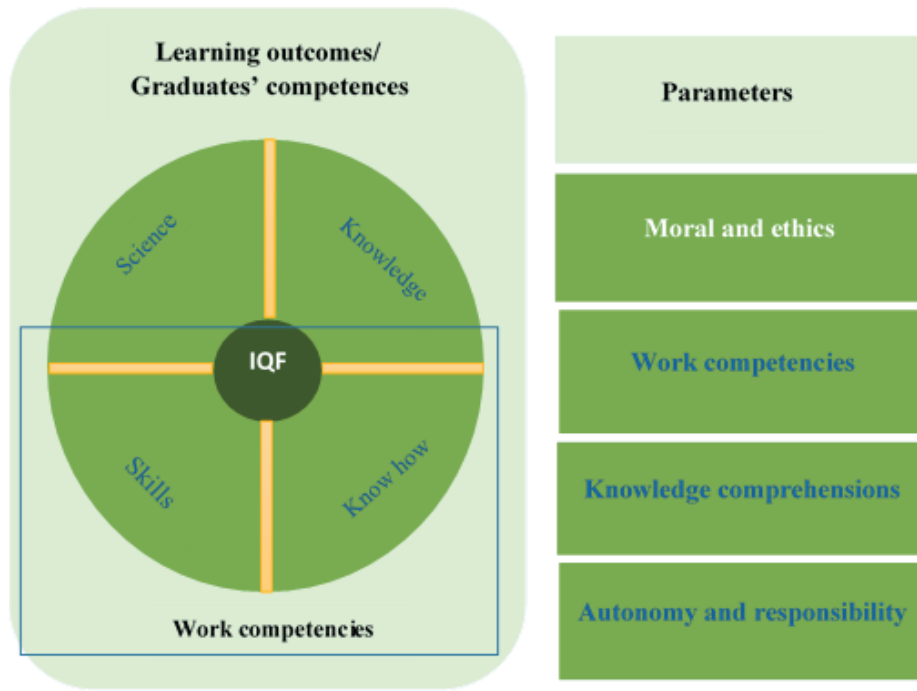
Once finalized by the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, the competency standards are available for training through industry or accredited training institutions. Assessment and certification is provided through the LSPs. It was noted that currently caregiver qualifications are not linked to the Indonesian Qualifications Framework. Given the very large number of migrant Indonesian domestic workers, this needs to be addressed.

Other key employment areas for migrant workers, such as construction and agriculture, are covered through new technical and vocational qualifications. National certification in these areas will make it possible, through the AEC, for skills to be recognized and higher remittances to be paid. Indonesian skilled workers should then also have the chance to move up the skills value chain into higher level and supervisory work within ASEAN.

Qualifications competency packages contain units that emphasize not only knowledge and skill but also attitudes, so that the overall outcome is that holders of IQF qualifications will be high-performing workers with more than just technical and vocational skills (see Figures 7.6 and 7.7).

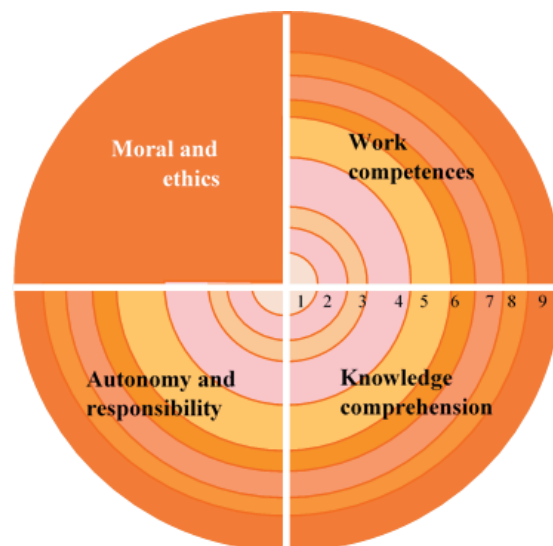
Figure 7.6 Indonesian Qualification Framework description based on learning outcomes

IQF description based on learning outcomes



Source: Government of Indonesia, 2013.⁴

Figure 7.7 Description of Indonesian Qualification Framework IQF description



Source: Government of Indonesia, 2013.⁵

⁴ Interview with Megawati Santoso, PhD. Government of Indonesia, Vice Chair ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Task Force, Team Leader IQF.

A 2010 study by the ILO called *Effectiveness, Efficiency and Impact of Indonesia's Apprenticeship Programme* looked at Indonesia's attempts to make training more industry orientated. The study noted that the lack of coordination and focus of the education and training systems caused significant problems typified by the fact that "Indonesian ministries run apprenticeship and training programmes independently, refusing to recognize the legitimacy of each others' certification" (ILO, 2010, p. 10) Furthermore, the current system "is not flexible enough to meet industry training needs or the demands of the economy and labour market generally" (ILO, 2010, p. 10). The report also pointed out that the duality of having a vocational secondary education system running alongside a national training system leads to "training initiatives [being] poorly executed" (ILO, 2010, p.16). To address this issue, the BNSP now convenes regular meetings in order bring together the many ministries involved in human resources development.

7.3.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

The number of certificates issued by the BNSP is now approximately 10,000 per year. This compares with a population in Indonesia of about 250 million and a formal workforce of over 100 million. Additionally, the number of students in vocational schools alone is approximately 3.5 million, of whom about 1 million graduate each year. Clearly the current system has barely scraped the surface. After some earlier attempts in the 1990s to introduce competency-based training and assessment, the current system began to be developed about 10 years ago. Assessment guidelines have been officially published, assessments are occurring, and certificates are being issued. While the quality of some assessments is reported to be variable, it may be said at least that a positive start has been made. Assessor standards have been endorsed and assessor training has been undertaken, so that there now exists a pool of qualified assessors.

The Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration identified the need for a strong campaign to promote to all stakeholders the features of the new HRD system. Unless beneficiaries have actually experienced the system, they usually know very little about it and their knowledge is usually only about the parts of the system that they have personally experienced. It is hoped that the German development agency GIZ will fund this communications strategy. There is a consistent view that few employers know about the current system (with the exception of companies in the construction industry, where licensing requirements involve them in a sector scheme of assessment, but this scheme is outside the BNSP). Employers' knowledge of the system seems to depend on their networks. Those who have the most knowledge, of course, are those who are connected directly into the system through LSPs, Chambers, etc. Others who are not directly connected are said not to know much.

As in all countries implementing competency-based qualifications arrangements, capacity building is required for all of the parts of the standards-setting, training, assessment, and the certification system. Of these, assessor training is especially important, as it is assessors who link together the downstream stakeholders who are beneficiaries of the system and those who are system managers. Assessors are the public face of the system in the front line of service. Their professionalism, integrity and competence directly affects the reputation of the system and public confidence in it.

⁵ Interview with Dr Megawati Santoso, Government of Indonesia, Vice Chair ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Task Force, Team Leader IQF.

The growth of the system depends on a Catch-22 situation in which employers and other stakeholders will not use the system until they know about it and trust it. On the other hand, they will not know about it and trust it until they use it. Implementation of a well-planned communications and socialization strategy is therefore needed to break through this impasse.

Experience drawn from other countries suggests that care must be taken that the programme of socialization does not raise public expectations that the current system cannot yet deliver, nor should it promote any parts of the system that are not yet working well. Rather it has to be targeted at those aspects of the system that are already working well, and then move to include other aspects as the performance of the system improves over time. Here it is important to promote the success stories that can be replicated. There should also be provision for the development of high quality informative materials to provide solid information to general stakeholders and fuller operational Guidelines for those directly involved.

Financing of the current system and affordability for candidates are problem areas. Fees are variable and sometimes very high. The fees may range from zero to 4 million Indonesian rupiah (IDR). Government subsidies (usually up to IDR400,000 per assessment) are paid to LSPs and are deducted from the amount to be paid by candidates. However, some assessment costs, as calculated by the LSP, are added to the candidate's account. Fees are usually higher when assessment occurs outside the training institutions. When the assessment centre is located inside the training institution (as with some vocational training centres) there is usually no fee for assessment. The costs of assessment are partly absorbed within the institutional training budget and are smaller anyway because of economies from using the same facilities and equipment and the same personnel as for training. However, when candidates are from outside, fees are charged. Sometimes these are full fees and sometimes just the cost of the assessor, with equipment costs being absorbed. For many candidates, an LSP assessment is not affordable, and for many families the cost of assessment by an LSP is more than their monthly income. Many candidates and their families are in the lower socio-economic groups.

In the development of its education system, including its vocational education and training system, Indonesia always had considerable support either from international donors or through the World Bank and the ADB. Currently several donors are supporting Indonesia with technical and financial aid in developing TVET, including GIZ, the European Union, AusAid, the World Bank, the ADB, and the ILO. Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and maybe others are also running TVET development projects. The main goal of these projects is to expand the quantity and quality of TVET in line with the Indonesian Government's development targets.

It is proposed that support for the development of policies and operational processes for the full implementation of the IQF be sought from the AANZFTA project. In addition it is proposed that the ILO seek the provision of capacity-building technical advice, perhaps also from the AANZFTA project, for two key TVET Ministries: the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and the Ministry of Industry.

7.4 Lao People's Democratic Republic

The almost exclusive destination for migrant workers from the Lao People's Democratic Republic is Thailand. Data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare for 2010 show that there were 38,653 regular Lao workers in Thailand under the Thai national verification system. Of these, 2,922 were in agriculture, 24,179 were in the service sector, and 11,552 were in manufacturing. It is estimated that there may be as many as another 300,000 irregular and undocumented Lao workers in Thailand, some commuting daily across the border. Because of this, there is actually a current skills shortage in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Consequently, significant numbers of Vietnamese are working in construction, in the service sector, and in agriculture within the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Chinese and Thai companies involved in infrastructure development are bringing their own skilled workers.

A unified national technical and vocational qualifications framework is not yet in place in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Everyone consulted agreed that its establishment is now a priority to promote readiness for the full implementation of the AEC. There is ongoing support for TVET from GIZ and the ADB.

Based on a survey by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education in 2010–2011, there were 154 vocational training and skills development centres in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, seven of them belonging to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as well as registered education curricula in 27 areas covering four main fields (agriculture, business, industry, and handicraft). Fifty-seven public and private institutions and more than 50 training centres were providing short courses. Fifteen departments, 10 ministries, and two community organizations were involved in vocational education and training. These included the Ministry of Public Health (University of Health Science, seven nursing schools); the Ministry of Finance (Economic and Finance Institute, three finance colleges in the provinces); the Lao Women's Union (three training centres); the Lao Revolutionary Youth Federation, an autonomous Government-supported organization (six training centres); the Ministry of Agriculture (five agricultural colleges, one in the North, three in middle part of the country, and one in the South); and the Central Bank (banking institute). There may now be more providers of skills training, including international NGOs (Don Bosco, for example).

A Prime Minister's Decree (No. 036, 22 January 2010) defines the structure, governance, and funding of TVET and skills development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Decree established a National Vocational Consulting and Skills Development Council with broad responsibilities for TVET and skills development, including oversight of competency standards-setting; student assessment and certification; and quality assurance. This agency is still very embryonic and needs strengthening. The decree assigns responsibility for TVET to the Ministry of Education and Sports and responsibility for skills training and testing to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. That is problematic, given the desirability of having a unified national system for industry skills standards setting, technical and vocational qualifications, regulatory quality assurance, and assessment and certification. This will need to be in place to promote straightforward regional recognition of the skills of Lao migrant workers. New competency-based technical and vocational qualifications should be available in the three fields noted above (agriculture, services, industry) if Lao workers are to achieve skills recognition in Thailand.

Currently, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Technical and Vocational Education Department of the Ministry of Education have differing certification/qualification

structures. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has four levels of skills assessment and certification preceded by a Certificate of Completion level. The duration of training at each level is based on a traditional “time served” approach, with assessment based on achievement of a percentage result. This traditional approach has been maintained in the recently launched skills standards. The Ministry of Education’s current TVET qualifications begin with a series of four certificates followed by two levels of diploma.

To support its skills development and testing services and to prepare trainees for the ASEAN Skills Competitions, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has established four levels of skills recognition, following testing:

- Level one: semi- skilled worker
- Level two: skilled worker
- Level three: tradesperson
- Level four: supervisor

With the support of the Partnership Programme of the ILO and the Republic of Korea, two sets of national skills standards have recently been launched by the Ministry focussing on the construction and automotive industries. These skill standards have been assigned to all the above four levels, and it is assumed that trainees will be awarded certificates at their level of achievement following skills testing. The skill standards documents identify which of the individual elements of competency are required at each level, with the requirements at levels one and two and those at three and four being almost identical. The associated curriculum specification notes additional learning requirements not set out in the skills standards, such as basic technical English, computing skills, and (in the case of automobile painting) electric welding. These skills standards are, in reality, curriculum statements at up to four levels, with trainee assessment being traditional, and not competency-based as is now more common in TVET systems in ASEAN. The skills standards have been developed by teachers and administrators and not by high performing industry practitioners as is international practice. Regional recognition of certificates will be difficult to achieve from this model, given the lack of specificity in the curriculum-focussed skills standards, the mix of skills standards and additional curriculum, and the planned assessment methodology. Prospective employers in the AEC will not be certain of the actual competencies of the Lao worker. Revision of the current standards is recommended, along with the development of a manual which can guide the drafting of future skill standards.

Finalized **automotive industry** skill standards:

1. Electrical/electronic system
2. Engine Performance
3. Chassis
4. Air Conditioning/Heating
5. Auto body painting
6. Auto body repairer
7. Drive train and axles

Finalized **construction industry** skill standards:

1. Reinforced concrete
2. Brick laying
3. Cast plaster and faced cornice
4. Plumbing
5. Welding
6. Electric installation
7. cabinet making
8. Floor and wall tiling
9. Aluminium and glass
10. Painting

Skills standards for the ICT sector will be developed in 2013–2014.

In the Ministry of Education and Sports, the ADB Strengthening TVET (STVET) Project, is finalizing competency standards for four occupational areas:

- I. Occupational area: Basic business**
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Book keeper | Level III |
| 2. Book keeper | Level IV |
| 3. Sales and marketing | Level III |
| 4. Sales and marketing | Level IV |
| 5. Secretary | Level III |
| 6. Secretary | Level IV |
| 7. Cashier | Level III |
- II. Occupational area: Automotive and mechanical**
- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Welding service and repair
Job: welder | Level III |
| 2. Welding service and repair | Level IV |
| 3. Automotive Service and repair
Job: auto mechanic
Job: motorbike mechanic
Job: agro-machinery mechanic | Level III |
| 4. Automotive service and repair | Level IV |
- III. Occupational area: furniture**
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Cabinet maker | Level III |
| 2. Furniture finisher (spraying) | Level III |
| 3. Team leader/supervisor | Level IV |
| 4. Window maker | Level II |
| 5. Furniture assembler/production | Level I |
| 6. Table ,aker | Level II |

IV. Occupational area: construction	
1. Brick layer	Level III
2. Plumber	Level III
3. Concreter	Level III
4. Carpenter	Level III
5. Electrical installer	Level III
6. Construction supervisor	Level IV
7. Electrical supervisor	Level III

These standards have been assigned to four levels according to the draft descriptors found in Table 7.4 below.

The format for the specification of the competency standards follows international best TVET competency-based practice. Units are assigned to a single level and there are separate documents laying out in full detail the teaching and learning programmes. Assessment resources will complete the packages. These materials will be straightforward for institutions and industry-based trainers to use. The separate and complete competency standard document will make it relatively simple to deliver the competencies in workplaces, through NGOs, and to assess for recognition of prior learning.

Table 7.4: Draft descriptors for the qualification levels devised by the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports through the ADB STVET Project

Qualification Level	Descriptors
Level V Advanced Diploma	Can translate engineering designs and concepts into practical actions; supervise the skilled workers; perform work programming, calculations; fine tune systems, work processes, and equipment; ensure implementation of quality assurance.
Level IV Diploma	Supervise the routine work of others; responsible for evaluation and improvement of work processes; analyze and troubleshoot occurring work problems; can perform whole of range of work at high level of competence, including those involving technical decision-making, limited interpretation, and execution of plans and work designs. Operates programmed/computerized production equipment.
Certificate Level III	Can perform complicated fabrication work using complex/multi-function equipment; can work on jobs requiring minimal tolerance; responsible for the entrusted equipment; can solve work problems using basic methods, tools, materials, and information.
Certificate Level II	Can operate simple/basic machines and equipment; interpret and make simple sketches/diagrams; perform repetitive tasks. Can perform simple mathematical operations, calculations, and estimates; and do preventive maintenance on equipment and housekeeping.
Certificate Level I	Can apply basic factual information and skills to perform simple tasks requiring close supervision.

