

FINAL REPORT

Increase TVET integration
and Enhance TVET Quality
Assurance in the ASEAN
Quality Assurance Framework

Zita Mohd Fahmi

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AMS	ASEAN Member States
APACC	Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission
AQAN	ASEAN Quality Assurance Network
AQRF	ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
EAS TVET QAF	East Asia Summit Technical and Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework
EQAAs	External Quality Assurance Agencies
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutes
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangement
NQF	National Qualifications Frameworks
QA	Quality Assurance
RECOTVET	Regional Cooperation Programme for the development of TVET in ASEAN
PDCA	Plan – Do – Check - Act
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RQAM	Regional Quality Assurance Model Criteria and Indicators
RWG - QA	Regional Working Group on Quality Assurance
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SEAMEO VOCTECH	SEAMEO - Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training
SAR	Self-assessment Reports
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

FOREWORD

Quality development is today widely regarded as a key to success of systems of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in ASEAN member states: it is crucial for building trust among TVET stakeholders, to improve the image of TVET, and to convince business and industry to take an active role in TVET systems and recruit TVET graduates. In the context of ASEAN integration, Quality Assurance (QA) in TVET has, in recent years, become an important element in efforts to advance regional labour mobility and to build a more integrated regional labour market.

The ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2016 - 2020) identified the need to strengthen regional harmonisation for the advancement of quality TVET by establishing regional quality assurance and recognition for TVET and/or “non-degree institutions” as one of the priority areas for the improvement of TVET systems in Southeast Asia. Likewise, the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2021 - 2025) asks for, among others, improved TVET quality through quality assurance, towards enhancement of access to quality initial and continuing TVET that is responsive to changing labour market demands.

The **ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN)** was founded in 2008 as a network of quality assurance authorities and ministries responsible for higher education among ASEAN member states with the purpose to share good practices of quality assurance, collaborate on capacity building, and facilitate the recognition of qualifications and cross-border mobility throughout the region and to develop a regional quality assurance framework for Southeast Asia. Since 2016, AQAN is an accredited entity associated with ASEAN.

Since its introduction in 2013, the **ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF)** has served as a common reference point for quality assurance agencies and institutions of higher education and lifelong learning as they strive towards harmonisation amidst the diversity of education systems, cultures and traditions in the region. Recognising the important role of TVET as an element of ASEAN systems of education and lifelong-learning and for meeting the demand for skilled labour in ASEAN member states, AQAN has, in recent years, devoted increasing attention to the topic of quality assurance of TVET – taking note also of higher TVET as a part of higher education.

In this context, AQAN has partnered with the **German Regional Cooperation Programme for TVET in ASEAN (RECOTVET)** since 2017 in the work of an internal task force and in events including the 2019 Regional Policy Dialogue “Advancing the quality of TVET in ASEAN – the practice of quality development and quality assurance”. Recognising the central role of the AQAF for the benchmarking of quality assurance systems of higher education and lifelong learning in the ASEAN region, AQAN and RECOTVET decided to jointly work on the question on how QA of TVET could be better integrated in the AQAF.

We could thereby build on the outcomes of a regional working group of quality experts from ASEAN member states, chaired by the ASEAN Secretariat and supported by RECOTVET, which had developed a set of practical quality criteria and indicators for priority areas of TVET quality assurance: The Regional Quality Assurance Model Criteria and Indicators for TVET and TVET Personnel (in short “RQAM”).

It is our hope that this publication provides inspiration to widen the application of the AQAF and make it a central pillar and point of departure for a more unified debate regarding the harmonisation of QA of TVET in the ASEAN region.

As such, we are convinced it is a useful and timely addition to existing reference documents including the East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework (2012), the ASEAN Guiding Principles for QA and Recognition of Competency Certifications Systems (2012), and the UNESCO Guidelines for QA of TVET Qualifications in the Asia Pacific Region (2017).

We are very grateful to the author the report, Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi – former Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Quality Assurance) of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, former Secretary of AQAN, and leading authority on AQAF – for taking on this assignment. Valuable inputs and advice have been provided by AQAN representatives from ASEAN member states, notably Mr. Pen Sithol, Deputy Secretary-General of the Accreditation Committee, Cambodia; Mr. Wiwik Purwadi, Assessor of BAN-PT for Vocational Education of Bandung Polytechnic of Manufacturing, Indonesia; Mr. Souphansai Singthammavong, Acting Head of HE/TVET Quality Assurance Division, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR; Ms. Mazlinawati Mohamed, Director, Institutional Audit Division of Malaysian Qualifications Agency, Malaysia; Mr. Federico Monsada, President and Mr. Emmanuel V. Caguimbal, Manager – Quality Systems of Philippine Technological Council. For strategic advice and continuous support, we are grateful to Mr. Sebastian Gries of the EU SHARE project. This publication would not have been possible without the coordination and tireless support of Dr. Dadang Kurnia and Ms. Hang Nguyen Thuy from RECOTVET.


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1. INTRODUCTION

This Report is developed to demonstrate the TVET common quality assurance practices that are in principle already integrated and assimilated into the AQAF. It will, however, be more explicit with enhanced supplementary guidance notes, interpretation and samples of evidence where necessary. This is in line with the agreement by AQAN to expand AQAF in the guidance notes to encourage TVET sectors to adapt TVET practices e.g. as defined in recognised regional TVET frameworks such as RQAM or UNESCO Guiding Principles for QA in TVET – hereby called “AQAF Model 2”. This approach will improve and add value to the work of External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) in the AQAN and other related agencies in the national systems that are responsible for both higher education and/or TVET programmes and providers.

This Report acknowledges that references have been made to various TVET-related regional frameworks and reports to support and rationalise the expansion of AQAF’s ‘Guidance Notes and Interpretation’ as well as ‘Samples of Evidence’ (of quality practices). It generally underscores the relevancy of the principles, interpretation and samples of evidence suggested for TVET quality assurance practices.

Outputs

- The AQAF, which is extended with additional content to amplify and verify quality assurance aspects relevant and applicable to TVET and the users of AQAF, such as the EQQAs, providers and stakeholders with roles and responsibilities for ensuring quality of TVET in their national systems.
- The AQAF Principles of Good Practice remain in their original form as the enhancement of content is only incorporated in the Guidance Notes/Interpretation and Samples of Evidence in matrix columns 2 and 3 of AQAF.
- The supplementary information added in Principles of AQAF where pertinent is linked and their significance emphasised by specifically regional TVET quality assurance frameworks as well UNESCO Guiding Principles for TVET QA and generally in international and regional QA frameworks. (Refer to Boxes A, B, C and D in section 8: The proposed expanded Matrix).

Expected Outcomes

- The enhanced AQAF is better able to strengthen the EQAAs’ role and responsibilities to assure the quality of TVET programmes and institutions within the education and TVET sector overall.
- Further harmonisation of QA systems, in particular the TVET quality assurance system, is expected to improve trust and recognition of TVET qualifications, the quality of the workforce, mobility, and integration within ASEAN Member States (AMS) and beyond.

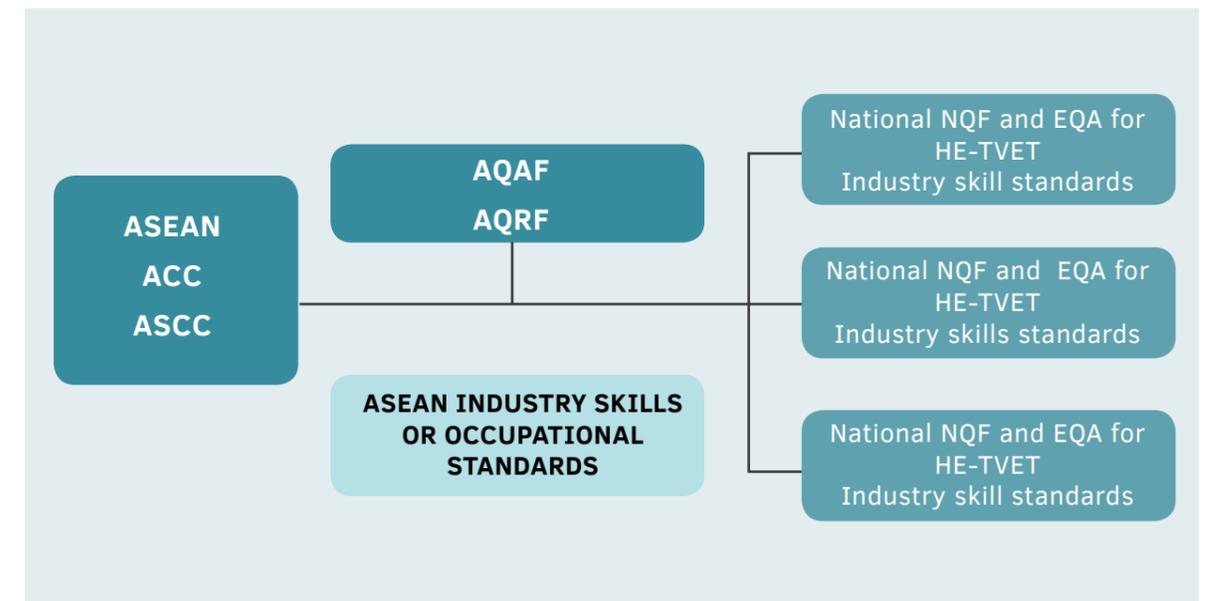
2. FACTORS

Given the significant role and development of TVET worldwide, the quality assurance framework for TVET has become more descriptive, dynamic, with clear specific performance indicators within the broader context of the role of TVET mainly in national systems. The need for a vibrant dynamic TVET ecosystem is a priority. The establishment of TVET regional quality assurance frameworks such as EAS TVET QA or the UNESCO Guidelines for QA of TVET Qualifications in the Asia Pacific Region includes scope and purposes, quality principles and indicators, required evidence (quantitative and data), or success criteria and/or performance indicators. Many of the guidelines or principles emphasised by EQAA and systems include: internal quality assurance and the responsibility of institutions/providers, evidence, measures and indicators of quality outputs and outcomes. Table A below provides an overview of QA core characteristics.

