Recognition and Validation

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Workshop 1: Tools for Recognition: Quality Assurance and Recognition stand for a welcoming culture and a culture of trust

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1.Global Recognition and Validation Tools

1. ***Global Inventory** of Regional and National Qualifications Framework*

2. UNESCO **NQF Guidelines** strengthening QFs in Asia and Pacific

3. UNESCO World Reference Levels (**WRL)**

4. ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

5. **Bilateral and Regional referencing** of qualifications

6. UNESCO Global Convention on he Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

7. **UNESCO *Guidelines*** *for the Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation (RVA) of Non-formal and Informal Learning* (UIL 2012)

8. UNESCO **Global Observatory of RVA**

2. The Global Inventory of Regional and National QFs

❖ Two-volume publication

❖ Updated every two-years

❖ Information on national and regional developments as well as selected themes

The Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks

❖ A **collaborative work** between the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the UNESCO Headquarters' in Paris, and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).

❖ The 2017 edition **recorded and analysed NQFs in 99** countries in all 5 continents.

❖ **7 Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs)**: in Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Gulf region, the Pacific, Southern Africa and the Commonwealth States.

❖ **8 thematic chapters** on transversal analysis of the most important issues in qualifications frameworks such as purposes and impact of NQFs.

Indicative structure of the country examples in the Global Inventory

1. Introduction and context
2. Policy objectives.
3. Levels and use of learning outcomes
4. Scope and structure of an NQF (with graphic/grid of NQF);
5. Stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangements
6. Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways
7. NQF implementation
8. Referencing to the regional frameworks
9. Important lessons and future

3. Global Inventory: Main Trends

❖ **150 countries** world-wide are now developing and implementing qualifications frameworks. Frameworks can be found in **all regions.**

❖ **Strengthened regional cooperation (**Between 2015-2017**)** such as EQF, ASEAN reference framework; SADC cooperation in the Southern African context. In the past decade **NQFs partly trigged by regional frameworks**. Considerable **policy borrowing.**

❖ **First generation frameworks** (Australia, NZ, UK, South Africa, are fully integrated part of regional and national systems and policies, but are undergoing continuous change and adaptation.

Main Trends (Contd.)

- **New generation frameworks such as the EQF** emphasise communication and transparency rather than regulation and harmonisation.

- **Developments in USA differ** from those in other countries. The Credential framework is a voluntary/private venture and independent of the state, but confirms the increasing need for transparency of qualifications and credentials, as well as relevance to learner, society and labour market agencies.

- **Shift from tight to loose frameworks. Tight frameworks** define uniform specifications for qualifications to be applied across sectors (early versions of South Africa and New Zealand).

Main Trends (Contd.)

In **loose frameworks**

❖ comprehensive level descriptors applied across subsystems

❖ sub-frameworks allowed to retain their own principles and regulation.

❖ able to trigger reform, mobilise and commit stakeholders, rather than impose a one-fit-for all, rules and regulations.

❖ **Shift from policy borrowing to reflective policy learning (**especially in Europe**)**;

❖ shift from solely transformative NQFs to communication and transparent NQFs.

❖ Tools and platforms for stakeholder cooperation across policy areas, levels and institutions.

Main Trends (Contd.)

New frameworks especially in Europe

❖ **Focus on wider policy objectives rather than narrow neo-liberal economic objectives.** Sustainable development and reform is cornerstone; economic and social equity; SDGs; Lifelong learning, reaching the end-user**.**

❖ **Support lifelong and life wide learning agenda** through learning outcomes focus, transparency and coordinated provisions and institutions, serve individual learning by supporting their lifelong learning pathways.

❖ **Learning outcomes** are at the core of national and regional qualifications frameworks.

NQFs **evolve over time**; part of country's **historical, political, institutional and cultural context** and the national educational and training and qualifications system.

Differences between **developing and developed countries** in the development and implementation of NQFs.

Main Trends (Contd.)

The case studies point to several important factors that shape **successful implementation**

- ❖ Technical and conceptual foundation

- ❖ Formal legal adoption

- ❖ Institutional structures and quality assurance mechanisms

- ❖ he commitment of key stakeholders to the long-term development of the framework

- ❖ The visibility of the frameworks to end-users, learners and workers

- ❖ The challenges of measuring the impact of qualifications frameworks are now at the forefront.

4. The Global Inventory Supports the ASEM Education Process

❖ The chair of the Seoul ASEM 2017 appreciated the joint efforts of Cedefop, ETF, UNESCO and UNESCO-UIL.

❖ The inventory is an important **reference document** for Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) and NQFs:

- Supports global **monitoring** by interested actors
- Provides **policy analysis**,
- Identifies **latest issues**, and
- Contributes to **peer-learning**

Ministers called upon all ASEM members

❖ **Countries to make use** of this *Global Inventory* and to enhance, develop and implement fully their RQFs and NQFs.

❖ encouraged to develop the World Reference Levels, led by UNESCO, which will, on completion, support RQFs and NQFs, by **providing a global reference system**.