Source: Asian Development Bank Support to Technical Vocational Education and Training Project.

The National Vocational Consulting and Skills Development Council needs strengthening so it can perform a national policy and implementation coordination role across the several Ministries delivering technical and vocational training in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Council needs to be independent and assume active responsibility for the future Lao Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework. In that context the Council could coordinate among responsible Ministries the necessary supporting features of a national TVET qualifications system:

- 1) The development with industry leadership of national competency standards and TVET qualifications for a modern high performing workforce; and
- 2) The establishment of the architecture of the TVET qualifications framework:
 - the number of levels;
 - the level descriptors;
 - the standards format and the formats for required TVET teaching and learning resources and national assessment materials;
 - the national regulatory quality assurance system through which high quality training can be offered in public and private institutions, through workplace learning, through NGOs and community groups, and through the recognition of prior learning;
 - the national student and trainee assessment system;
 - the national database of student and trainee results and qualifications awarded; and
 - the regional recognition by all ASEAN countries of the Lao TVET qualifications, thereby promoting skilled worker mobility.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has established an Education Management Information System and an annual reporting system on TVET that can be used as a reference for overall planning and management relevant to TVET policy issues and national workforce development.

A Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institution Quality Assurance Manual (TVET QA Manual) was published in 2011 in a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and UNESCO Bangkok Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education under the Capacity Development for Education for All – Lao PDR Programme (CapEFA). This manual was approved by the Minister of Education in April 2011. Quality assurance mechanisms were established in all 22 TVET institutions under the Ministry of Education. For the pilot implementation phase, the Technical and Vocational Education Department decided to set up the school networks for the North, middle, and the South of the country. The quality assurance network for the northern area consists of eight TVET schools, while the middle part consists of nine TVET schools, and the southern part comprises five schools. The TVET quality standard has 10 components and 32 indicators. The Minister assigned the implementation of the TVET Quality Standard to the Technical and Vocational Education Department, the Educational Standard and Quality Assurance Centre, and the Vocational Education Development Centre, for effective implementation in all TVET institutions, both public and private.

An East Asia Quality Assurance Framework has also been developed through the support of the Government of Australia. The framework consists of a set of principles, guidelines, and tools to assist countries to develop, improve, reform, guide, and assess the quality of their TVET systems. The package of materials developed can be used to guide the design and implementation of measures to strengthen institutional quality management at the institution

level in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. At the time the East Asia framework was developed, Lao officials committed to its implementation and to strengthening quality in TVET generally.

It needs to be noted that these quality assurance materials promote quality management in TVET institutions but do not establish a regulatory regime for national TVET quality assurance. Such a system will need to be in place to support AEC recognition of validly-awarded qualifications. Criteria and procedures have yet to be developed for the licensing (or registration) of private TVET institutions and for accreditation of all TVET institutions to offer the new technical and vocational qualifications.

The recent Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) initiatives impact directly on TVET in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in terms of the better linking of training provision and standards to identified market needs. ADB assistance for the implementation of the Action Plan for HRD in the Greater Mekong Subregion under the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Programme supports action to improve the effectiveness of subregional cooperation and to strengthen links with other subregional initiatives in HRD. Specific initiatives under the GMS Action Plan (2009–12) for promoting regional cooperation in education and skills development and labour migration included:

- Developing and Piloting a Framework for Mutual Recognition of Technical and Vocational Skills in the GMS: (1) Development of a GMS skills recognition framework for three key skills areas; (2) Development of additional GMS skills areas under the framework; (3) Development of TVET teacher training standards in at least three key skills areas; (4) Development of quality assurance systems in selected TVET institution; (5) Development of quality assurance systems in selected higher education institutions; (6) Development of GMS secondary education level exit standards and cross border mutual recognition;
- Strengthening of Safe Market Information Systems in the GMS: (1) Developing usable labour market information systems and procedures for sharing information, ADB; and (2) Continuing labour market information systems development across the subregion (ADB, 2009a).

Further support for HRD within the GMS has been agreed upon by the ADB, which can assist with establishing readiness for the AEC.

7.4.1 Issues, challenges and recommendations

From the above it can be seen that the establishment of a national TVET qualifications system to link with the translation mechanism of the emerging ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and to promote the national and regional recognition of worker skills is achievable over time in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, but policy and implementation support is immediately required. Multi-Ministry facilitation at a senior level is needed to establish the overall architecture of the TVET qualifications system through the National Vocational Consulting and Skills Development Council. Support will be needed to implement a unified comprehensive TVET system and to promote sustainability. A 10-year development road map should be prepared so that, progressively, the new multi-Ministry TVET system is implemented across all industry sectors, and through all Ministries involved in skills training. This TVET system must be linked solidly to national economic, social, and cultural development goals.

A high-level consultation workshop is to be convened at which the concept of a national qualifications framework will be reviewed in the context of national development and the imminent ASEAN Economic Community. One key outcome of the workshop should be the establishment of a national Taskforce with representation from key Ministries involved in skills training and national human resources development. The Taskforce should also include representation from key national stakeholders such as the Chamber of Commerce, trade unions, and higher education. A second outcome from the workshop should be an Action Plan for the establishment of a comprehensive Lao Qualifications Framework.

7.5 Malaysia

Malaysia has been experiencing close to full employment⁶ since 1990, and total population growth is relatively low, estimated at 1.74 per cent in 2008 (Robertson, 2008). Many Malaysians are said to be no longer willing to perform jobs that they consider as 3-D (dirty, difficult, and dangerous), therefore creating demand for migrant foreign workers in sectors like plantations/agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and some service occupations. The number of documented foreign workers has generally increased over the past decade due to this and a tight labour market situation. As a long-term measure and to ensure sustainable growth, as well as to minimize socio-economic implications, a medium- to longer-term policy on foreign workers has been introduced to reduce Malaysia's over-dependence on foreign workers while attracting more skilled and trained professionals.

The number of documented foreign workers in Malaysia totalled 1.8 million in 2010, but by 2011, the number had decreased by 13.5 per cent to 1.6 million accounting for 12.8 per cent of total employment. As of the end of July 2012, there were more than 1.6 million registered foreign workers in Malaysia (end-July 2011: 1.3 million). Of this total, 37.7 per cent were employed in manufacturing, 19.4 per cent on plantations, 14.6 per cent in construction, and 9.1 per cent in agriculture. The most prominent country of origin for foreign workers in Malaysia is Indonesia (48.5 per cent), followed by Nepal (17.7 per cent), Myanmar (8.7 per cent), and Bangladesh (8.5 per cent) (Government of Malaysia, 2013).

As of the end of July 2012, a total of 47,157 expatriates (end-July 2011: 40,938) were employed in the country. This indicates that only 3 per cent of foreign workers in Malaysia were highly skilled, while the remaining workers were low-skilled. The expatriates were mainly employed in the services (28,298; 60 per cent), manufacturing (10,350; 21.9 per cent), and construction (3,406; 7.2 per cent) sectors. The largest number were from India (9,360; 19.8 per cent), followed by China (5,396; 11.4 per cent), and Japan (3,384; 7.2 per cent) (Government of Malaysia, 2013).

All observers believe that migrant workers will continue to play an essential role in many sectors of the Malaysian economy, including manufacturing, for the foreseeable future. Malaysia's workforce is made up of only around 28 per cent skilled workers. In this respect, Malaysia is lagging behind its neighbours, and is consequently highly dependent on skilled migrant labour, which can, from 2015, be supplied through the AEC.

⁶ According to the *New Straits Times*, 25 May 2013, unemployment in Malaysia is between 2.5 and 3.5 per cent.

While Malaysia is generally a receiving country, there are emigrant workers of Malaysian origin in the region. The Malaysian Employers Federation estimates that up to 300,000 Malaysians are working in Singapore, some commuting across the border on a daily basis. The establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community will mean that those Malaysian workers will be able to seek to have their skills recognized in Singapore.

TVET is embedded in the Malaysian educational system with a two-pronged objective of meeting student aspirations and producing human resources to meet the needs of industry. The formal TVET system starts at the 10th year of schooling after the Lower Secondary Assessment, at which point students have the option to pursue their studies in academic, technical, vocational, and skill streams. From there, students can go to the world of work or pursue their studies through to the post-graduate level.

Providers of skills training and TVET in Malaysia include the Ministry of Human Resources, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry. They play the main role in strengthening the human resources base to ensure the availability of a workforce with the necessary levels of knowledge and technical and thinking skills. The capacity of skills training and of TVET is increasing through the expansion and upgrading of existing institutions as well as the establishment of new institutions by the public and private sectors.

A unified system of national qualifications, the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) was initially presented to the National Higher Education Council in November 2002 and was approved in November 2003. This approval was followed by many public discussions, stakeholder meetings, and seminars. The MQF has been fully implemented since late 2007 following the passing of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007.

Responsibility for implementing the MQF is shared between the Ministry of Education (the Higher Education and the Vocational and Technical Sectors) and the Ministry of Human Resources (the Skills Sector).

The MQF secures the standards of qualifications and reinforces policies on quality assurance, which ensures accuracy and consistency of the use of nomenclature of qualifications; supports flexible education by providing typical learning pathways and recognizing prior learning; encourages partnerships between the public and private sector; promotes links between non degree with undergraduate and postgraduate levels; encourages parity of esteem among academic, professional, and vocational qualifications; promotes a common currency for credit accumulation and transfer; provides clear and accessible public information; facilitates, where applicable, the presentation of the intended outcomes of qualifications in forms that enable professional bodies to gauge their contribution to professional formation; and articulates links with qualifications from other countries. The MQF helps make clear the range of qualifications offered in Malaysia, how these relate to one another, and what they offer for learners and employers. The MQF facilitates the development of flexible and innovative learning programmes to meet a range of requirements while being sufficiently flexible to accommodate new kinds of qualification that may arise from time to time.

The MQF qualification levels indicate levels of graduate capabilities. The typical qualifications at every level are described by generic features that indicate the expected capabilities of students in terms of:

- a. the depth, complexity, and comprehension of knowledge;
- b. application of knowledge and skills;
- c. the degree of autonomy and creativity in decision making;
- d. communication skills; and
- e. the breadth and sophistication of work practices.

The framework has eight levels from the initial Skills Certificate Level 1 to the Level 8 Doctoral Degree (See Table 7.5). The following are the principal qualifications in the framework:

- Levels 1-3 – Skills Certificate 1, 2, 3
- Level 4 – Diploma
- Level 5 – Advanced Diploma
- Level 6 – Bachelor’s Degree/Graduate Certificate and Diploma
- Level 7 – Master’s Degree/Post-Graduate Certificate and Diploma
- Level 8 – Doctoral Degree

Table 7.5: Sector-wise breakdown of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework

MQF levels	Sectors			Life long learning
	Skills	Vocational & technical	Higher education (academic & professional)	Accreditation of prior experiential learning APEL
8			Doctoral degree	
7			Masters degree	
6			Postgraduate cert. & diploma	
5	Advanced diploma	Advanced diploma	Advanced diploma	
4	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	
3	Skills cert. 3	Vocational & technical certificate	Certificate	
2	Skills cert. 2			
1	Skills cert. 1			

Source: Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

The following level descriptors are used by the Malaysian Department of Skills Development (DSD):

Table 7.6: Malaysian Department of Skills Development level descriptors

Level	Level descriptors
Level 5 - Management level	Competent in applying a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as do personal accountabilities for analysis and diagnosis, design, planning, execution, and evaluation. Specialization of technical skills should be demonstrated.
Level 4 - Supervisory level	Competent in performing a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and allocation of resources is often present. Higher level of technical skills should be demonstrated.
Level 3 - Supervisory level	Competent in performing a broad range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of context, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy and control or guidance of others is often required.
Level 2 - Operation and production level	Competent in performing a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. Some of the activities are non-routine and required individual responsibility and autonomy.
Level 1 - Operation and production level	Competent in performing a range of varied work activities, most of which are routine and predictable.

Source: Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources, Government of Malaysia.

For higher education qualifications, and for vocational and technical qualifications, 40 hours of academic load is valued by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) as one credit, a system not used by the DSD for the Skills qualifications the Department accredits. Credit is quantitatively a measure that signifies the volume of learning or academic load to attain the respective learning outcomes. The academic load is a quantitative measurement for all learning activities a student must undertake to achieve a defined set of learning outcomes, for

examination. A credit system is under consideration for qualifications in the Skills Sector that are the responsibility of the DSD.

There are robust internationally referenced quality assurance requirements for all levels of the Malaysian qualifications framework. Certification of standards and accreditation of programmes conducted in public and private colleges and universities come under the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. As a quality assurance body, the functions of the MQA are:

- to implement the MQF as a reference point for Malaysian qualifications;
- to develop standards and credits and all other relevant instruments as national references for the conferment of awards with the cooperation of stakeholders;
- to quality assure higher education institutions and programmes;
- to accredit courses that fulfil the set criteria and standards;
- to facilitate the recognition and articulation of qualifications; and
- to maintain the Malaysian Qualifications Register.

As noted above, the Department of Skills Development (DSD) of the Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for the quality of qualifications in the Skills Sector. The DSD manages, coordinates, and promotes skills-training programmes and career development based on the MQF competencies as identified through National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS). The NOSS specify the competencies expected of a skilled worker at an occupational level. They provide a pathway directly related to an occupational career structure. NOSS are developed by industry practitioners and skilled workers directly involved in an occupation. Sixteen Industry Lead Bodies have been established. For other skill areas, the Ministry convenes industry representatives to carry out the development of the NOSS, or contracts this work out to private sector specialists. There are currently 20 formal Skills Development Advisory Committees. The NOSS competency units can be packaged according to specific needs with core and elective competency units allowing for multi-skilling and customized programmes for specific industry needs.

Table 7.7: Industry lead bodies of Malaysia

	Sector	Industry lead body	Appointed date
1	Agriculture	National Agriculture Training Council (NATC)	2011
2	Communication, Content & Infrastructure (CCI)	Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC)	2011
3	Building & Construction	Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB)	2011
4	Biotechnology	Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation (BiotechCorp)	2012
5	Tourism and Hospitality	Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH)	2012
6	Financial Services	Asian Institute of Finance	2012
7	Electric & Electronic	The Electrical and Electronics Association of	2012

		Malaysia (TEEAM)	
8	Resources Based (Wood)	Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB)	2012
9	Palm Oil	Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB)	2012
10	Oil & Gas	Malaysian Oil & Gas Services Council (MOGSC)	2012
11	Energy	Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) / ILSAS	2012
12	NDT	Malaysian Society for Non-Destructive Testing (MSNT)	2012
13	Engineering & Machinery	Malaysian Iron and Steel Industry Federation (MISIF)	2012
14	Textile & Apparel	Malaysian Textile & Manufacturer Association (MTMA)	2012
15	Care & Community	Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat	2012
16	Business Services	Malaysian Institute of Human Resources & Management (MIHRM)	2012

In some economies these industry lead bodies also have the role of national strategic workforce planning for their sector of responsibility, providing research and leadership to their sector in:

- identifying current and future skill needs;
- developing strategic plans for industry to meet its skill needs;
- benchmarking against international standards and productivity levels; and
- promoting training to meet the needs of employers and employees.

