

Appendix 1. Frameworks in seven APEC economies

Australia

All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors	All qualifications that are nationally recognised are included. The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a system of national qualifications for post-compulsory education in Australia, and includes schools, vocational education and training (Technical and Further Education colleges, Adult and Community providers and private providers) and the higher education sector (mainly universities).
A number of <i>levels</i>	There are implicitly 11 overlapping levels across senior secondary (1), Vocational Education and Training (8) and Higher Education (7) Level is not specified in the framework.
<i>Level descriptors</i> for units of learning or descriptors of broad qualification levels	Descriptors for broad qualifications. The AQF Guidelines (descriptors) contain the main criteria for defining qualifications based on the general characteristics of education and training at each qualification level. These characteristics are expressed principally as learning outcomes. The guidelines provide common ground for qualifications across the sectors. Differences in approach between the sectors are, in the main, related to the area of authority for learning outcomes, and these are reflected in the guidelines.
Level descriptors, defined against a taxonomy of learning <i>outcomes</i> or by learning <i>inputs</i>	No explicit taxonomy though the descriptors cover such matters as knowledge, skill, performance and responsibility
Measures of the volume of learning	Only for higher education
<i>Formulae</i> for volume and level for qualifications	No
<i>Register and public information system</i> on qualifications, pathways and providers	The AQF Register has six sub-categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government Accreditation Authorities (all sectors) ▪ Australian Universities ▪ Other Higher Education Institutions which are authorised by governments to accredit their own courses ▪ Non Self-Accrediting Higher Education Institutions and their AQF-approved qualifications ▪ Registered Training Organisations and their AQF-approved qualifications (VET sector) ▪ Overseas higher education institutions approved to operate in Australia, their local agents (where relevant) and the international qualifications they are approved to deliver Sectoral registers provide further information.
Occupational <i>competency standards</i> , or other measures of learning outcomes	Not for schools or higher education. For VET the main way this has been done is in Training Packages which are nationally recognised VET programs developed by Industry Skills Councils. They contain three core components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ national industry competency standards ▪ assessment guidelines and ▪ the requirements for national qualifications under the AQF Qualifications for other forms of vocational education and training not covered by the Training Packages can be accredited under national guidelines by state authorities.
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	Australia has an obligation under the Lisbon Convention to ‘promote the use of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Diploma Supplement or any other comparable document’ (Article IX.3). In 2008 the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement was introduced to be implemented over 5 years. There is nothing comparable for VET qualifications although there is national recognition of VET AQF qualifications within Australia
<i>Credit framework</i> to estimate the level and volume of learning	No, though in the state of Victoria the Registration and Qualifications Authority has developed a unit based credit framework to enhance the operation of the AQF in Victoria. It is based on 8 level taxonomy (plus an enabling level) of knowledge and skills, application and degree of independence. Volume of learning time is estimated: 1 point = 10 hours of average designed learning time. Development of a national system is foreshadowed by the Australian Qualifications Framework Council.
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions</i> by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions	Australian Qualifications Framework Council oversees the AQF but the quality assurance functions are distributed among the separate sectors of higher education, vocational education and training and schools. In higher education National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes were agreed by National and State governments in 2000 to ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia. State universities are audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). Non university higher education providers are audited by state authorities. VET providers are audited by state authorities operating under

	<p>national guidelines in the Australian Quality Training Framework which cover the accreditation of qualifications under the AQF and the registration and audit of providers to deliver and award the qualifications.</p> <p>There is national recognition of both qualifications and providers so that any qualification issued by a registered VET or higher education provider should be recognised throughout the country.</p> <p>Each state and territory determines its own policies and practices on organisation of senior secondary schooling, curriculum, course accreditation, student assessment and certification. An Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority was established in 2008 to work with the states to develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum, achievement standards, national assessments and reporting on student assessment data.</p>
Links to other frameworks including regional frameworks	None but being explored by the AQF Council
Legal control, or voluntary involvement	Legal with state and national legislation
Development and control by a national NQF agency, or development managed by stakeholders	Managed by Australian Qualifications Framework Council from 2008, but previously by an advisory board

