

## How Can Asean Improve the Skills Recognition Framework for Migrant Workers?

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### ABSTRACT

The ASEAN Skills Recognition Framework (SRF) aims to facilitate the recognition of skills and competencies acquired by migrant workers, enhancing their employability and integration into the labor market. This study employs a qualitative research approach using a Research and Development (R&D) method combined with a case study approach. The case study methodology is derived from ethnography, focusing on in-depth examination and contextual analysis of the SRF implementation in various ASEAN member states. This study evaluates the implementation of the SRF across ASEAN member states, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and proposes strategies for improvement. Significant progress has been made in aligning national qualification frameworks with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), but challenges such as variability in recognition systems, limited awareness, and complex processes still hinder the framework's full potential. The proposed strategy for developing skills recognition services includes promoting ASEAN principles and protocols, developing TVET product standards, aligning the NQF with AQRF, and promoting the recognition of prior learning (RPL). The alignment strategy integrates the TVET Curriculum with Competency-Based Assessment (CBA), RPL certification, and the regional job market, ensuring seamless processes aligned with labor market needs. Recommendations include enhancing standardization, capacity building, improving transparency, promoting awareness, engaging governments, fostering cooperation, and conducting continuous evaluations. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of SRF and the role of technology in enhancing skills recognition.

**Keywords:** ASEAN, Economic Integration, Labor Mobility, Migrant Workers, Recognition of Prior Learning, Skills Recognition Framework.

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### INTRODUCTION

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Skills recognition for migrant workers is crucial as it significantly impacts their ability to find employment and adapt to life in their destination countries. The ASEAN Skills Recognition Framework (SRF) was created to facilitate the recognition of skills and competencies acquired by migrant workers, enabling them to access job opportunities that match their qualifications and experience. The International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasizes the positive impact of competency recognition on addressing labor market demands and benefiting workers, employers, and national economies .

Skills Recognition Framework (SRF), it is essential for harmonizing the recognition of skills and work competencies across ASEAN member states. (ASEAN 2016) identify that the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQR) serves as a common reference point for comparing qualifications across ASEAN member states, facilitating the mobility of skilled workers. While, Lamri and Lubart, (2023) highlight that by examining SRF components and their interactions, we can gain a more in-depth understanding of the nature of skills and their development. This approach has several potential applications and implications for various fields, including education, training, and workplace productivity. Additionally, Skills, Branch, and Braňka (2016) identify the skills recognition framework in ASEAN aims to ensure that the skills and competencies of migrant workers are officially recognized, which facilitates their access to job opportunities that match their qualifications and experience.

The main beneficiaries of the SRF, whose skills need formal recognition to enhance their job prospects and integration into the labor market. Rudolf Yuniarto (2019) pointed out that The Committee for Labour Migration identified specific challenges and passed a resolution on effective labor migration governance. Among the highlighted issues, skills recognition and development for migrant workers, especially those with low skills, were given considerable attention due to their limited access to services like recognition of prior learning. Similarly, Sultana (2022) emphasized that recognizing foreign qualifications, validating prior learning, and developing skills are essential for the integration of migrant workers into the labor market. However, these critical aspects are often neglected or ignored. Furthermore, the ILO (2020) highlighted that skills recognition is a key tool to address this challenge, noting that properly assessing and recognizing the existing skills of migrants can prevent unnecessary investment in redundant training and instead focus on additional training needed for essential missing skills.

A key component of the SRF, ensuring that recognized skills meet standardized criteria across different countries. Wong (2020) identify that competency certification as part of the Skills Recognition Framework (SRF) is vital for ensuring that skills are assessed and recognized based on standardized criteria, promoting consistency and reliability in the recognition process. Midhat Ali et al. (2021) also highlight the development of a competency framework and certification process is crucial for standardizing skills recognition across various regions, thereby facilitating the mobility and employability of workers. Furthermore, Sakamoto (2019) identify that the

competency certification ensures that the skills recognized meet standardized criteria across different countries, which is essential for creating a cohesive skills recognition framework within the ASEAN region.

