



**ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA)
Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP)**

Request for Proposal

**Consulting Opportunity for
ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Phase V –
Capacity Building for National Qualifications Frameworks and Referencing
[AANZ-0091-SER-15]**

“PROJECT CONSULTANT”

**PROPOSAL MUST BE RECEIVED BY
24 December 2020**

EMAIL PROPOSAL TO:

AANZFTA Support Unit
External Economic Relations Division
ASEAN Economic Community Department
The ASEAN Secretariat
Jakarta 12110, Indonesia
Email: ecwp@asean.org

Prepared by: AANZFTA Support Unit / SID / MID
Time: 11/2020

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1) ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand have worked in partnership over the last decade, investing significantly to transform the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), endorsed by ASEAN Ministers from 2015, into the first functional regional qualifications framework in Asia. The AQRF has provided the impetus for substantial reforms within ASEAN Member States' (AMS) education and training systems. These reforms have progressed at different rates given the variability of education and training systems and priorities across the ASEAN subregion. Despite this, the AQRF has clearly brought valuable benefits to ASEAN.
- 2) Following completion of AECSP Project on Referencing National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF) [Education and Training Governance: Capacity Building for NQF Phase IV (AQRF Phase IV Project) in June 2019, the AQRF is now at a critical juncture to maintain the positive momentum gained to date to instil international trust and recognition in the AQRF, the referencing process and referencing reports, and importantly, AMS NQFs and qualifications. The AQRF Phase IV Project supported the start of solid foundation established for a shared understanding of referencing concepts and principles, with some AMS demonstrating policy leadership capability and capacity in this technical field. Referencing NQFs to the AQRF is a significant step for regional integration, helping to improve the standard of education and encouraging greater student and worker mobility.
- 3) AQRF Phase V seeks to build within ASEAN the capacity and capabilities required for the future sustainability of the AQRF and the referencing process. In parallel, AQRF Phase V also seeks to continue to build the technical capability of AMS seeking to develop/implement NQFs by providing tailored, practical, and technical support.

2 SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 THE ASSIGNMENT

I. BACKGROUND

- 4) The concept of referencing and its processes are still in the early stages of development in South East Asia. Referencing is highly complex and requires significant time to understand and apply the fundamental concepts associated with it. This view is reinforced from discussions and lessons learned from AMS through the AQRF project to-date, the Australian and New Zealand experience with referencing, as well as from the European experience¹.
- 5) Despite the complexities of referencing, progress achieved under the AQRF project has been considerable. Implementation of Phases I-IV over almost a decade has delivered major results, including:
- **Phase 1** (2010 -2011) developed a policy concept paper on a regional qualifications framework, a regional forum and national consultation workshops.
 - **Phase II** (2012 - 2015) established a Task Force of AMS and representatives from Australia and New Zealand to develop the AQRF and agree on its implementation.
 - **Phase III** (2013 - 2015) provided tailored and practical technical support to AMS for respective NQF development and implementation, through in-depth exchanges of officials and technical experts. The AQRF Referencing Guidelines were endorsed.
 - **Phase IV** (September 2016 - June 2019) started the AQRF implementation phase with the AQRF Committee commencing in their role to review referencing reports. Two AMS (Malaysia and the Philippines) received endorsement of their referencing reports by the AQRF Committee. Four other AMS commenced referencing (Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam).
- 6) The development and now implementation of the AQRF has been transformative. It has required AMS to assess their education and training system level design, with a view to improving quality, transparency and integration of systems. Despite the significant achievements made to date, much work still needs to be done to fully benefit from the potential that the AQRF offers the region. Continued capability and capacity building assistance is required for individual AMS and collectively as a subregion. This will cement a shared understanding of referencing and associated NQF concepts such as NQF governance, quality assurance, qualification standards, learning outcomes, pathways and credit systems.

II. PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

- 7) AANZFTA is seeking the services of a project consultant with relevant expertise and international experience to provide technical assistance, policy advice and support implementation of Phase V of the AQRF project, in consultation with technical experts from Australia and New Zealand, as well as AMS and the AQRF Committee.

