

UNLOCKING SKILLS MOBILITY

*The Role of European Transparency Tools to Drive the
Skills Portability Initiative and Talent Mobility*

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

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Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

SPEAKERS

Profiles are presented in order of first appearance in the conference programme.



Koen Nomden

Team Leader, Transparency and Portability of Skills and Qualifications
European Commission

Mr Koen Nomden is an expert in qualifications and credentials. He has been working for the European Commission for more than 20 years and is currently Team Leader for Transparency and Portability of Skills and Qualifications, within the Unit of the European Commission dealing with Vocational Education and Training, Skills Portability and Cedefop. Before that he was a policy officer in charge of the validation of non-formal and informal learning and career guidance, worked as programme manager for the Erasmus Mundus programme and was involved in setting up the Education Audiovisual Cultural Agency. Prior to joining the Commission, he worked at the University of Antwerp (BE) and at the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht (NL).



Niranjn Kumar Sudhansu

Executive Member, NCVET and Additional Secretary
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India

A senior Indian Administrative Service officer of the 2000 batch (Maharashtra Cadre), Niranjn Kumar Sudhansu brings over two decades of distinguished public service spanning land administration, urban development, coal and mining policy, skill development, and government training. He holds a B.Tech in Petroleum Engineering from IIT-ISM, Dhanbad, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Policy Management from IIM Bangalore, with a residency at Maxwell School, Syracuse University, New York. Career Highlights: Additional Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Delhi (Present). Director General, YASHADA, Pune (2024–2026), Settlement Commissioner & Director of Land Records, Maharashtra (2020–2024) Professor of Economics, LBSNAA, Mussoorie (2018–2020), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India (2017–2018) Director, President's Secretariat (2015–2017) Director, Ministry of Skill Development, Government of India (2014–2015) Vice-Chairperson, MHADA, Mumbai (2012–2014) Collector, Jalgaon, Maharashtra (2010–2011) MD, Maharashtra State Mining Corporation (2009–2010) .



Alison Dittmer Croad

Principal Advisor to the Deputy Chief Executive, Quality Assurance
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Alison Dittmer Croad has extensive experience in qualifications recognition, qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and cross-border education policy through the work she has carried out for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and in support of Free Trade Agreement implementation. Alison served as Project Lead for the Pacific Qualifications Recognition Project until earlier this year, leading regional work to strengthen recognition and mobility across Pacific countries, including qualifications framework referencing, benchmarking and initiatives to build trust and confidence across qualifications systems. She has also contributed to international qualifications framework work involving Quality and Qualifications Ireland and the European Qualifications Framework, amongst others.



Selai Waqainabete

Project Lead, Pacific Qualifications Recognition Project

Pacific Community (SPC)

With more than 15 years of experience supporting quality assurance initiatives in higher education across the Pacific, Selai has played a significant role in advancing national and regional qualifications systems. As a member of the team responsible for developing the Pacific Qualifications Framework in 2009, she contributed to establishing a regional mechanism for qualifications recognition. Prior to this, Selai served as Project Lead for the development of the Fiji Qualifications Framework from 2003 to 2008, providing strategic leadership in establishing Fiji's national qualifications framework. She is the Project Lead for the Pacific Community (SPC) in the implementation of the Pacific Qualifications Recognition Project, a five-year (2024 – 2028) collaborative initiative funded by the New Zealand Government and jointly delivered by SPC and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).



Donnie Wood

Head of Pathways Policy

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership

Donnie is Head of Pathways Policy at the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Partnership (SCQFP). A former educator, he leads on the development and implementation of pathways policy within a changing education, qualifications and skills system, in addition to promoting lifelong learning and Recognition of Prior Learning for the benefit of individuals, their communities and the economy. Donnie has also managed the SCQF national schools programme with 270+ schools across the country, supporting schools to create flexible learning pathways for all learners.



Dr Andy Smith

Quality and Standards Manager

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Andy joined the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in January 2018. In his current role as Quality and Standards Manager, Andy is responsible for managing the UK's national quality standards and frameworks, including the Quality Code, the Qualifications Frameworks, Subject Benchmark Statements and other sector standards. Andy also manages QAA's work on academic integrity, degree standards and credit. Before joining QAA, Andy spent twenty-five years as a lecturer, researcher and senior manager in Theatre and Film Studies departments across the UK.



