

▶ South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF)

Technical Meeting #2



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Technical Meeting #2

(27-28 June 2022)

Acknowledgements

This report is being produced as part of the Governance of Labour Migration in South and South - East Asia (GOALS) Programme, which is implemented as a UN Joint Programme by the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Under the auspices of the GOALS programme, the ILO is assisting the South Asian member states (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), through a consultative process, with developing and implementing a Regional Qualifications Framework. As part of this process, the Second Regional Technical Meeting of the initiative was held virtually on 27 and 28 June 2022. This report is a documentation of the proceedings and outcomes of the Second Technical Meeting.

This report was prepared by Ms Andrea Bateman, ILO Consultant and education expert. Ms Bateman is assisting the South Asian member states with the development of the regional qualifications framework. Technical inputs and contributions to the report were made by ILO officials, Mr Gabriel Bordado, Skills and Employability Specialist for South Asia, and Mr Amish Karki, Technical Officer, GOALS programme. Publishing support was provided by Ms Akriti Paracer and Mr Karun Gopinath from ILO DWT/CO – New Delhi.

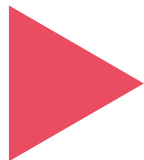
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List of acronyms

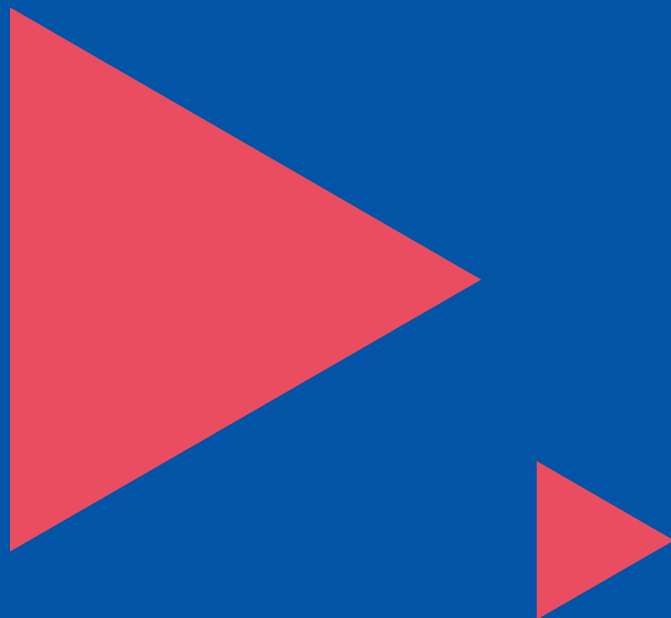
AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
AQAF	ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BNQF	Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework
BQF	Bhutan Qualifications Framework
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
HE	Higher Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
MS	Member States
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQS	National Qualifications System
NSQF	National Skill Qualifications Framework
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
QF	Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAQRF	South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training



Background

The project aims to develop a regional qualifications framework, sometimes referred to as a common reference framework, for South Asian countries.¹ It is envisaged that the framework will support labour mobility and strengthen common understanding and cooperation in the region. The development of the regional qualifications framework is being supported by the Governance of Labour Migration in South and South East Asia (GOALS) programme.²

Technical Meeting #2 is part of a series of five technical meetings conducted over 18 months to develop and refine a regional qualifications framework that is ready for endorsement.



1 Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Given the current situation in Afghanistan, there were no invitees or attendees.

2 GOALS is a Joint Regional Programme between the International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The programme is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Technical Meeting #2

► Purpose

The main objectives of the meeting were to:

- provide updates by the representatives of member states (MS) on the implementation of national qualification frameworks or systems (NQF/NQS) in their respective countries – specifically in relation to the implementation of learning outcomes, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer;
- start a discussion on the governance arrangements of the South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF);
- introduce the second draft of the South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF).

The meeting was held (virtually) on 27 and 28 June 2022, with a 3.5-hour session on each day. The agenda is included in Appendix 1.

Attendance

The Technical Meeting had strong attendance across all participating MS and International Labour Organization (ILO) representatives. In total, there were 32 participants on Day 1 and 40 participants on Day 2. The representatives from the MS were mainly from technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education competent bodies (e.g., quality assurance agencies, peak policy or funding bodies). There did not appear to be additional representatives from the agencies responsible for migration or labour.

► Summary of Day 1

Opening session

The Technical Meeting was opened by Dr Omar Faruque, Director General, Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Bangladesh. Dr Omar Faruque welcomed all the participants and noted the importance of developing a regional qualifications framework that would be recognized worldwide.

Mr Amish Karki, Project Manager, GOALS Programme, outlined the agenda for the two days and welcomed the participants.

Implementation of learning outcomes, recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

Andrea Bateman, Project Consultant, provided an overview and the definitions of learning

outcomes, RPL and credit transfer as a prelude to the MS country overviews.

- Learning outcomes were defined as what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes are the essential building blocks or “glue” for a transparent education and training system. Learning outcomes are applied at various levels of the system, including at (but not limited to) the NQF, qualifications (and components) and occupational standard levels.
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is defined as the process of confirmation, by



a competent authority, that an individual has acquired the learning outcomes in non-formal and informal learning settings as per a relevant standard.

- Credit transfer is defined as the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognized in another context.

RPL assesses an individual's competence or capability (gained in non-formal and informal settings) against a standard. Credit transfer is a process that provides an individual with credits based on identified equivalences in content and learning outcomes between one or more components in two qualifications (i.e., the qualification already achieved and the target qualification).

Each MS was invited to provide a brief overview of the status of their NQF, focusing on the status of, or the progress in, the implementation of the following:

- learning outcomes
- recognition of informal and non-formal learning
- credit transfer.

The presenters for each member state were:

- **Bangladesh:** Dr Md Omar Faruque
- **Bhutan:** Ms Sangye Choden and Mr Tandin Dorji
- **India:** Ms Ojaswi Goyal
- **Maldives:** Dr Abdul Hannan Waheed
- **Nepal:** Mr Tek Bahadur Malla
- **Pakistan:** Mr Shafiq Hussain Khokhar
- **Sri Lanka:** Dr Janaka Jayalath and Prof Thilak Gamage.



