APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility

Discussion paper

Andrea Bateman and Mike Coles

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Table of Contents

List of tables .................................................................................................................................................. 3
List of acronyms ............................................................................................................................................... 4
Executive summary ......................................................................................................................................... 5
Introduction ..................................................................................................................................................... 9
A: Discussion points ....................................................................................................................................... 11
   Regional Qualifications Frameworks ........................................................................................................... 11
   Regional Quality Assurance Frameworks .................................................................................................... 12
   Occupational Standards Framework .......................................................................................................... 12
   Level of pitch and detail of occupational standards ................................................................................ 13
   Governance .................................................................................................................................................. 14
B: Options and Recommendations ................................................................................................................ 15
   Options for agreement ................................................................................................................................ 15
      1. Occupational Standards Framework application .................................................................................... 16
      2. APEC Integrated Referencing Framework ............................................................................................ 18
   Recommendations ........................................................................................................................................ 24
   In summary ................................................................................................................................................... 24
References ......................................................................................................................................................... 27
Appendices ....................................................................................................................................................... 28
   Appendix 1: Standards definitions ............................................................................................................... 29
   Appendix 2: International classification definitions .................................................................................... 31
   Appendix 3: Definition of competence ......................................................................................................... 32
   Appendix 4: Glossary ..................................................................................................................................... 33
List of tables

Table 1: Purpose and principles of the Occupational Standards Framework ........................................... 16
Table 2: Level of advice ............................................................................................................................ 17
Table 3: Level of specificity of occupational standards ............................................................................ 17
Table 4: Classification standards and level of AQRF ................................................................................. 17
Table 5: Training standards ....................................................................................................................... 18
Table 6: Purpose and principles ................................................................................................................ 19
Table 7: Code of practice ............................................................................................................................ 19
Table 8: Using an RQF .............................................................................................................................. 20
Table 9: using an RQAF ............................................................................................................................. 20
Table 10: Quality assurance principles ..................................................................................................... 22
Table 11: APEC Diploma Supplement ..................................................................................................... 22
Table 12: Governance ............................................................................................................................... 23
Table 13: Communications strategy ......................................................................................................... 23
Table 14: Monitoring arrangements ........................................................................................................ 24
# List of acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQRF</td>
<td>ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community and Common Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDEFOP</td>
<td>European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>East Asia Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAS TVET QAF</td>
<td>East Asia Summit Technical Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQF</td>
<td>European Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCO</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMCS</td>
<td>Regional Model Competency Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQF</td>
<td>Regional Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical, Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

This Discussion Paper was commissioned by Department of Education and Training, Australian Government in relation to the proposal to establish an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility.

This Discussion Paper should be read in conjunction with the *APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility: Literature Review,* as this review provides the underpinning information in relation to various strategies for skills recognition and to issues related to development of an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility.

The Discussion Paper is part of a broader project that aims to build on existing research and add value to current activities to establish an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility. The new framework aims to draw together into a cohesive architecture the following key elements:

- Qualifications referencing framework – enables mapping against national qualification levels for occupations/qualifications,
- Quality assurance referencing framework – enables confidence in the quality of provision of training against occupational standards and the integrity of qualifications issued
- Occupational standards referencing framework – enables common understanding of skills required for specific occupations and determination of relevance of skills held by individuals.

The field of recognition of knowledge skills and competences is complex, there is no single model that informs local practice and different countries/regions have worked in different ways to bring coordination between occupational standards, qualifications systems and quality assurance procedures at the local level. The advent of regional qualifications frameworks and international quality assurance processes have made it possible to consider the potential of a more coordinated international approach to recognition that includes occupational standards. In this sense the APEC proposal is future oriented, ambitious and, because of its potential scale, unique.

The key focus of this Discussion Paper was to develop an approach that will facilitate recognition of skills and qualifications in the APEC economies; however, recognition is not achievable if:

- There is no trust between countries on the quality of the qualifications undertaken, their basis in occupational or educational standards and the certificates that are issued.
- Quality standards are not transparent and fully implemented across each participating country/provider/qualification.
- Facilitating mutual recognition is not a principle adhered to by participating countries/agencies/providers.
- There is no specific regional governance of the recognition process.

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1. APEC Integrated Referencing Framework: Literature Review (Bateman & Coles 2015)
There is no mechanism for mutual recognition to occur.

A common understanding and an agreement needs to be reached on:

1. Occupational Standards Framework

The Occupational Standards Framework in essence is a new stand alone framework that is to be embedded in a broader integrated framework. As such within the Occupational Standards Framework a number of critical aspects need to be determined prior to any formal documentation being developed. For the Occupational Standards Framework the APEC economies need to seek agreement on the following:

- Purpose and principles
- Levels of pitch and detail of occupations standards
- Process for the development and monitoring of the occupational standards (such as a code of practice or guidelines), including definition and format of the occupational standards
- Potential uses of occupational classifications standards and advice to users (mainly employers)
- Possible links to Training Standards.

2. APEC Integrated Referencing Framework

How the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework will be developed and used may take a longer to discuss, explore and establish. It is important to ensure that it meets the APEC community’s needs. Consideration needs to be given as to how the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework could be used by educationalists and employers. The APEC Integrated Referencing Framework could be brought together in a number of ways, and put simply could be an extended model or a simpler minimal model.

Not all aspects of the issues cited in the report need to be addressed in the immediate future however they have been posed to raise awareness of the potential of and issues related to developing a fully extended APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. A commitment from the APEC community is required however to ensure that these issues can be explored further and for the model to evolve.

For the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework the APEC economies need to seek agreement on the following:

- Purpose and Principles – to foster a common understanding of the purpose and principles that underpin the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework
- Code of Practice – to establish how member economies are expected to maintain commitment to the framework.
- RQF and RQAF application – to deepen understanding of APEC economies’ qualifications systems
- Associated transparency tools – to enhance and support the implementation of the integrated framework
Governance and collaborative management – to ensure smooth evolution and deepening trust, and to monitor arrangements – to identify challenges to the zone of trust.

To further advance a model for the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework the following general recommendations are proposed.

