



OPEN WINDOWS, CLOSED DOORS

MUTUAL RECOGNITION
ARRANGEMENTS ON PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES IN THE ASEAN REGION

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Abbreviations

AA	-	ASEAN Architect
AAC	-	ASEAN Architect Council
AAR	-	ASEAN Architect Register
ACCSTP	-	ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals
ACPA	-	ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountant
ACPAR	-	ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Register
ACPACC	-	ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Coordinating Committee
ACPE	-	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer
ACPECC	-	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineering Coordinating Committee
ACPER	-	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineers Register
AEC	-	ASEAN Economic Community
AJCCD	-	ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Dental Practitioners
AJCCM	-	ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Medical Practitioners
AJCCN	-	ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Nursing
APEC	-	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AQRF	-	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
ASEAN	-	Association of Southeast Asian Nation
ATPMC	-	ASEAN Tourism Professional Monitoring Committee
ATPRS	-	ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System
Australian Aid	-	Australian Agency for International Development
BNSP	-	<i>Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi</i> (Indonesia Professional Certification Authority)
CATC	-	Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum
CCS	-	ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services
CHED	-	Commission on Higher Education
CPD	-	Continuing Professional Development
HSSWG	-	Healthcare Services Sectoral Working Group
LEPPI	-	<i>Lembaga Profesional Pariwisata Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Institute of Tourism Professionals)
MC	-	Monitoring Committee
MRA	-	Mutual Recognition Arrangement
NAB	-	National Accountancy Board
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
NRA	-	Nursing Regulatory Authority
NTPB	-	National Tourism Professional Board
NTO	-	National Tourism Organization
PDRA	-	Professional Dental Regulatory Authority
PMRA	-	Professional Medical Regulatory Authority
PRA	-	Professional Regulatory Authority
RFA	-	Registered Foreign Architect
RFPA	-	Registered Foreign Professional Accountants
RFPE	-	Registered Foreign Professional Engineer
TESDA	-	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TPCB	-	Tourism Professional Certification Board

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Executive Summary

Between 2003 and 2014, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)¹ signed Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) in the tourism sector and in six regulated occupations: accountancy, architecture, dentistry, engineering, medicine, and nursing.

A further arrangement, in the surveying field, is being developed but is still in the framework stage. By jointly setting standardized rules for mutual recognition and renouncing, in part or in full, their national discretion to assess foreign qualifications, ASEAN Member States have potentially made it easier for professionals to have their qualifications recognized across the region. If fully implemented, the MRAs would also directly support the ASEAN goal of facilitating skill mobility.

Although these MRAs share nearly identical objectives, they diverge significantly in terms of institutional structures, requirements, and procedures. Not all MRAs are created equal. Globally, they come in various shapes and forms with some more open to foreign professionals, others more restrictive. ASEAN MRAs can be categorized into three different frameworks, with varying levels of openness to foreign professionals.

- **Open, comprehensive framework with minimal restrictions to ASEAN professionals.** The MRA on Tourism Professionals provides the greatest opportunity for mutual recognition among the seven ASEAN MRAs. It is the only MRA in the region that adopts a fully automatic recognition process, where tourism competency certificates issued in the country of origin are automatically recognized at destination. It also has the broadest scope, covering 32 occupations ranging from high-skilled jobs (such as hotel managers and executive chefs) to low-skilled occupations (such as maids and bellboys). The tourism MRA has a wide institutional footprint that mandates the creation of the largest number of regulatory and implementing offices at both the national and regional levels, and includes the participation of nongovernmental stakeholders at the national level, particularly businesses and industry associations. The tourism MRA is the only one among the seven that has institutionalized the training component through harmonization.
- **Partially open, regional-driven frameworks with major restrictions.** At the middle of the spectrum are the MRAs on accountancy, architecture, and engineering, which adopt a semiautomatic recognition process where ASEAN professionals still have to get their credentials recognized at destination based on the eligibility requirements negotiated in the MRAs. Central to this process are ASEAN-level committees that certify qualifications and experiences at the regional level and accord ASEAN-level professional titles: ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer (ACPE), ASEAN Architect (AA), and ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountant

¹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) includes 10 countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

(ACPA). The MRAs have safeguard provisions, however, that allow destination countries to impose additional rules that could make it very difficult for ASEAN professionals to receive recognition in practice.

- **Virtually closed, destination country-led frameworks with minimal opportunities for recognition.** The dental, medical, and nursing MRAs are the least open of the ASEAN MRAs. Similar to the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs, they adopt a semiautomatic recognition process. However, there are no ASEAN-level professional titles and committees to certify credentials. Instead, the destination country issues recognition and licensing certificates to ASEAN professionals. Health professionals who meet the MRA eligibility requirements apply directly to the regulatory bodies at destination. The MRAs include strong stipulations that allow destination countries to impose additional assessments or refuse recognition based on various considerations, including public safety, language, culture, and customs.

There is no “ideal” MRA. The level of openness to foreign professionals in any given arrangement is a reflection of national and regional contexts during the negotiation phase. In the ASEAN region, the presence of existing standards and availability of financial and technical resources to government officials and other relevant stakeholders during negotiation led to a more open recognition framework, while strong concerns over differences in regulatory standards and protectionist leanings increased the level of restrictions. The following examples illustrate some of the ways in which these factors affected negotiations and the resulting MRAs:

- **Presence of existing standards.** The tourism sector’s open framework can be traced to a process of harmonization training modules and professional competences that started a full decade before the signing of the MRA. In contrast, the absence of prior agreements or cooperation on dental, medical, and nursing services, and the vastly different education and training curricula across countries, led to a virtually closed framework.
- **Availability of financial and technical resources.** The MRA on Tourism Professionals has benefitted significantly from financial and technical contributions from the private sector, and, most especially, from international development agencies. In contrast, the negotiations on accountancy, architecture, and engineering, as well as the health-sector MRAs, were primarily dependent on the resources provided to the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services (ASEAN CCS) within the ASEAN Secretariat.
- **Public safeguards.** The wide diversity in professional regulatory standards in the six occupations (excluding the tourism sector, which is unregulated) heightened concerns over the qualifications of ASEAN professionals trained in different national contexts.
- **Protectionist leanings.** The high degree of international mobility and the prospect of employment for tourism professionals within and beyond the ASEAN region drove interest in signing an open MRA framework. In contrast, professionals in regulated occupations threatened by competition, particularly in the health field, were less likely to negotiate such open MRAs, which could potentially exacerbate already saturated, competitive markets.

The open, comprehensive framework of the tourism MRA presents tremendous promise in maximizing opportunities for recognition of ASEAN tourism professionals in the region. However, the approach also has its downsides. It is a huge undertaking to fully implement the tourism MRA, and requires an infusion of resources and capacity building at both national and regional levels. Many of the MRA’s working parts

“The benefits of fully implementing the seven ASEAN MRAs extend above and beyond the actual mutual recognition of qualifications.”

have yet to be completed. At the national level, it is important to complete the alignment of national standards to the ASEAN standards, improve training, and increase buy-in from the private sector. At the regional level, more has to be done to complete the MRA’s grand implementing structure.

Given the concerns over the wide diversity of professional regulatory standards in the regulated occupations, the partially open, regional driven approach taken by the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs could be seen as a practical way to achieve real progress on mutual recognition, albeit incrementally. The drawbacks, however, are clear. The semiautomatic recognition process still leaves room for arbitrary recognition outcomes since considerable power to determine the equivalency of qualifications remains with the intended destination country. The elaborate regional structure envisioned in these partially open MRAs plays an important role in shifting the power dynamics more equitably between origin and destination countries. Thus, it is critical to strengthen the regional infrastructure through a serious infusion of resources, financial and otherwise. Making compensatory measures² more transparent and gradually increasing the scope of the MRAs could also increase opportunities for recognition while addressing valid concerns regarding qualifications in the regulated occupations.

The closed, destination country-led approach of the health-related MRAs is not surprising given that globally the professional regulations in the health sector are some of the most stringent. The limited harmonization of training standards and curricula for health professionals among ASEAN countries has resulted in a significant lack of trust among regulatory bodies in the region. Moving forward, there is value in developing and implementing initiatives that increase trust among ASEAN Member States, such as by creating regional umbrella associations and supporting regional efforts to improve competency standards at the national level. These are small yet important steps that policymakers could consider to lay the groundwork for improved mutual recognition much later. Given the central role that destination-country regulatory authorities play in MRA implementation, it is important to ensure that they represent the evolving needs of the health sector.

The benefits of fully implementing the seven ASEAN MRAs extend above and beyond the actual mutual recognition of qualifications. Indeed, the greatest achievement of the ASEAN MRAs so far is rather indirect: The signing of these agreements has inspired a significant capacity-building effort in the less-advanced ASEAN Member States to upgrade professional regulation and training standards. And there are many ways to further maximize the benefits MRAs can bring to the region, including creating synergies with related developments such as the ASEAN Qualification Regional Framework (AQR) and existing mobility arrangements in the region, and exploring how approaches and practices adopted in the current batch of ASEAN MRAs can be replicated in other sectors and occupations in the region.

² Compensatory measures aim to bridge gaps between formal qualifications in different signatory countries. Professionals can complete these measures—which may include bridging courses, mentoring programs, on-the-job training, supervised or conditional work, or aptitude tests—to make up points of qualification required by the destination country.

Box 1: About This Research Project

This report is one in a series of four produced through a research partnership between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). The project aims to improve understanding of the barriers to the free movement of professionals within the ASEAN region and to support the development of strategies to overcome these hurdles.

The reports in this series draw on the insights of 387 regional and international experts and practitioners through their participation in focus group discussions, meetings, and surveys. Contributors include ASEAN Member States officials directly responsible for Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) implementation, as well as private-sector employers, academics, training directors, MRA monitoring committee members, and current and former ASEAN Secretariat officials.

ADB and MPI convened 12 days of focus group discussions and meetings between May and September 2015 that were attended by more than 100 regional stakeholders. Additionally, ADB and MPI administered an extensive qualitative survey on the development and implementation of MRAs that was completed by more than 300 individuals directly involved in or affected by the MRAs. See the Appendices of this report for more on the methodology of the study and for a complete list of stakeholders involved.

I. Introduction

Recognition of professional and academic credentials on an individual and case-by-case basis using criteria set unilaterally by one country has long been the norm for ASEAN professionals wishing to practice across borders. Competent authorities at destination assess the qualifications that foreign professionals acquired in their country of origin and determine, according to unilaterally determined criteria, the level of equivalence. Many experts agree that unilateral recognition often leads to less than full recognition and, even more troubling, to arbitrary outcomes, since the discretionary character of the unilateral procedure does not ensure objectively predictable assessments.

Mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs), which allow for two or more parties (state or nonstate) to jointly create a reciprocal recognition process, ideally reduce the uncertainty related to recognition of qualifications and rights of professionals to practice. Parties to MRAs essentially renounce, in part or in full, the discretion of assessing qualifications unilaterally on a case-by-case basis. By jointly setting standardized rules for mutual recognition, MRAs potentially make it easier for professionals to have their qualifications recognized in another country.

Indeed, many countries worldwide have entered into MRAs in an effort to create a more predictable recognition process.³ The Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN) has followed this trend by signing MRAs in the tourism sector and in six regulated occupations—accountancy, architecture, dentistry, engineering, medicine, and nursing (see Table 1). Concluded over the span of 9 years, between 2003 and 2014, the ASEAN MRAs share nearly identical objectives but diverge significantly in terms of institutional structures, requirements, and procedures. Policymakers in the region are currently working toward an MRA in the surveying field, but this agreement is still in the framework stage. As a result, this report will focus on the structure of the seven MRAs that have been fully concluded and are at varying stages of implementation.

Table 1: ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements

ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement	Date of Signing
Engineering Services	9 December 2005
Nursing Services	8 December 2006
Architectural Services	19 November 2007
Dental Practitioners	26 February 2009
Medical Practitioners	26 February 2009
Tourism Professionals	9 November 2012
Accountancy Services	13 November 2014

This report aims to compare the different approaches ASEAN Member States have taken to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications within the region, the factors that shaped each MRA approach, and their tradeoffs and policy implications. More specifically, the report aims to answer questions regarding:

³ For more on the use of Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) in other regions, see Dovelyn Rannveig Mendoza, Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Maria Vincenza Desiderio, Brian Salant, Kate Hooper, and Taylor Elwood, *Reinventing Mutual Recognition Arrangements: International Experiences and Key Insights for the ASEAN Region* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, forthcoming); World Trade Organization, “Trade in Services—Council for Trade in Services—Notifications,” accessed 13 June 2016, https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE_Browse/FE_B_009.aspx?TopLevel=8660#/.

1. **Different MRA approaches.** How do the ASEAN MRAs differ from each other and in what ways are they alike? Which MRA frameworks are the most and least open for foreign professionals if measured along five dimensions: the automaticity of the recognition process, the level of delegation of authority away from the country of destination, the scope of MRA coverage, the level of institutionalization, and the strength of post-MRA guarantees?
2. **Evolution of the ASEAN MRAs.** What factors have contributed to the design of each MRA approach? To what extent does the creation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)⁴ and the huge diversity in the region shape the different MRA designs?
3. **Tradeoffs and their policy implications.** What are the costs and benefits of the different approaches and their policy implications in the short and medium term?
4. **Looking into the future.** How can the region maximize the potential of MRAs in building and utilizing human capital in the long term? Are there opportunities to create synergies with related developments such as the ASEAN Qualification Regional Framework (AQR)⁵ and existing mobility arrangements in the region? Are the approaches and practices adopted in the current ASEAN MRAs replicable in other sectors and occupations—or are they specific to each industry or regulatory body?

In exploring these issues, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Migration Policy Institute (MPI) consulted with 387 regional and international experts on mutual recognition and professional mobility. ADB and MPI researchers convened 12 days of focus group discussions and meetings between May and September 2015 that were attended by more than 100 MRA stakeholders and experts, including a former ASEAN Secretary-General, the Chair of the ASEAN Business Council, and officials from key ministries engaged in MRA development across the region. ADB and MPI researchers also administered a qualitative survey to examine MRA implementation that was completed by 311 individuals from relevant government ministries, the private sector, professional associations, educational institutions, and the human resources field. Appendices 2 and 3 list the affiliations of all stakeholders who attended the meetings and completed the MRA implementation survey.

This report begins by comparing the ASEAN MRAs along five key dimensions—the automaticity of the recognition process, the level of delegation of authority away from the country of destination, the scope and depth of MRA coverage, the degree of institutionalization, and the strength of post-MRA guarantees. Section III offers a typology of different approaches ASEAN Member States have taken; Sections IV and V identify the various factors that shaped each approach, their tradeoffs, and corresponding policy implications. The report ends by outlining potential areas for cooperation that can maximize the potential of MRAs as tools for building and utilizing human capital in the region.⁶

⁴ The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) is a single market and production base involving all ASEAN Member States and allows for the free movement of goods, services, skilled labor, and investment as well as a freer flow of capital.

⁵ The ASEAN Qualification Regional Framework (AQR) is a common reference framework that will enable comparisons of qualifications across Member States through referencing qualifications between the National Qualifications Frameworks of Member States.

⁶ For an examination of the growth of skilled labor in ASEAN and the increased demand for labor circulation, see Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Guntur Sugiyarto, Doreen Rannveig Agunias, and Brian Salant, *Achieving Skill Mobility in the ASEAN Economic Community: Challenges, Opportunities, and Policy Implications* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ADB-MPI-Issue%20Paper-November2015-FINAL.pdf.

II. A Comparison of ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements along Five Dimensions

MRA come in various forms depending on how parties chose to reconcile two important and potentially competing objectives: creating an open mutual recognition framework where the supply of qualified foreign professionals efficiently meets the demand of local markets for their services while ensuring that important domestic and other considerations are kept firmly in place.

Indeed, in an effort to ensure the quality of incoming professionals and the integrity of the domestic recognition systems, MRAs rarely, if ever, grant fully unconditional and open-ended rights of access. In general, MRAs to date, both within the ASEAN region and elsewhere, outline sets of rules and procedures that restrict recognition while maintaining a level of openness that is sensitive to the national and regional contexts.

As with trade regimes, the degree of openness to foreign professionals varies greatly by MRA. The levels of openness can be assessed using many dimensions, but the following five are most relevant for the ASEAN region:

- Automaticity of the recognition process
- Extent of delegation of authority away from the country of destination
- Scope and depth of MRA coverage
- Level of institutionalization required
- Extent of post-MRA guarantees

A. Degree of Automaticity of the Recognition Process

In a *fully* automatic recognition framework, the stamp of recognition from the country of origin provides automatic access to the destination country. Essentially, as Kalypso Nicolaïdis puts it, a system of “international licensing” exists where foreign professionals do not need to meet additional local requirements and/or interact with licensing authorities at destination. A country-of-origin notification that the professional has met the MRA qualifications or a simple verification process limited to producing the certification or license issued by the origin country is typically enough.⁷

Fully automatic MRAs are rare, however. In most cases, MRAs leave residual powers to the country of destination, to a regional body, or both, though the extent of these powers varies. In a semiautomatic recognition framework, foreign professionals still go through a system of recognition at destination based on the eligibility requirements negotiated in the MRAs, which typically specify the conditions under which the intended country can impose compensatory requirements for professionals who fail to meet the eligibility criteria. These requirements can include, among others, completing an adaptation period or passing an aptitude test, and represent a secondary method for applicants to demonstrate their competence in the profession or remedy specific skills gaps.