Aurelija Valeikienė

Deputy Director and Acting Director

Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania

Aurelija Valeikienė is Deputy Director, currently Acting Director of SKVC (Lithuanian quality assurance agency and ENIC-NARIC centre). Her areas of expertise include external quality assurance of higher education, academic recognition of foreign qualifications (including automatic recognition), and internationalization of higher education. Aurelija gained extensive experience of external reviews of quality assurance agencies as ENQA expert, served on ENQA Board. Also served as Honorary Treasury and was elected President of CEENQA (Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies). She has worked as an expert for the European Commission, Council of Europe, European Training Foundation, World Bank, Europe-Asia Foundation, INQAHE.



Professor M. Iqbal Bin Saripan

Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Quality Assurance

Malaysian Qualifications Agency

Professor M. Iqbal Saripan serves as Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Quality Assurance) at the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). An accomplished academic administrator, he brings extensive expertise in Internal and External Quality Assurance (IQA/EQA) processes to drive national accreditation standards. He leads MQA's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, focusing on establishing a flexible future higher education system, sustainable QA, and global recognition. Previously, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) and Director of Quality Assurance at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). He holds a Bachelor's in Electrical-Electronics Engineering from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and a Ph.D. from the University of Surrey, UK.



Jeff Protheroe

Strategic Adviser, Work-based Learning and Employability

ColegauCymru / CollegesWales

Jeff Protheroe is ColegauCymru's Strategic Adviser for Work-based Learning and Employability. He leads the organisation's policy and influencing work across apprenticeships, employability and the wider skills system, representing the interests of colleges across Wales. Jeff works closely with Welsh Government, Medr (the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research in Wales), Qualifications Wales and other strategic partners to ensure that sector evidence and expertise inform national policy. His work includes developing consultation responses and policy positions on apprenticeship funding and delivery, vocational qualifications, apprenticeship frameworks reform, employability provision and Wales's current and future skills needs.



Bulbul Yadav

Consultant Grade-I

National Council for Vocational Education and Training, Government of India

Bulbul Yadav is a Consultant Grade-I at the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, where she works on skills policy, qualifications and workforce development. Her work spans qualifications development and quality assurance, assessment, occupational and qualification frameworks, emerging skills and international cooperation in the skills sector. She has contributed to India-EU cooperation on skills and qualifications, including the ILO-led work comparing India's National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), supporting work on qualifications, quality assurance and international alignment of qualifications frameworks.



Fiona Marie Ernesta

Chief Executive Officer

Seychelles Qualifications Authority

Ms. Fiona Marie Ernesta, from Seychelles, holds two Master's degrees and three postgraduate qualifications, including one in Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Over the course of her career, she has held key leadership roles including Director General for Technical and Further Education in 2007. Since 2012, Ms. Ernesta has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA), where she has contributed to significant innovations and developments, including Recognition of Prior Learning in Seychelles, Seychelles credit accumulation and transfer system, and Micro-credentials. Ms. Ernesta joined the SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation as Member, representing Seychelles in 2013.



Lotte Kejser

Chief Technical Advisor

International Labour Organization

Lotte Kejser currently manages two ILO projects in Bangladesh, financed by the European Union, on skills development and international skilled labour migration. To this end, she provides support for the Government of Bangladesh, stakeholders and partners to develop approaches and frameworks for skilled labour migration to EU Member States, which entails upgrading skills qualifications and training packages to match skills competencies demand in destination countries, while strengthening fair recruitment and protection of migrant workers throughout the recruitment and deployment process. Lotte Kejser furthermore provides technical advisory support for global and regional initiatives on skills development, decent work and good labour migration governance, and she has contributed to ILO's normative work and the implementation of international labour standards in ILO Member States.



Michael Graham

Qualifications Systems and Recognition Expert

European Training Foundation

Michael Graham is an expert with the European Training Foundation (ETF). ETF is an agency of the EU which cooperates with the EU's neighbouring countries, and other countries and world regions, to support development of their vocational education and training and lifelong learning systems. Michael specialises in qualifications systems and framework development, and recognition. He has written or contributed to several ETF publications on these subjects and to every edition so far of the joint UNESCO-ETF-Cedefop publication, the Global NQF Inventory, which tracks NQF developments worldwide. He has also advised several of ETF's partner countries in the Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East, and the Eastern Partnership on qualification system reform, as well as contributing to ETF's support to the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).