1. **Strengthen APEC zone of trust**
   The current trend is towards larger geographical approaches to qualifications frameworks, quality assurance procedures and defining skills/competences through occupational standards. The aim is always to build zones of trust that will enable the free movement of people, goods and services. Until the late 1900's traditional approaches to education, training and qualifications have built on the cultures and traditions in countries. These are inevitably different from one another and generally fit-for-purpose in the country concerned. However in recent years the traditional inward looking approaches to education, training and qualifications have begun to take on a more outward looking international stance, where the status of education, training and qualifications has to be understood and trusted by those seeking jobs and those investing in businesses and recruiting staff. It is therefore likely that the current globalisation trend will continue and a response from APEC will be welcomed by the member economies in the region. The aim must be to respect local approaches but to provide reference points in qualifications, quality assurance and the standards of skills and competences that can guide developments in countries, act as a benchmark of good practice and steadily and surely establish an APEC zone of trust that signals good understanding and high trust in national provision.

2. **Establish a vision**
   It is important for the APEC community to set out the case for an integrated approach including how it will build on current national approaches and developments, how it will yield added value and how it is future oriented. A fully integrated approach could evolve over time and therefore establishing a vision will assist in developing priorities and drive action.

3. **Provide a model for discussion**
   The model for discussion is based on three interrelated generic parts that are regional in nature and are not national approaches. These include:
   - The new ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
   - The EAS quality assurance framework
   - A new, high level classification of occupations, skills and competences that draws on elements of ILO regional model competency standards, the World Bank framework for occupational and training standards\(^2\) and findings drawn from the APEC transport and logistics working group.

Thus the integrated model itself is new but the elements of it are not.

It would be fruitful to:
- Use APEC fora to continue to discuss the potential value in the model, the implications, and the support it will need by APEC, countries and businesses.

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\(^2\) Fretwell, Lewis and Deij (2001)
• Look closely at the countries, businesses and regional bodies that could be involved and make it clear where they have scope to inform and support the model.
• Produce case studies which show the value of an integrated framework.

4. Develop a strategy for development
Regardless of the model proposed by the APEC community there is a need to establish a strategy for development including:

• Setting the agenda for future development
• Establishing a project task force and make clear the lines of responsibility and tasks through agreed terms of reference. A taskforce will provide the initial management arrangements, provide advice, be spokespersons for their country and also assist in seeking country feedback or assist in in-country consultations.
• Establishing timelines, milestones, resource requirements, key agencies, technical support for future development of the model. Establishing timelines and milestones will provide structure to the enhancement of the model.

5. Engage with countries that are developing frameworks, quality assurance and occupational standards
No regional framework functions in isolation, and there is an increasing need to engage with other countries and regional communities that are developing such frameworks (i.e. qualifications, quality assurance and occupational standards). It important for the project taskforce to link with and be informed from other models including those that are incorporated in the APEC Integrated Reference Framework. A key role of the project taskforce will be to:

• Engage with the countries and broader community
• Test the model and promote it more generally
• Refine the approach to developing occupational standards.

6. Set up a governing body of key players
Finally, if the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is to ‘have a future’ and be fully functioning there needs to be clear governance arrangements established. Establishing a governing body (be it an advisory council or a board) that is not only representative of the country members but also of industry will:

• Govern the process
• Be a focal point for stakeholders
• Maintain the momentum of the initiative.
Introduction

This Discussion Paper was commissioned by Department of Education and Training, Australian Government to support any future work on developing an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility.

This Discussion Paper should be read in conjunction with the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility: Literature Review, as this review provides the underpinning information in relation to various strategies for skills recognition and to issues related to development of an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility.

APEC currently include the following economies: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, The Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, The United States and Viet Nam.

This Discussion Paper is part of a broader project that aims to build on existing research and adding value to current activities to establish an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility. The new framework aims to draw together into a cohesive architecture the following key elements:

- Qualifications referencing framework – enables mapping against national qualification levels for occupations/qualifications,
- Quality assurance referencing framework – enables confidence in the quality of provision of training against occupational standards and the integrity of qualifications issued
- Occupational standards referencing framework – enables common understanding of skills required for specific occupations and determination of relevance of skills held by individuals.

The project aims to determine how these elements can combine to support recognition arrangements in TVET across APEC, explore the feasibility of adding value to existing qualifications and quality referencing frameworks, and to develop a draft referencing framework for regional occupational standards. This area of education and training frameworks and systems is complex and different countries/regions have worked in different ways to bring coordination to their systems and recognition processes. In many countries specific agencies are established to provide a consistent national approach to recognition, particularly for qualifications. Recognition of skills and competences is generally less formalised and left to employers to operate an approach that suits the organisation. Quality assurance processes operate at a range of levels and on different parts of the education, training and qualification system. Once again quality assurance as applied to qualifications is generally better developed and more consistent than for interpretation of occupational standards and generally speaking employers develop their own ways of using occupational standards for training, recruitment, skills audits, work process analysis, staff appraisal and other company processes.

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3APEC Integrated Referencing Framework: Literature Review (Bateman & Coles 2015)
This Discussion Paper aims to consider how best to establish a model that integrates the key structures to facilitate recognition of qualifications and skills in the APEC region.

The Discussion Paper is divided into two parts:

A. Discussion Points which focusses on critical areas for consideration

B. Options for an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework which outlines components of the Occupational Standards Framework and the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework that agreement needs to be reached. This section also include general recommendations to further advance a model for the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework.

The Discussion Paper includes a Glossary of terms, and three appendices (Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3) that outlines a various interpretations of key terms.

The following ‘working definitions’ apply in the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility: Literature Review (Bateman & Coles 2015) and in this Discussion Paper:

- Occupational standards shall be defined as *specifications of an occupation which may or may not include competency specifications*
- Competency specifications shall be defined as *specifications related to job tasks or functions within an occupation*
- Training standards can include:
  - An educational standard that refers to statements of learning objectives, content of curricula, entry requirements and resources required to meet learning objectives and/or
  - A standard that is less detailed and provides advice related to training expectations and inputs, such as associated achievement standards; resources (for example staff, students, materials) which should be available in an institution; duration or volume of learning of the programme; NQF level of qualification.
A: Discussion points

The key focus of this Discussion Paper is to develop an approach that will facilitate recognition of skills and qualifications in the APEC economies; however, recognition is not achievable if:

- There is no trust between countries on the quality of the qualifications undertaken, their basis in occupational or educational standards and the certificates that are issued.
- Quality standards are not transparent and fully implemented across each participating country/provider/qualification.
- Facilitating mutual recognition is not a principle adhered to by participating countries/agencies/providers.
- There is no specific regional governance of the recognition process.
- There is no mechanism for mutual recognition to occur.