Regional Frameworks	Principles	Sectors /bodies	Specific requirements to measure
INQAAHE GGP (revised 2016)	Principles and quality assurance standards for Agency in higher education	External quality assurance agencies	Quality themes, indicators, measures and data Voluntary Impact on membership status
East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework (2012)	Key components: Principles, Quality Standards; Quality Indicators and governance arrangements	TVET sector - Accreditation agencies, registering agencies, and advisory note to providers	Measures, indicators and data Voluntary
European Standards and Guidelines	EQAA establishment and QA of EQAA IQA of HEIs, Learning Outcomes	External Quality Assurance Agencies for higher education Agency reviews, Membership requirements	Supporting evidence Judgements: Full, substantial, satisfactory and non-compliance
Europe EQAVET	Quality criteria - planning, implementation, Evaluation and review	Mainly TVET providers	Indicative descriptors and selected quality indicators -largely quantitative nature

Regional Frameworks	Principles	Sectors /bodies	Specific requirements to measure
UNESCO Guidelines for QA of TVET Qualifications in Asia Pacific Region (2017)	13 Quality Principles development and process quality assuring TVET qualifications	National TVET systems and providers	Qualitative and quantitative indicators to demonstrate fulfilment of the principles
RECOTVET Regional Quality Assurance Model Criteria and Indicators (RQAM) (2017)	3 Focus Areas: (a) Industry (b) TVET Teachers and Personnel (c) Evaluation and Audit	Significant focus on TVET providers and industry involvement Minimal on EQAAs or accrediting authorities	Approach: Input, process and outcomes and indicators of success criteria
ASEAN Guiding Principles for QA and Recognition of Competency Certifications Systems (24 th ALMM 2012)	Guiding QA Principles and protocols for accrediting bodies, and providers	Guiding Principles and protocols for recognition	Voluntary
AQAF	4 quadrants: Principles of good practice EQAA, EQAA Standards and Processes, IQA, and NQF	Accreditation agencies, IQA of HE and TVET providers and application of national qualifications frameworks	Guidance / Interpretation; Notes and suggested samples of evidence -may be in the form quantitative and qualitative information

The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework was initially in the ASEAN agenda for harmonisation of higher education and training in 2008 and was incorporated into the Kuala Lumpur Declaration for Harmonisation and Implementation Work Plans 2015-2020. It encourages the AMSs to reference their QA systems with the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework led by the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network. They set their own national and institutional strategies and key performance indicators to monitor progress. The Declaration and Implementation Work Plans are also concerned with the alignment to AQRF by national bodies and their national qualifications frameworks for improving the quality of higher education, the skills of their graduates and workers, and student mobility. One key component is the significant focus on TVET development both regionally and nationally, and with strong industry standards and industry collaboration for the technical workforce. Diagram A below shows the relationships between ASEAN AQAF and AQRF, and their relationship to national QA systems.



AQAF's main objective is to be instrumental in harmonising the quality assurance systems in AMS by setting agreed common principles of good quality assurance practices, standards and processes while respecting the diversity in AMS' national higher education and TVET systems and practices. There is increasing convergence in the quality assurance practices in AMS as a result of various national initiatives, projects and activities of the EU SHARE project in QA (2015-2019) and now with the RQAM supported by RECOTVET.

The Principles-based framework, AQAF, is generic and broad, and applicable to both higher education and TVET sectors. It is a neutral reference device, which mainly serves the EQAAs but also informs HEIs and TVET providers, national authorities, employers/industry and recognition bodies. The principles are operationalised by national EQAAs in each AMS in ways that suit their specific context, level of development and goals. No specific model was promoted by AQAF.

3. TVET IN AQAF

AQAF is made up of 4 (quadrants) sets of quality assurance 'Principles of Good Practices', which are interrelated, interconnected and applicable to higher education and TVET as shown in the diagram below.



- **Principles 1 and 2** require competent, recognised and effectively operated EQAAs with common goals and a mandate for their functions, with learners and society at the core of their purpose. Their quality assurance standards and processes ought to be comparable to international good practices. One key standard is the internal quality assurance of the institutions and TVET providers. Most of the EQAAs in the broader systems in AMS are also responsible for accrediting or quality assuring TVET programmes and their respective providers. The principles advise the establishment and operations of EQAAs for higher education institutions and TVET providers.
- **Principle 3** recognises the primary responsibility of institutions and providers to learners and society at large to provide quality programmes and effective institutional responsibility for both higher education institutions and TVET providers. The principles focus and guide

the institutionalisation of effective internal management and quality assurance systems for their core activities: teaching and learning (programmes) research, and management and services. The principle of internal quality assurance is one key standard in Principle 3 (3.5) which was mandated in Principle 2 (2.2). EQAAs generally set quality standards and quality indicators for these core activities. These principles are also applied to TVET providers.



- **Principle 4** related to qualifications and certification and national qualifications frameworks. A key objective of quality assurance practices is to ensure programmes and qualifications fulfil the learning outcomes and competency standards set – knowledge, skills and competency. The focus is on quality of learning, sufficient mastery of skills, and the demonstration of the good attitudes. Qualifications are in principle mandated to comply with National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) or the certification of competency attested to the NQF levels or TVET and industry competency frameworks. This is related to Principle 4's National Qualifications Framework that takes into consideration the rapid development of national qualifications frameworks as well as the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (2015). **Criteria 6 of the AQRF** referencing criteria necessitates a robust and transparent quality assurance system as the premise to facilitate recognition across borders – learning outcomes leading to competencies, accountability and transparency. AQRF applies to all levels and sectors of education and training.
- All the four sets of principles clearly demand the involvement of stakeholders including employers and industry.
- In conclusion, the 4 sets of principles (quadrants) are appropriate to TVET programmes and providers. The extension to the Guidance Notes/Interpretation and Samples of Evidence as recommended in the report should explicate the applicability of AQAF to the TVET sector.

4. THE MAPPING OF AQAF TO RQAM AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS

The aims of Model 2 TVET is to validate that AQAF's Principles of Good Practice have already been assimilated by TVET and the addition of selected information in the Guiding Notes/ Interpretation as well as the Samples of Evidence to designated principles. There are many principles which are relevant to TVET without the need for further clarification in the guidance notes or Samples of Evidence.

However, there is a need to be balanced in the added information so as to maintain AQAF as a wholesome and overall framework for higher education and TVET. The main concern is to ensure ease in applicability and understanding by EQAAs, providers and other stakeholders in the national systems.

It is not intended to be exhaustive nor too

detailed for its users. It is for the national systems to interpret and provide practice and resources designed to operationalise it within their own context. The following notes explain the mapping of AQAF to TVET and to RQAM.

The RQAM is made up of 3 Improvement Criteria Focus Areas with 65 specific success indicators which when met demonstrate the quality of TVET programmes and institutions with substantial emphasis on the involvement of industry, TVET personnel, assessment and auditing. **In mapping RQAM to AQAF, it is not practical nor advisable to specifically map the criteria and indicators to each quadrant and principles as each has its own design philosophy, orientation, and approach; it is more effective to map them using their common objectives.** The RQAM analysis with AQAF on the one hand distinguishes the role of EQAAs and the providers and on the other reveals that they are interlinked in universal quality assurance practices. However, the mapping attempts to identify the connections between the two as closely as possible. Having said that, the national quality assurance systems for TVET are likely to incorporate the **RQAM improvement criteria and indicators of success** selectively in their manuals and practices as fit to their national contexts. The following demonstrates the relationships and commonalities between the RQAM and the AQAF framework and the role of EQAAs and TVET providers.



- i. **Improvement Criteria of Focus Area 1 'Industry Involvement'** is designed to ensure strong industry involvement, including: in design; market information; the inclusion of national occupational standards set by industry bodies; equipment and facilities; trainers; standards of delivery; and the assessment of programme outcomes, trainees, and trainers. **For the EQAAs** these input, process and outcome criteria and indicators in principle are matters within the quality assurance standards set by EQAAs for programmes in Principle 2 of AQAF. However, the quality assurance standards of the framework are not determined precisely in AQAF but must be comparable to international good practices. The difference is in the performance criteria influenced by the national context. However, they are not as explicit as items indicated in RQAM. In setting QA standards, the obligation to consult with relevant stakeholders is enshrined in the principles.

The Improvement **Criteria of Focus Area 1 'Industry Involvement' are relevant for TVET providers** as they inform the input, process and outcome criteria and success indicators that guide the setting of their internal quality standards, practices and performance targets. This is of significant relevance to **Principle 3 of AQAF – Internal quality assurance principles for institutions and providers.** The criteria and indicators, which may be predetermined by national TVET authorities, should be applicable in their IQA systems for programme design, delivery and assessment of outcomes. It was not intended to be explicit in AQAF because AQAN recognises the role of national bodies, or EQAA and the key stakeholders to collaboratively set the standards and performance indicators.

- ii. **Improvement Criteria Focus Area 2 'TVET personnel'** specifically states the quality criteria for TVET personnel in terms of qualifications and competencies, teaching skills, management support and collaboration with TVET stakeholders. Manpower and academic staff/master trainers and instructors fall within the focus area. For the **EQAAs**, their quality assurance standards must be benchmarked to international good practices (**AQAF Principle 2, statement 2.2**). This provides flexibility for the EQAAs to set the standards for providers' personnel – trainers, experts, instructors, assessors and management staff. Thus, this gives the national TVET authorities responsibility to determine the criteria for TVET personnel recruitment, development and management. It should be guided by RQAM or other external TVET QA guidelines to suit their specific circumstances.

Similarly, **TVET providers** must establish their policies and standards for recruitment and management of TVET personnel as well as set the criteria and performance indicators for teaching and learning. Again, this focus area contains indicators which can be mapped broadly to principles in AQAF Principle 3 and calls for improved guidance notes, interpretation and samples of evidence for extended clarification.

iii. **Improvement Criteria of Focus Area 3 ‘Audit and Assessment’** sets specific criteria for inputs, processes, outcomes and indicators for the success of TVET programmes. In particular, it emphasises the importance of internal and external assessments as well as audits performed by assessors and experts on trainees, trainers and the impact of training for graduates. It is important for **the providers to ensure these indicators and success criteria are practiced effectively in their internal systems with supporting evidence**. The role of internal quality assurance systems for follow-up action and the use of external experts and industry practitioners are important to sustain quality and effectiveness.

In mapping the ‘Improvement Criteria Focus Area 3’ against the AQAF, **for the EQAAs** the inputs, processes and outcomes (the internal and external assessment by external experts of trainees and trainers to ensure mastery of industry skills and standards, and the acquisition of knowledge and attitudes, etc.) are quality standards and processes that are normally set by EQAAs (Principle 2 of AQAF “comparable to international good practice”). These requirements of Focus Area 3 can also be linked to Principle 3 – Internal Quality Assurance (of institutions and providers) – for institutions/providers to embed into their systems.