Hong Kong SAR China

All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors	The Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) set up in 2004 covers academic, vocational and continuing education
A number of levels	7 levels with 7 the highest
Level descriptors for units of learning or descriptors of qualification levels	Descriptors for units in vocational education based on Standard Competency Specifications (SCS), developed by Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) in stages. Competency specifications are grouped together to form a qualification at a particular level.
Level descriptors defined against a taxonomy of learning <i>outcomes</i> or by learning <i>inputs</i>	4 elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge and Intellectual Skills; ▪ Processes; ▪ Application, Autonomy and Accountability; and ▪ Communications, IT and Numeracy.
Measures of the <i>volume</i> of learning	1 credit = 10 notional learning hours
<i>Formulae</i> for volume and level for qualifications	Yes, eg Diploma at level 3 to level 7 \geq 120 HKQF credits
Register and public information system on qualifications, pathways and providers	The Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) set up in 2007 maintains the Qualifications Register (QR)
Occupational <i>competency standards</i> , or other measures of learning <i>outcomes</i>	Yes for vocational education developed by ITACs
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	No information
<i>Credit framework</i> to estimate the level and volume of learning	Not at present but a commonly accepted credit framework is being developed under HKQF
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions</i> by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions	<p>The HKCAAVQ is the accreditation authority and qualifications register authority under the HKQF. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides advice to Government on the academic standards of degree programs ▪ Carries out academic accreditation of institutions and validation of programs ▪ Reviews general academic standards ▪ Evaluates an institution's ability to administer self-quality assured programs ▪ Carries out periodic reviews of self-quality assured programs ▪ Advises the Government and non-government organisations on academic accreditation and academic standards matters ▪ Provides information on academic standards of degree programmes and the promotion of academic accreditation methods and practices ▪ Conducts/commissions research into academic standards. <p>The publicly funded self accrediting universities have quality assurance activities.</p>
Links to other frameworks including regional frameworks	No
Legal control, or voluntary	Legal

involvement	
Development and control by a <i>national NQF agency</i> , or development managed by stakeholders	National agency

Malaysia

All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors	Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) covers the Skills Sector, VET sectors, Higher Education and Lifelong learning.
A number of <i>levels</i>	8 levels: 5 for the Skills Sector and the VET sectors (Certificates 1-3) Diploma, Advanced Diploma; 6 levels for Higher Education, with the three lowest overlapping with the Skills and VET sectors. For Lifelong Learning accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL) is being developed for formal, informal and non-formal education at higher education institutions, workplaces, voluntary work or self-learning.
<i>Level descriptors</i> for units of learning or descriptors of qualification levels	Descriptors of qualifications: the MQF is an interconnected structure that has set nationally-agreed criteria and benchmarking for naming, positioning and linking all qualifications. It is based on competency standards or learning outcomes in 3 categories: levels of qualification, fields of study, and program
Level descriptors defined against a taxonomy of learning <i>outcomes</i> or by learning <i>inputs</i>	Implicitly 5 outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depth, complexity and comprehension of knowledge ▪ Application of knowledge and skills ▪ Degree of autonomy and creativity in decision making ▪ Communication skills ▪ Breadth and sophistication of practices
Measures of the <i>volume</i> of learning	Yes, Credit value based on volume of learning or academic load, 1 credit = 40 hours Academic load includes all the learning activities the student undertakes to achieve a defined set of learning outcomes, such as lectures, tutorials, practical activities, retrieval of information, research, field work, and sitting for examinations.
<i>Formulae</i> for volume and level for qualifications	Yes, eg bachelor degree 120 credits, certificate 60 credits
<i>Register and public information system</i> on qualifications, pathways and providers	Malaysia has a register and public information on qualifications and providers details are at http://www.lan.gov.my/mqr/index.htm
Occupational <i>competency standards</i> , or other measures of learning outcomes	Competency standards for skills and VET sectors, learning outcomes for Higher Education
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	No
<i>Credit framework</i> to estimate the level and volume of learning	No
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions</i> by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions	The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing standards and criteria as national references for the conferral of awards ▪ Quality assuring higher education institutions and programs ▪ Accrediting courses ▪ Facilitating the recognition and articulation of qualifications ▪ Maintaining the Malaysian Qualifications Register Well established institutions can apply for self accrediting status The Quality Assurance Unit for Polytechnics and Community Colleges in the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for quality assurance in those institutions
<i>Links</i> to other frameworks including regional frameworks	No
Legal control, or voluntary involvement	Legal with state and national legislation
Development and control by a <i>national NQF agency</i> , or development managed by stakeholders	MQA implements and supervises the MQF