The accompanying literature review\(^4\) has shown that countries or regional communities do not necessarily rely on any one mechanism to facilitate recognition of occupations and qualifications for student and labour mobility, but utilise a range of strategies that may (or may not) be integrated and complementary to each other.

**Regional Qualifications Frameworks**

Given the uptake of NQFs around the world and the complementary development and implementation of regional qualifications frameworks, it is natural for the APEC economies to consider the notion of an Asia Pacific Qualifications Framework. Initial research was undertaken in 2009 whereby qualifications frameworks in the APEC region were mapped and a proposal made for a regional framework.\(^5\) A common reference framework for the APEC economies would not only facilitate mutual understanding of qualifications but would also generate further implementation of NQFs in participating countries that do not as yet have a NQF.

A RQF could be included in the development of occupational standards for determining the complexity of learning of occupational outcomes, and could provide users of the framework such as employees and employers a notion of the level of complexity of the learning required. Alternatively it may be considered that utilising RQF levels for occupational standards is inappropriate. Another approach could include RQF details being noted on an expanded APEC Diploma Supplement. An extended model for the inclusion of a RQF could involve a formal referencing process of the NQF to the RQF to make the qualifications systems more transparent.

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\(^5\) The proposal was to co-opt the EQF as the APEC qualifications framework.
Regional Quality Assurance Frameworks
A number of regional quality assurance initiatives outside the APEC region are relevant to TVET (or higher education), such as:

- European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
- East Asia Summit Technical and Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework.

The EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework provides a strong basis to assist member economies in review or establishing a robust quality assurance system. This framework has a self-assessment tool that also includes a stepped process for developing an action plan. At this stage eight EAS countries have undergone a self-assessment process. The majority of EAS member countries are also APEC countries.

How the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework will be applied in the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework will depend on the potential use by stakeholders and the governance arrangements of the framework discussed below. It could be utilised to assist the completion of a Diploma Supplement or be part of a country's referencing process, confirming how the quality assurance processes meet the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework.

Occupational Standards Framework

Shared or common occupational standards are utilised across a range of countries. In Australia, for example, TVET qualifications are national qualifications based on nationally agreed occupational standards to which providers seek permission to deliver. Within Australia, national TVET qualifications facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications and competency specifications. Shared or common qualifications based on occupational standards is utilised in the CARICOM model.

To establish the Occupational Standards Framework for the APEC economies clear guidelines will need to be documented and agreed by the APEC economies that confirms the definition and application of occupational standards, and describes how occupational standards will be developed by employers, agreed and reviewed. It should also include how the APEC countries and employers can utilise these occupational standards to evaluate skills of employers, to review existing competencies and qualifications, or to assist in the development of local or national competencies or qualifications.

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6 http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c31108_en.htm
7 This framework is moving towards endorsement.
8 Except for India, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.
9 Within the Pacific there is no such facility. The SPBEA outcomes report (November 2014) raises the option of sharing programs (or components of programs) amongst Pacific island countries. This report notes that this 'sharing of accredited courses fully address[es] capacity limitations of Pacific countries and realises economies of scale from sharing expertise and developments' (p. 3). The report does not, however, suggest how this might be done. This option was explored in Bateman 2015.
Level of pitch and detail of occupational standards

Occupational standards developed for the APEC region would best be developed at no lower than at an occupation level. This would allow member economies to develop their own competency specifications at a local or national level. There are various samples or templates available for member economies to adapt for the Occupational Standards Framework.

The ILO Guidelines for Development of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS) (2006) provides a standardised template for occupational standards development, including:

- preface to outline the relevant industry and primary functions of a sector
- competency specifications outline including coverage statement, elements" and performance criteria, evidence, critical skills and essential knowledge, range statement related to the work covered.

The current APEC Transport & Logistics project working group on the development of transport occupational standards have developed a standardised template for development competency specifications. This standardised template includes the following sections:

- Occupational standard title (based at job task level)
- Application/descriptor
- Skills statement (list of skills required)
- Knowledge statement (list of knowledge required)
- Responsibility (level of supervision or autonomy)
- Certification (notes relationships to licences or regulations)
- Date agreed.

This template could be adapted for developing the APEC occupational standards that could be agreed at regional level.

Potential link of Occupational Standards to Training Standards

In many countries occupational standards are directly linked to training standards so that education and training can relate directly to employment needs. In the TVET sector in Philippines, managed by Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Training Regulations are used which include:

- Qualification title
- Basic, common, core and elective competencies
- Completion rules
- Training arrangements including: curriculum design requirements, training delivery requirements, entry requirements, required tools/equipment/training facilities, require trainer qualifications, institutional assessment requirements, and certification requirements.

10 Although not included in the template, working industry examples include this field.
In the UK, the requirements for apprentices are being redesigned with a new approach to apprenticeship standards. These standards provide an overview of the occupation, key functions, core knowledge, skills and behaviours, link to the NQF level, proposed qualification and duration of programme and any licensing issues.

The approach to linking occupational standards to training standards will need to be agreed by the APEC member economies.

**Governance**

The AQRF is owned by the ASEAN Member States. The main issue for the ASEAN Member States is the maintenance, use, evaluation and updating of the AQRF. In addition, there is a need to provide guidance and support to participating countries if the AQRF is to be effective. There is also a need to for the maintenance of the framework, as well for monitoring its effectiveness and its implementation across member countries. It is anticipated that the AQRF will be managed through the ASEAN Secretariat, with a representative Advisory Committee and that a national level there will be a national focal point for collaboration. Regardless as to where the responsible agency is located, it needs to have full acceptance of its authority amongst participating ASEAN countries, and, importantly, a willingness of those countries to cooperate and provide the necessary data and information to enable the agency to perform its functions.