The Improvement Criteria Focus Area 3 provides for the recognition of TVET providers by certified QA agencies. This can relate to AQAF Principle 1 on the establishment of effective and legitimate EQAAs with their own quality assurance frameworks to accredit or validate TVET programmes and their providers. Many do not require formal certification. It is also fairly reasonable to expect that the standards, processes, tools and assessment for TVET by these EQAAs are comparable to international good practices, including RQAM and their own contexts or the updated AQAF. For example, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency’s new code of practice to accredit TVET programmes demonstrates how it incorporates the principles in improvement criteria in 3 focus areas of RQAM and selective success indicators as deemed appropriate to the Malaysian TVET QA context.

Finally, the quality-assured learning outcomes and competencies, certification or qualifications of trainees – the main objective of quality assurance systems – is provided particularly in **RQAM Focus Area 3. This is the link to AQAF Principle 4** – the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) – as certification and qualifications of acquired competency are increasingly linked to NQFs or competency frameworks in AMS. The process of linking is mainly by recognised external quality assurance systems at national level. This is also connected to the AQR as sufficient formal compliance or proven alignment to the AQR by national qualifications frameworks will support qualification recognition processes, mobility of skilled workers, and integration into ASEAN.

5. IMPLICATIONS

The difficulties in selecting additional material to be included in the Guidance Notes/Interpretation and Samples of Evidence for each principle ensures they are able to provide clear direction, relevance and usefulness to guide EQAAs as well as institutions/providers in applying the principles to their organisations for different purposes (e.g. internal self-assessment, external reviews, or in conducting accreditation exercises). The information suggested here is not exhaustive but is meant as a guide for both the EQAA and institutions/providers.

AQAN must be prepared to revise the Guidelines for Agency Reviews to accommodate TVET aspects, pilot the instrument, train auditors, and build capacity to oversee TVET quality assurance for the long term. In addition, they should establish collaboration with industries for industry skills/occupational standards (at national and regional levels) as inputs into the TVET sector, invite agencies to undertake reviews, and perhaps add value to the whole process by supporting the mutual recognition of qualifications and certifications awarded at national level.



The is the same for the Guidelines for Institutional Assessments. Both instruments assist EQAAs and their institutions/providers to advance their current practices.

In moving forward, a stronger and encompassing AQAF will provide better direction and guidance as a neutral reference point for national higher education and TVET systems to set higher quality standards for themselves and for ASEAN. It may also indirectly bridge the gaps between the world of work and education for our learners and the workforce.

6. AQAF MODEL 2

Model 2 demonstrates that TVET elements are evident in the AQAF, which should be integrated and enhanced for selected principles only from the quadrants which are in my opinion TVET-relevant and worthy of extension.

This can be achieved by incorporating added interpretations where relevant in the Guidance Notes/Interpretation as well as increasing the TVET-relevant Samples of Evidence with reference to RQAM, quality tools and other major regional TVET frameworks.

The list of suggested new information is not exhaustive nor should it be rigid in interpretation. The elements of these items are expected to be determined and further refined by national bodies for their respective TVET sectors. AQAN may encourage EQAAs and providers to further refer to regional TVET frameworks and good practices as well as to collaborate with counterparts to improve the quality of TVET and the skills of workers. The information recommended in the following table is guided by reference to various regional frameworks and guidelines. The main reference documents (without references sources not included here) include:

- RQAM and Quality Toolbox for Better TVET Delivery (supported by RECOTVET)
- UNESCO Guidelines for QA of TVET Qualifications (2017)
- EAS TVET QAF (2012)
- ASEAN Guiding Principles for QA and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems (2018)
- European Standards and Guidelines (2015)
- EQAVET
- AQRF
- Code of Practice for TVET Programme Accreditation (2018) Malaysian Qualifications Agency (2018)

7. THE PROPOSED EXPANDED MATRIX

The following table provides additional information and links to other frameworks in [blue font](#).

PRINCIPLE 1: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY			
This component explains the basic requirements. These must be explained for an appropriate and legally established external body mandated and dedicated to conduct quality assurance. The mission and goals of the EQAA must clearly indicate its mandate to provide quality assurance and to ensure the quality of education and training (TVET). If it is the case that the EQAAs' position is affected or constrained by national systems and other factors, these must be explained. These principles are key reference points for an appropriately established and competent EQAA.			
	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Example of evidence
1.1	The EQAAs in ASEAN countries have mission and goal statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mission and goals of this body provide a clear mandate regarding its roles and responsibilities • The EQAA 's mission and goals are developed with and approved by key stakeholders • Their mandate and scope of responsibility may differ, e.g. higher education only, or higher education and TVET or higher education, TVET and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National strategies and policy statements on HE and TVET and providers/ institutions • National Qualifications Frameworks • Ministerial statements on QA of TVET qualifications • Published mission and goals • Public reports of the EQAA • Legal documents (legislation, regulations, decrees, ministerial decisions) that provide the mandates • Minutes of consultations/ inputs with stakeholders – government agencies, providers, employers and industries
1.2	The EQAA has a legal basis and is formally recognised and trusted by competent public authorities in its home country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal basis for the formation of EQAA provides the authority to set up and conduct external quality assurance activities. It may be a statutory body or ministry unit through an Act of Parliament, Cabinet decree or equivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation or other legal frameworks • The nature of QA body includes a government entity, department or unit within a Ministry or statutory body • Decrees • Related and supportive policy papers

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Example of evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competent public authorities (ministries, agencies, recognition bodies, employers) work with, rely on, and recognise the decisions made by the EQAA 	
1.3	The EQAA has autonomous responsibility for its operations and its decision-making processes and judgements are free from undue influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for the EQAA to show its independence and autonomy to develop its systems, procedures and methods. Its decision-making process is free from outside influence and is entirely the responsibility of the EQAA In the context of ASEAN, however, it is often difficult to be operationally and financially independent. It is imperative, however, that the accreditation /evaluation decisions are made by the EQAA themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation Government policy statements Internal system, standards, and decision-making procedures Conflict of interest policies
1.4	The EQAA has a standard and transparent system for appointing members of the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are selection or election criteria that guide the EQAA in the appointment or election of its Board members. The appointment or election of Board members is announced to the public There should be a good and appropriate balance of stakeholder representation on the Board. This may include regulatory and professional bodies, HE/ TVET providers groups, students, employers and industry representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation and regulations Rules for nomination and election, if applicable Public announcement of members appointed or elected Web site information pertaining to Board members

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Example of evidence
1.5	The EQAA's management practices are based on good governance, transparency and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EQAA has a management structure e.g. the Boards, Executive Committees, and appropriately qualified staff for all positions There are operational manuals/guidelines and QA processes and procedures that are made available to the public. These indicate transparency Accountability to authorities and stakeholders should be indicated. Its financial system and performance should be transparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual for Operations Standard Operating Procedures Strategic Plans Performance and Financial Reports - supporting data such as QA codes, manuals and guidelines are accessible to the public
1.6	The EQAA keeps abreast of new developments and innovations in quality assurance as part of its internal continuous improvement system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EQAA provides relevant and effective policies and practices to keep up with the changes in higher education and TVET, learner and pathways, prior learning, teaching, learning, training/practices, new technology, online technology, and new demands for improved services Research is being conducted and feedback is being solicited. Presentations are made at various conferences A continuous quality improvement process is embedded in the management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Related publications on new practices Research output Seminars/ conferences Internal QA review system - outcomes and improvements Surveys and engagements with employers and industries -reported data and outcomes Monitoring systems and reviews of existing QA practices - e.g. with providers, graduates, employers and stakeholders or through satisfaction surveys
1.7	The EQAA has sufficient and adequate resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resources must be sufficient to enable the EQAA to perform its functions, meet its goals, in a timely manner, and serve stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on infrastructure and IT facilities Statistics on human resources and qualifications

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Example of evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resources include appropriately qualified and sufficient human resources and their development and financial capacity to sustain activities and future plans, including physical and IT infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment policy Training policies and programmes Planning systems Key performance indicators
1.8	The EQAA collaborates with key stakeholders, nationally and internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration at national levels with key stakeholders (e.g. students, institutions, employers, industry sectors and professional bodies) is critical as it enables better understanding and support of quality education and training and acceptance/ verification of the outcomes of QA work Information on industry standards and skills requirements Veracity of qualifications At international level, collaboration with QA partners enhances visibility, allows sharing of practices and resources, and supports recognition of QA decisions. QA knowledge and practices developed through managing transnational education and cross border higher education and TVET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies and documented process of participation of stakeholders, e.g. of various standards Listing of activities, projects, internships and sharing of information that involves key stakeholders Various collaborations - MOU, MOC, Reports, analysis and outcomes
1.9	The EQAA has a reliable system for controlling auditing and assessing all processes of its operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good internal management system addresses annual strategic planning, systemic checks, and performance assessment, including outputs and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents on strategic planning and performance reviews Documents on internal management systems Audited financial statements

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Example of evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDCA practices EQAAs are generally audited financially by higher authorities through yearly performance reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly performance review and report Customer feedback (including employers and industry), higher authorities through yearly performance reviews Audits are conducted by external QA bodies for separate certification and compliance with specific requirements Various data collected
1.10	The EQAA keeps the public informed of its current policies, procedures, criteria, standards and assessment results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The website/portal is kept up to date and made accessible to the public, e.g. all accredited programmes Timely issuance should be given of circulars/ notices, publications of QA documents, press releases and regular dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular communication through various means; website, circulars, emails, press releases and social media Publication of QA documents Public register of accredited qualifications Dialogue and feedback on effectiveness for improvement Campaigns Reports and Data on accredited programmes

AQAF emphasises the importance of EQAAs in quality assuring programmes and institutions/providers. EQAA Principle 1 provides good practices in the establishment of an external quality assurance body; normally government driven but can be applied to semi-public and private bodies.

- In the RQAM, this is included in Area Focus 3: Audit and Assessment: Article 62: “Certified QA agency” with its own QA frameworks, and Focus Areas 1 and 3 for industry involvement.
- Similarly, in the East Asia Summit Vocational and Training Quality Assurance Framework (2012).
- UNESCO Guidelines for the QA of TVET in the Asia Pacific Region (2017): Principles 1, 2, 6, 10 and 11.
- ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certifications System (2016).
- In addition, the AQR (2015) also clearly indicates the importance of robust quality assurance of programmes and institutions/providers by QA agencies at the national level to underpin trust and confidence as a premise for recognition.
- Most members of AQAN are responsible for higher education and TVET sectors.

BOX A
REFERENCES TO RQAM
AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS OR AGENCIES

PRINCIPLE 2: EQAA STANDARDS AND PROCESSES

The core function and activity of the EQAA is the conduct of quality assurance processes and the establishment of policies, standards, procedures and outcomes. Some EQAAs adopt their country’s standards as minimum standards, while others go beyond these standards. This quadrant focuses on how standards are developed, the role of stakeholders, key processes, transparency and fairness. The model being used reflects national needs and aspirations.