AQRF (ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework) provides a common reference point for comparing qualifications across ASEAN member states, facilitating the mobility of skilled workers. Setiawan (2016) mention that the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), a common reference framework, will function as a translation device to enable comparisons of qualifications across participating ASEAN countries. Le (2021) also identify that the AQRF provides a common reference point for comparing qualifications across ASEAN member states, which is crucial for enhancing the mobility of skilled workers within the region. Additionally, Mai (2023) (2023) identify that the AQRF aims to facilitate comparison and support the recognition of qualifications of member states. This is essential for promoting labor mobility within ASEAN, as it provides a standardized reference for assessing and validating the qualifications of skilled workers.

Despite the establishment of the SRF, several challenges hinder its effective implementation. These include the lack of standardization, limited awareness and understanding of the framework, complex and lengthy processes, and limited cross-border recognition. Additionally, there are technical and political barriers that prevent professionals from relocating and practicing their professions in other ASEAN countries .

Research Objectives

1. Development strategy for skills recognition service development for migrant workers
2. Develop alignment of CBT/CBE curriculum, assessment, RPL and certification, RPL abroad, and job market in the region.

## RESEARCH METHODS

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### Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a Research and Development (R&D) method combined with a case study approach. The case study methodology is derived from ethnography, focusing on in-depth examination and contextual analysis of the SRF implementation in various ASEAN member states .

### Data Collection

The research was conducted over three months, from July to September 2023, and involved two major data collection techniques:

1. Desktop Research: This involved gathering information from published and unpublished sources, including official reports, academic literature, and online resources. This approach allowed for a comprehensive review and analysis of existing information on the SRF and skills recognition in ASEAN .

- Interviews: Key informants, including officials from the National Professional Certification Authority (BNSP), the Ministry of Labor, and industry representatives, were interviewed to gain insights into the implementation and challenges of the SRF .

**Steps of Research**

- Assessment of SRF Implementation: Evaluating the current status and effectiveness of the SRF across ASEAN member states.
- Identification of Challenges and Opportunities: Analysing barriers and potential improvements in the skills recognition process for migrant workers.
- Strategy Development: Proposing strategies to enhance the SRF, including the promotion and implementation of principles and protocols for competent authorities, and alignment with the AQRF .

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Assessment of Skill Recognition Framework Implementation: Evaluating the current status and effectiveness of the SRF across ASEAN member states**

The Skills Recognition Framework (SRF) aims to ensure that migrant workers' skills and competencies are officially recognized, facilitating their access to appropriate job opportunities. The implementation of the ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems (AGP) and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) is critical to this effort. Based on the provided report, below is an evaluation of the status and effectiveness of SRF implementation across ASEAN member states.

**Table 1. Evaluation of the Status and Effectiveness of Skill Recognition Framework Implementation in ASEAN Member States (ASEAN Secretariat 2019a, 2019b, 2020; Komite Nasional Kualifikasi Indonesia 2020; RECOTVET 2020; The World Bank Group and KWPF 2019)**