¹ For reference, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) commenced in 2008 and the process of referencing continues in the region.

III. CONSULTANT'S SCOPE OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

9. The Project Consultant will provide high level policy advice to the AQRF Committee, individual AMS, Australian and New Zealand technical experts and the ASEAN Secretariat on the AQRF, AQRF referencing and national qualifications framework (or systems) development. The Consultant will be responsible for delivering the following project components in consultation with the project stakeholders outlined above, as well as meeting associated AQRF and project governance arrangements. The Consultant will also manage, task and supervise the Project Officer who will support the Consultant to deliver the components and report directly to the Consultant based on the agreed Terms of Reference of the Project Officer.

Component 1: Needs Analysis

- a. Design methodology to identify specific needs of AMS and AQRF Committee and conduct the needs analysis
 - (i) To identify immediate and future needs to support individual AMS to develop and implement their NQF (or national qualifications system) and to reference to the AQRF, including:
 - Key challenges understanding and applying the technical aspects of the AQRF and referencing;
 - Needs and challenges relating to online learning with respect to qualifications frameworks (or systems), including quality assurance;
 - Understanding reform priorities and plans, and key activities to develop and support the implementation of NQFs (or national qualifications systems);
 - How Australia and New Zealand can provide technical support.
 - (ii) Practical solutions to support the continued development of AMS seeking to develop/implement NQFs (or national qualification systems), including four AMS that would commence or advance referencing of their respective NQF into the AQRF.
- b. Deliver a report that presents the needs analysis findings including a detailed work plan how the results will inform project components 2, 3 and 4 and deliverables going forward.
- c. Present the key findings, detailed work plan and recommendations of the needs analysis virtually to the AQRF Committee including Australia and New Zealand.

Component 2: Capability and capacity building workshops for AQRF referencing

- a. Design and facilitate two one-day tailored technical AQRF referencing capacity and capability building workshops based on the needs analysis findings, detailed work plan and recommendations (one to be held virtually and the other face-to-face, subject to health advice and travel restrictions). The workshop design will also include technical capacity and capability building for AMS to advance their AQRF referencing.
- b. Develop materials (agenda, discussion papers, presentations).

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- c. Provide a written report following each workshop summarising the outcomes, including key activities, successes, challenges, lessons learned, and key recommendations going forward.
- d. Develop the roles and responsibilities for two senior advisors from two different AMS who will support and add value to referencing workshops.
- e. Provide technical capacity assistance to four AMSs that are either commencing or progressing the referencing of their respective NQFs to the AQRF. This includes reviewing their draft referencing reports and providing advice.

Component 3: Tailored capacity building workshop to support NQF development/implementation

- a. Design and facilitate a three-day tailored technical capacity building workshop based on the needs analysis findings (to be held in person, subject to the health advice and travel restrictions);
- b. Develop materials (agenda, discussion papers, presentations).
- c. Provide a written report following the workshop setting out the outcomes of the workshop, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and key recommendations going forward.

Component 4: AQRF Referencing Toolkit

- a. Review, refine, and consolidate existing AQRF referencing materials, and develop new documentation to support and enhance an internationally robust referencing process, if required. Such documents could include, but are not limited to:
 - (i) Revised templates for AQRF Referencing Report Review and AQRF Referencing Report
 - (ii) Other documents or training material, such as self-assessment tools, a set of agreed processes to ensure a shared understanding and transparent processes and protocols for referencing, reviewing and endorsement of referencing reports, guidance on referring to new qualifications.
 - (iii) AQRF Referencing Guidelines, as necessary.
 - b. Present the result of the review and recommendations to the AQRF Committee and Australia and New Zealand.
10. The workshops can be held virtually in the event that face-to-face delivery is not possible.
11. The AQRF Committee members and the relevant AMS agencies involved in the referencing process will benefit from capacity building and technical assistance planned for this Project. Once a functional regional qualifications framework is established to support the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills, other recipients who will benefit from this project include general businesses, service providers in education-related industries, education institutions and agencies.