A similar concern exists with the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework, however there is no clear secretariat to take responsibility of the framework. Possibilities for the future include the ASEAN Secretariat under an arrangement or indeed an APEC secretariat if the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is supported by such an arrangement.

The AQRF has sought commitment from participating members to a number of critical issues, e.g. implementation of learning outcomes and timeline for referencing, which extends the notion of ‘voluntary’ to a level of extended commitment. The AQRF development has also be supported by an extended capacity development program. The EAS TVET QAF however has had no further socialisation or established commitment including no further capacity development beyond the initial meeting in Canberra in 2012.11

The governance arrangements for the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework needs to be determined by participating economies with consideration of the issues noted above. In part the governance arrangements will depend on the level of engagement by the economies in terms of how the three frameworks will be deployed under the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework.

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11 Note that 8 countries have undergone a self-assessment and development of an action plan.
B: Options and Recommendations

Options

A range of options exist for the APEC economies in building an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. Although it may be posed that there are 2 – 3 options, it may be easier to address the various computations and to deal with each aspect of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework individually.

The key focus of this regional framework is to develop a zone of trust between the APEC member economies in terms of occupational standards and of qualifications. To foster a trusted environment there needs to be an appreciation by people in key agencies (e.g. learning providers, qualifications bodies/quality assurance agencies, professional bodies, employers, employee organisations) that the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is helpful for understanding occupational standards and the qualifications systems in other member economies.

A common understanding and an agreement needs to be reached on:

1. Occupational Standards Framework\(^\text{12}\) including:
   - Purpose and principles
   - Levels of pitch and detail of occupations standards
   - Process for the development and monitoring of the occupational standards (such as a code of practice or guidelines), including definition and format of the occupational standards
   - Potential uses of occupational classifications standards and advice to users (mainly employers)
   - Possible links to Training Standards.

2. The APEC Integrated Referencing Framework including:
   - Purpose and Principles – to foster a common understanding of the purpose and principles that underpin the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework
   - Code of Practice – to establish how member economies are expected to maintain commitment to the framework.
   - RQF and RQAF application – to deepen understanding of APEC economies’ qualifications systems
   - Associated transparency tools – to enhance and support the implementation of the integrated framework
   - Governance and collaborative management – to ensure smooth evolution and deepening trust, and to monitor arrangements – to identify challenges to the zone of trust.

\(^{12}\) Alternatively this could be titled Occupational Standards Guidelines.
1. Occupational Standards Framework application

The Occupational Standards Framework in essence is a new stand alone framework that is to be embedded in a broader integrated framework, as such within the Occupational Standards Framework a number of critical aspects need to be determined prior to any formal documentation being developed. These being:

- Purpose and principles
- Levels of pitch and detail of occupations standards
- Process for the development and monitoring of the occupational standards (such as a code of practice or guidelines), including definition and format of the occupational standards
- Potential uses of occupational classifications standards and advice to users (mainly employers)
- Possible links to Training Standards.

Purpose and principles

It is important in any community that to build and enhance trust that there is a clear understanding of the key purposes of the framework as well as any underpinning principles that the community considers important.

Table 1: Purpose and principles of the Occupational Standards Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose and principle application</th>
<th>Minimal model</th>
<th>More extensive model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Purpose is assumed – not described</td>
<td>Key purposes of APEC Occupational Standards Framework are developed and agreed by APEC economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>Principles are assumed – not described</td>
<td>Key principles of APEC Occupational Standards Framework is developed and agreed by APEC economies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupational standards development

The basis of the Occupational Standards Framework is coming to an agreement on the definition and format of the occupational standards, on the development process by employers and the process for reaching an agreement by participating APEC economies. In addition, given that occupational standards are to reflect occupations there needs to be an agreed process for reviewing the occupational standards. How occupational standards will be used by APEC economies and employers also needs to be agreed.

The AQRF includes 11 criteria to inform the referencing process but these are supported by detailed guidelines. A similar model could be utilised in the Occupational Standards Framework to support participating economies. Through the experience of other regional framework it has been shown that countries need support in referencing and associated functions. It is anticipated that implementing the Occupational Standards Framework will be no different. As such an extended model would include detailed guidelines that would assist countries to develop regionally agreed occupational standards according to an agreed template; it will address employers and potential users as to how to use the occupational standards for developing national occupational standards and for benchmarking existing national or local standards against the regional standards.
Table 2: Level of advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specificity of occupational standards</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process documentation</td>
<td>A set of simple criteria developed to inform the process</td>
<td>Detailed guidelines are produced to assist developers and end users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of occupational standards</td>
<td>Use by economies and employers for benchmarking is voluntary</td>
<td>To be applied in development and review of national occupational standards and/or qualifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupational standards level

Occupational standards describe an occupation, they can include competency descriptions for job tasks but many do not. The APEC Transport and Logistics group have documented the occupational standards utilising competency specifications. On the other hand, the apprenticeship standards developed by employers in the UK document the occupational standard at occupational level and do not specify any competency specifications at job task level.

The APEC community needs to give consideration to how occupational standards will be used, e.g. benchmarking standards, which will inform the level of specificity desired in the occupational standard.

Table 3: Level of specificity of occupational standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specificity of occupational standards</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of detail</td>
<td>Occupational Standards are described at occupational level, a statement rather than detailed specifications</td>
<td>Occupational Standards include detailed specification of competencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of additional information – occupational and educational classification standards

The use of classification standards to provide a common way of understanding of the scope and complexity of the occupational standards, and documenting the level of the occupation is an aspect that should be explored in the Occupational Standards Framework.

The AQRF level descriptors could provide a basis for outlining the level of complexity of learning for the proposed occupational standards. The most current version, ISCO-08, classifies skills based on four levels; these levels could be utilised in the proposed Occupational Framework. Whether the AQRF levels and the two classification standards are all used needs to be determined by the APEC economies. It may be that educational classification standards and the AQRF are not appropriate in the documentation of occupational standards, but this would need to be discussed and agreement reached.