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	EFFECTIVENESS
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with ASEAN Standards: Reviewing and improving certification procedures and competency assessments.</li> <li>Quality Development: Developing certification systems in accordance with ASEAN guidelines.</li> <li>Reciprocal Recognition: Adoption of mutual recognition with other ASEAN countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong commitment to align with ASEAN standards and ensure the quality of certification systems.</li> <li>Reciprocal recognition mechanism facilitates labor mobility.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing a system to ensure effective implementation.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Collaboration: Active participation in regional discussions and cooperation.</li> </ul>	
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the ASEAN TVET Council’s action plan for assessing labor market needs and employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Use of ISCO for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singapore’s involvement in regional cooperation and use of standardized classification systems enhances the recognition process.</li> <li>• Focus on labor market information ensures alignment with industry needs.</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with ASEAN Standards: Reviewing and improving certification procedures and competency assessments.</li> <li>• Quality Development: Developing relevant competency standards.</li> <li>• Reciprocal Recognition: Adoption of mutual recognition with other ASEAN members.</li> <li>• Monitoring and Evaluation: Ensuring effective implementation.</li> <li>• Regional Collaboration: Strengthening regional cooperation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thailand’s efforts to comply with ASEAN standards and improve competency assessments are crucial for regional integration.</li> </ul>
Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading action plans for enhancing mutual recognition of skills between sending and receiving countries.</li> <li>• Use of ISCO for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myanmar’s focus on mutual recognition of skills is important for migrant workers in low-skilled and middle-skilled occupations.</li> </ul>
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading action plans for strengthening TVET personnel skills development.</li> <li>• Use of ISCO for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lao PDR’s emphasis on TVET and skill development aligns well with regional needs.</li> </ul>
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of ISCO for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambodia’s use of standardized job classifications helps in</li> </ul>

		understanding workforce composition and trends.
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading action plans for strengthening labor market information systems and developing business engagement models.</li> <li>• Use of VSCO (Vietnam Standard Classification of Occupation) for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• - Vietnam’s initiatives support greater labor mobility and alignment with industry needs.</li> </ul>
Brunei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading action plans for ensuring quality TVET and promoting inclusive labor mobility.</li> <li>• Use of ISCO for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brunei’s focus on quality assurance in TVET and labor mobility is essential for regional integration.</li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with ASEAN Standards: Reviewing and improving certification procedures and competency assessments.</li> <li>• Quality Development: Developing certification systems in accordance with ASEAN guidelines.</li> <li>• Reciprocal Recognition: Adoption of mutual recognition with other ASEAN members.</li> <li>• Use of PSOC (Philippines Standard Occupation Classification) for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Philippines’ comprehensive approach ensures the recognition of skills and supports labor mobility.</li> </ul>
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with ASEAN Standards: Reviewing and improving certification procedures.</li> <li>• Quality Development: Developing certification systems in accordance with ASEAN guidelines.</li> <li>• Reciprocal Recognition: Adoption of mutual recognition with other ASEAN members.</li> <li>• Use of KBJI (Indonesian Standard Classification of Occupation) for job classification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indonesia’s thorough implementation of AGP and alignment with global standards supports effective skills recognition.</li> </ul>

This table presents the implementation steps taken by ASEAN countries and evaluates their effectiveness based on available data sources. It identifies significant progress and challenges

that need to be addressed to improve labor mobility and skills recognition in the ASEAN region. Based on the above evaluation, it is recommended to accelerate and expand the implementation of the AGP and AQRf with a detailed and structured framework to enhance labor mobility and skills recognition across the ASEAN region.

**Identification of Challenges and Opportunities**

Analysing barriers and potential improvements in the skills recognition process for migrant workers is crucial for enhancing their employability and integration into the labor market. This section presents an overview of the key barriers faced by migrant workers and identifies potential improvements to address these challenges effectively. The following tables provide a detailed evaluation of the barriers and suggest improvements to the skills recognition process.

**Table 2. Potential Barriers in the Skills Recognition Process for Migrant Workers**

Barriers	Details
1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Acceptance Issues	Competency certificates may not be recognized or accepted in destination countries due to differences in standards and criteria.
2. Capacity of Awarding Bodies	Certification bodies may lack the capacity to provide services to a growing number of potential users, including migrant workers, especially due to language barriers.
3. Transparency and Utilization Challenges	Migrant workers holding competency certificates may face challenges in utilizing them for career advancement due to a lack of transparency in occupational awareness and the requirements of the labor market structure.
4. Awareness and Access Difficulties	Potential users may be unaware of the competency certification system or have difficulty accessing it.
5. Variability in Recognition Systems	Recognition systems for informal and non-formal learning vary between major migration destination countries, leading to inconsistencies and barriers in recognition processes.
6. High Costs and Bureaucratic Procedures	Even in countries with available RPL services, high costs and lengthy, complicated bureaucratic procedures can prevent migrant workers from obtaining recognition.
7. Evidence Collection Challenges	Collecting evidence of training and employment experience is crucial for facilitating the RPL process when migrant workers return to their home countries.
8. Limited Cross-Border Recognition	Limited cross-border recognition and integration with labor market needs can reduce decent employment opportunities for low- or medium-skilled migrant workers.