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12. The following are activity milestones and indicative time frames of this project:

Activity Milestone	Indicative Timeframe
Project commences	January 2021
Component 1: Needs analysis support	January to February 2021
Component 4: Support revision of AQRf referencing report and AQRf Referencing Report Review templates	January to February 2021
Component 2: Referencing capacity and capability workshop 1	March/April 2021
Component 3: Regional NQF capacity building workshop	June/July 2021
Component 2: Referencing capacity and capability workshop 2	September/October 2021
Component 4: Support development, revision, of referencing guidelines and other documentation as required	September/October 2021
Project ends	November 2021

13. The consultants would be expected to complete the scope of work and activities approximately within 54 input days.

IV. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

14. The main output documents of this project will be, but not limited to:

- **Component 1 – Needs Analysis:**
 - Design methodology and conduct needs analysis
 - Consultant report on needs analysis
 - Consultant-led virtual discussion to present on the key findings of the needs analysis with the AQRf Committee, including Australia and New Zealand.

- **Component 2 – Capability and capacity building workshops for AQRf referencing:**
 - Delivery of two one-day tailored technical AQRf referencing capacity and capability workshops
 - Development of roles and responsibilities of senior advisors from two different AMS to support and add value to the technical AQRf referencing workshops
 - Preparation of agenda, workshop documents/materials and written report following each workshop
 - At least four AMS commencing or progressing referencing of their respective NQF to the AQRf.

- **Component 3 – Tailored capacity building workshop to support NQF development/implementation:**
 - Delivery of a three-day tailored technical capacity building workshop based on the needs analysis findings

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- Preparation of agenda, workshop documents/materials and workshop report, following the workshop, prepared by consultant and supported by the Project Officer
- **Component 4 – AQRF Referencing Toolkit:**
 - Key documentation, resources, tools and materials considered necessary to support a sustainable and robust referencing process, for example:
 - a. Revised AQRF Referencing Report Review template
 - b. Revised AQRF Referencing Report template
 - c. Other documentation or training materials required. For example, a self-assessment tool; agreed processes to ensure a shared understanding and transparent processes and protocols for referencing, review of draft referencing reports, and endorsement of final referencing reports; guidance on how to refer to the AQRF for new qualifications following endorsement of an AQRF Referencing Report
 - Refined, as necessary, AQRF Referencing Guidelines.

QUALIFICATIONS

CONSULTANT’S KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE

#	Qualification	Weight
1	The Consultant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - must have extensive demonstrated experience in qualifications framework referencing project, policies development and implementation; - should be an internationally recognised expert in NQF or RQF development and/or implementation and quality assurance mechanisms and/or systems. - Experience in capacity building work with ASEAN, in the ASEAN region, and/or with individual AMS is highly desired, as well as thorough knowledge of AMS NQFs (or national qualifications systems), understanding of the AQRF project - Experience working with international fora, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN, International Labour Organization (ILO), and UNESCO is also desirable. - Ability to commence work on the project phase immediately. 	60%
2	Appropriateness of proposed concept and work plan, including detail content and clear deliverables	20%
3	Qualifications of applicant/s	20%

3 RFP REQUIREMENTS

3.1 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMAT OF RESPONSE

In conformance to the ASEAN Secretariat's Financial Rules and Administrative Procedures (AFARP), the Consultant shall submit the applications in **two** separate documents: Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal.

