UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Expert Meeting:

Implementing National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) at Subject Level
Pilot: Educational studies and Cultural heritage management

Bangkok, Thailand

## 23-24 November 2017

Concept Note

Background

In Asia and the Pacific, many quality tools have been developed for domestic and cross-border purposes to facilitate mobility, employability and promote access to quality higher education for all. However, substantial differences at system, subject and programme levels exist. These barriers limit the potential to promote mobility and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 4.3 on access to quality higher education.

With generous support from the Republic of Korea Funds-In-Trust (KFIT), a four-year project was launched in 2015 on "**Developing Regional Quality Tools to Facilitate the Cross-Border Mobility of Students in Asia and the Pacific**" (KFIT Higher Education Project). The purpose of the KFIT Higher Education Project is to align regional quality tools for higher education, including through integration of learning outcomes at subject and programme levels and build capacity to effectively use National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) throughout Asia and the Pacific.

Building on the importance and role of NQF, **subject-specific benchmarks set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas.** These subject-specific quality standards provide a key means to convene stakeholders and build an outcomes-based approach to curriculum development. Such tools aim to serve as a regional quality reference document at subject level. The aim here is to describe the teaching and learning standards for qualifications in a range of subject areas (e.g. educational studies).

In this way, the framework below illustrates the connecting points between generic requirements in terms of knowledge, abilities, values etc. across NQF levels and how it can be used to inform subject-specific quality standards (see Exhibit 1. below). As part of the KFIT Higher Education Project, the aim of the expert meeting is to map and eventually reduce substantial differences among countries in Asia-Pacific and thus contribute to the quality assurance and recognition of international qualifications.

Exhibit 1. Building on NQF to align quality standards in specific subjects
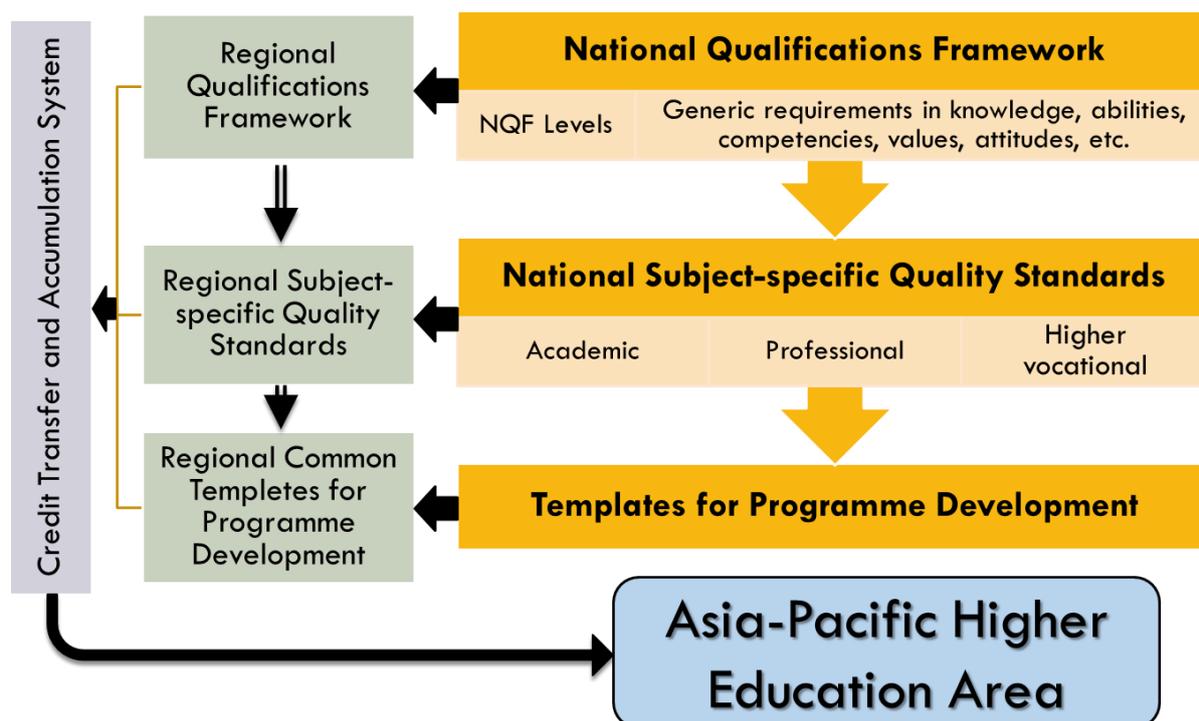
There are significant and ongoing efforts in the region to regulate subject-specific quality standards. For example, New Zealand's National Subject-Specific Quality Standards[1] extends into other Pacific countries. At regional level, the European Alliance of Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and Quality Assurance (EASPA) made an agreement with the Asian Pacific Quality Network (APQN)[2] to form an Asian Alliance of subject specific and professional accreditation in 2016.