**Table 3. Potential Improvements in the Skills Recognition Process for Migrant Workers**

Potential Improvements	Improvement Details
Harmonization of Standards	Developing standardized certification schemes and quality assurance systems that align with ASEAN Guidelines and the AQRf.
Capacity Building	Conducting training and workshops to enhance the capacity of certification bodies and other relevant stakeholders to manage the skills recognition process effectively.
Enhancing Transparency	Building efficient information systems and databases to track recognized skills and certifications, making it easier for migrant workers and employers to access relevant information.
Promotion and Awareness Campaigns	Implementing communication and awareness campaigns to disseminate information about the benefits and processes of skills recognition to all relevant stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, and migrant workers.
Government and Stakeholder Engagement	Encouraging government support to enact laws and policies that uphold ASEAN principles and establish competent authorities to manage the skills recognition process.
International and Regional Cooperation	Establishing cooperation with international and regional institutions involved in skills recognition and professional certification to enhance trust and validity.
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	Conducting periodic evaluations of the skills recognition system and making improvements based on stakeholder feedback to ensure it adapts to changing labor market demands and the needs of migrant workers.

The process of recognizing and validating the skills of migrant workers is fraught with numerous challenges that can impede their integration into the labor market and hinder their career advancement. Understanding these barriers and identifying potential improvements is essential for creating a more effective and inclusive skills recognition framework.

***Challenges in the Skills Recognition Process for Migrant Workers***

The skills recognition process for migrant workers faces significant challenges. Differences in standards and criteria cause issues with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) acceptance, leading to unrecognized competency certificates in destination countries. Certification bodies often struggle with capacity and language barriers, hindering their ability to manage increasing users. Transparency issues and a lack of occupational awareness further obstruct migrant workers from advancing their careers. Awareness and access difficulties, variability in recognition systems, high costs, bureaucratic procedures, and challenges in collecting evidence of training and employment experience add to the complexity. These factors collectively reduce employment opportunities for low- and medium-skilled migrant workers. ASEAN (2022) identified that beyond labor



shortages, other issues with current migrant recognition schemes have diminished their effectiveness in the labor market. These include a lack of awareness about the benefits, tools, and processes of skills recognition for migrant workers from both individual and company perspectives. Ra, Chin, and Liu (2015) noted that while the advantages of skills recognition for both individuals and employers are widely acknowledged, integrating them into recognition systems remains challenging. Furthermore, Skills, Branch, and Braňka (2016) emphasized the importance of initiating the recognition process for migrants before they arrive in the destination country.