New Zealand

All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors	New Zealand has an NQF for the whole education sector.
A number of <i>levels</i>	10 levels with levels 1 to 7 for certificates, levels 5 to 7 for diplomas and levels 7 to 10 for bachelor degree and higher.
<i>Level descriptors</i> for units of learning or descriptors of broad qualification levels	There are level descriptors for units.
Level descriptors, defined against a taxonomy of learning <i>outcomes</i> or by learning <i>inputs</i>	A taxonomy of process, learning demand and responsibility for levels 1 to 7 and a knowledge and skills statement for levels 8 to 10; mainly based on learning outcomes
Measures of the volume of learning	Volume of learning is measured in credits, reflecting the time a typical learner takes to cover the learning, 1 credit = 10 hours of learning.
<i>Formulae</i> for volume and level for qualifications	A formula for the credits required at specified levels for the senior secondary certificate, diplomas, bachelors and honours degrees and for postgraduate degrees. This outcome of the formulae determines the level of a certificate or diploma.
<i>Register and public information system</i> on qualifications, pathways and providers	The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications includes all national qualifications making up the National Qualifications Framework, listed on KiwiQuals. These are specified in a common outcome based format. The Register also includes other national quality assured qualifications and all quality assured qualifications developed by education and training providers.
Occupational <i>competency standards</i> , or other measures of learning outcomes	Occupational competency standards or learning outcomes are specified in a common outcome based format.
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	New Zealand has an obligation under the Lisbon Convention to 'promote the use of the Diploma Supplement or any other comparable document' NZQA has released a discussion paper seeking feedback on whether it is desirable to provide New Zealand graduates with the additional information the Diploma Supplement records to ensure ongoing international recognition of New Zealand qualifications.
<i>Credit framework</i> to estimate the level and volume in various qualifications and informal learning, to assist in transfers within the system, in employment selection and to support qualification design	The New Zealand Qualifications Framework has a 10 level taxonomy and system of credits 1 credit = 10 hours of learning and therefore includes a credit framework.
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions</i> carried out by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions	All accredited providers can award qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) qualifications. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) administers the NQF and also deals with the registration; accreditation, quality assurance of programs of VET programs; the New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee is responsible for quality assurance within the university sector.
<i>Links</i> to other frameworks including regional frameworks	No
Legal control, or voluntary involvement	Legal
Development and control by a <i>national NQF agency</i> , or development managed by stakeholders	NZQA has to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ register and monitor all national qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) ▪ administer the national senior secondary school examinations ▪ register and monitor all private providers of education and training to ensure they meet quality standards ▪ accredit industry training organisations to register workplace assessors ▪ provide a qualification recognition service to people holding overseas qualifications who want to live, work or study in New Zealand

Philippines

All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors	Philippines National Qualifications Framework (PNQF) is in three parts—basic education, technical-vocational education and higher education—within the PNQF which was adopted in 2006. The PNQF evolved from the Philippine TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) Qualifications Framework. The Department of Education (DepED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Commission for Higher Education Development (CHED) jointly approved in principle the Philippine National Qualifications Framework (PNQF).
A number of <i>levels</i>	Implicit levels in separate sectors
<i>Level descriptors</i> for units of learning or descriptors of qualification levels	For units and qualifications eg Certificate III, Descriptor: An individual who attains the Certificate III qualification is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform a wide range of skilled operations at a high level of competence involving known routines and procedures in a work context that involves some complexity in the extent and choice of options available; ▪ Perform work involving understanding of the work process, contributing to problem-solving, and making decisions to determine the process, equipment and materials to be used; ▪ Perform assignments involving individual responsibility and/or some responsibility for others and participation in teams including group or team coordination.
Level descriptors defined against a taxonomy of learning <i>outcomes</i> or by learning <i>inputs</i>	For TVET the taxonomy is: process, responsibility and application
Measures of the <i>volume</i> of learning	For TVET the volume or amount of learning in a qualification is indicated by the number and content of the units of competency in the qualification.
<i>Formulae</i> for volume and level for qualifications	No
<i>Register and public information system</i> on qualifications, pathways and providers	A register in each sector
Occupational <i>competency standards</i> , or other measures of learning outcomes	In TVET
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	No
<i>Credit framework</i> to estimate the level and volume of learning	There is not a process based on computation of volume but the ‘ladderization’ arrangement of qualifications including forms of credit transfer, embedded courses and articulation, allows for credit in the move to higher qualifications.
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions</i> by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions	Basic education, details not provided TESDA manage all post-secondary technical and vocational education. It has introduced a unified registration and accreditation system. Accreditation is based on programs, so some institutions will have accredited and non-accredited programs. CHED manages higher education standards by: Accreditation of programs in institutions and certification through the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP); Recognition of institutions at different levels. These indicate an institution’s level of freedom from regulation by CHED Program or degree course accreditation is the basis for classifying institutions as chartered or non-chartered. Chartered institutions are autonomous or deregulated. They design their own programs and award degrees. Non chartered institutions must apply to the commission for program accreditation or a Special Order to award certificates, diplomas or degrees. Programs that are not authorised by the Commission are not recognised for assessment purposes. As part of quality assurance the Commission has identified around 300 Centres of Excellence and Centres of Development in various disciplines in public and private institutions throughout the Philippines. These Centres are recognised as providing high quality instruction, research and community involvement, and are provided with additional funding for a range of activities. Graduates of professional programs must pass the Professional Regulation Commission licensure examinations before being allowed to practice. These exams are run by the 43 Professional Regulatory Boards which operate subject to the approval of the Professional Regulation Commission.