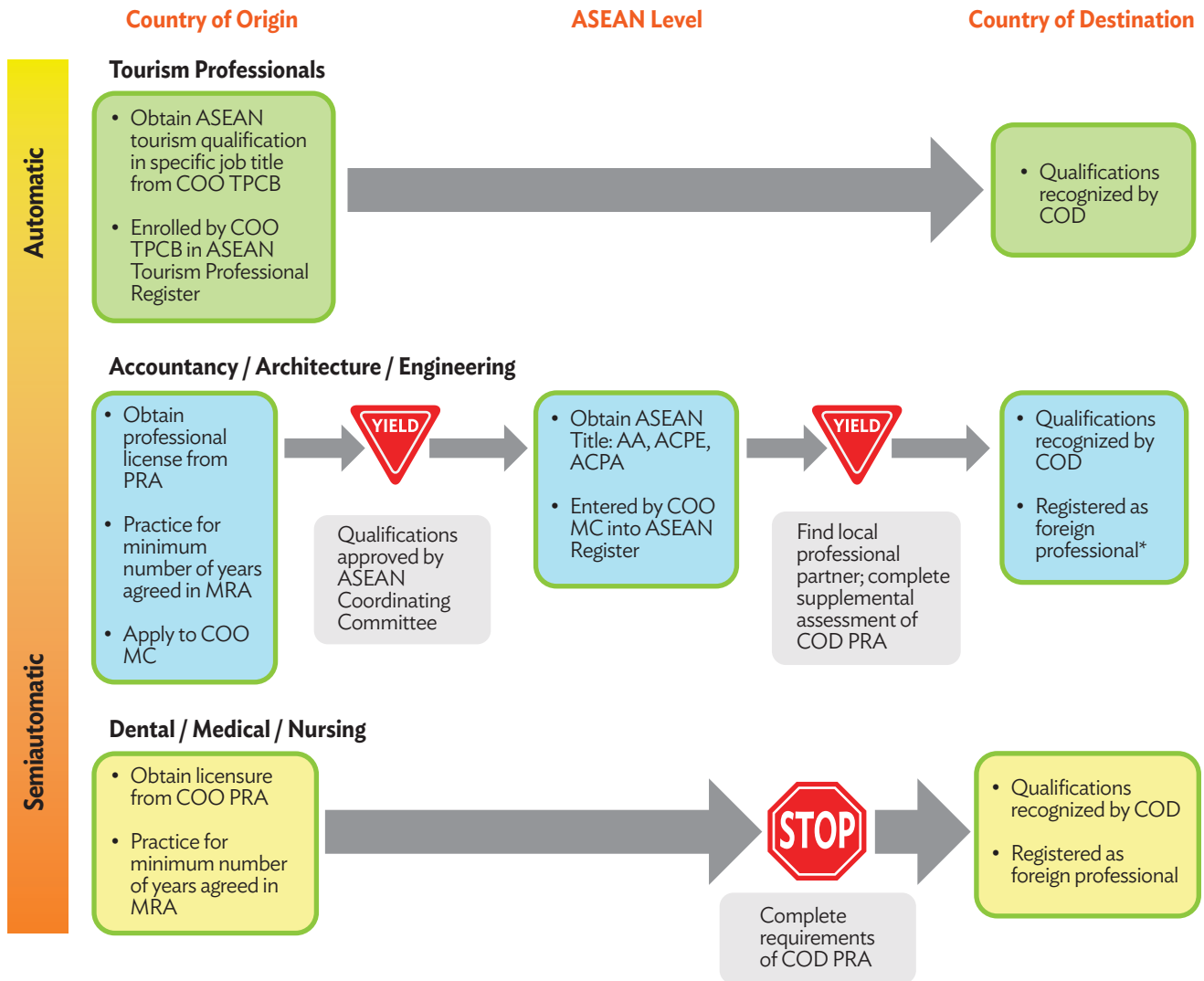
⁷ Kalypso Nicolaïdis, “Managed Mutual Recognition: The New Approach to the Liberalization of Professional Services” (working paper, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1997).

1. Automatic

Of the seven MRAs in the ASEAN region, only the tourism MRA provides for automatic recognition of professional credentials. The Tourism Professional Certification Board (TPCB) in the country of origin issues a tourism competency certificate to nationals who meet the eligibility requirements as agreed

in the MRA and enrolls them in a registry created specifically for the MRA: the ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System (ATPRS). The TPCB at destination would recognize as valid the certificates of ASEAN professionals listed in the ATPRS (which is not yet operational), and there would be no additional requirements or scrutiny (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Automaticity of the Recognition Process, by Type of Mutual Recognition Arrangement



AA = ASEAN Architect, ACPA = ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountant, ACPE = ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer, COD = Country of Destination, COO = Country of Origin, PRA = Professional Regulatory Authority; TPCB = Tourism Professional Certification Board

* Registered Foreign Professional Engineers (RFPE) and Registered Foreign Professional Accountants (RFPA) must work in collaboration with local professionals, while this is an option at present for Registered Foreign Architects (RFA).

Sources: Authors' interpretation of the text of the MRAs. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Engineering Services," 9 December 2005, http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-mutual-recognition-arrangement-on-engineering-services-kuala-lumpur-9-december-2005-2; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services," 8 December 2006, www.asean.org/storage/images/2015/april/mra_nursing/MRA%20Nursing%20signed.pdf; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Architectural Services," 9 November 2007, www.asean.org/storage/images/archive/21137.pdf; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Dental Practitioners," 26 February 2009, <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/rp/pdf/2009%20ASEAN%20Mutual%20Recognition%20Arrangement%20on%20Dental%20Practitioners-pdf.pdf>; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners," 26 February 2009, <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/rp/pdf/2009%20ASEAN%20Mutual%20Recognition%20Arrangement%20on%20Medical%20Practitioners-pdf.pdf>; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals," 9 November 2012, www.aseantourism.travel/media/files/20140508102208_mra_tourism_professionals_bw.pdf; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Accountancy Services," 13 November 2014, [www.asean.org/storage/images/2015/february/mra_on_accountancy/MRA%20on%20Accountancy%20\(signed%20Nov%202014\).pdf](http://www.asean.org/storage/images/2015/february/mra_on_accountancy/MRA%20on%20Accountancy%20(signed%20Nov%202014).pdf).

2. Semiautomatic

In contrast to the tourism sector MRA, the other ASEAN MRAs took the semiautomatic route, with significant variations between the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs, on one hand, and the health-related MRAs on the other.

a) Three-Step Process in Accountancy, Architecture, and Engineering

Essentially, ASEAN accountants, architects, and engineers who wish to be recognized under the MRA system have to go through a three-step qualification process in their country of origin, at the ASEAN level, and at destination.

- **Country of origin.** Individuals must first obtain a professional license from the Professional Regulatory Authority (PRA) in their country of origin and meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the relevant MRA. Those who meet the requirements then apply to the Monitoring Committees (MCs)—national-level bodies created under the MRA to certify the qualifications and experience of individual professionals. The MCs recommend admittance of their qualified nationals into ASEAN-level registries created specifically for the MRAs—the ASEAN Architect Register (AAR), the ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Register (ACPAR), and the ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineers Register (ACPER).
- **ASEAN level.** MRA coordination committees at the regional level—the ASEAN Architect Council (AAC), the ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Coordinating Committee (ACPACC), and the ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Coordinating Committee (ACPECC)—meet approximately four times a year to review MC-recommended professionals. Successful applicants receive the special designation as ASEAN Architect (AA), ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountant (ACPA), or ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer (ACPE).

- **Country of destination.** At the third and final stage, the AAs, ACPAs, and ACPEs apply as Foreign Registered Professionals in the intended destination country,⁸ where they may have to meet additional requirements as required under local laws and regulations, including finding a local counterpart to work with.

b) Two-Step Process in Dental, Medical, and Nursing Services

Unlike the other ASEAN regulated occupations with mutual recognition, the health-sector MRAs did not create ASEAN-level registries or professional designations. The MRAs in dental, medical, and nursing services outline only the minimum eligibility criteria that health professionals must fulfill to apply for recognition in another ASEAN country.

Health professionals interested in working in their fields in another ASEAN country follow a two step-process. First, like their counterparts in accountancy, architecture, and engineering, they must obtain licensure from their respective PRAs and meet the MRA-mandated criteria relating to the minimum number of years of experience, continuing professional development regulations, and professional and ethical standards. Those who meet the MRA requirements can then apply directly to the PRA at their intended work destination. In order to get full recognition and registration at destination, health professionals must still meet additional local requirements, which could vary by country.

c) Two-Step vs. Three-Step Recognition: Which Is More Straightforward?

Clearly, among the seven MRAs, the MRA on Tourism Professionals provides the most straightforward process of recognition since the qualifications acquired at origin are automatically recognized at destination.

⁸ Foreign Registered Professional is the title given to professionals who have successfully registered to practice with a Professional Regulatory Authority (PRA) in the country of intended destination through the MRA process. The designation is an umbrella term for the specific titles of Foreign Dental Practitioner, Foreign Medical Practitioner, Foreign Nurse, Foreign Tourism Professional, Registered Foreign Architect, Registered Foreign Professional Accountant, and Registered Foreign Professional Engineer.

Comparing the two-step approach of the health-related MRAs to the three-step approach of the other regulated occupations, one may think that the former is a more straightforward system. On closer inspection, however, although the creation of ASEAN-level registries in the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs added an additional step, it should result in faster and more efficient recognition of foreign qualifications. The AAs, ACPAs, and ACPEs have already passed the scrutiny of ASEAN coordinating committee members, and their admittance to the ASEAN registries offers proof of their qualifications. Ideally, it should be easier for destination countries, and prospective employers within them, to formally accept the qualifications of professionals in the ASEAN registries and give them the right to practice their professions.

In other words, by design, the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs envision a more open framework than their health-related counterparts; this difference in the level of openness is represented in Figure 1 through the use of the yield and stop signs.

B. Degree of Delegation of Authority

MRAs also differ in terms of the extent to which the destination country has delegated the authority to determine qualifications of foreign professionals. Countries of destination have either reserved the authority for themselves or delegated it, in part or in full, to the country of origin or to a regional or other entity. The level of delegation is an important indicator of trust among parties to the MRA. The greater the trust, the more authority is delegated away from the destination country.

Of the ASEAN MRAs, the tourism MRA has delegated the most authority away from the country of destination, since, as previously mentioned, the framework automatically recognizes tourism competency certificates issued at origin. In complete contrast, in the health-related MRAs, the PRAs at destination fully reserve the right to issue recognition and licensing certificates. The MRAs on accountancy, architecture, and engineering services have taken a middle ground by creating

regional entities that certify the intended workers' qualifications and experiences, although final authority remains with the PRAs at destination.

C. Degree of MRA Scope

MRAs also vary in scope; some cover an entire sector or sectors and involve multiple occupations, while others are limited to one type of occupation. MRAs also determine scope by defining the pool of professionals eligible to apply for recognition.

The MRA on Tourism Professionals has the broadest scope among the ASEAN MRAs. It is a sector-wide MRA covering 32 occupations in six labor divisions: front office, housekeeping, food production, food and beverage, travel agencies, and tour operation. Even more interestingly, the 32 occupations vary by skill level, ranging from high-skilled jobs, such as hotel managers and executive chefs, to low-skilled occupations, such as housekeepers and bellboys (see Figure 2).

The other MRAs are occupation specific and not sector-wide. They also have more stringent requirements that further limit the pool of eligible professionals. Aside from meeting education requirements, the six MRAs require minimum work experience (ranging from 3 years in accountancy and nursing to 10 years in architecture). By contrast, the tourism MRA covers all tourism professionals under the 32 occupations, regardless of years of experience, as long as they can meet the certification requirement (see Table 2).

To practice their profession as registered foreign professionals, ACPEs, AAs, and ACPAs must also demonstrate that they will work with a local partner. The limits on independent practice aim to eliminate liability issues in case of fault or accidents. While the MRA on Architectural Services allows for the option that Registered Foreign Architects (RFAs) could work independently, interviews with ASEAN Architect Council representatives have clarified that independent professional practice is not an option for RFAs currently. This further limits the scope of the accountancy, architectural, and engineering MRAs to professionals who can find and are willing to work with local counterparts.

Figure 2: Occupations under Tourism Mutual Recognition Arrangement, by Skill Level

	Hotel Services				Travel Services	
	Front Office	Housekeeping	Food Production	Food and Beverage Service	Travel Agencies	Tour Operation
High-Skilled	Front Office Manager	Executive Housekeeper	Executive Chef	Food and Beverage Director	General Manager	Product Manager
	Front Office Supervisor	Laundry Manager	Demi Chef	Food and Beverage Outlet Manager		Sales/Market Manager
			Commis Chef			Credit Manager
			Chef de Partie			Ticketing Manager
						Tour Manager
Middle-Skilled	Receptionist	Floor Supervisor	Commis Pastry	Head Waiter	Asst. General Manager	
	Telephone Operator		Baker	Bartender	Senior Travel Consultant	
			Butcher	Waiter	Travel Consultant	
Low-Skilled	Bell Boy	Laundry Attendant				
		Room Attendant				
		Public Area Cleaner				

Source: ASEAN, *Guide to ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals, For Tourism & Hospitality Organisations* (Jakarta: ASEAN and ESRT Program for Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism, 2012), 18, www.asean.org/storage/images/2013/economic/MRA%20GUIDE%20for%20Tourism%20&%20Hospitality%20Organisations.pdf.

Table 2: Mutual Recognition Arrangement Eligibility Requirement

	Minimum Education	Minimum Work Experience	Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Compliance with Professional/Ethical Standards	Practice with Local Partner
Accountancy	Yes: Accredited accountancy degree or equivalent.	3 years (within a 5-year period after graduating)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Architecture	Yes: Accredited architectural degree or equivalent from a program of 5 years duration.	10 years with 5 years experience after licensure and 2 years in more responsible position	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dentistry	Yes: Medical qualification recognized by PDRA	5 continuous years	Yes	Yes	No
Engineering	Yes: Accredited engineering degree or equivalent	7 years with 2 years in more responsible position	Yes	Yes	Yes

Continued.

Table 2. Continued.

	Minimum Education	Minimum Work Experience	Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Compliance with Professional/Ethical Standards	Practice with Local Partner
Medicine	Yes: Medical qualification recognized by PMRA	5 continuous years	Yes	Yes	No
Nursing	Yes: Nursing qualification from recognized training institution	3 continuous years	Yes	Yes	No
Tourism	Valid tourism competency certificate in specific tourism job title, issued by TPCB	No	No	No	No

Sources: ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Engineering Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Architectural Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Dental Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Accountancy Services.”

D. Degree of Institutionalization

The degree of institutionalization among MRAs also differs. Typically, MRAs mandate the creation of implementing institutions at national and/or regional levels and the direct involvement of public or private stakeholders. MRAs from other regions also institutionalize human-resource development issues by ensuring the quality of supplied professionals through the harmonization of training, and meeting labor demand by providing market access. Indeed, a few MRAs are linked to free trade agreements, which alongside recognition also provide full or limited access to the domestic labor market. The larger the institutional footprint, the more likely it is for an MRA to be more open to foreign professionals.

1. Implementing Offices at National and Regional Levels

Among the ASEAN MRAs, tourism has the largest institutional footprint by mandating the creation of offices at national and regional levels, and including the participation of a wider range of stakeholders. The ASEAN Tourism Professional Monitoring Committee (ATPMC) is at the core of this structure, tasked with creating awareness and disseminating information about the MRA within ASEAN. Appointed representatives from the National Tourism Professional Boards (NTPBs) and National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) from each ASEAN Member State make up the ATPMC (see Table 3).

Table 3: Implementing Bodies and Offices by Occupational Grouping

Office and/or Bodies		MRAs on Dental, Medical, and Nursing Services	MRAs on Architecture Services and Engineering	MRA on Accountancy Services	MRA on Tourism Professionals
Regional Level	Joint coordinating committee or body	X	X	X	X
	Professional registry		X	X	X
	Secretariat				X
National Level	Regulatory authority/certification board	X	X	X	X
	Monitoring committee/body		X	X	X
	Government central authority			X	X

Source: ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Engineering Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Architectural Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Dental Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Accountancy Services.”

The tourism MRA, unlike its counterparts in other occupations, has a permanent regional secretariat that not only maintains the professional register but is also responsible for promoting, updating, and monitoring two regionally agreed standards: the ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP) and the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum (CATC). The ACCSTP refers to the minimum requirements of competency standards in hotel and travel services while the CATC refers to the common curriculum for ASEAN tourism professionals.

The MRAs that cover accountancy, architecture, and engineering also mandated creation of implementing institutions at national and regional levels, but with a less comprehensive footprint than tourism. At the regional level, the ASEAN-level professional registries (AAR, ACPAR, and ACPER) and coordinating committees (AAC, ACPACC, and ACPECC) essentially streamline and centralize the recognition and certification process at the regional level, while the MCs (and in the case of accountancy, national accountancy boards [NAB]) coordinate the implementation of the MRAs across various sectors and agencies at the national level.

The MRAs on health-related occupations envisioned the most basic institutional setup, with national-level

regulatory bodies for each profession—a nursing regulatory authority (NRA), professional dental regulatory authority (PDRA), and a professional medical regulatory authority (PMRA)—to review applications and regulate the practice of foreign professionals.

Coordinating committees also facilitate and institutionalize the implementation of the MRAs at the ASEAN level. Two appointed representatives from the professional regulatory authority of each ASEAN country make up the three committees—the ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Nursing (AJCCN), ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Dental Practitioners (AJCCD), and the ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Medical Practitioners (AJCCM).

However, the coordinating committees in the health-related MRAs, unlike the other ASEAN MRAs, are essentially what their name implies: coordinating bodies whose mandate is limited to facilitating the exchange of information among Member States, particularly on existing domestic policies, procedures, and practices related to licensing and registration of health professionals (see Table 4). Their ultimate goal is to assist Member States to eventually adopt and align standards and procedures, which is a critical step to fully implementing the MRAs.⁹

Table 4: Comparing ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement Infrastructure

Offices and Bodies	Accountancy, Architecture, and Engineering MRAs	Dental, Medical, and Nursing MRAs	Tourism MRA
Professional Regulatory Body	Professional Regulatory Authority (PRA)	Professional Dental Regulatory Authority (PDRA)/Professional Medical Regulatory Authority (PRA)/Nursing Regulatory Authority	Tourism Professional Certification Board (TPCB)
<i>Role in country of origin</i>	Assesses qualifications and licenses local professionals to practice domestically		Assesses local professionals for ASEAN-level qualification, issues certificates of competency, maintains national registry of tourism professionals for ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System (ATPRS)
<i>Role in host country</i>	Assesses qualifications of foreign professionals wishing to have qualifications recognized	Sets continuing professional development standards, certifies good standing of local professionals, evaluates qualifications, registers and provides licenses for domestic medical practice to local professionals, and registers foreign professionals seeking qualifications recognition	Reviews complex cases of foreign tourism professionals seeking recognition of qualifications

Continued.

