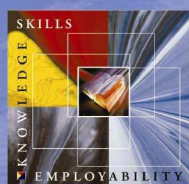




International  
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# SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC: The special skills development needs of small island economies

*Report of ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan/Regional Technical Meeting  
Skills Development in the Pacific: the special skills development needs of small island  
economies at Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji, 26-28 March 2008*



SKILLS-AP

Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP)

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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island economies at Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji, 26-28 March 2008

Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP)  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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First published 2008

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Skills development in the Pacific : the special skills development needs of small island economies : report of ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan/Regional Technical Meeting Skills Development in the Pacific : the Special Skills Development Needs of Small Island Economies at Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji, 26-28 March 2008 / International Labour Organization, Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP). - Bangkok: ILO, 2008  
26 p.

ISBN: 9789221218265; 9789221218272 (web pdf)

International Labour Organization; Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP)

skill / vocational training / youth employment / informal workers / occupational qualification / job requirements / regional cooperation / Pacific

06.01

*ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

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Printed in Thailand

## Foreword

Many countries in the Pacific have identified skills development as a key priority. However, they are finding it a growing challenge to respond to the employment needs of their people and the skills needs of their workforce in a time of increasing globalization, new technology and changing patterns of work. Many Pacific Island Countries are also facing the challenge of high youth unemployment with many young people forced to look for work in the informal economy. At the same time, these countries are facing skill shortages in growth areas such as tourism. The emigration of skilled workers exacerbates this problem.

A key factor in dealing with these challenges is the development of inclusive and effective national skills strategies. However, this is not a simple matter to get right as shown in the difficulties faced by many developing economies as they attempt to reform national policies and systems. For many of the Pacific Island Countries, with a large informal economy, the development of effective national skills strategies, which include approaches for developing skills in the informal economy, will be essential for helping people find new jobs and create livelihoods.

A critical challenge for small Pacific Island Countries is to coordinate closely and share the development of the national skills policies, systems and elements. Countries will all benefit from shared development of competency standards and national qualifications frameworks. Countries in the Caribbean provide a good model here with collaboration on qualifications frameworks and competency standards so that it has not been necessary for each country to develop its own separate system.

This meeting, held in Fiji in March 2008, addressed these needs and provided an opportunity for many countries to meet together and help in the development of future directions for skills development in the Pacific. These will be reflected in ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) which provide a link between the needs of constituents and ILO that can be taken forward.

I am pleased to have had an opportunity to review this report and I congratulate all participants for making the meeting a success. I would like to thank the Government of Japan for providing the funding for this meeting and for their strong support for skills development in the region, I would also like to acknowledge the Director and staff of the ILO Fiji Office, especially Mr Werner Blenk, Ms Margaret Reade Rounds, Ms Surkafa Katafono, Mr Peter Blumel, Ms Josephine Wainiqolo, and Ms Elizabeth Blakelock who all played important roles in ensuring the smooth and effective functioning of the meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Trevor Riordan, EMP/SKILLS, ILO-Geneva, who organized and provided his expertise at this meeting. I would also like to thank Mr Ray Grannall, who provided technical support for the meeting. Finally I would like to thank Ms Wipusara Rugworakijkul who provided the secretariat support to the meeting and Ms Alin Sirisaksopit who assisted in the preparation for the meeting.

Sachiko Yamamoto  
Regional Director  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



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## Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARM	Asian Regional Meeting
DWCP	ILO Decent Work Country Programme
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PATVET	Pacific Association for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RIF	Regional Institutional Framework
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SI	Solomon Islands
SPBEA	South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment
SKILLS-AP	ILO Regional Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific
SPC	Secretariat for Pacific Islands Commission
CETC	SPC Community Education Training Centre
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USP	University of the South Pacific



## **Introduction**

During the first Technical Meeting of the Regional Skills Network Partner Organizations held in Korea in November 2005, Pacific Island Countries requested a Pacific regional meeting. In that meeting, the participants identified the special skills needs of small island economies as one of the key issues facing countries in the Pacific. This reinforced an earlier request by ILO Pacific Island member States in July 2005.

This meeting was set up to address these needs with the overall objective to discuss the key issues and major challenges for skills development in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Special emphasis was to be placed on the development of national skills strategies and assisting countries as they go through the process of developing their national and possibly regional skills strategies.

The meeting was also designed to assist countries to reorient national skills policies and systems to focus on the needs of working people, to promote learning and ensure that skills are constantly renewed and adapted for a wide variety of potential jobs. Specific topics included youth employment, skills in the informal economy, and the development of competency standards and qualification frameworks.

The main focus was on the key issues identified in the recent major study on TVET in the Pacific conducted by the ADB, namely skills recognition, skills for youth and skills for informal economy workers. In addition to these themes, the ILO's policy framework, recommendation 195 was introduced together with examples of good practice and international experience which related to the major themes and which were relevant to the participating countries.

The meeting consisted of a number of technical sessions, comprising introduction of materials, panel discussion and technical Working Group sessions. Chairing responsibilities for technical sessions was shared among participants.

## **Participants**

Participants were invited from Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Participants included senior level staff of the national vocational education and training organizations. Workers and employers organizations dealing with this subject were also invited to participate and share their experience.

ILO Suva also invited several of the important regional organizations including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat for Pacific Islands Commission (SPC) and the Pacific Association for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET). During the discussions in the meeting, these organizations presented outlines of their work in the region, described research and other practical initiatives that were taking place. Details of participants are included in Appendix 3.