Table 4: Classification standards and level of AQRF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of occupational standards</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AQRF application</td>
<td>AQRF is not used to determine level of complexity of learning</td>
<td>AQRF is used to determine level of complexity of learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Link to training standards

APEC economies vary in their application of occupational standards and the link (of lack of link) to prescribed training standards. It is possible that the Occupational Standards Framework also includes the development of agreed Training Standards to better inform and assist regulating agencies and TVET providers as to training expectations. Other approaches could include companion documents to provide information for countries to develop their own training standards. However getting agreement on training standards given the various approaches to delivery and assessment across the APEC countries may pose a significant barrier to achieving agreement.

Table 5: Training standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training standards</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documented training standards to link with the agreed Occupational Standards</td>
<td>Countries decide the best way to describe and prescribe training standards</td>
<td>APEC working groups in the development of occupational standards also provide agreed training standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documented companion volume to provide advice to countries for developing Training Standards</td>
<td>Countries decide the best way to describe and prescribe training standards</td>
<td>APEC working groups in the development of occupational standards also provide agreed advice through a companion volume.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. APEC Integrated Referencing Framework

How the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework will be utilised may take a longer period of time to discuss, explore and establish. It is important to ensure that it meets the APEC community’s needs. Consideration needs to be given as to how the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework could be used by educationalists and employers. The APEC Integrated Referencing Framework could be brought together in a number of ways, and put simply could be an extended model or a simplified minimal model.

Not all aspects of the issues below need to be addressed in the immediate future however they have been posed here to raise awareness of the potential of and issues related to developing a fully extended APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. A commitment from the APEC community is required however to ensure that these issues can be explored further and for the model to evolve.

Purpose and principles

Both the ASEAN QRF and the EAS TVET QAF has clearly articulated the purpose of each framework and also a set of underlying principles. To establish the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework the economies to facilitate a common understanding could outline its purpose and the principles that
underlie it. To facilitate APEC economies’ ownership of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework an extended model would be desirable.

Table 6: Purpose and principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose and principle application</th>
<th>Minimal model</th>
<th>More extensive model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Purpose is assumed – encompassing the AQRF and the EAS TVET QAF</td>
<td>Key purposes of APEC Integrated Referencing Framework are developed and agreed by APEC economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>Principles are assumed - encompassing the AQRF and the EAS TVET QAF</td>
<td>Key principles of APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is developed and agreed by APEC economies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code of practice**

Neither the ASEAN QRF nor the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework have a code of practice. However in the ASEAN QRF the formulation of a code of practice is embodied in the endorsed AQRF specification where principles for the operation of the AQRF are laid out as a procedure for referencing to it. The ASEAN QRF task force resolved that the principles and criteria for referencing were, for the time being, the ‘code of practice’. In addition, the AQRF will be supported by guidelines referencing, which are in the development stage.

In the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework the concept document does not include guidelines or a procedure for benchmarking quality assurance systems, but does include a process for self-assessment and an action plan including standardised templates. This in itself may require further enhancement to ensure that EAS countries undertake or utilise the framework in a consistent way and produce a country report in a consistent structure.

The proposed APEC Integrated Referencing Framework could be strengthened by a code of practice or guidelines on how countries and key stakeholders such as employers shall utilise the framework in a consistent way.

Table 7: Code of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code of application</th>
<th>Minimal model</th>
<th>More extensive model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code of practice</td>
<td>Code of practice is assumed in other frameworks</td>
<td>Code of practice outlines how the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework shall be utilised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>No guidelines required</td>
<td>Guidelines developed to support key users of framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Using an RQF**

The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework requires participating countries to reference to the framework according to a procedure and guidelines. The options for the APEC countries is to apply the ASEAN QRF to its fullest extent or to utilise it for determining the level of the proposed qualification and/or the level of occupation. The extended model would strengthen the community of trust amongst the APEC economies. The minimal model does not necessarily enhance the development of a community of trust amongst APEC economies or provides for a common understanding of economy education and training systems, but does provide for a consistent
reference point for learners, employers and those responsible for comparing occupations and qualifications.

Table 8: Using an RQF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQF application</th>
<th>Minimal model</th>
<th>More extensive model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levels of Occupational Standard</td>
<td>Levels are utilised as a reference point in the development of an Occupational Standard</td>
<td>Levels are utilised to determine level of each Occupational Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust</td>
<td>APEC economies undertake a self-assessment and confirm to other participating economies the level alignment</td>
<td>A full referencing process occurs as per ASEAN QRF processes, and a single report produced and shared. Extended approach – includes report published on dedicated APEC website – refer to governance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using an RQAF

For the referencing process, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework requires countries to refer to one or more established quality assurance frameworks as the basis for the agreed quality assurance principles and broad standards. The AQRF referencing criteria notes the following frameworks (but not limited to):

- East Asia Summit Technical Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework (includes the quality principles, agency quality standards and quality indicators)
- ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) - ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education. 14

A critical question for the APEC economies is how a quality assurance framework assists in the evaluation of programmes, qualifications or occupational standards. In addition, whether APEC economies undertake a full referencing process or whether the referencing is to be a self assessment and assertion that the quality assurance system meets a benchmark or that there is a plan in place to ensure that there is a commitment to improve the national quality assurance system.

Table 9: using an RQAF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQAF application</th>
<th>Minimal model</th>
<th>More extensive model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparing qualifications or occupational standards</td>
<td>QA benchmarks are reference point in the development of occupational standards and link to training standards and/or qualifications</td>
<td>QA benchmarks are used to inform evaluation processes of education and training systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust</td>
<td>APEC economies undertake a self-assessment of QA and confirm to other participating</td>
<td>A full referencing process occurs as per ASEAN QRF processes, and a single report produced and shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 Requirements for full member.
14 Requirements for full member.
If it is agreed that the APEC economies will undertake a referencing process, then key questions that need to be agreed to by the APEC economies includes: *If one or more of the three frameworks are not used, then how will APEC economies be assured that the quality assurance principles and standards, applied by an individual APEC economies are suitable? Should APEC economies agree on a list of quality assurance frameworks, or should a set of principles be established to inform the selection of quality assurance frameworks, or should APEC economies seek approval for alternative quality assurance frameworks?*

It is noted that in the case of European countries that implementing the EQF, they are expected to ensure that quality assurance is carried out in accordance with a common set of principles noted below.