To explore these trends and the potential for regional collaboration, UNESCO Bangkok will host an expert meeting on implementing NQF at subject level from **23-24 November 2017** in Bangkok, Thailand. The focus of the workshop will cover two subject areas where UNESCO has specific competencies, including educational studies and cultural heritage management. Faculty deans, quality assurance officials and experts from each of these subject areas will work to identify and assess quality standards in two subject areas, which are elaborated below.

1) **Educational studies** – The study and practice of education are increasingly transdisciplinary. For example, educational studies in higher education may include training for researchers and practitioners to shape curriculum, policy, and improve

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[1] New Zealand Qualifications Authority. (2017). The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Subject Resources- http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/

[2] European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. (2016, July 4). Creation of the Asian alliance of subject specific and professional accreditation - www.enqa.eu/index.php/creation-of-the-asian-alliance-of-subject-specific-and-professional-accreditation/

community life through education. However, learning objectives vary significantly across Asia and the Pacific, which is important for international recognition, and efforts to promote the quality and relevance of higher education.

In an effort to operationalize quality education, UNESCO outlined specific learning objectives for SDG4 (see Exhibit 2).[3] Intentionally broad, the objectives have yet to be tailored to specific levels or contexts. As shown below, the learning outcomes share three general domains: cognitive; socio-emotional; and behavioural learning objectives (see Annex for a complete list). How these domains apply to educational studies at post-graduate level in Asia-Pacific is not yet clear and will be elaborated.

Exhibit 2. Specific Domains for Quality Education in SDG4

Cognitive learning objectives	Socio-emotional learning objectives	Behavioral learning objectives
Example: The learner understands education as a public good, a global common good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights	Example: The learner is able through participatory methods to motivate and empower others to demand and use educational opportunities	Example: The learner is able to promote gender equality in education.

Source: Excerpt from [SDG Learning Objectives](), UNESCO, 2017

In the context of the forthcoming expert meeting, **specialists in educational studies at post-graduate level will analyse and share their program level outcomes for educational studies and how they align.** The aim of this stocktaking effort is to understand how educational studies as a subject area is implemented in higher education in Asia-Pacific and explore how best to promote educational studies and training in the context of SDG4.

2) **Cultural Heritage Management –** Over the last two decades, there has been a notable leap in post-graduate cultural heritage management education in the Asia Pacific region. The number of programmes in the region listed under the Training Directory of International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)[4] has more than doubled since the mid-90s. To date, nearly 60 universities now offer courses in the field of cultural heritage and management. While these programmes are traditionally interdisciplinary covering areas such as archaeology, architecture, conservation, museology and cultural tourism, they have also expanded their boundaries to include digital archiving,

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[3] Education for Sustainable Development Goals Learning Objectives (2017). UNESCO. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002474/247444e.pdf
[4] International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. (8 September 2017). Training Directory: http://www.iccrom.org/training-directory/

communication and media, financial management and developmental studies, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, etc. Despite the increase in number of cultural heritage management higher education programs, the challenge is to ensure the quality of the programmes. One way to do so is to improve qualification standards with the longer-term aim to certify professional management of cultural heritage resources in the Asia-Pacific region.

With the recent dispute regarding cultural tourism and increasing awareness in the role of culture in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the need for quality expertise in the field of cultural management is more vital than ever. Along these lines, the UNESCO-ICCROM initiative of Asian Academy for Heritage Management is "a network of institutions throughout Asia and the Pacific offering professional training in the field of heritage management."[5] Since its launch in 2001, it has been a regional platform for institutional cooperation in training, research, and exchange, with a shared mission to strengthen professional capacity to sustainably manage heritage resources.