## **Inaugural Session**

The meeting coordinator, Ms. Margaret Reade-Rounds, welcomed all participants and introduced Mr. Werner Blenk, Director for ILO Suva who began his new term of Office on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007. Mr Blenk thanked Ms. Reade-Rounds and indicated that he was pleased to have returned to the Pacific. He indicated that the Pacific is faced with globalization on one hand but the countries also have internal issues. He suggested that, rather than importing systems from other countries, participants should discuss what is needed for the Pacific and find opportunities to



assist each other, using the regional organizations to help make use of the opportunities that globalization brings. He stressed a number of issues:

- the need to look at the concept of employability, rather than permanent employment;
- the need for knowledge based skills;
- the importance of young people for the future as they will become a most important resource if they are properly skilled;
- the limited resources available in the Pacific Islands and the need to work together to maximise the minimum they have;
- the need for labour mobility within the region so people can move more freely;
- skills development to support external migration to access labour markets away from the Pacific to meet the demands of globalization;
- The importance of skills recognition with on-going negotiations with the EU, Australia and New Zealand.

He indicated that ILO work priorities are based on Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and there is a need to produce a road map between constituents and ILO on where we want to go. This can be assisted by finding the differences between the past and present. He also indicated that DWCPs should be resourced, results-oriented and time bound and that they will assist ILO Suva to take the DWCPs forward to HQ and ILO global. The Pacific needs to be precise to put the Pacific more on ILO radar screen and this will occur with well formulated DWCPs to attract more resources.

He pointed out the need to distinguish between the country context and the regional context and that ILO is pleased that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) would like to take this forward as well. He mentioned that in the International Labour Conference (ILC) for 2008, skills featured on the agenda and it is imperative for the Pacific that Geneva is able to get in touch with the main decision makers in the Pacific. Mr Blenk concluded his remarks by expressing his pleasure to see many familiar faces and he indicated that he will set up individual meetings with country groups to move forward. He wished everyone a successful meeting.

Ms. Selai Waqanibete on behalf of Fiji Government welcomed delegates and agreed that the meeting is important for skills development and skills upgrading in the Pacific Islands. She hoped that participants will take advantage of the meeting to build network, garner support from ILO and each other.

## **Technical Session 1 – Key Issues in Skills Development**

The government participant, Mr Eci Naisele (Fiji Government Representative) chaired the first technical session on *Key Issues in Skills Development – International and Pacific Regional Experience*. He introduced Mr Trevor Riordan, Senior Skills Development Specialist for ILO Geneva who indicated that he was happy to be back in Fiji since he was last here in July 2005 for the 'Skills in informal economies' workshop and the follow-up in the Korean meeting – Asian Regional Meeting (ARM). He indicated that he was looking forward to discussions centred on specific needs of island economies and tripartite participation. He identified the following key issues and challenges facing the countries in the Pacific:

- Youth employment – education and training;
- Informal sector – help to generate livelihoods;
- Skills mobility challenge for skills systems;

- Interesting cross-section of people and experiences;
- International ideas to assist the local needs and genuine partnership;
- Resource mobilisation – important for resources.

He also described the ILO Policy Framework and HRD Recommendation, 2004 and the various education and training policies – reaching out to the informal economy. He mentioned Pakistan's new National Skills Strategy – national plans and aligned to strategy and identified issues for skills in productivity, competitiveness & jobs

- Changing patterns of work;
- Critical need for reform;
- Greater involvement of private sector in skills – countries cannot rely only on government / public training;
- Workplace learning – lifelong learning for all;
- Development of competencies - Irrespective of where people gained their skills;
- Skills recognition and certification;
- Career guidance;
- International and technical cooperation;

Mr Ray Grannall, ILO Resource Person, presented a paper on International Good Practice (see Appendix 4) in which he discussed competency standards, recognition of current competencies, recognition of prior learning and partnerships.

Dr Helen Tavola, Social Development Adviser, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat described the Communiqué from the 1971 Minister's Meeting which highlighted skills but which did not specify outcomes. She described the Regional Study on Skills Development in the Pacific, carried out by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which included 13 country studies with 6 countries chosen for in-depth studies. She indicated that the final report was still being finalised but it included various outputs:

- Types of TVET in Pacific – school, centres and tertiary levels;
- The Pacific skills paradox;
- Three dimensions of skills gaps;
- Negative attitudes;
- Five criteria;
- Economic relevance;
- Social – equity – regional NQF being worked on by SBEA;
- Private trainer providers;
- Organization & Management;
- Promising interventions;
- Finance & internal efficiency;
- Regional Project Proposals to implement the ADB report (SPC will obtain funding for these projects)

Other issues raised in discussion were the negative peer pressure and the lack of successful role models available to young people so that they can see the benefits of undertaking training. There is also a need to demonstrate that work in fishing and planting can be a worthwhile occupation and it was suggested that more attention should be given to promoting skills development champions and successful vocational school graduates.

## **Technical Session 2 – Country Experiences**

Mr Rup Singh, (USP Fiji) and Mr David Kaumae (Government, Solomon Islands) introduced the two sessions dealing with key issues in skills development in Pacific

Island Countries - experience of countries in the region. Country papers will be included on the website.

Many issues were raised in discussion at the meeting including:

- The need for all parties to work together;
- The need for stable governments;
- Contracting economies;
- Shortage of jobs;
- Out-migration of the skilled and unskilled;
- Literacy and numeracy issues for many school leavers;
- Difficulties and frustrations for employers attempting to train people new basic skills;
- Students are not encouraged to ask questions at school and because of cultural issues. As a consequence, not able to seek clarification of the work that they are required to do;
- Increasing fees for popular courses including apprenticeships.

## **Technical Session 3 – Regional cooperation**

### **Technical Session 3a – Competency Standards**

Ken Roberts (Fiji Employer Representative) chaired the first part of the third technical session on *'Regional cooperation on selected key themes: skills recognition, competency standards and improving the quality of training systems'*.

