

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)

ASEAN Secretariat
for
The WOHAI Virtual Workshop on the Way Forward of VEEs and VSBs in South-East Asia
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Introduction and Context

- ❑ The ASEAN Charter, signed by the ten ASEAN Leaders in Singapore on 20 November 2007, provides the basis for a region-wide qualifications reference framework in ASEAN.
- ❑ The **ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)** was initially developed in 2010 through the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) project.
- ❑ The AQRF is a regional common reference framework that functions as a **translation device to enable comparisons of qualifications across ASEAN Member States (AMS)** to support the recognition of their national qualifications framework (NQF) or national qualification systems.
- ❑ ASEAN is characterised by varying levels of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs).

AQRF Role in ASEAN Community Building: As an ASEAN Cross-sectoral Initiative

AQRF is an initiative in line with the ASEAN Charter's objective to develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning to empower the peoples of ASEAN and to strengthen the ASEAN Community

The AQRF aimed to support ASEAN Community building and specifically through the process to achieve the following goals:

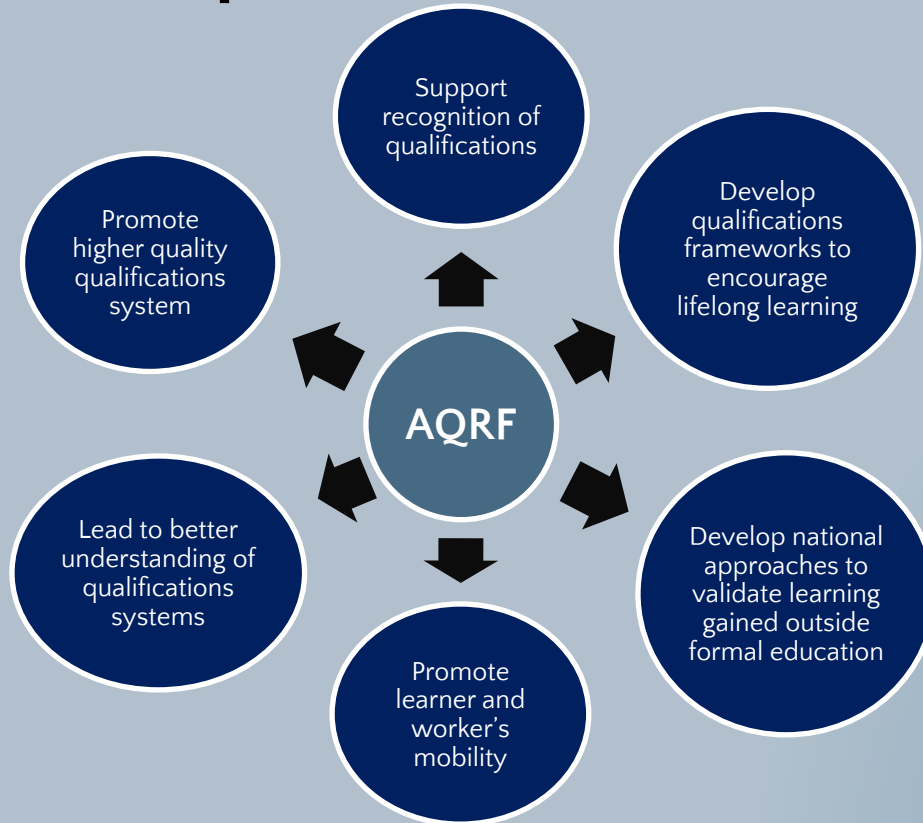
ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015 Blueprint:

"free flow of skilled labor (through harmonization and standardization) within the region"