Member States	Notes
Bangladesh	<p>The presentation provided an overview of the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF). The BNQF is stated to be based on learning outcomes and supports RPL and credit transfer; credit points are allocated to qualification types. There was no information as to whether credit points inform credit transfer activities or a credit transfer and accumulation system. In terms of the training and vocational system, RPL is available through assessment centres, and it was noted that 56% of the certificates issued in 2020 were based on RPL. It was also noted that the training and vocational sector is competency-based and that the assessment tools and assessors for RPL and formal learning are the same.</p>
Bhutan	<p>It was noted that the Bhutan Qualification Framework (BQF) has faced challenges. With regards higher education, the BQF had not been well implemented, but TVET has seen some progress in implementation. One challenge in the BQF is credit transfers. Recognition differentiates between recognition of formal learning and non-formal learning.</p> <p>The higher education sector focuses on the recognition of formal learning to allow a credits system.</p> <p>The Bhutan Vocational Qualifications Framework currently applies to all TVET in the country. Accreditation of TVET programmes is based on competency standards, and there are national certificates (NC 1-3) and diplomas (NC 1-2). Curricula are based on units of competency (written as learning outcomes), and candidates are assessed based on well-defined principles. In terms of RPL, assessments are conducted through accredited assessment centres and are based on national competency standards. Applicants are required to complete a minimum of three years of experience in the relevant field. Literacy and numeracy requirements apply to some occupations. Some assessment centres are institutions or workplaces. RPL is limited to certificate levels; however, over 1,000 workers have been assessed through this method.</p>
India	<p>The presentation provided an overview of the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). The NSQF is a competency-based framework that categorizes a series of levels of learning complexity and supports RPL (of non-formal and informal learning) and credit transfer. Recently (February 2022), entry requirements, notional hours, apprenticeships, off-the-job training, and naming conventions were standardized for the levels (1-8). A unified credit framework has been proposed. The presentation also included the future road map for the NSQF.</p>
Maldives	<p>The presentation indicated that the Maldives National Qualifications Framework has been operational since 2000 and was revised in 2009 and again in 2017. It is a competency-based unified framework. The presentation noted that learning outcomes are specified in the level descriptors; it was unclear how learning outcomes are implemented in qualifications. The Maldives Qualifications Authority has a policy regarding advanced standing in the Guidelines for Programme Accreditation, which applies to formal learning achieved at a higher level than the minimum qualification level. Advanced standing cannot be given for prior experience.</p>
Nepal	<p>This presentation provided an overview of the National Vocational Qualification System. The NQF/NVQF was approved in 2020; 60 accredited skills assessment centres have been established; 11 sets of national competency standards have been established with another 15 in the pipeline; there are 3 sector skills committees with another 3 in the pipeline; and 6,800 assessors have been certified. The presentation indicated that there is a range of documents to support the system, including (but not limited to) a quality assurance manual, credit transfer guidelines, accreditation assessor guidelines and RPL guidelines. In terms of RPL, there are, as of July 2022, 1,000 applicants to be assessed. In terms of credit transfer, a (draft) guideline has been developed.</p> <p>Matters of concern include the need for a legal mandate (such as a TVET act) and overall NQF implementation. Learning outcomes are specified in the NQF/NVQF level descriptors; it was unclear how learning outcomes are implemented in the development and use of qualifications.</p>

Member States	Notes
Pakistan	The presentation considered RPL and credit transfer in relation to the National Vocational Qualifications Framework. The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission tests/examines individuals who claim to have the requisite competencies. RPL and the certification of skills can be gained through life experience including other forms of training and formal and informal employment experience. Tests are conducted against competencies by certified assessors. It was noted that 46,275 youth have been tested and certified; there are 114 RPL assessment centres; and there are 350 assessment centres. Credit points are allocated to whole qualifications. Credits can be transferred to another programme, and such credit transfer is facilitated by the registry. Programme-learning outcomes describe what the student should be able to do at the end of the whole programme, and course-learning outcomes have been developed for a single course.
Sri Lanka	<p>The presentation focused on the implementation of learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning under the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) and the National Vocational Qualifications system. The presentation noted that the National Vocational Qualifications system is based on competency standards, and in higher education, objectives are specified in terms of learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired. In terms of RPL, NVQ levels 1–4 are governed by NVQ-RPL circular 02/2021. There are two access groups: mature candidate route (level 5 is governed by NVQ circular 01/2019) and flexible learning mode (which is governed by NVQ circular 03/2020). In relation to credit transfer, for levels NVQ 5–7, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is used.</p> <p>It was noted that there are two separate frameworks and two separate ministries, and there is a possibility that a unified NQF and quality assurance legal remit will cover all qualifications. It was proposed that there be a qualifications registry.</p>

It was noted that for several MS, the presentations did not specify the status of implementation of learning outcomes, RPL and credit transfer. In addition, it was noted that the presentations emphasized information pertaining to the TVET sector and did not always include information related to the higher education sector.

Governance arrangements

This session included a discussion on the governance arrangements for the SAQRF.

The Project Consultant presented the governance discussion paper, Appendix 2, outlining the potential options. The presentation outlined that there are three levels of governance arrangements:

1. SAQRF Technical Committee – which has representation from each MS
2. National SAQRF Committee – which is the national link between the MS and the SAQRF Technical Committee. Provides oversight of the referencing activity.
3. Overall governance of the RQF.

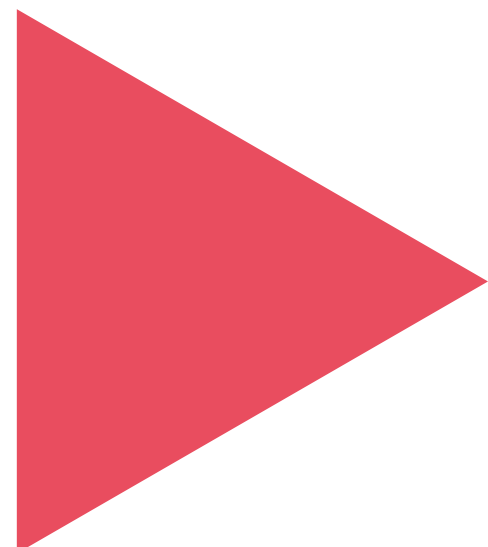
The discussion paper offered three options.

Option 1: SAARC	Option 2: Collaborative	Option 3: Collaborative–extended
Sit under SAARC and Charter	MS responsible for hosting on rotational basis	Collaborative model supported by Columbo Process
<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAARC protocols and support would apply • Long term sustainability • Small secretariat • Clear identity 	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS manage approach in line with an agreement • Rotation hosting with rotation of Chair 	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS manage approach in line with an agreement • Rotation hosting with rotation of Chair • Support mechanism
<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAARC engagement • SAARC membership 	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS bear costs of secretariat and web hosting • High level of cooperation • Requires ‘heads of agreement’ or ‘constitution’ 	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbo Process may affect membership? • Would Columbo Process support initiative that not all members have access, or, a member of another RQF?

The discussion among the MS representatives yielded preferred options and their reasons for the decision. Another option was suggested, which pertained to the use of an international agency to provide interim support before establishing the SAQRF with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The Project Consultant indicated that the discussion paper would be revised and provided through the Task Force for discussion.

An informal poll was held, and the overwhelming positive response was that the governance of the SAQRF would be best managed under SAARC.

Finally, the Project Consultant indicated that a revised governance discussion paper would be provided to Task Force members for discussion with their respective countries.



► Summary of Day 2

Day 2 was opened by Mr Amish Karki and Mr Gabriel Bordado, ILO NQF specialist. Mr Gabriel Bordado noted that the speakers from the overview session the previous day were predominantly from the TVET sector, and that it was important that information also be provided by the higher education sectors.