- a) Interested applicants/experts are invited to respond to this advertisement electronically and must submit both a technical and financial proposal.
 - i. The technical proposal must include the following details:
 - o A brief discussion indicating the prospective Consultant's understanding of the project's purpose;
 - o A discussion of how the prospective Consultant proposes to approach the project including but not limited to methodology to undertake the assignment, list of possible reference materials and a work plan specifying the activities to be undertaken (including focused topics for workshop, travels per expert for each activity), an outline of the reports to be delivered, and schedule of activities, taking into account the targets to complete the undertaking;
 - o A brief summary of the prospective Consultant's expertise, knowledge, skills and experience as outlined in the section above; and any relevant publications on referencing, NQF and/or RQF development/implementation, and quality assurance, including links to or copies of publications. *(Please provide links to the publications if available, or enclose selected publications in soft-copy in the application);*
 - o Brief discussion on the consultant's or firm's past experience in undertaking similar work and brief summary of projects undertaken; including initiatives that involve identifying strategic issues, ascertaining stakeholder needs, effective reporting, recommending and/or implementing practical strategies, as well as establishing highly productive working relationships.
 - o Experience in the design, development and delivery of tailored capacity building workshops on complex technical subject matter, including high level liaison with key stakeholders).
 - o Names and curriculum vitae of associates, subcontractors, personnel or employees who will be engaged in the performance of services and specific roles for each of the team members.
 - o Complete the attached Appendix 1 and 1a - Company General Information and List of Clients; and
 - o Other information to substantiate the capacity of the applicant to undertake the project.
 - ii. A financial proposal must be submitted and shall include detailed cost estimates including a summary sheet indicating the unit prices; payments schedule, following Appendix 2 to this RfP. The financial proposal must also include the following details:

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- the consultancy/professional services fees for completing all deliverables, in unit cost and the number of hours/days for each deliverable.
- miscellaneous charges, if applicable.

The cost of travels to support the proposed work program, as may be required and arranged by the ASEAN Secretariat, shall be borne by the Project Fund and based on actual costs.

- b) Consultant must ensure that both technical and financial proposals are received via email at the following address before the tender closing date **24 December 2020**

AANZFTA Support Unit
External Economic Relations Division
ASEAN Economic Community Department
The ASEAN Secretariat
Jakarta 12110, Indonesia
Email: ecwp@asean.org

- c) All proposals must be submitted in English.
- d) Consultant should indicate the Title of the Tender at the subject of the email.
- e) The Technical and Financial Proposals must be submitted in two separate documents.
- f) Consultant must not include any financial/cost data in the Technical Proposal, but only in the Financial Proposal.
- g) The proposals should be concisely presented and structured, and should explain in detail the Consultant's availability, experience and resources to provide the requested services.
- h) Proposals that are incomplete or do not address the required criteria may not be considered in the review process.
- i) Applicants are welcome to submit an application for this consultancy only or a combined application with the Project Officer position: [Consulting Opportunity - Project Officer for ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Phase V](#).

3.2 RFP TERMS & CONDITIONS

3.2.1 3.3.1 Bid Expiration Date

Received proposals shall be valid until **28 February 2021**

3.2.2 Implementation/Delivery Schedule

- a. Contract award will be decided by the Selection Committee comprised of representatives of ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework Committee (AQRFC) and Principle Technical Experts from Australia and New Zealand, in consultation and coordination with Co-Chairs of the AANZFTA Committee on Trade in Services (CTS).
- b. Terms and reference of the contract will be negotiated by the ASEAN Secretariat.
- c. In carrying out his/her assignment, the Project Consultant will work closely with the ASEAN Secretariat, Principle Technical Experts from Australia and New Zealand and reporting to the AANZFTA Committee on Trade in Services (CTS) and the AQRFC Committee through the ASEAN Secretariat.

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d. The timeline for hiring and initial activities of the consultant will be as follows:

Activity	Deliverables	Indicative Timeline
Contracting		January 2021
Submission of draft output:		
Project Commencement	Inception report	January 2021
Component 1 – AMS participate in needs analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the desk-based research, surveys and other activities stipulated in the methodology • Prepare the draft Needs Analysis Report (Consultant Report) • Submit the draft Needs Analysis Report for consideration by relevant ASEAN and AANZFTA bodies, and Principle Technical Experts from Australia and New Zealand • Provide the revised draft report for discussion at the workshop 	Draft Needs Analysis Report	January - February 2021
Component 4 – Commence revision of AQRF referencing report and review templates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the draft revised templates for the AQRF Referencing Report Review and AQRF Referencing Report for consideration by relevant ASEAN and AANZFTA bodies and Principle Technical Experts from Australia and New Zealand • Provide the revised draft templates for discussion. 	Draft Revised Templates for the AQRF Referencing Report Review and Draft Revised AQRF Referencing Report	
Component 1 – Completion of needs analysis report and virtual discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare virtual discussion documents, including draft agenda, materials • Facilitate the virtual discussion • After completion of the virtual discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare and submit draft virtual discussion report ○ Finalise the Needs Analysis Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda for the virtual discussion; • discussion materials or presentations; • discussion facilitation; • discussion report; • Final Needs Analysis Report 	February/March 2021