<i>Links to other frameworks including regional frameworks</i>	The PNQF was to enhance and build on the international recognition of Philippine qualifications but is not linked to other frameworks
<i>Legal control, or voluntary involvement</i>	Legal under instruction from the President
<i>Development and control by a national NQF agency, or development managed by stakeholders</i>	Managed by TESDA and the Federation of Accrediting Agencies (FAAP) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Singapore

<i>All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors</i>	Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system, only for VET sector
<i>A number of levels</i>	7 levels
<i>Level descriptors for units of learning or descriptors of qualification levels</i>	Descriptors for both units and qualifications
<i>Level descriptors defined against a taxonomy of learning outcomes or by learning inputs</i>	Complexity at each WSQ qualifications level is determined by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The kind of knowledge and skills involved ▪ The kinds of issues or problems that the knowledge and skills are applied to ▪ The amount of accountability, independence, self organisation or organisation of others that is required to solve problems or complete tasks ▪ The occupational levels and range and depth of the knowledge and skills required of the jobs which the qualifications relates to.
<i>Measures of the volume of learning</i>	The credits of a competency unit are an indication of the relative magnitude of the learning effort expressed as Recommended Training and Assessment Hours (RTAH). 1 = 10 RTAH Credit value placed on all qualifications, e.g. Certificate =10, Diploma =20.
<i>Formulae for volume and level for qualifications</i>	For the WSQ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum 80% of the total credit value must be at the stated qualification level ▪ Maximum of 20% of the total credit value may be collected in competency units that are one or two levels above the qualification level, or one level below the qualification level.
<i>Register and public information system on qualifications, pathways and providers</i>	Register
<i>Occupational competency standards, or other measures of learning outcomes</i>	Competency standards
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	No
<i>Credit framework to estimate the level and volume of learning</i>	Levels and credits are assigned to units in a qualification.
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions</i>	Qualifications are issued by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), certifying that all training and assessment requirements for the qualifications have been satisfied and accredited under the WSQ. Quality assurance is based on 2 key strategies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-delivery approval ensures that the course approved meets the competency requirements of WSQ and includes appropriate delivery modes and resources. It also ensures that the course is to be delivered by a reliable training organisation using suitably qualified trainers. Training providers need to meet the required accreditation criteria, comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course Criteria – which is the organisation's ability to design and develop curriculum, deliver instruction and/or carry out assessment according to the WSQ competency requirements. ▪ Organisational Criteria - includes the practices the organisation adopts to ensure quality and professionalism in delivery of services 2. Post-delivery monitoring is carried out by WDA to monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of the course and employer satisfaction with the outcomes. This process will be built into the Approved Training Organisation's continual improvement cycle. This process is to be built into the Approved Training Organisation's continual improvement cycle

Links to other frameworks including regional frameworks	No
Legal control, or voluntary involvement	Legal
Development and control by a national NQF agency, or development managed by stakeholders	Control by the WDA

Thailand

All education and training and qualifications, or just some sectors	National qualifications framework for higher education only established by the Commission on Higher Education in 2003, though it is still in implementation. Other sectors have an interest in the framework. Work is being done on a qualifications framework for vocational education, using employment-related competencies for five industry groups.
A number of <i>levels</i>	6 levels
<i>Level descriptors</i> for units of learning or descriptors of qualification levels	Yes
Level descriptors defined against a taxonomy of learning <i>outcomes</i> or by learning <i>inputs</i>	Yes
Measures of the <i>volume</i> of learning	Yes
<i>Formulae</i> for volume and level for qualifications	Yes
<i>Register and public information system</i> on qualifications, pathways and providers	Yes
Occupational <i>competency standards</i> , or other measures of learning outcomes	Implementing an outcome based approach
<i>Recognition Tools</i>	Not yet
<i>Credit framework</i> to estimate the level and volume of learning	Yes
<i>Regulatory quality assurance functions</i> by the national NQF agency, or distributed to other institutions	Commission on Higher Education through the Bureau of Standards and Evaluation
Links to other frameworks including regional frameworks	Not yet, pending full implementation of their own framework
Legal control, or voluntary involvement	Legal under the Commission on Higher Education
Development and control by a national NQF agency, or development managed by stakeholders	Commission on Higher Education