Keith Moynes

Assistant Secretary

Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Keith is an Assistant Secretary in the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, where he is the management board member responsible for higher education policy, funding and governance as well as student support and inclusion policy. He was previously responsible for national research and innovation policy, and for capital programmes across further and higher education. Earlier in his career, Keith served in the Department of Education, the Department of the Taoiseach, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, including as a diplomat at the Irish Embassy in Tokyo. He is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin and UCD Smurfit Business School.



Dr Kevin Marshall

Head of Future Skilling and Chair of the National Skills Council

Microsoft Ireland

Dr Kevin Marshall has extensive cross-sectoral, education, and industry experience working for Microsoft Ireland for the last 20 years, with the last 10 years as the Head of Future Skilling. He was recently appointed Chair of the National Skills Council. He has been appointed as Adjunct Professor in the Assisting Living and Learning (ALL) Institute in Maynooth University. He has a BA (Hons) in Psychology from University College in Dublin, an MSc in Occupational Psychology from University of Hull and a Ph.D. in Educational Measurements and Research, from Boston College. His experience as the Head of Future Skilling in a multinational corporation, combined with a Ph.D. in education, position him as an expert in both theoretical and practical aspects of skills development.



Iraklis Pliakis

Expert in Qualifications and Credentials

Cedefop

Iraklis is a Cedefop expert in qualifications and credentials. Working in the Department for VET and qualifications since 2017, Iraklis manages the project on National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), mapping and analysing NQF developments in countries participating in the European qualifications framework (EQF) process. His current research areas of focus include Microcredentials for labour market education and training, and excellence and inclusion in VET. Iraklis is an economist by training, with a PhD in didactics of Economics from the University of Macedonia. Before joining Cedefop he was an advisor to the Deputy Minister of Education in Greece focusing on VET and apprenticeship. He has also worked as a teacher in upper secondary and post-secondary education and as a researcher in tertiary education.



Michela Bastianelli

Senior Researcher and Head of the Transparency and Recognition of Qualifications and competences for International Cooperation Team

INAPP, Italy

Michela is Senior Researcher at INAPP - Italian National Institute for Public Policy Analysis, Head of the Transparency and Recognition of Qualifications and competences for International Cooperation Team, EQF Advisory Group member for Italy, Vice- Coordinator of the Italian National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework (EQF NCP) Sociologist in economic and organizational studies with a specialization in HR and active labour market policies development. She also holds a postgraduate qualification in Integral Evolutionary Coaching (Life and Career Coaching). Her work focuses particularly on the implementation of the Italian National Qualifications Framework, the referencing and portability of qualifications to EQF, the VNFIL and the development of tools supporting social inclusion and employability of adults population.



Satu Järvinen

Human Capital Development Expert

European Training Foundation

Satu Järvinen is a Human Capital Development Expert at the European Training Foundation (ETF), where she serves as the focal point for micro-credentials. Her work focuses on skills development, lifelong learning, qualifications, and the recognition of learning across ETF partner countries, supporting policy development and international cooperation in education and skills systems. Satu is recognised for her expertise in micro-credentials, open badges, and skills recognition, with a particular interest in how emerging credentialing approaches can support lifelong learning, employability, and skills mobility. Alongside her work at ETF, she is pursuing doctoral research at the University of Eastern Finland, examining the role of technology-enabled learning and digital micro-credentials in Senegal.



Noella Baker-Albert

Principal Standards Officer

Seychelles Qualifications Authority

Noella specialises in tertiary education quality assurance and qualifications frameworks, advancing transparent and recognised credentialing systems. In her professional capacity in Seychelles, she focuses on the strategic implementation and oversight of national qualifications standards, governance and quality assurance frameworks. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Quality Assurance in Higher Education from the University of Mauritius, awarded in collaboration with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Her work includes co-leading the technical referencing of the Seychelles National Qualifications Framework (SNQF) to regional structures including the ACQF and SADCQF, as well as driving Seychelles' implementation of the ACQF Qualifications Credentials Platform (QCP).



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