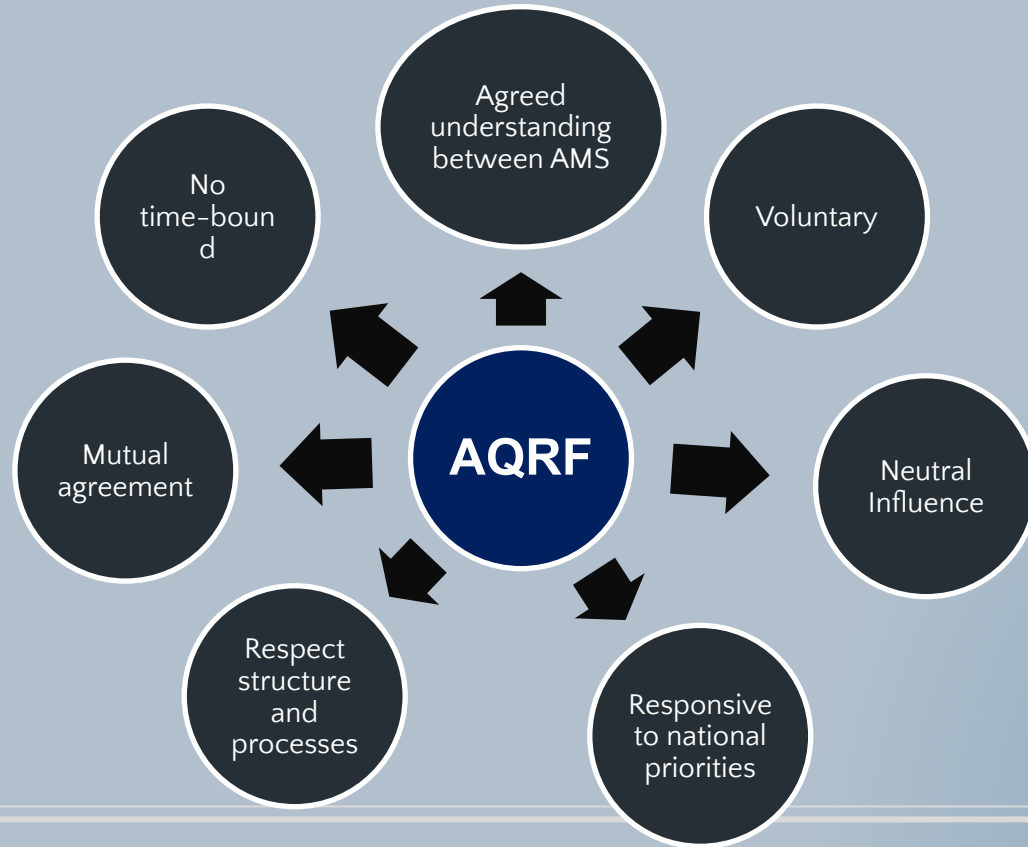
ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) 2015 Blueprint:

"to establish national skills frameworks as an incremental approach towards an ASEAN skills recognition framework"