- Quality assurance policies and procedures should underpin all levels of the European Qualifications Framework.
- Quality assurance should be an integral part of the internal management of education and training institutions.
- Quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programmes or their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies.
- External monitoring bodies or agencies carrying out quality assurance should be subject to regular review.
- Quality assurance should include context, input, process and output dimensions, while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes.
- Quality assurance systems should include the following elements
  - clear and measurable objectives and standards;
  - guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement;
  - appropriate resources;
  - consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review;
  - feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement;
  - widely accessible evaluation results.
- Quality assurance initiatives at international, national and regional level should be coordinated in order to ensure overview, coherence, synergy and system-wide analysis.
- Quality assurance should be a cooperative process across education and training levels and systems, involving all relevant stakeholders, within Member States and across the Community.
- Quality assurance orientations at Community level may provide reference points for evaluations and peer learning.

Neither the ASEAN QRF nor the EAS TVET QAF include quality assurance principles that address key underpinning issues in relation to the deployment and level of engagement of quality assurance strategies at a national level. The use of quality assurance criteria could be an area of development to enhance commitment within the proposed APEC Integrated Referencing Framework.
Table 10: Quality assurance principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality assurance application</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality assurance principles</td>
<td>Quality assurance principles are not required, given the QA Framework.</td>
<td>Quality assurance principles are included in the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework to further assist users to understand quality assurance systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Associated transparency tools**

Associated transparency and recognition tools provide APEC member economies to enhance and support the implementation of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. The use of an APEC Diploma Supplement model at TVET level would allow participating economies, that have developed and approved qualifications derived from the regional occupational standards, to identify this alignment through supporting issuance documentation that accompany a certificate e.g. diploma or degree papers. The supplement could also link the AQRF levels and alignment to the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework.

The APEC Higher Education Diploma Supplement could be expanded to include whether the qualification achieved is based on or addresses APEC occupational standards, the NQF alignment to the AQRF, and a description of the quality assurance processes (which could be incorporated into the education system field) and benchmarked against the EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework.

This application could be the minimalist linking device for an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. However, the APEC Diploma Supplement does not lend itself to documenting the working experience of a worker unless it can be verified by the issuing institution. For unqualified experienced workers, other recognition strategies would need to apply.

Table 11: APEC Diploma Supplement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APEC Diploma Supplement</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting documentation such as APEC Diploma Supplement</td>
<td>Voluntary use by APEC member economies</td>
<td>Required by all participating APEC member economies that utilise the regional occupational standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Template</td>
<td>APEC member economies utilise their own template</td>
<td>APEC Integrated Referencing Framework approved template is provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Governance**

Governance may be seen as having an official function and a strategic planning function.

How the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework could be implemented and the level of oversight desired by the member economies is something that needs to be explored. Should the notion of an integrated framework for recognition be accepted by member economies as something that will coordinate current practices, build on international developments and yield improvements to recognition practices then, beyond design of such a system, the ongoing governance needs to be considered. Notwithstanding that the integrated framework may use provision such as the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and the EAS Quality Assurance Framework, with their own associated governance arrangements, there will be a need to:
1. Manage how these frameworks are used within the APEC community and how APEC might play a role in the future development of the two frameworks;
2. Develop how a common framework for occupational standards might be developed, even if it is based on existing good practice around the world;
3. Assessing how effective the integrated framework is through monitoring its use and exploring new developments to the framework.

A governing body (such as an Advisory Council or Board) of representatives of potential users of the integrated framework would need to be established. This governing body would also need to have some membership links to the management boards of the associated frameworks such as the yet to be established international AQRF Committee.

This governing body would need to report to the APEC secretariat (or Human Resources Development Working Group) and the APEC community more generally and take its terms of reference from them.

| Table 12: Governance |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Governance | Minimal approach | More extended approach |
| Office of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework | Based in the APEC secretariat | In other organisations, rotating between participating economies on a cyclical basis |
| Governing body of the APEC | 1 representative from each participating economy plus one expert | More than 1 member per economy, other members, observers, experts. |

The successful implementation of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework depends on the APEC economies ensuring that the architecture and functions of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is understood across the main stakeholder groups in countries and awareness of the general population is raised. The potential added value of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework, in, for example, easing barriers to labour mobility, also needs to be addressed.

| Table 13: Communications strategy |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Communications | Minimal approach | More extended approach |
| National communications strategy | APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is mentioned in official documents | A long term, well targeted, rolling program of communications activities is devised that raises the profile of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework and its potential value. |
| APEC communications strategy | Communications is left to the APEC economies | Each APEC economy is requested to make its communications strategy available to other countries. General APEC Integrated Referencing Framework materials are created for APEC economies to adapt (language and style). |
| Web based facility | Communication through web based facility is left to APEC economies | APEC secretariat utilises a dedicated website to the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework, that includes at a minimum APEC approved documentation (e.g. Guidelines for development of APEC occupational standards) as well as occupational standards; but may also include country referencing reports, NQF level descriptor comparisons. |
For the success of the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework it is important to evaluate and update the framework, including assessing its effectiveness and whether it is providing the enabling function for member economies. Monitoring and evaluation strategies will require APEC economies to cooperate and provide the necessary data and information to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the framework.

Other strategies that could be considered include independent review by external experts after a period of, say five years, of implementation or an annual data or survey returns from each country evaluating member economy feedback in relation to:

- success of Occupational Framework in assisting in the development of occupational standards
- effectiveness of the APEC Integrated Reference Framework in relation to use and deployment of the AQRF and EAS TVET QAF
- support and capacity development needs.

Table 14: Monitoring arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring arrangements</th>
<th>Minimal approach</th>
<th>More extended approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of APEC Integrated Referencing Framework</td>
<td>APEC Integrated Referencing Framework does not include monitoring and evaluating of its effectiveness but is left to member economies to reflect on their own use and effectiveness.</td>
<td>APEC Integrated Referencing Framework includes periodic monitoring of its effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommendations**

To take the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework forward the following general recommendations are proposed.

