Quality Assurance of TVET Qualifications
Third Expert Meeting
(31 October – 1 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand)

Concept Note

Background:
At the 3rd International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) held in Shanghai in 2012, a recommendation was made to explore the possibility of developing quality assurance (QA) guidelines for the recognition of qualifications based on learning outcomes. This recommended action was further echoed in UNESCO’s new Strategy for TVET (2016-2021) and in the revised Recommendation concerning TVET (2015), which calls for transparent and quality-assured TVET qualifications and the promotion of mutual recognition of qualifications at national, regional and international levels. A key concern for developing such guidelines is the quality assurance arrangements in TVET which are essential for generating trust and ensuring transparency of qualifications for the labour market and individuals. Up-to-date and well-grounded information on QA of qualifications in TVET in different countries/regions is needed to formulate these guidelines.

In relation to the Asia-Pacific region, exploring QA and developing related guidelines is timely. With expanding socio-economic cooperation and integration within and between sub-regions in Asia-Pacific, mechanisms for fair and transparent recognition of qualifications are needed to facilitate learning and labour mobility. This need is reflected in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which called on Member states to “foster regional integration and labour mobility” by setting up mechanisms for fair and transparent recognition of qualifications with a view to facilitate mobility for both study and professional purposes. Many countries in the region are developing or have already developed National Qualification Frameworks (NQF), and are currently devising their implementation strategies. The majority of countries which are developing NQFs are also involved in the development of Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) such as the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), against which the NQFs are to be referenced. As NQFs and RQFs are being developed, attention is increasingly being shifted to their implementation and to the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms which are the foundation for mutual trust and recognition of TVET qualifications across borders.

Following the recommendation in the Shanghai Consensus and considering the key role TVET plays in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in the context of lifelong learning, UNESCO launched a research initiative to examine QA mechanisms that underpin the qualification process, to explore the possibility of developing international guidelines on quality assurance for the recognition of qualifications, based on learning outcomes, and to identify a set of world reference levels which are expected to facilitate the international comparison and recognition of TVET qualifications. Through a phased approach, it has produced a discussion paper (Phase 1), which explores and identifies issues involved in assuring quality and consistency of qualification processes, and country reports (Phase 2), which present QA principles, criteria and approaches supporting the qualification process, and how these are understood by stakeholders and applied in countries. The outcome of Phase 1 and 2 will inform the development of guidelines for designing effective and harmonized quality assurance of TVET qualifications (Phase 3).
In the framework of UNESCO’s global study on QA of TVET qualifications and as a follow-up to the first and second Expert Meetings held in October 2015 and July 2016 respectively, UNESCO Bangkok is organizing a regional meeting to bring together a range of international experts and national stakeholders from the Asia-Pacific and beyond to share the main outputs of the project: the final synthesis report on quality assurance of TVET qualifications in Asia-Pacific and proposed regional guidelines for effective quality assurance of qualifications systems. They will also discuss how the report and the guidelines can be utilised by relevant policymakers and stakeholders in the region to further optimise the quality assurance mechanisms of TVET qualifications at both national and regional levels.

Objectives:

- To share the final synthesis report and proposed regional QA Guidelines;
- To discuss the operationalisation of the proposed guidelines and how the implementation can be supported and monitored;
- To encourage regional collaboration and facilitate networking and exchange of experiences among the participants.

Expected Outputs:

- Final synthesis report and proposed regional QA guidelines shared and discussed;
- Action framework for the operationalisation and monitoring and support of implementation of regional QA guidelines;
- Follow-up activities identified and invitation for expressions of interest for UNESCO support extended.

Participants (tentative 30-40):

- International experts of NQFs and quality assurance in TVET;
- National QA experts/researchers from countries in Asia-Pacific involved in the UNESCO study;
- Officials from relevant ministries in Asia-Pacific.