The current NOSS cover the following 29 sectors:

- 1) Electrical and electronics, telecommunications and broadcasting
- 2) Information and communications technology
- 3) Machinery and equipment
- 4) Mechanical and electrical service maintenance
- 5) Transportation
- 6) Materials – metal and non - metal
- 7) Packaging
- 8) Printing
- 9) Chemical
- 10) Medical and pharmaceuticals
- 11) Hospitality and tourism
- 12) Souvenir and small enterprise
- 13) Building and construction
- 14) Landscaping and environmental
- 15) Interior decor
- 16) Business management
- 17) Textiles and apparel
- 18) Agriculture and agro-based
- 19) Resource-based
- 20) Biotechnology
- 21) Education and training services

- 22) Oil and gas
- 23) *Halal* industry
- 24) Integrated logistics services
- 25) Distributive trades
- 26) Defence and security services
- 27) Care and community services
- 28) Arts and culture
- 29) Mining

7.5.1 Issues, challenges and recommendations

Having two separate national agencies responsible for human resources development, quality assurance, and certification is somewhat problematic for Malaysia to have straightforward skills recognition within ASEAN:

- There are different criteria for assigning qualifications to levels, with the DSD using traditional descriptors derived from Bloom’s Taxonomy and the MQA using a sequence of qualifications definitions. The MQA does not assign a level to the certificates that it accredits, although it regards all those certificates as being at Level 3. The DSD accredits at all the three certificate levels of the MQF, and also at the Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels. There appear to be no mechanisms to promote consistency in level assignment between the two central agencies.
- The MQA applies a national credit system that is not used for skills certificates and diplomas.
- The NOSS are generally not used in the vocational and technical sector; only in skills programmes offered through the DSD.
- There is no single database of all qualifications in Malaysia that are quality assured and recognized on the MQF, and potentially available to immigration officers in other ASEAN countries.
- Given the split responsibilities for overseeing the development of qualifications, it is difficult to establish qualifications value chains spanning all eight levels of the MQF.

Having qualifications linked together across the levels can create value chains of skills development and industry investment. For example, in the forestry sector, the value chain could promote increasing returns, beginning with initial harvesting and extending to transportation, milling, the development of specialty products such as composites, and furniture manufacturing; and then including business management and marketing. Increasingly high-level skills are needed, and value is added to the harvested timber at each point along the value chain. A fully unified qualifications framework has the potential to provide the planning “connectivity” for a forestry sector-wide skills and capability needs analysis that can be linked directly to market opportunities and ultimately to applied research; that establishes the potential to minimize transfer costs between each step; and that promotes education and training at all levels. A similar approach can be applied to traditional areas such as plantation agriculture, as well as to tourism, or to the development of new technology-based industries, or perhaps to national initiatives aimed at meeting international labour market opportunities in targeted areas (such as in

information technology), thereby creating employment and remittance potential for individuals and families in ASEAN.

APEC project

Of major significance for human resources development in Malaysia is an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) project being undertaken by the DSD. In APEC economies, TVET and employment programmes have been gaining increased attention from policy-makers and other stakeholders. Furthermore, TVET programmes are known to contribute significantly to national economic development and growth. Implementing TVET programmes as part of holistic human capital development is seen as a way to ensure the continuous supply of the skilled workforces required in industries. Thus, developing an effective TVET system will help to tackle the issues that are being faced by many economies, namely demographic shifts, high youth unemployment, and rapid labour market changes.

APEC member economies have noted that the most challenging task of TVET is to produce the right-type of skilled workforce, who are able to match the need of the market demand in a timely manner, and that the private sector, including the industry players, education and training institutions, individual trainers, trade associations, media, employers as well as trainees, need to play their roles to help overcome the issue of quality and skill mismatch.

These issues also confront Malaysia. Currently, the 28 per cent of the Malaysian workforce is comprised of high-skilled workers, whilst ~20 per cent of the workforce does not have any post-secondary qualification. The 10th Malaysia Plan has set a target of achieving a 50 per cent highly-skilled workforce by the year 2020 and the Economic Transformation Programme has identified a requirement of 1.3 million TVET graduates. In order to achieve the target, the Department of Skills Development believes that the TVET delivery system and the NOSS should be aligned to current and future industry needs and technological trends.

As noted above, the NOSS is a document that stipulates the required competency level expected of a skilled employee who is employed in Malaysia in a specific trade. It also defines the level of employment and the path required to achieve the stated competency level. “Occupational analysis” is the process of identifying the work process of an occupational area in terms of competencies. It is used to analyse the skilled human resource competency requirements for an industry. The proposed APEC project will review the methodology of occupational analysis and NOSS by looking at the best practices in selected countries.

In some countries, NOSS were in the past interpreted very narrowly, resulting in the certification of workers with inflexible sets of skills. Internationally⁷, competency standards are no longer linked solely to the International Standard Classification of

⁷ Derived from information supplied by Andre Lewis, Australian National Training Authority, 1997.

Occupations (ISCO). While those ILO-developed occupational definitions have been very useful in the past as a guide to common approaches to occupational trade skills, they may not in every circumstance describe emerging patterns of work. As an example, a number of industries such as automotive manufacturing certainly use trade occupations, such as those in mechanical and electrical engineering. However, they now tend to want more multi-skilled workforces and require their employees to use their skills in combinations not usually covered in a narrow trade definition. Thus, a traditionally qualified electrical fitter would perhaps also be expected to utilize some mechanical skills and combine these with work on production line robotics and mechatronics. A conventionally qualified electrical fitter would therefore need to have some, but maybe not all, of the skills required to fulfil the demands of some more advanced automotive enterprises. As a result, nations with competency-based systems generally now prefer their standards to reflect broad sectors such as engineering, agriculture, food processing, or tourism; and qualifications packages have a broader industry, industry sub-sector, or occupational cluster coverage rather than the traditional narrower single occupational focus.

The results of this APEC study will be of genuine interest to all ASEAN Member States, many of whom are grappling with the same challenges and seeking to identify international best practice in skills identification, skills training, and TVET so as to produce future-focussed flexible workers for their 21st century economies.

7.6 Myanmar

Significant job opportunities will be opening up for skilled workers from Myanmar with the establishment of Economic Zones within Myanmar (the Thilawa Special Economic Zone 25 km south of Yangon and the Dawei Deep Seaport and Special Economic Zone) and from ASEAN regional integration. The east-west road corridor stretching from Myanmar's Indian Ocean town of Mawlamyine to Danang on the Vietnamese coast will open up opportunities for work in transportation, services, and later in tourism, as will the 132km highway from the Thai border to Dawei and the port. The embryonic tourism industry in Myanmar should benefit hugely from adopting the ASEAN industry skill standards, providing employment opportunities within the country but also throughout ASEAN. AEC can provide the chance for skilled workers in niche areas, such as welding and construction, to secure legitimate employment in other ASEAN economies. A small number of semi-skilled workers already travel to Singapore for work in these areas.

These opportunities for skilled workers in Myanmar and within ASEAN should go some way towards reducing the number of irregular workers who currently cross the border into Thailand. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates⁸ that there are 1.3 million undocumented migrant workers in Thailand, the vast majority of whom come from Myanmar. Many of these are in the shrimp industry (in the shrimping fleets and in shrimp peeling), which is worth about US\$1 billion a year to the Thai economy. Workers too often have their papers confiscated, suffer physical abuse, and remain unpaid. The Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation says⁹ that young Burmese often need to work for six months in order to pay off a bond to the broker who smuggled them into Thailand.

⁸ Reported in the *Myanmar Times*, 01 April 2013

⁹ Reported in *The Economist*, 02 March 2013

To support moves towards upskilling the Myanmar workforce, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security (MOLES) has taken a lead role in the establishment of a unified skills training system. The Ministry has the responsibility to introduce training standards and to set up a national system of trade skill testing and certification. In addition, a number of other Ministries are offering skills training:

- The Ministry of Science and Technology;
- The Ministry of Industry;
- The Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Forestry;
- The Ministry of Railway Transportation;
- The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries;
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation;
- The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism;
- The Ministry of Construction;
- The Ministry of Transport;
- The Ministry of Cooperatives;
- The Ministry of Health;
- The Ministry of Border Affairs; and
- The Ministry of Social Welfare.

The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) is providing training for the expanding textiles and garment industries.

All these agencies can progressively come together under a single unified skills training and recognition system. At the moment, these Ministries and agencies carry out vocational evaluation, testing, and certification processes in conformity with their own standards and different approaches to meet the needs of the industries they serve. Certification is by the training institutions concerned and is usually at three or four qualification levels. At present, there is no centralized system for skills certification for sub-professional occupations. Myanmar needs to establish a national unified system for skills recognition. Currently in Myanmar, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology are the main sponsors of formal pre-employment education and training. Degree and diploma certificates provided by the Ministries concerned are officially recognized at the national level.

Myanmar, with MOLES as the focal Ministry, participated in the ASEAN project “Enhancing Skills Recognition Systems in ASEAN” from 2004 to 2008. The project recommended establishment an occupational competency standards framework for national certification with four levels:

- Level 1 – Semi- skilled worker/ assistant
- Level 2 – Skilled worker/journeyman
- Level 3 – Advanced skilled worker
- Level 4 – Technician/supervisor

Under the Project, the CLMV/T countries with assistance of the Project Team drew up, on a trial basis, a set of Subregional Competency Standards in the following occupations:

1. Welding

2. Concreter
3. Air conditioning mechanic
4. Poultry farm worker
5. Tour guide

The MOLES, with Cabinet approval, formed the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA) in October 2007. The NSSA is headed by the Deputy Minister of MOLES and is comprised of representatives from the training organizations under the various concerned Ministries and private sector agencies. The Director General of the Department of Labour is the Secretary of the NSSA.

The NSSA's functions include:

- Establishing occupational competency standards for occupations on a priority basis;
- Laying down policies and programmes for workforce development;
- Accrediting training providers, and testing providers and competency-based trainers and assessors, including those in the private sector;
- Overseeing assessment and certification of skilled workers at the national level; and
- Supervising the work of committees under NSSA.

The National Skills Qualifications Framework adopted by the NSSA has four levels:

Level 1 – Semi-skilled/helper/learner

Level 2 – Skilled worker

Level 3 – Advanced skilled worker

Level 4 – Supervisor/technician

The competency standards developed in Myanmar include

- Job description
- Skills required
- Level of skill required
- Conditions relating to work activity
- Performance criteria
- Evidence of competency

Table 7.8 on the next page provides more detailed and internationally referenced level descriptors.

Table 7.8: Descriptors for certification levels under the Myanmar National Skills Qualifications Framework

Qualification	Job level	Skill, knowledge and ability
Certificate 1	Semi-skill worker	Understands safety requirements; Has basic practical skills and operational knowledge in a defined range of tasks; Can carry out routine tasks given clear direction; Can receive and pass on information; Can access and record information; and Take limited responsibility
Certificate 2	Skilled worker	Has practical skills and operational knowledge in a range of tasks; Can carry out skilled tasks; and Take limited responsibility for output of self
Certificate 3	Advanced skilled worker	Has some theoretical knowledge; Has a range of well-developed skills; Can apply solutions to routine problems; Can interpret available information; and Can take responsibility for output of others
Certificate 4	Supervisor	Has a broad knowledge base, and can apply some theoretical concepts; Can identify and apply skills and knowledge; Can identify, analyze, and evaluate information; and Understands and can take responsibility for quality, safety, and environmental issues

Source: Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Government of Myanmar.

Since its formation, the NSSA has decided on the development (through the relevant Ministries) of occupational competency standards for 173 priority occupations in various economic sectors. Fifty-five competency standards have been approved by the Cabinet. Occupational Competency Standards Development Committees have been formed according to the various occupational clusters. The Occupational and Competency Standards Sector Committees are:

1. Metal and Engineering Industry Occupational Competency Standards Committee
2. Construction Occupational Competency Standards Committee
3. Woodworking Industry Occupational Competency Standards Committee
4. Agricultural Occupational Competency Standards Committee
5. Livestock and Fishery Occupational Competency Standards Committee
6. Transport Industry Occupational Competency Standards Committee
7. Mining Industry Occupational Competency Standards Committee

8. Information Technology Occupational Competency Standards Committee
9. Health Services Occupational Competency Standards Committee
10. Social Welfare Services Occupational Competency Standards Committee
11. Manufacturing Industry Occupational Competency Standards Committee
12. Commercial & Business Services Occupational Competency Standards Committee
13. Hotel and Tourism Occupational Competency Standards Committee
14. Oil and Natural Gases Occupational Competency Standards Committee

As stated above, a total of 55 occupational competency standards have been approved:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Concreter | 31. Apply finishing touches on garment |
| 2. Carpenter (construction) | 32. Upper maker |
| 3. Bricklayer | 33. Skiving operator |
| 4. Painter | 34. Assembler |
| 5. Tiler | 35. Upper sewer |
| 6. Structure steel worker | 36. Pattern maker |
| 7. Scaffolder | 37. Miner |
| 8. Pipe Fitter / plumber | 38. Drilling machine operator (mine) |
| 9. Roofer | 39. Flootation man |
| 10. Caretaker (building) | 40. Cyanide man |
| 11. Landscape gardener | 41. Electric arc furnace man |
| 12. Construction machine maintenance mechanic | 42. Bell boy |
| 13. Well digger | 43. Waiter |
| 14. Toll collector | 44. Hotel housekeeping operators (laundry attendant) |
| 15. Rubber plantation worker | 45. Public area clearer / attendant |
| 16. Palm oil plantation worker | 46. Hotel housekeeping operators (room attendant) |
| 17. Motorized farm equipment operator | 47. Bartender |
| 18. Motorized farm equipment mechanic | 48. Cook |
| 19. Cabinet maker | 49. Baker |
| 20. Saw bencher | 50. Butcher |
| 21. Wood saw operator | 51. Commis pastry |
| 22. Veneering operator | 52. Poultry farm worker |
| 23. Operation and maintenance supervisor (petroleum) | 53. Artificial insemination technician |
| 24. Boiler operator | 54. Hatchery / nursery technician |
| 25. Process control supervisor | 55. Pig breeder |
| 26. Lab technician (quality controller) | |
| 27. Drilling crew (derrick man, floor man) | |
| 28. Garment sewing machine operator | |
| 29. Draft and cut pattern of garment | |
| 30. Prepare and cut materials of garment | |

Competency standards include technical competencies for mastery of the knowledge and skills required for high job performance. Competency standards may also include generic competencies that apply to a whole range of jobs in the occupational stream. Several generic competencies have been identified with the broad aim of training high performing workers.

Ongoing work for the NSSA includes:

- designing the curriculum in all areas;
- training trainers and assessors;
- implementing the training programmes;
- implementing skill-testing programmes; and
- establishing national student certification systems.

An Accreditation and Certification Committee has been established by the NSSA. This Committee is headed by the Director General of the Industry Supervisory and Inspection Department of the Ministry of Industry. The Committee members are from senior levels of the various Ministries and associations concerned. The Committee is responsible for:

- Accreditation of Assessment Centres;
- Organizing the accreditation of training institutions using experts from the public and private sectors; and
- Inspection of testing by institutions based on the following competency standards:
 - assessment plan/facility;
 - assessment manual;
 - rules and regulations for certification, cancellation; and
 - renewal and validation.

The Employment and Skill Development Law was approved by the Parliament on 30 August 2013. A comprehensive industry-led human resources development system can now be established in Myanmar, closely linked to national economic and social development goals. There is now a window of 90 days during which the implementation regulations must be prepared by MOLES.

The Union Government will establish a Central Body to implement the Act. This will have at least seven members. Included are the mayors of Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, and Mandalay cities; the chair of the UMFCCI; and the chairs of Myanmar employers' and workers' organizations.

The Central Body will form a body which could be named the Myanmar Skills Development Agency. Included in this sub-committee are managing directors of relevant departments or enterprises; a representative of the UMFCCI; the chairs of technical organizations; representatives of Myanmar labour organizations; and representatives of Myanmar employer organizations. The Skill Development Team will prescribe skills, register training institutions, and accredit training programmes.

The Skills Development Agency shall form two committees to enable it to carry out its functions:

- The Skill Standards Committee, and
- The Skill Standards Assessment and Certification Committee.

The Central Body will also establish the (provisionally named) Employment Development Agency to promote employment and reduce unemployment.

The Ministry of Education is currently Employee Skill Development Fund through a levy of 0.5 per cent on wages and salaries, to be paid by employers.undertaking a Comprehensive Education Sector Review that includes a review of TVET and the future establishment of a full eight-level qualifications framework, which will build upon the four levels adopted by MOLES. In the medium term, that wider framework has the potential to allow for regional recognition of the qualifications of technician, technologist, and professional workers from Myanmar.