Day 2 was focused on:

- the next iteration of the Draft SAQRF;
- understanding the referencing activity.

Draft South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework

Participants were provided with an updated Draft SAQRF (Appendix 3), and the Project Consultant focused the discussion on the level descriptor domains, referencing criteria and obligations as well as the quality criteria.

A series of informal polls were held, and the following was noted:

- *Separation of domains*: There was support for separating knowledge and skills and that the third domain be application, keeping responsibility and autonomy separate (45%). About 20% of the participants supported the third domain being application without separating responsibility and autonomy (20%).
- *Referencing criteria and obligations*: 79% of the participants considered that separating the two sets of criteria would help minimize the referencing burden.
- *Quality criteria*: 74% of the participants considered that the quality criteria were clear. Participants indicated that there were some criteria that needed attention. Comments included: rearranging the criteria 1–6, while 8–10 needed attention.

Referencing activity

The Project Consultant then provided an overview of the referencing activity, noting that:

- referencing is an activity that results in the establishment of a relationship between the levels of the SAQRF and that of the national qualifications framework or system (NQF/NQS);
- referencing criteria provide for consistent responses from the participating MS;
- the activity culminates in a referencing report that is to be accepted by other MS as a true and accurate representation.

She also indicated that the referencing process:

- is conceived, structured, and conducted as a gradual process that can take longer in certain MS than in others;
- allows MS to choose to submit a limited response to one or more criteria (but will not be considered formally until all criteria are responded to);
- is an iterative activity and process;
- involves collective self-assessment, mutual learning and understanding, comparison and transparency.

Interim tasks

The final session addressed interim activities to be led by the Task Force, including future Task Force meetings.

The main interim task is a self-assessment. The Project Consultant outlined the purpose of the self-assessment and provided the draft for discussion.

The Project Consultant also noted that:

- ▶ there would need to be two Task Force meetings before Technical Meeting #3
- ▶ the MS will need to undertake the self-assessment in readiness for Technical Meeting #3
- ▶ Task Force members would need to start discussions within the country regarding governance arrangements

The Project Consultant indicated that the project requires two MS to undertake a partial referencing activity. The MS will be asked to confirm interest by Technical Meeting #3 as a draft referencing report would need to be submitted and reviewed by other MS in preparation for Technical Meeting #4. She indicated that the self-assessment would be provided to the Task Force members.

Closing session

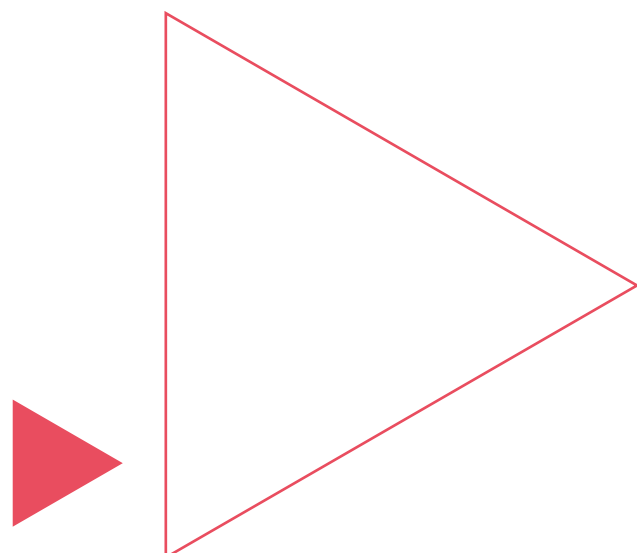
Ms Sangye Choden, Chief Programme Officer, Quality Assurance & Accreditation Division, Department of Adult & Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Bhutan, closed the meeting. She thanked all the participants and acknowledged the input provided over the two days.

▶ Outcomes

Technical Meeting #2 provided a valuable basis for collaboration among the MS, and there was support for continuing the development of the SAQRF. It was noted that the higher education sectors from several MS did not present the status of implementing learning outcomes, RPL and credit transfer – all key strategies of an NQF.

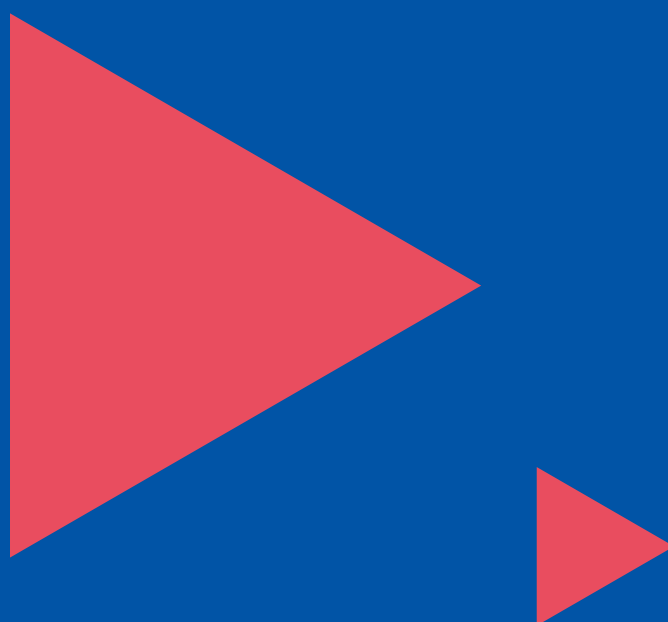
▶ Comments for future meetings

It is suggested that we adopt a whole-of-government approach to ensure that all relevant parties within MS are involved. This will “smooth” acceptance of the framework, especially at the endorsement stage. The ILO should also encourage quality assurance/qualifications authorities to include additional staff in technical meetings as a form of professional development for them.





Appendices



Appendix 1:

Agenda

► Meeting Agenda for Technical Meeting #2

South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF)

27 -28 June 2022

09:30 am –13:00 pm (IST)

Description	Technical Meeting #2: Developing an internationally robust regional qualifications framework for South Asia
Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update MS on the status of implementation of credit transfer and recognition of non-formal and informal learning (RPL). 2. Discuss governance arrangements for the RQF. 3. Consider the draft RQF policy instrument. 4. Prepare MS for the next technical meeting – self-assessment.
Participants	South Asia member representatives, including NQF (or sector) technical experts, those involved in quality assurance of qualifications systems (or subsystems), and those involved in bilateral or regional labour or student migration or trade agreements.
Link	<p>Zoom meeting link –</p> <p>https://ilo-org.zoom.us/j/96497478978?pwd=bGNcNG81TmlqTTdPaDZqUEZhNDNNQT09</p> <p>Meeting ID: 964 9747 8978</p> <p>Passcode: 132923</p>
Time zones	<p>Maldives and Pakistan: 09:00 am</p> <p>India and Sri Lanka: 09:30 am</p> <p>Nepal: 09:45 am</p> <p>Bhutan and Bangladesh: 10:00 am</p>