Appendix 2. The survey

MONASH University



30 September 2008

Explanatory Statement

Mapping of Qualifications Frameworks across APEC Economies

Project HRD-04/2008

My name is Gerald Burke. I am Professor and Executive Director of the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) at Monash University in Melbourne Australia.

CEET, in a consortium with the Centre for Postcompulsory Education and Lifelong Learning (CPELL) University of Melbourne and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), has been contracted by Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat to undertake research and analysis on *Mapping of Qualifications Frameworks across APEC Economies*.

This is an official APEC project, developed by the Australian Government, supported by other Education Ministers and funded by the APEC Secretariat.

The project is examining:

- Qualifications frameworks and associated Recognition Tools;
- The uses and benefits of qualifications frameworks;
- Implementation issues including policy constraints;
- The linkages between qualifications frameworks and qualifications recognition and quality assurance;
- Reviews undertaken in the APEC region in relation to qualifications frameworks or with a qualifications recognition component; and
- The feasibility of developing an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework having regard to possible models.

As part of this study a survey is to be undertaken of persons expert in the qualifications structures in each of the APEC economies. The attached questionnaire has been developed.

As part of this study a survey is to be undertaken of persons expert in the qualifications structures in each of the APEC economies. The attached questionnaire has been developed.

For economies which have a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) the questions relate to:

- The factors that led to the introduction of the NQF
- The main benefits to be achieved through the establishment of the NQF
- The structure of the NQF

- The development of Recognition Tools
- Quality assurance
- Achievements and limitations of the framework
- International frameworks
- Possibility of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework
- Other comments or suggestions about qualifications issues your economy or this project

For economies without a NQF the questions relate to:

- The qualifications system in the economy
- The development of Recognition Tools
- Quality assurance
- Consideration of a NQF
- Possibility of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework
- Other comments or suggestions about qualifications issues in your economy or this project

Your name and address has been provided to us by the APEC Secretariat as the APEC EDNET coordinator in your economy, for forwarding the questionnaire to the qualification expert in your economy. When you forward the questionnaire to the selected qualification expert, would you please advise me accordingly.

Being in this study is completely voluntary. Your consent, and the consent of the qualification expert in your economy, to participate in the project will be indicated by your informing us that you have forwarded the questionnaire to the qualification expert, and he/she returning the completed questionnaire to us. An early indication of the likelihood of your expert participating would be appreciated. You and the expert may withdraw at any stage. We do not intend to ask any personal or intrusive questions, but if you feel any questions are of this nature you may avoid answering them. You may also refuse to provide confidential or privileged information. You may choose to answer none, some, or all of the questions.

Could you ask your designated expert to indicate willingness to participate in the study by: October 10 by emailing gerald.burke@education.monash.edu.au.

The completed *Questionnaire* will need to be sent to me by: November 3 2008

The completed *Questionnaire* will be available only to the researchers and will be securely stored according to Monash University regulations in a locked cabinet and/or password-protected computer. They will be destroyed after five years. Any confidential documents provided will also be securely stored.

When the project is completed, a draft report will be submitted by CEET to the APEC Secretariat. No individual participant will be identified in the report. Your name will be included in the list of persons who contributed to the study only with your written consent after you have seen the draft report.

If you would like further information about any aspect of the project please contact me by email: Gerald.Burke@education.monash.edu.au or telephone: + 61 3 9905 2808 or fax + 61 3 9905 9184.

If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research < CF08/2653 - 2008001365 > is being conducted, please contact:

Human Ethics Officer

Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH)

Building 3d

Research Office

Monash University VIC 3800 Australia

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: scerh@adm.monash.edu.au

Thank you.

Gerald Burke

Economy Questionnaire
**Mapping of Qualifications Frameworks across APEC
Economies (HRD-04/2008)**

This consultancy has been commissioned by Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). It is concerned with:

- Qualifications frameworks and associated recognition tools in APEC economies;
- The uses and benefits of qualifications frameworks;
- Implementation issues including policy constraints;
- The linkages between qualifications frameworks and qualifications recognition and quality assurance;
- Reviews undertaken in the APEC region in relation to qualifications frameworks or with a qualifications recognition component; and
- The feasibility of developing an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework having regard to possible models.