A presentation was made by Dr Lia Maka (SPC-CETC) who expressed concern over the shortage of TVET trained people. She indicated that RIF – SPBEA would work with SPC to develop a regional qualifications register, a regional qualifications framework and a national TVET policy framework. She indicated that one of the recommendations from the ADB Report is the need for capacity building and strengthening partnerships with other agencies at both regional and national level. She also indicated that the ADB had recommended:

- The development of a Labour Market Information System (LMIS);
- Regulatory and policy frameworks;
- Quality assurance systems;
- Strengthening the non-formal TVET sector;
- Strengthening TVET partnerships with enterprises.

Challenges included the need for an effective TVET financing strategy, new funding sources and issues associated with lack of cooperation between government departments and agencies responsible for TVET. She also indicated that the Forum is the political arm and SPC is the technical arm and that collaboration between ILO and SPC is needed.

Ms Emily Hazelman, PATVET indicated that issues included the need for a regional TVET definition, the problems of small Island states, the need for a single agency at national levels and a specific budget allocation to TVET.

Mr Ray Grannall, ILO Resource Person made a presentation on generic employability skills and workplace competencies. He described the approaches to competency-based training in Asia and the Caribbean and he provided some examples of regional frameworks such as the European and ASEAN models. He gave an introduction to some approaches to setting and measuring quality standards and

systems. There was some discussion about the difficulties facing large and small providers and the new Fiji approach to developing 'Centres of Excellence'.

### **Technical Session 3b – Skills for Young People**

Mr Taatite Babetara (Kiribati Worker Representative) chaired the second part of the Technical Session in which Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager ILO/SKILLS-AP, described the problems facing young people and their untapped potential. He mentioned the Japan vocational experience museum that simulates various occupations so that people know what to expect at a certain job.

Ms Margaret Reade Rounds, ILO Suva made a presentation on skills and youth and she described some of the work that was taking place in Indonesia and Sri Lanka to increase the participation of young people. Issues raised in the discussion that followed included:

- The need for school leavers to take up whatever job is available;
- The shortage of career teachers;
- The shortage of career counsellors and the need to advise students at early stage of their options;
- The need for young people to have a set of core competencies, perhaps the SPC can look at a regional intervention;
- The need for parents to be better informed and more involved in career guidance.

### **Technical Session 3c – Skills for Informal Economy Workers**

Ms Grace Piniau (SI Employer Representative) chaired the third part of Technical Session 3 which focussed on skills for informal economy workers. Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO Geneva described the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) pilot projects which had been conducted successfully in Pakistan and the Philippines. He also described the work done by ILO in conflict or disaster affected areas. He pointed out that training must be taken to where the people are and that it is important to not train for the sake of training. Following the meeting, SPC expressed strong interest in working with the ILO on a possible TREE project, and information was provided to them.

### **Working Groups**

Three working groups were established to discuss the issues presented in the Technical Sessions.

1. Mr Charles Carlo, Vanuatu Employers Representative) chaired the first working group session on *Priority issues for skills development in Pacific Island Countries*
2. Mr Martin Tofinga (Kiribati Employer Representative) chaired the working group on *Priority Issues for Regional cooperation*
3. Mr Ken Roberts chaired the session on *Strengthening Skills Elements in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs)*

Presentations from the Working Group discussions are included in Appendix 1. There was considerable discussion of the need to make TVET attractive through innovative approaches such as promoting role models for young apprentice of the year.

## **Synthesis of major issues**

This session was chaired by Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO SKILLS GENEVA, Mr Ray Grannall, ILO Resource Person presented a summary of major issues that had been discussed at the meeting and possible follow-up action.

### ***Importance of Skills Development***

He indicated that there is consensus in the region on the importance of skills development. The Nadi Tripartite Meeting on Decent Work in Pacific Island Countries has indicated that proposals arising out of this meeting will build on the outcomes of the Nadi meeting and will be used to formulate the skills elements of the Decent Work Country Programme. The meeting highlighted the extensive current research that existed on TVET in the Pacific.

Participants at the meeting were encouraged to research available materials before they developed a new course or training programme. To assist in this process, they were provided with information about existing materials that were available from internet, ILO and other agencies. ILO's recent work on national qualifications frameworks, the development of National Skills Strategies, training for young people and career guidance were highlighted. It was pointed out that there were many guides available with regard to developing competency standards, competency based training and conducting assessments.

Details were provided on Regional Model Competency Standards produced by ILO SKILLS-AP and participants were strongly advised to review the internet because many materials allowed modification after the purchase of a single copy to meet copyright requirements.

### ***Challenges***

Some of the challenges identified in the meeting included:

- the limited training infrastructure especially in remote island communities;
- Lack of specific TVET policies;
- Low levels of funding for TVET;
- Shortage of qualified teachers;
- Poor coordination of TVET in many countries especially those without an apex TVET body;
- Lack of political support for reform;
- Low status of TVET;
- The generally low quality of TVET due to the lack of trainers, out-of-date courses and a focus on supply;
- Lack of accurate labour market information especially with regard to job or employment outcomes;
- The need to link employment to training provision;
- Limited interaction with industry reflected by a lack of partnerships and a lack of involvement in course planning and placement of graduates.

Other issues arising from discussions included:

- The need for targeted skills and support programmes (core work skills, career guidance) for young people;
- Need for a comprehensive promotion and marketing scheme to raise the image of TVET;

- Need to develop new methodologies for skills development for informal economy workers (e.g. TREE).

### ***Future Directions***

Some general points on future directions included:

- Need for comprehensive National Skills Strategies
- Need to establish apex body for TVET to facilitate coordination of system
- Need to improve quality of TVET at all levels
- Focus on teaching and assessment
- Need for training to better match industry and community needs
- LMIS, Industry Training Boards, Partnerships
- Need for capacity building of many national institutions
- Support for regional approaches to assist small countries

Some specific points on future directions included:

- National competency standards
- Competency based training & flexible delivery
- National Qualification frameworks
- National Quality frameworks
- Capacity building
- Private sector involvement in training (workplace learning)
- Access and equity
- Skills for informal economy workers
- Skills and employability for youth

### **Closing Session**

Mr Werner Blenk, Director, ILO Suva indicated that he felt that the major outcome of the meeting had been the provision of information that would assist in the development of national action plans and strategies. The discussion will provide valuable inputs into our future work in addressing key skills issues. From ILO's perspective, these will be included in the DWCPs and will be followed up progressively by ILO.

He then invited statements by representatives of governments, employers and workers. Following these he thanked participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

## Appendix 1 – Working Group Issues

Issues identified by the Working Groups have been summarised below together with possible strategies that were suggested to address the issue or problem area.

### COMMUNICATION

Labour market information needs to be shared and disseminated to relevant stakeholders.

**Possible Strategies:** There is a need to identify a central authority at the national level in each country to take the lead role in documenting, researching and coordinating TVET. At the regional level, an existing regional body such as SPC, SPBEA or PIFS could take on this role.

### RESOURCES

A continuing problem is the lack of funds and human resources experts. It was also indicated that in some cases funds are spent inappropriately.

**Possible Strategies:** Pool funds, maximize available resources, access donor funding through project proposals

### COORDINATION

Duplication of programmes

**Possible Strategies:** Improve communication and strengthen tripartism. PATVET can play a role in coordinating national training providers and collate data

### POLICY DIRECTIONS

Many countries lack clear policies and guidelines for TVET.

**Possible Strategies:** Each country should review all existing TVET policies or establish new ones. This should involve tripartite consultation on policy recommendations together with strategies to obtain funding to implement policies. National institutions should find ways to be self-sufficient e.g. fees for registration.

At the regional level, the Pacific Islands Forum needs to be TVET-sensitized so that it can play a greater role in conducting research about what is happening in other parts of world and provide these examples to PICs.

### GOVERNMENT STABILITY

The lack of continuity and instability of Governments creates problems in TVET implementation due to new governments seeking to change systems or alternatively lacking interest in the TVET sector.

**Possible Strategies:** Promote good governance with transparency and accountability and develop sound national policies which provide clear long term goals.



## REMOTE ISLAND ECONOMIES

Remote Island economies face many problems and challenges with regard to communication, transport, remoteness, isolation, inaccessibility to facilities, lack of resources both in the Pacific and within each Island nation.

**Possible Strategies:** Improve telecommunication and transportation links

## SUPPLY-DRIVEN COURSES

Many TVET Institutions continue to churn out graduates with skills that are not relevant in the labour market OR not relevant to likely changes to the labour market. Many courses are rigid and unresponsive and there is a need for greater emphasis on training for the rural sector.

**Possible Strategies:** Develop effective systems to respond to measure labour market needs through continuing consultations with social partners. This can include consultation at an institution level and formal group meetings at the national level.

## APPRENTICESHIP & INCENTIVES FOR SMALL EMPLOYERS

There has been a drastic reduction on employers' part to support apprenticeship schemes. At the same time employers complain that people are not appropriately skilled and the skills they have do not match their requirements.

**Possible Strategies:** Tax rebates, levy schemes and flexible apprenticeship options for employers such as the Australian Group Training Scheme

## LOW PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF TVET:

TVET is seen as inferior to other forms of higher education even though there are better employment outcomes than some university courses. At political levels, there is a lack of interest in TVET as blue collar jobs are seen as being inferior to white collar.

**Possible Strategies:** Start promoting TVET at high school level; Provide comprehensive training for career guidance teachers and counsellors about the value of TVET. This should include arranging for the career teachers to meet with parents during parent/ teacher days. Vocational schools need to have quality facilities to compete with other sectors of education and there should be more partnerships with private companies. TVET managers should lobby their governments to increase allocations. Countries should review programmes that have helped to create positive attitudes to TVET such as the FIT franchise programme.

At the national level, Ministries of Education, Labour and National Planning should work together to review the education system to identify ways that the status could be improved. This could include TVET in schools to show parents that this might be a suitable option for their child. At the regional level, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat should seek to raise awareness, and provide access to information through a clearing house. It can also have a role as a forum for dialogue and sharing information.

## EQUITY

More work is needed to improve gender equity in provision. Study by PIFS showed that TVET Institutions had approximately 30% female enrolments. Access was unequal by gender with approximately 5-25% female enrolments in TVET training for traditional occupations. However, total access was low with between 5-20% of school leavers. Access was unequal geographically and was related to family income

**Possible Strategies:** Development of effective policies; collection of enrolment and labour market information and training in empowerment for teachers and managers.

The members of the working groups suggested that :

1. Individual countries should inform PIFS of the strong need for greater collaboration on TVET and other related issues, and their support for a decision by Forum Island Leaders that the Ministers of Labour should follow those of Finance, Economic, Education, Trade, etc. in having an annual meeting and that all such meetings of all Ministers should have an obligatory agenda item - TVET
2. At the national level countries should prepare action plans to improve the status of TVET through issues that have been identified

## Appendix 2 – Programme

**ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan/ Regional Technical Meeting**  
***Skills development in the Pacific:***  
***the special skills development needs of small island economies***  
**Nadi, Fiji**  
**26 – 28 March, 2008**  
**PROGRAMME**

**WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 2008**

<b>0800 – 0830</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>0830 – 0900</b>	<b>Individual meetings of Government, Employer and Worker participants</b>
<b>0900 – 1000</b>	<b><i>Inaugural session</i></b>  MC: Ms Margaret Reade Rounds, ILO Suva Addresses: Mr Werner Blenk Director, ILO Suva Ms Selai Waqanibete, Training & Productivity Authority of Fiji Mr Trevor Riordan, Senior Training Policy Adviser, ILO EMP/SKILLS and SKILLS-AP  Introduction of participants Programme and arrangements for the meeting Group photograph
<b>1000 – 1030</b>	<b>Tea/coffee break</b>
<b>1030 – 1200</b>	<b><i>Technical session 1: Key issues in skills development – international and Pacific regional experience</i></b>  Panel Chairperson: Government participant Presentations: Mr T. Riordan, ILO Geneva, Resource Person Dr Helen Tavola, Social Development Adviser, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat  Panel members: Worker and employer perspectives Discussion
<b>1200 – 1300</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>1300 – 1400</b>	<b><i>Technical session 2a: Key issues in skills development in Pacific Island Countries - experience of countries in the region</i></b>  Panel Chairperson: Government participant Panel members: Three country presentations: (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands - 10 minutes each) and worker and employer views (5 minutes each).  Questions and comments
<b>1400 – 1530</b>	<b><i>Technical session 2b: Key issues in skills development in Pacific Island Countries - experience of countries in the region</i></b>  Panel Chairperson: Government participant Panel members: Four country presentations (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, and Vanuatu- 10 minutes each) and worker and employer views (5 minutes each).  Questions and comments
<b>1530 – 1600</b>	<b>Tea/coffee break</b>

- 1600 – 1730**      ***1<sup>st</sup> Working Group session: Priority issues for skills development in Pacific Island Countries (three mixed working groups)***
- Panel Chairperson:    Worker participant  
Introduced by:        Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager ILO/SKILLS-AP
- 1800 – 2000**      **Welcome reception hosted by the ILO at the Poolside**

#### **THURSDAY 27 MARCH, 2008**

- 0900 – 0930**      ***Presentation from the Working Group discussions***
- Panel Chairperson:    Worker participant  
Panel:                  Chairs/rapporteurs of the Working Group discussions
- 0930 – 1000**      **Tea/coffee break**
- 1000 – 1100**      ***Technical Session 3a: Regional cooperation on selected key themes: skills recognition, competency standards and improving the quality of training systems***
- Panel Chairperson:    Employer participant  
Presentations by:    Mr Ray Grannall, ILO Resource Person  
                              Dr Lia Maka, SPC-CETC  
                              Ms Emily Hazelman, PATVET  
Panel members:      Government and worker perspectives  
Questions and discussion
- 1100 – 1200**      ***Technical Session 3b: Regional cooperation on selected key themes : skills and youth***
- Panel Chairperson:    Worker participant  
Presentations by:    Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager ILO/SKILLS-AP  
                              Ms Margaret Reade Rounds, ILO  
Panel members:      Government and employer perspectives  
Questions and discussion
- 1200 – 1330**      **LUNCH**
- 1330 – 1430**      ***Technical Session 3c: Regional cooperation on selected key themes : skills for informal economy workers.***
- Panel Chairperson:    Employer participant  
Presentations by:    Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager ILO/SKILLS-AP  
Panel members:      Government and worker perspectives  
Questions and discussion
- 1430 – 1500**      **Tea/Coffee break**
- 1500 – 1700**      ***2<sup>nd</sup> Working Group Session: Discussion on regional cooperation on the key themes (three mixed working groups)***
- Chair:                    Government participant  
Introduced by:        Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager ILO/SKILLS-AP

#### **FRIDAY 28 MARCH, 2008**

- 0900 – 1000**      ***Presentations of the Working Group discussions***
- Panel:                  Chairs/Rapporteurs of the Working Groups
- 1000 - 1030**      **Tea/coffee break**
- 1030 – 1230**      ***3<sup>rd</sup> Working Group Session: Proposals to strengthen skills elements in***

***Decent Work Country Programmes***

**1230 – 1400**

**Lunch**

**1400 – 1530**

***Presentations of proposals to strengthen skills elements in DWCPs***

Panel Chairperson: Government participant

Panel: Representatives of the Participating Country Working Groups (10 minutes each)

Open discussion

**1500 – 1530**

**Tea/coffee break**

**1530 - 1600**

***Synthesis of major issues arising out of the meeting and discussion of follow up action***

Panel Chairperson: Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager ILO/SKILLS-AP

Introduced by: Mr Ray Grannall, ILO Resource Person

**1600 – 1630**

**Closing session**

Chairperson: Mr Werner Blenk, Director, ILO Suva

Statements by: Representatives of Governments, Employers' and Workers' organizations

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## Appendix 4 – International Good Practice in Training

International good practice in training with specific focus on the skills needs of small island economies - With reference to Planning, Skills Recognition, Competency Standards and Quality of Training

### Introduction

Over the last twenty years, major changes have been taking place around the world with regard to skills development and the organization and structure of vocational education and training.

Many of these changes have occurred in the following areas:

- The development of national or regional systems to support competency based training;
- Flexible approaches to teaching and learning;
- The implementation of quality standards and systems;
- Improved planning to meet labour market needs and the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- The introduction of formally recognised VET qualifications in the School system

This paper briefly describes some of these international trends and relates them to the particular skill needs of small island economies. This paper was prepared as background material for the ILO/SKILLS-AP Regional Technical Meeting for Skills development in the Pacific to be held in Nadi, Fiji from 26 – 28 March, 2008. During this meeting, two presentations made reference to this paper. The first Technical Session will focus on *'Key issues in skills development – the international experience'* and the third Technical Session will focus on possible regional cooperation in key areas such as *'skills recognition, competency standards and improving the quality of training systems'*

### Competency Based Training (CBT)

Competency based training (CBT) focuses on providing training for a single competency or set of competencies. They are based on competency standards which describe the skills and knowledge needed to do some activity in the workplace. Competencies vary in the amount of detail they include. However, most have components such as the following.

**Competency elements:** the skill components that contribute to the performance of a larger work activity or competency;

**Range Statement:** Additional information to describe the scope of the equipment, tools or materials, area of operation and the range of conditions under which the operation is to be performed;

**Evidence Guide:** guidance can be provided for assessors. Critical skills or knowledge and required underpinning knowledge or skills can be described;

**Assessment Guide:** suggestions or guidance on ways in which the competency can be accurately assessed (e.g. role plays, fault finding, test projects etc);

**Resource Implications:** Possible costs associated with learning and assessment activities.

While many traditional approaches to education allow a 'pass' grade on the achievement of a score of 50%, competency based training requires the demonstration of mastery of the competency to the specified standard. A person is usually considered 'competent' or 'not-yet competent'. If someone is 'not-yet competent', they may require additional time to practise, additional training, or both. Many training organizations specify essential or critical competencies that must be demonstrated before a pass can be awarded.

Generally a feature of competency based training is that there are no separate 'theory' and 'practical' subjects. Theory and practice are taught together so that students can understand the links between the knowledge elements and the ways that they are used. Training can be carried out in a classroom, in the workplace or through a variety of flexible learning approaches such as videos, online training programmes, DVDs or similar approaches.

### ***Competency Development***

Competencies are usually described as technical or generic competencies. Technical competencies describe such things as "drive a car"; "repair a generator" "use a word processor". Generic or workplace competencies describe other skills sought by employers such as: "communicate effectively"; "work with others in a team"; or "follow work instructions". Competencies for industry and occupations include both generic and technical competencies.

### ***National or Regional Competency Standards***

Numerous sets of competencies are available and countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore have developed thousands of competencies for most industries and occupations.

### ***Regional Model Competency Standards***

The ILO has also developed Regional Model Competency Standards for selected industries including manufacturing, tourism and hospitality. Additional competency sets will be developed progressively depending on demand.

### **National Systems to Support CBT**

Many countries have made a national commitment to implement competency based training (CBT) and have set up national bodies to coordinate this work. National Training Boards and agencies are well established in a many countries including Singapore, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Malaysia. They are also planned and being set up in many more.

These central agencies take a number of different forms but they allow a single point of contact for industry advice. In many countries, the single agency approach has been used to overcome potential conflict, for example between a Ministry of Education and a Ministry of Labour about responsibility for developing competency standards. Typical activities of these organizations are:

- the development of a national commitment to implement competency based vocational education and training;
- the development of a national or regional Qualifications Framework;
- the development of national systems for the accreditation, licensing or registration of courses, public and private training institutions, trainers and assessors;

- the development of guidelines and standard formats for competency standards; curriculum, qualifications and nationally accredited courses;
- the development of statistical standards for use across the whole system (including standard definitions for such things as students, enrolments, course completions, qualifications and demographic information about participants to help in planning and matching training to labour market needs);
- the coordination of research into training needs;
- the coordination of advice from industry to establish priorities for the development of competency standards and courses;
- the development of national or regional competency standards;

## **National or regional Qualifications Framework**

To assist in skills recognition and to ensure a consistent approach to qualifications, many countries have developed National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF's) which define qualifications at certificate, diploma and degree levels. The Australia Pacific Technical College currently uses the Australian Qualifications Framework. National qualification frameworks (NQF's) are in place or are being developed or considered in Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji and PNG. There are also some examples of regional qualifications frameworks.

### ***CARICOM***

Seven member countries<sup>1</sup> of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have successfully implemented a Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) model that incorporates:

- 1) Acceptance of a five-level framework of occupational certification<sup>2</sup>;
- 2) Acceptance of Occupational Standards already developed in the region;
- 3) Acceptance of the process of standards development; and,
- 4) Acceptance of the process of training delivery and assessment for certification in accordance with the Model.

### ***European Qualifications Framework***

The European Qualifications Framework has eight levels and is designed to allow comparisons within and between countries and between various education and training systems. It is designed as a basis for co-operation. Participation is voluntary and there are no legal obligations on Member States. The EQF is not about replacing national/ sectoral frameworks or harmonization and the EQF cannot define new qualifications.

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<sup>1</sup> Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

<sup>2</sup> Level 1: Directly supervised/entry -level worker  
 Level 2: Supervised Skilled Worker  
 Level 3: Independent or Autonomous Skilled Worker  
 Level 4: Specialized or Supervisory Worker  
 Level 5: Managerial and/or Professional Worker

## **ASEAN**

In a recent ASEAN project, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam, agreed on using four Certificate levels and two Diploma level qualifications (Diploma and Advanced Diploma). Certificate 1 is the lowest level and is designed for those assisting others or carrying out very basic jobs. More diverse skills and more supervision are added in Certificates levels 2, 3 and 4.

## ***Pacific***

The South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment is working with the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) to create a regional qualifications register as a first step toward a regional qualifications framework.

More information on national and regional qualifications frameworks is available on

[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/hrdr/topic\\_i/t18\\_1.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/hrdr/topic_i/t18_1.htm)

## **Planning to Meet Labour Market Needs**

Systematic planning is needed to match the limited resources available for training to the needs of the labour market. One of the first systems to be implemented is usually a system to classify competencies, either by industry, occupation, field of study or some other system. There also needs to be planning to identify regional and community needs and the needs of disadvantaged groups.

## ***Harmonisation of Training and Licensing Requirements***

In some countries, licensing requirements for occupations such as fork lift driver, crane driver, gas installer and electrician have developed independently from the competency development carried out by national training organizations. As a consequence, competencies required of, for example, a Certificate level 4 qualification for an electrician is not the same as the licensing requirements for the electrician. To overcome this problem work is currently proceeding to merge or harmonise the two sets of requirements.

## **VET in Schools**

Many countries are working towards the provision of basic level vocational qualifications within the school system. Some of the advantages of this system are that students and parents gain a greater respect for the value of vocational qualifications especially for students who may not be suited to a university education. Another advantage is that students get a chance to try an occupation and get some associated work experience prior to leaving school.

## ***Pacific Skills Needs Analysis***

To plan for the vocational and training needs in the Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have collaborated in a technical assistance project to determine what skills are in demand across 13 countries. The Regional Skills Development Study was undertaken with funding provided by the Japan Special Fund. The Study's objective was to establish effective public and private investment in skills development by strengthening vocational and technical education linkages with the labour market.

In-depth country reports on the relationship between skills development and economic development, labour market demand and outward migration have been completed for Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu. The study also included:

- a literature review of existing written documentation on skills development relevant to the Pacific
- a survey of employers identifying areas of skills shortage and employers' view on the quality of TVET training in their respective country.
- a survey of skilled employees identifying where they developed their skills and the level of ongoing training which they receive.

A synthesis report, proposing skills development policy options is currently (March 2008) close to final publication.

### **Flexible approaches to teaching and learning;**

Rapid changes in the workplace due to technological change and other factors have meant that learning and training programmes must be able to respond rapidly. It is no longer acceptable for an educational institution to spend two years designing a four year training programme since by the time the fourth year is reached it is likely that the technology will have changed substantially.

There is an increasing expectation that training providers will be flexible and responsive to client needs. Employers and individuals also expect greater choice and control over the time, place and content of training. In response to this, many traditional training organizations have moved to arrangements by which they allow students to start any time, and any place.

### **Learning Organizations**

The concept of a learning organization was developed to describe this rapid response to changing learning needs. Successful Learning Organizations often included a commitment to training in the company's business plan, mission statement, strategic directions document or other major policy document. Other features were

- Management commitment and understanding of processes and industrial issues;
- Clear identification of training needs;
- An integrated approach to learning;
- Good timetabling and access to workers;
- A recognition of the language, literacy and numeracy needs of the workforce;
- Regular monitoring and review of the effectiveness of training;
- Appropriate assessment strategies; and,
- Effective record keeping systems.

### **Partnerships**

Many organizations make a decision that while they recognise that training is important, they consider that it is more important to focus on the core business and they use specialist organizations to organize the training, learning and assessment activities. There can be many benefits from using the formal government VET system or private training providers as a partner in facilitating workplace learning, thus allowing the company to focus on its core business and outsourcing the training to a specialist organization. As well as the activities listed above, these specialist organizations can also provide benefits through:

- Conducting off site recognition of current competency assessments;
- Servicing individuals who are in non-standard working arrangements such as those in casual or part-time employees and contractors who are not tied to a particular place of employment;
- Organizing training companies that will allow a person to gain experience in a number of different workplaces in a structured learning environment.
- Providing accreditation of training which may be necessary to meet regulatory or licensing requirements;
- Formally recognising a company's training and assessment under a National Training Framework (for example in Australia through 'auspicing' arrangements between companies and registered training providers);

## **Workplace Learning**

A new emphasis on workplace learning is another example of a flexible approach to learning. This has become increasingly important during the last decade as an effective means of developing workforce knowledge and skills. It is recognised that public training systems are unable to develop national workforce skills by themselves and this has led to an increasing focus on the workplace as a centre of learning. The concept was formalised in ILO Human Resources Development HRD Recommendation 195 (2004) which stresses that member States should "promote the expansion of workplace learning and training".

## **Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) is a means by which people can have their existing skills assessed. Candidates can be in a working situation when naturally occurring products and processes can be observed or produced in written form, or explained through a professional conversation. Alternatively, candidates can prepare a portfolio of work which demonstrates their experience and skill levels. These are compared to competency standards.

Candidates work with an assessor to identify the qualification(s) they wish to achieve, the unit standards that will make up the qualification and any additional training or work experience that they must carry out.

## **E-Learning**

Technology has provided the means for training to be delivered in remote locations.

Computer based learning can take many forms and considerable resources have been spent on innovative means of delivery such as satellite delivery and the production of computer based learning programmes using CDs or DVDs.

An example of an industry based flexible learning programme is the FORDSTAR programme which is 'an instructor led satellite based system for training staff employed by Ford dealers'. This provides training in more than 112 courses, broadcasting over 70 hours of instruction per day, to their worldwide dealership network of over 5000 companies.

A range of innovative approaches to learning have been developed – some of which have been more successful than others. The structure of courses has changed with greater emphasis on options so that students to select subjects or course modules to meet their own requirements. Numerous e-learning packages have been developed to support traditional training – some requiring supervision while others are done by

students in their own time. Whole courses can be done on line and programmes have been developed to check that the enrolled student is the same as the person who is sitting for the examinations or submitting the work.

## **Quality Standards and Systems**

While competency standards form the basis of modern training programme, various quality standards have been developed to ensure consistency in assessment and delivery. These quality standards are variously developed for:

- accreditation and registration of courses or qualifications;
- licensing of training providers (public and private);
- licensing or registration of trainers;
- licensing or registration of assessors;
- licensing or registration of licensing or accrediting organizations – generally at a regional or provincial level.

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) provides a good example of a comprehensive quality system. Originally this included two sets of standards one for registered training organizations and the other for accrediting bodies (in each state and territory). There were twelve standards and every Registered Training Organization (RTO) had to demonstrate

- Systems for Quality Training and Assessment;
- Compliance with legislation and regulatory requirements;
- Effective Financial Management Systems;
- Effective Records Management;
- Mutual Recognition of qualifications from other RTOs;
- The provision of Access, Equity and Client Services;
- Competent Staff;
- Registered and documented assessments;
- Documented learning and assessment strategies;
- Systems for issuing awards;
- Use of Logos;
- Ethical Marketing and Advertising;

In 2007, the AQTF was revised to reducing the amount of paper work required and to streamline and standardise processes for national consistency. The new emphasis is focussed on outcomes. Audits under the new system are designed to give registered training organizations (RTOs) more opportunity to focus on the quality of the outcomes of their training and assessment so that industry will have greater confidence in the outcomes of training. The twelve standards have been replaced by three:

### **Standard 1 The Registered Training Organization provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations.**

- 1.1 The RTO collects, analyses and acts on relevant data for continuous improvement of training and assessment.
- 1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.



- 1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment, and training and assessment materials used by the RTO are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the RTO's own training and assessment strategies.
- 1.4 Training and assessment are conducted by trainers and assessors who:
- (a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
  - (b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed
  - (c) continue developing their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvements in delivery of the RTO's services.
- 1.5 Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
- (a) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
  - (b) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
  - (c) meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

**Standard 2 The Registered Training Organization adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients.**

- 2.1 The RTO continuously improves client services by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.
- 2.2 Before clients enrol or enter into a contract, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations.
- 2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner's training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.
- 2.4 Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.
- 2.5 Learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.
- 2.6 Complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively.

**Standard 3 Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the Registered Training Organization operates.**

- 3.1 The RTO uses a systematic and continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.
- 3.2 The RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that they comply with all aspects of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.
- 3.3 The RTO manages records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

Three quality indicators have been also identified for continuous improvement of RTO performance and for the establishment of risk profiles by state and territory registering bodies.

*The three quality indicators are:*

- **Employer satisfaction** (competency development, and training and assessment quality). This indicator focuses on employers' evaluations of learners' competency development, its relevance to work and further training, and the overall quality of the training and assessment.
- **Learner satisfaction** (learner engagement and competency development). This indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in activities likely to promote high-quality skill outcomes, as well as learners' perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive from RTOs.
- **Competency completion rate**. This is calculated for qualifications and units of competency/modules delivered, based on data provided by RTOs on the previous calendar year's number of enrolments and qualifications completed and/or units of competency/modules awarded.

### **Relevance to small island nations**

All countries in the Pacific are different but many share similar problems and issues with regard to the provision of a trained workforce. Typical issues are:

- Comparatively high population growth rate and associated migration to urban areas;
- Transport difficulties – delays and high costs associated with inter-island transport, general lack of transport infrastructure;
- Small and remote island communities with no training infrastructure;
- Increasing numbers of young people who have completed formal schooling yet lack the practical skills that are useful in the labour market;
- Increasing demand for water, sanitation, power, housing, education and health services in both urban and non urban areas;
- Lack of employment in small communities and outer islands;
- Loss of youth leaders who receive scholarships to study in other countries;
- Low status of vocational education and training;
- Out migration of skilled workers to higher paid jobs in other countries;
- Emphasis on university and higher education by many aid agencies;
- Shortage of suitably qualified teachers for technical and vocational training;
- Difficulties providing services to people in remote areas or islands;
- low levels of literacy and numeracy;
- Lack of a formal apprenticeship, traineeship or workplace training arrangements.
- Insufficient numbers to form viable class sizes apart from areas such as accounting, office administration and computing;
- Government job rotation policies creating skill shortages;
- In many public sector organizations, senior managers have obtained tertiary qualifications through overseas scholarships but many of these have not received practical training;
- There is no formal apprenticeship or traineeship system for people employed in public and private sector businesses
- Need and demand but few opportunities for skills up-dating and practical training in many technical areas.

## **Skills Needs**

The skills needed in Pacific Island nations are similar to those needed in any developed or developing country – the main difference is that only a small number of people need each of the competencies specific technical skills because of the small population base. It is important to highlight that technical training is needed in all of the following areas and many more specialist fields:

- Agriculture, fishing, crop production, animal care, aquaculture pig and chicken raising, landscaping and environmental management;
- Accounting and financial management (including computer based accounting);
- Business and small business management skills including contracting, marketing, public relations, retail operations and customer service;
- Clerical and general administration (including government administration and property services, project management, supervision, front line management training, staff training, extension officer training and report writing);
- Computer operations and maintenance (including networking, audio-visual and internet communications and cabling);
- Engineering services including the diagnosis repair and maintenance of technical equipment such as generators, refrigeration equipment, automotive, motor cycle, outboard motors, heavy machinery and boats);
- Health care (infection control, upgrading and maintaining nursing skills, medical technology operation and maintenance, drug and lifestyle counselling, physiotherapy);
- Hospitality and tourism skills (including safe food handling, food preparation, restaurant service and quality assurance of seafood);
- General construction including framing, waterproofing, electrical wiring, plumbing, water supply, furniture manufacturing;
- Civil construction including road, airport and wharf construction, water supply and sewerage;
- Power generation, electro-technology, communications, electrical, electronics operation and maintenance;
- Hairdressing, beauty therapy; art, design, music, dance, laundry & dry cleaning, floristry and funeral services ;
- Land care and environmental management (surveying, sanitation, waste collection, records management, database and GIS systems management, environmental analysis and reporting);
- Security, public order and safety;
- Sport and recreation management, massage, fitness and lifestyle instruction;
- Tourism and Hospitality (including tour guide and cultural information);
- Transport storage and distribution, including wharf operations, warehousing, aircraft and maritime operations;
- Remedial education (language, literacy and numeracy)

## **Possible Future Directions**

The recent Pacific Forum/ Asian Development Bank (ADB) project provides a good research basis and an opportunity for collaboration and development in technical and vocational education.

Possible areas for consideration for regional cooperation might be:

- agreement on standard formats for competencies,
- a shared qualifications framework;
- shared competency development;

- shared courses and qualifications;
- standard planning categories based on industry, occupation or some other classification system;
- coordinated curriculum development
- regional quality framework
- standard statistical collections

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