Day 1: 27 June 2022

DATE/TIME (IST time)	SESSION	SPEAKERS	CHAIR
09:30–09:40	Opening session: - Welcome message	MS representative	Mr Amish Karki
09:40–09:45	- Outline of the technical meeting	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Amish Karki
09:45–10:00	Session 1: NQF strategies Implementation of NQF strategies: - learning outcomes; - recognition of non-formal and informal learning; - credit transfer.	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Shahzad Ahmed
10:00–10:45	Session 2: NQF strategies - MS to provide an overview of the status of/progress in implementing learning outcomes, recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit transfer [3 MS]	MS representatives	Mr Shahzad Ahmed
10:45–10:55	Q&A	ALL	Mr Shahzad Ahmed
10:55–11:05	Break – 10 minutes		
11:05–12:05	Session 2: cont'd - [4 MS]	MS representatives	Mr Shabarinath Nair
12:05–12:15	Q&A	ALL	Mr Shabarinath Nair
12:15–12:25	Session 3: Governance of RQF - Overview of the discussion paper	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Gabriel Bordado
12:25–12:55	Open discussion – each MS nominates a preferred model	ALL	Mr Gabriel Bordado
<i>Closing</i>			
12:55–13:00	- Summary of the outcomes of Day 1 and preparation for Day 2	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Shabarinath Nair

Day 2: 28 June 2022

DATE/TIME (IST time)	SESSION	SPEAKERS	CHAIR
09:30–09:50	Opening session: - Welcome and focus for today		Mr Amish Karki
09:50–10:50	Session 4: Draft SAQRF and guiding questions - Draft SAQRF – discussion on critical aspects: Using the guiding questions	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Gabriel Bordado
10:50–11:00	Q&A	ALL	Mr Gabriel Bordado
11:00–11:10	Break – 10 minutes		
11:10–11:40	Session 4: Draft SAQRF and guiding questions (continued) - Draft SAQRF – discussion on critical aspects: Using the guiding questions	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Gabriel Bordado
11:40–11:50	Q&A	ALL	Mr Gabriel Bordado
11:50–12:10	Session 5: Referencing activity - Overview of referencing, purpose - Draft referencing process for RQF - Nominations for referencing trial	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Gabriel Bordado
12:10–12:20	Q&A	ALL	Mr Gabriel Bordado
<i>Closing</i>			
12:25–12:30	Session 6: Interim activities for MS Interim tasks and plans for the next technical meeting: - Self-assessment – overview of activity - Task force meetings (#2 plus)	Mr Gabriel Bordado	Mr Amish Karki
12:50–12:55	- Summary of outcomes of Day 2	ILO RQF Project Consultant Andrea Bateman	Mr Amish Karki
12:55–13:00	- Closing comments and remarks by the MS representative and ILO representative	Ms Sangye Choden, Bhutan, ILO representatives	Mr Amish Karki

Appendix 2:

Governance discussion paper

As presented to the participants at the technical meeting.

Governance of the SAQRF: Discussion Paper

Draft 14/04/2022

► Preamble

The purpose of this paper is to provide the starting point for a discussion on the overarching governance arrangements of the RQF.

There are 3 levels of governance related to the SAQRF. Two levels are proposed within the SAQRF document:

1. SAQRF Technical Committee – which has representation from each Member State (MS)
2. National SAQRF Committee – which is the national link between the MS and the SAQRF Technical Committee.

The third level relates to overall governance of the RQF, that is:

- Who will have oversight; and sign off as a representative of the MS on the SAQRF and associated high level governance papers e.g. education, labour, economic?³
- Where will it be housed?

- How will it be supported by a small secretariat?

- How will a dedicated website for MS and sections for public for international access be maintained?

Additional concerns include:

- How will implementation be funded and planned for long term sustainability?

The third level of governance cannot be divorced from that proposed in the SAQRF. This governance information is included in Appendix 1, which also needs to be finalised as part of the SAQRF.

³ Refer to AQRF as an example of high level governance paper. Refer to endorsed papers, <https://asean.org/our-communities/economic-community/services/> Note that multiple ministers in-country were identified and each had to 'sign off'.

► Options

There are a number of potential models that could be applied.

Option 1: SAARC

The RQF initiative could sit under the SAARC and the SAARC Charter.

The advantages of this approach includes:

- SAARC protocols could be applied, e.g. time period of Chair and Vice Chair of the technical committee, voting protocols
- A small secretariat (team) could sit within SAARC secretariat under one of the areas of cooperation
- Provides for the uniqueness of the MS and seen as a SAARC initiative
- Provides for a long-term base for the RQF.

Issues:

- How can SAARC be brought into the discussion and provide a platform for support for the RQF?

Option 2: Collaborative approach

This approach would mean that the South Asia MS⁴ take control of the RQF and its associated functions/structures, e.g. website and support team. For example, a MS will host the website and the support team (secretariat) for potentially 2 years, and could be aligned to the Chair terms of sitting.⁵

This model is similar to that used for APQN, <https://apqn.org/>. Noting that the APQN is an incorporate company, and there is a constitution and a board (members are elected), <https://apqn.org/constitution/governance-and-constitution>.

Advantages:

- MS can manage this approach in line with an agreement
- Rotation of hosting is in line with the Chair

Issues:

- Costs of website and support team is borne by the host MS
- Requires a high level of cooperation
- Requires additional documentation similar to a 'heads of agreement' or 'constitution' (whatever is allowed at this level of engagement within the MS).

4 SAARC MSs

5 Currently the terms include 1 year as Chair. Advice is sought how other technical committees under SAARC are determined.

Option 3: Collaborative approach - extended

There is the potential that a collaborative model be supported through the Colombo Process⁶.

Advantages:

- ▶ MS can manage this approach in line with an agreement
- ▶ Rotation of hosting is in line with the Chair
- ▶ Provides a support mechanism for a collaborative model, whereby the Colombo Process infrastructure (website) could be used and human resources could be housed.

Issues:

- ▶ Would using the Colombo Process affect the membership of the RQF? Membership of the RQF through the Colombo Process is less clear, and goes beyond South Asia. For example; both Indonesia and Malaysia (an observer) are members of the AQRF, and Italy (an observer) is a member of the EQF. Consideration as to whether the Colombo Process would support a RQF that does not include all Member States would need to be resolved.
- ▶ Colombo Process is labour mobility focussed and may marginalise schools and higher education sectors from supporting the RQF which may limit its strength.
- ▶ Collaborative approach would require an agreement or memorandum of understanding, and would require specialist input to design the agreement.

⁶ Member States include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The eight Observer States include Bahrain, Italy, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

▶ Sustainability

Discussions will also need to be had around long-term sustainability. Although the above discussion only addresses a website and a support team, there is a significant amount of work to be undertaken, referencing activities and meetings throughout the life of a long term project such as this.