❖ Cedefop, ETF and UNESCO requested to proceed to produce an **updated edition** in time **for dissemination** at the next ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME7).

5. NQFs and SDGs

❖ The attention being paid to qualifications frameworks is rising;

❖ This is evidenced by the UN's Education 2030 Framework for Action and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls on countries to promote inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning;

❖ Some possible links between NQFs and SDGs can already be identified.

NQFs and SDGs (contd.)

NQFs are important instruments for reforming national qualification systems to improve:

- ❖ **Relevance** of qualifications: Qualifications frameworks deliver relevant learning outcomes (4.1, 4.3) and skills (4.4);

- ❖ **Quality assurance** of qualifications (4.1, 4.3) increases the chance of access through recognition (4.3) and acceptance of relevant skills (4.4) for employment and further study;

- ❖ Widening **access** and opening up pathways to learning opportunities. Equal **access** requires strong, flexible and **transparent** outcomes-based processes for recognition (4.3)

NQFs and World Reference Levels (WRL)

❖ There is also growing global cooperation at technical expert level, e.g., through work on **world reference levels**, led by UNESCO.

❖ WRL was **requested in Shanghai in 2012** in the context of the third international congress on technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

❖ Purpose is **to increase transparency of qualifications** and aid **international comparisons** and **recognition of TVET qualifications**.

NQFs and World Reference Levels (WRL)

❖ WRL goal is 'to translate any outcomes-based qualification, credential, entry requirements, job specification or framework level into an internationally recognized form of decision which can be used **in deciding on comparing qualifications or negotiating recognition or progression arrangements'** (John Hart, 2017).

❖ WRL aims to address the relationship between national and regional qualifications and explores ways in which a common language related to qualifications can be developed.

Critical factors in the operationalisation of WRL

❖ WRL operationalization (its conceptualization and technical development) will depend the **state of play of regional QF ecosystems** based on mutual trust and sustainable commitments.

❖ Should WRL concentrate only on **TVET qualifications** or **all qualifications ?**

❖ **Questions about the importance of 'all learning' that can be given a credit value?**

❖ 'Qualifications are '**states of learning outcomes** achieved following an assessment according to an agreed standard'. It is a **currency** signally a specific value.

7. UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

The general aim is to:

1. Promote **international cooperation in higher education**

2. Strengthen and promote **international mobility** and lifelong learning

3. Promote **coherence** between **recognition, quality assurance and qualifications frameworks**, while recognizing the growing diversity in the sector.

❖ The future development of this work on the UNESCO Conventions are **relevant to the development of NQFs** to improve cross border student and worker mobility.

Internationally mobile students and workers in Australia. Source: www.aqf.gov.au

Recognition, NQF, QA

1. Qualifications Recognition assesses if a qualification meets a specific benchmark for a specific purpose (study, research, general employment, regulated employment, migration

2. **Quality assurance**: NQFs can only deliver trusted outcomes if quality assured (Maintain and enhance minimum standard; Usually through registration and/or accreditation of institutions and qualifications; Includes self-evaluation and external review

3. **Qualifications frameworks** promote relevance, transparency, portability and consistency in qualifications (levels and learning outcomes, knowledge, skills and competences, registers of qualifications and/or awarding bodies)

Enabling comparison of qualifications between countries and world regions

Facilitating lifelong learning across education sectors

- •- validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning
- •- Establishing and maintaining pathways

9. Different types of comparisons to enable the recognition of qualifications across borders

❖ **Frameworks to framework** (NZ and Malaysia)

❖ **Qualification type** to qualification type (e.g. degrees, diplomas in specific streams (upper-secondary, higher education vocational education) such as and Higher Vocational Diploma in Sweden (SeQF 5) etc. Advanced (Level 6), with demand for skills and WBL integrated.

❖ Qualifications based on **occupational standards** (e.g. a plumbing qualification)

❖ **Comparing regional to QFs** (Hong Kong SAR to EQF).

❖ NQF /RQF to WRL in the future

Key elements of international qualifications comparisons

MATURE	Developing
Multigenerational maturity. NQF developed and re-developed over period of years	Recently developed – low level of maturity
Consistent application across the system	Not implemented in some parts of the system
Centralised or decentralised	Centralised or de-centralised
NQF exists in practice	NQF exists as a policy document
Clear level descriptors	Nascent level descriptors
Developed quality assurance arrangements	Quality assurance arrangements uneven or inconsistent
High trust	Source: Booker and Klinkum, 2018

Referencing Outcomes/Output

Mature High trust	less mature Medium trust	Developing Low trust
Qualifications recognition (automatic) Recognition arrangements for specific qualifications Successful referencing against RQF Formal recognition statement	Referencing report Comparative analysis Scoping Report Policy dialogue	Comparative analysis Source: Booker and Klinkum, 2018

Points of comparison

❖ Should be clear and **transparent** in terms of levels, level descriptors and learning outcomes-based approaches

❖ Take account of **best fit, and 'substantial difference' used to help with comparison of levels** in respect to duration, qualification titles or modes of study

❖ **Should be quality assured**, through trusted, consistent and accepted minimum standards, registration, accreditation of institutions and qualifications, evaluation and external review.