Purpose of the AQRF



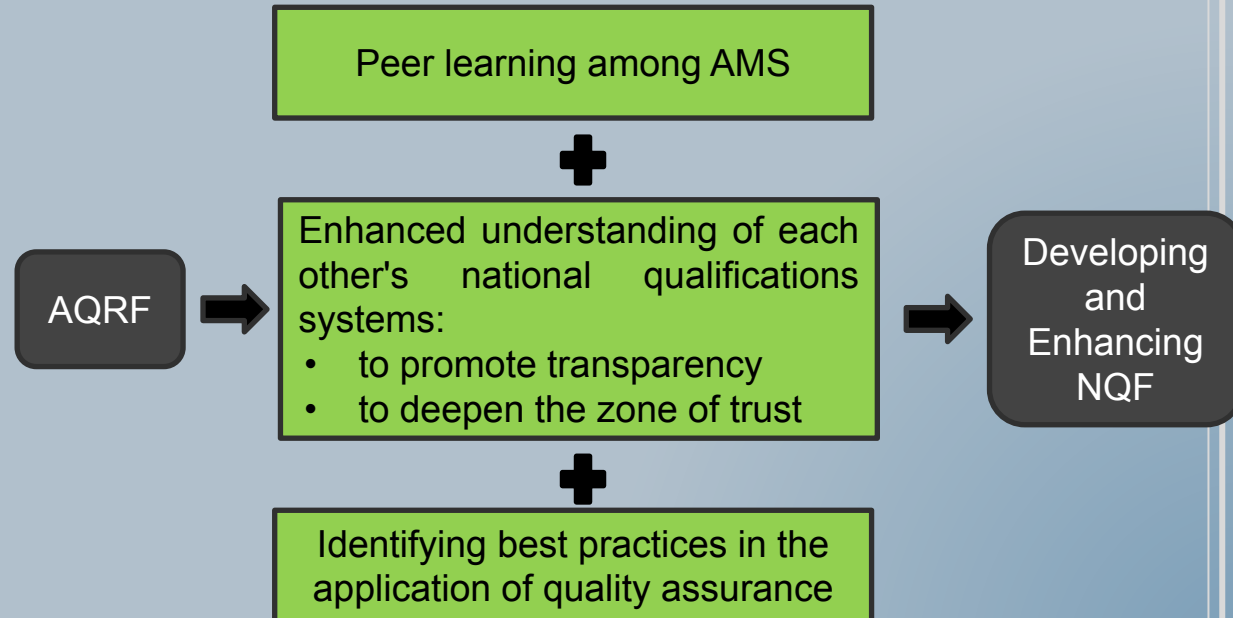
Principles of the AQRF



How does AQRF support NQF?

AQRF aimed to support and enhance AMS NQF or NQS by offering a mechanism to facilitate comparison, transparency and higher quality qualifications systems.

AQRF is underpinned by a set of agreed quality assurance principles and standards, and requires participating AMS to describe their education and training quality assurance systems



Understanding Referencing to the AQRF

- ❑ The AQRF is a tool for **enabling comparisons of qualification at national levels** across AMS.
- ❑ Referencing is a process that establishes **the relationship between the eight-level AQRF and NQF or qualifications system** of participating AMS.
- ❑ AQRF would therefore **improve the understanding of the qualification of each level of a NQF** or qualifications system of the participating AMS.
- ❑ **The level descriptors** in the AQRF **use learning outcomes** to facilitate comparisons of and links between qualifications and systems across Member States in ASEAN