▶ Appendix 1: Extract from SAQRF - Governance

The oversight of the SAQRF will be managed by the SAQRF Technical Committee. This Committee shall:

1. Provide high level technical advice and engage with policy issues arising from the implementation of the SAQRF
2. Foster collaboration amongst the Member States
3. Facilitate the resolution of issues with agreements on common approaches and understanding culminating in briefing papers and guidelines
4. Provide for the consideration of referencing reports and confirming whether the submission meets the SAQRF Referencing Criteria
5. Promote the SAQRF and quality assurance of education in all sectors within its Member States
6. Monitor the implementation of the SAQRF and of the Technical Committee's remit
7. Facilitate capacity development of Member States in terms of qualifications frameworks and quality assurance
8. Promote the SAQRF to the international education and training community.

Representation shall be one member per SA Member State. Election of Chair and Vice Chair shall be determined on an alphabetical basis, appointed for one year, with the Vice Chair continuing as the Chair for one year. Decision-making processes shall be based on consensus. Members may draw on additional expertise for their deliberations. Member States may determine the number of observers present from their Member State.

Further governance arrangements are stipulated in the decisions made by the Technical Committee.

There are multiple levels of governance:

- *Overall governance (‘home’ and secretariat support) for the SAQRF – to be determined at a later date*
- **Operational governance – through a Committee that has responsibility for its management**
- National level linkages.

The Operational governance is through a SAQRF Technical Committee. Broad roles and responsibilities are included here.

- Is there anything that needs to added? Changed?
- Should there be a terms of reference developed and added in this document. Or can it be a different document? Is the terms of reference, as documented here, sufficient?

National representation shall be through a National SAQRF Committee (NSC) acting as the interface between the SAQRF Technical Committee and the Member State. Membership

shall be determined by the member state, but should include nominated representatives of the relevant competent bodies responsible for the national qualifications framework (or system) and other main stakeholder bodies in the country. The NSC should have expertise in the NQF/NQS and related policy positions of the Member State it represents.

The NSC is responsible for

1. Updating and reporting to the National SAQRF Committee (NSC) on changes and progress in qualifications systems within its own country
2. Developing a nationally agreed roadmap for referencing
3. Steering and guiding the referencing process
4. Ensuring the quality of the referencing milestones and outcomes and producing a validated report.

There are multiple levels of governance:

- Overall governance (and home and secretariat support) for the SAQRF – to be determined at a later date
- Operational governance – through a Committee that has responsible for its management
- National level linkages.

This section outlines the key roles of the National SAQRF Committee (NSC).

- Is there sufficient information here in the terms of reference?
- Is there anything that needs to added? Changed?

Appendix 3: Draft South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework

As presented to the participants at the technical meeting.

Draft South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework

V 26/05/2022

► Background

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. SAARC comprises eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu on 17 January 1987.

The objectives of the Association outlined in the SAARC Charter are:

- To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life; to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials
- To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia

- To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields
- To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries
- To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests
- To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes

The New Delhi Declaration on Education (31 October 2014) resolved to foster quality education and expand the scope of cooperation, which would involve the formulation of a *SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030*. The Declaration resolved to focus on, amongst others:

- Enhance the availability, accessibility and quality of secondary education

- Expanding opportunities for skill development including technical and vocational education and training
- Revitalize higher education, including facilitating mutual recognition of qualification and mobility of students.

In the Heads of State or Government 18th Meeting (Kathmandu, November 2014), the leaders expressed their strong determination to deepen regional integration for peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia by intensifying cooperation. The leaders also renewed their commitment to achieve a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) in a phased and planned manner through a free trade area, a customs union, a common market, and a common economic and monetary union. The leaders also expressed their resolve of education for all and ensuring quality education. The leaders also agreed to ‘collaborate and cooperate on safe, orderly and responsible management of labour migration from South Asia to ensure safety, security and well-being of their migrant workers in the destination countries outside the region.’

The *SAARC Plan of Action for Cooperation on Matters Related to Migration* (adopted in Kathmandu, May 2016) endorses the development of a South Asian Qualifications Reference Framework:

Developing a South Asian qualifications reference framework... would facilitate harmonization of skills qualifications at the regional level and also facilitate enhanced recognition of skills of migrant workers from South Asia in the destination countries.

The *SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030* was endorsed in September 2016 at the Third Technical Meeting of senior officials on education in South Asia. The senior officials identified 12 priority areas which included, amongst others:

- Improving learning outcomes and promoting quality education

- Promoting acquisition of skills for life and for work
- Improving education governance
- Ensuring lifelong learning opportunities
- Strengthening partnership and collaboration

At the ILO-MSDE Inter-Regional Expert Forum on Skills and Migration in the South Asia – Middle East Corridor in New Delhi (July 2017), one of the key recommendations was to:

“Work with the SAARC Secretariat, and through the existing SAARC frameworks on education and on migration, to endorse the development of a South Asian Qualification Reference Framework. The Framework would function as a mechanism to enable comparisons of qualifications across SAARC Member States, also facilitate enhanced recognition of skills of migrant workers from South Asia in countries of destination.”

The Abu Dhabi Dialogue has identified skills recognition as one of four priority areas. In the strategy proposed for Cooperating on skills certification in the Asia-GCC migration corridors (June 2017), the ADD puts forward two important steps that countries of origin can take:

“Countries without a qualifications framework which maps to international standards should accelerate the development of the framework without which MoUs of mutual recognition of skills cannot happen”

“Countries of origin that have a qualifications framework in place may want to proactively engage in MoUs with GCC countries to recognize equivalences (and other third party countries). The recognized mapping of their qualifications framework to third party countries can then be shared

with GCC countries transparently so GCC countries can consider recognizing the same mapping through their existing partners.”

The zero-draft of the Global Compact on Migration (February 2018) contains a dedicated section on skills:

“We commit to invest in innovative solutions that facilitate recognition of skills, qualifications and competences of migrant workers at all skills levels, and promote skills development for the full employability of migrants in labour markets of countries of origin and destination.”

The initial development of the South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF) was supported by the ILO and began in mid to late 2020 with a survey and interviews of representatives culminating in a background report. The report was followed by consultations on a concept proposal, with a final draft Concept Design for the regional qualifications framework and a roadmap for finalization/endorsement and implementation.⁷

Insert here a chronological timeline for development and endorsement.

The SAARC QRF was endorsed by the XXXX.

The Member States, acknowledge the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) as being benchmarks for the development of the SAQRF.

Taking into account the above-mentioned political and legal context and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the SAQRF is established as a policy and instrument of regional scope to deliver on the objectives of enhanced transparency of qualifications and mutual trust between qualifications frameworks and systems for lifelong learning in South

Asia. It supports and supplements Member States’ activities and should be implemented in accordance with national law and practice.

1. Is the title of the RQF appropriate?
2. Other options:
 - ▶ South Asia Regional Qualifications Framework
 - ▶ South Asia Qualifications Framework
 - ▶ SAARC Qualifications Framework
 - ▶ SAARC Qualifications Reference Framework

▶ Purpose

The main purpose of the SAQRF is to enable the referencing of national qualifications frameworks or systems, and therefore enable comparisons of all types and levels of qualifications within participating Member States’ national qualifications framework or system; focusing on referencing their qualification levels to the levels of the SAQRF.