	Principles	Guidance Notes/ Interpretation + TVET requirements	Sample evidence/Indicators
2.1	The interests of students and society should be at the forefront of external quality assurance of external quality assurance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose and goals of the EQAA is to benefit both the students of HE and TVET sectors and society. The declared purpose of QA therefore should be supported by appropriate QA frameworks and processes for HE and TVET that provide the means to benefit both parties • The QA systems also serve the larger interests of society through their economic, social, and environmental goals • Students include trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission, objectives and goals • Regulation and policy for accreditation assessments, audits and EQAA statements of intent • Student/trainee focus and engagement • Publicly available data such as enrolments, completion, pathways and employment • Annual reports • Impact reports where available
2.2	Standards should be comparable to international good practices and related to internal quality assurance of higher education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and selection of standards by EQAAs involve stakeholders, e.g. experts, employers and industry practitioners and are benchmarked or referenced with international best practices for HE and TVET • They must be fit for purpose • The institutional QA requirement is part of the EQA standards whether for programme-based or institution -based approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure for developing standards • Dialogues or consultation and workshops • Standards set by national authorities, e.g. ministries • Involvement of industry (experts, employers demand, updated national occupational skills standards) • Alignment to regional standards (e.g. RQAM) • Documented and published QA standards and processes

	Principles	Guidance Notes/ Interpretation + TVET requirements	Sample evidence/Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality assurance standards are nationally developed and may include more specific criteria and agreed performance indicators determined at national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA standards may include: Curriculum design teaching, learning and training requirements and delivery, staff, academics, trainers, educational and training resources and their maintenance, financial allocation, leadership and management, research etc. Institutional and programme IQA and assessments Records of audits and accreditations and their outcomes Collaborative initiatives
2.3	Development of standards must involve participation of relevant stakeholders to meet current needs and demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of standards must be relevant to local context, national priorities and capacities, and the changing demands affecting higher education and TVET. How do the quality standards address this demand? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents/records of periodic dialogues and consultation Evidence of involvement of stakeholders such as employers and industry, expert groups and institutions Feedback from social media Open consultation papers References to national strategies for higher education and TVET, skills and industry, labour market analysis, and relevant industry standards
2.4	Standards must be made publicly available and applied consistently and with due regard for cultural diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EQA standards must be properly developed, approved, and well disseminated The interpretation must be fit for purpose and consider context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uploaded to EQAAs' portals, circulars and notices issue in a timely fashion Set quality assurance framework, evaluation instrument, assessor training and monitoring and/or moderation Assessment report feedback from institutions Evidence of appeal processes

	Principles	Guidance Notes/ Interpretation + TVET requirements	Sample evidence/Indicators
2.5	The process normally includes self-assessment reports (SAR) of the programme or institution, site visits, feedback, formal decisions, and follow-up procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline the institutional process to produce a national SAR This procedure is an accepted core process in QA practices, applicable to both programme and institutional accreditation, (audit and evaluation) This requires HE and TVET institutions to have an internal system for quality assurance and to conduct a proper audit to generate data and prepare a report (SAR) In preparation of the SAR, the institution internal audit committee involves various stakeholders relevant to the programme and/or institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manuals for institutional and/or programme accreditation: SAR Documents pertaining to institutional IQA system; (instruments and tools) Sampling of institution or programme subjected to the process; (data) List of members of the internal audit team Minutes of decisions Documentary evidence of follow-up/post visit reports
2.6	Assessment must be objective, fair, transparent, and conducted within an appropriate time frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EQAA must have assessment standards and procedures that have been well disseminated Uses validated tools in assessments Assessment reports or templates are conveyed to institutions for feedback Assessments should be carried out within a reasonable timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual/Code of Practice for institutional or programme assessments/ accreditation/ audit for higher education and TVET institutions Samples of validation tools Documents or sampling of processes Records of feedback from interviews for institutions and other related parties such as industry experts, students, employers Periodic review and analysis of assessment reports
2.7	The EQAA provides appropriate training at regular intervals for the development of assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors are seen to be the backbone of QA systems. Normally they are external peer experts and are trained by the EQAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection criteria and practice Up-to-date training modules to guide the conduct of assessments and/or accreditation

	Principles	Guidance Notes/ Interpretation + TVET requirements	Sample evidence/Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EQAA has specific criteria and training activities to oversee the quality of the reports and the performance of its assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual/Code of Conduct for audits/accreditation/assessments Use of validated tools and instruments Certification and/or registration of appointed assessors by the EQAA or relevant bodies
2.8	Quality assurance activities and processes are on a cyclical basis to promote continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQAAs should have a policy for the review of QA standards and keep the approach relevant and effective There may be fixed cyclical reviews of issues arising from time to time Feedback from stakeholders serve as an important basis for reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Performance Report Reports on reviews, findings and actions Workshops Feedback from Stakeholders
2.9	Quality assurance activities and processes are on a cyclical basis to promote continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQAAs should have a policy for the review of QA standards and keep the approach relevant and effective There may be fixed cyclical reviews of issues arising from time to time Feedback from stakeholders serve as an important basis for reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Performance Report Reports on reviews, findings and actions Workshops Feedback from Stakeholders
2.10	An appeal mechanism is established and accessible to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQAAs should provide appropriate appeal mechanisms, policies, and procedures that are publicly disseminated There are protocols to follow for appeals pertaining to decisions by the EQAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents on appeals system and procedures Records of appeals and outcomes

AQAF Principle 2: EQAA Standards and Processes must uphold the responsibility of the agency to students and society. EQAAs are to determine their own quality assurance framework ‘comparable to international good practice’ for higher education or TVET or both. Principle 2.2: Standards should be comparable to international good practices and related to internal quality assurance of higher education institutions.

- RQAM Focus Area 3: Assessment and Audit on ‘certified quality assurance agency’ sets its own quality assurance framework.
- Specific quality assurance standards link to RQAM Focus Area 1,2 and 3 (input, process, and outcome criteria should be reflected in the certified QA agency framework.)
- UNESCO Guidelines for the QA of TVET in the Asia Pacific Region (2017) Principles 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13.
- EAS TVET QAF (2012).
- ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certifications System (2016).
- INQAAHE (2016).
- ESG Part 1 (2015).

BOX B
REFERENCES TO RQAM
AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS OR AGENCIES

PRINCIPLE 3: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (INSTITUTIONS/PROVIDERS)

The internal quality assurance (IQA) system is important for continuous quality improvement and the effective performance of institutions. It has almost become a mandatory standard in many EQAAs' quality assurance standards. It reflects the close linkage between external quality assurance and internal quality assurance. Quadrant 3 requires institutions to develop their own policies and internal quality assurance systems and processes for accountability, transparency and achievement/improvements.

The stage of development of IQA systems in AMSs varies from one country to another and therefore the principles expressed here should be used as guides for the development of systems. For those with existing IQAs, this section can be used as a benchmark. AQAF does not prescribe a specific model, but it is important that generally IQA is a component of the Institutional Quality Management System.

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Samples of evidence
3.1	The institution has primary responsibility for quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions include providers of TVET and higher education It is expected that institutions take full responsibility to develop and implement systems and processes to ensure the quality of learning and other activities. Such commitment ought to be expressed in policy and strategic statements The EQAA has been established to ensure this institutional responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision and mission statements Policies, strategies, plans and resources An internal quality management system which features IQA A structure within the organisation to ensure implementation and monitoring for improvement Statistics of accredited programmes Student/trainee employment Examples of collaborations with stakeholders/industry
3.2	Quality assurance promotes the balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education and TVET is seen as a public good, especially in developing nations such as those in ASEAN. Both the EQA and IQA system should strive to strike a balance between institutional autonomy and accountability. Institutions should ensure a fair balance between their needs and the needs of society and demonstrate that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational and management structure Appropriate governance, systems, policies and strategies to manage academic and/or TVET for all activities and manage responsibilities Regulations and codes of ethics Records of accredited programmes by QA agencies

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Samples of evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> their governance systems, policies and strategies to manage academic and/or TVET autonomy, research and services are in place 	
3.3	Quality assurance is a participatory and cooperative process across all levels incorporating the involvement of academic staff, students and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of the various parties – top, middle management and support staff, academics and students should be identified Quality assurance is a shared responsibility and inputs and feedback should come from various stakeholders to foster quality in institutions Commitment to regular structured engagement with internal clients and stakeholders is likely to impact on institutional activities Stakeholders external to the institution include alumni, government agencies, employers and industry and professional bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IQA events to orient and educate internal heads, management staff, academics, trainers and students Documented policies and responsibilities of all parties which have been disseminated to various sectors Outcomes of dialogues and inputs from various parties Events organised for specific stakeholders and employees List of employers, industry representatives and other stakeholders from industry
3.4	A quality culture underpins all institutional activities including teaching, learning, research services and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does institutional quality culture evolve in an institution? In teaching, learning, research services and management and training activities Compliance with procedures Publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators for examples of quality strategies, systems, practices, performance, competent and certified human resources Standards of teaching and training, infrastructure, and continuous quality improvement, quality outcomes and institutional outputs Quality of faculty and trainers - adoption of international standards Networking and collaboration

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Samples of evidence
3.5	A structured and functional IQA system with clearly defined responsibilities is established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is expected that institutions will create an IQA system, a function assigned to specific unit or body to ensure the IQA system works reasonably within the wider institutional management system There is evidence of sufficient resources to support IQA activities, both human and financial It is expected that the IQA unit is linked closely to departments, faculties, and other service centres to oversee the system's effectiveness. These other centres are also expected to be involved in IQA at their respective level IQA generally includes the responsibilities of the unit/faculties, system for T&L outcomes. The scope of the IQA and the responsible parties should be determined by the institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents of establishment of an IQA Unit Documents of quality management/assurance, manual and practices Reports on planning, panels of assessors, internal assessment and audits, and follow-up actions Follow-up actions on external assessment findings Resources for IQA Record of activities undertaken by IQA
3.6	The quality system is promulgated, and is supported by senior management to ensure effective implementation and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the institutions is envisioned through their strategic intent. Thus, senior management commitment is crucial to the effective implementation and sustainability of IQA systems Senior management engages all levels of staff to promote understanding, acceptance, provide adequate resources, and exercise regular assessment and feedback mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings / documentation of activities, records of promotion of quality systems Successful and effective implementation of IQA records Improvements undertaken that enhance the institutions Financial records