Within this context, the expert meeting will serve as a unique opportunity to **bring together experts from higher education institutions that run programs on cultural heritage conservation (most of whom are members of the Asian Academy) to discuss the criteria for assessing quality of the training programs**. The aim here is to develop a set of quality standards for cultural heritage management as an integrated subject that combines skills, knowledge and attitudes to safeguard both intangible and tangible cultural heritage in Asia-Pacific.

To summarize, the expected outcomes of the expert meeting are stocktaking of subject-specific quality standards in Asia and the Pacific to inform and develop practical tools for educational studies and cultural heritage management. The stocktaking process will provide key insights into the planning, development and implementation of quality tools in higher education. The specific meeting objectives are listed below.

Meeting objectives

- Assess the diverse norms and principles of how higher education institutions develop subject-specific quality standards in the Asia-Pacific region
- Take stock of subject-specific quality tools in educational studies and cultural heritage management (post-graduate education in selected countries in Asia-Pacific)
- Develop a research framework to inform regional guidelines in the two subject areas

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[5] Asian Academy for Heritage Management (2017, September 8) About AAHM- http://asian-academy.org/about-aahm/

Expected outputs

- Synthesis report on policies and practices for developing subject-specific quality standards in Asia-Pacific
- Initial analysis of institutional-level quality standards in the two subject areas
- Draft outline for regional guidelines on subject-specific quality standards
- Collect new quality tools for the online repository of policies and practices on cultural heritage protection and management, and educational studies

Participants

Approximately 60 experts, including deans and resource specialists from more than 10 countries in the Asia-Pacific region and UNESCO staff will take part in the consultations. These include:

- South Asia: India, Sri Lanka, Nepal
- Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand
- East Asia: China, Japan, Republic of Korea
- Pacific: Australia, Fiji

The target groups for this meeting are deans and quality assurance officials and practitioners at system and subject levels, especially from post-graduate programmes in cultural heritage management, and educational studies.

For information regarding participation, please email eisd.bgk@unesco.org.

Organisers

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok, Thailand with generous support from the Republic of Korea Funds-In-Trust.

Venue

The Landmark Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand

Dates

23-24 November 2017

Tentative programme

Day One: Thursday, 23 November

- Opening remarks by UNESCO Bangkok
- Project overview: Progress towards developing quality tools in Asia and the Pacific
- Meeting objectives
- Three working groups to assess institutional case studies on developing subject-specific quality tools in Asia-Pacific
- Mapping synergies and exploring gaps
- *Evening reception and dinner*

Day Two: Friday, 24 November

- Reflection
- Building consensus - roundtable discussions of subject-specific working groups
- Action planning for the development of regional guidelines
- Next steps for the online repository of regional quality tools in higher education
- Closing remarks

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Annex. Building on learning objectives to achieve the SDGs

1.2.4. SDG 4 | Quality Education | Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Table 1.2.4. Learning objectives for SDG 4 "Quality Education"

Cognitive learning objectives	1. The learner understands the important role of education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (formal, non-formal and informal learning) as main drivers of sustainable development, for improving people's lives and in achieving the SDGs.
	2. The learner understands education as a public good, a global common good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights.
	3. The learner knows about inequality in access to and attainment of education, particularly between girls and boys and in rural areas, and about reasons for a lack of equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.
	4. The learner understands the important role of culture in achieving sustainability.
	5. The learner understands that education can help create a more sustainable, equitable and peaceful world.
Socio-emotional learning objectives	1. The learner is able to raise awareness of the importance of quality education for all, a humanistic and holistic approach to education, ESD and related approaches.
	2. The learner is able through participatory methods to motivate and empower others to demand and use educational opportunities.
	3. The learner is able to recognize the intrinsic value of education and to analyse and identify their own learning needs in their personal development.
	4. The learner is able to recognize the importance of their own skills for improving their life, in particular for employment and entrepreneurship.
	5. The learner is able to engage personally with ESD.
Behavioural learning objectives	1. The learner is able to contribute to facilitating and implementing quality education for all, ESD and related approaches at different levels.
	2. The learner is able to promote gender equality in education.
	3. The learner is able to publicly demand and support the development of policies promoting free, equitable and quality education for all, ESD and related approaches as well as aiming at safe, accessible and inclusive educational facilities.
	4. The learner is able to promote the empowerment of young people.
	5. The learner is able to use all opportunities for their own education throughout their life, and to apply the acquired knowledge in everyday situations to promote sustainable development.