⁹ Mendoza and Sugiyarto, *The Long Road Ahead: A Status Report on the Implementation of Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Professional Services* (Manila: ADB, forthcoming).

Table 4. Continued.

Offices and Bodies	Accountancy, Architecture, and Engineering MRAs	Dental, Medical, and Nursing MRAs	Tourism MRA
National Monitoring Body	Monitoring Committee Develops assessment statement, establishes and maintains national professional registers, serves as the bridge for professionals to apply for ASEAN qualifications to the ASEAN-level committee, monitors compliance of ASEAN professionals with eligibility criteria	None	National Tourism Professional Board (NTPB) Promotes, updates, maintains, and monitors standards of the ACCSTP and CATC; facilitates exchange of information; creates the application form for local professionals to apply for registration in ATPRS ASEAN National Tourism Organization (ASEAN NTO) Ministerial-level body in charge of tourism, appoints members of NTPB and oversees the ATPMC, and approves annual business plan of Regional Secretariat
ASEAN-Level Coordinating Committee	ASEAN Architect Council (AAC) / ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Coordinating Committee (ACPACC) / ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Coordinating Committee (ACPECC) Approve assessment statements applications of professionals for ASEAN titles	ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Dental Practitioners (AJCCD) / ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Medical Practitioners (AJCCM) / ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Nursing (AJCCN) Promote the mobility of professionals and the harmonization of training and standards, facilitate implementation of the MRAs, promote information exchange	ASEAN Tourism Professional Monitoring Committee (ATPMS) Promotes awareness of the MRA, monitors the ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals and Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum, facilitates exchange of information on assessment procedures. Regional Secretariat for Tourism Professionals Enhances awareness and capacity building on MRA implementation, maintains the ASEAN professional register
ASEAN-Level Professional Register	ASEAN Architect Register (AAR) / ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Register (ACPAR) / ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineers Register (ACPER)	None	ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System (ATPRS)

Sources: ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Engineering Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Architectural Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Dental Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Accountancy Services.”

2. Type of Stakeholders Involved in Mutual Recognition Arrangement Implementation

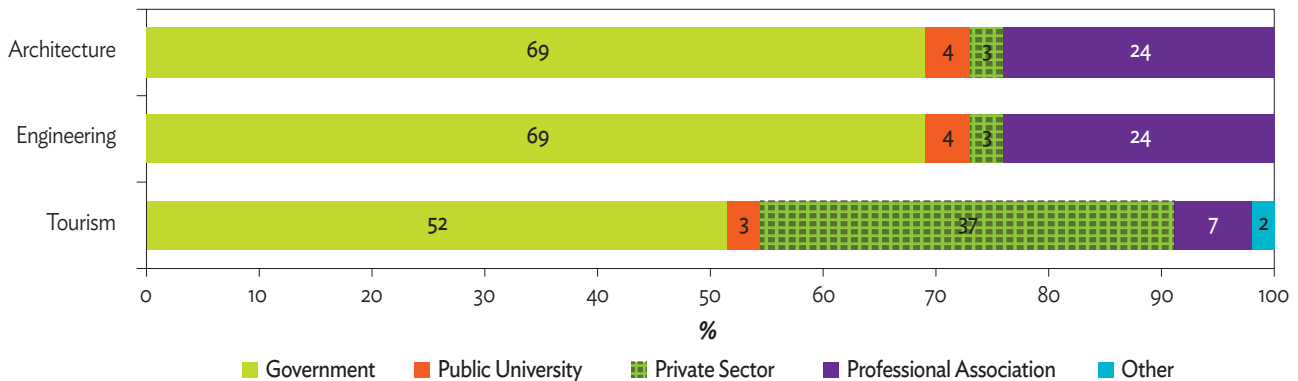
The range of stakeholders beyond government that are directly involved in implementation of mutual recognition arrangements also differs. The health-related MRAs are the least inclusive since they did not envision the creation of multistakeholder bodies, such as the professional boards in tourism and the monitoring committees in accountancy, architecture, and engineering.

In contrast, the government shares the role of MRA implementation with nonstate stakeholders

in tourism, and to a lesser extent in architecture and engineering. For instance, government representatives controlled approximately 52% of NTPB membership in 2016. Four out of every ten NTPB members in ASEAN in 2016 were from the private sector.

The MCs in engineering and architecture also include the private sector, but at 3% and 5% respectively in 2016. Government representatives made up nearly 70% of the MCs, although one-quarter of the slots are reserved for professional associations (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Composition of the National Tourism Professional Boards and Architecture and Engineering Monitoring Committees, by Type of Stakeholder, 2016



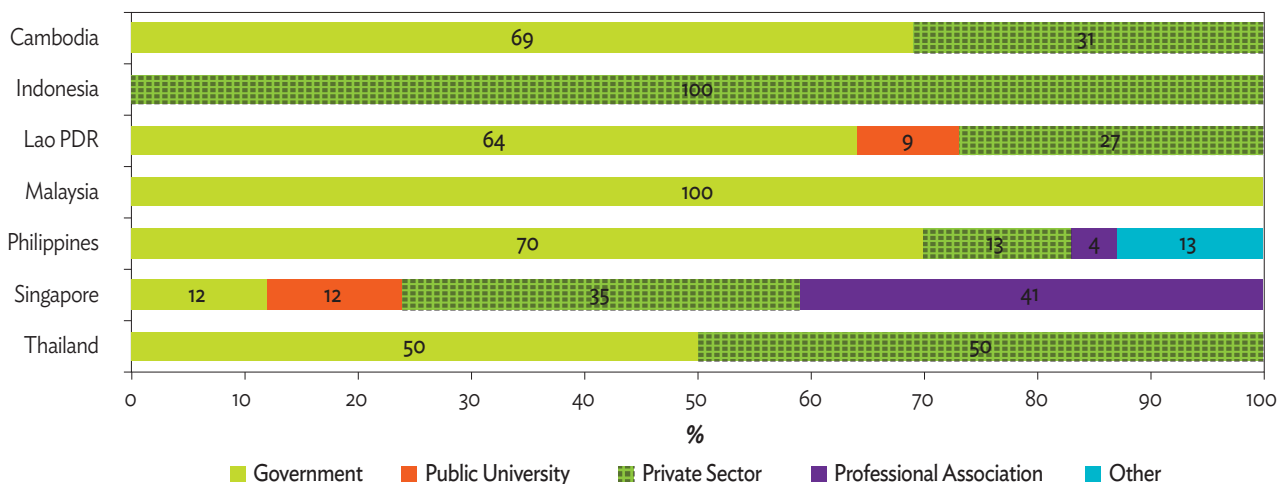
Sources: Authors’ compilation using data from National Monitoring Committee Architecture and Engineering Assessment Statements; Tourism Industry Board Foundation, “Board of Trustees of the Tourism Industry Board,” accessed 20 April 2016, www.tourismindustryboard.org/about-us/board-of-trustees; Singapore Tourism Board, “Board of Directors,” accessed 20 April 2016, www.stb.gov.sg/about-stb/Pages/Board-of-Directors.aspx; Responses to Asian Development Bank-Migration Policy Institute (ADB-MPI) research questionnaire, 15 September–30 October 2015.

Figures 4, 5, and 6 show the same information disaggregated by country. In five out of the seven ASEAN members with available data on tourism professional board membership—Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Singapore, and Thailand—private businesses and/or their associations made up more than one-quarter of NTPB membership in

2016. At one extreme is Indonesia, in which the tourism professional board, *Lembaga Profesional Pariwisata Indonesia* (LEPPI), is a purely private organization.

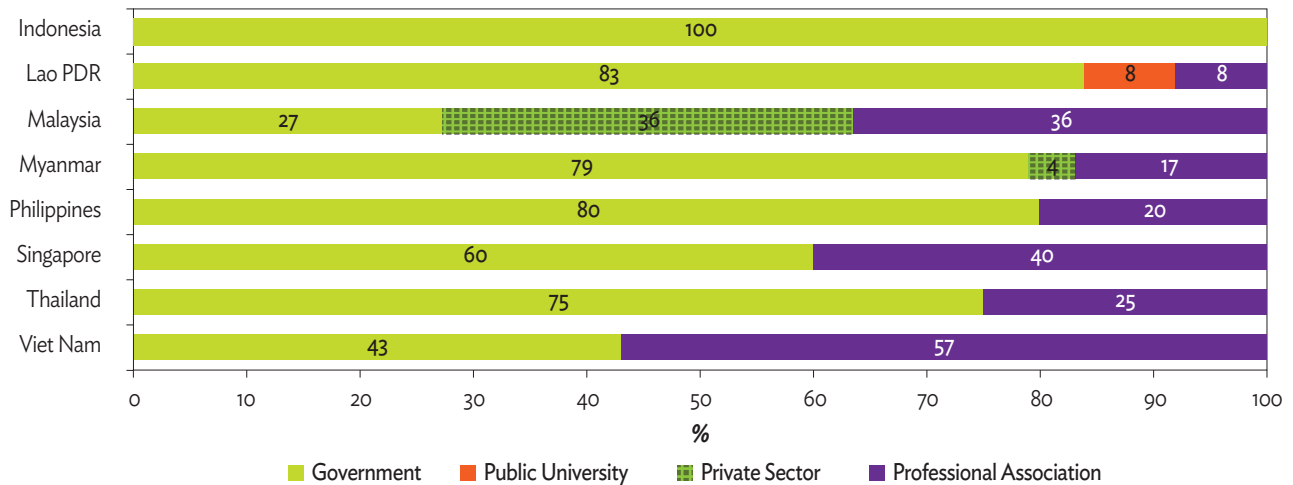
In comparison, MC members in architecture and engineering also include nongovernment stakeholders but at a much lower proportion.

Figure 4: Composition of National Tourism Professional Board by Type of Stakeholder, Selected ASEAN Members, 2016



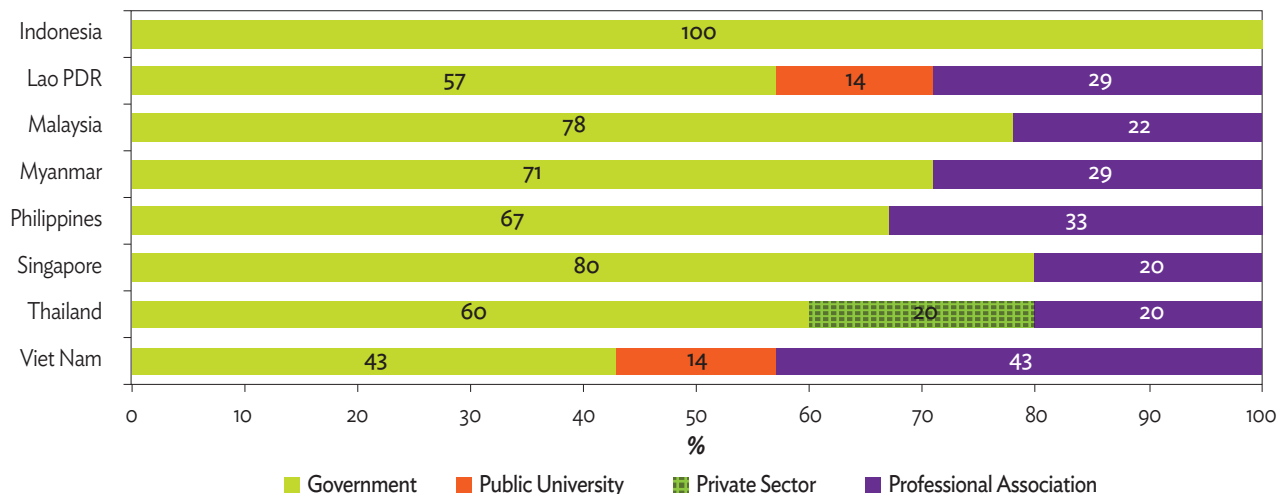
Source: Responses to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 22 September - 30 October 2015.

Figure 5: Composition of Monitoring Committees in Engineering, by Type of Stakeholder, Selected ASEAN Members, 2016



Sources: Indonesia Monitoring Committee, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, n.d.), <http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/03.%20ID-ACPE%20ASSESSMENT%20STATEMENT%20rev%202012.pdf>; Lao Monitoring Committee, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, n.d.), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/04.%20Lao%20PDR%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20Engineering%20-%20\(ACPECC%2019\)%20Dec%202012-1.pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/04.%20Lao%20PDR%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20Engineering%20-%20(ACPECC%2019)%20Dec%202012-1.pdf); Board of Engineers Malaysia, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, n.d.), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/05.%20Malaysia%20ACPE%20Assesmet%20Statement%20-%20\(ACPECC%201\).pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/05.%20Malaysia%20ACPE%20Assesmet%20Statement%20-%20(ACPECC%201).pdf); Professional Regulatory Authority, Myanmar, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, n.d.), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/06.%20Myanmar%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20\(ACPECC%2014\).pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/06.%20Myanmar%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20(ACPECC%2014).pdf); Republic of the Philippines, "Assessment Statement - ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, n.d.), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/07.%20Philippines%20Assessment%20Statement%20ACPE%20-%20\(ACPECC%2017\).pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/07.%20Philippines%20Assessment%20Statement%20ACPE%20-%20(ACPECC%2017).pdf); Professional Engineers Board Singapore, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, n.d.), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/08.%20Singapore%20ACPE%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20\(ACPECC%201\).pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/08.%20Singapore%20ACPE%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20(ACPECC%201).pdf); Council of Engineers of Thailand, "ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Assessment Statement" (assessment statement, March 2010), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/09.%20Thailand%20ACPE%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20\(ACPECC%207\).pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/09.%20Thailand%20ACPE%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20(ACPECC%207).pdf); Viet Nam Monitoring Committee, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer" (assessment statement, 1 October 2008), [http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/10.%20Vietnam%20ACPE%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20\(ACPECC%204\).pdf](http://acpecc.net/v2/dl/10.%20Vietnam%20ACPE%20Assessment%20Statement%20-%20(ACPECC%204).pdf)

Figure 6: Composition of Monitoring Committees in Architecture, by Type of Stakeholder, Selected ASEAN Members, 2016



Sources: Board of Architects Cambodia, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect" (assessment statement, n.d.), www.iuc.or.kr/board/pds/board/64/files/de8f7b3400660cb6a9ab52595475ec4c; Indonesia Monitoring Committee, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect, 2nd Draft" (assessment statement, 8 October 2009), http://aseanarchitectcouncil.org/pdf/indonesia_aaa.pdf; Lao Monitoring Committee, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect" (assessment statement, n.d.), <http://aseanarchitectcouncil.org/pdf/Lao%20Assessment%20Statement%20Architect.pdf>; Board of Architects Malaysia, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect-Malaysia Monitoring Committee" (assessment statement, n.d.), http://aseanarchitectcouncil.org/pdf/malaysia_aaa.pdf; Professional Regulatory Board of Architects and United Architects of the Philippines, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect-Philippines Monitoring Committee" (assessment statement, n.d.), http://aseanarchitectcouncil.org/pdf/philippines_aaa.pdf; Board of Architects Singapore, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect" (assessment statement, n.d.), http://aseanarchitectcouncil.org/pdf/singapore_Architect%20Assessment%20Statement.pdf; Architect Council of Thailand, "Assessment Statement for ASEAN Architect" (assessment statement, n.d.), http://aseanarchitectcouncil.org/pdf/thailand_aaa.pdf

For instance, as Figure 5 shows, for six out of the eight ASEAN countries with available information,¹⁰ the government comprised a majority of the monitoring committee members in engineering in 2016, with Indonesia again at the extreme with total government membership.

In the architecture monitoring committees, the government represented a majority in 2016 in seven of the eight ASEAN countries with available data. Similar to engineering, all MC members in Indonesia are from the government. Viet Nam has the lowest proportion of government representatives and the highest percentage of professional associations, each making up 43% of committee membership.

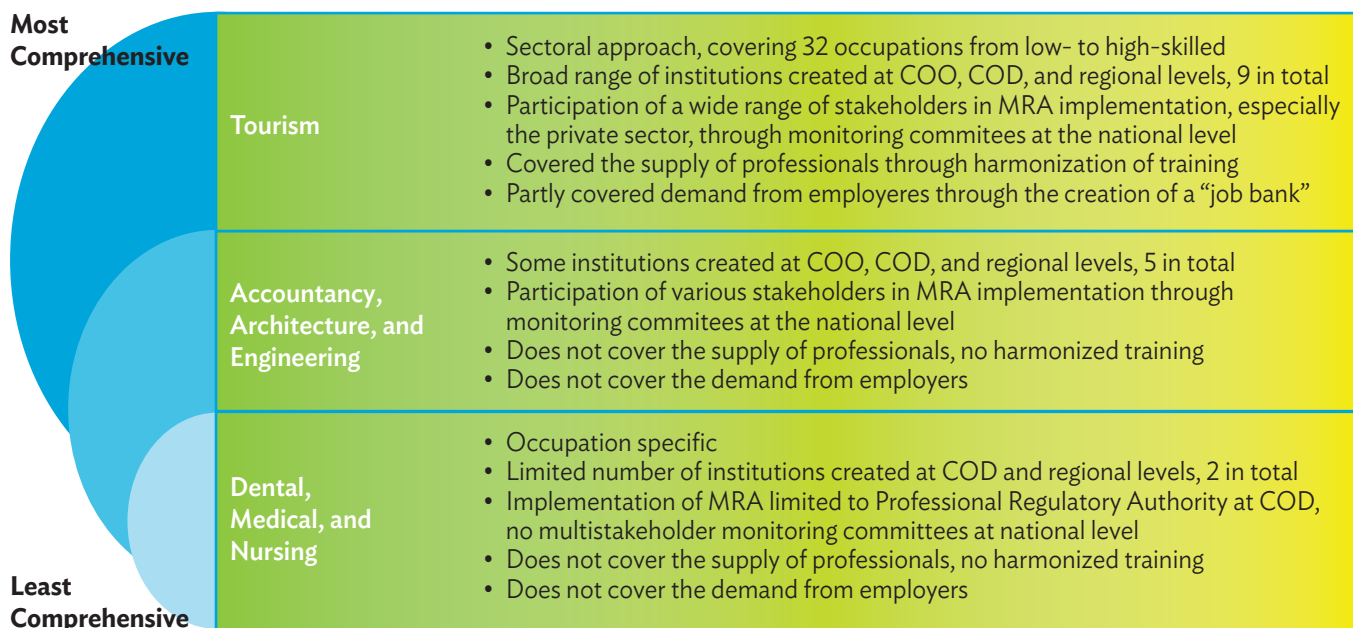
3. Human Resource Development Issues

Some MRAs also cover human resource development issues by ensuring the quality of supply of professionals through the harmonization of training and providing access to the labor market.

Among the seven MRAs, only tourism has institutionalized the harmonized training component. The MRA builds on a preexisting regional process of harmonizing training modules and professional competences, which began in the early 2000s. The ACCSTP, the cornerstone of this process, outlines the competency requirements for earning a tourism competency certificate in any of the 32 occupations under the MRA. The competencies may be earned in the classroom or in the workplace.

Although the MRAs were developed closely with the creation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which envisions the establishment of a single market and production base for the region, they are not directly linked to existing regional initiatives that provide access to the labor market. The tourism MRA envisioned that its registry would function as a web-based job bank, by connecting tourism professionals with prospective employers. However, unlike other MRAs linked to free trade agreements, for instance, the MRA on Tourism Professionals stops short of providing direct access to visa and immigration systems at destination.

Figure 7: Degree of Mutual Recognition Arrangement Scope and Institutionalization



COD = Country of Destination, COO = Country of Origin, MRA = Mutual Recognition Arrangement
Source: Authors' rendering.

¹⁰ Member States for which no data was available include Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia.

E. Post-MRA Guarantees

Lastly, many MRAs include safeguards that enable the authorities at destination to keep or reassert regulatory jurisdiction in order to protect national policy objectives, such as public safety, and may even include the possibility of reversing or removing recognition obligations in light of changes to the other party's regulatory system. These provisions essentially compensate for the destination country's loss of control.

In all seven MRAs, ASEAN Member States have reserved the right to revise, reverse, or remove recognition obligation. However, post-MRA

guarantees are particularly strong for the regulated occupations, less so for tourism professionals. For instance, the ASEAN MRAs on health service practitioners stipulate that foreign health professionals must *respect the culture and religious practice of the host country*—a clause not found in other MRAs. The stipulation essentially leaves ample leeway to the PRA at destination to impose additional assessments or refuse a recognition application from an ASEAN-qualified candidate based on public safeguard considerations. The same could be said for the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs, which allow countries to impose domestic laws and regulations as deemed appropriate by the regulatory authority at destination (see Table 5).

Table 5: Post-Mutual Recognition Arrangement Guarantees, by Mutual Recognition Arrangement

Accountancy	Architecture	Dentistry	Engineering	Medicine	Nursing	Tourism
Must work in collaboration with local professional accountant, and “subject to domestic laws and regulations”	May work in independent practice or in collaboration with local licensed architect, and “subject to domestic laws and regulations”	- Comply with any other assessment imposed - Subscribe to insurance liability program - Respect the culture, religion of host country	Must work in collaboration with local professional engineer, and “subject to domestic laws and regulations”	- Comply with any other assessment imposed - Subscribe to insurance liability program - Respect the culture, religion of host country	- Submit to any requirements including medical exam, induction program, competency assessment - Subscribe to insurance liability program - Respect the culture, religion of host country	-The eligibility to work in a host country will be “subjected to prevailing domestic laws and regulation of the host country.”

Sources: ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Engineering Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Architectural Services;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Dental Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals;” ASEAN, “ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Accountancy Services.”

III. The ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements: Three Approaches to Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

As described in the previous section, the degree to which an MRA is open to foreign professionals can be assessed using the following five dimensions:

- Automaticity of the recognition process
- Extent of delegation of authority away from the country of destination
- Scope and depth of MRA coverage
- Level of institutionalization required
- Extent of post-MRA guarantees

Based on these measures of openness, the ASEAN MRAs can be roughly categorized into three different approaches.

The MRA on Tourism Professionals provides the greatest opportunity for mutual recognition among the seven MRAs. It adopts a fully automatic

recognition process, gives full authority to the country of origin, and has the most comprehensive coverage and minimal post-MRA guarantees (see Figures 8 and 9).

At the middle of the spectrum are the MRAs on accountancy, architecture, and engineering, which can be considered partially open, regional-driven frameworks. They operate under a semiautomatic recognition process, have delegated some authority to an ASEAN-level body, but maintain final authority for recognition at destination. They have fairly comprehensive coverage and, unlike the tourism MRA, have strong post-MRA guarantee provisions, essentially allowing destination countries to impose additional rules that could make it very difficult for ASEAN professionals to receive recognition in practice.

Figure 8: ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement Level of Openness



Source: Authors' rendering.

The health-related MRAs are essentially closed, destination country-led frameworks with minimal opportunities for recognition. Although they also adopt a semiautomatic recognition process and have strong post-MRA guarantee provisions, the

countries of destination have reserved full authority to determine qualifications. They also have the least comprehensive scope and degree of institutionalization compared to the other four MRA.

Figure 9: ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements along Five Dimensions

Degree of Automaticity



Degree of Delegation of Authority away from Country of Destination



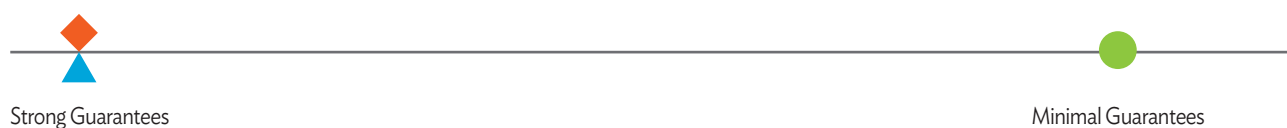
Degree of Mutual Recognition Arrangement Coverage



Degree of Mutual Recognition Arrangement Institutionalization



Post Mutual Recognition Arrangement Guarantees



Source: Authors' rendering.

IV. The Evolution of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements: Factors Affecting Design

The MRAs' level of openness to foreign professionals is a reflection of the national and regional context during the negotiation phase. In the ASEAN region, the presence of existing standards and availability of financial and technical resources to government and other stakeholders during the negotiation of certain MRAs led to relatively open recognition frameworks, while the presence of strong concerns over differences in regulatory standards and protectionist leanings increased the level of restrictions in others.

A. Presence of Preexisting Standards

The presence of preexisting standards involving some or all ASEAN countries increased the level of trust during negotiations and led to relatively open recognition frameworks in the MRAs for certain occupations. Indeed, as already mentioned, the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals benefitted greatly from a process of harmonization of training modules and professional competences that started a full decade before the signing of the agreement.

In contrast, the essentially closed framework of the health-related MRAs can partly be attributed to the absence of previous agreements or cooperation on dental, medical, and nursing services, and the vastly different education and training curricula across countries.

Regional and international professional standards also influenced the MRA design in engineering and architecture. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand have all participated in the

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Engineer initiative since the early 2000s.¹¹ The initiative aims to facilitate mutual recognition among APEC economies by setting international standards for professional engineering credentials and by requiring that the assessment systems of participating countries align with such standards.

The APEC Engineer initiative significantly influenced the design of the ASEAN MRA on Engineering Services, and the eligibility requirements are quite similar. The APEC initiative also designates a professional engineer as someone who holds a valid professional certificate of registration, has a baccalaureate degree from an accredited engineering institution, has at least 7 years of practical experience since graduation (of which at least 2 years must be in charge of significant engineering work), and is a member of the national professional engineering body.

Professional engineers assessed against these standards in APEC countries earn substantially equivalent competences and can be registered as APEC Engineers in the International Professional Engineer Register (IPER), which is quite similar to

¹¹ The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Engineer initiative began its implementation phase in 2000. The Institute of Engineering Malaysia is one of the founding members, together with the corresponding professional bodies of Australia; Canada; Hong Kong, China; Japan; the Republic of Korea; and New Zealand. The Institution of Engineers of Indonesia joined in 2001, as did the United States. The Philippine Technological Council and the Council of Engineers Thailand joined in 2003. The Institution of Engineers Singapore started to implement the agreement in 2005, the same year as Taipei, China. The Russian Federation also joined in 2010.

the ASEAN registry in engineering.¹² The APEC Engineer initiative also inspired the creation of monitoring and coordinating committees and

the use of assessment statements for evaluating prospective ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineers (see Table 6).¹³

Table 6: Comparison of the ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Engineer

	Description	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Engineer
Eligibility Criteria	Minimum education	Complete an accredited engineering degree recognized by the professional engineering accreditation body	Complete an accredited or recognized engineering program
	Eligibility to practice in country of origin	Possess a current and valid professional registration to practice engineering in country of origin	Pass an individual assessment for independent practice in country of origin
	Years of experience	7 years' practical experience since graduation; 2 years' responsible charge of significant work	7 years' practical experience since graduation; 2 years' responsible charge of significant work
	Compliance with professional/ethical standards	Continuing professional development (CPD) at satisfactory level	CPD at satisfactory level
	Certification of compliance with standards	Certification from origin-country Professional Regulatory Authority (PRA) of no record of serious violation of technical, professional, or ethical standards	Certification from origin-country Monitoring Committee (MC) that candidate has signed a statement of compliance with applicable professional codes of conduct
	Comply with codes of professional conduct	Bound by local and international codes of professional conduct in accordance with the policy on ethics and conduct established and enforced by the country of origin, as well as prevailing host-country laws and regulations	Bound by the codes of professional conduct established and enforced by the country of origin and by host country
	Collaboration / accountability	Work in collaboration with local professional engineers in the host country, subject to destination-country domestic laws and regulations	Held individually accountable for actions, both through requirements imposed by the host-country regulatory body and through legal processes.
Institutional Structures	National institutions	PRA MC	MC
	International committee	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Coordinating Committee (ACPECC)	APEC Engineer Coordinating Committee
	Professional registry	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Register (ACPER)	International Professional Engineer Register (IPER)

Sources: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Engineer Coordinating Committee, The APEC Engineer Manual: The Identification of Substantial Equivalence (Singapore: APEC Human Resources Development Working Group, 2009), www.ieagrements.org/APEC/Documents/APECEngineerManual.pdf; ASEAN, "ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Engineering Services

¹² For more on the APEC Engineering Agreement, see International Engineering Alliance, "APEC Engineer Member Economies," accessed 13 June 2016, www.ieagrements.org/APEC/signatories.cfm; APEC Engineer Coordinating Committee, The APEC Engineer Manual: The Identification of Substantial Equivalence (Singapore: APEC Human Resources Development Working Group, 2009), www.ieagrements.org/APEC/Documents/APECEngineerManual.pdf; Gue See Sew, "APEC Engineer Register, Challenges and the Way Forward to Promote Mobility of Engineering Services" (discussion paper, APEC 43rd Industrial Science and Technology Working Group Meeting, Taipei, China, August 2012), www.gnpgeo.com.my/download/publication/2012_01.pdf; Edward H. Wang, "Current Status and Strategies on the Mobility of Professional Engineers within APEC Economies," Information: An International Interdisciplinary Journal 17, no. 6B (2014): 2635-54, www.academia.edu/8661689/Current_Status_and_Strategies_on_the_Mobility_of_Professional_Engineers_within_APEC_Economies.

¹³ Author interview with a stakeholder familiar with the working of the ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Coordinating Committee, Bali, 17 May 2016.

In the architectural services, all ASEAN countries except Cambodia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam participate in the International Union of Architects,¹⁴ whose cornerstone, the 1999 UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice, has codified common definitions of practice, requirements, accreditation standards, registration, ethics, and professional development as a basis for mutual recognition.¹⁵

Does the Presence of Preexisting Standards Lead to More Open Frameworks?

The participation of a core group of ASEAN countries in these international professional agreements and standards facilitated the negotiation phase by establishing mutual trust and cooperation among the relevant professional bodies. It is important to note, however, that while preexisting arrangements facilitate the development of new MRAs, they do not necessarily lead to more open frameworks for recognition. Instead, they could replicate the restrictive arrangements of their predecessors or make them even less open. In the case of the engineering MRA, for instance, the system envisioned in the APEC Engineer is more open since it does not require that accredited engineers work with local counterparts. This is not surprising since APEC member countries¹⁶ are far less diverse than those in the ASEAN region.

B. Availability of Financial and Technical Resources

The availability of financial and technical resources to assist during the negotiation phase also affects the openness of MRA design. It is an expensive,

time-consuming process to negotiate and develop such arrangements, requiring continual funding, monitoring, and expertise. For instance, the tourism MRA benefitted significantly from financial and technical contributions from corporations, and, most especially, from international development agencies. The Australian Agency for International Development (Australian Aid) played a key role at the outset by providing technical assistance to review the various tourism competency standards in the region. Perceived as a neutral arbiter, Australian Aid helped ASEAN Member States develop an ASEAN-level competency framework. Between 2001 and 2014, Australian Aid donated A\$57 million (US\$40.9 million) to the development of the MRA on Tourism Professionals, particularly on the standards and curricula that support the arrangement. Australian Aid support has continued even since the arrangement was signed.¹⁷ Foreign governments beyond Australia also provided targeted financial and technical support directly to some ASEAN countries.¹⁸

In contrast, the negotiations on the health-related MRAs were primarily dependent on the resources provided to the Healthcare Services Sectoral Working Group (HSSWG), one of the working groups under the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services (ASEAN CCS). The HSSWG discusses a number of issues pertaining to facilitation and cooperation in health-care services, and the implementation of the MRAs is just one of them. The coordinating committees must depend on the yearly operations budget of the ASEAN CCS to conduct their activities, even post-MRA signing, thus limiting opportunities for more interactions among ASEAN Member State officials.¹⁹

Funding Constraints and the “ASEAN Way”

¹⁴ International Union of Architects, “A Global Network,” accessed 21 January 2016, www.uia.archi/en/qui-sommes-nous/un-reseau?tid_i18n=249#.VqPIK_nhDIU. A number of ASEAN countries also followed international accounting standards prior to entering into the regional MRA.

¹⁵ International Union of Architects, *UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice, Amended August 2014 at the XXVI General Assembly* (Washington and Beijing: International Union of Architects, Professional Practice Program Joint Secretariat, 2014), www.uia.archi/sites/default/files/AlAS075164.pdf.

¹⁶ APEC member countries include Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; the People’s Republic of China; Taipei, China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russia; Singapore; Thailand; the United States; and Viet Nam.

¹⁷ ASEAN-Australian Development Cooperation Program Phase II (AADCP II), “About Us,” accessed 9 May 2016, <http://aadcp2.org/about-us/#about-aadcp>; AADCP II, “Streams,” accessed 9 May 2016, <http://aadcp2.org/streams/>; University of Queensland, Australia “ASEAN Common Core Standard Competency for Tourism Professionals: An Awareness Program,” accessed 9 May 2016, www.uq.edu.au/cbamt/docs/training-resources/CBAMTCBTAwareness.ppt.

¹⁸ William Angliss Institute, *Gap Analysis on Implementation of MRA on Tourism Professionals* (Jakarta: AADCP II, 2013), <http://aadcp2.org/file/ASEAN-GA-Final-Report.pdf>.

¹⁹ Information derived from participant conversation during Session VI, Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) in Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

Funding is an especially important consideration in any ASEAN-led initiative, given the way the ASEAN Secretariat and its activities are funded. The Secretariat relies heavily on funding from dialogue partners and external donors—mostly through specific projects or operations—in pursuing its activities. Far from a supranational organization such as the European Union, the ASEAN Secretariat has limited resources and capacity, and does not possess the mandate or power to command individual Member States or to devise common policies on its own. It is primarily responsible for administrative support, sorting out the daily paperwork and arranging meetings for the organization.

The Secretariat’s operational budget and manpower reflect this rather limited role. The Secretariat has a miniscule staff of around 300—65 managers and experts, 180 local staff, and 55 officials from donor organizations—and relies on equal contributions by the Member States (see Box 2). The contribution has never been increased substantially and is intentionally kept low to ensure that the poorest members can pay. The result is a severely constrained ability to fund projects.

C. Public Safeguards and Differing Realities

Concerns over differing standards and the need to protect the public interest also have a strong influence on the openness of MRAs. Governments have a fundamental responsibility to protect public health and safety and ensure the accountability of professionals working within their borders. Indeed, the relative openness of the tourism MRA is largely due to the unregulated nature of the occupations in the tourism sector.

Within ASEAN, public safeguards take an even more prime seat due to the diversity in professional standards and regulations in the region. For instance, there is significant variation in the establishment of professional regulatory bodies and the number of professional associations overseeing each occupation. Regulatory authorities in engineering and architecture were established in the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia more than 40 years before the signing of MRAs, while those in Cambodia and Myanmar were created only after the MRAs were completed. In the engineering field, four ASEAN countries—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar—have just one professional

Table 7: Comparison of ASEAN and European Union Budgets and Personnel, 2015

	ASEAN Secretariat	European Union (Commission, Council, Parliament)
Personnel	300	42,500
Budget	US\$ 17 million	US\$ 161.2 billion
Population	632.3 million	508.2 million
Gross Domestic Product	US\$ 2.5 trillion (2014)	US\$ 18.51 trillion (2014)

Sources: European Union, “EU Administration – Staff, Languages and Location,” accessed 16 May 2016, http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/administration/index_en.htm; David Pilling, “The Fiction of a Unified, Harmonised ASEAN,” Financial Times, 9 December 2015, www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/cba00b70-9dcf-11e5-8ce1-f6219b685d74.html#axzz49tAY7M4u; European Union, “Budget,” accessed 16 May 2016, http://europa.eu/pol/financ/index_en.htm; Eurostat, “Population and Population Change Statistics,” accessed 16 May 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population_and_population_change_statistics#EU-28_population_continues_to_grow; World Bank, “Data–GDP Ranking,” accessed 16 May 2016, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table>; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision—Total Population, Both Sexes,” updated July 2015, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.

association compared to the 10 in Thailand, 12 in the Philippines, and 31 in Indonesia.²⁰ Such diversity in the development and structure of professional regulatory systems leads to obvious concerns that could only be minimized via more stringent regulations concerning incoming professionals.

These concerns are also a product of the rapidly expanding education market throughout the region, which could possibly lead to a greater quantity of professionals with questionable credentials. For instance, in Lao PDR, the Midwife Department was established only in 2010, and there is lack of qualified professional teachers and trainers in this specialized field.²¹ Similarly, a number of stakeholders consulted for this report noted the need to improve the quality of nursing education and training in Viet Nam.²² Others have raised concerns that many Vietnamese dentists have limited professional knowledge.²³

Stakeholders in accountancy services in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam have raised similar concerns over the quality of professionals. For instance, one stakeholder with intimate knowledge of the accountancy profession in Thailand noted the “insufficient accounting skills and knowledge” among Thai accounting practitioners.²⁴ Likewise, a source in Indonesia attributed “the low competency of Indonesian professional accountants” to limited opportunities for continuing professional development.²⁵

In Cambodia, business leaders have expressed concern that the “education and qualification of Cambodian professional may not be at par with the other member countries” such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore.²⁶ One such leader in Cambodia noted that there were fewer than 200 qualified professionals in the whole country as of 2015²⁷

An expert in the accounting industry had similar observations for Viet Nam: the “professional knowledge of local accountants does not meet the demand of international integration.” The level of local training knowledge is very low, with many receiving training just on bookkeeping.²⁸

Neighbors Yet Worlds Apart

ASEAN MRAs involve 10 nations with vastly different levels of socioeconomic development, and the economic bloc is arguably one of the most diverse regional groupings in the world today. As of 2015, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in Singapore was almost 30 times higher than in Lao PDR and more than 40 times higher than in Cambodia and Myanmar.²⁹ The standard deviation in average incomes among Member States is also more than seven times that in EU countries.³⁰ The differences between countries are astounding. For instance, Indonesia is the source of almost 40% of economic output in the region and is a G-20 member; by contrast, Myanmar is a frontier market that, after a half century of isolation, is just starting to build up its institutional infrastructure.³¹

The key differences extend beyond income gaps, to how those gaps translate into the quality of institutions that are critical in negotiating and implementing intergovernmental arrangements such as MRAs. For instance, the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) suggests a huge gap in government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and rule of law among ASEAN Member States (see Figure 10). The standard deviations of scores for ASEAN countries along these three indicators are approximately two or more times that of EU Member States.

²⁰ ASEAN, *Handbook on Liberalisation of Professional Services Through Mutual Recognition in ASEAN: Engineering Services* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2015), www.asean.org/storage/images/2015/september/ASEAN-Handbook-Architecture-Services/FINAL%20ASEAN%20Handbook%2001%20-%20Engineering%20Services.pdf.

²¹ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 25 October 2015

²² Responses to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 20 August 2015 and 27 January 2016.

²³ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 26 October 2015.

²⁴ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 30 October 2015.

²⁵ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 15 December 2015.

²⁶ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 1 December 2015.

²⁷ Ibid.

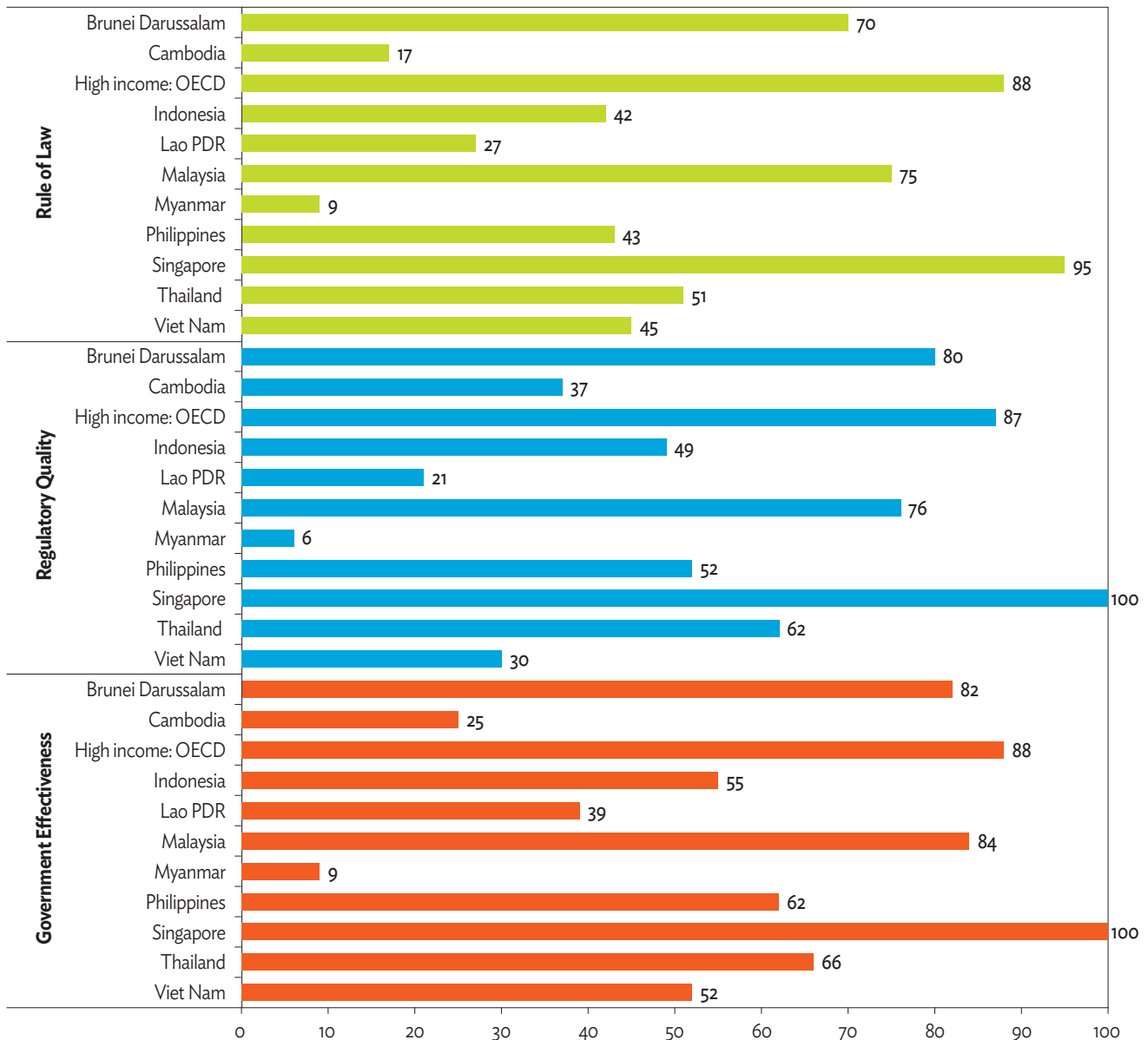
²⁸ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 27 October 2015.

²⁹ World Bank, “GDP Per Capita (Current US\$),” accessed 8 September 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?year_high_desc=true.

³⁰ Vinayak HV, Fraser Thompson, and Oliver Tonby, “Understanding ASEAN: Seven Things You Need to Know,” McKinsey & Company, May 2014, www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/understanding-asean-seven-things-you-need-to-know.

³¹ Ibid.

Figure 10: Worldwide Governance Indicators Ranking, by Country, 2014



Source: World Bank, "The Worldwide Governance Indicators," accessed 2 August 2016, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports>.

Table 8: Perception of Governance Indicators Comparison between ASEAN and European Union, 2014

Indicator	Region	Standard Deviation with the Region
Government Efficiency	European Union	11.3
	ASEAN	26.9
Regulatory Quality	European Union	10.0
	ASEAN	27.4
Rule of Law	European Union	13.8
	ASEAN	26.8

Source: Authors' calculation based on data from World Bank, "The Worldwide Governance Indicators."

D. Protectionist Concerns

The openness of MRAs is also shaped by the protectionist leanings of local professional associations and regulatory boards. In professions with a high degree of international mobility and prospects for employment overseas, members of professional associations may be more proactive in seeking to open up potential export markets for their services. In professions where local members already feel threatened by competition or are well aware of unfavorable prevailing price differentials between their services and those of foreign suppliers, there is likely to be little enthusiasm for negotiating and concluding an MRA that will only exacerbate an already saturated, competitive market.

Among respondents to the survey conducted to inform this report, 10% said they did not believe that MRAs would facilitate the hiring of professionals from other ASEAN countries.³² Within this subgroup, respondents in four professions across four countries mentioned protectionism as a central reason for their belief that MRAs would

not facilitate cross-border mobility.³³ Professionals in both accountancy and medicine highlighted unemployment of local professionals as a reason for national ministries to exclude foreigners from practice.³⁴ Doctors in Malaysia were said to be “protecting their turf,”³⁵ while Filipino architects were said to hold strong protectionist feelings and believe that professional integration was most disadvantageous to them.³⁶

The strength of protectionist tendencies is also evident within the tourism industry. For instance, the MRA excluded tour guides, who are regulated by local and national professional associations.³⁷ Tour guide associations across the region have expressed concern that demand for their services would decrease if foreign guides were permitted. Local regulations often mandate that local tour guides lead all tourist groups, in addition to trip planners who may have travelled from the home country with the group. Local civil societies also regularly play a monitoring role to ensure that members of their communities benefit from increasing revenue brought by foreign visitors.³⁸

³² The survey, “Questionnaire on Developments in Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs)” was conducted by MPI staff and national project consultants working in nine ASEAN Member Countries between July 2015 and February 2016. The survey received more than 300 responses from government officials, private sector leaders, practitioners, academics, and policy analysts. For more details, see Appendix 1.

³³ Analysis of survey results from project survey, “Questionnaire on Developments in Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs),” July 2015–February 2016. Professions include architecture, dentistry, medicine, and nursing. Countries include Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and the Philippines.

³⁴ Responses to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 3 January 2016 and 21 January 2016.

³⁵ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 28 January 2016.

³⁶ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 28 November 2015.

³⁷ VietNamNet Bridge, “Tour Guides Not Allowed to Work Freely in ASEAN,” VietNamNet Bridge, 22 October 2014, <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/business/114732/tour-guides-not-allowed-to-work-freely-in-asean.html>.

³⁸ Participant comment during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 26 September 2015.

V. Moving from Design to Implementation: Tradeoffs and Policy Implications of the Three Mutual Recognition Arrangement Approaches

There is no “ideal” MRA. It is clear from the previous section that ASEAN Member States designed MRAs that closely reflect the national and regional contexts, and especially the particularities of the professions involved. As with any agreement, an MRA is only as good as its ability to turn the goals laid out on paper into reality.

Currently, the ASEAN MRAs are at different stages of implementation, with some facing significant challenges.³⁹ There has been some progress in the creation of implementing offices and bodies at the regional and national levels, as outlined in the MRAs, and in the incorporation or transposition of MRAs principles into national laws (see Box 2). However, there is a tremendous backlog in a third key area: the operationalization of MRAs principles into detailed regulations, plans, procedures, and mechanisms.

The sections that follow will explore the process of implementation as well as some of the policy implications of the three different approaches adopted by the ASEAN MRAs.

A. Tourism: Completing the Missing Parts

Unlike the other ASEAN MRAs, the tourism MRA took the least expedient route by opting to first bridge the structural differences between national training systems in the region. By taking the long road to harmonization of training, the tourism sector may have lost time but gained much in terms of wider coverage of different types of occupations and, most especially, in the automaticity of the recognition

process. Automatic recognition is quite useful in the dynamic and seasonal tourism industry, in which labor market needs frequently change and quality workers are needed on short notice.

Indeed, the open, comprehensive framework of the tourism MRA presents tremendous promise in maximizing opportunities for recognition of ASEAN tourism professionals in the region. However, the approach also has its downsides. Given the comprehensive scope of the tourism MRA, full implementation is a huge undertaking, requiring an infusion of resources and capacity building at both the national and regional levels. Many of the working parts have yet to be completed.⁴⁰ At the national level, it is important to complete the process of aligning national standards to the ASEAN standards, improving training, and increasing buy-in from the private sector. At the regional level, more has to be done to complete the grand implementing structure envisioned in the MRA.

1. Aligning National and Regional Standards

The ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP) and the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum (CATC) serve as the building blocks of the MRA on Tourism Professionals and it will still take time for these regional standards and curricula to be implemented in all Member States across all labor divisions and job titles. Harmonizing training systems, especially in a vastly diverse region, is a laborious pursuit, and it could take decades before they are aligned correctly.

³⁹ Mendoza and Sugiyarto, *The Long Road Ahead*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Box 2: Progress in Mutual Recognition Arrangement Implementation

MRAs are not easy to operationalize. Another report in this series, cited below, looks specifically at the progress made in implementing the ASEAN MRAs and finds that progress has primarily been made in two areas: the creation of implementing offices and bodies at the regional and national levels, as outlined in the MRAs, and the incorporation or transposition of MRA principles into national laws.

- **At the regional level.** Five out of the nine regional bodies the MRAs envisioned have already been created and are fully functioning. Coordinating committees for the seven occupations meet regularly (two to four times per year) with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretariat. The engineering and architecture registries are also currently active with more than one thousand professionals registered in the system.
- **At the national level.** ASEAN Member States created or adapted 12 offices after the MRAs were signed, with Myanmar creating the most new regulatory offices. Eight of the 10 countries in the region also enacted new laws or revised existing legislation since signing the MRAs.

For the MRAs to be fully implemented, however, laws have to be translated into clear working processes. Progress in this area remains slow and uneven across countries and for all occupations.

- **Accountancy, architecture, and engineering.** The MRAs on engineering and architecture have made the most progress toward creating a functional process that ASEAN professionals can utilize to be recognized and registered in another ASEAN country. However, 10 years into implementation, only seven engineers have completed the process and been registered in destination countries. More importantly, none have moved and begun work in the country where they are registered. Only two countries—Malaysia and Singapore—have completed all of the steps required to fully implement the engineering MRA. In both architecture and engineering, there is currently a backlog in the registration of professionals at destination. Meanwhile in accountancy, no country has progressed beyond the first step: the official submission of notification of the intention to participate in the MRA.
- **Tourism.** Many components of the tourism MRA are still missing. The registry is not yet operational and no ASEAN tourism professionals have been registered in the MRA system. ASEAN Member States have focused on developing training modules, called toolboxes, for common competencies in the six labor divisions identified in the MRAs. These resources allow each country to develop its own national competency standards, curriculum, and tools based on the ASEAN standard model. The alignment process, however, is far from complete.
- **Dental, Medical, and Nursing.** Most of the progress in the health-related fields has focused on the exchange of information about how regulatory and registration standards vary across ASEAN member states in order to increase transparency and encourage benchmarking in the medium to long run.

Source: Mendoza and Sugiyarto, *The Long Road Ahead: A Status Report on the Implementation of Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Professional Services* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, forthcoming).

Currently, implementation is most advanced in the hotel services sector, which employs far more workers in ASEAN than the travel services. The ACCSTP and related training modules (known as toolboxes) created to implement the standards are now being piloted in the housekeeping labor division across all ASEAN countries. Master Trainers and Master Assessors have also been trained at the ASEAN level, and in turn are expected to train trainers and assessors in their respective countries.⁴¹

Competing curricula and standards are impeding the full adoption of the ACCSTP and CATC at the national level, however. Currently, in most ASEAN countries, only government-owned schools have access to the ACCSTP toolboxes and the Master Trainers and Assessors; private schools continue to follow different curricula and standards.⁴²

And in many ASEAN countries, several vocational training organizations set the curricula for tourism training. For example, Thailand lacks a National

⁴¹ The first Master Trainer and Master Assessor training was held in Bali in November and December 2012 for the housekeeping job title.

⁴² Author interview with an official familiar with the workings of the Southeast Asian tourism industry, Bali, 26 September 2015.

Qualifications Framework (NQF)⁴³ on tourism, which has led to four sets of standards being developed for the same course of training. The ASEAN MRA objective of harmonizing the different training standards to streamline the process for obtaining certification is likely to encounter some opposition from these organizations, which face losing their role in setting standards and influencing the training of national professionals and the possibility of being downsized.

Language issues also pose a particularly difficult obstacle in implementing the tourism MRA at the national level. ASEAN curricula and toolboxes are entirely in English and set the expectation that all trainers and assessors will be proficient in English, and that their students will either speak or learn English through their training. However, English language proficiency is low in some countries in the region, which has made it difficult to identify Master Trainers and Assessors, and even harder to teach a class of students who are not proficient in the language. In some countries, including Lao PDR, budgetary constraints mean that it is not possible to translate the curricula to the local language.⁴⁴ At the same time, despite these difficulties, the adoption of English as the *lingua franca* in this sector could be advantageous in the long term. One Thai stakeholder listed the adoption of English, and the resulting impetus for ASEAN countries to step up the use of English, among the benefits of the MRA.⁴⁵

2. Improving the Quantity and Quality of Training at the National Level Using ASEAN Standards

Even when national standards are fully aligned to regional standards, an even bigger challenge is how to improve the quantity and quality of training at the national level using the ASEAN standards. A number of stakeholders consulted for this report highlighted the need for more trainers. For instance, in Myanmar, there was a noted need for training trainers and assessors a key constraint in MRA implementation.⁴⁶ More specifically, the industry needs training establishments and technical experts who can implement the curricula and manage the assignment certification process. Instructional resources, more specifically training facilities, must also be upgraded since Myanmar currently has a limited number of assessment centers and training institutes.⁴⁷

The same problem is present in Indonesia. An Indonesian expert on the certification of skills highlighted challenges in the readiness of trainers and teachers in implementing competency-based education and training in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).⁴⁸ A related and key challenge is how to give more teachers the opportunity to train as assessors.⁴⁹

Stakeholders also raised concern that many teachers and trainers are not themselves practitioners. For instance, in Indonesia, many vocational programs exist, but the quality varies tremendously, such as between those on the island of Java and outside Java. Producing students who can achieve certification requires the best teachers with experience in the field. Therefore, the lecturers or instructors themselves must have certification. Indeed, the vocational program of Universitas Indonesia has now required that all lecturers and instructors in tourism courses be certified.⁵⁰

⁴³ A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) details the qualifications provided by professional education and training experiences. The framework describes what an individual who holds a certain qualification should know and be able to do, as well as how the learner can move from one qualification, or qualification level, to another, within a system.

⁴⁴ Participant comment during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁴⁵ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 6 November 2015.

⁴⁶ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 1 November 2015.

⁴⁷ Participant comment during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

⁴⁸ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 27 October 2015.

⁴⁹ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 21 October 2015.

⁵⁰ Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 24 November 2015.

Similarly in the Philippines, many teachers do not have industry experience, making it difficult to teach students practical, hands-on courses, such as housekeeping activities, food- and beverage-related activities, and culinary arts. Interestingly, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requires educators to have at least a master's degree. However, the tourism industry is highly skills-based and needs more educators who have industry experience. For one education expert, a key challenge is for higher education institutions in the Philippines to understand the need to review the qualifications for graduate and doctoral degrees in their programs and include acquisition of practical skills as requirements.⁵¹

3. Increasing Industry Endorsement of the ASEAN Standards

The most significant threat to full implementation of the MRA in tourism stems from the limited awareness and buy-in from private tourism firms, particularly large multinationals operating in the sector.

Even though the tourism MRA has included a larger proportion of industry representatives on the tourism professional boards, specifically to increase private sector buy-in, full industry endorsement remains elusive. Many private tourism firms have been implementing their own professional standards for decades and resist adapting to the ASEAN standards.

Interviews with regional stakeholders conducted to inform this report suggest a general reluctance from hotel managers to send their staff to training programs in order to obtain ASEAN certifications. Many do not see the ASEAN certifications as providing any advantages over industry-led international standards. This problem was especially evident in Cambodia, and actually led to concerted efforts by its NTPB to promote the trainings to major hotels. Most hotels understand the goals of ASEAN certification, but appear reluctant to engage in the training.⁵²

⁵¹ Participant comment during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁵² Ibid.

Indeed, large hotels throughout the region train staff according to their own curricula, or those set by their parent companies,⁵³ with less focus on the transferability of skills. Similar to the CATC, training is often competency based, and students are assessed on their ability to apply skills in the workplace.⁵⁴

Recent developments may signal new trends, however. For instance, Dusit Thani, a large hotel chain based in Thailand, opened a hotel school in Bangkok in 2015, the first in Thailand that is training entirely on the CATC and meeting the ACCSTP.⁵⁵

4. Completing the Implementing Structure at the Regional Level

Lastly, it is also important to complete the implementing structure the MRA envisions at the regional level. Although there has been much progress in 2015 in setting up the regional secretariat, the ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System (ATPRS) remains underdeveloped.

If the registry works as envisioned—as a job bank connecting tourism professionals with employers—it could increase MRA buy-in among workers and businesses alike. Indeed, a functional registry is critical in providing a useful and agile tool to support international recruitment of tourism professionals, particularly in countries with a shortage of such workers.

For instance, Cambodia is projected to need 200,000 more tourism professionals by 2020. In order to address this need, universities have begun working with government and the private sector in a “triple helix partnership” to pioneer programs for the development of tourism professionals whose skills meet industry needs. Even with this concerted

⁵³ InterContinental Hotel Group, “IHG Launches Industry Leading Training Programme for Food & Beverage Teams” (news release, 2 October 2014), www.ihgplc.com/index.asp?PageID=116&NewsID=3304.

⁵⁴ Dusti Thani College, “Program Overview: Bachelor of Business Administration Programme in Hotel and Resort Management,” accessed 3 March 2016, www.dtc.ac.th/en/b-b-a-international-programs/hotel-and-resort-management-inter-program.html.

⁵⁵ Suchat Sritama, “Dusit to Open ASEAN-Standard Hotel School in August,” *The Nation*, 1 June 2015, www.nationmultimedia.com/business/Dusit-to-open-Asean-standard-hotel-school-in-Augus-30261323.html.

training effort, however, it will be difficult for Cambodia to meet the growing demand. In the Siam Riep region, nearly 30% of high-skilled professionals at managerial levels come from abroad, predominantly from Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia.⁵⁶ Assuming that Cambodia will continue to rely on foreign labor at major tourist sites, the country's tourism infrastructure and companies will be aided by greater access to certified competent professionals through the MRA.⁵⁷

B. Accountancy, Architecture, and Engineering: Increasing Scope and Strengthening the Regional Infrastructure

Unlike the tourism sector, the MRAs in accountancy, architecture, and engineering have opted for expediency by foregoing harmonization of training and curricula and selecting a semiautomatic recognition process. Given the concerns over differing professional standards affecting the regulated occupations, as discussed earlier, the approach taken by the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs could be seen as a practical way to achieve real progress on mutual recognition, albeit incrementally.

The drawbacks, however, are clear. The semiautomatic recognition process still leaves room for arbitrary recognition outcomes since considerable residual power to determine the equivalency of qualifications remains with the country of destination. The elaborate regional structure as envisioned in the MRAs plays an important role in shifting the power dynamics more equitably between origin and destination countries. Thus, it is critical to strengthen the regional infrastructure through a serious infusion of resources, financial and otherwise. Making compensatory requirements more transparent and gradually increasing the scope of the MRAs could also boost opportunities for recognition while acknowledging valid concerns.

1. Making Compensatory Measures More Transparent

Compensatory measures aim to bridge gaps between national qualifications and the scope of practice permitted to professionals in MRA signatory countries. These are a chance for foreign professionals to demonstrate or build skills required by a destination country and may take various forms, such as an adaptation period or aptitude test. The case-by-case nature of compensatory requirements allows for continued restriction of recognition through arbitrary individual decisions. Parties may vary widely in their decisions to offer recourse to compensatory measures in the first place, or they may determine the content of these requirements very differently. Indeed, there is evidence that destination country PRAs have made use of the safeguard clauses in MRAs to impose additional conditions for recognition. For instance, the Board of Engineers Malaysia has required ACPEs to submit original copies of their grade transcripts, with detrimental consequences for the (timely) recognition of accomplished professionals who may have graduated many years ago and may no longer have access to their original transcripts.⁵⁸

To ensure a more effective implementation of the MRAs in accountancy, architecture, and engineering, it is important to make compensatory measures more transparent. As an official from the Philippines explained:

When a Singaporean comes here and asks 'How do you assess the Filipino engineers who have been recognized?' ..the Philippine Regulation Commission and the boards can no longer say that it is confidential. Transparency is now the name of the game. That is the only way we can also gain the mutual trust and confidence of the stakeholders.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Participant comment during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Participant comment during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28-29 September 2015. Safeguard clauses are set in Article 5 (mutual exemptions) and 3.3.2 of the MRAs on Architectural Services and Engineering Services..

⁵⁹ Participant comment during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

Increasing transparency on compensatory measures could be a starting point for the convergence of national regulations across the region. It would be easier to identify best practices in the region, which in turn can provide a reference point in comparing regulations. As one senior regional official noted, this approach has been tried and tested in the development of competition policy in the region. For this official, “Once the best practices have been identified, other Member States are encouraged to follow it.”⁶⁰

2. Increasing MRA Scope and Flexibility

MRAs are living documents that require continuous revision, improvement, and renegotiation. Certainly for the MRAs on engineering and architecture, which were signed nearly a decade ago, there is opportunity to learn from experiences in implementation. Discussions with stakeholders from the region suggest the value in possibly infusing more flexibility into the system by widening recognition access to a larger pool of ASEAN architects and engineers.⁶¹

For instance, there is a case to be made for removing the limitation to independent practice, either upon recognition or after a reasonable initial probationary period. For decades, engineers and architects have worked in other ASEAN countries through intracompany transfer or by applying to work with local partners in the destination countries. If engineers and architects cannot work autonomously on projects even after going through the three-step recognition process as envisioned in the MRAs, there is little incentive to seek recognition under the MRAs. In fact, at least one regional stakeholder suggested that established professionals in ASEAN countries seek recognition under the MRAs on engineering and architectural services to obtain a rewarding honorific title, rather than to access professional practice in another country.⁶²

Another option is to allow the practice of cross-bordering, which enables architects and engineers to register in the country of destination in two ways depending on whether there is an intention to work or not. In this system, only those who intend to work are required to find a local collaborator. Some stakeholders in the region believe that this could encourage more professionals to utilize the MRA system.⁶³

3. Strengthening the Coordinating Committees

Lastly, given the centrality of the regional process in the accountancy, architecture, and engineering MRAs, it is also important to support projects that would increase the capacity and relevance of the coordinating committees.

Initiatives could be as simple as translating relevant documents into English to facilitate information exchange among committee members. For instance, in architecture, the majority of ASEAN Member States have declared that they are ready to receive registered foreign architects. However, domestic rules and building and social regulations are all written in local languages.⁶⁴

Another way of strengthening the committees is to increase the number of meetings per year. Since MRA-related meetings are only riders to the ASEAN CCS, there is currently no budget for additional meetings. It requires continuous negotiation to fully implement the MRAs. In fact, the decision to opt for expediency and forego harmonization of training has meant more work post-MRA signing. Constant and multiple opportunities for communication are especially crucial in implementing a regional-driven MRA framework.

It is also particularly important to exchange best practices, and there is value in supporting initiatives that would deepen technical knowledge on relevant issues. For instance, ACPECC has created a study group on mobility. Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand have already submitted representatives to this group, and it is crucial to ensure that all members participate in such initiatives.

⁶⁰ Participant comment during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

⁶¹ Responses to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 30 October–4 December 2015.

⁶² Author interview with a stakeholder familiar with the working of the ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineer Coordinating Committee, Bali, 28 September 2015.

⁶³ Participant comment during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

⁶⁴ Participant comments during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

C. Health Professionals: Building Trust and Strengthening the National Infrastructure

The closed, destination country-led approach of the health-related MRAs is not surprising given that globally, professional regulations in the health sector are some of the most stringent. In fact, with the notable exception of the European Union,⁶⁵ it is extremely rare for MRAs in the health sector to grant full and automatic mutual recognition. Establishing common curricula in medical schools within the country is also still an elusive goal in a number of ASEAN countries, including Thailand.⁶⁶

The limited harmonization of training standards and curricula for health professionals among ASEAN countries has translated into little trust among regulatory bodies in the region. Moving forward, there is value in initiatives that increase trust among Member States, such as by creating regional umbrella associations and supporting regional efforts to improve competency standards at the national level. These are small yet important steps that would lay the groundwork for mutual recognition much later. Given the central role that destination-country regulatory authorities play in MRA implementation, efforts could also focus on making sure that they represent the evolving needs of the health sector.

1. Creating Umbrella Regional Associations

One way to increase trust is to support the creation of ASEAN-wide professional associations that would serve as a hub for information exchange and capacity building. One senior regional official described it as “an interesting goal to work towards the future.”⁶⁷

And there have been some developments to this end that could provide possible templates. For instance, the ASEAN Regional Alliance of Nursing Administrators is an umbrella organization that aims to improve nursing practice within ASEAN.⁶⁸

2. Improving Competency Standards

There are also opportunities among ASEAN countries to help each other in developing competency standards. For instance, the Philippines is helping Cambodia develop core competency standards in nursing through the Cambodia Nurse Bridging Program, which is conducted by the University of the Philippines Manila College of Nursing.⁶⁹ The Philippines has a world-class curriculum for nurses. The latest curriculum developed in 2009—CHED Memorandum Order 14 (CMO 14)—was found to be comparable to those of Denmark, Finland, and Norway.⁷⁰ CMO 14 is also widely recognized within the European Union. Since 2013, Filipino nurses who graduate under CMO 14 are no longer required to undergo the one-year experience that foreign professionals need to get licensed in the European Union.⁷¹

There are also opportunities for improving competency standards in the medical profession. For instance, the Council of Thailand is leading an initiative comparing the medical education and curricula used in all 10 ASEAN countries. The immediate goal is to make a comparison metric of the medical competency in each country and then later to establish the best possible regional framework.⁷²

⁶⁵ Within the European Union (EU), for example, there is automatic recognition for health professionals including doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, and veterinary surgeons. For more on mutual recognition within the European Union, see Mendoza, Papademetriou, Desiderio, Salant, Hooper, and Elwood, *Reinventing Mutual Recognition Arrangements*.

⁶⁶ Participant comments during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁶⁷ Participant comment during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, 28–29 September 2015.

⁶⁸ Participant comments during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁶⁹ Republic of the Philippines, Department of Foreign Affairs, “Filipino Nurses Help Upgrade Skills of Cambodian Counterparts,” updated 12 February 2015, www.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/newsroom/phl-embassies-and-consulates-news/5392-filipino-nurses-help-upgrade-skills-of-cambodian-counterparts

⁷⁰ Participant comments during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

3. Reimagining the Role of Professional Regulatory Authorities in the 21st Century

Because of the core role destination-country PRAs play in the MRA-implementation process, it is important that they represent the changing needs of health-sector professionals and employers. As Leslyanne Hawthorne, Professor at the University of Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, asked in a conference convened to inform this report:

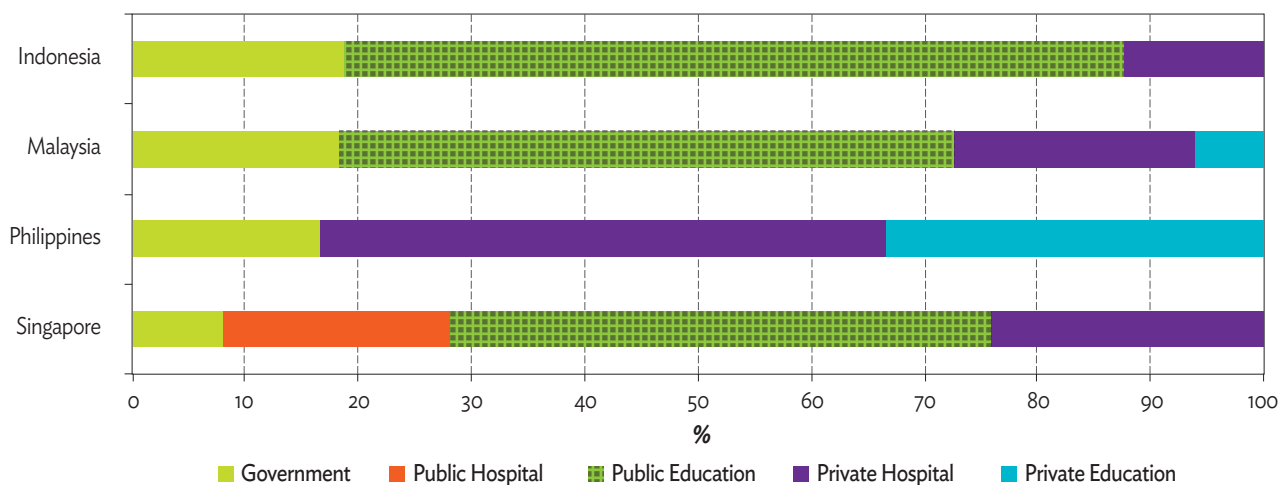
Are regulatory bodies fit for purpose? Do they match the mobility strategies of the 21st century when the workers want to move, employers want them to move, and governments want efficient access, but regulatory bodies can be seen as blockers rather than facilitators?⁷³

As some stakeholders in the region noted, the MRAs were designed “in good faith” and without unnecessary barriers, yet the strict domestic rules and regulation to practice at destination remain.⁷⁴

Clearly, there is much value in changing mindsets within PRAs and in ensuring that the policymaking process takes into account the viewpoints of a range of stakeholders, particularly those from private hospitals and private educational institutions.

Figure 11 shows the composition of medical PRAs’ boards of directors in 2016 in four ASEAN countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Although government officers made up less than 20% of board membership in these countries in 2016, public educational institutions, which are also run by the government, accounted for a large proportion of the boards for Singapore (48%), Malaysia (55%), and Indonesia (65%). Private hospitals were also represented, but at a generally lower rate: 24% for Singapore, 21% for Malaysia, and 12% for Indonesia. The Philippines is a clear exception in this group; private hospitals and private educational institutions representatives dominated the board in 2016, making up 50% and 37% respectively.

Figure 11: Composition of Board of Directors, Professional Regulatory Authority on Medicine, Selected ASEAN Countries, 2016



Sources: Konsil Kedokteran Indonesia, “Nama Anggota,” accessed 20 April 2016, www.kki.go.id/index.php/subMenu/987; Malaysian Medical Council, “Council Members,” accessed 20 April 2016, www.mmc.gov.my/v1/index.php/council; Republic of the Philippines, Professional Regulation Commission, “Board of Medicine – Board Composition,” accessed 20 April 2016, www.prc.gov.ph/prb/default.aspx?id=28&content=162; Singapore Medical Council, “Council Members,” accessed 20 April 2016, www.healthprofessionals.gov.sg/content/hprof/smc/en/topnav/about_smc/council_members.html.

⁷³ Leslyanne Hawthorne, Professor, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, Australia, speaking at Session III, Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

⁷⁴ Participant comments during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015; Response to ADB-MPI research questionnaire, 18 January 2016.

VI. Looking into the Future: Maximizing the Potential of Mutual Recognition Arrangements as Tools for Building and Utilizing the Region's Human Capital

The benefits from fully implementing the ASEAN MRAs extend above and beyond the actual mutual recognition of qualifications. Indeed, the greatest achievement of the seven MRAs so far is rather indirect: They have inspired significant capacity-building effort in the less advanced ASEAN Member States to upgrade professional regulation and training standards.

Implementation of the MRAs in engineering and architecture has driven the creation of regulatory bodies and the adoption of new professional standards in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. Similarly, the MRA-driven harmonization of training requirements in nursing is promoting higher qualifications standards in countries such as Viet Nam. Clearly, the ASEAN MRAs have enhanced mutual learning and the transmission of regulatory experience.

There are many ways to further maximize the benefits MRAs can bring to the region, of which three are worth highlighting: (1) creating synergy between MRA and the ASEAN Qualification Regional Framework (AQRF), (2) linking the MRAs with existing mobility arrangements in the region, and (3) applying lessons learned as future MRAs are being negotiated.

A. Creating Synergy between Mutual Recognition Arrangements and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

Alongside efforts to negotiate and conclude MRAs, over the past decade ASEAN countries have also cooperated on the establishment, alignment, and mutual referencing of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). NQFs are developed by national institutions and outline the qualifications

conferred via a national education and training system and describe what learners should know, understand, and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification. These frameworks also demonstrate how learners can move from one qualification, or qualification level, to another within a system. If fully implemented, NQFs allow employers to more effectively assess the competency levels of professionals within the country.

In 2014, the economic, human resources, and education ministers in ASEAN Member States endorsed a common regional qualification framework, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). The alignment of NQFs to the AQRF will create shared qualification-level descriptors that enable employers, regulators, and education providers in each country to “read” and understand the meaning of foreign-acquired qualifications and competences relative to the domestic qualifications with which they are familiar. The AQRF was developed in line with the Australian and New Zealand qualifications frameworks and is heavily influenced by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

1. MRAs and the AQRF: Mutually Beneficial Processes

Implementing MRAs and mutually referencing NQFs against the AQRF remain two parallel processes, with separate objectives. Yet, they still influence and support each other in many ways.

By offering regulators a broad understanding of the equivalency of foreign qualifications with domestic ones, the mutual referencing process could indirectly spur the implementation of

ASEAN MRAs and the recognition of professional qualifications within the region. The establishment of NQFs and their alignment along the AQRFBenchmark may also lay the groundwork that enables regulators involved in implementing the health-related MRAs to reach agreement on training and qualifications requirements.

MRAs also establish the roles that regulatory and professional bodies should play in upgrading the standards of professionalism in their country, while NQFs complement this process by aligning all training programs in a country with these standards. Thus, graduates are guaranteed to meet a certain level prescribed by the NQF, whereby they are prepared to exercise their profession at the level expected by national regulatory bodies.

Beyond this complementarity in objectives, MRAs and NQFs may fill gaps in one another's implementation. Stakeholders interviewed for this report noted that the AQRFBenchmark could be useful in illuminating the gaps in training between professionals across the region.⁷⁵ This could lead to the development of fine-tuned bridging courses that can overcome differences in training, and bring practitioners quickly up to speed with local practices.

Linkage of the AQRFBenchmark and the MRAs is particularly promising in the tourism sector. The alignment and mutual referencing of NQF with the AQRFBenchmark may improve employers' understanding of the value of qualifications acquired by ASEAN workers in their countries of origin, through the comparison of qualification levels across aligned frameworks. The AQRFBenchmark includes a framework for the mutual referencing of qualifications in tourism, ranging from qualifications obtainable in high school to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and higher education.⁷⁶ As more training institutions open in ASEAN countries to train the next generation of

tourism professionals, the AQRFBenchmark and individual NQFs aim to ensure that teaching and assessment standards are preserved.

Looking toward the future, there is potential for closer integration of mutual recognition processes and qualifications frameworks. Currently, MRAs allow for portability of qualifications once professionals reach a certain career level. In the future, qualifications frameworks will be able to more precisely define professionals' skill levels throughout their careers.⁷⁷ Through referencing mechanisms such as the AQRFBenchmark, the capacity of workers throughout the region will be more legible to employers. This might set in motion an expansion of current MRAs to allow for the portability of qualifications at various levels of the workforce. Such a process is already underway in Gulf countries, where skills passports have been piloted for workers to demonstrate their capabilities, putting them in line for certain jobs and salaries, as well as the potential for mobility.⁷⁸

2. The Long Road Ahead in Developing National Qualifications Frameworks

Qualifications frameworks undoubtedly have great potential to complement mutual recognition in advancing professional standards and facilitating professional mobility within ASEAN. Realizing this potential, however, depends on all ASEAN countries completing national qualifications frameworks in the first place, and undertaking the arduous processing of referencing to the AQRFBenchmark.

However, as Figure 12 shows, only Singapore and Malaysia have completed NQFs. Five countries—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand—are in the implementation phase, while three—Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam—are still in planning stages.

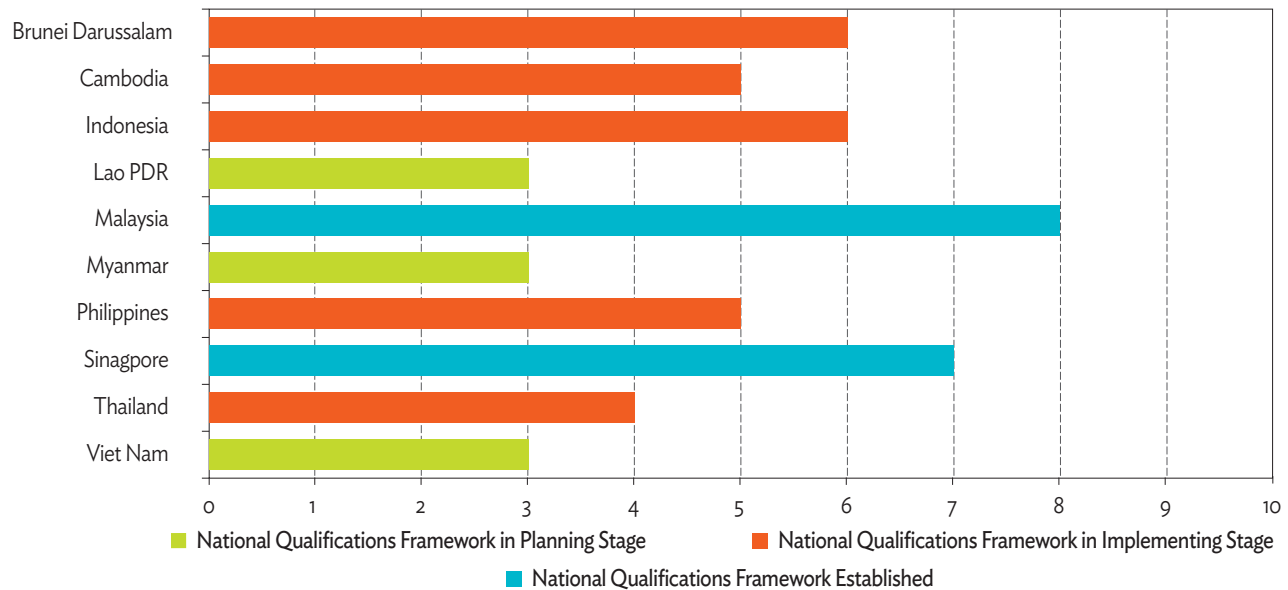
⁷⁵ Participant comment during the Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 28–29 September 2015.

⁷⁶ ASEAN, "ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework" (specifications for the AQRFBenchmark Taskforce, 4th AQRFBenchmark Meeting, 20 March 2014), http://kknikemenristekdikti.org/asset/pdf/1-AQRFBenchmark_General_Information.pdf

⁷⁷ Participant comments during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

⁷⁸ International Labour Organization (ILO), *Promoting Effective Governance of Labour Migration from South Asia: The ILO South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project 2013–2016* (Bangkok: ILO and European Union, 2016), www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/--ro-bangkok/--ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms_468048.pdf

Figure 12: ASEAN Member State National Qualifications Framework Level of Implementation, October 2015



Level 1 – No intent to create NQF
 Level 2 – Desired but no progress
 Level 3 – Background planning underway
 Level 4 – Initial development and design completed

Level 5 – Some structures and processes agreed and completed
 Level 6 – Some structures and processes operational
 Level 7 – Structures and processes established for 5 years
 Level 8 – Review of structures and processes proposed underway

Source: Andrea Bateman and Mike Coles, ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and National Qualifications Frameworks: State of Play Report (Jakarta: Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst, 2015), 8, www.share-asean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AQRF-NQF-State-of-Play-Report.pdf.

B. Linking the Mutual Recognition Arrangements with Existing Mobility Arrangements within ASEAN

The contribution of the MRAs to efficient human-capital transfers across borders also depends on whether they are embedded in a broader policy framework that supports the mobility of professionals across member countries. MRAs are likely to be most effective when concluded as part of a broader package of policy measures that enable access to the labor market through visa and work-permit policies that facilitate orderly and circular flows of professionals between countries.

As noted earlier, although the MRAs were developed closely with the creation of the AEC, the ASEAN MRAs are not directly linked to existing regional initiatives that provide access to the labor market. For instance, in the health sector, temporary licensing programs have been widely used to move health-care professionals across the ASEAN region. There is

value in exploring how these programs currently work and how could they be aligned more closely with the health-related MRAs.

Temporary Licensing for Health Professionals

Temporary licensing programs for nurses are currently in place in all ASEAN countries, and similar programs for medical practitioners exist in all except Viet Nam.⁷⁹ These structures allow professionals to move for a temporary period, in many cases for 1 year and on a renewable basis, and to practice in countries where their services are needed. Through

⁷⁹ ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Nursing (AJCCN), “Policies of Temporary Licensing in ASEAN Member States” (chart, 18th AJCCN, September 2015), www.asean.org/storage/images/2015/september/ajccn/AJCCN%20web-1%20Policy%20of%20Temporary%20Licensing%20for%20Foreign%20Nurses%2018th%20AJCCN.pdf; ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Medical Practitioners (AJCCM), “ASEAN Member States’ Policy for Temporary Licensing and Registration” (chart, 6 January 2016), www.asean.org/storage/2016/01/6Jan/ajccm/AJCCM_1-Temporary_Licensing_and_Registration_for_Medical_Practitioners.pdf

this process, governments may fill the gaps in their medical workforces without using the MRA route.

In this system, health practitioners do not have to undergo a reassessment of qualifications, while the government exerts control over foreign workers through monitoring and performance evaluation. Most importantly, temporary licensing programs allow various types of health practitioners to practice, including those on humanitarian missions, researchers, and teachers.⁸⁰ An expert familiar with the medical industry in Thailand remarked that “temporary permission is the easier policy method for professionals to move between ASEAN countries.”⁸¹

There are limitations to the programs, however. As Table 9 outlines, only six countries—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines—permit work in both the private and public sector. Singapore and Thailand limit the program to professionals intending to work in public hospitals. The duration of the license also varies:

five countries allow 1-year, renewable stays, while Malaysia permits only a 3-month stay. Singapore offers the most liberal terms: up to a 4-year license.

C. Learning from the Current Batch of ASEAN MRAs

Lastly, the approaches and practices adopted in the current set of ASEAN MRAs are replicable to other sectors and occupations as well. There is also potential for cross-fertilization, and lessons can be drawn across sectors that may facilitate progress in implementation—particularly for the less-advanced MRAs in the health sector.

For instance, once the harmonization of training curricula in the health professions across the region is complete, policymakers could consider introducing ASEAN-wide professional titles for the health sector as a way of raising awareness of the MRAs and stimulating uptake. Establishing standardized criteria for assessment in a host country might also help

Table 9: Mobility of Medical Practitioners in ASEAN under Temporary Licensing

Country	Private or Government Practice?	Requirements	Duration
Brunei Darussalam	Both	None	Up to 1 year
Cambodia	Both	Annual monitoring and performance evaluation Submit annual formal report	1 year (renewable)
Indonesia	Both	Annual monitoring and performance evaluation Submit annual formal report	1 year (renewable)
Lao PDR	Both	None	Project-based (renewable)
Malaysia	Private	Supervised by fully registered medical practitioner Limited to place of practice	3 months (renewable)
Myanmar	Both	Limited to place of practice and specialty National fully registered counterpart required	1 year (renewable)
Philippines	Both	Monitoring and evaluation of performance Submit formal report	1 year (renewable)
Singapore	Government	Limited to specialty Under supervision for the first year Monitoring and performance evaluation	Up to 4 years
Thailand	Government	Supervised by fully licensed medical practitioner Limited to place, specialty, and period of practice Submission of formal report	Project-based (no more than 1 year, renewable)

Source: ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committee on Medical Practitioners (AJCCM), “ASEAN Member States’ Policy for Temporary Licensing and Registration” (chart, 6 January 2016), www.asean.org/storage/2016/01/6Jan/ajccm/AJCCM_1-Temporary_Licensing_and_Registration_for_Medical_Practitioners.pdf.

⁸⁰ AJCCN, “Policies of Temporary Licensing in ASEAN Member States;” AJCCM, “ASEAN Member States’ Policy for Temporary Licensing and Registration.”

⁸¹ Participant comment during a focus group discussion organized by ADB and MPI, Manila, 3 September 2015.

improve the consistency of the recognition procedure laid out by the ASEAN MRAs in the health sector.

The functioning of the ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System as a job bank also offers lessons, and could inspire new functionalities for the other ASEAN registries—the ASEAN Architect Register, ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants Register, and ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineers Register—as actual job-matching tools. This would require minimizing the third stage of the recognition process for accountants, architects, and engineers, ideally leading to automatic recognition in the country of destination.

More generally, building mutual trust among the professional regulatory authorities in a given sector across ASEAN countries may have spillover effects, eventually facilitating advancements in the portability of professional qualifications in other sectors. Indeed, the MRA negotiation in accountancy benefited from the prior developments in engineering and architecture.⁸²

MRAs remain a work in progress in ASEAN, but as the experience with these seven shows, with full implementation and buy-in by employers and professionals alike, they could do much to usher in the advent of skilled mobility envisioned by the AEC.

⁸² Information derived from participant conversation during Session Malaysia, Myanmar, and Singapore Breakout Session, Focus Group Discussion, organized by ADB and MPI, Bali, 26–27 September 2015.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Methodology

A total of 387 individuals from the ASEAN region and beyond directly contributed to the findings of this report. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) consulted with officials in all ministries in the 10 ASEAN Member States directly responsible for Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) implementation, as well as with private-sector employers, academics, training directors, members of MRA monitoring committees, and current and former ASEAN Secretariat officials.

The research employed a three-pronged approach:

- **First**, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), MPI convened 12 full days of focus group discussions and meetings between May and September 2015. These forums engaged regional and international experts on mutual recognition and professional mobility, and featured specific presentations on progress and challenges to MRA implementation at national and regional levels. More than 100 MRA stakeholders and experts, including a former Secretary-General of ASEAN, Chair of the ASEAN Business Council, and officials from key ministries in MRA development across ASEAN, attended the convenings. Appendix 2 lists the names and affiliations of all participants in the formal meetings and interviews.
- **Second**, MPI administered a qualitative survey on the development and implementation of MRAs in each Member State. The survey examined the specific context of MRA implementation, including evolving bottlenecks to completion. Between August 2015 and February 2016, MPI, working with local researchers in the 10 Member States, received responses from 311 individuals from relevant government ministries, the private sector, professional associations, educational institutions, and the human resources field. Appendix 3 lists the affiliations of all stakeholders who completed the MRA implementation survey (*Note: Several respondents chose to omit their names in order to answer more openly*).
- **Third**, MPI reviewed key documents and presentations relating to the conclusion and implementation of the ASEAN MRAs on professional services. These included guides and reviews published by ASEAN; handbooks on implementation progress; and studies conducted by the International Labour Organization, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, and ASEAN-Australian Development Cooperation Program Phase II.