The consultancy is being undertaken by a consortium in Australia of the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) Monash University, the Centre for Postcompulsory Education and Lifelong Learning (CPELL) University of Melbourne and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The consultants have approached the task first by collating publicly available information on qualifications frameworks, and reviewing any recent activities undertaken in the region with a qualifications frameworks or recognition component.

A questionnaire has been developed to gather and facilitate access to information about qualifications frameworks and tools for increasing transparency and reliability. Prior to considering this some key terms are defined. This is provided in Box 1.

NOTE:

Questions 1 to 9 are to be answered for economies where there is a National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Questions 10 to 15 are to be answered for economies where there is no National Qualifications Framework.

**The completed Questionnaire should be emailed to
Gerald.burke@education.monash.edu.au**

Postal address Professor Gerald Burke, CEET Faculty of Education,
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Box 1 Definitions/Glossary

For the purpose of this questionnaire the following definitions have been used

Qualification⁴ is a formal certificate issued by an official agency, 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 workplace experience and/or a program of study. A qualification confers official recognition of value in the labour market and in further education and training.

Qualifications system¹ 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.

National qualifications framework¹ (NQF) is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of 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.

A Recognition Tool is a means of improving the information conveyed in a certificate or diploma. One form of tool is the Diploma Supplement. E.g. from the University of Nottingham: 'This Diploma Supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the Supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international "transparency" and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.)'.

Levels typically refer to either the complexity of learning in any qualification and/or the progression routes that learners take.

Descriptors may be descriptors of qualifications types or of units of learning within qualifications.

Taxonomies are used within NQFs to describe the type of learning outcomes achieved at each level. Examples are complexity of knowledge, degree of application and level of autonomy.

Credit framework typically is a set of taxonomy based descriptors of the volume of learning and the level of learning. It is designed to enable and support the development of courses and qualifications, compare and align qualifications and therefore enable stronger links between qualifications, including credit based links.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)⁵ refers to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

Sectors refers to the main subgroups within education e.g. schools, TVET and higher education (universities).

⁴ OECD 2005, *Bridges to the Future: The role of qualification systems in promoting lifelong learning*, Paris.

⁵ UNESCO and ILO, 2002, *TVET for the 21st Century*, Paris and Geneva.

Questionnaire: for APEC economies with a NQF

ECONOMY NAME:

1. The factors that led to the introduction of the NQF

a) Who or which agencies initiated the establishment of the NQF and when?	
b) Could you briefly describe how and why the NQF was established?	
c) Was the NQF established by legislation?	
d) What was the particular role of any central qualifications agency in developing the NQF?	
e) What was the role of each of the following organisations and groups in developing the NQF?	
i. The central or state government and minister	
ii. Department of Education	
iii. Department of Labour (and industry)	
iv. Industry/employer bodies	
v. Unions/professional bodies	
vi. Universities and other higher education institutions	
vii. TVET institutions	
viii. Other (please specify)	

2. The main benefits aimed to be achieved through the establishment of the NQF

(Please tick the appropriate box)

	very important	important	a little important	not important
<i>Benefits to students and workers</i>				
a) Simplification of complex qualifications arrangements for different sectors				
b) Identify and build clear links between qualification levels and across sectors (i.e. higher education, TVET and school) to support, progression and facilitate lifelong learning				
c) Support the recognition of prior learning and informal learning, and credit transfer				
d) Support the portability of qualifications				
e) Support the mobility of workers				
f) Support the mobility of students				
g) Other benefits (please specify)				
<i>Benefits to employers</i>				
h) Promote trust in qualifications and the qualifications system				

i) Enable qualifications to be aligned with industry skills/competencies				
j) Promote the consistent recognition of the same qualification throughout the economy				
k) Enhance mobility of labour throughout the economy				
l) Enable the national qualifications system to be more flexible and responsive to industry needs				
m) Other benefits (please specify)				
<i>Benefits to education and training institutions</i>				
n) Promote national qualifications to students and workers				
o) Make it easier to design new qualifications				
p) Make it easier to link qualifications				
q) Other benefits (please specify)				
<i>Benefits to education and training sector authorities</i>				
r) Make it easier to benchmark qualifications and occupational standards and establish credit				
s) Make it easier to conduct quality assurance of qualifications				
t) Make it easier to design new qualifications				
u) Other benefits (please specify)				
<i>International benefits</i>				
v) Promote student mobility internationally				
w) Promote worker mobility internationally				
x) Make it easier to align with regional qualification frameworks				
y) Make it easier to align with other economies' national qualification frameworks				
z) To facilitate the delivery, design and provision of off-shore education and training programmes				
aa) Provide for the recognition and quality assurance of non-local qualifications				
bb) Promote international recognition and trust in your economy's qualifications				
cc) Other benefits (please specify)				

