Pacific Capacity Building Workshop on
Implementing National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) at Programme Level

The use of learning outcomes matched against level descriptors of NQFs

Concept Note

Background

The Asia-Pacific region is rapidly undergoing economic, technological, social and cultural changes and becoming increasingly interconnected. However, these gains are not evenly distributed. Small island developing states in the Pacific face significant challenges to promoting sustainable economic growth underpinned by inclusive and quality lifelong learning systems.

Capacity building to develop quality assurance (QA) systems that support the use of learning outcomes at programme level is needed to improve the quality and relevance of lifelong learning systems, including TVET and higher education. To address this need, QA experts from 14 countries in Pacific will meet in Apia, Samoa from 20-24 March 2017 to map their education and training pathways. This first consultation is part of a new two-year initiative on “Pathways to Empowerment – Building Capacity for Quality Higher Education and TVET in Pacific Island Countries” with generous support from the Malaysia Funds-in-Trust.

During a consultation meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu (October 2015), the Pacific Heads of Education Systems confirmed that the poor quality of learning environments in TVET institutions in the Pacific focused on employability, often at the expense of transversal skills, including problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution, which can be used across a range of occupational fields. Delegates underlined the need to explore a new approach to “skills development” that promotes sustainable livelihoods and lifelong learning in the Pacific context.

Both TVET and higher education are covered in Pacific countries’ development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) as well as the Regional Qualifications Framework. However, qualifications frameworks are relatively new to the Pacific and most are at the initial stages of development and consolidation.

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2 The Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS)
To support capacity building, the Asia-Pacific region offers rich professional experience with how to effectively apply and monitor NQFs at national, institutional and programme levels. Collaboration between UNESCO and quality assurance agencies in Malaysia and the wider region can support the use of learning outcomes and quality assurance systems in the Pacific Community (e.g. how to apply NQF at national, institutional and programme levels so that learning outcomes are quality assured).

Meeting objectives

The meeting will be jointly organized by UNESCO and the Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) with support from the Malaysia Funds-In-Trust and Republic of Korea Funds-In-Trust. The aim of the capacity building workshop is:

- Support capacity building for quality assurance of lifelong learning systems in Pacific Small Island Developing States;
- Train a pool of experts on quality audits in tertiary education, including TVET and higher education;
- Build capacity to promote and effectively monitor quality lifelong learning based on NQF throughout the Pacific Community.

Expected outputs

As a result of this intensive workshop, expected outputs include:

a) Increased staff capacity in the Pacific Community to guide NQF implementation across TVET and higher education (e.g. developing learning outcomes that are quality assured);
b) Review draft regional quality standards for tertiary education programmes and institutions, including the Revised Pacific Framework for TVET (e.g. develop research framework to map skills development pathways and recognition roadblocks);
c) Build a pool of regional experts on quality assurance audits in tertiary education, including TVET and higher education.

Participants

Workshop participants are experts from 14 accreditation agencies in the Pacific Community. In addition, UNESCO National Commissions will be invited to nominate an additional representative to join the training, pending available funding from donors. Resource specialists from the Pacific and researchers from Malaysia will also join to support an interactive training.

Organizers and sponsors

The meeting will be jointly organized by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for
Education in Bangkok Thailand and UNESCO Office in Apia and SQA with support from the Malaysia Funds-In-Trust and Republic of Korea Funds-In-Trust.

**Dates**

20-24 March 2017 (draft agenda available upon request)

**Venue**

Tanoa Tusitala Hotel, Apia, Samoa

**Resource persons**

Ms. Jeanette Baird, Professor and Vice President, Quality Assurance, Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea

Mr. Jeong Yoon Cho, Senior Research Fellow, Korea Institute for Vocational Education and Training

Mr. Morshidi Sirat, Professor Dato Doctor, Founding Director of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF), Penang, Malaysia

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