❖ Take account of **social context** for the use of qualifications

❖ **International experts** to provide impartial opinions on the comparison process and outcomes.

Who benefits from qualification frameworks comparisons?

Learners	Enhances mobility for work and study across borders.
Employers	Assists in understanding the comparability of qualifications and qualifications systems.
Government agencies	Builds confidence as part of trade agreements implementation. Assist with recognition for work visas and permanent residency applications. Assist with meeting demands for skills.
National Qualifications authorities Specialized agencies for recognition of foreign qualifications such as E.g., Agency for Higher Vocational Education in (post-secondary, in Sweden)in cooperation with industry, also involved in programme delivery; Nokut in Norway	Increases understanding of other qualifications systems and quality assurance arrangements. Assists with the work of recognition of foreign qualifications Source: Booker and Klinkkum, 2018

10. Validation tools

❖ Use of Job-card system, Skills passports, Portfolios, online CVs, Badges matched to qualifications requirements or study programmes are on the increase.

❖ With regard to recognition of qualifications there still remain challenges:

– How to handle refugees with unverifiable, partial, or no documentation?

– How to increase the understanding of assessments in relation to NQFs?

– How to take into account the broader learning of individuals?

Use of validation tools to recognise prior learning in relation to recognition of qualifications

Uses of validation tools to recognize prior learning

- ❖ Validation for admission and credit transfer in the Higher education
- ❖ Validation without documentation in education:
- ❖ Validation as admission requirements for teachers.

Tools for recognizing qualifications outside the public education system

❖ Substantial part of education and training takes place outside the formal education system (e.ge. Industry sectors, continuous training at work, liberal adult education education, labour market training

❖ To include qualifications awarded outside the formal education system and bring the qualifications together in the national framework increase transparency and transferability and give a better overview of the recognition of qualifications

❖ Gains of the learning outcomes approaches are not seen as obvious at the national level if restricted to only the formal education system.

Source:Shawn Mendes, 2018

Tools for recognizing qualifications outside the public education system.

In many countries organizations that issue qualifications outside the public education system can apply for level placement in their NQFs:

- ❖ **the level** is valid for a specified number of years.
- ❖ Organizations applying for placement have access to a guide and handbook of how to relate learning outcomes to the NQF
- ❖ Information is needed on how KSC are assessed (written or practical tests, validation, etc.
- ❖ How qualifications of assessors are described
- ❖ How quality assurance of qualifications planned, conducted, evaluated.

Point of departure of NQFs should be:

- ❖ **Comprehensive framework** to include all types of qualifications – regardless of provider

- ❖ The development to be characterized by **openness**, **inclusiveness** and **dialogue** with relevant national authorities and other stakeholders

- ❖ The creation of a framework that inspires confidence – distinct demands on **quality assurance and learning outcomes**

- ❖ Th inclusive NQF to be developed in pace with the interest from **working life and sectors**.

Assessing the Impact NQFs are having on increasing worker and learner mobility

❖ Are **level descriptors** known and **used** by stakeholders?

❖ Are learning outcomes **understood** and **trusted** by society in general and by employers?

❖ Do NQFs include **all types** of qualifications and certificates relevant for employers and job seekers?

❖ Do labour market stakeholders see them as **relevant and credible**?

Source: Bjornavold, 2016

11. Challenges

❖ **Instruments and tools** are transferable across countries but not policies and systems; it is important to take into account **national contexts**.

❖ **Learning outcomes** in NQF standards are **result-oriented and measurable and objective**; however it is important not to forget that they are process-oriented, open to negotiation and have relevance when seen at different levels (as policy tool, intended objectives, objectives of a learning programme, used in teaching learning etc.). There still lot of work to be done in strengthening international cooperation in learning outcomes approaches.

Challenges

❖ How can we best establish **comparability** of qualifications frameworks to ensure quality assurance for recognition and mobility?

❖ Does **referencing** support more efficient recognition and mobility?

Challenges

❖ How can UNESCO global and regional conventions raise the **profile of the work on qualifications framework comparisons and quality assurance of qualifications to enable recognition** and mobility across borders?

Challenges

❖ How can we achieve better learner and worker mobility linking NQFs to the **Education 2030 agenda?**

❖ How can **public policy** in the area of **recognition,** qualifications frameworks and quality be coordinated rather than operate as separate domains?

Challenges

- ❖ The rise of '**international qualifications**'
- ❖ Borderless online education
- ❖ Importance of informal and non-formal learning which may not be recognized within NQFs
- ❖ The growth of **micro-credentials/nano-degrees**
- ❖ Varying **maturity levels** across many NQFs and most Regional Qualifications Framework (RQFs)

Thank you for your attention

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