3. The structure of the NQF

Does the NQF include:	Yes	No	Provide details
a) a single framework for all education and training sectors			
b) a framework for some sectors only			
c) descriptors of qualifications			

d) guidance on naming qualifications			
e) descriptors for units within qualifications			
f) descriptors based on taxonomies			
g) whether qualifications are meant to signify achievement in a broad area, something more than a collection of units			
h) levels of complexity/difficulty of qualification and if so the number of levels			
i) the volume or amount of learning in a qualification and how measured			
j) the volume or amount of learning in a unit and how measured			
k) a formula for determining if units completed meet requirements for particular qualifications			
l) the recognition of prior learning and credit transfer between qualifications and sectors			
m) a credit framework for evaluating the quantity and complexity of a qualification			

4. The development of Recognition Tools

a) Has your economy developed Recognition Tools for increasing the transparency and reliability of information about qualifications? If so what are they?	
b) Are these linked to the NQF?	

5. Quality assurance

a) What is the process for including a qualification under the NQF?	
b) Which bodies are responsible for qualification recognition/accreditation?	
c) Which bodies award qualifications?	
d) What other forms of quality assurance are there to show that awarding bodies/providers of education and training are meeting the standards for a qualification?	
e) Does the body responsible for the NQF have a major role in quality assurance or are other bodies responsible?	
f) Is there a national register of qualifications? If so, does the body responsible for the NQF have a major role in administering and maintaining the register?	
g) Are qualifications under the NQF recognised as equivalent throughout your economy?	

6. Achievements and limitations of the framework

a) Have there been major policy constraints in developing the NQF?	
b) Are there any significant problems with the NQF?	
c) What have been some of the most difficult challenges in	

developing and implementing the NQF?	
d) Is there broad support for the NQF across the education and training sectors and amongst employers, unions and other stakeholders? Give details	
e) Is there any evidence of the achievements of the NQF at this stage?	
f) What are the main limitations or weaknesses of the NQF?	
g) Will it be possible to address those limitations or weaknesses?	
h) Are there any likely changes or additions to the NQF in the near future? If so please give details?	
i) Has the NQF been formally evaluated or monitored and if so can you give details?	
j) Are most qualifications included under the NQF? Can you estimate a proportion?	

7. International frameworks

a) Is the NQF linked to any other qualifications framework?	
b) Is the NQF used as a means of assessing and recognising qualifications from other economies?	
c) Have your economy examined any international developments in NQFs? If so:	
i. Has the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) influenced your NQF and if so in what ways?	
ii. Has your NQF been influenced by any particular NQFs in the Asia and Pacific region? If so, which NQFs and why?	
iii. What does your economy regard as some of the most important aspects of international developments in NQFs?	

8. Possible Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework

a) Would you support the development of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework?	
b) If so what would be the main purpose and benefits?	
c) What should be the key features of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework?	
d) What would be the barriers or obstacles to the development of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework in your economy?	
e) Can you identify implementation issues for your economy if an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework is proposed?	

9. Have you any other comments or suggestions about qualifications issues in your economy or this project?

Please include a copy of the NQF and other relevant documents that are available.

Questionnaire: for APEC economies without a NQF
 ECONOMY NAME

10. The qualifications system in your economy

a) What bodies are responsible for the awards of qualifications?	
b) Is there an economy-wide hierarchy of levels of qualifications, if so how are they described and reported?	
c) Are qualifications recognised throughout the economy?	

11. The development of Recognition Tools

a) Has your economy developed Recognition Tools for increasing the transparency and reliability of information about qualifications?	
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12. Quality assurance

a) What process if any is there to register qualifications?	
b) Are there any government bodies including sectoral agencies responsible for quality assurance of qualifications?	
c) If so, how are these qualifications registered or recognised?	
d) What other forms of quality assurance are there to ensure that providers of education and training and awarding bodies are meeting the standards for the delivery of a course leading to a qualification?	

13. Consideration of a national qualifications framework

a) What degree of support is there for an NQF in your economy?	
b) Which groups or government bodies support the idea of an NQF?	
c) What are the perceived benefits and/or costs of an NQF?	
d) What barriers or obstacles are there to the introduction of an NQF?	
e) Are there any plans or documents relating to a possible NQF?	