7.6.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

Some immediate challenges for TVET in Myanmar include:

- Capacity building to promote the establishment and implementation of the new skills recognition and certification system;
- The development of instructional resources and the upgrading of training infrastructure and equipment;
- The training of trainers and assessors;
- The development of market-responsive skills development programmes meeting the needs of the economy;
- Resourcing for the nationwide expansion of TVET training opportunities closely linked to employment nationally and within ASEAN; and
- Technical expertise for the implementation of quality assurance, assessment, curriculum design and development, and for establishing a rigorous national certification process.

The Skills Training Centres suffer from a shortage of qualified instructors and need a core team of competent personnel. There is generally a lack of upgraded teaching aids, machinery and equipment. There is a weak relationship between the training centres and industry. There is an urgent need for technical assistance and financial support for sustainable development. This includes internet facilities to obtain the required information, such as training materials and up-to-date curriculum, to upgrade the quality of courses and to disseminate information about the approved skill standards.

7.7 The Philippines

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimates that 10 per cent of the population of the Philippines, or around 9 million people, are working overseas as temporary workers at any given time. In 2012, there were 2.08 million landbased workers and 0.45 million seabased workers sent abroad (re-hires and new hires) (POEA, 2012). These migrants are identified as Overseas Filipino Workers. Commonly, Filipinos are deployed overseas as domestic workers, medical professionals, construction workers, maritime workers, seafarers and IT experts, amongst others. They travel to countries across the world, including to Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, Australia, and North America. A majority are women working as domestic helpers and personal service workers. The exodus includes skilled workers taking on unskilled work overseas, resulting in what has been referred to as a brain drain, particularly in the health and education sectors.

Table 7.9 Number of workers with contracts processed by type: 2008-2012

Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	1 464 295	1 479 070	1 644 439	1 850 463	2 083 223
Landbased workers	1 005 538	1 043 555	1 205 734	1 384 094	1 629 867
New hires	394 977	362 878	424 977	517 311	554 665
Rehires	610 561	680 677	780 757	866 783	1 075 202
Seabased workers	458 757	435 515	438 705	466 369	453 356

Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 2008-2012 *Overseas Employment Statistics*.

In 2012, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the central bank of the Philippines, expected official remittances coursed through banks and agents to grow 5 per cent over 2011 to US\$21 billion, noting that official remittances were only a fraction of all remittances. Remittances by unofficial, including illegal, channels are estimated by the Asian Bankers Association to be 30 to 40 per cent higher than the official BSP figure. The Philippines is the fourth largest recipient of official remittances after China, India, and Mexico. Remittances from overseas Filipinos represent 13.5 per cent of the country's GDP, the largest in proportion to the domestic economy among the top four remittance-receiving countries. In 2012, approximately 80 per cent of the remittances came from only seven countries: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Japan.

The Philippine formal education system is managed by three central government agencies: the Department of Education (DepEd) for basic (elementary and high school) education; the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for TVET; and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The TESDA, which began implementing reforms leading to a quality assured competency-based TVET system in 1998, formally established and defined a national qualifications framework for TVET in 2003. Known as the Philippine TVET Qualifications Framework (PTQF), it defined four levels of qualifications: National Certificates I to IV. National TVET qualifications based on units of competency were developed with industry stakeholders and promulgated by TESDA in priority industry sectors. The PTQF therefore gives national recognition to the attainment of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in middle-level occupations. These qualifications are called “national”, a term restricted to TESDA-promulgated qualifications developed by a TESDA-recognized national industry or professional body. The qualifications are attained by students and workers after undergoing national assessment as defined in the promulgated Training Regulations. The PTQF is underpinned by the following general principles:

- National qualifications correspond to meaningful broad-based employment and are based on, and packaged from, industry-verified competencies together with learning outcomes from necessary underpinning general education;
- National qualifications promote life-long learning and provide for recognition of prior learning through which workers and learners can have their present skills and knowledge recognized and be given credit towards a qualification at any level regardless of how or where the competencies were acquired; and

- National qualifications allow for the accumulation of units of competency through workers having their specific competencies assessed and progressively certificated with a Certificate of Competency. Completion of all required competencies entitles the student or worker to a national qualification after successful national assessment.

Training Regulations have been promulgated by TESDA for:

1. Agriculture and Fishery
2. Automotive and Land Transport
3. Construction
4. Decorative Crafts
5. Electronics
6. Footwear
7. Furniture and Fixtures
8. Garments
9. Health, Social, and other Community Development Services
10. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning/ Refrigeration
11. Information and Communication Technology
12. Maritime
13. Metals and Engineering
14. Processed Food and Beverages
15. Pyrotechnics
16. Tourism
17. TVET
18. Utilities
19. Wholesale and Retail Trading

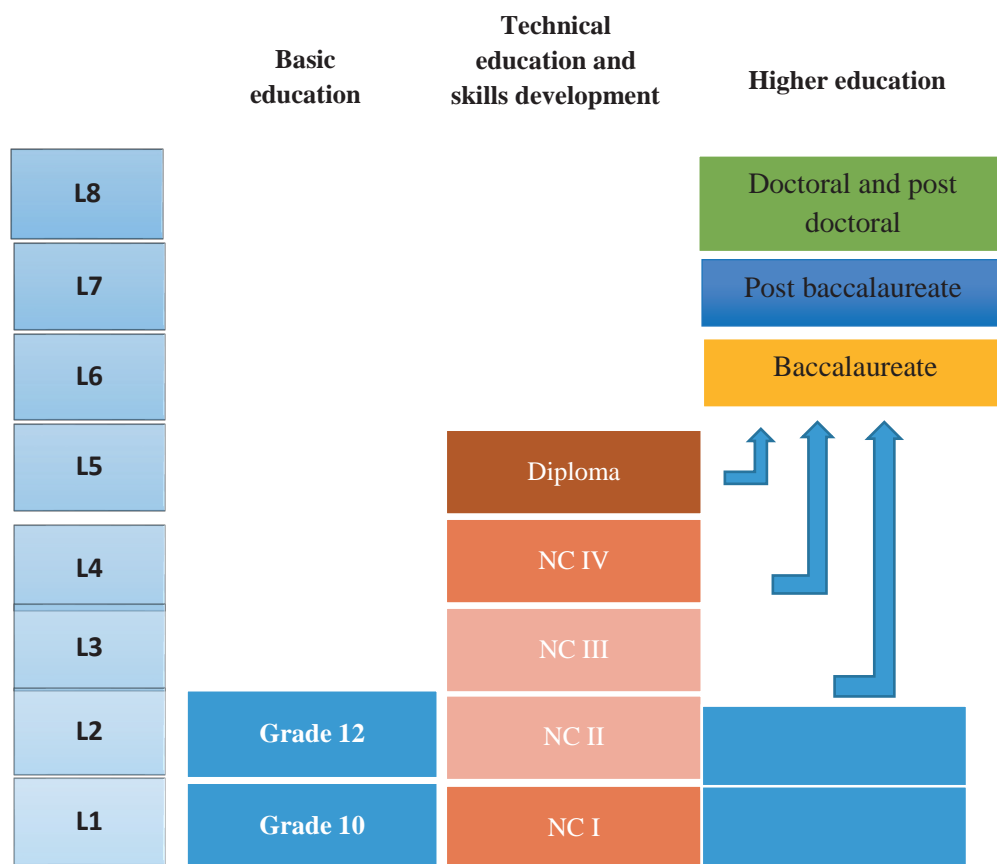
Qualifications promulgated for the PTQF should meet all requirements for benchmarking with the emerging ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. It should therefore be possible for Philippine technical and vocational qualifications to be recognized throughout the AEC from 2015. AEC cross-border recognition of Philippine higher education qualifications will need to wait for the new Philippine Qualifications Framework (see Figure 7.8) to be implemented.

The move towards a wider national qualifications framework covering all three sectors of education, and not just TVET, received impetus through the issuance of a presidential executive order in 2004 promoting a unified qualifications framework as part of the national move towards ladderized education. Ladderization is now well established in the Philippines, with diploma exit points available to students in baccalaureate and graduate programmes. Further impetus has been provided by Executive Order No. 83, s. 2012, dated 1 October 2012 and entitled “Institutionalization of the Philippine Qualifications Framework”.

The new Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) established by the Executive Order encourages life-long learning by ensuring that qualifications in the three sectors of education and training are strongly connected, with increased opportunities for ladderization. Ladderization refers to opportunities for learners to have credit transfer or to progress from one area of learning to another, so as to achieve personal development goals. In addition, a unified national qualifications framework can make possible value chains of skills development and industry investment. For example, in the forestry sector, the value chain could promote increasing returns, beginning with initial harvesting and extending to

transportation, milling, the development of specialty products such as composites, and furniture manufacturing; and then including business management and marketing. Increasingly high level skills are needed, and value is added to the harvested timber at each point along the value chain. A fully unified qualifications framework has the potential to provide the planning “connectivity” for a forestry sector-wide skills and capability needs analysis that can be linked directly to market opportunities and ultimately to applied research; that establishes the potential to minimize transfer costs between each step; and promotes education and training at all levels. A similar approach can be applied to traditional areas such as agriculture, as well as to tourism, and to the development of new technology-based industries, or perhaps to national initiatives aimed at meeting international labour market opportunities in targeted areas (such as in information technology), thereby creating employment and remittance potential for individuals and families in ASEAN.

Figure 7.8: Illustration of the Philippine Qualifications Framework



Source: TESDA, Philippines, 2003.

The following information is from Executive Order No. 83, s. 2012:

Section 1. Establishment of the Philippine Qualifications Framework

The Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF) is hereby established with the following objectives:

1. to adopt national standards and levels for outcomes of education;
2. to support the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies that 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 labour market; and
3. to align the PQF with international qualifications frameworks to support the national and international mobility of workers through the increased recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications.

Section 2. PQF Coordinating Committee

The PQF National Coordinating Committee is hereby created to be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education with the following as members:

- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- Commission of Higher Education (CHED);
- Department of Labour and Employment; and
- Professional Regulations Commission (PRC).

Section 4. Participation of the Industry Sector

Industry Sector representatives shall be consulted and tapped in the detailing and application of the PQF to ensure alignment of educational outcomes to job requirements.

Section 6. Learning Standards

DepEd, TESDA, and CHED shall make detailed descriptors of each qualification level based on *learning standards in basic education, competency standards or training regulations*, and *the policies and standards of higher education academic programmes*. They shall jointly implement national pilot programmes to determine their relevance and applicability in all levels of education.

Section 7. Review of Licensure Examination

The PRC and CHED shall *review the framework and contents of the licensure examinations of each of the professions and align them with that of the PQF*.

Section 8. Technical Secretariat

To ensure efficient and effective implementation, DepEd, TESDA, and CHED shall organize from their present staff complements a permanent Technical Secretariat.

The PQF has been developed to establish a coherent national and internationally benchmarked structure for all qualifications awarded in the Philippines. The features and requirements of the PQF also promote the national and international relevance of qualifications so that workers have the skills and knowledge necessary to support national economic and social development. Through the internationally benchmarked PQF, graduates will have enhanced recognition and be more readily employable; skilled Filipino workers will be even more sought after in the international market place; and the Philippines can become an increasingly attractive nation for international investment because of the skills of its workforce.

The PQF will cover all levels of both formal and non-formal education, from completion of the high-school certificate at grade 10 and the diploma at grade 12, to certificates for initial employment in the workplace through to the highest academic qualifications. All qualifications defined in the PQF will be quality assured to a consistent national standard so that there will be national and international confidence not only in their academic and competency standards and their vocational relevance, but also in the quality of teaching, assessment, and the valid awarding of officially recognized Philippine qualifications.

The PQF has three broad component sectors that correspond to the three sectors of Philippine education and training. The foundation is basic education, with the certificate and diploma awarded to students who graduate from grades 10 and 12 in secondary schools respectively. This leads to two tracks: 1. technical education and skills development, and 2. higher education. The existing four levels of vocational certificate in the PTQF will be retained within the PQF and extended to technical and vocational diplomas. In higher education, there is the standard international qualifications sequence from the initial baccalaureate degree to the doctorate. Internationally-referenced definitions of all qualifications are needed to establish a sequence of learning achievements and ladderization pathways for learners across the entire qualifications framework.

The PQF will promote credit transfer through articulated, embedded, and bridging mechanisms among qualifications, thereby facilitating student pathways and progression:

- 1 **Credit transfer** where students are able to carry credit forward from one qualification to another because the learning outcomes overlap;
- 2 **Articulated programmes** where the learning outcomes achieved for the completion of one qualification provide a sound platform for entering a more advanced programme;
- 3 **Embedded programmes** where one qualification is nested fully within another, providing an intermediate exit (or entry) point for learners; and
- 4 **Bridging programmes** where there is a learning gap between qualifications requiring a “bridge” so that students can make up the difference and enter the more advanced programme.

The PQF has been designed to provide opportunities for students and workers to have flexible pathways and a variety of learning entry and exit points responding to changes in a person’s career and lifestyle. The PQF structure will also help an individual navigate a learning pathway given the planned linkages among school, work-based, technical/vocational, and academic qualifications. Through the strong commitment to ladderization, bachelor’s degrees offered by the higher education sector may often have a certificate or a diploma embedded within them bearing credit towards the degree.

The agreed level descriptors define a progression from Levels 1 to 8 based on:

- Knowledge, skills, and values;
- Application; and
- Degree of independence.

To implement Executive Order No. 83, s. 2012, five Technical Working Groups (TWGs) have been established:

1. TWG for the Qualifications Register (Chair: TESDA)

Function:

- Establish, maintain/update the database of all qualifications that have been entered into the PQF Register, as aligned with the descriptors of the PQF in the eight levels, in coordination with the pertinent offices of CHED, TESDA, and DepEd; and
- Provide regular, timely data/information to the PQF Secretariat and to the employers, trainers, trainees, and other stakeholders;

2. TWG for Pathways and Equivalencies (Chair: CHED)

Function:

- Establish equivalency pathways and equivalency systems for seamless educational transfer and/or progression between education levels corresponding to the PQF levels; and
- Develop a National System of Credit Grant and Transfer inter and intra qualifications.

3. TWG for Quality Assurance (Chair: CHED)

Functions:

- Establish a convergence system for the Regional Quality Assessment Team (RQUAT), the TESDA Quality Management System (QMS) on UTPRAS¹⁰, the Competency Assessment and Certification (CAC), and the PRC QMS; and
- Facilitate the reporting and review of the various quality assurance systems by the National Coordinating Committee.

4. TWG for Information and Guidelines (Chair: DepED)

Functions:

- Formulate guidelines, circulars and policy issuances for the approval of the National Coordinating Committee; and
- Develop information, education and communications materials to promote and advocate the PQF.

¹⁰ UTPRAS refers to the Unified TVET Program Registration Accreditation System.

5. TWG for International Alignment (Chair: PRC)

Functions:

- Conduct research/studies for comparability/benchmarking of Philippine qualifications with other countries and regional/international groupings; and
- Coordinate with other related international organizations in the pursuit of mutual recognition arrangements/agreements.

7.7.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

The Philippines now has the challenging task of implementing the PQF so as to be ready for the forthcoming benchmarking with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. The potential benefits for skilled Filipino workers migrating within the AEC of 600 million people are substantial.

Some policy issues remain to be addressed by the Technical Working Groups. It is not clear whether the PQF as currently designed accommodates national certificates and diplomas as well as certificates and diplomas developed by institutions and enterprises. Some additional policy development is required so as to establish internationally-referenced definitions for qualifications, especially in higher education. As the central agencies will be inputting data on qualifications to the PQF website, all should have identical interpretations of the qualifications definitions and the level descriptors.

The requirements for specification of programmes in higher education in outcome terms need to be developed. For this, the policies of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency may be instructive.

Achieving a common standard for quality assurance across the central agencies will be complex, but there are some useful examples of international good practice from which to design a Philippine model. Given the importance (and success) of ladderization in the Philippines, it will be necessary to develop a model of quality assurance practice that avoids duplication, especially where TVET certificates and diplomas are embedded in degrees. Higher education institutions and secondary schools offering TVET qualifications will need to satisfy requirements laid down by TESDA for quality assurance so the institutions and details of courses offered towards TVET qualifications, or partial TVET qualifications, can be entered on the PQF national database and website. Secondary schools offering TVET programmes will need to have these quality assured. In some cases it is envisaged that secondary schools will want to offer a programme made up of only some units of a full National Certificate. Current TESDA certification arrangements allow for certification of a cluster of competencies leading ultimately to a National Certificate.