These comparisons of qualifications across the Member States aim to:

- ▶ Improve the recognition of qualifications
- ▶ Improve student and labour mobility
- ▶ Improve transparency of qualifications, qualification systems and quality assurance arrangements
- ▶ Improve recognition of learning achieved outside formal education
- ▶ Support national qualifications frameworks that facilitate lifelong learning

⁷ Bateman 2020a, Bateman 2020b, Bateman 2020c

- Strengthen regional identity and support other regional initiatives
- Provide a link to other regional qualifications framework internationally.

1. Are these purposes appropriate? Any more to add, or to delete?
2. Is the order appropriate?

► Scope

The SAQRF is a common reference framework and functions as a device to enable comparisons of qualifications across the Member States.

The SAQRF acknowledges all forms of learning (non-formal, informal and formal) across all education and training sectors.

3. Is the scope appropriate?
4. Should the scope refer to linkages with other South Asia regional developments in qualifications recognition and common skills standards?

► Principles

The SAQRF:

1. Is based on agreed understandings between Member States
2. Aims to be a neutral influence on qualifications frameworks in Member States
3. Does not replace or define qualifications frameworks in Member States and does not describe specific qualifications. Specific qualifications should only be referenced to the SAQRF by way of the relevant

qualifications framework (or qualifications system).

4. Is based on a hierarchy of learning outcomes with increasing levels of complexity and proficiency. These learning outcomes will contribute to the shift to learning outcomes in each Member State's education and training system, and serve as a translation device to better understand different qualifications systems and their qualifications.
5. Supports the transparency, comparability and transportability of its people's qualifications.
6. Supports lifelong learning and the recognition of prior learning and credit transfer processes or systems.
7. Allows for voluntary engagement and for its Member States to determine when they will undertake the referencing process. The SAQRF and referencing process should be implemented in accordance with each Member State's laws and practices.
8. Allows for Member States to revise and update their referencing reports through a new referencing activity as their national qualifications framework (or systems) change over time.
9. Shall be reviewed and evaluated in consultation with Member States and, if necessary, updated.

5. Are these principles appropriate? Is the order of these principles appropriate?
6. Is it clear that the Regional Qualifications Framework aims to NOT impinge upon national QFs/systems? Refer to Principle 2.
7. It is clear that those Member States without a sectoral QF or NQF can still reference key qualification types? Refer to Principle 3. Would the last part of this statement be best included in the Referencing section?

► Structure

The main features of the SAQRF include its learning outcomes approach, the specification of the eight level descriptors and the referencing criteria.

The level descriptors are based on the notion of competence, using the following:

- Knowledge and skills
- Context
- Application (incorporating responsibility and autonomy).

Knowledge is defined as the body of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a field of work or study. Within the SAARC QRF, knowledge is described as theoretical or factual or technical.

Skills is defined as the 'ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems'. In the context of the SAQRF, 'skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)'.⁸

Context is defined as the types of tasks, problems or issues to be resolved in a field of work or study.

Application is defined as the ability of the learner to apply the knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility.⁹

These descriptors assume:

- That the level of learning outcomes incorporates those in the lower levels.
- That the domains at one level should be interpreted together to provide an understanding of the level.

The level descriptors are included in Annex 1, and were adapted from the EQF level descriptors.

Knowing that the primary aim of an RQF affects the decision of the number of levels and domains in an RQF. The primary aim of the SAQRF may be to:

- To bring MS's qualifications systems together
- To link with other RQFs (or NQFs) external to the community (e.g. EQF, AQR as being the main two RQFs – that are both 8 level frameworks)
- Or both 1 & 2?

8. Annex 1 – places level 1 at the top of the table? Is this appropriate? What does this say about the SAQRF and lifelong learning? Is it preferred that level 8 is at the top of the table?

9. Given the above, what would be the optimum number of levels?

10. **This table has been adjusted since Technical Meeting #1.** Two domains are being used (Knowledge and Skills, and Application. Application has two sub-domains: Context, and Responsibility and Autonomy. What should be the key domains? Is it better that Context and Application are collapsed into one domain? For greatest portability, should the domains be similar to, and align with, the EQF, and AQR? Note EQF has 3 domains, AQR has 2 domains – but they align.

11. Are the definitions for the current three domains suitable?

⁸ EQF 2017, p. 20.

⁹ EQF 2017, p. 20.

► Referencing Criteria and Obligations

The aim of any referencing activity is to promote understanding and engender trust in a Member State's qualifications that are part of a national qualifications framework or system.

The referencing activity culminates in a Member State referencing report. To provide for a consistent approach to referencing, the Member States have agreed on the referencing criteria and the obligations of the Member States and the SAQRF Technical Committee, refer to Governance.

The referencing activity also requires some key conditions to be met in terms of process and ensuring that the outcomes of the referencing activity are shared with Member States' stakeholders and are readily accessible.

The Referencing Criteria and Obligations are outlined in Annex 2.

The referencing process requires that each Member State establish a National SAQRF Committee (NSC) of key stakeholders to coordinate the referencing process. To strengthen the referencing process, to provide for capacity development, and to engender trust in the process, the Member States have agreed that the referencing process will include an observer from one of the other Member States.

EQF has 10 referencing criteria and AQR has 11. To minimise the referencing burden, it is proposed that some items are treated as obligations, and do not need a written response, but may need to be included in the report as annexes.

12. Does the separation of the Referencing Criteria and Referencing Obligation assist in minimising the referencing report burden?
13. How will we treat Referencing Obligation 3? Referencing Obligation 3 logically appears as an obligation in the first cycle of referencing, but would be more appropriate as Referencing Criteria in subsequent referencing cycles?
14. Should any Referencing Obligations be moved to a Referencing Criteria?

► Quality Assurance

Trust in a member state's qualifications that are part of a national qualifications framework or system is essential for supporting the mobility of learners and workers within the region and external to the region. Quality assurance of qualifications and the provision of the qualifications through education and training providers is critical to engendering trust.

Quality assurance is 'focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled'. In relation to training and educational services, 'quality assurance refers to planned and systematic processes that provide confidence in educational services provided by training providers under the remit of relevant authorities or bodies. It is a set of activities established by these relevant authorities or bodies to ensure that educational services

satisfy customer requirements in a systematic, reliable fashion'¹⁰.

Quality assurance of qualifications is a member state's responsibility and should provide for transparency of process and outcomes.

The South Asia region does not have a common agreement or set of principles for a quality assurance framework at a regional level. However, the SAQRF could support and link with such a regional quality assurance framework.

The referencing process requires the Member States to not only reference their National Qualifications Framework (or system), but also to describe the quality assurance processes linked to their qualifications. In the absence of a regional quality assurance framework or principles, the SAQRF draws on the experience of the EQF and has agreed to a set of Quality Assurance Criteria.