14. Possible Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework

a) Would you support the development of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework?	
b) If so what would be the main purpose and benefits?	
c) What should be the key features of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework?	
d) What would be the barriers or obstacles to the development of an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework in your economy?	
e) Can you identify implementation issues for your economy if an Asia-Pacific Qualifications Framework is proposed?	

15. Have you any other comments or suggestions about qualifications issues in your economy or this project?

Please include copies of any relevant documents that are available

Appendix 3. Terms of Reference



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Terms of Reference

CONTRACTOR FOR SERVICE – MAPPING OF QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK SYSTEMS ACROSS APEC ECONOMIES

Purpose of contractor for service

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) will recommend APEC engage a contractor for the delivery of services that will raise awareness in the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG) of formal and informal qualifications frameworks systems, associated descriptors and quality assurance frameworks and recognition agencies across APEC economies.

Background – Mapping of Qualifications Framework Systems Across APEC Economies

The 21 member economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum are: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam.

Australia advances its international education interests and raises Australia's profile in the region through the Education Network, one of the three networks of the HRDWG.

In April 2007, Australia successfully hosted the 29th meeting of the HRDWG and at that meeting secured endorsement for the project: *Mapping of Qualification Frameworks across APEC Economies*. The project directly responds to the APEC priority area of *Governance and Systemic Reform in Education* as identified at the third APEC Education Ministers Meeting in 2004. This project directly responds to the priority through its aim of facilitating increased transparency and reliability of information about formal and informal qualifications frameworks, associated descriptors and quality assurance frameworks, and recognition agencies across APEC economies.

To date, there has been no comprehensive survey of formal and informal qualifications frameworks, associated descriptors and quality assurance frameworks, and recognition agencies across APEC economies. This project will review existing or planned surveys that may be expected to compliment the project. It will take into account any surveys conducted or planned by multilateral organisations, including the International Labor Organisation, the Asia-Pacific Recognition Network (APARNET), and the Brisbane Communiqué Senior Officials Working Group which has collected data on several individual economies in the region.

Findings from the project may be presented by the researcher to APEC education officials early in 2009.

Services to be provided by contractor

DEEWR will seek to engage a contractor (possibly an academic) with demonstrated capability and knowledge of qualifications frameworks and education systems of the APEC region, for service to:

- Conduct research and analysis of the education systems in the APEC region in terms of:
 - Publicly available information on qualifications frameworks;
 - Reviews undertaken in the APEC region with a qualifications recognition component;
- Develop an electronic questionnaire survey to gather and facilitate access to information about qualifications frameworks and tools for increasing transparency and reliability of information about higher education systems within APEC member economies
- Identify an appropriate survey respondent in each APEC economy
- Produce a completed report detailing the formal and informal qualifications frameworks, associated descriptors and quality assurance frameworks, recognition tools, and recognition agencies in the APEC region.

Proposed work schedule

DEEWR to engage a contractor	January/February 2008
Contractor to provide draft report to DEEWR (DEEWR to provide comments/feedback within 7 working days)	May 2008
Contractor to provide final report to DEEWR	September 2008

**This work schedule is indicative - it may need to be amended in consultation with the contractor.*

Roles of contractors and DEEWR

The contractor will be responsible for:

- liaising with and reporting to the DEEWR project officer at regular intervals; and
- provision of draft and final reports to DEEWR at agreed dates.

DEEWR will be responsible for:

- providing advice on the project and on APEC initiatives; and
- overall management of the project, including payment schedules.

All work is to proceed in consultation with DEEWR. DEEWR retains final editorial control and ownership of intellectual property.

Selection - contractor for service

Selection for the provision of services listed above is to among parties approached by DEEWR on a Request for Quote (RFQ) basis. Those parties will be academics or professionals with capability and knowledge of qualifications frameworks and education systems of the APEC region.

Selection for the provision of services listed above is among parties approached by DEEWR on a Request for Proposals (RFP) basis, circulated in January 2008 to at least three potential bidders and allowing at least three weeks for proposals to be submitted. The RFP will be prepared in consultation with the APEC Secretariat Director (Program). The successful tenderer will be required to enter into a contract with the APEC Secretariat. The approved project cost of USD51,000 funded by APEC. This incorporates items to cover consultancy fees (600 hours at USD80) and consultancy secretarial fees (100 hours at USD20). The project will adhere to normal APEC financial rules and general principles for the financial management of the APEC funds (accountability, value and openness).

RFPs will be distributed to qualified parties in January 2008.

Project Officer

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