### ***Potential Improvements in the Skills Recognition Process***

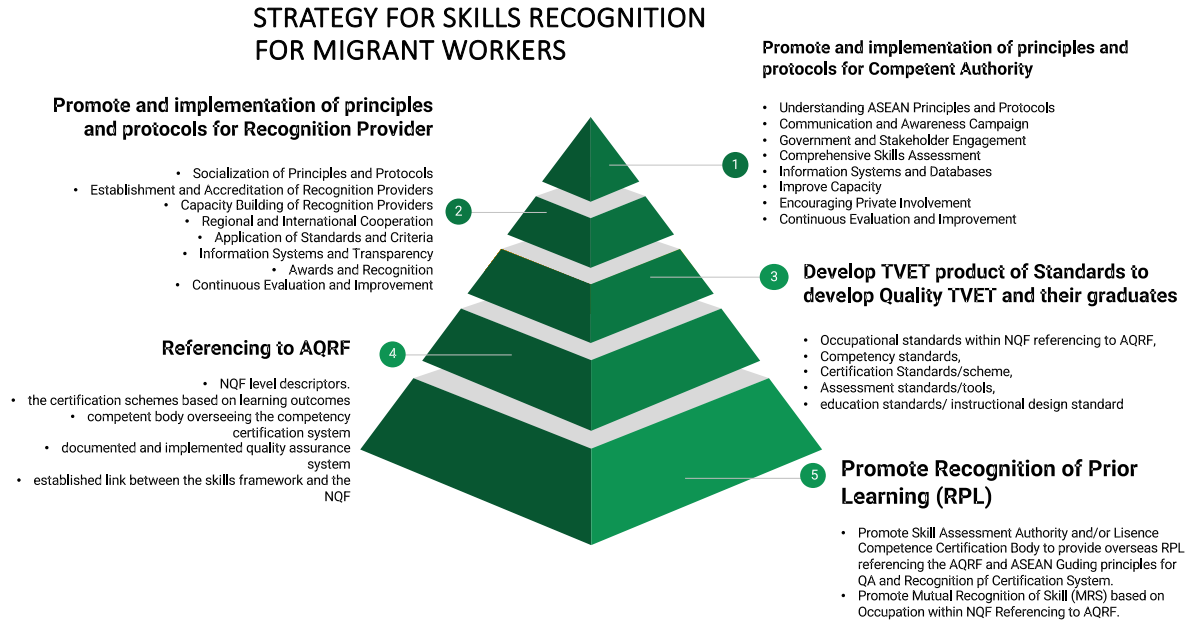
To improve the skills recognition process for migrant workers, several key strategies are essential. Harmonizing standards involves developing standardized certification schemes and quality assurance systems aligned with ASEAN Guidelines and the AQRF. Capacity building through targeted training and workshops can enhance the capabilities of certification bodies. Enhancing transparency with robust information systems and databases will facilitate access to recognized skills and certifications. Promotion and awareness campaigns are needed to inform all stakeholders about the benefits and processes of skills recognition. Government and stakeholder engagement should focus on enacting supportive laws and policies. Strengthening international and regional cooperation by partnering with relevant institutions will enhance trust and validity. Continuous evaluation and improvement through periodic reviews and stakeholder feedback are vital for adapting the skills recognition system to changing labor market demands. Aantjes, Burrows, and Armstrong (2022) identify that Continuous evaluation and improvement through periodic reviews and stakeholder feedback are vital for adapting the skills recognition system to changing labor market demands. This ensures that the system remains relevant and effective. Awad, Panzica, and Popova (2023) highlight that the active engagement of employers' and workers' organizations, along with governments, in labour migration policy design and implementation may ensure more effective and coordinated policy approaches to address future skills demand and supply for migrant labour. Additionally, Sakamoto (2019) identify that The AQRF will allow national qualifications frameworks and training systems to be interconnected. This is intended to enhance transparency, build mutual trust, and thereby ease the transfer and mutual recognition of workers' skills and qualifications.

With the discussion above, we can clearly see the barriers faced in the skills recognition process for migrant workers in ASEAN and the potential improvements that can be made to overcome these barriers.

### **Strategy for skills recognition service development for migrant workers**

The strategy for skills recognition for migrant workers in ASEAN developed to ensure that the skills and competencies possessed by migrant workers are officially recognized, facilitating their access to job opportunities that match their qualifications and experience. This strategy

comprises five key steps designed to strengthen the skills recognition system and enhance labor mobility within the ASEAN region.