Having the Professional Regulation Commission closely involved with the development of the PQF will provide a strong impetus to ensure that all qualifications registered with the PQF meet stakeholder, including professional body, requirements.

Decisions need to be made as to whether or not to adopt a national credit system, as in Malaysia, for example, or whether to indicate qualifications volume requirements some other way (as in Australia). The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a student-centred system developed for higher education and based on the total student time required to achieve the objectives of a programme – objectives preferably specified in terms

of the learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired. ECTS is based on the principle that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time higher education student during one academic year. Credit can only be granted after successful completion of the work required and successful assessment of the learning outcomes achieved. The ECTS provides a common measure of student workload linked to learning outcomes that can be recognized for the purposes of credit transfer. Noting that the system was developed for higher education, New Zealand adopted a credit measure of 120 credits for a full year programme, so as to accommodate the shorter qualifications and smaller component units in TVET and work-based training. This is now also being considered for skills qualifications in Malaysia where the current credit rating is more suitable for higher education. The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training is aligned with the ECTS, with 60 credits for a standard year of training.

It is worth noting the policies of the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) organization, which was founded in 1993 as a voluntary association of government and non-government representatives of the higher education sector across the Asia-Pacific. UMAP has developed a pilot UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme to facilitate greater student mobility in the region by providing a framework for establishing credit transfer arrangements. The UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme model has adopted the outcomes-based European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in order to assist and facilitate student mobility and create a flexible mean of transferring grades between participating universities, countries/territories, and governments.

A really important issue will be the designing of the Philippine Register of Qualifications, which meet the PQF standard, as this register will be the basis for negotiating recognition throughout ASEAN. Along with the design, there will need to be careful consideration as to how to progressively enter into the Register all recognized Philippine qualifications. A national classification system for qualifications will be required. The existing classification systems of TESDA and CHED are unlikely to suffice. The TWGs may consider taking into account national reporting obligations to international agencies (such as UNESCO and the ILO) when determining the website classification system. The Philippine Standard Classification for Education is derived from International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Several years ago, Australia and New Zealand jointly agreed to a common classification system, also derived from ISCED, of 12 broad categories:

- Natural and physical sciences
- Information technology
- Engineering and related technologies
- Architecture and building
- Agriculture, environment, and related studies
- Health
- Education
- Management and commerce
- Society and culture
- Creative arts
- Food, hospitality, and personal services
- Mixed field programmes

As qualifications are confirmed by central agencies as meeting the PQF requirements, they can be entered on the combined database and website along with the details of the institutions

authorized to offer them. The TWG could consider that the following core data be supplied to the central agencies for all qualifications to be entered on the database:

- The title of the qualification, conforming to the PQF;
- The name/s of the provider/s of the qualification;
- An outcome statement indicating what it is that the whole qualification represents in terms of the application of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes;
- Summary detail of the components of the qualification and their learning outcomes, which, in their combination, make up the complete qualification;
- Information as to where further information and other information on the provider is available;
- Summary detail of the regulatory quality assured status of the qualification; and
- Summary detail of stakeholder endorsement of the qualification.

Those responsible for providing career advice to prospective students, and representatives of industry and professional bodies, should be asked to comment on the adequacy and suitability of the above proposed core data.

The central agencies should promote the website nationally and internationally. That will lead to increased confidence in human resources development among stakeholders with recognition and mobility benefits for students and workers. It will also promote confidence among companies considering investing in the Philippines or purchasing Philippine goods and services. The National Coordinating Committee may consider briefing diplomatic representatives at some future date, especially those from key ASEAN and other trading partners or whose countries are key destinations for Overseas Filipino Workers or migrants.

A meeting with leaders of the ASEAN Constructors Federation reinforced the value of the ILO investing further in the development of additional Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS). These will assist developing countries in ASEAN as they kick-start their TVET national qualifications systems, but would provide a useful resource for the common certification of high-performing workers for the ASEAN construction industry. The Federation has membership from seven ASEAN countries, has a close partnership with trade unions, and hopes to be able to bid for very large infrastructure and construction projects using teams of ASEAN workers assembled from several member countries. It would be useful for the ILO to consult with ASEAN countries on priority skills areas. Training for maids and for the construction sector would seem to be a priority. There could also be a link to the ASEAN Tourism competency standards from the RMCS website. Up to now the ASEAN Constructors Federation has been working with TESDA to use their competency standards regionally. The ILO may need to have two levels of RMCS: the current simplified form as well as full RMCS that can be used for training and assessment.

7.8 Singapore

Singapore is a thriving city-state, with a population of about 5.31 million¹¹. To support the Singapore economy, which has seen rapid economic growth since the 1970s, the Government's workforce development system has been able to move effectively to deliver

¹¹ Figures as at June 2012, and according to Department of Statistics Singapore: <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/>

the skills required to support economic restructuring, from primarily labour-intensive industry (1960s–1970s), through a more capital-intensive phase (1970s–1980s), and since the 1990s, to a policy focus on building a knowledge-intensive and higher value-added economy. The system’s effectiveness in delivering demand-led skills has been supported by the close tripartite partnership between the Government, unions, and stakeholders, as well as a coordinated approach within government. Workforce development has been central to meeting the Government’s strategic economic plans and coping with current and future change in a highly open economy (World Bank, 2012). This can partly be seen in the Government’s strong emphasis on formal education, which has contributed to the higher educational profile of Singapore’s workforce over the past decade (Government of Singapore, 2013).

Singapore’s key strategy to growth in the next decade will be growth based on productivity, rather than expanding the use of resources, to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic development. The Government therefore considers it important for companies to continue to invest in productivity improvements, to improve the skills of their workers, and to reduce their reliance on manpower additions to achieve business growth. The Government has supported the move towards a productivity-driven economy through introducing various programmes and incentives, such as the Productivity and Innovation Credit to help businesses and individuals in the country raise their productivity. As these measures aim to improve the quality of labour in the country, it is therefore clear that the ASEAN Leaders’ commitment to promote the freer flow of skilled labour and professional workers would not only be of benefit to Singapore, but to ASEAN as a region. Singapore President Tony Tan was quoted in *The Straits Times* as being confident that the AEC will be realized by 2015, stating that more than 80 per cent of all objectives have already been attained (*The Straits Times*, 31 May 2013). He indicated that the Community will be very useful in strengthening economic ties among ASEAN countries while opening up new opportunities and developments. He stated that all ASEAN countries look forward to it.

Notwithstanding this, it is important to acknowledge that the demand and acceptance of skilled labour ultimately depends on hiring decisions made at the company level, and such demand and acceptance are determined by market forces. It is therefore critical for a country to build up its nationals’ skills competency so that its workers are recognized by employers both within and outside its boundaries. Given the diverse economies of the ASEAN Member States, a regional qualifications framework will also need to take into account unique national contexts and necessary localized regulations.

Two Ministries have the principal roles in human resources development in Singapore: the Ministry of Education, which oversees the public school system and the registration of private schools undertaken by its statutory board, the Council for Private Education; and the Ministry of Manpower, including its statutory board, the Workforce Development Agency.

The Ministry of Education directs the formulation and implementation of education policies. It has strong oversight of the development and administration of most primary schools, secondary schools, junior colleges, etc., which fall within the ambit of the national school system. It also registers private schools, aided by the Council of Private Education (CPE). Higher education institutions in Singapore can be categorized into publicly funded and non-publicly funded institutions or organizations. Publicly funded institutions are overseen by the Ministry of Education. Publicly funded universities are established by individual Acts of Parliament and are operationally autonomous, self-governing, and confer degrees, diplomas,

and/or certificates. Policy guidelines for admission standards, enrolment levels, student payments, etc. are the purview of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry approves requests for new programmes and programme changes. These publicly funded institutions offer a comprehensive range of post-secondary education and training opportunities for young people and mature adults. These institutions can be divided into four types: universities, polytechnics, specialized arts institutions, and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).

There are four publicly-funded autonomous universities. The National University of Singapore and the Nanyang Technological University have initiated a number of innovative programmes, including the broadening of undergraduate education, the introduction of a core curriculum, collaborations with top foreign universities, and the establishment of interdisciplinary centres. The Singapore Management University offers a broad-based business curriculum modelled after that of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The Singapore University of Technology and Design is the newest addition to the university landscape. This new university nurtures technically grounded leaders and innovators for society and was established in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Zhejiang University.

In addition, there is one publicly-funded university: SIM University, which provides university education to working professionals and adult learners by adopting a flexible learning approach to enable its learners to balance their career, family, and studies. The Ministry of Education provides fees subsidies for eligible Singaporean students attending SIM University's part-time undergraduate degree programmes.

The autonomous universities primarily offer full-time degree programmes and a few select post-graduate diploma courses. Degree regulations are relatively similar at all universities and in line with good international practice. For example at the National University of Singapore, a programme leading to a Bachelor's degree requires a minimum of 120 modular credits. A student will typically take about three years to complete such a programme. A programme leading to a Bachelor's degree with Honours requires a student to complete a minimum of 160 modular credits. It will usually take a student about four years to complete an Honours programme. The Graduate Diploma programme requires a minimum of 24 modular credits.

There is collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower in some areas. The Workforce Skills Qualification Graduate Diploma in Precision Engineering (Design and Processes) is a joint programme offered by the Nanyang Technological University Centre for Continuing Education and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). The objective of the course is to inculcate the core competencies, including fundamental knowledge and skills in precision engineering design, and processes necessary for managers and engineers in precision engineering-related manufacturing industries.

The polytechnics in Singapore (i.e., Nanyang Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Republic Polytechnic, Singapore Polytechnic, and Temasek Polytechnic) were set up with the mission to develop a practice-oriented workforce with the relevant knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the economy. Apart from pre-employment training, the polytechnics are also significant providers of continuing education and training for professional development. The polytechnics provide a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes leading to diploma, post diploma, and certificate qualifications. The polytechnics provide a large variety of programmes across many fields such as engineering, health sciences, business and

management, information and digital technologies, applied sciences, and design. They constantly review their course offerings in response to the changing needs of the economy.

LASALLE College of the Arts and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts are private institutions providing post-secondary education in the arts. Both LASALLE and the Nanyang Academy offer publicly-funded diploma programmes. The institutions also receive government funding for select degree programmes offered in partnership with reputable overseas universities.

Another public post-secondary education option is with the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), which offers technical and vocational education and training programmes for school leavers and workers. Full-time training in these programmes is available for students who have completed secondary school with either GCE “O” or “N” qualifications. ITE offers over 100 full-time courses across its three colleges. There are two basic levels of qualifications under the National ITE Certificate (NITEC) system of certification. Depending on students’ achievements in schools, their aptitudes, and their interests, they may enrol in the NITEC or Higher NITEC programmes at ITE, which are one- to two-year programmes in the Schools of Engineering, Business & Services, Electronics & Info-Communications Technology, Applied & Health Sciences, Hospitality, and Design & Media. ITE also offers a Technical Diploma in selected disciplines.

There are articulation pathways for progression from ITE to the polytechnics, and from polytechnics to the universities, primarily based on merit. There is also porosity between alternative pathways to cater to students with different learning needs and talents.

The non-public sector of higher education comprises a diverse range of private education institutions that are regulated by the Council for Private Education (CPE), a statutory board under the Ministry of Education, established in 2009 under the Private Education Act. Under the Private Education Act, private education institutions seeking to offer any full-time certificate programme, or any diploma or degree-level programme, are only allowed to operate if they are registered with the CPE.

A range of industry-specific diploma and degree programmes is also offered by educational institutions that are affiliated with or part of government agencies, and such qualifications are regulated with a light touch from the CPE. For example, the BCA Academy, the education and research arm of the Building and Construction Authority offers full-time diploma programmes – as well as other courses, seminars, and workshops – in construction, design, and engineering. Such educational institutions and their programmes are not funded by the Ministry of Education. It is unclear how formal qualifications from these agencies can be articulated with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework for skills recognition throughout ASEAN.

In addition to the above programmes and qualifications, the Ministry of Manpower, through the WDA, oversees the Continuing Education and Training (CET) system for adults and all members of the workforce. The aim of CET is to equip the workforce with the required competencies to ensure they remain employable, that industries benefit from enhanced work performance from skilled workers, and that these skilled workers ultimately contribute to the economic growth of Singapore. The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) System has been developed to be the main vocational CET framework in Singapore to provide for the training and education needs of all levels of the workforce. The WSQ system

was developed to support the economic development of Singapore and to enable all in the Singapore workforce to have access to quality, reliable, and relevant CET programmes. At the national level, the WSQ system strives to ensure that the skills requirements of existing and new emerging sectors are met, and that all workers are equipped with competencies that are portable and that would support their lifelong employability. At the sectoral/industry level, the WSQ system aims to deepen the competencies and expertise of industries, professionalize their workforces, and enhance the productivity of their workers. At the individual worker level, the WSQ system seeks to enhance the provision of quality programmes that would support the training needs and aspirations of all workers, provide access to formal programmes leading to industry recognized qualifications, and allow progression of learning within WSQ or serve as the connection to other qualifications systems for further learning and progression where applicable. WSQ is based on national standards developed by the WDA in collaboration with industries.

The WSQ system is designed to be a practical, accessible and affordable launching pad for individuals to take charge of their own careers and advancement. It is also a powerful business tool for employers to access and maintain a skilled workforce as it enhances their competitive edge and advances their businesses. The key features of the system are:

- It is an occupational and competency-based system, designed to build industry-specific capabilities.
- There are both singular and flexible training modules, with the option to implement as-is, or build up to full qualifications.
- Assessment and certification are based on ability to demonstrate the industry's required capabilities.
- The system is accessible to all workers and professionals.
- The system recognizes prior learning, such as work experience.
- Qualifications and certifications are based on industry-agreed standards.
- WSQ qualifications are comparable with credentials issued by international and local awarding bodies.

WSQ is underpinned by a strong quality assurance framework. From developing competency standards, to accrediting training providers, to awarding WSQ qualifications, stringent criteria are applied to ensure best standards and delivery. A structured and efficient system has been established to help build a strong training infrastructure that supports Singapore's workforce development.

According to Johnny Sung (2011), professor of Skills and Performance, University of Leicester, industry leaders, training institutions and unions work together in the Industry Skills and Training Councils (ISTCs) to identify the skills required in the industry and to develop the industry-specific WSQ. The ISTCs also review the learning outcomes to ensure the framework remains current and relevant. The roles of these councils include developing a sector strategic plan and CET framework with the WDA; establishing a skills profile and identifying skills gaps; developing competency maps; and providing advice on the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) to the WDA. Having received skills profiles and competency maps from the ISTCs, the WDA has its own curriculum design division to design the various levels of WSQ qualifications, as well as the maintenance of these qualifications. However, unlike other countries where the qualifications authorities tend to be a separate entity, the curriculum and qualifications maintenance work is part of the WDA. The immediate benefit of this is that the WDA is more able to maintain control and take quick action when required

in the WSQ system in relation to skill training activities. After six years of development almost from scratch, the WSQ system now covers 31 sectors of the economy.

Below is the list of 31 industry and occupational frameworks:

1. Aerospace
2. Assembly & test
3. Business management
4. Clinical research
5. Community and social services
6. Creative industries
7. Early childhood care and education (ECCE)
8. Environmental cleaning
9. Financial industry competency standards
10. Floristry
11. Food & beverage
12. Generic manufacturing skills
13. Healthcare support
14. Human resource
15. Landscape
16. Leadership and people management
17. National infocomm competency framework
18. Occupational hygiene professionals WSQ framework
19. Port services
20. Precision engineering
21. Process industry
22. Public transport
23. Retail
24. Security
25. Service excellence
26. Textile and fashion technology
27. Tourism
28. Workplace safety and health for marine
29. Training and adult education
30. Wafer fabrication
31. Workplace safety and health (WSH) professional

The system has seven levels (See Figure 7.9), ranging from the basic entry (certificate) level to the Graduate Diploma (similar to the UK Foundation Degree). The basic design of the WSQ has been influenced by the Australian and the UK qualifications frameworks.

Figure 7.9: Illustration of the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) framework



Source: Adapted from Singapore Workforce Development Agency, 2012.

