

FORUM EYES ONLY



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(b)

EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

*Auckland, New Zealand
26-28 November 2007*

SESSION TWO

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER: PROGRESS REPORT

This paper was prepared by the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment

FORUM EYES ONLY

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress of the regional qualifications register in the Pacific and to seek Ministers' continued support.

Background

2. At the meeting held in Auckland in May 2001, priorities for improving basic education in the region were considered by the leaders of Pacific countries, and it was agreed to “*consider the setting up of a regional qualifications framework covering basic, primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary education benchmarked against appropriate international standards and qualifications*”.

3. The meeting was followed by one in November 2003 in the Cook Islands, where the UNESCO Directors of Education agreed that a Regional Qualifications Register (RQR) be set up to achieve this objective over the more complex proposal to establish a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF).

4. A paper prepared by Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), which was based on a research study by UNESCO and recommended that development of a RQR be pursued was presented to the Education Ministers in Apia, in 2004. Ministers endorsed this proposal.

5. In November 2004 the CROP Human Resource Development Working Group agreed that SPBEA should take the lead role in the establishment of the RQR, and for the SPBEA to prepare a project proposal for possible funding of the development of the RQR. It was also agreed that the inventory of technical and vocational education being undertaken by PATVET, the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, would provide input into this process. PATVET has made considerable progress in compiling the inventory and has completed work in seven countries¹ with a further seven² in progress.

6. In May 2005, Education Ministers met in Apia, and reaffirmed their support for the development of the RQR.

7. SPBEA agreed to take the lead role provided that all physical and human resources are given. In 2005 at the SPBEA AGM the Board approved a review of its constitution to reflect the nature of the work in establishing and maintaining a RQR in its mandate.

¹ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tokelau, Tonga

² Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

FORUM EYES ONLY

8. A development plan for the realization of a RQR was developed through a six stage process. The first of those stages was implemented in May 2007 through cluster meetings held in three Pacific countries, to which delegates from 14 Pacific countries contributed. This phase was funded by AusAID.

9. A project proposal that covers the remaining development of a RQR is currently with AusAID. It is envisaged that a development period of five years will be necessary in order to fully establish a viable and dynamic RQR.

Issues/Policy Advice

10. The strengthening of regional links is an aspiration lying at the heart of the Pacific Plan. One of those links describes the qualifications that enable Pacific people to take their expertise from one country to another – facilitating labour mobility. Another link concerns the movement of a partially completed educational qualification to be completed in another country – leading to educational mobility. If the value of specific qualifications are recognized and understood, then Pacific-wide opportunities for employment open up beyond country borders. For this aspiration to be met with confidence there needs to be a mechanism whereby qualifications can be assessed and evaluated to a set of criteria that are accessible to all interested parties. The Regional Qualifications Register can be that mechanism.

11. In order that a Regional Qualifications Register can be fully functional there is a need for all countries submitting qualifications for inclusion in the regional register, to commit resources to the establishment of their own national qualifications register. Some countries are well down the road to this establishment, while others will require on-going technical assistance to ensure that strong quality assurance and controls are put in place.

Recommendations

12. Ministers are invited to:

(a) Note progress on the development of the Regional Qualifications Register.