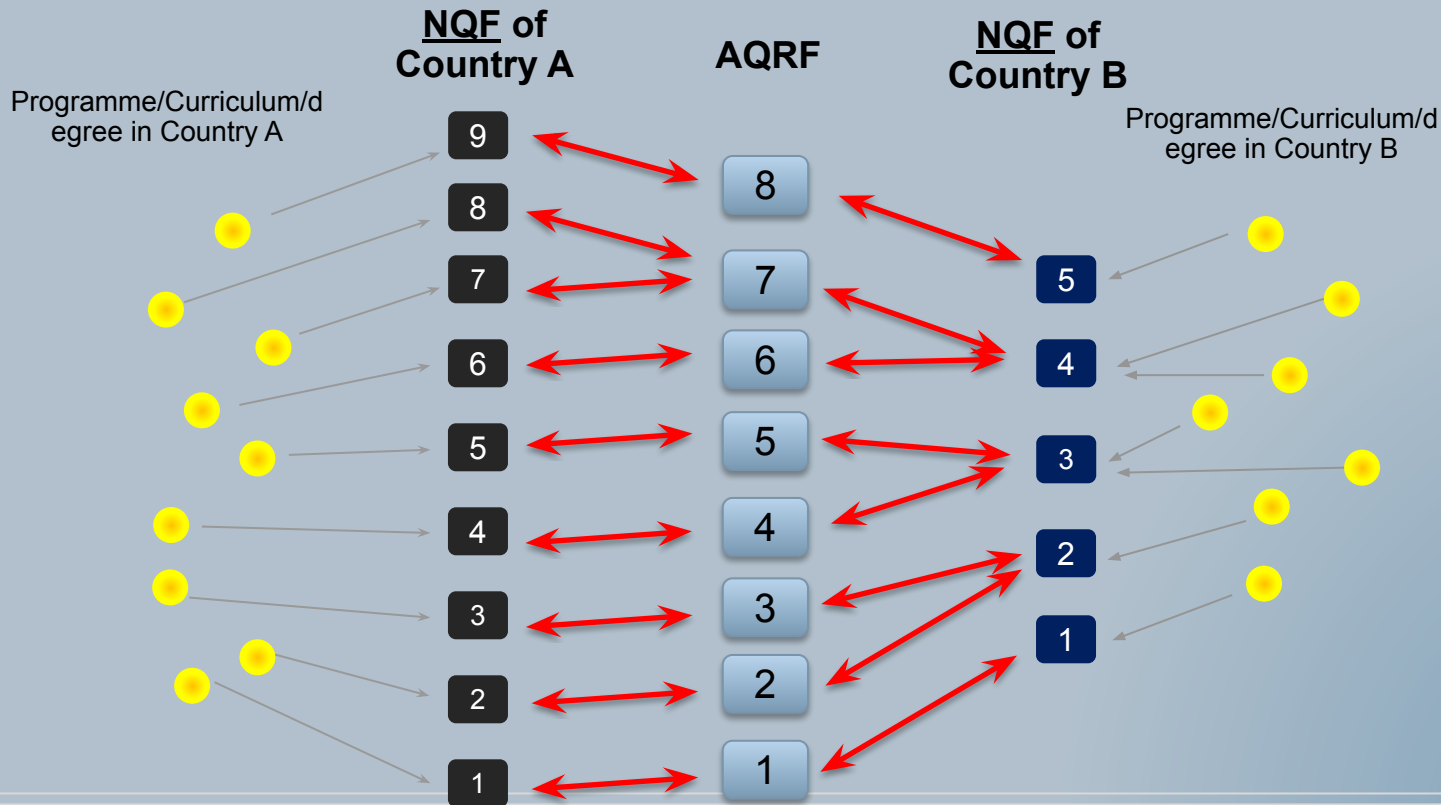
Levels and Learning Outcomes

- ❑ The AQRF level descriptors **aim to provide a reference point for the levels in NQFs** and national qualifications systems.
- ❑ The level descriptors include two domains:
 1. Knowledge and Skills
 2. Application and Responsibility
- ❑ The level descriptors assume that **the learning outcomes are cumulative by level.**

AQRF Level Descriptors

Level	Knowledge and Skills	Application and Responsibility
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is at the most advanced and specialized level and at the frontier of a field involve independent and original thinking and research, resulting in the creation of new knowledge or practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are highly specialized and complex involving the development and testing of new theories and new solutions to resolve complex, abstract issues require authoritative and expert judgment in management of research or an organization and significant responsibility for extending professional knowledge and practice and creation of new ideas and/or processes.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is at the forefront of a field and show mastery of a body of knowledge involve critical and independent thinking as the basis for research to extend or redefine knowledge or practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are complex and unpredictable and involve the development and testing of innovative solutions to resolve issues require expert judgment and significant responsibility for professional knowledge, practice and management
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is specialised technical and theoretical within a specific field involve critical and analytical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are complex and changing require initiative and adaptability as well as strategies to improve activities and to solve complex and abstract issues
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is detailed technical and theoretical knowledge of a general field involve analytical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are often subject to change involve independent evaluation of activities to resolve complex and sometimes abstract issues
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is technical and theoretical with general coverage of a field involve adapting processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are generally predictable but subject to change involve broad guidance requiring some self- direction and coordination to resolve unfamiliar issues
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes general principles and some conceptual aspects involve selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are stable with some aspects subject to change involve general guidance and require judgment and planning to resolve some issues independently
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is general and factual involve use of standard actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involve structured processes involve supervision and some discretion for judgment on resolving familiar issues
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is basic and general involve simple, straightforward and routine actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involve structured routine processes involve close levels of support and supervision

How AQRF Referencing Works ?



Status of AQRF Referencing Reports

Post Referencing Activities:

Four AMS (Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand) already referenced their National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the AQRF and currently are progressing in their post-referencing activities at national level.

Ongoing Referencing Reports:

Four AMS (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam) are in different stages of referencing their NQF to the AQRF and targeting to submit respective partial referencing reports in 2023

Post-AQRF Referencing Process: AMS efforts at National Level

AMS who have successfully referenced their National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the AQRF to do the AQRF Criterion 11.
(i.e. Following the referencing process, all certification and awarding bodies are encouraged to indicate a clear reference to the appropriate AQRF level on new qualifications certificates, diplomas issued)

Malaysia: planning to have an update of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), in the process of introducing accreditation of prior experiential learning, in the process of introducing accreditation of prior experiential learning to be integrated into the Malaysian Qualifications Register.