The system caters to working adults, and is delivered through quality assured public and private institutions, such as the Institute of Technical Education, polytechnics, and universities. Qualifications focus on job competencies – having the capabilities to perform a job at an industry expected level. These capabilities are comprised of three skill sets: employability, industry, and occupational skills. Employability skills are generic skills needed in all industries. Industry skills are broad foundation skills relevant to a particular industry. Occupational skills are required for a specific work role or roles in an industry.

The WSQ can benefit all levels of workers, including those without academic qualifications but with verifiable skills. This is possible because the WSQ can recognize previous training, work experience, and current qualifications in addition to academic achievements.

The WSQ system, with its range of qualifications from certificate to graduate diploma level, is an industry-specific training road map. The WSQ level and qualification descriptors describe the overall and detailed learning outcomes of each WSQ level and qualification. Complexity at each WSQ qualifications level is determined by:

- The kind of knowledge and skills involved;
- The kinds of issues or problems that the knowledge and skills are applied to;
- The amount of accountability, independence, self-organization or organization of others that is required to solve problems or complete tasks; and
- The occupational levels and range and depth of the knowledge and skills required for the jobs that the qualifications relates to.

Every WSQ qualification contains a set of training modules derived from competency units. Upon completion of a module, trainees receive a Statement of Attainment. The WSQ qualification is awarded upon completion of all modules. This certifies that the holder has the skills, knowledge, and attitude for several job functions within an occupation and industry.

Besides providing clarity for progression and articulation, and promoting consistency in the assembly of qualifications from competency units, the qualifications levels also help training providers and employers decide on the appropriate certification level required for an employee's skills upgrade.

The WDA manages and monitors the quality of training providers and their programmes through pre-delivery accreditation and post-delivery monitoring, to ensure the effectiveness of the training. The WDA and its stakeholders also monitor the outcomes of all training and assessment under the WSQ.

The WDA is also the awarding body of WSQ modular certifications and qualifications. The quality of WSQ training programmes and assessments are ensured through the WSQ's quality assurance regime, which accredits WSQ training providers and curricula. The WSQ quality assurance regime focuses on the following elements:

- Approval of WSQ training providers;
- WSQ course accreditation;
- Establishment of benchmark standards for trainers, assessors, and curriculum developers;
- Continuous Improvement Reviews of WSQ training providers;
- Policy guidelines, advice, and support for WSQ training providers; and
- Security systems and careful management of the issuance of WSQ credentials.

The WSQ quality assurance framework includes pre-accreditation and continuous accreditation mechanisms, to ensure quality, reliability, and recognition of WSQ programmes, credentials, and qualifications. During the pre-accreditation stage, potential WSQ training providers are subjected to checks on their organizational status and track record as well as their processes and systems to ensure quality course design and delivery. Curriculum and assessment materials are checked, as are the credentials of training providers' personnel, including management, trainers, assessors, and curriculum developers.

After training providers have successfully been WSQ accredited, they are subjected to annual review audits that look into four main areas – their internal quality assurance system of course design, development, and delivery; adult educator management system; outcome evaluation system; and administrative system – to determine if they can continue their status as WSQ training providers.

7.8.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

There is no doubt that post-secondary qualifications awarded in Singapore are of high quality and relevance. Other ASEAN members will be confident about recognizing Singaporean qualifications held by migrant workers who are graduates of such a well regulated sector.

It is worth noting that while the majority of qualifications are awarded through institutions regulated by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower, there are other agencies in Singapore, including Ministries that award qualifications. This may pose some issues for mutual recognition in the AEC.

Of concern for the robust implementation of the AEC will be the level of recognition that can be fairly granted to qualifications other than degrees. Nomenclature and academic regulations for degrees awarded in Singapore are in line with international good practice, so mutual

recognition of degrees should not be difficult. However the terms certificate and diploma (often with qualifiers such as “professional”, “executive”, or “international”) are used interchangeably and with much less precision by public and private institutions. This will be problematic for fair skills recognition within ASEAN. Officials in Singapore are currently consulting with stakeholders on the emerging details of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. It is hoped that the lack of precision in the use of sub-degree qualifications nomenclature in Singapore will be an issue taken up for early resolution. If not addressed, this will potentially impact negatively on migrant workers whose qualifications may be accorded lesser status than deserved because there is no consistently applied benchmark in Singapore showing a progressive ladder of attainment for sub-degree qualifications.

For example, it would be unfair if a migrant worker from Singapore with a Diploma in Bridal Make-Up and Hair Design (June’s Beauty School, 1.5 months full-time) were to be rated equally elsewhere in ASEAN with a migrant worker with a Diploma in Hotel and Leisure Facilities Management (Singapore Polytechnic, three years full-time). Similarly, migrant workers arriving in Singapore with advanced qualifications at the Diploma level should be able to expect a system to be in place to determine a fair rating for their qualifications.

7.9 Thailand

In its 2012–13 ASEAN Business Outlook Survey (AMCHAM Singapore & US Chamber of Commerce, 2012), the American Chamber of Commerce noted a very positive outlook on investment opportunities in Thailand, and that economic integration from 2015 would further promote intra-regional trade and investment. United States investors also expressed the hope that efforts will continue to expand the availability of skilled labour to support their continued investment in the ASEAN region.

IOM’s Thailand Migration Report 2011 outlines why Thailand is such an attractive destination for migrant workers. The report notes that the nature of economic development in a more globalized world has strengthened the role of international migration in the economy of Thailand. Growing income disparities among countries provide an incentive to migrate. The report notes that labour migration has been stimulated by the manufacturing sector, where companies employ both highly skilled and low-skilled migrant workers. Migration is facilitated by private recruitment and placement agencies, as well as government placement agencies, such as is the case for migration to the Republic of Korea through the Employment Permit System. The Government of Thailand has promoted the country as a destination for international tourism, medical care, secondary and tertiary education, and retirement, each of which leads to an increase in international migration (IOM, 2011).

While most attention is focused on low-skilled migration to Thailand, the country’s open economy attracts a large numbers of professional, managerial, and highly skilled workers from a wide range of countries around the world, including ASEAN professionals. In 2010, more than 100,000 foreigners held work permits in these occupations (IOM, 2011).

The website of the Thai Ministry of Immigration makes it clear that preparations are underway for the AEC beginning in 2015 and that Thailand should be well prepared.

The mobility of skilled labour throughout ASEAN will be facilitated more easily where nations have consistent national systems for qualifications recognition and where those national systems are referenced to the emerging ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. To support that consistent approach to national human resources development in Thailand across the many Ministries and private sector agencies involved in technical and vocational skills training, the Ministry of Education has taken the lead in drafting a National Qualifications Framework. The new Framework encompasses the three levels of skills assessment and recognition established by the Ministry of Labour as well as the Higher Education Framework more recently applied to Thai universities. Discussions on this are not yet finalized with the Ministry of Labour. The National Qualifications Framework of Thailand was approved by Cabinet on 8 January 2013. The framework has nine levels, as shown in Table 7.10.

Implementation of the new unified national qualifications arrangements will bring together the qualifications systems of general secondary education, TVET, higher education, and the skills testing and certification carried out through the Ministry of Labour.

Table 7.10: Levels within the National Qualifications Framework of Thailand

Level	Qualifications titles
9	Doctoral Degree
8	Higher Graduate Diploma
7	Master's Degree
6	Graduate Diploma
5	Bachelor's Degree
4	Diploma/ Associate Degree
3	Certificate III (vocational certificate)
2	Certificate II (High school and initial vocational training)
1	Certificate I (middle secondary and initial vocational training)

Source: Ministry of Education.

The National Qualifications framework was initially drafted in consultation with six industry clusters:

- Food
- Petrochemical
- Merchant marine
- Tourism and hospitality
- Logistics
- Jewellery.

Following dissemination of the initial draft, the qualifications framework proposal was reviewed with a further 15 industrial clusters, and then finalized. The Ministry of Education, through the Vocational Education Commission’s Bureau of Vocational Education Standards and Qualifications, is now redeveloping its education and training programmes so they are based on competency standards, so as to prepare students for national assessment and certification.

The objectives for the National Qualifications Framework of Thailand are:

1. To develop linkages between the competencies required in the workforce and educational qualifications;
2. To facilitate the development of a unified national qualifications system;
3. To put in place a mechanism for the recognition of the skills and knowledge acquired through experience, and to promote life-long learning;
4. To comply with the policies and strategies in the Second Round Education Reform Plan (2009–2018); and
5. To develop linkages with international qualifications systems.

The Ministry of Labour, through the Department of Skills Development (DSD), has responsibility for the assessment of Thai workers seeking national certification and recognition for overseas jobs.

To support that function, the DSD, in collaboration with the Federation of Thai Industry, has developed National Skill Standards and testing systems in seven categories and at 3 levels (see Table 7.9):

1. Construction
2. Industrial
3. Automotive
4. Electrical, electronics, and computer
5. Industrial art
6. Agro-industry
7. Hospitality and services

Through analysis of the new level descriptors, the skill standards will be able to be mapped to the appropriate levels (probably Levels 2–4) of the nine level National Qualifications Framework (Table 7.8 above).

Table 7.11 DSD certification levels

Level 3	advanced
Level 2	intermediate
Level 1	basic

Source: Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Labour.

Other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Tourism are understood to be considering introducing their own training programmes and certification, which can now fit within the National Qualifications Framework. With the support of the Ministry of Labour, Thailand has signed the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals. The new ASEAN common competency standards will promote the mobility of Thai workers in this key industry and improve the quality of services generally. There are 32 job titles covered under this MRA, ranging from hotel food production, to travel agencies and tour operators. The ASEAN MRA Framework on Tourism Services will provide an early mechanism for agreement on the equivalence of tourism certification procedures and qualifications across ASEAN. Once this is achieved, ASEAN nations will be able to mutually recognize one another's qualifications for tourism. This will encourage a free and open market for tourism labour across the region and boost competitiveness of the tourism sector in every ASEAN nation. This recognition will be able to point the way towards fuller recognition in many areas of skill that will develop later through the combined use of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and ASEAN countries' national qualifications frameworks.

A National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Thailand has been in place since 2006. The Qualifications Framework for Thailand's higher education system is designed to support implementation of the educational guidelines set out in the National Education Act, to ensure consistency in both standards and award titles for higher education qualifications, and to make clear the equivalence of academic awards with those granted by higher education institutions in other parts of the world. The Framework helps to provide appropriate points of comparison in academic standards for institutions in their planning and internal quality assurance processes, for evaluators involved in external reviews, and for employers in understanding the skills and capabilities of graduates they may employ.

The sequence of levels and qualifications titles within the Higher Education Framework is outlined in Table 7.10 below.

Table 7.12: Levels within the higher education framework of Thailand

Entry	Completion of basic education
Level 1	Associate degree
Level 2	Bachelor's degree
Level 3	Graduate diploma
Level 4	Master's degree
Level 5	Higher graduate diploma
Level 6	Doctoral degree

Source: National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Thailand, Implementation Handbook 2005.

To support the development of the new National Qualifications Framework, the Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute (TPQI) has been set up. The TPQI is a public organization, under the supervision of the Prime Minister, responsible for developing the professional qualifications system and competency-based occupational standards in

Thailand. It aims to raise professional qualifications to be considered equivalent to national education qualifications. The TPQI accredits, monitors, and evaluates organizations that assess and certify individuals' competencies. The TPQI also acts as the centre of information for professional qualifications and workforce development. It works with industry bodies and enterprises to ensure that workforce development in Thailand equips workers with the competencies for current and for future needs. The agency has a key focus on strengthening workforce capacity and efficiency, as well as increasing business competitiveness.

The TPQI has assumed responsibility for the development of mid-level occupational standards in such areas as logistics, beauty therapy, construction, and automotive production. The aim is to develop standards and new comprehensive qualifications in 20 occupational areas every year. The TPQI does not intrude into the normal work of the 13 professional councils in Thailand (such as the Medical Council, the Nursing Council, and the Teachers Council, which regulate courses in Thai universities), nor does it duplicate the work of Ministries already involved in competency standards and qualifications development, such as Tourism and ICT. The overall aim is to establish a suite of comprehensive qualifications that include not just technical skills but the wider generic and interpersonal skills so important for high performance in the modern workplace. All qualifications contain three components:

1. Knowledge;
2. Skills; and
3. Application and attributes.

In 1968, the ILO introduced occupational skills standards and testing into Thailand with the Department of Labour (now the Ministry of Labour), and the Department of Skill Development (DSD) has been the core organization responsible for practical skills training and operation of the occupational skill standard and testing system for Thai workers. Currently, the content of the National Skill Standard and the Testing System appears in the Skill Development Promotion Act B.E.2545 (2002). Under this Act there is a Skill Development Promotion Committee appointed by the Minister of Labour. Skills testing is conducted by institutes and centres of the DSD and authorized public and private skills testing centres. Some companies have applied the national skills standards levels for classifying the levels of skilled workers in their own companies and for establishing their wage structure.

Furthermore, the DSD is responsible for the skills standards testing for workers seeking overseas jobs. These workers are required to pass the national skill standard test or meet the particular skill standard required by overseas employers. The implementation of this scheme by both public and private testing organizations is under the supervision of the DSD in accordance with the Employment and Labour Protection Act 1994 (2nd Amendment).

In order to promote wider national recognition of skill standards, the DSD organizes skill competitions. Skill competitions are regarded as a means of improving the potential of vocational training and enhancing the proficiency of skilled labour. These skill competitions are conducted at the regional, national, ASEAN, and international level biennially and at the provincial level occasionally.

The DSD has been responsible for providing skills testing for the labour market for nearly 40 years. The regional institutes and provincial centres for skill development that are located around the whole country are responsible for organizing skills testing for the workforce, with certificates issued by the DSD. When Thailand started to send Thai workers to work abroad, the DSD developed skills standards to meet the requirements of overseas employers and also

tested the skills of those applying to work overseas. If they passed the skills testing they would receive a Skills Testing Certificate issued by the DSD. Anyone who wants to get a working visa needs to apply for skills testing from the DSD in order to get a certificate. They can then apply for a visa and work permit in the receiving country.

It is understood that Phase III of the AANZFTA project to establish an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework will support ASEAN countries as they implement their own qualifications frameworks in the context of the regional recognition framework. Thailand is to be the pilot.

7.9.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

Key challenges identified for the robust implementation of the National Qualifications Framework of Thailand include:

1. The National Qualifications Framework must become an important national agenda with careful identification of the national roles and responsibilities of key Ministries;
2. Proactive cooperation and collaboration is required among industry groups, the service sector and professional councils;
3. A governance and management structure is required for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, involving key Ministries and national stakeholders;
4. There needs to be a redevelopment of existing curriculums and development of new curriculums to prepare students for assessment against the new competency-based qualifications;
5. Learning pathways are needed for those out of the school system;
6. Staff development is required to support implementation of the National Qualifications Framework;
7. Quality assurance of education and training needs to be implemented to promote consistency of assessment and student learning;
8. Study and review of all aspects of implementation are required to promote effective implementation;
9. Linkages need to be developed with ASEAN nations and beyond, for networking, for knowledge-sharing, and for working on common issues towards the establishment of the proposed regional qualifications reference framework.

7.10 Viet Nam

In the first 8 months of 2013, 54 761 Vietnamese migrant workers travelled abroad for work through organized labour schemes. The Department of Overseas Labour reported that in September 2013 there migrant workers abroad in over 40 countries, with

99,000 in Taiwan (Province of People's Republic of China), 79,000 in Malaysia, 74,000 Republic of Korea, and 19,000 in Japan (ILO, 2013).

The Government of Viet Nam has identified international labour migration as a solution to domestic economic challenges like high unemployment and poverty; has established training

programmes in technical and language skills for workers; and is making efforts to regulate the migration process. The Law on Vietnamese Guest Contract Workers was passed in 2006 to manage the flow of workers and systematize overseas work contracts, as well as to limit irregular migration and offer more effective protective mechanisms for workers.

The total population in Viet Nam was last recorded at 88.8 million people in 2012, up from 34.7 million in 1960.¹² Compared to the Philippines and Indonesia, the total number of overseas workers is not high, with considerable scope for increase should the Government enhance targeting of international markets (including ASEAN countries) with skilled workers.