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Samples of evidence
3.7	Sufficient resources for establishing and maintaining an effective quality system within the institution should be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify resources required to establish and maintain the IQA system. Depending on the model chosen, the unit must be well organised and adequately staffed This includes financial expenditure and allocation for the operations of core activities including TVET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment/launch of an IQA structure or unit Various resources such as QA personnel, training and financial statements –allocation and expenditure, and investment
3.8	The institution should have formal mechanisms for approval, periodical reviews and monitoring of programmes and awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This principle strictly addresses the need for formal systems to ensure quality. This requirement is considered at the planning, development and monitoring phases as well as at the delivery stage, Depending on the nature and objectives of the programme, consideration is to be given to market labour needs, technical/ professional or occupational standards Review of resources and staff (academic and trainers) sufficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved documented policy system for programme development, approval and review National and institutional goals List of members of appropriately qualified curriculum committee Records of development and reviews for the improvement of programmes Internal and external performance evaluation reports Graduate/trainee feedback Feedback from stakeholders e.g. industry and employer representatives Reports of labour market analysis, approved technical/ professional or industry occupational standards

	Principles	Guidance notes/ Interpretation	Samples of evidence
3.9	Quality is regularly monitored and reviewed for the purpose of continuous improvement at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution has existing policies on monitoring the IQA system and processes for continuous improvement. Usually, there is a unit or department in charge of QA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies on monitoring and review of IQA system and procedures Monitoring reports, findings and actions taken
3.10	Relevant and current information about the institution, its programmes, achievements, and quality processes are accessible to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution has a website that contains information about its programmes, activities, and achievements, including QA mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website, circulars, newsletters, promotional materials

AQAF Principle 3 sets out principles of good practices for the establishment and operationalisation of internal quality assurance – part of the internal management systems of institutions/providers that include staff, resources, sustainability and stakeholder involvement. The core activities include teaching and learning, research, services and management, in particular a structured internal quality assurance system. EQAAs to further develop the QA principles for TVET at national level.

- RQAM provides strong and detailed criteria and success indicators to promote clear guidance with Improvement Criteria 1: Industry Involvement; Area 2: TVET Personnel; and Focus Area 3: Assessment and Audit detailing a more descriptive framework for both EQAAs and TVET providers as to the involvement of industry in market analysis, curriculum design and teaching, learning and assessment including: processes and outcomes, trainers, internal and external assessment regularly applied to TVET programmes. The approach taken by MQAs and EQAAs to incorporate RQAM sets the direction for both EQAAs and providers.
- Quality Toolbox for better TVET delivery (RECOTVET) is an excellent tool to institutionalise quality practices for quality culture.
- UNESCO Guidelines for the QA of TVET in the Asia Pacific Region (2017) among key Principles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11.
- EAS TVET QAF - Providers .
- ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certifications System (2016).
- ESG Part 1 IQA.
- INQAAHE.

BOX C
REFERENCES TO RQAM
AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS OR AGENCIES

PRINCIPLE 4: NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

NQF generally provides the national classification and standards for qualifications in the higher education sector or as a comprehensive framework (may include school, TVET and higher education sectors). It reflects the progressive complexity of learning, promotes learning outcomes, credits, and establishes a learner-centric approach in teaching and learning, and beyond that supports lifelong learning. It is noted that NQFs have been developed in many AMS to enhance their higher education and TVET sectors. They have become increasingly important especially with the development of the **ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)**, which supports the ASEAN Agenda facilitating the mobility of persons, integration and harmonization.

Generally, underpinning the NQF is an effective EQA system managed by a competent recognised body that quality assures qualifications.

	Principles	Guidance Notes/ Interpretation	Samples of Evidence
4.1	NQF facilitates the progressive nature of learning and training with the inclusion of recognition of prior learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles 4.1 to 4.7 reflect the key objectives generally found in National Qualifications Frameworks Generally, NQFs in AMSs are inclusive of schools, TVET and higher education. There may be separate frameworks for TVET qualifications These items are also provided in the AQRF in terms of competencies – cognitive, functional, personal and ethical competencies (AQRF) Programme and institutional levels TVET-Industry competency standards relevant at programme and institutional levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQF policy statements Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)/Recognition of prior learning (RPL) development and initiatives Lifelong learning policies Credit transfer systems Learning outcomes include knowledge, skills, application and responsibility Statement of learning outcomes and levels, outcomes descriptors Teaching and learning approaches May adopt outcomes-based and TVET industry competency TVET-Industry competency standards
4.2	NQF supports students and workforce mobility through recognition of qualifications, including lifelong learning		
4.3	NQF is based on learning outcomes that emphasise student - centred learning competencies		
4.4	NQF supports consistency, transparency and flexibility of learning pathways and progression		
4.5	NQF is generally defined by levels, descriptors, and can be based on a credit system		

	Principles	Guidance Notes/ Interpretation	Samples of Evidence
4.6	NQF must be supported by relevant national policies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policies and strategies
4.7	Stakeholders must be consulted and actively involved in the development and implementation of NQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective consultations with various stakeholders including industry and employers to ensure acceptance, support and the recognition of qualifications and certifications of learners/trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of consultations and participation of stakeholder discussions on the development, implementation and review of NQF. May be at institutional level as well Development of industry competency standards
4.8	The implementation of the NQF is to be carried out by an authorised body and supported by a set of agreed quality assurance principles and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be a body entrusted to be responsible for the NQF. However, it is not necessary the responsibility of the EQAA The EQAA may be given the task to ensure its implementation within institutions The QA system ensures that the NQF requirements are complied with. Here lies the connection to Principles 1, 2 and 3 of AQAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws or equivalent evidence of establishment of authorised body responsible for NQF Written evidence of implementation policies and mechanisms Documents which describe the QA principles, standards and processes at national level. (e.g. MQA's Code of Practice for Accreditation of TVET programmes, 2018)
4.9	NQF is dynamic and should be reviewed to meet changing needs and developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NQF bodies must have policies and actions on periodic reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of reviews and consultations and improvement
4.10	NQF should be complemented by an authorised information centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of EQA of programmes and institutions should be available to the public through reports and decisions of accreditation Often there is a need to create a register or upload to portals of the EQAA or the Ministry There should be updated and accurate information to advise and protect the public Institutions may introduce Diploma Supplements or equivalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of proper, accurate information provided/ accessible to the public through website /portal The type of information may cover a range of items such as the purpose and use of the portal, a list and key information of accredited or quality assured programmes and qualifications, and the institutions/providers

AQAF Principle 4: National Qualifications Framework advises ASEAN Member States with NQF or with NQFs in development to use the principles to strengthen the quality of their higher education and TVET qualifications with learning outcomes and competencies, and to support lifelong learning and mobility for stakeholders and for ASEAN harmonisation. The role of a robust and recognised QA builds a zone of trust and recognition within and beyond ASEAN and as a requirement for referencing the AQRF.

- RQAM Focus Area 3: Audit and Assessment stresses the importance of internal and external assessment of trainees by providers using their judgment on knowledge, skills and attitudes. The award may be in the form of qualification and certification of competency by appropriate parties.
- RQAM emphasises the occupational standards/competency standards that must be incorporated into TVET qualifications.
- UNESCO Guidelines for the QA of TVET in the Asia Pacific Region (2017) Principle 4
- EAS TVET QAF (2012).
- ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certifications System (2016).
- EAS TVET QA.
- ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (2015).

BOX D
REFERENCES TO RQAM
AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS OR AGENCIES

ANNEX – THE RQAM

Regional Quality Assurance Model Criteria And Indicators For TVET And TVET Personnel In ASEAN

September 2017

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
(Quality) Audit	Systematic and independent examination to determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve quality objectives ⁽¹⁾ .
Accreditation	Process of accrediting an institution of education or training, a programme of study, or a service, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative and professional authorities by having met predetermined standards ⁽²⁾ .
Action research	A wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses – whether organizational, academic, or instructional – and help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently.
Assessment	The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how, skills and competences) of an individual and typically leading to certification ⁽³⁾ .
Assessment of learning outcome	Process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by certification.
Assessment panel	A group of selected competent people assigned to plan, conduct, monitor, and document the assessment process. The panel consists of representatives from TVET institutes and industry.
Assessor	Accredited individual authorized to evaluate or assess competencies of a candidate (person) applying for certification ⁽⁴⁾ .
Audit panel	A group of selected competent people assigned to plan, conduct, monitor, and document the audit process. The panel consists of representatives from TVET institutes, government and industry.
Certificate	An official document issued by an awarding body, recording achievements of an individual following assessment against a predefined standard.
Employability	The degree of adaptability an individual demonstrates in finding and keeping a job, and updating occupational skills.
Formative assessment	The frequent assessment of learner understanding and progress to identify needs and shape teaching ⁽⁵⁾ .
Guiding assessment standards	A systematic assessment instrument, set up with joint agreements of TVET stakeholders, containing a set of guidance explaining measures and procedures to conduct assessment processes.

⁽¹⁾ ISO, 1994

⁽²⁾ BIPP, 2016

⁽³⁾ UNEVOC/NCVER, 2009

⁽⁴⁾ ISO, 1994

⁽⁵⁾ BIPP, 2016

TERM	DEFINITION
In-company trainer	Internal trainers (employed by companies) who provide internal trainings (trainings organised and carried out in and/or by the company for their staff) and support the learning of adults (CVET) (and apprentices, trainees) in non-formal and informal learning environments within the company ⁽⁶⁾ .
In-company training	The portion of the Dual Training System (DTS) programme where students/trainees receive practical learning by being integrated into the regular work system of an establishment (company).
Industry impact assessment (Industry feedback)	The assessment conducted by the industry to measure the learning achievements of students during their attachment to the industry.
In-service Industry experience	Work experience and professional skills which one acquires through attachment at a certain industry during his/her service as TVET personnel. The experience is relevant within the teaching or training fields in which TVET personnel work.
Master trainer	Trainer who trains In-Company Trainers to become qualified as In-Company Trainers.
Occupational competencies	Integration of professional competence, individual competence, methodological competence and social competence. An employee has the ability to carry out a complete work process when she/he has the necessary occupational competence.
On-the-job training	Vocational training given in the normal work situation. It may constitute the whole training or be combined with off-the-job training.
Pre-service Industry experience	Work experience and professional skills which one has acquired for a certain (minimum) period of time of work at an industry before one starts his/her service as TVET personnel (especially teachers and trainers). The experience is relevant within the teaching or training fields in which TVET personnel work.
Qualifications framework	An instrument for the development and classification of qualifications (e.g. at national or sectoral level) according to a set of criteria (e.g. using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes ⁽⁷⁾ .
Quality assurance	The processes of ensuring that specified standards or requirements for teaching, learning, education administration, assessment and the recording of achievements have been met ⁽⁸⁾ . Quality assurance is a component of quality management and is 'focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled' ⁽⁹⁾ .
Quality management system	The totality of an organization's management processes designed to meet identified quality standards ⁽¹⁰⁾ .