The Quality Assurance Criteria, agreed to by Member States, to be considered in the referencing process is included in Annex 2.

The EQF uses quality assurance criteria similar to that included in Annex 2. AQRf uses international or regional quality assurance frameworks as its basis for comparability. The South Asia does not have an agreed regional quality assurance framework, and therefore criteria are used in Annex 3.

15. Are these criteria clear?

16. Is there anything more that needs to be added? Or deleted?

► Credit Systems

Credit systems assist learners to progress in their learning and assist in transfer across qualifications, qualifications systems, and

countries. Credit systems allow learners to accumulate and transfer credit related to learning outcomes.

Credit systems operate at institution, national and regional level. The SAQRF does not include any structures related to credit or a credit system. However, it encourages Member States to develop credit systems within their own context, and it supports a link with a future regional credit transfer system.

17. Are these credit transfer statements sufficient at this stage in the development of regional initiatives? And accommodate the possibility that the region will implement a regional credit transfer system?

► Glossary

The agreed terms and understandings are included in Annex 4.

The agreed terms and understandings do not impinge on agreed terms and understandings within the qualifications system of Member States, but are used to come to a common understanding of practices.

The terms included in the Glossary are not mandatory but assist with explaining the qualifications system and its quality assurance arrangements. Terms vary across Member States and internationally. These terms can assist in drafting referencing reports.

18. Are these terms sufficiently broad to accommodate understandings in Member States?

19. Are there any other terms that required explaining within a qualifications system?

¹⁰ Bateman et al., 2009, p. 8.

► Governance

The oversight of the SAQRF will be managed by the SAQRF Technical Committee. This Committee shall:

1. Provide high level technical advice and engage with policy issues arising from the implementation of the SAQRF
2. Foster collaboration amongst the Member States
3. Facilitate the resolution of issues with agreements on common approaches and understanding culminating in briefing papers and guidelines
4. Provide for the consideration of referencing reports and confirming whether the submission meets the SAQRF Referencing Criteria
5. Promote the SAQRF and quality assurance of education in all sectors within its Member States
6. Monitor the implementation of the SAQRF and of the Technical Committee's remit
7. Facilitate capacity development of Member States in terms of qualifications frameworks and quality assurance
8. Promote the SAQRF to the international education and training community.

Representation shall be one member per SA Member State. Election of Chair and Vice Chair shall be determined on an alphabetical basis, appointed for one year, with the Vice Chair continuing as the Chair for one year. Decision-making processes shall be based on consensus. Members may draw on additional expertise for their deliberations. Member States may determine the number of observers present from their Member State.

Further governance arrangements are stipulated in the decisions made by the Technical Committee.

There are multiple levels of governance:

- Overall governance ('home' and secretariat support) for the SAQRF – to be determined at a later date
- Operational governance – through a Committee that has responsibility for its management
- National level linkages.

The Operational governance is through a SAQRF Technical Committee. Broad roles and responsibilities are included here.

20. Is there anything that needs to added? Changed?
21. Should there be a terms of reference developed and added in this document. Or can it be a different document? Is the terms of reference, as documented here, sufficient?

National representation shall be through a National SAQRF Committee (NSC) acting as the interface between the SAQRF Technical Committee and the Member State. Membership shall be determined by the member state, but should include nominated representatives of the relevant competent bodies responsible for the national qualifications framework (or system) and other main stakeholder bodies in the country. The NSC should have expertise in the NQF/NQS and related policy positions of the Member State it represents.

The NSC is responsible for

1. Updating and reporting to the National SAQRF Committee (NSC) on changes and progress in qualifications systems within its own country
2. Developing a nationally agreed roadmap for referencing
3. Steering and guiding the referencing process
4. Ensuring the quality of the referencing milestones and outcomes and producing a validated report.

There are multiple levels of governance:

- ▶ Overall governance (and home and secretariat support) for the SAQRF – to be determined at a later date
- ▶ Operational governance – through a Committee that has responsible for its management
- ▶ National level linkages.

This section outlines the key roles of the National SAQRF Committee (NSC).

22. Is there sufficient information here in the terms of reference?

23. Is there anything that needs to added? Changed?

Annex 1:

Level descriptors for formal, nonformal and informal learning

Level	Knowledge and Skills	Application	
		Problem solving	Responsibility and Autonomy
	Learning outcomes include:	Learning outcomes include the ability:	Learning outcomes involve:
1	Basic general knowledge and skills	To carry out basic tasks	Direct supervision in a structured context
2	Basic factual knowledge of a field with, basic cognitive and practical skills	To carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Supervision with some autonomy
3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts in a field; with, a range of cognitive and practical skills	To accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying known methods, tools, materials and information	Ability to take responsibility for completion of tasks, and to adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts; with, a broad range of cognitive and practical skills	To generate solutions to specific problems in a field	Ability to exercise self-management within guidelines and in contexts that are usually predictable but subject to change
5	Comprehensive and specialized, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field, and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge; with a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills	To develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Ability to exercise management and supervision in contexts where there is unpredictable change; and to review and develop performance of self and others
6	Advanced knowledge in a field involving a critical understanding of theories and principles; with, advanced skills demonstrating mastery and innovation	To solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field	Ability to manage complex technical or professional activities or projects; taking responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making in unpredictable contexts Managing professional development of individuals or groups
7	Highly specialized knowledge (some of which is at the forefront of a field) as the basis for original thinking and/or research, and a critical awareness of issues within a field and at the interface between different fields; with specialized problem-solving skills	To develop new knowledge and procedures to solve highly complex problems, and to integrate knowledge from different fields in research or innovation	Ability to manage and transform contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; and to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of others
8	Knowledge which is at the most advanced frontier or a field and at the interface between fields; with the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques including synthesis and evaluation	To solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Ability to demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of a context including research

Source: Adapted from EQF 2017.

Annex 2: Referencing Criteria and Obligations

► Referencing Criteria

1. The structure and profile of the broader education and training system is described, including an overview of the national qualifications system and its national qualifications framework (if relevant).
2. The quality assurance practices are integral to the national qualifications framework and/or system, and are consistent with the Quality Assurance Criteria in Annex 3.
3. Qualifications are based on learning outcomes principles and inform the recognition of all forms of learning¹¹ and credit systems (where they exist) within the national qualifications framework and/or system.
4. The process for inclusion of qualifications on the national qualifications framework (or describing the place within the qualifications system) are clear and transparent.
5. There is a clear and demonstrable link between the levels of the national qualifications framework (or system) and the levels of the SAQRF.

► Referencing Obligations

1. The referencing report has been prepared with and endorsed by the Member State's National SAQRF Committee (NSC). In addition, it has been endorsed by relevant competent bodies, such as national

qualifications framework agencies and quality assurance agencies, as being an accurate representation of the relevant quality assurance arrangements, provision and practice. The referencing report shall include these endorsements. The legitimacy and responsibilities of all relevant competent bodies involved in the referencing process are clear and transparent.