Viet Nam's training system has been built around a hierarchy of training providers. The Law on Vocational Training (2006)¹³ provides for the establishment of three levels of institutions, which are under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA). These institutions are: vocational colleges that deliver diploma level qualifications over 2.5 to three years; vocational secondary schools that deliver a middle-level diploma over three years for students who graduate from lower secondary school; and vocational training centres that deliver elementary level certificates over one year or less. Other training providers outside this hierarchy, such as universities, colleges, and employment and youth job centres, are allowed to deliver training if their programmes are registered. While there are many private training providers, training is delivered predominately by government institutions. The TVET system includes over 300 colleges and schools that train technicians and workers in such sectors as agriculture, industry, health care, tourism, construction, and transportation. There are a number of higher education institutions offering courses leading to diplomas and certificates. In almost all provinces there are centres for general technical education and vocational training that offer short courses for high school students and vocational programmes. The scope and objectives of the present TVET system of Viet Nam can be summarized as follows:

Short-term vocational training/re-training programmes for unemployed or employed individuals to get specific vocational skills and a certificate;

One- to Three-year vocational training programmes for students who have graduated from lower or upper secondary education to lead towards a vocational certificate or diploma. Based upon duration and field of training, the students can be granted different levels of qualifications from elementary to diploma. After finishing school, students can be employed to work as skilled workers;

Two- to Three-year vocational and technical education programmes that combine general education subjects and specific occupational subjects to lead to a diploma.

The TVET system is under the state administration of the Ministry of Education and Training, MOLISA, and other central line ministries. At the local level, it is controlled by local authorities.

¹² Reported by the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam.

¹³ The Law is currently undergoing a reform process to make it more responsive to current national and international developments.

The training system has been characterized by issues such as: graduates not having the skills required in the workplace; trainers without experience or qualifications; poor management skills in training providers; limited links with industry; no curriculum standards linking training to workplace competencies; inadequate funding; and being a supply-driven system. Though highly structured through the 2006 legislation, the current system actually includes many different organizations managed by many different ministries, with the result being that there are no common training standards and curriculum. Curriculum has not been competency-based (although that is now changing), and it is therefore difficult to evaluate outcomes or compare providers. The ADB concluded in 2009 that the “current management of VET system is uncoordinated and inefficient and remains unsatisfactory with respect to meeting the changing requirements of the economy and the country’s socio-economic development goals” (ADB, 2009b, p. 22).

However, the Government has attempted to respond to these issues, as well as to an identified skills gap in industry, by prioritizing the establishment of more vocational colleges to train workers in higher-level technical skills, including at a new vocational college level that provides for a two-year diploma course for higher-skilled workers. At the same time, basic level training, which is predominately based on service sector skills, will be reduced by 50 per cent.

MOLISA undertakes annual surveys of industry to assess industry skills needs and demands. The mechanisms used to ascertain this are “employer’s perceptions of skilled labour deficiencies, job vacancies, and the difficulties employers face in recruitment.” (ADB, 2008, p. 2) However, the lack of clear management and policy making at the national level means that complete and relevant labour market information, which is essential to make informed decisions on training priorities, is not being collected.

The Ministry of Education and Training offers through the Department of Technical and Vocational Education a range of two-year curriculum-based TVET programmes, many in similar technical and vocational areas to those offered by MOLISA. Programmes are required to have an outcomes focus but are not based on skill standards, unlike the programmes under development through MOLISA. Other Ministries also offer TVET qualifications. The following Ministries have been working with the MOLISA to develop National Occupational Skill Standards (NOSS): the Ministry of Construction; the Ministry of Industry and Trade; the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism; the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; the Ministry of Transport; and the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Education and Training provides strong leadership through the Department of Technical and Vocational Education, and recognizes the value of having a unified national qualifications framework, especially as a platform for international mutual recognition. The Director General of the Department is representing Viet Nam on the Task Force developing the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and confirmed the desire to unify TVET provision and to establish a full national qualifications framework (with perhaps nine levels, as is currently being discussed by the Director General). As promulgated through the Vocational Training Development Strategy 2011–2020 (see Appendix II), the Government is firmly committed to the strengthening of TVET, including the establishment of a national qualifications framework and the seeking of mutual recognition of the skills of migrant workers within the planned AEC.

Decision No. 09/2008/QĐ-BLĐT BXH (dated 27 March 2008 by MOLISA) defines the principles and procedures for developing and issuing national skills standards for occupations. The Vietnamese National Occupational Skills Standards are developed using the

DACUM and the functional analysis approaches, in which occupations are analysed in order to determine tasks and assignments required to be performed by individuals in an occupation or industry sector. This process involves participation from experts, teachers, and researchers in the field of the occupation as well as experts in the field. National Occupational Skills Standards include regulations on the level of performance and the required knowledge, and the skill and attitude needed to perform the various assignments of a certain occupation. NOSS are developed according to a hierarchy of occupational skills. The number of levels of occupational skills depends on the complexity of that occupation, subject to a maximum of five levels of complexity (see Table 7.12). The hierarchy of occupational skills is built on three main criteria: i) scope, difficulty, and complexity of the assignment; ii) flexibility and creativity involved in performing the assignment; and iii) level of collaboration and responsibility in performing the assignment.

As of 2011, the total number of occupations developed with Occupational Skills Standards was 148, of which 109 occupations had been agreed upon for issuance in the following fields: Construction, Transport, Industry and Commerce, and Agriculture. The remaining 39 occupations were being finalized in terms of procedures required prior to issuance.

On the basis of the NOSS, multi-choice questions are designed with an aim to testing the level of essential understanding and knowledge required to perform work corresponding with each level of occupational skill. The practical items are designed to assess essential skills required to perform relevant assignments of the occupation at a certain level of occupation skill. Currently, the General Department of Vocational Training (GDVT) within MOLISA is the agency which manages the production of multi-choice questions and the practical items bank in service of national occupational skills assessment.

The assessment of national occupational skills is still at an early stage in Viet Nam. Currently, the GDVT is the agency which provides training and confers national occupational skills evaluator cards. The training of national occupational skills evaluators has been carried out since 2009, and as of 2011, 253 evaluators had been trained for 10 occupations, of which 93 evaluators had been granted the level-two evaluator card for five occupations, i.e. Underground Mining Technology; Underground Mining Construction; Underground Mining Mechatronics; Mechatronics Engineering; and Graphic Design, which had been piloted as of the end of 2011.

National Occupational Skills Assessment Centres are the agencies that arrange the assessment of occupational skills for workers. If a National Occupational Skills Assessment Centre wishes to be established, it must be granted a certificate by the GDVT after the Department reviews and assesses eligibility conditions in terms of infrastructure, experts, and financial resources. In 2011, three National Occupational Skills Assessment Centres were established, including two centres located in two vocational colleges. At present, the assessment of national occupational skills in Viet Nam has drawn from experiences mainly in two countries: the Republic of Korea and Japan.

In 2011, the assessment of occupational skill was carried out for 350 workers on a pilot basis at two levels of occupational skills for five occupations: Mechatronics Engineering; Graphic Design; Underground Mining Technology; Underground Mining Construction; and Underground Mining Mechatronics. As a result, the proportion of workers who successfully completed the test and were granted the certificate at two levels of occupational skill was 59.7 per cent.

The occupational skills assessment for workers in Viet Nam is still at an early stage of development and has yet to be replicated to a wider scope, so the awareness of benefits among all stakeholders (workers, employers, labour management agencies) is still low.

Quality accreditation is also seen as an important tool for contributing to improvement of the quality of vocational training. The purpose of quality accreditation of vocational training is seen as being to assess and determine the extent to which the objectives, curriculum, and contents of vocational training are delivered by vocational institutions. This will, on the one hand, help vocational institutions self-evaluate and accomplish quality assurance conditions, and also help management agencies with responsibility for vocational training to assess the quality of vocational training currently delivered by institutions. The GDVT has promulgated accreditation standards and criteria corresponding to training levels: collegiate, intermediate, and elementary. Quality accreditation of vocational training in Viet Nam is still in a development stage, with vocational institutions only receiving initial evaluations and with no impact assessment being done to determine how these evaluations impact on each institution after accreditation. In the period from 2008 to 2011, 115 quality accreditations of vocational training were conducted for 112 vocational institutions out of a total of 1,293 vocational institutions nationwide, or about 9 per cent of the total.

Table 7.13: Breakdown of Viet Nam national occupation skills levels

Levels	Requirements	Certification of sets of national occupational skills
Level 1	<p>a) Competent in performing simple tasks and repetitive tasks within one occupation;</p> <p>b) Understands and has basic knowledge in narrow range of operations of an occupation of some areas; can apply some specific knowledge when carrying out the task;</p> <p>c) Be able to receive, take note and transfer information as required, takes limited responsibility for outcome, output of self.</p>	<i>Certificate 1</i>
Level 2	<p>a) Competent in performing simple tasks, repetitive tasks, and some complicated tasks in a defined range of situations under guidance;</p> <p>b) Understands and has some basic knowledge of operations of an occupation; can apply some professional knowledge and be able to come up with some solutions to solve normal issues in their work;</p> <p>c) Be able to consider, predict, and explain information; can work in team, can work independently in some cases and take most of the responsibility for outcome, output of self.</p>	<i>Certificate 2</i>
Level 3	<p>a) Competent in performing different tasks, most of which are complex and major in a range of options; can work independently without guidance;</p> <p>b) Understands and has knowledge of basic theoretical concepts, professional knowledge of the occupation; can apply professional knowledge and be able to identify to apply knowledge to deal with, solve normal issues in a variety of contexts;</p> <p>c) Can identify, classify, analyze, and evaluate information from different sources; be able to give direction for others in the working team or group; take responsibility for output of self with specified quality standards and can take limited responsibility for output of others in the working team or group.</p>	<i>Certificate 3</i>
Level 4	<p>a) Competent in performing a broad range of varied tasks, most of which are complex and major in a range of different options, can work independently without supervision and guidance;</p> <p>b) Understands and possesses broad knowledge of basic theoretical concepts and has deep professional knowledge in different areas of the occupation; be able to transfer and apply creative knowledge and skills to deal with complex technical issues in a variety of contexts;</p> <p>c) Can analyze, evaluate information and can use analysis to come up with ideas, recommendations serving for the sake of research and management; be able to manage and run the working team or group when performing the work; take responsibility for outcome, output of self with specified quality standards and take limited responsibility for outcome, output of the working team or group.</p>	<i>Certificate 4</i>
Level 5	<p>a) Competent in performing all varied tasks of the occupation fluently and skillfully; work with high independence, great self-control;</p> <p>b) Has broad knowledge of basic theoretical concepts and has deep professional knowledge in many areas of the occupation; has techniques for analyzing, forecasting, designing, considering to solve both technical and management problems in a wide scope;</p> <p>c) Can analyze, evaluate, and generalize information to come up with opinions and initiatives; manage and run the working team or group when performing the work; take responsibility for outcome, output of self with specified standard quality and take responsibility for output of the working team or group in accordance with specified standards and specifications.</p>	<i>Certificate 5</i>

Source: Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Government of Viet Nam.

7.10.1 Issues, challenges, and recommendations

Viet Nam does not currently have a national qualifications framework through which it can plan to benchmark qualifications to the emerging ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. MOLISA has made some progress through adopting five levels of occupational skills, which can pave the way towards the development of a national qualifications framework. There is strong support from the Director General of the Department of Technical and Vocational Education for the establishment of a full qualifications framework. It was reported that the British Council has agreed to assist with implementation. To pave the way for that British assistance, short-term technical advice from the ILO is recommended along with a study tour to review relevant practice in the Philippines and Malaysia. That will mean that senior officials will be in a strong position to work with the British Council team.

A significant policy issue to be addressed in Viet Nam is that there are currently two national regulatory bodies for TVET. Both have their own policies, standards, and general expectations about TVET and its future development. Consequently, it is quite difficult to achieve unified central leadership for the development of competencies and qualifications, and for their accreditation, assessment, and national certification. Cross-border recognition, including within ASEAN, will be constrained until this is resolved. Articulation between TVET and higher education in Viet Nam has not so far been possible. A single national approach to qualifications is desirable, bringing together qualifications recognition within TVET and qualifications recognition within higher education.

ADB support will be continued in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) towards (i) developing a system for the mutual recognition of core competencies and qualifications for jobs/occupations, (ii) implementing skills competency testing, and (iii) providing GMS job/occupation certification, particularly in the skills most needed for development of the economic corridors (ADB, 2013). That can assist all Mekong countries as they prepare for 2015.

A proposed APEC project, led by Malaysia, to review the methodology of occupational analysis and NOSS by looking at the best practices in selected countries, was drawn to the attention of senior officers in Viet Nam. In some countries, NOSS were in the past interpreted very narrowly, resulting in the certification of workers with inflexible sets of skills. Internationally,¹⁴ competency standards are no longer linked solely to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). While those ILO-developed occupational definitions have been very useful in the past as a guide to common approaches to occupational trade skills, they may not in every circumstance describe emerging patterns of work. As an example, a number of industries, such as automotive manufacturing, certainly use trade occupations such as those in mechanical and electrical engineering. However, they now tend to want more multi-skilled workforces and require their employees to use their skills in combinations not usually covered in a narrow trade definition. Thus a traditionally qualified electrical fitter would perhaps also be expected to utilize some mechanical skills and combine these with work on production line robotics and mechatronics. A conventionally qualified electrical fitter would therefore need to have some, but maybe not all, of the skills required to fulfil the demands of some more advanced automotive enterprises. As a result, nations with competency-based systems generally now prefer their standards to reflect broad sectors such as engineering, agriculture, food processing, or tourism; and qualifications packages have broader

¹⁴ Edited from information supplied by Andre Lewis, Australian National Training Authority, 1997.

industry, industry sub-sector, or occupational cluster coverage rather than the traditional, narrower single occupational focus.

The results of this APEC study will be of genuine interest to all ASEAN Member States (including Viet Nam), many of whom are grappling with the same challenges and seeking to identify international best practice in skills identification, skills training, and TVET so as to produce future-focussed flexible workers for their 21st century economies.

8. General recommendations and overall conclusions

Four general recommendations are made:

1. The first is to propose that the ASEAN Secretariat be requested to adopt a coordinating role among the several agencies proposing to support ASEAN Member States as they prepare for skilled and professional worker mobility through the AEC from 2015. There are a number of initiatives that at the moment have the potential to result in gaps and overlaps in support. The AANZFTA project proposes that in Phase 3 there be assistance for ASEAN countries. It is understood that Thailand is to be the pilot supported by New Zealand, and that Malaysia will be supported by Australia. Indonesian officials from the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration indicated that a recent ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting approved a project that they will lead to provide support progressively to all Member States. They are now seeking funding. The ADB has on-going support for TVET in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia. The ADB also proposes further investment in the GMS countries under ILO leadership, part of which aims to promote skills recognition. The British Council has agreed to support Viet Nam in the implementation of a unified qualifications framework to support plans to be able to benchmark Vietnamese qualifications against the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. The donor coordinating group in Myanmar, including UNESCO and GIZ, should be able to support the strengthening of education and training in that country and the establishment of a national qualifications framework. The ILO itself wishes to support ASEAN countries as they prepare for 2015.

It is suggested that a conference of key supporting agencies be convened by the ASEAN Secretariat, perhaps at the ASEAN headquarters in Jakarta to harmonize all these proposed inputs. The overall aim should be that all 10 ASEAN Member States are able to benchmark at least some qualifications by 2015.

2. The second is to propose that a focal international agency be identified by the ASEAN Secretariat to partner with it to provide technical support for its lead coordinating role across all ASEAN Member States and all Development Partners. The ILO is proposed to play this role as it has the international technical expertise. That will ensure that policies and operational procedures for the benchmarking of country qualifications systems will use international good practice.

3. The third is to propose that the ILO invest further in priority skill areas (such as domestic worker training and construction) for the development of additional RMCS. This will provide a development springboard for ASEAN Member States that have yet to make significant progress in establishing unified national qualifications arrangements. It would also support the ASEAN Constructors Federation, as it seeks a resource for the common certification of high-performing workers for the ASEAN construction industry. The Federation has membership from seven ASEAN countries, has a close partnership with trade unions, and hopes to be able to bid for very large infrastructure and construction projects using teams of ASEAN workers assembled from several member countries. It would be useful for the ILO to consult with ASEAN countries to finalize priority skills areas for their migrant workforce. Training for domestic workers and for the construction sector would seem to be a priority. There could also be a link to the ASEAN tourism competency standards from the RMCS website. Up to now the Federation has been working with TESDA in the Philippines to use their competency standards regionally. The ILO may need to have two

levels of RMCS: the current simplified form as well as the full RMCS which can be used for training and assessment. The Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS) provide good practice models of modern competency standards, supporting the need for flexibility in workforce skills and reflecting the international move away from competency standards for single occupations to broader industry-based competency standards and qualifications.