**Figure 1. Strategy For Skills Recognition for Migrant Workers**

**Promote and Implement Principles and Protocols for Competent Authority**

The first step in this strategy is to understand and implement ASEAN principles and protocols for competent authorities. This involves: Understanding ASEAN Principles and Protocols, Communication and Awareness Campaign, Government and Stakeholder Engagement, Comprehensive Skills Assessment, Information Systems and Databases, Improve Capacity, Encouraging Private Involvement, and Continuous Evaluation and Improvement. ASEAN (2019) emphasize the importance of Good Regulatory Practices (GRP) that include ASEAN core principles such as clarity in policy rationale, consistency, transparency, and stakeholder engagement. Moreover, ASEAN (2016) provides a comprehensive understanding of how ASEAN principles and protocols for competent authorities can be promoted and implemented to enhance the skills recognition framework for migrant workers.. Furthermore, Ishikawa (2021) indicates that private involvement is a crucial component in ASEAN's economic integration, which is also relevant in the context of skills recognition for migrant workers.

**Promote and Implement Principles and Protocols for Recognition Providers**

The second step is to promote and implement principles and protocols for recognition providers. This includes: Socialization of Principles and Protocols, Establishment and Accreditation of Recognition Providers, Capacity Building of Recognition Providers, Regional and

International Cooperation, Application of Standards and Criteria, Information Systems and Transparency, Awards and Recognition, and Continuous Evaluation and Improvement. ASEAN (2016) highlight the need for competent bodies to approve and monitor training and assessment providers based on set criteria or standards, ensuring they meet the required quality. ASEAN (2020) provided documents support the statement: "Promote and Implement Principles and Protocols for Recognition Providers.

### **Develop TVET Product of Standards to Develop Quality TVET and Their Graduates**

The third step is to develop TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) products of standards to support skills recognition services for migrant workers. This includes: Occupational Standards within NQF Referencing to AQRF, Competency Standards, Certification Standards/Scheme, Assessment Standards/Tools, and Education Standards. ASEAN (2020) collectively supports the development of high-quality TVET systems and the recognition of the skills of migrant workers, facilitating their mobility and employability within the ASEAN region. Furthermore, Skills, Branch, and Braňka (2016) highlight the importance of establishing clear occupational and competency standards, reliable certification schemes, and valid assessment tools to support the recognition of skills, particularly for migrant workers.

### **Referencing to AQRF**

The fourth step is to align the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) with the AQRF (ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework) to ensure transparency and trust in the skills recognition process. This includes: NQF Level Descriptors, Certification Schemes Based on Learning Outcomes, Competent Body Overseeing the Competency Certification System, Documented and Implemented Quality Assurance System, and Established Link Between the Skills Framework and the NQF. ASEAN (2020) provides a hierarchy of levels based on learning outcomes. Furthermore, ASEAN (2016) highlights the importance of having a clear link between the skills framework and the NQF. This linkage helps in understanding how different levels of skills and competencies are recognized and transferred across the region

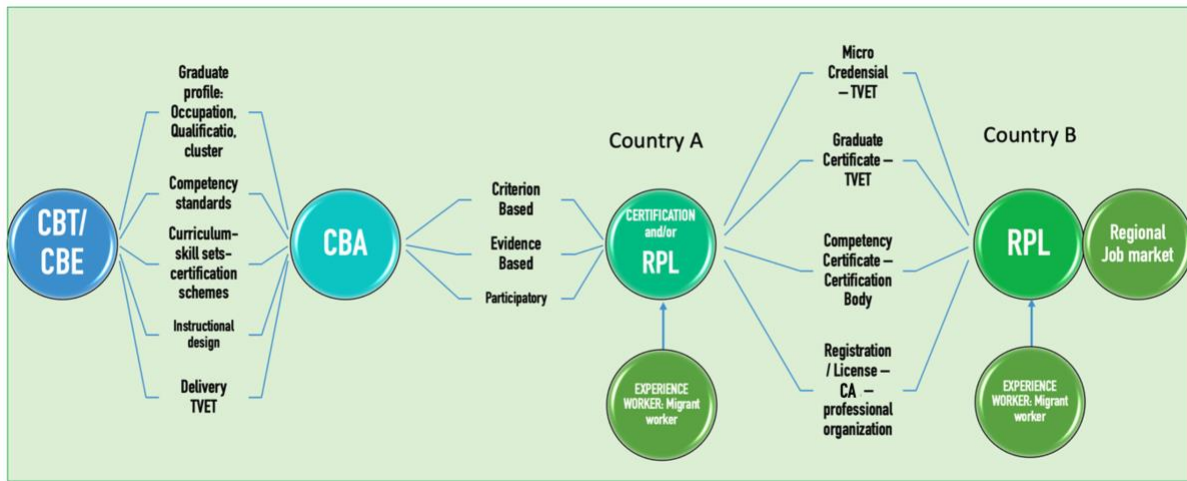
### **Promote Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