2. The referencing process involves international experts to support and assist the development of trusted outcomes. The referencing report shall include the written statement from the international experts from two different countries internal or external to the region.¹²
3. Following the referencing process, the Member States commit to a clear reference to the appropriate SAQRF level on new certification documents issued within the national qualifications framework or system, e.g. qualifications, certificates, diplomas.¹³
4. There is one comprehensive referencing report, setting out the response to each criterion and includes any supplementary information or evidence.
5. The report shall be readily available and published by the competent body within the Member State and by the XXX¹⁴.

¹¹ Nonformal, informal and formal

¹² These international experts are in addition to another Member State's representative as an observer of the referencing process. Note that AQRf requires 1 expert, EQF requires 2 experts

¹³ Adapted from EQF 2017 and ASEAN 2015.

¹⁴ The body/entity that ultimately is responsible for the SAQRF. To be determined.

Annex 3: Quality Assurance Criteria

All qualifications should be quality assured to enhance trust in the SAQRF level assigned and their quality in terms of conception, formulation, and provision.

In consideration of national context and circumstances these quality assurance criteria apply to the various sectors of education and training within the qualifications system.

Quality assurance of qualifications assigned a SAQRF level should:

1. Ensure that competent bodies operate with clear and transparent governance arrangements.
2. Be based on clear and transparent quality standards or rules.
3. Address the design of qualifications as well as the application of learning outcomes.
4. Ensure valid and reliable assessments against agreed transparent learning outcomes, and address the certification process. Barriers to assessment, including for non-formal and informal learning, are minimized.
5. Address the evaluation of the quality of provider provision of qualifications, including internal review and external review.
6. Involve key stakeholder groups across the key aspects of quality assurance practice.
7. Be underpinned by a continuous improvement approach and decisions are informed by feedback, data and research.
8. Require competent bodies and those who issue qualifications linked to the SAQRF commit to their own internal evaluation and to cyclical external evaluation, as well as to making public the findings of external evaluations.
9. Be fit for purpose, appropriately resourced and sustainable.
10. Be enhanced through national and international linkages and cooperation.¹⁵

¹⁵ Adapted from UNESCO 2017 and European Commission 2017.

Annex 4:

Glossary of terms

For the purposes of the SAQRF the following definitions apply.

Competence	Competence is the 'proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development'. ¹⁶
Competent body	<p>A competent body is any organization that has the legally delegated or invested authority, capacity, or power to undertake a specific function. Within qualifications systems that could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies with the responsibility to approve qualifications against the NQF and which manages qualifications accreditation under national legislation. • Agencies responsible for approving education and training providers and the provision of services related to approved qualifications. <p>These agencies could be national qualifications agencies, quality assurance agencies, official review boards or other nationally approved bodies or agencies.</p>
Credit	Credit 'means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes'. ¹⁷
Credit systems	Credit systems are a 'transparency tool for facilitating the recognition of credit(s). These systems can comprise, inter alia, equivalence, exemptions, units/modules that can be accumulated and transferred, the autonomy of providers who can individualise pathways, and the validation of non formal and informal learning'. ¹⁸
Credit transfer	Credit transfer means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context'. ¹⁹ It may include but is not limited to the following processes known as cross-credit, advanced standing, block credit, specified credit, unspecified credit.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (such as in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to certification. ²⁰

¹⁶ EQF 2017, p. 20.

¹⁷ EQF 2017, p. 20.

¹⁸ EQF 2017, p. 21.

¹⁹ EQF 2017, p. 21.

²⁰ CEDEFOP 2011, p. 75.

Informal learning	Informal learning is learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. ²¹
Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes are statements regarding what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. Within this RQF learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, context and application (responsibility and autonomy). ²²
National Qualifications Frameworks	National Qualifications Frameworks are instruments for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. National Qualification Frameworks aim at integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. ²³
Non-formal learning	Non formal learning is learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically does not lead to certification. ²⁴
Qualifications	A qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment in recognition that an individual has been assessed as achieving learning outcomes or competencies to the standard specified for the qualification title, usually a type of certificate, diploma or degree. Learning and assessment for a qualification can take place through various means, such as workplace experience, or a program of study, or a blend of both. A qualification is issued by a competent agency, which confers official recognition of value in the labour market and in further education and training. ²⁵
Qualifications System	Qualifications systems 'means all aspects of a member state's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. That includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications' ²⁶ . A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may or may not include an explicit national qualifications framework.
Quality Assurance	Quality assurance is a component of quality management and is 'focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled'. In relation to training and educational services, 'quality assurance refers to planned and systematic processes that provide confidence in educational services provided by training providers under the remit of relevant authorities or bodies. It is a set of activities established by these relevant authorities or bodies to ensure that educational services satisfy customer requirements in a systematic, reliable fashion'. ²⁷

21 CEDEFOP 2011, p. 85.

22 Adapted from EQF 2017.

23 Adapted from EQF 2017.

24 CEDEFOP 2011, p. 113.

25 Adapted from EQF 2017 and from ASEAN 2015.

26 Adapted from EQF 2017, p. 20

27 Bateman et al., 2009, p. 8.

Formal recognition of learning outcomes	<p>Confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes gained by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against pre-defined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of standards, including a qualification or component/s of a qualification.</p> <p>Recognition of learning outcomes includes the notion of valid and reliable assessment with a formal setting, recognition of prior learning/assessment of prior learning; and also, of credit transfer processes or credit transfer systems.²⁸</p>
Recognition of prior learning	<p>Recognition of prior learning relates to recognizing learning gained and currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. It involves the assessment of an individual to make a judgement against the specified learning outcomes. It will include the assessment of skills and knowledge obtained through non-formal or informal learning, but it may also involve evidence of formal learning previously undertaken.</p>

²⁸ Adapted from EQF 2017, ASEAN 2015, CEDEFOP 2011, p. 125.



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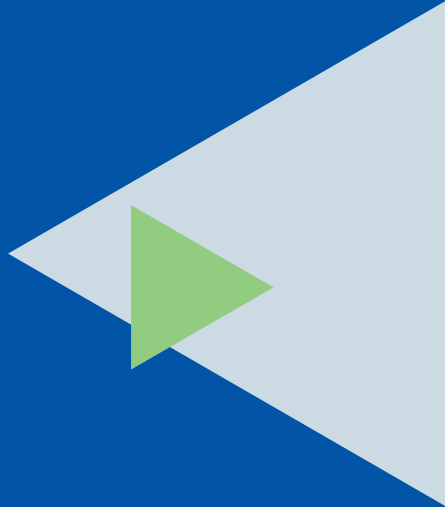
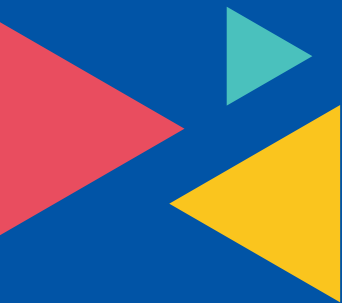
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