4 The fourth is to propose that the ILO publish a booklet on good practice in the development of national competency standards and TVET qualifications; then convene a training workshop for senior practitioners from all ASEAN Member States. The 1997 draft booklet prepared for Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP) – *A study on new approaches to regional skill standards* – and the draft *Guidelines for the development of RMCS, 2006* can be edited together and updated, and the ILO could convene a regional workshop. Issues arising from the APEC project to review the NOSS of Malaysia should be included in the updating. It was evident from the visits to ASEAN countries, that guidance in this area is very much needed. The results of the APEC study will be of genuine interest to all ASEAN Member States, many of whom are grappling with the same challenges as Malaysia (which has proposed the APEC study) and are seeking to identify international good practice in skills identification, skills training, and TVET, so as to produce future-focussed flexible workers for their 21st century economies.

Overall summary conclusions

The following are the **overall summary conclusions** from the study of the readiness of the 10 ASEAN Member States for skills recognition from 2015 and their need for external assistance:

Proposed AEC readiness multi-donor support

**Malaysia,
Singapore,
Brunei Darussalam**

These Member States have some technical work to do but external assistance is not required.

These three Member States should be invited to participate in regional activities but have the capacity to resolve outstanding policy and implementation qualifications issues without external support; and can be ready for ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework benchmarking when the requirements and the process are finalized.

Thailand

New Zealand will provide external technical advice to Thailand through the AANZFTA project.

The AANZFTA RFP for Phase III proposes direct support through to July 2014; additional support will certainly be required beyond that date.

Philippines

Short-term external assistance is proposed to complete policy development for the PQF.

It is proposed that the ILO provide technical support for two months to enable detailed policy development to be completed for finalization of the PQF. Benchmarking with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework should begin with the TVET qualifications.

Viet Nam

Short-term external assistance is proposed to lay down a robust platform for implementation support from the British Council.

It is proposed that the ILO support the development of high-level policy for the establishment of a national qualifications framework for Viet Nam through a one-month technical consultancy together with a study visit to the Philippines and Malaysia for a small team of key senior officials; noting that the proposed support will provide a solid platform for the envisaged technical assistance from the British Council for practical implementation of a national qualifications framework. Benchmarking with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework should begin with the TVET qualifications.

Indonesia

Support is proposed to allow for the comprehensive development of policies and operational processes for the IQF; and TVET technical advice to the

It is proposed that the ILO seek (if possible from the AANZFTA project) the required support for the comprehensive development of the necessary detailed policies and implementation processes for the full establishment of the IQF; and

two implementing Ministries: the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and the Ministry of Industry.

make available (hopefully also through the AANZFTA project) capacity-building technical advice for the full implementation of TVET qualifications initially through two Ministries: the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and the Ministry of Industry. Benchmarking with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework should begin with the TVET qualifications in the two Ministries.

**Cambodia,
Lao PDR,
Myanmar**

Sustained support is recommended to fully develop national qualifications arrangements and to establish robust implementation, especially in priority migrant worker skill areas.

It is proposed that the ADB GMS Phase 2 project support these three countries in the robust establishment of national qualifications frameworks; focussing initially on three skills areas of importance to migrant workers; noting that additional specific recommendations have been made in this report for all three countries; and that the GMS project will also include Viet Nam. Benchmarking with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework should begin with TVET qualifications in the priority migrant worker skill areas.

General Recommendations

1. The first is to propose that the ASEAN Secretariat be asked to adopt a coordinating role among the several agencies proposing to support ASEAN Member States as they prepare for skilled and professional worker mobility through the AEC from 2015.
2. The second is to propose that a focal international agency be identified by the ASEAN Secretariat to partner with it to provide technical support for its lead coordinating role across all ASEAN Member States and all Development Partners.
3. The third is to propose that the ILO invest further in priority skill areas (such as domestic worker training and construction) for the development of additional RMCS.
4. The fourth is to propose that the ILO re-publish a booklet on good practice in the development of national competency standards and TVET qualifications; then convene a training workshop for senior practitioners from all ASEAN Member States.

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Appendix I: Schedule of people consulted

1 ASEAN Secretariat	<p>Ms Mega Irena, Assistant Director, Socio-Cultural Cooperation Directorate</p> <p>Ms Nurul Imlati, Services and Investment Division</p> <p>Mr Eddy Krismeidi Soemawilga, Infrastructure Division</p> <p>Ms Dorothea Lazaro, Programme Coordinator AANZFTA</p> <p>Ms Kunto Suseno, Trade Officer</p> <p>Ms Glenda Reyes</p> <p>Ms Anna Mae Tuazon, Senior Officer, Initiative for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing the Development Gap (CML)</p> <p>Ms Sopheary Ou</p> <p>Ms Rinda Meirzalinda</p>
2 Brunei Darussalam	<p>Mr Adinin Bin Md Salleh, Acting Executive Secretary, BDNAC</p> <p>Mr Haji Mohd Sharifuddin bin Haji Mohd Salleh , Acting Director of Technical Education</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Mr Walter Chong, Senior Education Officer, Department of Technical Education</p> <p>Ms Hajah Fatimah Hj Ismail, Head of Secretariat, Brunei Darussalam Technical and Vocational Education</p> <p>Hj Mohd Zamri Hj Sabli, PhD. Head of SPN21 Vocational and Technical Education, Department of Technical Education</p> <p>Hajah Noorzainab Abdulladi, Principal Sultan Saiful Rizal Technical College</p>
3 Cambodia	<p>Mr Tep Ouen, Deputy Director General, Directorate General of TVET, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training</p> <p>Mr Khim Sosamrach, Assistant to Director General of Labour</p> <p>Mr Khim Yorm, Directorate General of TVET</p> <p>Mr Pen Montana, Chief of Skills Accreditation Office, Ministry of Labour</p> <p>Mr Si Len, General Manager, the Association of Banks in Cambodia</p> <p>Ms Sandra Damico, CAMFEBA</p> <p>Mr Chuon Momthol, President CUF</p> <p>Mr Khleang Rim, National Triangle Project Coordinator</p> <p>Antonio D Alegria, PhD. STVET Project</p> <p>Pramod Shrestha, PhD. STVET Project</p>
4 Indonesia	<p>Mr Kunjung Masehat, Director of Competency Standard and Training Programme, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration</p> <p>Ms Ratna Kurniasari, Directorate of Competency Standard and Training Programme, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration</p> <p>Mr Aldo Tobing, Indonesia Professional Certification Authority (BPNS)</p> <p>Mr Albert Bonasahat, ILO Triangle Project</p> <p>Megawati Santoso, PhD. Vice Chair ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Task Force, Team Leader IQF</p>
5 Lao PDR	<p>Mr Phouvanh Chantavong, Director General, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Department of Skill Development and Employment</p> <p>Mr Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat, Director International Relations, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare</p>

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Hoang Ngoc Vinh, Dr. Director General, Department of Technical and Vocational Education,, Ministry of Education and Training

Ms Nguyen Thi Mai Thuy, National Project Coordinator, ILO Triangle Project

Appendix II: Additional useful resources

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Appendix III: Vocational Training Development Strategy: Viet Nam

THE FOLLOWING ARE KEY SECTIONS ONLY FROM THE FULL DECISION:

**GOVERNMENT PRIME MINISTER
NAM**

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET

Independence-Freedom-Happiness

N0: 630/QD-TTg

Hanoi, 29th May 2012

DECISION

Approval of Vocational Training Development Strategy period 2011-2020

Government Prime Minister

Pursuant to Governmental Organization Law dated 25th December 2001;

Pursuant to Education Law dated 14th June 2005 and amendment law dated 25th November 2009 adding a number of articles to the Education Law;

Pursuant to Vocational Training Law dated 29th November 2006;

Pursuant to Socio-economic Development Strategy Period 2011 – 2020;

Pursuant to Manpower Development Strategy of Viet Nam period 2011 – 2020;

Pursuant to Manpower Development Master Plan of Viet Nam period 2011 – 2020;

Considering proposal of Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs at the submission letter N0. 22/TTr-BLDTBXH dated 29th March 2012 about approval of Strategy on Vocational Training Development period 2011 – 2020,

Decides:

Article 1: approve attachment of this Decision, the “Strategy on Vocational Training Development period 2011 – 2020” with the following contents:

I. GUIDING VIEWPOINT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT GOAL PERIOD 2011-2020

1. Development of TVET is the cause and the responsibility of whole society; is an important content of the national manpower development planning and strategy, requiring compulsory participation of government, ministries, sectors, localities, TVET institutes, labour employing establishments and labourers themselves in order to deliver labour-market-oriented TVET.
2. Carry out fundamental and drastic reform of state management of vocational training, in order to create momentum for promoting vocational training toward standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration.
3. Improve quality and expand scale of vocational training is a process of both universalizing vocational training for labourers and meeting demands of sectors, occupations needing manpower of high skills, in-country and for labour export.

4. Strengthen and expand international cooperation for development of vocational training, focus on establishment of TVET institutes of high quality, with priority attention to those designated for international level; focal occupations of national, regional and international standards.

II. OBJECTIVES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT PERIOD 2011 – 2020

1. Overall objectives:

Until 2020, vocational training will meet labour market demand in terms of quantity, quality, occupation structure and training qualifications; training quality of some occupations will reach the level of developed countries in the ASEAN region and of the world; build up skilled manpower contributing to increasing national competitiveness; to universalizing vocational training for labourers, to transferring labour structure, increasing income, sustainably reducing poverty, ensuring social security.

2. Specific objectives:

- Provide vocational training in order to increase the rate of vocational trained labour to 40%, equivalent to 23.5 million people in 2015 (of which the vocational secondary and college levels accounts for 20%) and to 55% in 2020, equivalent to 34.4 million people (of which the vocational secondary and college levels accounts for 23%).

- All of national focal occupations, occupations of regional, international standards; high quality institutes, model vocational training centres are accredited. There will be established 3 centres of vocational training quality accreditations in 3 regions and some centres of vocational training quality accreditation established by organizations, individuals.

- Develop national occupational qualification framework; to 2015, promulgate 250 sets of national occupational skill standards, of which 130 sets are for national focal occupations. To 2020, promulgate 400 sets of national occupational skill standards, of which 150 sets are for national focal occupations. Period 2011-2015, organize assessment, certification of national occupational skills for about 2mio people and about 6mio people in period 2016-2020.

III. SOLUTIONS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

To achieve the strategic goals, it is necessary to implement comprehensively 9 measures, among which the measures (1) “Reform of state management in vocational training” and (2) “Develop the contingent of vocational, teachers and managers” are meant to create a breakthrough; the measure (3) “Establish national occupational qualification framework” is the central solution.

3. Development of national vocational and technical qualification framework

- Develop a national occupational qualification framework in relation with the national educational qualification framework.

- Complete the national occupational skill framework.

- Promulgate national occupational skill standards for popular occupations.

- Receive and transfer (adapt) sets of occupational skill standards of focal occupations of regional and international levels.

- Develop curriculum frames.

6. Quality control and assurance in vocational training

a) Quality accreditation in vocational training

- The State takes overall control of vocational training quality nation-wide; Ministries, sectors, People's Committees of levels, governing agencies, and vocational training institutions have responsibility for vocational training quality assurance in their capacity.

- Carry out accreditation of vocational training institutions and programmes. Vocational training institutions shall be responsible for their training quality; for standardizing "input" and "output"; for conducting self-assessment of their training quality and are under the regular accreditation by vocational training accreditation bodies.

- Establish Department of Vocational Training Quality Accreditation carrying out the management function of quality assurance; set up 3 regional accreditation centres in 3 regions; set up a number of accreditation centres by private organizations and individuals.

b) Assessment and certification of national occupational skills

- Set up occupational skill assessment centres for labourers and attach it with investment for development of focal occupations at vocational training institutions, enterprises and other institutions.

- Form a specialized agent carrying out the state management function in the occupational skills assessment for labourers, establish a number of testing centres for assessing occupational skills of vocational teachers.

- Develop a bank of testing questionnaires and organize assessment and certification on national occupational skills for labourers.

7. Connecting vocational training with labour market and enterprises participation

- Develop strong relationships between vocational training and labour markets at all levels (national, regional, provincial, district and commune) to ensure that vocational training is geared towards meeting the needs of socio-economic planning, demands of employers and job creation.

9. Strengthening of international cooperation in vocational training

- Strengthen international cooperation in vocational training, select strategic partners in vocational training which are successful cases in vocational training development in the ASEAN and Asia regions (such as Malaysia, Korea, Japan...), EU (such as Germany, the U.K,...) and North America.

- Cooperate with ASEAN country toward mutual recognition of occupational skills, toward an ASEAN Community in 2015.

- Strengthen cooperation in scientific research in vocational training, study, apply scientific achievements and advanced vocational training technology for improving vocational training quality. Actively participate in international activity and events on vocational training.

- Encourage vocational training institutions in-country to expand cooperation,

networking on training with overseas vocational training institutions.

- Offer convenient legal framework attracting foreign investors, enterprises to set up vocational training institutions of high quality and training cooperation in Viet Nam.

Article 2. Organization of implementation of the strategy

1. This Strategy is the orientation and basis for drafting, submission and implementation of the planning, programmes and project proposal on vocational training of Ministries, sectors and localities.

2. Ministries, sectors and People's Committees of central-level cities and provinces base on this Strategy in planning, developing project proposals on vocational training development of its management; integrate Strategy objectives, viewpoints and development solutions into the planning, programming and project proposals on vocational training, detail out the Strategy content into annual and 5-year plans of Ministries, sectors and People's Committees with objectives and solutions closely following content of this Strategy.

3. Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

- Chair, cooperate with Ministries, sectors People's Committee of cities and provinces detail out into annual and 5-year plans; develop mechanism and policy, programmes, project proposals, national target programmes on vocational training for Government approval and organize the implementation; develop national occupational qualification framework, standards and criteria.

- Approve and organize the implementation of planning of vocational training network to 2020 (with close attention on vocational training institutions for ethnic minority and people with disabilities; focal occupations); organize the implementation of project proposal on establishment of 40 vocational training institutions of high quality.

- Guide, monitor and follow up Ministries, sectors and localities in the implementation of Strategy.

- Cooperate with Ministry of Planning and Investment organize the forecast of manpower demands; cooperate with Ministry of Education and Training in implementing permeable training and orienting secondary school graduates to vocational training learning.

Assessment of the readiness of ASEAN Member States for implementation of the commitment to the free flow of skilled labour within the ASEAN Economic Community from 2015

Recognition of the skills of migrant workers within ASEAN is an important feature of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015, with significant economic and social benefits for ASEAN Member States. It is envisaged that over time the entire region will become more competitive globally and increasingly attractive to international investors looking for countries with a skilled workforce. Since 2015 is fast approaching, it is important to take stock of developments on the AEC goal of the free flow of skilled labour in the ASEAN Member States and assess the present state and directions to which such goals can be achieved, with the goal to determine the possible next steps in ASEAN. This scoping and assessment study was carried out to review the status of activities on the AEC in ASEAN countries in relation to the goal of the free flow of skilled labour with respect to the mutual recognition agreements and core competencies developed for job/occupations in priority sectors. The study identifies issues and challenges in implementing AEC goals on recognizing the skills of migrant worker and analyses the current skills standards and national testing and certification system that is in place for implementing the mutual recognition for skilled labour and promoting worker mobility throughout ASEAN.

The Tripartite Action for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in ASEAN (ASEAN TRIANGLE) Project is a four-year project that aims to significantly reduce the exploitation of labour migrants in the region through increased legal and safe migration and improved labour protection. The project will promote both bilateral and regional approaches to deal with shared concerns, make regionalism more effective, and enhance the capacity of institutions in ASEAN. The project objectives are in line with the strategic priorities of the ASEAN Labour Ministers Work Programme (2010-2015).

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