The fifth step is to promote the recognition of prior learning (RPL). This includes: Promote Skill Assessment Authority and/or License Competence Certification Body to Provide Services RPL Referencing the AQRF and ASEAN Guiding Principles for QA and Recognition of Certification System and Promote Mutual Recognition of Skill (MRS) Based on Occupation within NQF Referencing to AQRF. ASEAN (2020) outline the need for approving and monitoring assessors, which helps promote confidence in assessment decisions. Furthermore, Skills, Branch, and Braňka (2016) emphasizes the establishment of a recognition authority responsible for certifying qualifications, providing information, and coordinating with other stakeholders. With the strategy, the skills recognition system in ASEAN is expected to be more integrated and effective,

supporting labor mobility, economic integration, and social protection for migrant workers in the region.

**Design Of the Alignment Of CBT/CBE CURRICULUM, Assessment, RPL And Certification, RPL Abroad, And the Job Market in The Region**

Based on the results and discussions of AQRf, ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification, and the status of AMS, it is identified that an alignment strategy could be developed between the TVET Curriculum (CBT & CBE) with CBA, RPL-certification, destination country RPL, and the regional job market.



\*CBT= Competency Based Training, CBE=Competency Based Education, CBA= Competency Based Assessment, CBC=Competency Based Certification, RPL=Recognition Prior Learning, CA= Competent Authority.

**Figure 2. Alignment Strategy: Operational Curriculum – National Certification/RPL between country – Regional Job Market**

The strategy for skills recognition for migrant workers in ASEAN aims to ensure that the skills and competencies acquired by migrant workers are officially recognized, facilitating their access to job opportunities that match their qualifications and experience. This strategy leverages Competency-Based Training (CBT), Competency-Based Education (CBE), and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to create a seamless skills recognition process across ASEAN member states.

Competency-Based Training (CBT) and Competency-Based Education (CBE) encompass several key elements, including defining the graduate profile, which outlines the occupational profiles, qualifications, and clusters relevant to various job roles. It also involves establishing competency standards that clearly delineate the skills and knowledge required for specific occupations. Furthermore, it includes developing curricula and skill sets that align with certification schemes to ensure comprehensive training and utilizing effective instructional designs to deliver Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. Jwan (2023) identify that Competency-Based Education (CBE) involves defining desired endpoint

competencies and ensuring that educational programs are organized to achieve these outcomes. This approach is supported by various educational and regulatory bodies to ensure relevance and effectiveness in training. Gasskov (2018) explains how competencies are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and application, providing a clear framework for what is required for specific occupations. Additionally, Aggarwal and ILO (2015) includes written assessments, practical evaluations, and project-based assessments, ensuring that learners can demonstrate their skills comprehensively..

Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) ensures assessments are based on predefined criteria that match industry standards, making them criterion-based. It also utilizes evidence gathered from various sources, including workplace performance and previous training, to create an evidence-based approach. Additionally, the participatory approach involves participants in the assessment process, allowing them to engage in self-assessment and thereby making the evaluation more comprehensive and reflective of actual competencies. Sinan et al. (2018) identify that the methods used for RPL assessment can be: assessment based on the evidence portfolio; direct observation of skills or competences; examples of the work of a candidate drawn from work, social activity, community, or other locations where the candidate applies the learning, skills or competence; evidence of learning abilities or competences; and a combination of any of the foregoing. Idrissi, Hnida, and Bennani (2016) emphasizes that CBA uses a structured approach to assess competencies, ensuring that the assessment is criterion-based and aligns with industry standards.

Certification and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Country A provides pathways for migrant workers to obtain certification or recognition of their prior learning and work experience. Recognized certification bodies issue competency certificates to validate the skills and competencies of migrant workers. Furthermore, micro-credentials and graduate certificates are offered through TVET programs to support continuous learning and skill enhancement, ensuring that workers can demonstrate their competencies and qualifications effectively. Sinan et al. (2018) outlines the process of recognizing prior learning (RPL), emphasizing the certification of skills acquired informally or non-formally. Maurer (2021) (2021) highlights that competency certificates issued through RPL validate the skills and knowledge of individuals, aligning them with formal educational standards. ILO (2018) promote that the RPL process involves gathering evidence from various sources, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts.

In Country B, competency certificates recognized by certification bodies facilitate the integration of migrant workers into the local job market. The registration and licensing process is managed by competent authorities or professional organizations to ensure that migrant workers meet the necessary regulatory requirements. This approach supports the transition of migrant workers into the regional job market by recognizing their skills and qualifications, thus promoting smoother integration and better employment opportunities. ASEAN (2016) highlights that

competency certification systems are based on assessments which include tests, performance assessments, and portfolios, ensuring that competencies are validated by a competent body against predefined standards. Idrissi, Hnida, and Bennani (2016) mentions that CBA involves participants in the assessment process through self-assessment, making the evaluation comprehensive and reflective of actual competencies. Curry and Docherty (2017) underscores the importance of involving participants in the assessment process to enhance the reliability and validity of the evaluations.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism allows migrant workers to have their previous learning and work experience formally recognized, reducing the need for repetitive training. This facilitates their integration into the job market in the destination country based on their verified skills and competencies. By formally acknowledging prior learning and experience, RPL helps migrant workers gain entry into the job market more efficiently and effectively. ASEAN (2019) highlight that RPL is essential for any applicant who has acquired relevant competencies through work experience, informal or non-formal learning but does not have a related qualification/certificate. ILO (2018) promote RPL systems are especially beneficial for disadvantaged groups, including migrant workers who face underutilization of competencies and overqualification in their jobs. Ishikawa (2021) emphasizes the importance of RPL in improving employment opportunities for immigrant workers, reducing training and certification costs, and enhancing the formal path to certification through credit transfer processes. This ultimately helps in integrating migrant workers into the local job market more efficiently and effectively.

## **CONCLUSION**

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This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Skills Recognition Framework (SRF) implementation across ASEAN member states, identifying key challenges and opportunities while proposing strategic improvements. The research highlights significant progress in aligning national qualification frameworks with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQR), which is crucial for recognizing the skills and competencies of migrant workers. Despite these advancements, variability in recognition systems, limited awareness, and complex processes still impede the full potential of the SRF. The study outlines a strategic approach to developing skills recognition services, emphasizing the importance of standardization, capacity building, transparency, and international cooperation to facilitate labor mobility and economic integration.

Key recommendations include enhancing standardization by developing certification schemes and quality assurance systems aligned with ASEAN guidelines, building capacity through targeted training, improving transparency with robust information systems, and promoting awareness via comprehensive communication campaigns. Additionally, the study stresses the need for government engagement, fostering regional cooperation, and conducting continuous



evaluations to adapt to labor market needs. By addressing these aspects, the SRF can effectively support the recognition and utilization of migrant workers' skills, thereby improving their access to job opportunities that match their qualifications and experience across ASEAN member states.

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