1. **Strengthen APEC zone of trust**

   The current trend is towards larger geographical approaches to qualifications frameworks, quality assurance procedures and defining skills/competences through occupational standards. The aim is always to build zones of trust that will enable the free movement of people, goods and services. Until the late 1900’s traditional approaches to education, training and qualifications have built on the cultures and traditions in countries. These are inevitably different from one another and generally fit-for-purpose in the country concerned. However in recent years the traditional inward looking approaches to education, training and qualifications have begun to take on a more outward looking international stance, where the status of education, training and qualifications has to be understood and trusted by those seeking jobs and those investing in businesses and recruiting staff. It is therefore likely that the current globalisation trend will continue and a response from APEC will be welcomed by the member economies in the region. The aim must be to respect local approaches but to provide reference points in qualifications, quality assurance and the standards of skills and competences that can guide developments in countries, act as a benchmark of good practice and steadily and surely establish an APEC zone of trust that signals good understanding and high trust in national provision.
2. Establish a vision
It is important for the APEC community to set out the case for an integrated approach including how it will build on current national approaches and developments, how it will yield added value and how it is future oriented. A fully integrated approach could evolve over time and therefore establishing a vision will assist in developing priorities and drive action.

3. Provide a model for discussion
The model for discussion is based on three interrelated generic parts that are regional in nature and are not national approaches. These include:

- The new ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
- The EAS quality assurance framework
- A new, high level classification of occupations, skills and competences that draws on elements of ILO regional model competency standards, the World Bank framework for occupational and training standards\(^\text{15}\) and findings drawn from the APEC transport and logistics working group.

Thus the integrated model itself is new but the elements of it are not.

It would be fruitful to:
- Use APEC fora to continue to discuss the potential value in the model, the implications, and the support it will need by APEC, countries and businesses.
- Look closely at the countries, businesses and regional bodies that could be involved and make it clear where they have scope to inform and support the model.
- Produce case studies which show the value of an integrated framework.

4. Develop a strategy for development
Regardless of the model proposed by the APEC community there is a need to establish a strategy for development including:

- Setting the agenda for future development
- Establishing a project task force and make clear the lines of responsibility and tasks through agreed terms of reference. A taskforce will provide the initial management arrangements, provide advice, be spokespersons for their country and also assist in seeking country feedback or assist in in-country consultations.
- Establishing timelines, milestones, resource requirements, key agencies, technical support for future development of the model. Establishing timelines and milestones will provide structure to the enhancement of the model.

5. Engage with countries that are developing frameworks, quality assurance and occupational standards
No regional framework functions in isolation, and there is an increasing need to engage with other countries and regional communities that are developing such frameworks (i.e. qualifications, quality assurance and occupational standards). It important for the project taskforce to link with and be

\(^\text{15}\) Fretwell, Lewis and Deij (2001)
informed from other models including those that are incorporated in the APEC Integrated Reference Framework. A key role of the project taskforce will be to:

- Engage with the countries and broader community
- Test the model and promote it more generally
- Refine the approach to developing occupational standards.

6. Set up a governing body of key players
Finally, if the APEC Integrated Referencing Framework is to ‘have a future’ and be fully functioning there needs to be clear governance arrangements established. Establishing a governing body (be it an advisory council or a board) that is not only representative of the country members but also of industry will:

- Govern the process
- Be a focal point for stakeholders
- Maintain the momentum of the initiative.

In summary
This Discussion Paper has outlined the issues related to developing an APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. It also outlines the various options that could be deployed for the Occupational Standards Framework and the proposed APEC Integrated Referencing Framework. These options will need to be discussed if APEC is to move forward to create its own integrated zone of trust to optimise the recognition of qualifications and skills.
References


Appendices
### Appendix 1: Standards definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Job tasks</th>
<th>Job Vs Occupation</th>
<th>Occupational standard</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Vocation</th>
<th>Vocational stream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NTB</td>
<td>May be intellectual, manual, motor, perceptual or social. Most tasks require a combination of these and involve the application of cognitive and psychomotor functions together with appropriate knowledge.</td>
<td>Discrete, identifiable and meaningful component of work that is carried out by a person for a specific purpose and leads to a specific outcome. The performance of a task requires the application of skills and knowledge. Discrete, identifiable and meaningful component of work that is carried out by a person for a specific purpose and leads to a specific outcome.</td>
<td><strong>Job</strong> - Hire for a given service or period. <strong>Occupation</strong> - relates to a person and his/her role in the labour market (e.g. accountant). It is a more general concept than a job.</td>
<td>Are built from a collection of units (of competency) Fisheries</td>
<td><strong>Vocation</strong> - relation to a person and his/her role in the labour market (e.g. accountant). It is a more general concept than a job.</td>
<td><strong>Vocational stream</strong> - a group of related economic entities or enterprises (e.g. financial sectors, mining sector, agricultural sector).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO RMCS</td>
<td>May be intellectual, manual, motor, perceptual or social. Most tasks require a combination of these and involve the application of cognitive and psychomotor functions together with appropriate knowledge.</td>
<td>Sets of competency standards in streams of occupational or industry sector groupings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretwell et al</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Job tasks</td>
<td>Job Vs Occupation</td>
<td>Occupational standard</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wheelahan et al</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vocation**
Refers to practice — what people do in jobs, and the knowledge, skills and attributes they are required to use. A vocation is based on a continuum of knowledge and skill, in which work, vocational education, and higher education are linked, and is premised on the capacity to accrue knowledge and skills in a coherent, cumulative fashion.