The Philippines: enhancement of the Philippine Qualifications Register (PhQuaR), implementation of the Philippine Credit Transfer System (PCTS), and preliminary inter-agency data on recognizing qualifications and skills/ education and training programs of Filipino learners, workers, and professionals in other countries.

Indonesia: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology launched the “Independent Campus, Freedom to Learn” (MBKM) policies which give students the right to study three semesters outside their study program and provide education institutions with automatic extension of accreditation status for the next three years

Thailand: works on establishing the National Credit Bank system to strengthen educational opportunities for all age groups as Thailand acknowledged the importance of a lifelong learning policy, aims to strengthen the learning system based on the NQF and AQRF standards, intends to link its programmes or qualifications with other AMS' within 2023.

Example of Mapping Nursing Career Pathway to NQF

Nursing Career Pathway



Example of Benchmarking to AQRF Level

At the 47th ASEAN Insurance Council (AIC) Meeting held on 27-28 October 2021 in Singapore, the AIC agreed to benchmark **the ASEAN Insurance Diploma to AQRF level 6**.

The Diploma is envisioned to be universally accepted as it is benchmarked to the AQRF and accredited by the Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA).

It will also utilize the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) along with its four principles.



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ASEAN INSURANCE DIPLOMA

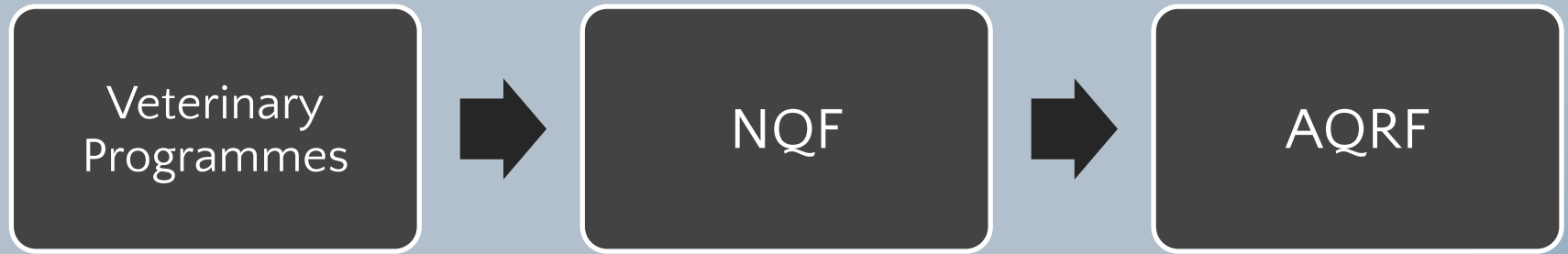
The process of awarding the ASEAN Insurance Diploma bearing on AQRF level 6 qualification. The Diploma is envisioned to be universally acceptable as it is benchmarked to the ASEAN Quality Reference Framework (AQRF) and to be accredited by the Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA).

It was agreed that a common approach will be adopted: ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework. The Framework consists of four sets of interrelated principles, namely:

1. External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAA)
2. External Quality Assurance (EQA) Standards and Processes
3. Institutional Quality Assurance (IQA)
4. National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Quoted from 2021 AIC Meetings

Veterinary, NQF, and AQRF



Closure : Salient Points of AQRF

- ❑ AQRF is a lifelong learning framework and covers different types of qualifications
- ❑ AQRF aimed to support and enhance NQF or NQS by offering a mechanism to facilitate comparison, transparency and higher quality qualifications systems
- ❑ The AQRF referencing process will help ASEAN Member States to understand each other's education system and qualification systems
- ❑ Each ASEAN Member States has their unique way of referencing to AQRF, while still complying to the same referencing criteria and standards
- ❑ The more number of ASEAN Member States referring their NQF to AQRF, the more meaningful AQRF will be, especially in implementing post-referencing activities (e.g. certifications, benchmarking to AQRF levels)

THANK YOU