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Activity	Deliverables	Indicative Timeline
<p>Component 4 – Finalisation of revised referencing report and review templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the Revised Templates for consideration by relevant committee and relevant AANZFTA bodies and Principal Technical Experts from Australia and New Zealand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Revised Templates for the AQRF Referencing Report Review and Draft Revised AQRF Referencing Report 	
<p>Component 2 - Workshop 1 (held together with AQRFC meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver and facilitate the 1-day workshop, including developing materials (agenda, discussion papers, presentations), design roles and responsibilities of Senior Advisors from two AMS. Provide advice on draft referencing reports (partial or full version) submitted by four AMS Submission of the workshop report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop materials (including agenda, discussion papers, presentations) Roles and responsibilities of senior advisors from two different AMS supporting and adding value to the technical AQRF referencing workshops Review of 4 AMS' referencing reports Advice on 4 AMS' referencing reports Workshop report 	<p>1st Workshop: March/April 2021</p> <p>2nd Workshop: September/October 2021</p>
<p>Component 3 – Workshop 3 (Regional Workshop)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission and consultation on the draft agenda for the regional workshop Prepare the workshop documents/materials Facilitate the regional workshop Submission of the workshop report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop materials (including agenda, discussion papers, presentations) Workshop Report 	<p>June/July 2021</p>
<p>Component 4 – Refine referencing guidelines as required and AQRF Committee, including Australia and New Zealand, refine referencing toolkit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the refined referencing guidelines (toolkit) as required, incorporating all comments, suggestions and output of discussions for consideration by relevant ASEAN and AANZFTA bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refined referencing toolkit, including training materials required, e.g. a self-assessment tool; agreed processes to ensure a shared understanding and transparent processes and protocols for referencing, review of draft referencing reports, and endorsement of final referencing reports; 	<p>September/October 2021</p>

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Activity	Deliverables	Indicative Timeline
	guidance on how to refer to the AQRF for new qualifications following endorsement of an AQRF Referencing Report	
Project End	• Completion Report	November 2021

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Appendix 1

Company General Information

*(Only required for consulting firms, to be submitted as part of the **Technical Proposal**)*

Company's Legal Name:			
Division or Subsidiary (if applicable):			
Company Address:			
City:			
Province / State:			
Country:			
Postal Code:			
Telephone:			
Business Name Registration:			
Tax Registration Number:			
Valid Business Permit:			
Company Contact:		Telephone no.:	
Title / Position:		Fax no.:	
E-Mail:			
Indicate number of years involved in similar business			
Are you a subsidiary of a financial institution? *If Yes, Please indicate your Holding Company			

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**Appendix 1a.
Customer Reference**

To be submitted as part of the Technical Proposal

Customer Details	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Telephone Number	
Fax Number	
Contact Name	
Project Title	

Customer Details	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Telephone Number	
Fax Number	
Contact Name	
Project Title	

Customer Details	
Company Name	
Company Address	
Telephone Number	
Fax Number	
Contact Name	
Project Title	

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APPENDIX 2

Price and Payment Schedule

To be submitted as part of the Financial Proposal

A. PRICE

Unit: USD or AUD

No.	Description	Unit	Price (Total estimated cost)
1	Professional Services		
	- Input days for each expected output	(# of days)	
2	Other expenses		
	- Item 1		
	- Item 2		
TOTAL			

B. PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE