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Definitions

Accredited institution
Status awarded to an institution which has been judged capable of delivering a training programme leading to the award of a national vocational qualification

Advisor
Person officially assigned by the national agency responsible for providing services to migrant workers, to support a migrant worker with advice and support, particularly in the assembly of the portfolio of evidence for assessment

Assessment
Process of reviewing evidence and making judgements as to whether a returning migrant worker can perform according to the knowledge, skills and attitudes specified in the RMCS or the national competency standards

(Certified) Assessor
Person authorised to conduct assessment to determine if the competencies specified in the Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS) or the national competency standards, have been acquired

Competence
The possession by workers of what they are expected to know and be able to do together with the capacity to apply that skill and knowledge in new situations and environments

Mutual Recognition of Vocational Qualifications
The result of comparing the vocational qualifications system in one jurisdiction with that in another and deeming broad technical equivalence and common acceptability of vocational qualifications

Portfolio of evidence
Comprehensive record of all technical and soft skills acquisition, work experience and all work-related achievements such as leadership and supervisory roles

Recognition of Prior Learning
Process of awarding credit for competencies achieved outside of formal accredited training

Skills recognition
The result of the formal assessment of the portfolio of evidence; confirmation that skills acquired internationally map fully to specified RMCS units or national units of competency

Verifier
Second assessor who checks that the competency-based assessment has been carried out fairly, validly, consistently and to the required industry standard

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Background

This section identifies the significant increase in the number of migrant workers worldwide; recent developments of relevance including in ASEAN; ILO and ADB initiatives; and slow progress in recognising the skills of returning migrant workers.

1 The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates\(^1\) that worldwide, there are 214 million migrant workers crossing international borders in search of employment and human security. This number is expected to increase rapidly in the coming decades. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) sees the global challenge as requiring policies and resources to better manage labour migration so that it contributes positively to the growth and development not only of the sending and the receiving countries, but also of the migrant workers themselves.

2 Most low skilled migrating workers are willing to accept dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs (the 3Ds) at wage rates lower than nationals are willing to accept. However, some more highly skilled migration is also occurring, such as between the China and Viet Nam, and from the Philippines. The stock of potential labour migrants in the Greater Mekong sub-region is projected to be 5 million over the next 10 years. An estimated 200,000 Lao workers are in Thailand, of whom only 120,000 are working there legally.

3 Under the ILO Skills-AP-KOREA partnership programme, the ILO has convened several workshops involving member states on skills recognition of migrant workers. These have contributed to the progress on skills recognition issues supporting worker mobility, decent work and helping to shield migrant workers and their families from exploitation. The ILO has now published Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS) which can be used by member states to help describe the skills of workers. A recent ASEAN project has resulted in agreement on four levels of competency. ASEAN member economies adopted in 2007 an Economic Community Blueprint to promote the free flow of trade in services and the mobility of professional people. However, the blueprint does not capture the majority of regional migrants who depart as low skilled workers, but it will facilitate circular migration with workers going away, coming back, and going away again throughout the ASEAN region, with few restrictions.

4 The Asian Development Bank (ADB) currently has a project in the Greater Mekong Sub-region which is developing a modality to promote the recognition of the skills of departing migrant workers. Experiences and policy developments from that project have informed the drafting of these ILO Guidelines and the assessment modality being proposed for consideration by member states. The ADB project is also making use of the ILO RMCS as a primary platform for the cross-border recognition of the skills of workers, thereby helping to address skill shortages and enhance sub-regional competitiveness.

5 Until recently, slow progress has been made towards attempting to recognise the skills of returning migrant workers. Many return without the opportunity to have newly acquired skills and work experience recognised. This situation impacts negatively upon their employability

\(^{1}\) www.iom.int

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and on labour market outcomes. In addition, many returning migrant workers lack support services which could help them to find new employment or self-employment after training and relevant support and advice. These opportunities are missed to capitalise on the considerable new learning and skills development of the returning workers.

Scope and Purposes

This section identifies the scope and purposes of these Guidelines: to outline the features of the modality through which the skills of returning migrant workers can be recognised.

1 These Guidelines aim to promote recognition of the newly acquired skills of returning migrant workers. To implement that recognition, it is proposed that advice and support be provided to departing migrant workers so they gather data while employed overseas and that there be further advice, support and assessment of their skills, when they return. A new national agency, with provincial representation, will be required; or the proposed additional services may be made available through an existing agency of Government.

2 A modality is outlined through which returning workers will assemble data from their overseas employment, including any skills training, into a comprehensive portfolio; map that data against identified national or international competency standards; and, following assessment, achieve recognition for their new skills and work experience, so as to provide a solid platform for purposeful employment or self-employment.

3 The Guidelines are being developed at a time when significant progress is being made in many countries in strengthening technical and vocational education and training and in establishing robust skills recognition systems, often through competency-based vocational qualifications frameworks. Mechanisms are now increasingly being put in place by member states to give recognition to informal and structured workplace skills acquisition. Capitalising on these positive developments, the Guidelines aim to help responsible agencies to reach out effectively to returning migrant workers, and through the proposed mechanisms for assessment of their skills, to make it easier for them to reintegrate into the labour market.

4 These Guidelines are for use by

- Government agencies responsible for sending and receiving workers;
- national agencies responsible for recognising migrant worker skills;
- local agencies and NGOs providing support services to returning workers;
- national employer and employee organisations and
- private and overseas employment services.
5 The Guidelines provide details of the features of the modality being proposed for the recognition of the new skills of returning migrant workers:

- The role of the responsible national agency (page 7)
- The use of a portfolio of evidence of the new skills of returning migrant workers (page 11)
- The use of the RMCS, national competency standards and the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications (page 14)
- The assessment of the portfolio of evidence (page 17)
- The roles of Government, employers and employees (page 19)

Steps in the proposed skills recognition process

Data gathering advice before departure

Assembly of the portfolio of evidence upon return

Mapping to RMCS and national competency standards

Portfolio finalised with support of an advisor

Assessment of the portfolio and verification of decision

Recognition of new skills of returning migrant worker
Questions for workshop participants:

1 Do the stated objectives of the Guidelines meet the needs of the participating ILO member states seeking to recognise the skills of returning migrant workers?
2 Are there any additional objectives-- which should therefore be reflected in the detailed sections of these Guidelines?

1 National Agency to Support Migrant Workers

This section outlines the proposed new services for departing and returning migrant workers to be provided through a new or an existing national agency to support labour market reintegration with purposeful employment or self-employment and with full recognition of their new skills.

1 It is proposed that a new national agency be established to support departing and returning migrant workers; or that the role of an existing national agency be extended to provide the additional services proposed. The national agency will need to be able to offer outreach services in provincial/district areas as well as nationally. Nationwide coverage could be achieved through the national agency’s own district and provincial offices, or through contracts (and training) with interested bodies such as NGOs, employer/employee associations and private employment services. Services will need to be available to both departing and returning migrant workers.

1.1 Supporting Departing Migrant Workers

2 For departing migrant workers, it is recommended that services be provided which should include information on:

- the work environment in the receiving country
- employment contracts in compliance with national labour laws, ensuring decent work
- wages and working conditions
- safety and safety standards
- equipment which will be provided
- health care and medical leave entitlements
- job security
- social and other benefits
- insurance
- repatriation benefits
3 Some “lifestyle” pre-departure training could be very valuable especially for low-skilled workers who may be about to encounter hard manual labour in difficult circumstances and with minimal personal support. Training in occupational safety and health would also help. Workers should take with them a record of their current skills and qualifications. This may require an assessment of those skills to be undertaken and a record to be provided, prior to departure.

4 To promote skills recognition upon their return to their home country, two additional services are proposed for departing migrant workers:

✓ The inclusion of the provision of skills development with formal skills recognition in all overseas contracts. A skilled worker is more likely to be high performing and contribute more in productivity and in the mentoring of other workers. The formal recognition may at its simplest be a document signed by the trainer or employer.

✓ The provision of advice or training before departure, to encourage the regular collecting of evidence of skill development while overseas so that the raw material for skills recognition is available when the worker returns. It is recognised that this should not be onerous and must be simple to carry out.

5 Where both the sending and receiving countries have established national vocational competency-based qualifications frameworks, it is recommended that the responsible national agencies in both countries work together on benchmarking and on mutual recognition of vocational qualifications. Departing migrant workers should be aware that any formal skills training carried out in the receiving country may therefore be able to be readily recognised in their home country.

6 It will be important that industry and worker associations in receiving countries are made aware that migrant workers are being asked to gather documentation for a future portfolio of evidence so as to enhance their employment prospects when they return home. It is suggested that at least the following matters should be raised with these associations by the responsible national agency:

- The nature and details of the contracts to be offered prospective migrant workers;
- The need for a full job specification with details of skills levels required and skills, referenced to the RMCS, where possible;
- Whether skills upgrading training is to be part of the contract;
- Support, especially from employers, for data gathering by workers for their future portfolio of evidence of skills development;
- Regulations on permitted fees to be charged by recruitment agents;
- Information on workers collective rights and obligations;
- Regulations on occupational health and safety; safety standards and the use of protective equipment.

7 Employers in receiving countries should all be informed of the RMCS; of the use that migrant workers will be making of them; and understand how they can use them to make maximum use of the skills of their workers.
Questions for workshop participants:

3 Is it feasible to propose that the provision of skills training with formal recognition should be recommended for inclusion in all overseas contracts?
4 Can advice or training be made available to departing workers so as to encourage the regular collecting of evidence of skills development?
5 Are there additions to the above list provided for the guidance of industry and worker associations in receiving countries?
6 Is such guidance realistic?

1.2 Supporting Returning Migrant Workers

8 Returning migrant workers (who may have departed as manual labourers) bring back new skills and knowledge, international work experience, and any accumulated capital additional to remittances already sent home. These benefits from worker migration can be enhanced if a country has in place systematic policies and procedures to ensure the successful reintegration of the migrant workers into purposeful employment or self-employment, taking full advantage of their new knowledge and skills. Advisory services can assist workers to invest any capital wisely - and hopefully productively; and can help them to secure work, or self-employment, so as to make full use of their new skills to support national development.

9 The following new services are proposed to support returning migrant workers:

✓ Small business advice to ensure any capital brought back is invested wisely and productively;
✓ The development by returning workers of a portfolio of evidence attesting to their new skills and knowledge;
✓ Employment placement services specifically for returning migrant workers so as to gain maximum economic benefit from their new skills;
✓ Advice on self-employment options and on any assistance available such as training for enterprise development and information on access to credit.

10 The responsible national agency should help returning workers navigate the pathways required for their skills to be recognised; and provide access to any other services and programmes available to them. Employment placement services will require collaborative and strategic actions on the part of Government agencies, employers and employee associations so that there are in place the right processes, information and resources to recognise fairly and accurately the knowledge, skills and work experience of the workers.

11 The responsible national agency will consequently need to bring together employers and employee associations, education and training institutions, professional and regulatory bodies, and national skills/ qualifications certificating agencies. The returning workers may
have to pass through one or a combination of these stakeholders in order to successfully re-enter the labour market in their home country.

12 Given that the returning workers will have been earning while overseas, the services may be provided for a cost-recovery fee. However this issue will require discussion in every member state when the national agency is being established. Government budgetary support will be required if there is not to be a cost-recovery fee. Another option may be a financial contribution from the employer of the newly-recognised highly skilled worker.

13 For the returning workers it is proposed that there should be

- Information about how to go about registration and getting their skills recognised;
- Affordable assessment services so their new skills are recognised fairly and transparently, based on current and accurate information;
- Advice of the next steps--which may be employment or a gap-filling training programme leading to full occupational certification.

Viet Nam is setting up a national system to organise and manage national skills evaluation and certification. Occupational skills evaluation centres are to be developed nationwide. These centres will organise skills tests on an annual basis at five occupation qualification levels. Based on the results, the General Department of Vocational Training will grant a certificate for the candidates from level 1 to level 5. Candidates are able to attend the national skill test if they consider they have experiences and ability to pass the test. Attendance at a training institution is not required.

14 The overall outcome should be that returning migrant workers will have the opportunity to fully use their skills and international work experience for the benefit of themselves, their families and their country, through either purposeful employment or self-employment.

Questions for workshop participants:

7 Are the proposed migrant worker reintegration services through a single national agency with provincial/district offices, feasible and adequate? Are there other models?
8 How should the new services be funded?
2 The Portfolio of Evidence

This section describes the proposal for a portfolio to assemble all the evidence gathered by migrant workers when overseas including details of soft skills development; mapping of the new skills of the migrant worker to the RMCS or the national competency standards; and the role of the advisor in assembling the portfolio of evidence.

1 It is recommended that all returning migrant workers should develop a portfolio of evidence of training and relevant work-related achievements. The portfolio should provide a comprehensive record of all technical and soft skills acquisition, work experience and all work-related achievements such as promotion to leadership or supervisory roles. It is accepted that organising the portfolio may not be a priority while the worker is overseas. However, collection of the raw data should be a priority.

2 Employers should value the portfolio for the detailed information provided about a prospective worker. Returning migrant workers should benefit from having a clear summary of their skills for a future employer’s consideration. Use of the industry standards from the RMCS and the national competency standards will allow employers to

- Provide a more detailed specification of skill requirements
- Be certain that new workers have the skills required
- Accurately map the skills of their workforce
- Improve recruitment processes
- Target training resources
- Increase productivity from having a more highly skilled workforce

3 The skills recognition process will acknowledge the skills gained through international work experience, identify that they are still current, and, if possible, reference them to the RMCS, or the home country’s competency standards and vocational qualifications. If such referencing is not possible, the detailed information in the portfolio can still be available to potential employers of the returning migrant worker.

4 The portfolio should contain evidence in two broad categories: official documents and supporting documents. Official documents will be

- Job descriptions
- Details of work and training history
- Certificates from formal training courses

Supporting documents may be

- Details of any workplace or similar training programmes, signed by the trainer or supervisor;
- Written statements attesting to work experience and skills development signed by supervisors and employers;
- Performance appraisal documents;
 ✓ Information on any leadership, supervisory and soft skills developmental roles held by the migrant worker;
 ✓ Details of any additional roles undertaken such as the establishment of workplace safety and quality improvement policies;
 ✓ Photographs of work sites, equipment used and products made by the migrant worker;
 ✓ Logs of work activities.

5 While retaining evidence of the acquisition of technical skills may be the priority, documentation of soft skills should not be overlooked. Migrant workers may acquire considerable expertise in some soft skill areas, particularly those employed in the service sector; but also those who progressively assume team leadership and supervisory roles. In some areas, soft skills really are the technical skills to perform the job.

6 Soft skills are commonly regarded as the everyday skills beyond the technical expertise and knowledge required to perform in a given role. These skills include

- Interpersonal, communication and customer service skills
- Capability to create networks and to work in teams
- Problem solving skills
- Research and analytical skills
- Time management skills
- Capability to learn and adapt.

7 While technical skills are important, translating technical proficiency into economic output commonly requires soft skills. In some occupations such as personal and customer services, success is essentially driven entirely by soft skills. It is also difficult to measure and certify proficiency in soft skills, and they may not always be built into formal qualifications.

8 It is suggested that migrant workers should collect and retain evidence of soft skill development. This may be no more than a personal record of performance in soft skill areas such as working in teams. Or, it may be that testimonials are sought from customers and employers about capability in soft skills. This documentation can be included in the portfolio.

9 Some technical skills acquired will be more significant than others for the returning migrant worker. Skilled workers are increasingly scarce in a number of industries world-wide, including the health and information technology sectors. Workers acquiring these scarce skills should be encouraged to seek out formal training opportunities and obtain and retain detailed documentation of such training for inclusion in their portfolio and final job-seeking resume when they have returned home.

10 Soft skills are incorporated into national vocational competency-based qualifications in different ways in different countries. Retaining details of soft and technical skills acquisition is therefore important, as the evidence from international training may be able to be credited towards the award of a vocational certificate in the worker’s home country.

11 It is recommended that the portfolio documentation be assembled in a ring binder with dividers to separate the various types of information being provided. The portfolio should
begin with standard personal identification details, such as the name address and contact information for the migrant worker, and details of work experience and qualifications prior to departure.

12 The national agency supporting the reintegration of returning migrant workers should make advisors available to assist with the completion of the portfolios of evidence for assessment. The advisors should be able to provide information, guidance and support throughout the process. They should have good counselling and communications skills, and the ability to gain the confidence of applicant migrant workers.

13 The role of the advisors is to assist the returning migrant workers to
- Identify the RMCS units, the national competency units, or the national vocational qualification/s for which recognition is to be sought;
- Obtain a copy of the components of those units and qualifications, their competencies and any other relevant information;
- Arrange for the services of a certified assessor and verifier;
- Map the evidence against the specified competencies;
- Identify any evidence gaps and ask the applicant to fill those gaps, if that is possible;
- Finalise the portfolio for submission to the certified assessor;
- Advise on a suitable training programme or other action when a decision has been made.

14 The key questions to guide the advisor in initiating the recognition process will be:

- Are there RMCS or national competency standards available in the industry field/s of international work experience?
- If there are RMCS or competency units, which units should the international experience be realistically mapped to?
- Is it possible to map against the requirements of a full competency-based qualification in the home country?

15 See section 3 for further details of the RMCS and national competency standards. Appendices 1 and 2 have examples showing how skills and work experience can be mapped to show achievement of the requirements of an RMCS unit and a national competency unit.
In the Philippines, TESDA has worked in Region XIII in the municipality of Socorro, home to many highly skilled but uncertificated carpenters, masons, furniture and cabinet makers, to assess workers so as to recognise skills acquired through hand-on experience and exposure to actual work. Assessment was conducted by a team of assessors in sites where actual housing construction was being undertaken. Workers had acquired skills through employment locally or as overseas migrant workers.

16 Where mapping is difficult, undertaking formal training or a complete testing programme of all the specified competencies, may be the best way to achieve recognition for skills acquired overseas. This may apply especially where there is significant theoretical underpinning for the workplace skills.

Questions for workshop participants:

9 Is there support for the portfolio of evidence?
10 Should there be additional components to those described for the portfolio?
11 Is it feasible to ask busy migrant workers to regularly collect the raw data during their time overseas?
12 Is it feasible that the responsible national agency in the home country be asked to provide an advisory service to help finalise the portfolio and to complete the mapping of work experience to the identified RMCS or national competency standards?
13 Is there support for the collection and retention of details of soft skills acquisition by migrant workers?

3 Regional Model Competency Standards; National Competency Standards and Mutual Recognition of Vocational Qualifications

This section indicates how recognition can be sought for the skills newly acquired overseas through mapping to the RMCS and national competency standards; and mutual recognition of vocational qualifications.

3.1 Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS)

1 The RMCS have been designed to assist both employers and workers and can be used to make the recognition of the skills of returning migrant workers an easier and more achievable process. The RMCS are simple and flexible and can be customised to suit the skills recognition systems in different countries. The RMCS are now being published by the
ILO in a simplified format so they can be used in discussions between Governments, employers, workers and training organisations. Receiving countries can use the RMCS to specify clearly their skill requirements and migrant workers returning home are able to use them to describe their new skills and knowledge.

2 The RMCS define the essential skills required to work in a particular industry or sector, providing a flexible framework that can be used by all enterprises, regardless of location or size. The structure is deliberately simple so they can be readily understood. Additional elements can be added as required. The standards are grouped functionally and not as jobs or occupations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMCS are currently available at the ILO in</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Manufacturing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casting and moulding; machining operation and component assembly; fabrication and finishing; equipment servicing and maintenance; furniture manufacturing; textiles manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism product development; sales and marketing; office administration and venue maintenance; tour operations and guiding; attractions and theme parks; supervision and management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Construction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Generic/ Core Work Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration, supervision, basic scientific skills, soft skills, computer skills, introductory generic skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Mechanical Repairs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Air-conditioning, motor-cycle and automotive repair</td>
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Additional RMCS can be developed depending on demand.

3 Appendix 1 provides an example showing how to begin the process of mapping information from the portfolio about the newly acquired skills, to the broad specifications of an RMCS unit.

3.2 National Competency Standards

4 A number of member states have developed, or are in the process of developing, national competency-based TVET qualifications systems. These more precisely specified
competencies can also provide a sound reference point for the recognising of worker skills, or even of complete qualifications.

5 The learning outcomes of a training programme in an overseas country can be mapped against competency units developed for a national vocational qualifications framework. The mapping will readily identify any gaps and differences between the details of the overseas training programme and the home country’s skills specifications in its competency standards.

6 Appendix 2 contains an extract from a national unit of competency and shows how the evidence of overseas achievement can be progressively mapped to the specified elements of competence in the national unit. Following successful assessment, it should be possible for the worker to receive credit towards vocational qualifications in the home country.

3.3 Mutual Recognition of Competency-Based Qualifications

7 Especially where skills upgrading training has been built into overseas contracts, migrant workers may achieve full vocational qualifications while overseas. To obtain mutual recognition of these qualifications will require the agency responsible for providing services to returning migrant workers to liaise with the national vocational certification agency. That agency will in turn need to link with the sister overseas certification agency so as to benchmark qualifications frameworks and mutually recognise vocational qualifications as demonstrated in Appendix 3. For benchmarking, and consequently mutual recognition to be accorded, the national certification agency should have confidence in the overseas country’s national standards setting policies and processes (particularly its involvement with industry); and in the rigour of its quality assurance and student or worker assessment.

8 Where member states do not have competency-based systems in place it will be more realistic to simply map the training programme against the RMCS as indicated above. In skill areas where there are no developed RMCS, nor national competency-based vocational qualifications, evidence of the training undertaken can nevertheless be summarised carefully in the portfolio of evidence, for the consideration of potential employers.

Questions for workshop participants:

14 Is it agreed that there is potential for the RMCS to provide a useful translation tool for the recognition of skills acquired overseas?
15 Could the RMCS be used by employers in receiving countries to specify the skills required by the migrant worker?
16 Is it feasible for national certification agencies to be asked to develop the capacity to benchmark national vocational qualifications?
4 The Assessment and Skills Recognition Services

This section covers establishing the assessment service; the role of the certified assessor and the verifier in the assessment of the portfolio of evidence; and competency-based assessment.

1 The national support agency will need to have its own certified assessors, or capitalise upon the assessment system already in place with the national vocational certification agency. Member states with national competency-based vocational qualifications frameworks will most likely already have in place assessment arrangements which may be able to be extended to include the proposed portfolio assessment. There may be national and provincial skills testing centres set up primarily to assess students from institutional training programmes (Philippines). Policies and processes may already be in place to assess workers in the workplace or to assess candidates in recognition of prior experiential, or uncertificated, learning (Sri Lanka). Discussions with the national vocational certification agency may lead to an existing service being able to be expanded, with policies and processes suitably modified, to include assessing the portfolios of returning migrant workers; based on the RMCS as well as the national competency standards. The national support agency will need a formal agreement with the certification agency that, using the portfolio approach, its assessors will be able to assess validly against the simplified RMCS as well as the national competency standards. If private sector agencies are involved, there will need to be formal accreditation processes.

2 If no such assessment service exists currently, the national agency with responsibility for supporting the reintegration of migrant workers will need to investigate whether such a service can be established, through a network of trained and certified assessors, or through attaching accredited assessment centres to existing nationally recognised organisations.

3 The certified assessors will be asked to

- Review the portfolio of evidence supplied;
- Consider the evidence supplied of skills, knowledge and experience, mapped against the specific competency requirements of the RMCS or national competency standards;
- Seek further evidence, conduct testing or set up practical exercises where additional evidence is needed;
- Make a formal assessment and a recognition decision, identifying any skills and knowledge gaps and providing advice to the candidate on future actions;
4 The certified assessors will be selected for the assessment role because they have sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in the content area(s) they will assess; but they will also need to be good communicators. In partnership with the migrant worker and the advisor, they will attempt to match the evidence of the international skills development to the competencies of the specified RMCS or other competency units for which credit is being sought. If insufficient evidence is submitted more may be requested.

5 Variety in the methods of assessment should be encouraged. Demonstration, attestation, interview, or the evaluation of work samples or projects are commonly used. The assessment should be as rigorous as, but no more so, than formal institutional or workplace assessment. Assessors must be able to apply non-traditional methodologies. For example, assessors should:

- Demonstrate objectivity, sensitivity and reasonableness in the assessment process;
- Have an understanding and ability to carry out a wide range of assessment techniques;
- Have the ability to judge diverse evidence, fairly and accurately;
- Have the ability to draw inferences based on evidence presented; and
- Have the ability to share control of the assessment process with the migrant worker.

6 It is proposed that recognition of skills though portfolio assessment be carried out solely by a certified assessor and that decisions be checked by a second certified assessor acting as a verifier. Assessors and verifiers should be either

1) Senior industry practitioners who have significant practical and current work experience in the skill area being assessed;
2) Teachers or trainers from the relevant skill area. It is expected that initially these will be experienced teachers from accredited institutions.

7 Assessors and verifiers must be committed to on-going training and be prepared to take part in updating training as required. They should also be committed to maintaining knowledge and relevant experience in the area in which they assess or in assessment. Assessors may also need to take part in national consistency of assessment training. Assessors should identify any conflicts of interest they may have from assigned assessment activities. Assessors may be called upon to assist with the resolution of appeals against assessment decisions.

8 The proposal that only certified assessors may assess and determine that RMCS standards have been achieved; or that the requirements of national competency units have been met, will be essential for the credibility of the proposed portfolio assessment system and for acceptance of decisions by the national vocational certification agency.

9 There is ample international precedent and good practice available to support the general concept of recognising prior experiential or uncertificated learning. National certification agencies use the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a process to allow candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through evaluation of documentation, together with a series of assessments specifically designed to assist them to display their
competence. At the end of the assessment process the candidate can be issued with credit linked to the national vocational qualifications. RPL can recognise current competencies whether acquired through unaccredited formal learning, workplace experience, or general life experience. The proposed process for the recognition of the skills of returning migrant workers can be considered to be very similar to that in common use for RPL.

10 Training programmes will be required in all member states once decisions are made to establish advisory and assessment services for migrant workers. These programmes will need to prepare the advisors to work with the migrant workers; and to train the assessors and verifiers in competency-based assessment so as to officially recognise the skills acquired overseas. Training will need to meet the requirements of the national certification agency, if there is one.

11 To promote national and international credibility, assessment will be competency-based. This is further explained in Appendix 4.

Question for workshop participants:

17 Is it reasonable to propose that there be a national cadre of trained and certified assessors and verifiers to provide the proposed skills recognition services for returning migrant workers?

5. Recommended Roles for Government, Employers and Employees in Support of Skills Recognition

This section notes the proposed roles for Government and its agencies, as well as for employers, employees and their national associations to support skills recognition for returning migrant workers.

1 It is recommended that the role of Government includes:

- Establishing services for migrant workers through one of its own agencies, or setting standards and accrediting private service providers to support migrant workers
- Ensuring that there are services to support departing and returning migrant workers, including:
  - Advice, training and skills assessment prior to departure
  - Support and skills assessment for returning workers so they can reintegrate with maximum use being made of their new skills
  - Assisting returning workers where overseas employers are unwilling to provide evidence of skills acquisition
- Recording the support of employers so as to help with future placement of workers when they return home

✓ Translating the RMCS and making them available to employers and prospective migrant workers and providing training in their use;
✓ Establishing links with the national vocational qualifications certification agency to encourage benchmarking of vocational qualifications with counterpart agencies in receiving countries;
✓ Setting up skills assessment and recognition services for returning migrant workers; ensuring staff and assessors are trained; and that there are close links with the national vocational qualifications certification agency;
✓ Working to achieve support for skills recognition for migrant workers from employers and workers and their national associations;
✓ Achieving a resolution to the issue of funding for the services to be provided.

2 It is recommended that the role of employers and employees, and their national associations, includes

✓ Working with the agency nominated by Government to support departing and returning migrant workers;
✓ Nominating and supporting experienced industry practitioners to be trained as certified assessors and verifiers;
✓ Making the translated RMCS widely available and promoting their use by departing and returning migrant workers, and by employers;
✓ Assisting the advisors as they seek purposeful employment or self employment for returning skilled migrant workers, once their portfolios are complete and have been assessed;
✓ Working with their international associations to promote fair treatment for migrant workers.

Questions for workshop participants:

18 Are the roles proposed for Government, employers and employees, and their national associations, feasible?
19 What other roles should there be to support returning migrant workers?

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APPENDICES

1 Regional Model Competency Standards

1 The following example is from the simplified Manufacturing industry RMCS (Unit D4). The Standard is that the worker is able to perform lathe operations.

**Perform lathe operations**
Job requirements are determined from drawings and work is sequenced. The job is set up and turning operations are performed. Components are checked for conformance with specifications.

**Performance Elements**
- Observe correct safety precautions including wearing of protective clothing and safety glasses;
- Interpret drawings, determine sequence of operation and select tooling to produce component to specification;
- Set up job using instruments such as dial test indicators, and digital read-out equipment;
- Calculate speeds and feeds using appropriate mathematical techniques and reference material;
- Use the full range of accessories on a centre lathe including three and four jaw chucks, centres, face plate, steadies, cross slide and tail stock;
- Perform turning operations to specification;
- Check components for conformance with specifications using appropriate techniques, tools and equipment.

2 A migrant may acquire these skills through a formal training programme, through structured training in the workplace or even through informal training and supervision in the workplace.

3 Using three performance elements from the RMCS unit above, mapping could start with further questions something like the following:
**Assessment Questions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perform lathe operations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job requirements are determined from drawings and work sequenced. The job is set up and turning operations are performed. Components are checked for conformance with specifications.</td>
<td>Is this work part of the international job description supplied? Is there a statement from the employer or supervisor that it was actually performed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observe correct safety precautions including wearing of protective clothing and safety glasses;</td>
<td>Is there a photograph of the worker or information on workplace safety policies and their strict application?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpret drawings, determine sequence of operation and select tooling to produce component to specification;</td>
<td>Is there a statement from the supervisor about the quality of work outputs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set up job using instruments such as dial test indicators, and digital read-out equipment;</td>
<td>Can the returning migrant worker satisfactorily explain to the assessor, these set-up activities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 The answers to the questions, and the results of a scrutiny of the portfolio evidence, can be recorded in a grid as is proposed for the extract from the Philippines competency unit which follows in Appendix 2.
2 National Competency Standards

The following is an extract from a competency unit in automotive technology from the Philippines, listing the four elements of the standard and their associated performance criteria. The elements taken together make up the overall competency. The performance criteria specify the quality of the evidence which must be demonstrated. The comprehensive detail of the competency standard promotes ready comparison with the skills specifications of standards in another member state.