Appendix 2: List of Participants in Formal Meetings and Individual Interviews

Roundtable of High-Level Experts, Bali, Indonesia, 11–12 May 2015, Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute	
Abella, Manolo	International Labour Organization MIGRANT Unit
Batalova, Jeanne	Migration Policy Institute
Bedford, Richard	AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand
Chia, Siow Yue	Singapore Institute of International Affairs
Desiderio, Maria Vincenza	Migration Policy Institute
Doutriaux, Yves	Government of France
Fix, Michael	Migration Policy Institute
Govindasamy, Jeevakumar	Talent Corporation Malaysia, Government of Malaysia
Hasan, Rana	Asian Development Bank
Ishikura, Yoko	Hitotsubashi University; World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Education and Skills
Majid, Tan Sri Munir	CIMB ASEAN Research Institute and Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd.
Mendoza, Dovelyn Rannveig	Migration Policy Institute
Narjoko, Dionisius	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)
Nicolas, Imelda M.	Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Office of the President of the Philippines
Papademetriou, Demetrios G.	Migration Policy Institute
Santoso, Megawati	ASEAN Task Force on the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
Sugiyarto, Guntur	Asian Development Bank
Tambo, Ichiro	Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute
Theroux, Eric	Ministry of International and Francophone Relations of Quebec, Quebec Ministry of International and Francophone Relations
Pereira, Ana Carla	DG Employment, European Commission
Yeoh, Brenda	National University of Singapore

Focus Group Discussion, Manila, Philippines, 3–4 September 2015, Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute	
Abaquin, Carmencita	Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing, Philippine Professional Regulation Commission
Aldaba, Fernando T.	Department of Economics, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
Alipio, Arlene	Department of Tourism, Philippines
Ang, Alvin	Department of Economics, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
Baromey, Neth	Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Batalova, Jeanne	Migration Policy Institute
Bulaong, Ofelia	Philippine Professional Regulations Commission
Chalamwong, Yongyuth	Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)
Chantavanich, Supang	Faculty of Political Science and Director, Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM), Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
Chanthavong, Panya	Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
Dacuycuy, Lawrence	School of Economics, De La Salle University, Philippines
Dalalom, Phouthone	Institute of Mass Media, Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR
Dethoudom, Somphone	Council of Sciences and Technology, Ministry of Public Works & Transportation, Lao PDR
Hasakool, Ruangsang	Office of the Vocation Education Commission, Thailand
Isaac, Irene	Policies & Planning, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
Korwanich, Narumanas	Dental Council of Thailand

**Focus Group Discussion, Manila, Philippines, 3–4 September 2015,
Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute**

Kuouch, Somean	National Employment Agency, Cambodia
Leakhena, Sim Chan	National Committee for Tourism Professionals, Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia
Lwin, Kyaw	Ministry of Construction, Myanmar
Mai, Thanh Tong	Viet Nam Association of Accountants & Auditors
Malindog-Uy, Anna	Asian Development Bank
Manzala, Teresita	Philippine Professional Regulations Commission
Myint, Win	Ministry of Construction, Myanmar
Navallo, Katrina	Asian Development Bank
Nguyen, Ba Ngoc	Institute of Labor Science and Social Affairs, Viet Nam
Nguyen, Bich Luu	Viet Nam Nurse Association
Nguyen, Lan Huong	Ministry of Health, Viet Nam
Nguyen, Thi Thai Lan	University of Labor and Social Affairs, Viet Nam
Ochoa-Moreno, Anabelle	Tourism Industry Board, Republic of the Philippines
Oum, Sothea	Ngee-Ann Adelaide Education Centre, Cambodia
Pham, Ngoc Toan	Institute of Labor Science and Social Affairs, Viet Nam
Phan, Thi Dung	Viet Hue University Hospital
Phousinghoa, Sengxay	National Implementation Unit, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
Phuengkamchomb, Atinart	Medical Council of Thailand
Sriwatanawongsa, Adirek	Dental Association of Thailand
Suan, Eric	Asian Development Bank
Ta, Bao Luu	Nhatviet Investment Consulting, Viet Nam
Tran, Viet Hung	Ministry of Health, Viet Nam
Tullao Jr., Teresito	De La Salle University Manila
Waikakul, Saranatra	Faculty of Medicine, Sriraj Hospital-Mahidol University, Thailand
Win, Zaw	Myanmar Knowledge Management
Yorm, Khim	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Cambodia
You, Virak	Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, Cambodia

**Focus Group Discussion, Bali, Indonesia, 26–27 September 2015,
Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute**

Ananta, Aris	University of Indonesia
Ariyanto, Tetty DS	Inspire Travel and Tourism Learning Centre
Aung, Aye Aye	Asia Mega Link Company
Batalova, Jeanne	Migration Policy Institute
Chan, Chong Kong	Human Capital, PriceWaterhouse Coopers
Desiderio, Maria Vincenza	Migration Policy Institute
Djajadihardja, Yusuf Surachman	Geospatial Information Infrastructure, Badan Informasi Geospasial
Fahmi, Zita Mohd	Malaysian Qualifications Agency, ASEAN Quality Assurance Network Executive Board
Fix, Michael	Migration Policy Institute
Hasan, Chotib	University of Indonesia
Hasan, Isnarti	Ministry of Labor, Indonesia
Htoon, Ye Swe	Border Areas Development Association, Myanmar
Lwin, Kyi	Myanmar Engineering Society
Marhzan, Nurmazilah Dato	Malaysian Institute of Accountants

**Focus Group Discussion, Bali, Indonesia, 26–27 September 2015,
Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute**

Mendoza, Dovelyn Rannveig	Migration Policy Institute
Omar, Amir	Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia
Paryono	SEAMO VOCTECH Brunei Regional Centre
Salleh, Adinin Md	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council , Ministry of Education
Salant, Brian	Migration Policy Institute
Santoso, Megawati	ASEAN Task Force on the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
Shahima, Wan Yon	Human Resources Development Fund, Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia
Suprajaka	Geospatial Information Infrastructure, Badan Informasi Geospasial
Summaryono	Division for Human Resources and Industry for Special Information
Sugiyarto, Guntur	Asian Development Bank
Thangavelu, Shandre Mугan	University of Adelaide, Centre for International Economic Studies
Tjptoherijanto, Prijono	University of Indonesia
Zakaria, Aminuddin	Malaysia Airlines Berhad

**Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, Bali, Indonesia, 28–29 September 2015,
Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute**

Aguirre, Estelita C.	ASEAN Federation of Accountants (AFA)
Aldaba, Fernando T.	Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
Ananta, Aris	University of Indonesia
Batalova, Jeanne	Migration Policy Institute
Bui, Thuy Anh	Ministry of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam
Chansompheng, Chanthaly	International Financial Institutions Division, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR
Chantavanich, Supang	Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM), Chulalongkorn University
Chanthavong, Panya	Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
Chen, Lurong	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)
Chia, Siow Yue	Singapore Institute of International Affairs
Chong, Wai Kit	Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia
Conti, Leandro A.	ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineering Coordinating Committee (ACPECC)
Cordero, Rolando	Professional Regulation Commission, Republic of the Philippines
Fahmi, Zita Mohd	Malaysian Qualifications Agency, ASEAN Quality Assurance Network Executive Board
Fix, Michael	Migration Policy Institute
Gagni, Oth	Asian Development Bank
Gajaseni, Nantana	ASEAN University Network
Hawthorne, Leslyanne	Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne
Hasan, Rana	Asian Development Bank
Herliza	Directorate General of International Trade Cooperation, Ministry of Trade, Indonesia
Ho, Quang Trung	ASEAN Secretariat
Hongrat, Kanjana	Ministry of Education, Thailand
Htoon, Ye Swe	Border Areas Development Association, Myanmar
Kato, Hiroshi	Japan International Cooperation Agency
Le, Dong Phuong	Institute of Education and Vocational Training, Ministry of Education and Training, Viet Nam
Lin, Kyaw Kyaw	Ministry of Labor Employment and Social Security, Myanmar
Long, Simon	The Economist
Malang, Lyndree	Asian Development Bank

Bali Forum on Skill Mobility in ASEAN, Bali, Indonesia, 28–29 September 2015, Convened by Asian Development Bank and Migration Policy Institute	
Majid, Tan Sri Munir	CIMB ASEAN Research Institute and Chair, Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd.
Mendoza, Dovelyn Rannveig	Migration Policy Institute
Metiranan, Pornpimol	Office of Education Council, Ministry of Education, Thailand
Miao, Mabel	Center for China and Globalization
Navallo, Katrina	Asian Development Bank
Nguyen, Thi Thai Lan	University of Labor and Social Affairs, Viet Nam
Nicolas, Imelda M.	Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Office of the President of the Philippines
Noh, Nirwan	Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia
Ong, Keng Yong	S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
Oum, Sothea	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
Papademetriou, Demetrios G.	Migration Policy Institute
Paryono	SEAMO VOCTECH Brunei Regional Centre
Perdiguero, Alfredo	Asian Development Bank
Phan, Oun	Risk Management Unit, Directorate General, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia
Phouinghoa, Sengxay	National Implementation Unit, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
Pisoth, Khem	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Kingdom of Cambodia
Pratama, Aucky	ASEAN Federation of Accountants (AFA)
Roostiwati	Ministry of Manpower, Indonesia
Salant, Brian	Migration Policy Institute
Santoso, Megawati	ASEAN Task Force on the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
Sideth, Dy Sam	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Kingdom of Cambodia
Singdala, Inthavone	Skills Development and Employment, Ministry of Labor and Welfare, Lao PDR
Skeldon, Ronald	Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex
Sumarna	Ministry of Manpower, Indonesia
Tasaka, Takuro	Embassy of Japan in Indonesia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
Thangavelu, Shandre	University of Adelaide, Centre for International Economic Studies
Thol, Nara	Directorate General for International Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia
Win, Zaw	Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Myanmar
Winters, L. Alan	Department of Economics, University of Sussex; formerly, Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom
Yulistyawati, Ika	Directorate of Trade in Services Negotiation, Ministry of Trade, Indonesia

Appendix 3: Affiliations of Stakeholders Who Completed Mutual Recognition Arrangement Implementation Survey

Brunei Darussalam	
Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council	KPMG Brunei
Brunei Institute of Certified Public Accountants - FTMS Accountancy Academy	Lee and Raman, CPA
Brunei Medical Board	Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam
Brunei Shell Petroleum	Ministry of Primary Resources & Tourism, Brunei Darussalam
Deloitte	Nursing Board for Brunei
Institut Teknologi Brunei	Nursing Services Unit, Suri Seri Begawan Hospital, Kuala Belait
Juntera OMC (OMC Engineering)	Pengiran Anak Puteri Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Institute of Health Sciences, UBD
Juruukur Bahan Dan Pengurusan Utamacon	VSL Systems (B)

Cambodia	
Aplus Consulting	KPMG Cambodia
Board of Engineers, Kingdom of Cambodia	Moha Engineering & Consulting
Cambodia Society of Architects	National Accounting Council, Kingdom of Cambodia
Cambodian Mekong University	National Committee for Tourism Professionals, Ministry of Tourism, Kingdom of Cambodia
Cambodian University for Specialties	Norton University
Central Hospital, Phnom Penh	PSE Institute
Chenla University	Roomchang Dental Hospital
Dara Airport Hotel	Sakal Dental Clinic
HRDP & Associates	Secret Villa
HR Cambodia	University of Puthisastra, Department of Dentistry
International SOS	University of Puthisastra, Department of Midwifery
Kampuchea Dental Clinic	Urban Architect of CTS Group
Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors	

Indonesia	
Bisa Nusantara University	Lembaga Profesional Pariwisata Indonesia (LEPPI)
BNP2TKI	Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia
BNSP (Indonesian Professional Certification Authority)	National Professional Certification Board, Ministry of Manpower (BNSP)
Committee on Human Resources in Health	Obat24.com
Faculty of Agriculture, Bogor Agricultural University	Persatuan Insinyur Indonesia (Indonesia Association of Engineers) – PII
Faculty of Dentistry, Universitas Indonesia	Program Pendidikan Vokasi (Vocational Training Programme), Universitas Indonesia
Faculty of Economics, Universitas Indonesia	PT Hagalink (HAGALINK)
Geospatial Information Infrastructure, Badan Informasi Geospasial	School of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi Bandung
Ikatan Akuntan Indonesia	The ASEAN Secretariat
Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI)	Universitas Indonesia, Master of Accounting and Accounting Profession Program
Inspire Travel and Tourism Learning Centre	Vocational Programme, Universitas Indonesia
Institution of Indonesia Chartered Accountants	

Lao PDR	
Burapha Agro-Forestry	Faculty of Nursing Services, University of Health Sciences
Children's Hospital	Friendship Hospital
Council of Sciences and Technology, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Lao PDR	Geographic Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Lao PDR
Dental Clinic Department, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR	Health Care Department, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR
Dental Clinic, University of Health Sciences	Institute of Mass Media, Culture, and Tourism, Lao PDR
Dental Department, Mahosot Hospital	Lao Development Bank
Dental Faculty, University of Health Sciences	Lao Hotel and Restaurant Association
Department of Electrical Engineering, National University of Laos	Lao Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Department of Geology and Minerals, Lao PDR	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Department of Land Administration, Lao PDR	Lao Toyota Service
Department of Mines, Ministry of Energy and Mines, Lao PDR	Ministry of Finance, Accounting Department, Lao PDR
Department of Nursing Service, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR	MMG LXML Sepon
Department of Roads, Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), Lao PDR	National Audit Organization, Lao PDR
Educational Standards and Quality Assurance Center, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR	Nursing Service Faculty, University of Health Sciences
Exo Travel Laos	National University of Laos, Faculty of Engineering, Dean Office
Fa Jewelry	Pakpasak Technical College
Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, National University of Laos	Polytechnics Institute
Faculty of Architecture, Department of Environment and Urban Planning, National University of Laos	Survey and Mapping Center, Ministry of Home Affairs, Lao PDR
Faculty of Dentistry, University of Health Sciences	Tourism Development Department, Ministry of Information, Cultures, and Tourism, Lao PDR
Faculty of Engineering, Department of Electrical Engineering, National University of Laos	Vientiane Plaza Hotel
Faculty of Hotel and Tourism, National University of Laos	Wonderful Garment

Malaysia	
Berjaya University College of Hospitality	Malaysian Dental Association
Department of Skills Development, Malaysia	Malaysian Institute of Accountants (PRA/NAB)
International Islamic University Malaysia	Malaysian Medical Association
International Medical University	Medical Practice Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia
JobStreet.com	Melorita Healthcare, Malaysia
JUBM	Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia
Land Surveyors Board Malaysia	Prince Court Medical Centre
Lincoln University College	Robert Walters Malaysia
Malaysian Accountancy Research and Education Foundation	Westports Malaysia
Malaysian Accounting Standards Board	

Myanmar	
Asia Mega Link Company	Ministry of Social Welfare, Union of Myanmar
Asia Royal Hospital	Myanmar Academy of Medical Science
Association of Myanmar Architects	Myanmar Accountancy Council
City Development Council	Myanmar Architect Council
Department of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Transport, Union of Myanmar	Myanmar Business Executives Association

Myanmar	
Defense Services Medical Academy	Myanmar Dental Council
Dental Association	Myanmar Engineering Council
Engineering Council, Union of Myanmar	Myanmar Engineering Society
Insein General Hospital	Myanmar Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Institute of Dental Medicine	Myanmar Medical Association
MAT Audit and Professional Services	Myanmar Medical Council
MC Audit, Myanmar	Myanmar Nurses and Midwifery Association
Military Nursing Paramedical and Pharmacy Institute	Myanmar Nursing and Midwifery Council
Ministry of Construction, Union of Myanmar	National Skill Standards Authority
Ministry of Education, Higher Education, Upper Myanmar	Nursing University
Ministry of Education, Union of Myanmar	People's Health Foundation
Ministry of Health, Union of Myanmar	Tourism Promotion Department, Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health, Department of Medical Services, Union of Myanmar	Tourism Training School, Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Industry, Union of Myanmar	Win Htut Aung and Associates
Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Security, Union of Myanmar	

Philippines	
Asian Institute of Management	Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing, Republic of the Philippines
Ateneo de Manila University School of Medicine	School of Economics, De La Salle University
Board of Accountancy, Professional Regulation Commission, Republic of the Philippines	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Republic of the Philippines
Department of Tourism, Republic of the Philippines	The Medical City
Health Alternatives for Total Human Development (HEALTHDEV) Institute	Tourism Industry Board Foundation
Professional Regulation Commission, Board, Mechanical Engineering, Republic of the Philippines	University of Santo Tomas
Professional Regulation Commission, Regulatory Board of Architecture, Republic of the Philippines	University of the Philippines Asian Institute of Tourism
Professional Regulation Commission, Board of Geodetic Engineering, Republic of the Philippines	University of the Philippines College of Dentistry
Professional Regulation Commission, Board of Dentistry, Republic of the Philippines	University of the Philippines College of Nursing

Thailand	
17th Somdejprasangkraj Hospital	Medical Association of Thailand
Architect Council of Thailand	Medical Council of Thailand
Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Kingdom of Thailand
Council of Engineers, Kingdom of Thailand	Office of the Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Thailand
Dental Association of Thailand	Pan House Travel / Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA)
Dental Council of Thailand	Siriraj Hospital
Department of Skill Development, Kingdom of Thailand	Somsilp
Director of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Thailand	SSC Rental & Engineering
Dusit International	Thai Red Cross College of Nursing
Faculty of Accountancy, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)
Faculty of Dentistry, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand Medical Council

Thailand	
Faculty of Engineering, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand Nurses Association of Thailand
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suansunandha Rajabhat University	Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council
Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University	Thammathorn Accountancy
Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University	Tourism Professional Training Institute, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Kingdom of Thailand
Federation of Accounting Professions	Tripple P Accounting
King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital	V.S.P. Construction
Kopfun	

Viet Nam	
Administration for Medical service, Ministry of Health, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Ministry of Construction, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Central Public Hospital of Odonto and Stomatology	Ministry of Health, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Department of International Cooperations, Ministry of Construction, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Ministry of Health, Department of Healthcare Examination Management, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Department of International Relations, Ministry of Construction, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Department of Managing Construction Activities, Ministry of Construction, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Nhat Viet Investment Consulting Company
Department of National Remote Sensing, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Sapio Tourism
Department of Surveying and Mapping, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Southern Transportation Consultancy and Designing Company
Dong Hung Accounting Services	VietDuc Hospital
European Union-funded Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme (ESRT)	Viet Nam Association of Accountants and Auditors (VAA)
Faculty of Accounting, University of Labor and Social Affairs	Viet Nam Consultancy Construction Company
GITES JSC	Viet Nam Institute of Geodesy and Cartography
Ha Noi Tourism College	Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism
Ha Noi Medical University	Viet Nam Nursing Association
Institute of Labor Science and Social Affairs (ILSSA)- Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Viet Nam Tourism Certification Board
JSC Developed Architecture and Construction KINESIS	Viet Nam Young Physician Association
Khanh Hoa Mental Health Hospital	Viet Nam, Odonto, Stomatology Association (VOSA)
KTV Advisory and Auditing	

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* ADB recognizes “China” as the People’s Republic of China, “Vietnam” as Viet Nam, and “Laos” as the Lao People’s Democratic Republic..

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Open Windows, Closed Doors

Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Professional Services in the ASEAN Region

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has signed mutual recognition arrangements in the tourism sector and in six regulated occupations: accountancy, architecture, dentistry, engineering, medicine, and nursing. By setting standardized rules for mutual recognition, ASEAN members have made it easier for professionals to have their qualifications recognized across the region. Although these arrangements share nearly identical objectives, not all are created equal and come with varying levels of openness to foreign professionals. This report is the latest in a project by the Asian Development Bank and the Migration Policy Institute to improve understanding of the barriers to free movement of professionals within ASEAN and to support the development of strategies to overcome these hurdles. The report draws on insights of nearly 400 ASEAN and state officials, private-sector employers, training directors, and others who participated in focus group discussions, meetings, and surveys.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to a large share of the world's poor. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