**Vocational stream**
Vocational stream links the occupations that share common practices, knowledge, skills and personal attributes, thereby allowing individuals to specialise within the field of practice or move laterally into related occupations. Vocational streams have the potential to support vocations that underpin practice in broad fields.
## Appendix 2: International classification definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Skill level</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCO</td>
<td>Is defined as the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job.</td>
<td>As a function of the complexity and range of tasks and duties to performed in an occupation.</td>
<td>A set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self employment</td>
<td>The kind of work performed in a job. The concept of an occupation is defined as a ‘set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity’ A person may be associated with an occupation through the main job currently held, a second job, a future job or a job previously held. A set of jobs that require the performance of similar or identical sets of tasks. As it is rare for two actual jobs to have identical sets of tasks, in practical terms, an ‘occupation’ is a set of jobs whose main tasks are characterised by a high degree of similarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZSCO</td>
<td>The ability to competently perform the tasks associated with an occupation</td>
<td>As a function of the range and complexity of the set of tasks performed in a particular occupation. The greater the range and complexity of the set of tasks, the greater the skill level of an occupation.</td>
<td>A set of tasks designed to be performed by one person for an employer (including self-employment) in return for payment or profit. Individual persons are classified by occupation through their relationship to a past, present or future job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILO 2012, ABS 2013
## Appendix 3: Definition of competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NTB</td>
<td>Comprises the specification of the knowledge and skills and the application of that knowledge and skill across industries or within an industry, to the standard of performance required by the employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO RMCS</td>
<td>Relevant knowledge and skill applied to the standards of performance expected in the workforce. Includes the capacity to apply skills and knowledge to new tasks in a range of environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN QRF</td>
<td>Competence is an ability that extends beyond the possession of knowledge and skills. It includes: i) <strong>cognitive competence</strong> involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially; ii) <strong>functional competence</strong> (skills or know-how), those things that a person should be able to do when they work in a given area; iii) <strong>personal competence</strong> involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and iv) <strong>ethical competence</strong> involving the possession of certain personal and professional values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix 4: Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement standards</strong></td>
<td>Statement approved and formalised by a competent body, which defines the rules to follow in a given context or the results to be achieved. A distinction can be made between competency, educational, occupational, assessment, validation or certification standards:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* competency standard refers to the knowledge, skills and/or competencies linked to practising a job;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* educational standard refers to statements of learning objectives, content of curricula, entry requirements and resources required to meet learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* occupational standard refers to statements of activities and tasks related to a specific job and to its practise;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* assessment standard refers to statements of learning outcomes to be assessed and methodology used;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* validation standard refers to statements of level of achievement to be reached by the person assessed, and the methodology used;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* certification standard refers to statements of rules applicable to obtaining a qualification (e.g. certificate or diploma) as well as the rights conferred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence</strong></td>
<td>Competence is the ability that extends beyond the possession of knowledge and skills. It includes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Functional competence (skills or know-how), those things that a person should be able to do when they work in a given area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Personal competence involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Ethical competence involving the possession of certain personal and professional values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency specifications</strong></td>
<td>Specifications related to job tasks or functions within an occupation. This is a working definition for this discussion paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Learning outcomes are clear statements of what a learner can be expected to know, understand and/or do as a result of a learning experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Licensing bodies</strong></td>
<td>Licensing boards are generally established via legislation in relation to specific trades. In addition, licensing bodies have remit over the declaration of trades and may be involved in trade testing. Their role in quality assuring programs is similar to that of professional bodies. Trade training and testing bodies may also be linked those agencies with remit over training levies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National qualifications</strong></td>
<td>National qualifications are those developed to meet a specific national priority need or interest, and whose development has involved the appropriate national industry, profession or community group related to the qualification outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Majority of these definitions are included in the ASEAN QRF.
17 Cedefop (2011), p. 109, included in ASEAN QRF.
18 Coles & Werquin (2006), p. 23, included in ASEAN AQRF.
The qualification and its development process must have widespread endorsement to be termed a national qualification.

**National Qualifications Framework**

Instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria or criteria for levels of learning achieved. This set of criteria may be implicit in the qualifications descriptors themselves or made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. The scope of frameworks may be comprehensive of all learning achievement and pathways or may be confined to a particular sector, for example initial education, adult education and training, or an occupational area. Some frameworks may have more design elements and a tighter structure than others; some may have a legal basis whereas others represent a consensus of views of social partners.  

**Professional bodies**

A professional association or body is usually a nonprofit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and/or the public interest. The role of professional bodies varies; however, many are involved in the development and monitoring of professional educational programs, and the updating of skills, and thus perform professional certification to indicate that a person possesses qualifications in the subject area, e.g. nurses. In some instances, membership of a professional body is synonymous with certification, though not always. Membership of a professional body, as a legal requirement, can in some professions form the formal basis for gaining entry to and setting up practice within the profession, for example, doctors.

**Occupational standards**

Specifications of an occupation which may or may not include competency specifications. This is a working definition for the purposes of this discussion paper.

**Qualification**

Qualifications are a meaningful and coherent cluster of learning outcomes that meet the specified qualification type descriptors, that are capable of being assessed and are subject to external quality assurance processes.

**Qualification (award of)**

Formal recognition by a recognised awarding organisation that a person has successfully achieved all the required learning outcomes relevant to an identified programme of study.

**Qualifications framework**

Instrument for development and classification of qualifications (at national or sectoral levels) according to a set of criteria (such as using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes.

**Qualifications system**

Qualifications system includes all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. One feature of a qualifications system may be an explicit framework of qualifications.

**Quality assurance**

Quality assurance is a component of quality management and is ‘focused on

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20. This may be referred to as certification.
In relation to education and training services, quality assurance refers to planned and systematic processes that provide confidence in the design, delivery and award of qualifications within an education and training system. Quality assurance ensures stakeholders' interests and investment in any accredited program are protected.

| **Quality assurance framework** | A set of principles, guidelines, tools and standards that act as a reference for guiding the consistent application of quality assurance activities.  
24 |
| **Quality assurance system** | Quality assurance system includes all aspects of a country's activity related to assuring the quality of education and training. These systems include the following elements:  
- clear and measurable objectives and standards, guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement,  
- appropriate resources,  
- consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review,  
- feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement,  
- widely accessible evaluation results.  
25 |
| **Referencing** | Referencing is a process that results in the establishment of a relationship between the national qualifications framework and that of a regional qualifications framework.  
23 |
| **Regional qualifications framework** | A broad structure of levels of learning outcomes that is agreed by countries in a geographical region. A means of enabling one national framework of qualifications to relate to another and, subsequently, for a qualification in one country to be compared to a qualification from another country.  
23 |
| **Training standard** | A training standard could be an educational standard as noted in ‘Achievement Standards’ or could be a standard that is less detailed and provides advice related to training expectations and inputs, such as associated achievement standards; resources (for example staff, students, materials) which should be available in an institution; duration or volume of learning of the programme; NQF level of qualification. This working definition for the discussion paper includes both these notions.  
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24 Adapted from Cedefop Glossary (2011), p. 21  