

Technical Dialogue: Strengthening AQRF Referencing through EU Collaboration

14 February 2026
Makati Diamond Residences
Manila, the Philippines

About SCOPE-HE

The EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package – Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE) is a collaborative initiative funded the European Union (EU) and approved by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), running from February 2024 to January 2028 with a budget of 9.3 million euros. Implemented by Nuffic, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education, in partnership with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), SCOPE-HE builds upon the successes of previous programmes like SHARE and ERASMUS+.

The programme focuses on enhancing exchanges and connectivity in higher education, research, and technical and vocational education within ASEAN and between ASEAN and the EU—with particular emphasis on the green transition, digital transformation, and the blue economy. Key activities include facilitating student and academic mobility, strengthening university networks to foster research collaboration, and improving graduate employability by connecting vocational education institutions with the private sector. Through these efforts, SCOPE-HE aims to create a more connected and dynamic higher education landscape, empowering future generations and strengthening the economic and social fabric of the region.

Rationale

The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) provides a shared platform to compare qualifications across ASEAN Member States. It aims to support lifelong learning, promote labour mobility, and enhance regional integration by enabling better understanding and recognition of qualifications across borders. While a number of ASEAN countries have already been referenced to AQRF, others—namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste—are at varying stages of the referencing process. These countries are navigating a range of technical and institutional considerations in advancing their referencing reports, including evolving capacity, mandate clarity, and opportunities for structured peer learning.

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At the same time, the European Union (EU) and its Member States have accumulated substantial experience in referencing national qualification frameworks (NQFs) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). In Europe, few NQFs were only legally established after the first referencing and a case study will consider the approach where the existing education and training system is described, without an operational NFQ. The EQF referencing processes—though adapted to the European context—offer valuable insights into institutional coordination, stakeholder engagement, quality assurance, and international comparability of qualifications.

This technical dialogue seeks to bring together representatives from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste with EU experts, in order to create a space for experience-sharing and targeted matchmaking. The aim is to provide tailored technical support and initiate collaboration that can help these countries move forward in their referencing processes to the AQRF.

Expected Outcomes

- Better understanding of the technical and institutional requirements of successful referencing processes.
- Identification of potential EU experts or institutional partners who could support referencing efforts.
- Follow-up actions, such as technical assistance, study visits, or bilateral collaboration.
- Strengthened ASEAN-EU cooperation in the field of education and qualifications recognition.

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Event Agenda

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08:30 – 09:00	Registration & Morning Coffee
09:00 – 09:10	Opening Session Welcome Remarks Dr. Frank Feulner SCOPE-HE Team Leader, Nuffic Southeast Asia Group Photo
09:10 – 10:10	Session 1 Case Study: Italian National Qualifications Framework Referencing and Re-referencing Experience to the EQF Speaker: Ms. Michela Bastianelli Researcher and Representative for Italy in the EQF Advisory Group, INAPP (National Institute for the Public Policies Analysis)
10:10 – 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:00	Session 2 Matchmaking Session In this session, EU experts will meet with representatives from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste, to exchange views and discuss expectations. Facilitator: Ms. Trie Yunita Sari SCOPE-HE Programme Officer, DAAD Regional Office Jakarta
12:00 – 12:15	Wrap-up and Following Actions
12:15 – 13:00	Lunch



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