⁽⁶⁾ CEDEFOP (SME), 2015

⁽⁷⁾ CEDEFOP, 2011, adopted by AQRF

⁽⁸⁾ SAQA, 2013

⁽⁹⁾ AS/NZS ISO 9000, 2006, adopted by AQRF

⁽¹⁰⁾ TESDA, 2010

TERM	DEFINITION
Real Internship	Internship programmes taken by students which enable them to acquire real work skills that are relevant, linked and matched with specific (theoretical) competencies that they learn at a TVET institution.
Regulations for involvement of external experts for industry	A regulatory framework that stipulates different aspects of the involvement of experts from industry, which enables them to receive a mutual benefit for their involvement in the TVET delivery process.
Self-assessment (of TVET providers)	A process in which an enterprise or training provider assesses the extent to which it satisfies the criteria for quality endorsement of the training provider's learning, education and training system and identifies opportunities for improvement ⁽¹¹⁾ .
Standards for teacher training	This refers to the sections of the Training Regulations that give information and important requirements for TVET providers to consider when designing training programs corresponding to a national qualification (see definition of qualification). This includes information on curriculum design, training delivery, trainee entry requirements, training tools and equipment, and trainer qualifications ⁽¹²⁾ (Training Regulations Framework).
Summative assessment	Assessment that occurs at a point in time and is carried out to summarise achievement at that point in time. Often more structured than formative assessment, it provides teachers, students and parents with information on student progress and level of achievement ⁽¹³⁾ .
Training plan	A documented program of training and assessment required for an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It is developed by a registered training organisation in consultation with the parties to the contract as the basis for training and assessing a person undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship ⁽¹⁴⁾ .
TVET outcome	Knowledge, skills and/or competencies acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting that have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. TVET outcomes on the labour market can be measured by the share of TVET graduates that obtained a job after completion of training, the time span between graduation and placement, the ratio between the average wage of TVET graduates and the average wage of those who did not follow the TVET path, etc. ⁽¹⁵⁾ .
TVET personnel	All persons involved in the TVET delivery process encompassing teachers and instructors at TVET institutions, school managers and trainers at partner companies and management support staff.
TVET providers	Organizations that deliver Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes such as adult and community education providers, agricultural colleges, TVET operations of certain universities, schools, private providers, community organizations, industry skill centres, and commercial and enterprise training providers ⁽¹⁶⁾ .
Upskilling programmes	A planned programme of measures to improve professional skills (e.g. by further training) of TVET personnel.

⁽¹¹⁾ Wahba, 2013, Global

⁽¹²⁾ TESDA, 2010

⁽¹³⁾ NCVET, 2013

⁽¹⁴⁾ NCVET, 2013

⁽¹⁵⁾ ETF, ILO, UNESCO, 2012

⁽¹⁶⁾ Wahba, 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

When the ten ASEAN member countries decided to unite to form one regional economic community, vocational education was expected to contribute to economic growth in the region by supplying the regional labour market with a skilled workforce. To fulfil this expectation, the diverse technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems across ASEAN needed to be harmonised in a way that their outcomes and qualifications could be compared, recognised and accepted at the regional level. Regional acceptance is envisaged by the ASEAN community as providing a basis for the mobility of skilled workers as envisioned in the ASEAN Economic Community blueprint for 2025. Within this vision, a regionally recognised quality assurance mechanism is a central issue for TVET players in ASEAN. Labour competition that comes with the regionalisation of ASEAN countries increases the need for a common understanding of TVET quality. Yet, this raises the question: how can TVET quality assurance work at the regional level and what instruments are available to support this endeavour?

The ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2016-2020) identified the need to strengthen regional harmonisation for the advancement of quality TVET by establishing regional quality assurance and recognition for TVET and/or “non-degree institutions” as one of the priority areas for the improvement of TVET systems in Southeast Asia. Within these priority areas, different QA initiatives have been adopted either in full or partly applied in certain ASEAN countries. By complementing the existing initiatives, the **Regional Quality Assurance Model Criteria and Indicators for TVET and TVET Personnel** (in short “**RQAM**”) has been developed to support the harmonisation process of the diverse TVET systems in the ASEAN region. With a set of operational criteria and indicators, the model is intended to be a reference instrument for TVET providers in the ASEAN region to ensure regional recognition of their TVET delivery processes with strong involvement of the private sector. The model can also support national TVET systems in the region to achieve comparable quality of TVET outcomes.

The RQAM has been developed as a complement to other regional initiatives on TVET personnel under the support of RECOTVET implemented by GIZ, including the Regional TVET Teacher Standards (RTTS) and the In-Company Trainer Standards (ICTS). The RTTS focuses on TVET teacher qualification and gives policy makers an in-depth picture on the required competency profile for TVET teachers in Southeast Asia. The linkage to this standard is specifically manifested in the focus area of the RQAM Teaching Personnel, which purposely reflects the three main components of the RTTS. The ICTS complements the RQAM in that it provides a set of action-oriented competency standards to be met by in-company trainers. As such, the trainers are defined as TVET personnel as in the context of RQAM. In this context, TVET personnel comprise all persons involved in TVET delivery processes, encompassing teachers and instructors at TVET institutions, school managers and trainers at partner companies, and management support staff.

2. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES TO DEVELOP THE RQAM

The process to develop the RQAM was kicked off with a RECOTVET initiative to establish three RWGs that focus respectively on TVET teacher standards, quality assurance in TVET and TVET personnel, and good practices in TVET personnel training. The RWGs brought key TVET players from the ten AMSs together to exchange and discuss different aspects within the three thematic focuses. The RWGs came up with concrete recommendations for developing the RTTS and RQAM, and for promoting regional and national good practices for TVET personnel development to foster improvement and harmonisation of TVET systems in the region. These three working groups are complementary.

The RWG-QA started with the establishment of a steering committee, in which the ASEAN secretariat takes the role as the head of RWG. With support and facilitation from the RECOTVET team and international experts, key regional stakeholders and representatives of the government, private sector and TVET institutions from across the region joined the RWG to discuss and develop the RQAM.

The participatory work approach and active contribution of the members constitute a key success factor in the development of the RQAM. In total, six physical and two remote meetings were held in which the members of the RWG worked intensively to formulate the quality criteria and indicators to bridge the diversity of TVET systems in ASEAN. In 2015, the group discussed the underlying qualification framework in the region (AQRf) to identify the main challenges and opportunities in implementing the framework. Through the facilitation of QA experts, the members exchanged the status of their National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) to develop understanding of the development status of the respective NQFs in reference to the AQRf. During the discussion, the members identified that the establishment of a regional QA system poses a fundamental cornerstone for the effective implementation of the AQRf. Accordingly, in 2016 and 2017 the RWG started to work on the development of the RQAM by determining the focus areas and priority elements to be covered and then formulating quality criteria as well as quality indicators for each focus area.

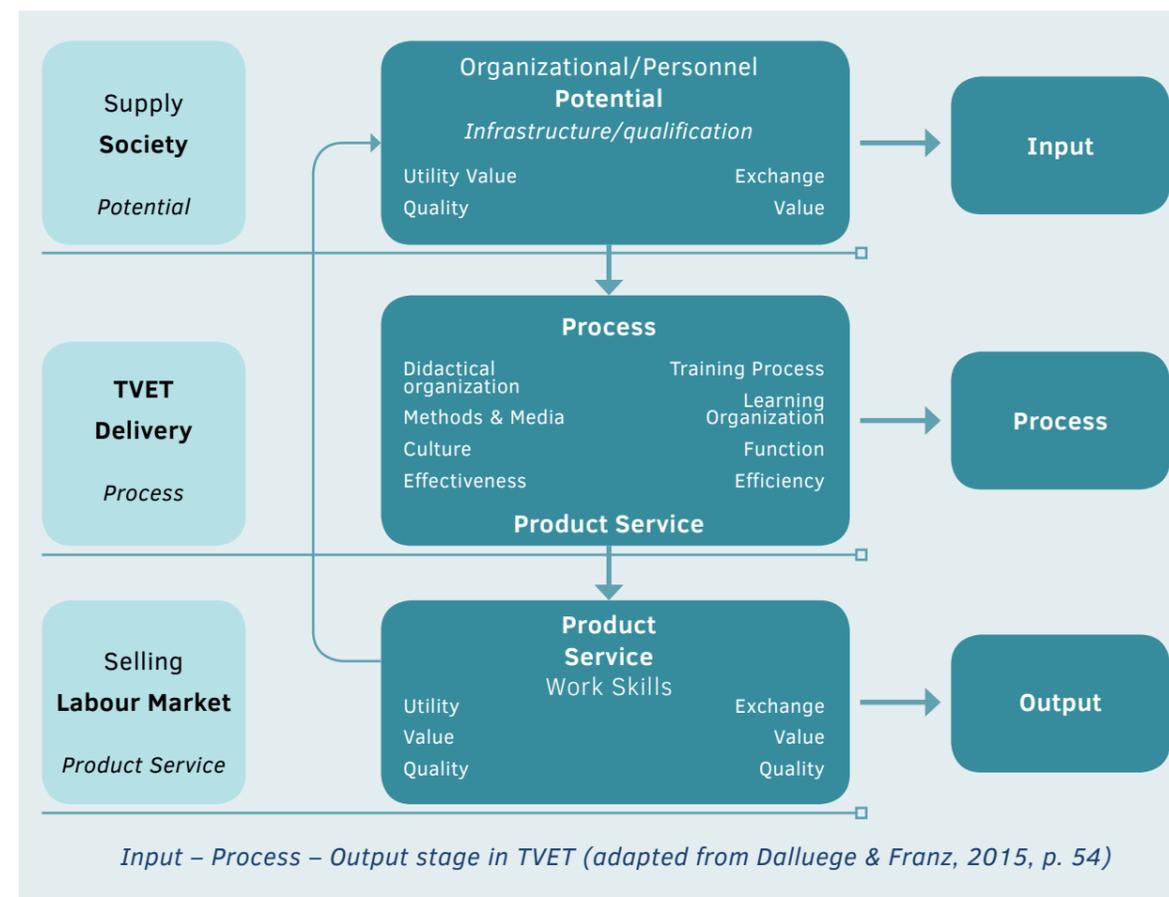
To examine the soundness of the defined indicators, a validation process was undertaken. For this purpose, the members were requested to conduct peer consultations within their institutions. The so called RARE-criteria were applied to validate each indicator:

- **Relevance:** Is the indicator relevant to reach the goal or meet the criterion? Indicators are not identical with criteria or goals. The idea is that one indicator or a set of indicators show to what extent a criterion or a goal is reached.
- **Acceptability:** Is the indicator accepted by the relevant stakeholder/process owner(s)? Since indicators only indicate that a demand is met, it is important that every indicator is accepted.
- **Reliability:** Is the indicator distinct/unambiguous? An indicator has to be precise to be measurable. Sometimes it is better to define more than one indicator for one criterion.
- **Simplicity:** Is the indicator easy to measure? Indicators should be very clear and easy to measure since it is accepted that they will directly indicate whether requirements have been met.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE RQAM

In general, a QA model consists of different aspects and stages of a production process of products (goods and services) which mainly consist of input, process and output parts. Likewise, a TVET QA can also be depicted in different models and approaches with different characteristics. Despite their differences, most of the models, if not all, embrace the three stages of the production line model: input-process-output.

By utilizing the potential existing in the supply side of society (Input), the production takes place in the process part. The process aims at fulfilling the needs of the labour market with regard to skilled workers (Output).



In the context of TVET, **input** quality refers to certain requirement standards of different factors that need to be in place at the outset of education and training processes. These encompass technical and personnel infrastructure, learning venue, regulations, training modules, etc. By means of adequate didactical elements and approaches, the input factors are utilized by TVET providers to run learning and teaching **processes** with the intention of producing certain expected **outputs**, which are mainly in the form of occupational competencies or skills (Fischer, 2014, p. 147). A total quality assurance approach covers the three stages in a continuous way to achieve continuous improvement.

The RWG-QA agreed to apply the linear model of Input-Process-Output as an **orientation for structuring the RQAM wherever possible**.

At the input stage, the focus of discussion lies in various factors that need to be in place as a precondition for learning processes to take place. The process stage refers to didactical actions and interventions taken to develop learners' work skills and competencies. At the output stage, the discussion pivots to the evaluation and assessment of TVET delivery. Based on joint consensus the RQAM comprises three focus areas in TVET QA systems:

1. Industry involvement
2. TVET personnel
3. Audit and assessment



The three focus areas were established to embody the RQAM in its current stage. The RWG-QA found these the most substantial elements of QA in TVET that are sparsely covered by the existing QA initiatives in ASEAN; the RQAM provides more operational indicators for application in these elements. Given the vital role of the private sector throughout the process of TVET provision, the model emphasizes the integration of industry involvement and industry-related aspects in all focus areas. Furthermore, the comprehensive coverage of TVET personnel provides a regional reference to profile quality teachers and school managers.

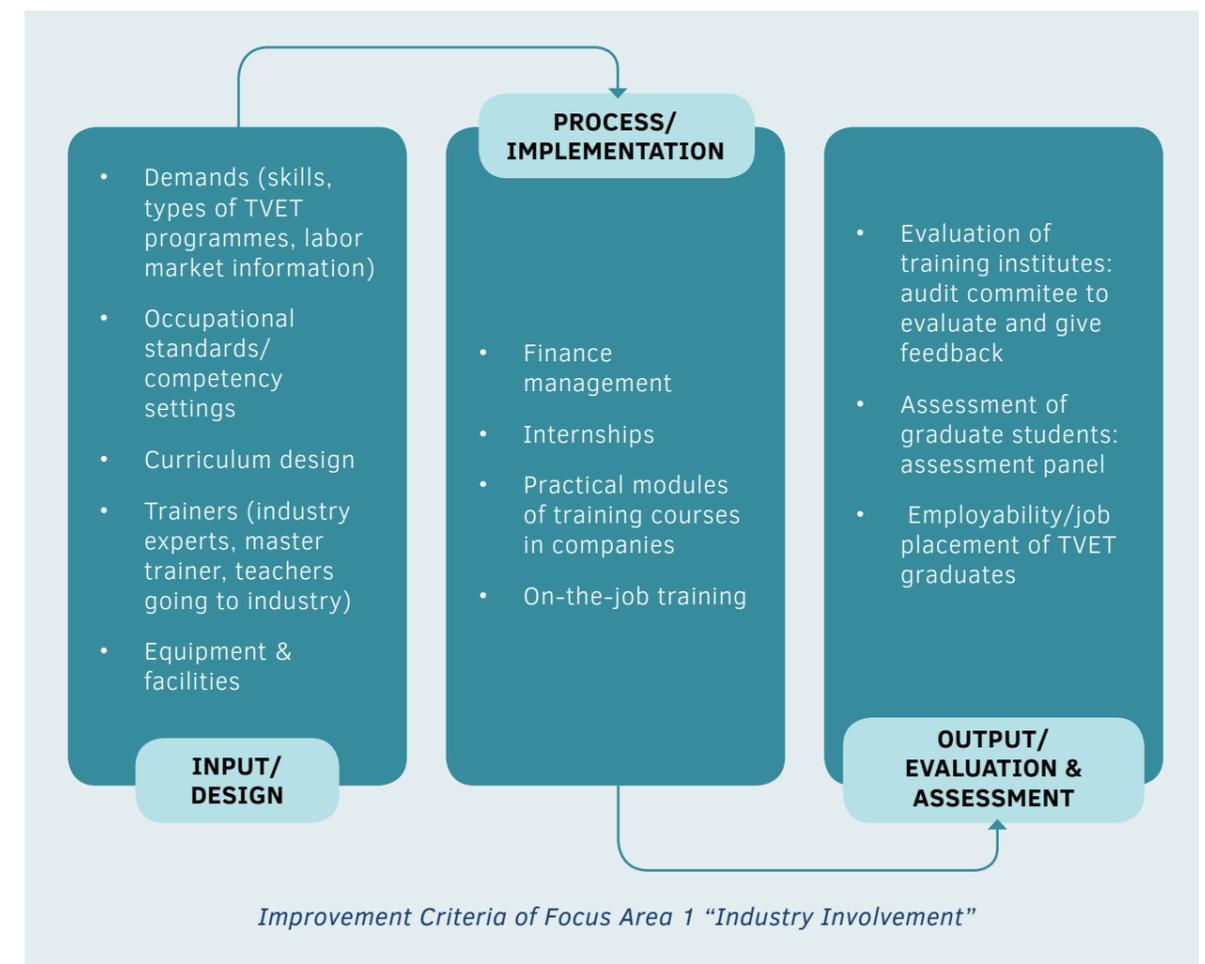
Whilst the scope and boundaries of the focus areas “industry involvement” and “audit and assessment” are structured in the linear model of Input-Process-Output, the focus area “TVET personnel” is operationalised by a different approach that applies a relational structure. The consideration of WG members to place more emphasis on the quality profile of TVET personnel prompted this structural difference.

3.1. Focus Area 1 - Industry involvement

Considering the vital role of business and industry in TVET, and given its current low levels of engagement in shaping TVET systems, industry involvement is the first focus area discussed in the RQAM. The involvement of industry in TVET should be understood in a holistic way, covering all stages of TVET, ranging from providing demand information (planning/input stage), and organization of internships (implementation/process stage) to the evaluation of learning outputs and the utilisation of TVET outcomes (output stage).

Within this context, input refers to a set of criteria and indicators reflecting the involvement of industry in assuring the quality of training factors as a precondition to (effectively) run training processes. The criterion and indicators in the process dimension show the role of industry involvement in the organization and implementation of training, teaching and learning processes to develop work skills. The output dimension defines criteria and indicators for industry involvement in the evaluation of learning outputs in TVET.

The focus area “Industry Involvement” consists of 12 criteria with 26 indicators:



IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1. INPUT	
1.1 Demand (skills, types of TVET programmes, labour market information)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial analysis of current and future skills demand made by responsible agencies with the involvement of industry. National strategy indicating industry priorities is available and accessible.
1.2 Occupational standards/competency standard setting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> National occupational standards or references set up in cooperation with the private sector are available.
1.3 Curriculum design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A competent body/expert group consisting of representatives from government, industry, labour unions, NGOs, etc., is established to develop and update curricula.
1.4 Trainers (industry experts, master trainer, teachers going to industry)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The qualification of TVET trainers is higher than the level of trainees (having theoretical and practical experience). Internal audit documentation on performance evaluation of TVET trainers is available. Upskilling programmes for TVET trainers are provided regularly.
1.5 Equipment and facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment and facilities are compatible with the requirements of industry and training programmes, and are consistent with government regulations. Regulations on the provision of, and the minimum standards and management for equipment and facilities are available according to each sector. Maintenance log books are available.
2. PROCESS	
2.1 Financial management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of funds allocated to practical training by regulation. Fund for TVET exists.
2.2 Real Internship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Guaranteeing real internship placements with Terms of Reference (ToR) or Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) for all students.
2.3 Practical modules of training courses in companies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Training plan and materials are available and adequately scheduled. Adequate ratio of trainers to students.
2.4 On-the-job training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated division for handling training is organised and managed. An evaluation system on the delivery of training is established.

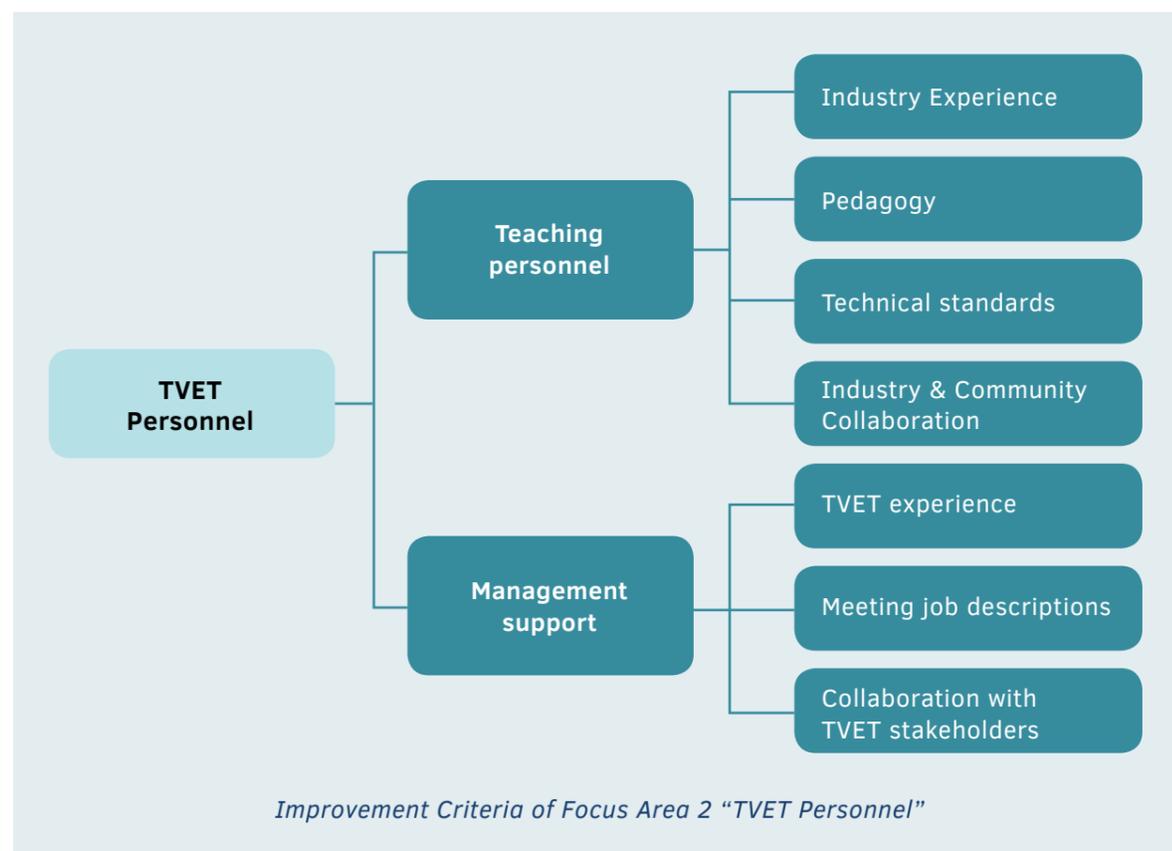
IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
3. OUTPUT	
3.1 Evaluation of training institutions: audit committee to evaluate and give feedback	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Joint evaluation and audit committee consisting of representatives from government, schools, and industry is established. Evaluation/audit principles, instruments and tools are developed with the involvement of industry. Reports with recommendations by joint audit committees are published.
3.2 Assessment of graduate students: assessment panel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Joint assessment panel (consisting of representatives of industry, government, etc.) is established (on sub-national level). Assessment instruments/tools are developed with the involvement of industry. Certificates based on joint assessment acknowledging the acquisition of work skills are awarded.
3.3 Employability/job placement of TVET graduates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A mechanism to increase the employability of TVET graduates is applied. Tracer studies on employer satisfaction towards the quality of TVET graduates are conducted regularly. The satisfaction of trainees following training courses in industry is ascertained.

3.2. Focus Area 2 - TVET personnel

TVET personnel in this context are regarded as actors involved in TVET organisation and delivery, encompassing those involved in the process of skills transfer (teachers, [in-company] trainers) and those responsible for the management of TVET institutions (school managers and management staff). The criteria were defined with a focus on two sections: teaching support and management support.

The linkages between the RQAM and the RTTS is reflected in the four improvement criteria in 'Teaching personnel' that resemble the three components from the RTTS: The *Personal and Social* component is in line with the improvement criteria *Networking with the Community*. The alignment in terms of *Pedagogy* and *Teaching Methodology* comes naturally as it covers a fundamental part of teaching. Furthermore, the *Technical* component relates directly to *Standards of Professional Teaching* to elaborate the importance of expertise and technical knowledge in the respective occupation and workplace. Additionally, one of the central characteristics in both documents is the industry experience that ensures a demand-orientation of teaching and learning. Overall, the linkages between both documents is of significance for the further improvement and harmonisation of the quality of TVET personnel.

The Focus area “TVET Personnel” consists of 7 criteria with 17 indicators:



IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1. TEACHING SUPPORT	
1.4 Collaboration with industry and the community	35. Networking with the TVET community is conducted continuously, and promoted and maintained. 36. Publication of action research by and between teachers and industry is promoted.
2. MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	
2.1 Pre-service TVET experience	37. A requirement for management staff to have a minimum of number of years' experience is established.
2.2 Meeting job descriptions	38. Internal annual performance evaluation using a bottom-up approach is implemented. 39. Continuous professional development through in-service training or practice in industry or other organisations is conducted once per year. 40. Pre- and post-assessments to measure the level of competencies are conducted. 41. Competencies in the field of quality management system.
2.3 Collaboration with TVET stakeholders	42. Collaboration with various stakeholders/partners is established. 43. Dialogue sessions with stakeholders are conducted at least once per year.

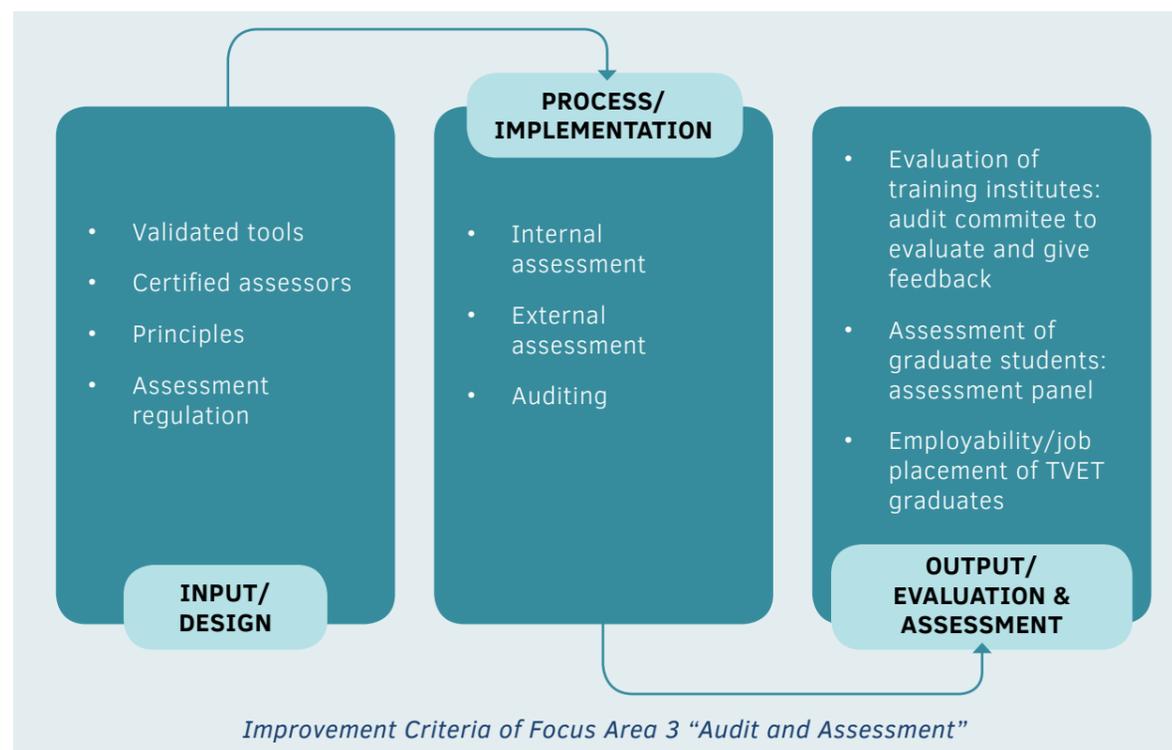
IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1. TEACHING SUPPORT	
1.1 Pre- and In-service Industry experience	27. The requirement of a minimum of 12 months' industry experience is established. 28. Experience in industry is relevant to the teaching/training field at TVET institutions. 29. The requirement of a minimum of 1 month every 2 years in industry for in-service trainer/teacher training is established.
1.2 Pedagogy	30. Teachers possess a valid certification in pedagogy. 31. Monitoring instruments for teacher performance are developed. 32. Standards for teacher training are established.
1.3 Technical standards of professional teaching	33. Procedural manuals for delivering TVET programmes are developed. 34. The monitoring of teaching compliance with procedural manuals is implemented (e.g. documentation with checks, visits/audits).

3.3. Focus Area 3 - Audit and Assessment

The third focus area on audit and assessment consists of different requirements to be fulfilled when measuring the achievements and effectiveness of TVET delivery both from institutional and organizational perspectives. The criteria are structured according to the input, process and output stages followed by a list of success indicators. The Input in this context refers to prerequisite criteria and indicators to be met permitting the process of auditing and assessment towards the effectiveness of TVET delivery. The process dimension sets key criteria and indicators that need to be managed to proceed to the assessment and audit process. The output dimension outlines key criteria and indicators used to measure the quality of TVET delivery processes, targeting different actors in TVET.

A crucial aspect characterising the measurement criteria in this part is the involvement of industry in all stages of audit and assessment. The correspondence between TVET institutions and industry as “end users” is strongly reflected in all focus areas in general, and in audit and assessment in particular.

The Focus area “Audit and Assessment” consists of 11 criteria with 22 indicators:



IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1. INPUT	
1.1 Validated tools	44. Assessment and audit processes including procedures and criteria are documented. 45. Assessment and audit tools are validated by a competent body.
1.2 Certified assessors	46. Assessors are certified by a competent body. 47. Guiding assessment standards (including defining sufficient assessors in the respective profession) are established.
1.3 Principles	48. A code of conduct for the audit and assessment process is available in accordance with ASEAN guiding principles of certification.
1.4 Assessment regulation	49. Regulations for assessments are set up by a governing body consisting of representatives of key stakeholders.
2. PROCESS	
2.1 Internal assessment	50. A panel of internal assessors is established. 51. Standard procedures for assessment are available.

IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
2. PROCESS	
2.2 External assessment	52. Regulations for the involvement of external experts from industry are available. 53. A panel with certified external experts from relevant fields is established.
2.3 Audit	54. An internal audit committee is established. 55. Planning for internal audits and their implementation is available. 56. Results and improved quality performance are shared. 57. External audits are conducted at least once every three years. 58. An internal quality assurance system and plan to follow-up the audit process are set up.
3. OUTPUT	
3.1 Judgement of individual knowledge & wider competencies against criteria	59. Trainees: Assessment tools (formative and summative tailored towards learning outcomes) are developed. 60. Trainers: Academic qualification/industrial experience in related fields is certified/proven. 61. Trainers: Currency of knowledge and skills performance are evaluated by clients (trainees and employers).
3.2 Recognition of TVET providers	62. The quality of the TVET delivery process is recognised by a certified QA agency by using a QA framework prepared by the QA agency (e.g. survey instrument).
3.3 Industry impact assessment (industry feedback)	63. An industry assessment instrument is established to assess the Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) of trainees and trainers.
3.4 Employability	64. Trainees are employed in their relevant field of specialisation (absorptive rate). 65. Ability of trainees to be job creators instead of job seekers.

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