UNIT OF COMPETENCY: PERFORM SHOP MAINTENANCE

UNIT DESCRIPTOR: This unit deals with inspecting and cleaning of work area including tools, equipment and facilities. Storage and checking of tools/equipment and disposal of used materials are also incorporated in this competency unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inspect/clean tools and work area</td>
<td>1.1 Cleaning solvent used as per workshop/tools cleaning requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Work area is checked and cleaned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Wet surface/spot in work area is wiped and dried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Store/arrange tools and shop equipment</td>
<td>2.1 Tools/equipment are checked and stored in their respective shelves/location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Corresponding labels are posted and visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 Tools are safely secured and logged in the records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dispose wastes/used lubricants</td>
<td>3.1 Containers for used lubricants are visibly labeled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Wastes/used lubricants are disposed as per workshop SOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Report damaged tools/equipment</td>
<td>4.1 Complete inventory of tools/equipment is maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 Damaged tools/equipment/facilities are identified and repair recommendation is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 Reports prepared has no error/discrepancy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The certified assessor could record evidence of skills acquisition of the elements and performance criteria under three categories:

- Portfolio evidence supplied
- Practical tasks carried out at the direction of the assessor

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Questions asked of the returning migrant worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</th>
<th>EVIDENCE FROM:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inspect/clean tools and work area</td>
<td>1.1 Cleaning solvent used as per workshop/tools cleaning requirement</td>
<td>portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Work area is checked and cleaned</td>
<td>tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Wet surface/spot in work area is wiped and dried</td>
<td>questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Where necessary, the advisor will need to work with the returning migrant worker to see if further evidence can be supplied, or if additional training can be provided to plug skills gaps. Practical testing is a suitable way to verify skills acquisition, if evidence is otherwise unavailable.
3 Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

1 Competency-based qualifications are commonly made up of units and are assigned to a level based on a descriptor or a qualification definition. By comparing these level descriptors and qualifications definitions across member states it is possible to benchmark national qualifications frameworks. A migrant worker achieving a full qualification in a country with a competency-based system can therefore aim to have that qualification benchmarked to similar qualifications in the home country. While the qualification can be benchmarked, indicating the comparative level of technical skill achieved, the precise content of compared qualifications may differ as skills are packaged in different combinations in different countries.

2 As an example (and noting that this draft benchmarking requires official confirmation by the relevant national certification agencies), a Filipino migrant worker acquiring a Higher Certificate qualification through the Workforce Development Agency in Singapore and returning to the Philippines could expect that to be recognised as a (PTQF) Certificate III by TESDA, the national TVET certification agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate/ Diploma</td>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Diploma</td>
<td>Certificate III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Certificate II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 A Sri Lankan migrant worker in Malaysia, achieving a Skills Certificate level 3, should be able to have that recognised as being technically equivalent to the TVEC’s (the national certification agency’s) National Certificate 4, upon returning to Sri Lanka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma/ General Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>National Diploma 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Certificate 3</td>
<td>National Diploma 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Certificate 2</td>
<td>National Certificate 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Certificate 1</td>
<td>National Certificate 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Certificate 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Competency-based Assessment

1 Assessment of the portfolio of evidence for the recognition of skills must involve a process which is fair, valid, consistently applied, and be against the appropriate competency standard. Competencies credited to the migrant worker must be current. Where assessment decisions may result in credit awarded towards national vocational qualifications, the assessment will need to take place under the authority of the national certification agency.

2 The RMCS and new national vocational qualifications in many countries are expressed in terms of competencies. All students in training programmes (and in future it is proposed, migrant workers submitting portfolios) should be required to demonstrate evidence of achievement of those competencies before credit can be awarded for individual units, or before complete qualifications can be awarded. Consequently credit can be awarded without regard to length, place or method of learning. This can be a significant change for students, workers and education and training institutions who may be more familiar with the traditional approach whereby a curriculum may be taught, a generic examination is administered, which may or may not cover all aspects of the curriculum, students are ranked, and about half are commonly deemed to have “passed”.

3 Assessment based on the gathering of evidence of learner achievement against a specified industry standard encourages a diversity of styles of teaching and learning and opens up the possibility of very different approaches to learner assessment, including the recognition of experiential learning and direct assessment following structured or informal learning in the workplace. Competency-based assessment allows for improved reporting to learners, and is generally welcomed by employers who know more precisely what it is that learners or workers know and can do.

4 This competency-based approach provides a sound platform for the introduction of the formal recognition of skills acquired through migrant work. Assessment against specified standards makes it more possible to assess the diverse evidence (including the proposed portfolios) that will be presented by returning migrant workers seeking assessment in recognition of their experiential learning or seeking to be assessed in their places of work.

5 The assessors will need to be certain that the evidence provided in the portfolio is
   - authentic
   - valid
   - consistent
   - sufficient
and above all that the evidence meets the specified RMCS, or other, competencies.
5 Additional Sources of Information

1. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (http://www.poea.gov.ph) has a very thorough schedule of services noted on its website.


3. Information and good practice for the Recognition of Prior Learning is available at http://www.vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au


6. The Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific website is http://www.ilo.org/skills-ap

7. The Skills Community of Practice at http://skills-ap.ilobkk.or.th/join_form